Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša

The Conquest of Abyssinia

[16th Century]

By Šihāb ad-Dın Aḥmad b in `Abd al-Qāder
bin Sālem bin `Uṯmān, *also known as* `Arab Faqīh

Translated by Paul Lester Stenhouse
With annotations by Richard Pankhurst

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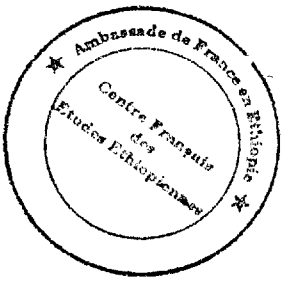

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Translated by
PAUL LESTER STENHOUSE

With annotations by
RICHARD PANKHURST

Futūh al-Habaša: The Conquest of Abyssinia
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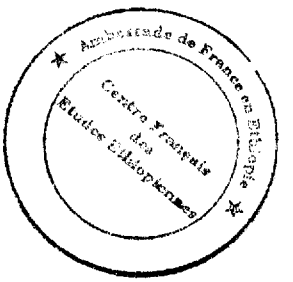
Note on Title

A word should be said about the title of this work - 'Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša,' or 'Conquest of Abyssinia' - which undoubtedly reflects the situation as it seemed to its Yamanī author at the time of its composition. The forces of Imam Aḥmad bin Ibrahim had occupied the greater part of Ethiopia. The resistance of Emperor Lebna Dengel had virtually come to an end, and many Christians had chosen to convert to Islam. The victorious Imam's regime seemed there to stay.

This was, however, far from the end of the story. The Imam was killed in battle on February 21, 1543, whereupon his army almost immediately disintegrated. Those of his soldiers who could do so made their way back to the East. Not a few Muslim converts reverted to their former faith.

The Futūḥ thus refers to a relatively short, though crucially important, period in Ethiopia's long history. The book is nevertheless valuable, in that its author was an eye-witness of many of the events he describes, and writes, as far as we can judge, with a degree of objectivity rare for his time.



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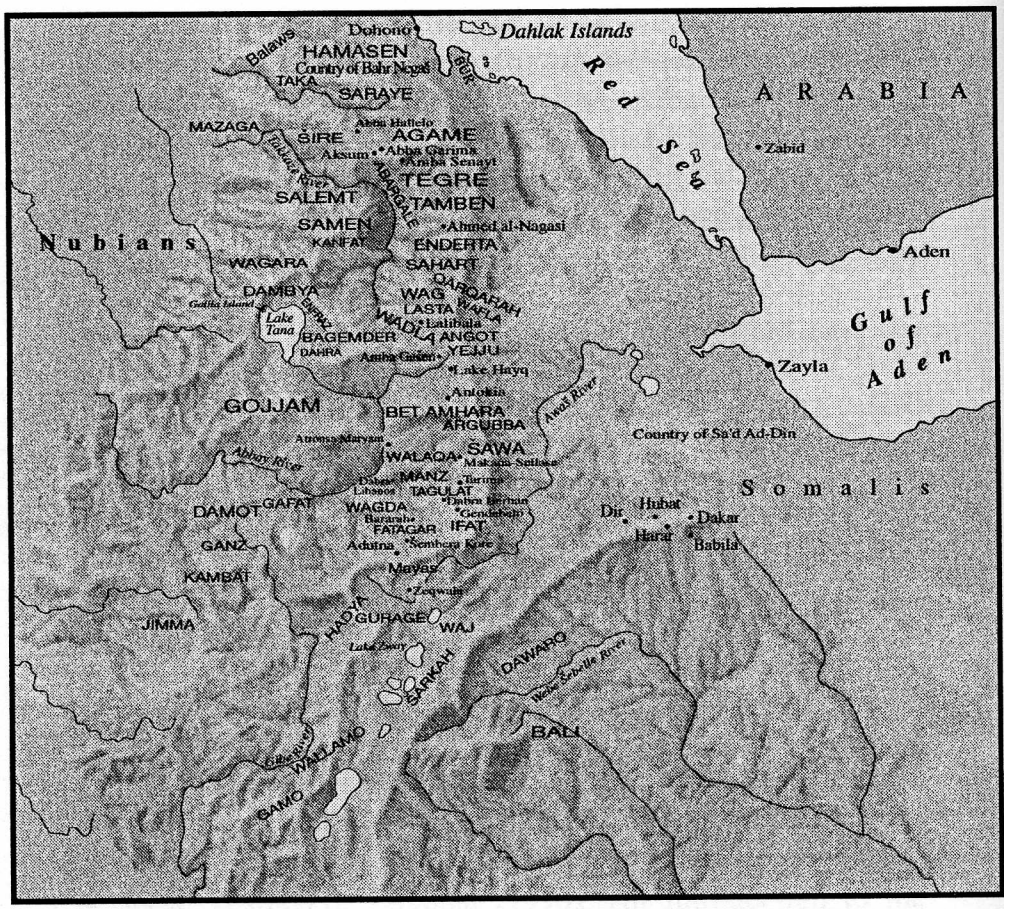
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Country of Bahr Negash
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SARAYE
Red Sea
ARABIA
Zabid
MAZAGA
SIRE
AGAME
Aksum
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TEGRE
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TAMBEN
SAMEN
KANFAT
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ENDERTA
Nubians
WAGARA
SAHART
Aden
DAMBYA
WAG
QARQARAH
LASTA
RAYA
Lake Tana
Latibhala
BAGEMDER
ANGOT
DAHRA
YEJJU
Lake Hayq
Zayla
Gulf of Aden
GOJJAM
Antokia
BET AMHARA
ARGUBBA
Awash River
Country of Sa'd Ad-Din
WALAQA
SAWA
Makana-Selasa
Abbay River
MANZ
TAGULAT
Somalis
DAMOT
GAFAT
WAGDA
IFAT
Dir
Hubat
Dakar
Harar
Babila
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KAMBAT
Maryas
Zeqwala
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INTRODUCTION

The rise in the early sixteenth century of the charismatic Adal leader Imām Aḥmed bin Ibrahim; his seizure of power at the old Islamic city of Hārar; his campaigns against Somalis and other fellow Muslims in the neighbouring lowlands; his *jihad*, or Holy War, against what he considered the 'non-believers' of south-west Ethiopia, and his subsequent near-destruction of the age-old Ethiopian Christian state - all this constituted a major turning-point in the history of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa.

The wars of Aḥmed bin Ibrahim - Aḥmed Grañ, or the Left-handed, as he is often called - had immense consequences. These included the conversion to Islam, albeit in many cases only temporary, of a vast proportion of the Ethiopian population; the virtual collapse of the traditional Christian Ethiopian empire; the breaking-down of long-established feudal relationships, and related taxation; heavy loss of life, by combatants and civilians alike; the capture, and despatch to Arabia (and also to India) of innumerable slaves; the destruction of some of the country's finest Christian churches, monasteries, and treasures; and the bringing to Hārar, and export to Arabia, of considerable quantities of gold, used in part by the imām for the purchase of fire-arms and other weapons.

The warfare associated with the imām, which had an important international dimension, became increasingly enmeshed in the global conflict between the Christian Portuguese and the Muslim Ottoman Turks. This led to the arrival of many Arab fusiliers and canoneers on the Imām's side, and of their Portuguese counterparts, led by Vasco da Gama's son Christovão, on that of the Ethiopian Christian state.

Imām Aḥmed was finally defeated in 1543, after which the Adal state declined, and thereafter adopted a largely defensive stance. On the other hand the Ethiopian Christian monarchy, though victorious, did not recover its prestige, area, or wealth for several centuries.

The fighting of this period, and the weakening of both contestants, was followed meanwhile by extensive population movements, most notably

the northward migration of the Oromos, then generally referred to as Gallas, as well as that of the inhabitants of Gāfat, Dāmot and elsewhere.

The imām's wars constituted a great, and at times tragic, human drama, a saga of death, pillage and destruction, as well as of military heroism and religious ecstasy. Many of the actors, on both sides, risked their lives to propagate, or defend, their religion, and deeply-held beliefs. Others tried no less desperately to save their skins, and those of their relatives and loved ones, by accomodation to the exigencies of the hour. Many others again were influenced, if not governed, by all-important family ties. There were many forced conversions, and though a few heroic men and women willingly faced martyrdom for their beliefs, others displayed considerable ingenuity in the day-to-day struggle to survive.

For our knowledge of this important, and fascinating, period of Ethiopian history, which is the subject of numerous legends, we are deeply indebted to one of imām Aḥmed's followers, Šihab ad-Dīn Aḥmed bin 'Abd al-Qader bin Sālem bin 'Uṯmān. He was a scholarly Yemani, who accompanied his master and hero on several of his expeditions.

Šihab ad-Dīn's work, the *Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša*, or Conquest of Ḥabasha, i.e. Abyssinia, is an elaborate, and remarkably detailed, narrative written in Arabic shortly after 1559. Though prone at times to exaggerate, and to adopt flowery language, interspersed with poetry, its author was on the whole a good and, for the most part, dispassionate observer. He writes largely as an eye-witness. He tells us for example that he was present at the famous battle of Šemberā Korē in 1529; was with the imām and the latter's wife Hājirah at Barārah, where the Adal army was greatly inconvenienced by the wind and the rain; and, passing by way of Ifāt, later joined his master's camp at Wāṣal, prior to the siege of the Ambā, which he describes in such detail that one can only assume that he was present.

The *Futūḥ* has much to tell us about the imām: his character, motives and aspirations. It throws valuable light on his relations with his allies and supporters in Arabia; with his soldiers, many of whom were at times most reluctant to follow him on campaign; and with various sections of the Ethiopian population - nobles, peasants, merchants and slaves, as well as Christians, Muslims, Falašas and Animists.

Šihab ad-Dīn's oral sources were apparently also both informative and reliable. Beside the Imām himself, they included such individuals as Abbās and Azmāc Ḥaībī, who had fought in the Christian army at Šemberā Korē or elsewhere, before defecting to the forces of Adal.

The author of the *Futūḥ* is thus able to present a largely balanced report of the *minutiae* of events, as well as detailed, and historically invaluable, descriptions of the country through which the Imām's army passed, its mountains, rivers, and towns. The text thus provides us with many interesting glimpses of the lands Aḥmad ruled, conquered and taxed.

Šihab ad-Dīn's account is, however, incomplete: it ends shortly after the imām's conquest of the islands of Lake Ṭānā in 1537, i.e. four years before the coming of the Portuguese expeditionary force, and six before the imām's demise. The existing text, which the author describes as the first volume of his work, thus represents only part of a study probably intended to run to two, or perhaps more volumes. Scholars over the years have searched for later chapters, but in vain. Whether they were never written - perhaps on account of their author's death, or were lost, remains a matter of speculation. The mystery has even given rise to the suggestion, made however entirely without any evidence, that the work may have been destroyed by the Imām's widow. The surviving text, which forms a unity in itself, is nevertheless a testimony of unsurpassed historical importance.

The significance of the *Futūḥ* was first recognised in Gujarat, the region of India with closest connections with Ethiopia, and the destination of numerous slaves captured by the imām in the course of his campaigns. A copy of Šihab ad-Dīn's work reached Gujarat within only a few decades of its composition. The text was considered so important in explaining the influx of Abyssinian slaves into that part of India that the Gujarati writer 'Abdallah Muḥammad bin Omar al-Makki al-Āṣafī al-Ulugkānī, better known as Haji ad-Dabir, included portions of it in his history of Gujarat written in Arabic around 1605. He may have been encouraged in this by the fact that he was in the service, successively, of two noblemen, Muḥammad Yaqut Ulugh Khan and Abdul Kerim Dayfud Muḥammad Fulad Khan. Both had apparently been captured in the Imām's wars, or were the descendants of persons so captured.

The *Futūḥ* was not, however, known to European scholarship for almost a quarter of a millennium. Perhaps the first to learn of Šihab ad-Dīn's work was the British traveller Richard Burton, who described it in his *First Footsteps in East Africa* as 'a rare work'. He declared that the Amir of Hārar 'had but one volume' of the *Futūḥ*, and added, on what evidence he does not state, that 'the other was to be found in Mocha or Hudaydah'.

Though undoubtedly rare, several copies of the first volume of the *Futūḥ* (but none of any second) subsequently came to light. Copies were obtained by the French scholarly travellers Antoine and Arnauld d'Abbadie; the Egyptian conqueror of Hārar, Rauf Pasha; the British consular representative on the Somali coast, Major Hunter; the French trader in Aden, Alfred Bardey; the British governor of the Sudan, General Charles Gordon; and the French scholar, Casimir Mondon-Vidailhet.

The *Futūḥ* acquired enhaced European interest in the last decade of the nineteenth century, a time when the Italians, French and British were coincidentally also developing expansionist interests - or ideas of 'conquest'- in the area.

The first version of the *Futūḥ* in Italian, was produced by Dr Cesare Nerazzini, an Italian military physician in Ethiopia, and was published in Rome in 1891. Entitled *La conquista mussulmana dell'Etiopia nel secolo XVI*, it was based on a copy of Šihab ad-Dīn's text, which the Italian had managed to see (but not to purchase) in Hārar, and was somewhat inadequately paraphrased by his local interpreters.

The publication of Nerazzini's work attracted the interest of a British scholar, Samuel Arthur Strong, of Cambridge. Basing himself on a copy in the then British Museum, he published a short extract, entitled *Futūḥ al-Habasha or the Conquest of Abyssinia by Shihāb al Dīn Ahmad B. 'Abd al Kadir B. Sālim B. 'Uthmān.* Part I of this work, a slim volume, appeared in London in 1894. In his Introduction, he comments that copies of the *Futūḥ* were 'extremely rare in Europe, and that those that exist in the East seem to be jealously guarded by their owners'. Strong's work ran to a mere 48 pages, and took the story only as far as the battle of Šemberā Korē in 1529. Strong also envisaged issuing an English translation, but, learning that René Basset

had plans to publish the *Futūḥ* with a French translation, abandoned all further work on it. Part I was thus the only part to see the light of day.

A second translation of the *Futūḥ*, again in French, had meanwhile been started by Antoine d'Abbadie who died, however, before its completion. His work was subsequently completed by the Austrian traveller Philipp Paulitschke. It was entitled the *Futûḥ el Habâcha: Des conquêtes faites en Abyssinie au XVe siècle*. It appeared in Paris, with the publication date 1898.

René Basset meanwhile was continuing with his work, and later published the resultant Arabic text, with a new French translation. These appeared in Paris, in two volumes. Entitled *Histoire de la conquête de l'Abyssinie (XVIe siècle)*, Basset's Arabic edition, though issued shortly after that of d'Abbadie and Paulitischke, to which it refers (for the most part critically), was actually dated a year earlier, i.e. 1897. The French translation appeared over ten years later in 1909.

The Arabic text of Haji ad-Dabir's *History of Gujarat*, with its extracts from Šihab ad-Dīn's work, was published by Dennison Ross, the British historian of India, in London, in 1910-1928.

Most of the above works were published over a century ago, when the historical geography of the Ethiopian region was still relatively little known to the outside world. The present translation of the *Futūḥ*, by Paul Stenhouse, is based on Basset's published Arabic text, but also refers to variants in the Gujarati text. The present work is the first English translation ever issued. It is designed to make Šihab ad-Dīn's work available to the present-day Anglophone reading public, both Ethiopian and foreign, as well as to offer the reader more up-to-date annotations. Though many of the places mentioned cannot be located without extensive field-work beyond the means of either translator or annotator, the footnotes by Paul Stenhouse the translator (S), and Richard Pankhurst the annotator (P), attempt to throw light on the translation, and to identify the principal places, as well as many of the more important individuals, institutions and customs, referred to in the text.

Basset's Arabic text was based on three MSS. which he designated A, B and C. MS. A was a gift from Alfred Bardey to the Bibliothèque Nationale of Algeria [MS. No. 1628; formerly 1732]. MS. B was the British Museum MS. No.2409 that had belonged to General Gordon. This was the MS. that

Strong started to translate and courteously abandoned when he learned that Basset had undertaken a French version. MS. C was the Mondon-Vidailhet text which in Basset's judgement belonged to a different family of MSS. from Alfred Bardey's MS. A.

We have departed from MS. A, Basset's preferred text, and followed alternative readings - mainly from MS. C - when this seemed called for. Occasional *lacunae* that occur in Basset's translation, caused by *homoioteleuta,* have been remedied. The translator's aim has been to produce a text that can be understood by a wide readership, and generally literalness has been preferred to elegance where the latter might have called for an above-average grasp of the English language. However, the literal translation of *Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša* is 'Conquests of Abyssinia' but we have followed Basset, and used the singular, 'Conquest,' as the plural seemed inappropriate.

The text poses major problems of transliteration in that it is written in Arabic, but includes many Ge'ez, Amharic or Tegrenya names as well as several phrases in Ethiopian languages. Arabic/Muslim names have been transliterated in accordance with conventional practice, but Ethiopian/Christian names have been rendered as far as possible in their original form, to make the translation more intelligible. The Arabic usage as given in the *Futūḥ* has, however, as far as possible, been indicated in footnotes. Local names which could not be identified with any precision have been left unchanged.

A novel feature of this edition is the division of the text by the insertion of section titles: these are designed to explain the contents of the various parts of the work, and should assist comprehension of an at times difficult and convoluted narrative.

Šihab ad-Dīn's work, as the reader will perceive, is invaluable. It throws light not only on the military events with which the author is primarily concerned, and on their religious consequences, but also on economic, social and cultural conditions in many parts of the country, as well as on the traditions of the Ethiopian people in all walks of life.

- Paul Stenhouse and Richard Pankhurst March 25, 2003

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Paul Lester Stenhouse

Transliteration

ā ’	Ç	d	Ï	ḍ	Ö	k	ß
b	È	d̲	Ð	ṭ	Ø	l	á
t	Ê	r	Ñ	ẓ	Ù	m	ã
t̲	Ë	z	Ò	‘	Ú	n	ä
j	Ì	s	Ó	ḡ	Û	h	å
ḥ	Í	š	Ô	f	Ý	w, ū	æ
k̲	Î	ṣ	Õ	q	Þ	y, ī	ì

CONQUEST OF ABYSSINIA

[Preamble]

MAY the generous God, endowed with graciousness, openhandedness, and the performance of good deeds; who gives before the asking, 'and amply bestows upon us good things,'[1] favours and largesse, be praised. He begins with creation, follows up with his support, and pursues what is proper. God be praised for his abundant and plentiful gifts, his unceasing and inexhaustible graciousness that is without favouritism. I declare that there is no God but Allāh,[2] who is unique, and without peer.

I also declare that our lord, Muḥammad, is His servant and Messenger whom He sent to us - a faithful and self-evident Messenger, a Prophet, the Prophet for the believer, Muḥammad the elected one, the chosen one. May God bless him and grant him salvation as day follows night. And may God bless his family and his companions who have defended the true religion with their swords and their spears and generously given of their wealth and very selves, and left their people and their fatherland.

Now then, to our topic. Know that the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him salvation, is the best of messengers and his nation is the best of nations. This is what the Lord of Lords decreed in the sure [place] of the Book where the Most High says: 'You are the best of the nations which has been selected for the people'.[3] He also says, 'And thus we have made you a well-balanced nation.'[4] And all this only because they followed the most gracious of Messengers, the first of them in grace, the last of them to be sent, Muḥammad, may God bless him and grant him salvation. Thus they became the most celebrated of nations; and their most renowned service of God was held to be their persistence in the truth, and their fighting against the infidel

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[1] *Qur'ān* xxxi, 20. (S)

[2] The *Tahlīl*, لا إله إلا الله - lā ilāha illā llāh: 'there is no god but Allah'. For the *Takbīr* see note[98]. (S)

[3] *Qur'ān* iii, 110; in some editions iii, 109. (S)

[4] *Qur'ān* ii, 143; in some editions, ii, 142. (S)

opposed to this religion, coming from every race and from all directions: from where the stars first appear[5] and the west wind blows;[6] from north and south.

They proclaimed it with their swords in the east and the west, in the rugged mountains and the valleys. 'They well prepared the land,'[7] and thoroughly subdued the infidels with their swords. They drove their religion's tent pegs deep, and built it into a mighty pavilion .

By the kindness of the Most High God, their descendants never cease following in the footsteps of their ancestors; and those who struggle against them receive nothing but disaster for their pains. And they, up till now, make the infidels and the dissemblers drink deep from the cup of death; and sprinkle upon them the dust of calamity until, God willing, the day of resurrection puts an end to their arrogance.

In the words of the Most High, 'Then your Lord announced that he would certainly send against them those who would subject them to the most evil punishment, until the day of resurrection.'[8]

Muḥammad said, peace be upon him [f°2] 'No part of my nation that is steadfast in the truth will ever suffer harm from apostates among them, or from the disobedient ones among them. Until God's command comes they will [always] be like this.'

Abū Dāūd,[9] and others as well, transmitted this genuine saying. How, therefore, can people be so ignorant and stupid as to say 'these are the last days,' and 'we are in the Millennium'? How can they be so ignorant of the promise made to the communities? And if they see the better in their time, they follow, instead, the worse. That is the result of their wicked opinions, and inadequate understanding, their ignorant prattling and their non-existent intelligence, basing themselves on what is without foundation - viz.: [the

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[5] i.e. *east.* (S)

[6] i.e. *west.* (S)

[7] *Qur'ān* lxxiv, 14. (S)

[8] *Qur'ān* vii, 166; in some eds vii, 167. (S)

[9] Sūleimān Abū Dā'ūd as-Sijistānī, born in 202 AH (817 AD) author of the *Kitāb as-Sunan*, one of the six canonical books of tradition accepted by Sunni Muslims. I've not been able to trace this hadith. (S)

belief] that Judgement Day has arrived, and its portents have been revealed: among which portents are the waxing of evil, and the waning of good.

Even if this were true, it would not be necessary that it be true of every country, or verified in the case of every servant of God. And again, one should not be depressed by what certain ignorant people say who transmit the following *hadith:* [10] 'I will not grant the earth 2,000 years'. In any case, knowledgeable men, through whom God assists us, have said that it is not a [genuine] *hadith* but a false one.

as-Suyūṭī [11] - may God the Most High show him mercy - has said that the prophetical *hadiths* indicate that this Muḥammadan nation will outlast a thousand years, but the supplementary years will not reach the five-hundredth. What happens after this the Most High God knows; he is All-knowing, the Omniscient One. We know that the eye of God watches over the nation of Muḥammad, may God bless him and grant him salvation, and that their religion will never cease to be proclaimed and renewed.

If someone should say, 'O most competent observer, O most scrupulous questioner of momentous deeds, and of the happenings down the ages, delight me with tales of the *mujāhidūn* [12] who have sacrificed their life-blood, waging war from dawn to dark. Regale me with what has happened in your own time, and with what you have seen with your own eyes.' I would reply: As for the tales that treat of the Chosen One, may God bless him and grant him salvation, and his companions, these have gladdened the times.

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[10]Primarily 'narrative' or 'communication'. Usually reserved for the sayings of Muḥammad and his companions. (S)

[11]Jalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī, born in 1445 AD in Asyūṭ in upper Egypt, the outstanding literary figure among the Arabs of the fifteenth century. Titles of over 560 of his works are known to us. (S)

[12]lit: 'those who wage the Holy War' (مجاهدون). The 'Holy War' *(jihād)* is the religious duty to spread Islam by force. The people against whom the *jihād* is waged should first be invited to embrace Islam. If they are pagans they have a choice only between Islam and death. If they are 'people of the book,' i.e. Christians, Jews or Samaritans, and they refuse, then they should be offered the options of becoming *ḍimmī* (tolerated persons) and paying the *jizya* (or head-tax on non-Muslims); or fighting. If they fight they may be killed or enslaved and all their property seized as booty. Apostates must be put to death. See Gibb and Kramers *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam (SEI),* 1974 ed. p.89. (S)

And as for the tales of the Caliphs[13] who followed the true faith, endowed with understanding and keenness of perception, these are written in their biographies, and in the chronicles of the learned, radiant with their graciousness and their deeds. Every book is full of the tales of those who came after them; there is no room for doubt about this; no problem.

But I will present you with solid and authentic fare that will arouse longing in souls and through which the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him salvation, will teach us. For it is true of him, may God bless him and grant him salvation, that he rose from his place[14] and said to them, 'Nothing was and nothing will be until the day of the resurrection, but I will notify you of it.' The one who has uttered warnings about this day is he upon whom we can rely for help, in the events that God has brought about amongst us. He, may God bless him and grant him salvation, had indicated who would be the restorers for this nation of the authority of its religion.[15] Some there will be among them who will renew it by spreading knowledge in faraway countries; others will renew it by striking schismatics and hypocrites with their swords.[16] Others again will renew it by good administration and knowledge born of experience.

[Sources of the Chronicle]

Pay attention to me that I may recite to you at length. All of you gather round me, to receive the testimony.[17] And cast a glance at my book entitled 'Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša' - The Conquest of Abyssinia[18] - effected by the celebrated, glorious, high-minded, renowned fortunate imām, whose equal

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[13]'Successor,' principally of Muḥammad, when the title is used of the supreme heads of the Sunni Muslim community, the imāms. Shī'ī ideas on the nature of the Caliph and the imām vary greatly among different groups. (S)

[14]'From his place.' Gujarat: 'amongst his companions'. See note[86] *infra* for comment on sections of the Futūh found in the *Arabic History of Gujarat* edited by Sir E. Denison Ross and published in 1921. (S)

[15]Gujarat omits 'the authority'. (S)

[16]'By striking schismatics .... with their swords.' Gujarat: 'by exercising sovereign power.' (S)

[17]'For you to receive the testimony'. Gujarat: 'to make it easy for you.' (S)

[18]al-Ḥabaša, the term used in the text for the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia. This usage was general in Arabic writings of the time. (P)

one has never heard of, nor has there ever been his like. May God proclaim over us and over the Muslims his blessings and his amiability: the triumphant king, the glowing flame, the star of religion, from the stock of the lords of the *mujāhidūn*, one of the imāms akin to the Mahdī, attentive to God's commands, who has put pleasing God ahead of all other aims, our Lord and master, the elevated, the revered honourable lord, the emir[19] of believers, the sultan, the imām Aḥmad bin Ibrahīm al-Ḡāzī, the *mujāhid*, the mooring cable.

May the Most High God have mercy on him, the mercy that exonerates, that makes him dwell close to Him in the world to come, by the good offices of Muḥammad, the Elect, the chosen one, his family and his companions, the righteous and the elite. May the Most High God grant him all his desires, and whatever occurs to him to want in the afterlife, and in this world. For He is master of this world, and Lord of all that is in the next one. Amen. O God, Amen. For He is famous for this, both by his very name, and by the description given of Him as depicted in the books.[20]

It was my lord the sheikh, the universal pole, the sparkling light, endowed with long-standing responsibilities, the performer of pleasing deeds, the seeker of revelations, both secret and public, who is conversant with the Most High God - the friend of God, Šams ad-Dīn 'Alī bin 'Umar aš-Šāḏilī al-Qaršī al-Yemenī[21] - may God assist us through him and his learning, Amen - who pointed him out. He commemorated his[22] wondrous deeds, just as the imām al-Mas'ūdī[23] commemorated his battles and other things besides.

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[19] امير : lit. one who commands; a governor, a lord, prince or king. The title 'emir al-mu'minīn,' lit. 'commander of the faithful' was first borne by 'Umar the second Caliph.

[20] B omits from 'O God Amen' to 'books'. (S)

[21] The text implies that Šams ad-Dīn 'Alī bin 'Umar aš-Šāḏalī al-Qaršī al-Yemenī and al-Mas'ūdī were contemporaneous with Aḥmed. This would rule out any identification of aš-Šāḏilī with Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī bin 'Abd Allāh aš-Šāḏilī 593-656 AH (1196-1258 AD), the founder of the Sufī brotherhood named after him. Basset says that our text's Šams ad-Dīn 'Alī bin 'Umar aš-Šāḏalī al-Qaršī al-Yemenī has his tomb in Moḵā in Saudi Arabia where he was credited with introducing coffee. Carsten Niebuhr and Silvestre de Sacy, however, attribute the introduction of coffee into Saudi Arabia to the Sufī founder in 656 AH, the year he died. See *SEI ed. cit.* p.510. (S)

[22] i.e. Aḥmad's. (S)

[23] This is presumably Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Mas'ūdī the Mu'tazalite historian, nicknamed the 'Herodotus of the Arabs' who died in al-Fusṭāt in 956 AH (1549 AD). (S)

They reported on his conquest of Abyssinia, the whole of it: its plains and rugged mountains; and on his humiliating of its leaders and scattering of its treasures and setting fire to its churches. [f°3]

My lord, the shiekh, the friend of God the Most High, and the son of God's friend Muḥammad bin Aḥmad bin Muḥammed bin 'Abd al-Wāḥid bin Yūssef bin Ya'qūb al-Qaršī al-Tūnisī al-Magrabī al-Dahmānī said [to me], 'O my son, he [the imām Aḥmad] is one of the most outstanding of the pommels of God,' and he was right: he was one of the most outstanding of the pommels of God, and one of the most outstanding of the swords of God whom the Most High unsheathed so that his religion might triumph; and so that the infidels might be subjugated; and spurious books might be torn to shreds; and that the houses of lies might be burnt down; and the party of Satan the acursed, might be split asunder. Aḥmad's first command was outstanding. And the appositeness of his judgement may be adduced from the memorable events, and famous conquests, and the foregathering of victorious armies.

The author,[24] may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: They whom I could trust concerning these events, from among *the storytellers* who were eye-witnesses, are my informants: for example, the emir Ḥusain bin Abū Bakr al-Gāturī, and Aḥmad -Dīn bin Ḵālid bin Muḥammad bin Ḵaīr ad-Dīn, who commemorate from among those who ruled the land of Sa'd ad-

[24] مولف : The *author* or *writer* of the *Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša* identifies himself as Šihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad bin 'Abd al-Qāder bin Sālem bin 'Uṯmān, nicknamed *'Arab Faqih*. He was at the battle of Šemberā Korē, and in 937AH witnessed a violent storm that flattened or blew away many of the tents in the Muslim encampment. He must have returned to Hārar because in 939AH he joined a caravan that went from there to the imām at Wāṣal *via* Ifāt, before the seige of the 'Ambā of which he appears to have been an eye-witness. Nothing further is known of him. (S)

Dīn,[25] and from among the *mujāhidūn* who administered the country, the sultan Muḥammad bin Azr.[26]

[Background to the *jihād*]

The storyteller[27] says: The sultan Sa'd ad-Dīn had, among his children, Abū Bakr and Badlāī. The latter had two sons, one of whom was Muḥammad bin Badlāī,[28] grandfather of the sultan 'Uṯmān bin Suleimān; and Abū Bakr had two sons, of whom one was 'Alī who was grandfather of the sultan Barakat, and [the other was] Ḥabīb. 'Alī's children were 'Umar-Dīn bin Muḥammad bin Aẓhar ad-Dīn bin 'Alī bin Abū Bakr bin Sa'd ad-Dīn;[29] and his second son's name was Azar bin Abū Bakr: he was the grandfather of the sultan Muḥammad bin Abū Bakr bin Muḥammad bin Azar bin Abū Bakr bin

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[25]The name of this territory commemorates the famous ruler of the Muslim sultanate of Adal, Sultan Sa'd ad-Dīn (AD 1386-7 to 1415). After an at first successful confrontation with Emperor Dāwit I of Ethiopia (1380-1409 AD), he took refuge on the Gulf of Aden island port of Zayla', where he was killed, and buried. The name Sa'd ad-Dīn seems to have originally been applied to the land immediately inland from that port, but the *Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša* uses it expressly to include the city of Hārar. Maqrizi, *Historia Regum Islamiticorum in Abyssinia,* pp. 22-7; Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, pp. 74-5. On Sa'd ad-Dīn's grave, which is no longer extant, see Burton, *First Footsteps in East Africa*, I, 52. (P)

[26]Sultan Muḥammad bin Azr was an Adal ruler, who reigned for thirty years (1488-1518). He reportedly tried to remain at peace with the Christian Ethiopian empire, but was frustrated, according to the Portuguese traveller Francisco Alvares, by the more aggressively dynamic policy of imām Maḥfūẓ, the ruler of Zayla'. Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, pp. 82-3; Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, II, 410-15. (P)

[27] الـــراوي : Despite the fact that the 'storyteller,' and the 'author' take turns at narrating (see, e.g. p.18 *infra*) I agree with the judgement of Basset (tome premier, p.ii) that the narrator is more than likely Šihāb ad-Dīn himself, who made use of information garnered from the sources that he lists: Šams ad-Dīn 'Alī bin 'Umr aš-Šaḍalī al-Qarši al-Yemenī, the imām al-Mas'ūdī, the emir Ḥusain bin Abī Bakr al-Gāturi, Aḥmad Dīn Ḵālid bin Muḥammad bin Ḵaīr ad-Dīn, 'Alī bin Ṣalāḥ al-Jabalī, Aḥmad bin Ṭahār al-Mara'wī, *et alii.* Basset points out that Šihāb had access to some of the imām's own recollections; and, for eyewitness accounts of the events from the Abyssinian side, would have had Abyssinian deserters or captives to draw upon. (S)

[28]Muḥammad bin Badlāī was Sultan of Adal from 1445 to 1471. He despatched an embassy to the Ethiopian Emperor Ba'eda Māryām (1468-1478), offering to pay the latter tribute. Perruchon, *Chroniques de Zar'a Yâ'eqôb et de Ba'eda Mâryâm*, p. 131; Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, p. 81. (P)

[29]'Umar-Dīn bin Muḥammad, as reported later in the text, subsequently rebelled against imām Aḥmed's enemy, Sultan Abū Bakr of Hārar. (P)

Sa'd ad-Dīn. And Badlāī bin Sa'd ad-Dīn's second son's name was Šams ad-Dīn and his line became extinct.[30]

The sultan Muḥammad bin Azar bin Abū Bakr bin Sa'd ad-Dīn ruled the country for thirty years during the ninth century[31]. And after Sultan Muḥammad embarked on the *jihād* in the country of Abyssinia, there was a clash between the Muslims and the infidels; with the infidels inflicting disaster upon the Muslims, killing a vast number of them.

Returning to his country Sultan Muḥammad was murdered by his in-law[32] Muḥammad bin Abū Bakr bin Maḥfūẓ, a prominent person in the country, who ruled the country after him for one year. Then Muḥammad bin Abū Bakr bin Maḥfūẓ was, in his turn, murdered. His killer was Ibrahīm bin Aḥmad, ruler of the country of Hubat,[33] of the tribe of Balaw,[34] a prominent person in the country who ruled the country after him for three months.

Ibrahīm bin Aḥmad was killed in his turn. His murderer was Wasanī the slave of Garād Maḥfūẓ,[35] a prominent person in the country who ruled the country for three months. He was arrested after this, and his captor was Manṣūr bin Muḥammed[36] who sent him in shackles to Zayla'[37]and he was

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[30]Sultan Badlāī bin Sa'd ad-Dīn ruled the Muslim sultanate of Adal from 1432 to 1445. He invaded the Ethiopian province of Dawāro in the latter year, but was defeated, and killed in battle. Maqrizi, *Historia Regum Islamiticorum in Abyssinia*, pp. 40-1; Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, pp. 74-5. (P)

[31]The ninth century of the Muslim era (AH) - the fifteenth century of the Christian era (AD) - ran from September 13, 1398, to October 1, 1494. (S)

[32] صهره : The term صهر describes a relationship by marriage, covering son-in-law *or* brother-in-law. (S)

[33]Hubat, or Hobat, a Muslim-inhabited locality in eastern Ethiopia. Already mentioned in the chronicle of the fourteenth century Ethiopian Emperor 'Amda Ṣeyon (1312-1352), the area is thought by the modern British author G.W. B. Huntingford to have been perhaps the same as latter-day Hubeta, 20 miles north-west of Hārar. Huntingford, *Glorious Victories of 'Amda Ṣeyon*. pp. 74, 76; *idem*, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 121. (P)

[34]The Balaw, referred to by Alvares as the Bellono, a Muslim people inhabiting the country north of Tegrē. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, II, 461; Huntingford, *Glorious Victories of 'Amda Ṣeyon*, pp. 62, 197, 129. (P)

[35]The title *Garād*, which already appears in the chronicle of Zar'a Yā'qob, was given to the local rulers of Adal, Hādeyā, and other Muslim, or Animist, territories to the south of the Christian empire. Perruchon *Chroniques de Zar'a Yâ'eqôb et de Ba'eda Mâryâm*, pp. 16, 18; Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, p. 84. (P)

[36]Gujarat confuses the two Manṣurs. Manṣūr bin Muḥammad is called Manṣur bin Maḥfūẓ. The latter is

murdered by one of the slaves of Yāfa' in Zayla'. In his stead ruled the emir Manṣūr bin Maḥfūẓ bin Muḥammad bin Garād Ādaš.[38] Garād Manṣūr waged war against Garād Abūn[39] for five months.

After this Garād Abūn came against him,[40] and ruled for seven years. He clung to the truth, and exercised justice and authority in a fair way, banning what was forbidden [in the Law], killing highwaymen, forbidding wine, games, and dances accompanied by drums. The country flourished. He cultivated the nobles and the Qur'ānic teachers, the dervishes and the sheikhs. He ruled over his kingdom, and worked for the good of his subjects.

[Aḥmad bin Ibrahīm]

Our lord the imām of the Muslims, Aḥmad bin Ibrahīm al-Ḡāzī was at that time a knight under Garād Abūn, endowed with intelligence and foresight who consulted, in his youth and in his prime, the inspiration of God the Most High in regard to the commission that God willed should be entrusted to him. Garād Abūn loved him mightily, when he saw how courageous and astute[41] he was.

After this, the sultan Abū Bakr,[42] son of the sultan Muḥammad bin Azr from the stock of Sa'd ad-Dīn, stood up against Garād Abūn. He raised

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described as being sent in chains to Zayla', murdered and then waging war against Garād Abūn for five months! (S)

[37]Zayla', a port and town on the Gulf of Aden coast of Africa, dating back to at least to the ninth century. The port, by the sixteenth century, handled the bulk of the import-export trade of the Horn of Africa, including the region's commerce in slaves and fire-arms. On the history, and commerce, of the port see Pankhurst, *History of Ethiopian Towns*, pp. 54-64. (P)

[38]Gujarat reads this name as Āraš and/or Ādṭīr. (S)

[39]Gujarat consistently reads ابوی for Abūn ابون. (S) Garād Abūn, a religious zealot, was a notable Adal ruler, whom imām Aḥmad served loyally in his youth. The Garād, as explained in the text, was later killed by his enemy, Sultan Abū Bakr bin Muḥammad, in 1525. Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, pp. 84-5. (P)

[40]Gujarat adds: 'and Garād Manṣūr surrendered'. (S)

[41]Astute: راعته. Gujarat: audacious اقدامه. (S)

[42]Sultan Abū Bakr bin Muḥammad was a renowned Adal ruler who transferred his capital from Dakar to Hārar in 1520. A strong opponent of Garād Abūn, whom he eventually killed, he was opposed in turn

against him a band of Somalis[43] whom he had recruited from among the riff-raff and highwaymen. They fought against Garād Abūn and waged a bloody battle against him, killing Garād Abūn bin Ādaš in his homeland as he defended his country and his family.[44] He died a martyr's death. May the Most High God have pity on him.

The sultan Abū Bakr ruled the country after Garād Abūn. He laid the country waste. Highwaymen re-appeared, as did alcoholic drinks. In his time, the people of his realm harassed travellers in order to do them harm. Corruption re-appeared and no one in his day received justice for evil done against him. The nobles, Qur'ānic teachers and sheikhs rebuked him for his conduct.

When the imām Aḥmad realised that the sultan and his army had left the path of the Qur'ān and the Sunna[45] by their daring to do what was forbidden, and their ignoring of the prohibition against illicit acts, he took to flight, accompanied by people of the country who had formed part of the army of Garād Abūn. They assembled their forces in a country called Hubat,[46] and settled there. The number [f°4] of their horses was at that time a hundred or more.

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by imām Aḥmad bin Ibrahīm, the protagonist of our text, who killed him, in 1525, and replaced him by his brother 'Umr, who became a puppet ruler under the imām's control. Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, pp. 84-6. (P)

[43]Somalis, a nomadic Muslim people speaking a Cushitic language. They inhabited an extensive stretch of territory on the eastern Horn of Africa, including the port of Zayla', as well as much of the land up to, but excluding, the city of Hārar. (P)

[44]'His country and his family'. Gujarat reads: 'his people, his possessions and his kingdom'. (S)

[45]i.e. the Sunna of the Prophet Muḥammad: his sayings and doings that later on became established as legally binding precedents in addition to the Law laid down by the *Qur'ān*. The *Qur'ān* and the Sunna, together with the Ijmā' (the agreement of the *mujtahids* - those special people who have a right to make a judgement, in any age on any matter concerning Islam) and the Qiyās (logical deductions from the *Qur'ān* and the Sunna by properly accredited Muslims) constitute the Sharī'a. (S)

[46]Gujarat adds: 'and this was one of the regions in the land of Sa'd ad-Dīn'. (S)

[The first *jihād*]

They made Garād 'Umar-Dīn[47] their emir over them. It was while he was in this position that they heard that one of the patricians of the Ḥaṭī [48] king of the Abyssinians, a Christian, named Fanu'ēl,[49] from the Dawāro[50] people, along with a band of other patricians, had invaded the country of the Muslims up to a point in the country of Hubat not far from where they were. These had plundered the country of the Muslims, captured the wives and families of the Muslims, and taken their livestock. The imām Aḥmad bin Ibrahīm and his forces heard this news and immediately set out to attack the infidels, goading each other on to wage the holy war in the way of God.

They joined forces at a place called 'Aqam[51] - it was a mighty river, with copious water - and the Muslims drew up their battle lines. The infidels, unaided by God,[52]did likewise, and mobilised their infantry and their cavalry. The Muslims attacked them in a single wave. The fighting was intense, the battles hard fought, with choking dust, hero joining with hero. At that time all that could be heard was the thud of sword against leather shield.

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[47] Umar Dīn's rule was, as we shall see, short-lived, for he was soon afterwards killed. (P)

[48] *Ḥāṭi*, a long-established Arabic rendering of the Ge'ez title *Haṣē*, or Emperor. Leslau, *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez*, p. 226. For earlier Arabic usage see Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, p. 59. (P)

[49] فانـــــــل sic! (S) Possibly the chief of that name who later, during the reign of Emperor Galāwdēwos (1540-1559), played a major role in continued fighting against the armies of Adal. Conzelman, *Chronique de Galâwdêwos*, pp. 144-6. (P)

[50] Dawāro, a territory to the south-east of the Christian empire, was tributary to it since the time of Emperor 'Amda Ṣeyon. Huntingford considers that Dawāro was divided into two distinct areas separated from each other by Ifāt: 1) A southern area, extending to the Wabi Šabellē river, and 2) a northern one bounded on the south-east by the 'Awāš river. Huntingford, *Glorious Victories of 'Amda Ṣeyon*, pp. 62, 197, 129; *idem*, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 67; Merid Wolde Aregay, "Political Geography of Ethiopia at the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century," pp. 624-5. See also Ludolphus, *New History of Ethiopia*, p. 15; R. Pankhurst, *Ethiopian Borderlands,* pp. 171-182. (P)

[51] This river, Huntingford believes, could well be the Amārresā, situated below Mt. Akim, just south-west of Hārar. Huntingford, *Glorious Victories of 'Amda Ṣeyon*, p. 121. (P)

[52] المخذولون : lit. 'abandoned by God' - a term of opprobrium applied to non-Muslims. See Qur'ān iii,154. (S)

The imām Aḥmad attacked the middle rank of the infidels and scattered their united front, splitting them all asunder. He charged into the midst of them, and brought their cavalry to the ground.

The Muslims attacked with him the left flank of the infidels who turned tail before the blows of their swords and the thrusts of their spears. Then the right flank of the infidels counter-attacked. Amongst these was the tyrannical and obdurate patrician, the rebellious Satan, Fanu'ēl, may God curse him. He wore protective armour, and on his head a helmet of iron[53] so that all that could be seen of him were his eyes peering out; and his companions likewise.

The Muslims met them with hearts worthy of Islam and a zeal akin to Muḥammad's. The fighting that took place there was fiercer than before, but the Muslims withstood them, and turned them back with sword blows. The infidels turned tail, and on that occasion a throng of patricians was killed, along with thousands of soldiers.

On that day the Muslims captured sixty horses, and an innumerable quantity of weapons and mules. They took back the Muslim captives and all the livestock that the infidels had captured, and restored them to their people. The Muslims returned rejoicing and happy to the town called Zīfah, close to the town of the sultan Abū Bakr bin Muḥammad. Not one of them had been killed.

[Conflict between Aḥmad and the sultan]

When the sultan and the Somalis he had with him heard the news about them and what they had done during the *jihād* against the infidels, and the booty they had taken, they were overcome with anxiety and fear, and fled the country, he and the Somalis with him, to a town called Kidād in the country of the Somalis.

The imām Aḥmad bin Ibrahīm and his companions heard news of the flight of the sultan and his Somalis from the country, and set out after them

[53]Reading خودة for كردة. (S) The limited use by the Ethiopian aristocracy of helmets and coats-of-mail had earlier been noted by Alvares. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, II, 429. (P)

and reached Kidād and ran the sultan and his Somalis to earth in a place called Qarn - a river filled with much water - at mid-day.[54]

They organised their forces and joined battle, and the sultan and his Somalis were put to flight. A troop of them was killed. The imām took thirty horses from amongst their mounts, as booty. They sacked their country, and collected vast booty from it. The imām and his companions returned to their country, Hārar, part of the land of Sa'd ad-Dīn.[55]

They had not settled down very long when the sultan Abū Bakr assembled a force against the imām Aḥmad and his companions, made up of an immense army of Somalis and others. Their horses and troops were so numerous as to be incalculable. They all reached the district, that is to say, Hārar. When the imām and his companions heard of their coming, they withdrew from the country and proceeded to the town called Hubat Zeberta. In Hubat there was a high mountain which they climbed.

The sultan learned of what they had done and set out in pursuit of them as far as the mountain itself. Here he besieged them, hemming them in with a siege that lasted somewhere between thirteen and nineteen days.[56] The imām and his companions were so exhausted by the siege that they descended the mountain by night. A terrible battle ensued and the companions of the imām were put to flight. The emir whom they had chosen to rule them, 'Umar Dīn, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, was killed. So the imām and his companions went back to their homes.

After this the people mediated between the imām and the sultan and the Somalis. The imām and his companions entered the service of the sultan Abū Bakr for a few days, but then the sultan Abū Bakr violated the pact and

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[54]Gujarat reads الزوال (which also means 'noon') for الظهر and adds: وكان الظفر للامام 'and the imām was victorious'. (S)

[55]The town of Hārar, which is here expressly referred to as part of the land of Sa'd ad-Dīn, had replaced Dakar as the Adal capital only in 1520. On the history, and character, of Hārar at this time see R. Pankhurst, *History of Ethiopian Towns*, pp. 49-53, and, more generally, Robecchi-Bricchetti, *Nell'Hārar*, and Paulitschke, *Hārar*. (P)

[56]بضعة used with ten usually means a number from thirteen to nineteen. B: 'pendant plus de dix jours'. See p.16 *infra* where بضعة وثلثين وتسعمائة means 'more than nine-hundred-and-thirty'. Gujarat reads بضع عشرة يوما. (S)

the peace, and betrayed the imām, Aḥmad, and his companions, confiscating their swords, their mounts, and their weapons. The imām had only three of all his horses left.

Among the imām's companions who were killed after the peace and the pact [were violated] was an outstanding emir [f°5] whose name was 'Uṯmān bin Yas.[57] The sultan devastated the country, tyrannizing the citizenry along with some of the sheikhs, the Qur'ānic teachers and the learned men. The imām's life was threatened so he left, fleeing by night from the country, taking with him his three horses.

He went to his home in a town called Za'ka, a day's journey from the town of the sultan. He encountered a young man in the employ of the sultan Abū Bakr bin Muḥammad, whose name was Ḥamduš bin Maḥfūẓ,[58] who had four of the sultan's horses with him. He took them from him, and set out from his town of Za'ka for a place called Rābāt al-Baqr This was a place of many trees, with a well-fortified mountain. He stayed there one day, and then went on to a place called Šiḥ[59] which was a mighty, flowing river. He then had seven horses. He was joined by an emir called Garād Abū Bakr bin Isma'īl.

The imām went ceaselessly from village to village until he arrived at the country of Hubat. There he was joined by the emir Ḥusain al-Gāturī as a support.

The sultan, meanwhile, never ceased sending out spies into every place so that information could be secretly obtained about the imām whom he wanted to kill. Hearing that the imām was in the country of Hubat, the sultan Abū Bakr set out with his infantry and his cavalry and went to the village of the imām Aḥmad. He burnt his home, and looted the possessions of the Muslims there.

The imām and his companions heard what the sultan had done in his village, so he and they set out by night from the country of Hubat and kept on

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[57]Gujarat: Yāsīn ياسين. (S)

[58]Ḥamduš, apparently the son of imām Maḥfūẓ, would have been been the brother of imām Aḥmed's future wife, Bāti Del Wanbarā, and hence the Adal leader's brother-in-law. (P)

[59]Gujarat: Šabaḵ شبخ. (S)

going from town to town harrying the sultan, and being harried by him, until they came to a place called Jāḍar.[60] Exhausted from their journeying they fell asleep there. Around noon the sultan and his forces caught them unawares as they slept. They awakened and fled but not one of them was captured.

Around two-hundred infantry along with seven horses joined forces with the imām in a town called Wāšīn.[61] The sultan got to know about them, and attacked them in a surprise raid killing two men in the imām's forces one of whom was a knight called Muḥammad bin Ibrahīm, and the other was an infantryman, one of the equerries of the imām.

His forces, which were scattered to the winds, regrouped in the country called Hubat. One of the sultan's emirs, Šanbara by name,[62] then attacked them with a force made up of an uncountable number of infantry, and fourteen cavalry.

The imām Aḥmad drew up his battle line with infantry; and the emir did likewise with his forces. They joined battle and the fighting was intense, with Šanbara's lines being broken through, and his being killed. The imām captured twelve of his cavalry; two of them fled.

When the sultan Abū Bakr learnt of their defeat and of the death of his emir, he quit his country for that of the Somalis, leaving behind in the country, five emirs from among those entitled to carry the pennants, sixty cavalry and a vast number of infantry. When the imām Aḥmad and his forces heard about the departure of the sultan from his country and about his leaving some emirs there he immediately organised his army, set out and reached Za'ka in the neighbourhood of the sultan's town. When news of this reached one of the sultan's emirs entitled to bear the pennants, Kūšem Abū Bakr by name, the husband of the sultan's sister, he organised his army and set out for the imām's town.

The imām Aḥmad drew up his battle lines and organised his twenty cavalrymen. The sultan's emir, on the other hand, had as many as one-hundred cavalrymen. They formed their lines and came close to one another

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[60]Gujarat: Ḥādar حادر. (S)

[61]Gujarat: Wa'šīn وعشـــين . (S)

[62]Gujarat: 'called Šabantara' قيل شبترى . (S)

until they met eye to eye. Kūšem Abū Bakr and his companions broke ranks without battle being joined, and they fled to their town of Hārar, even though not one of the imām Aḥmad's companions pursued them.

The imām went on to a place called Jarīr,[63] assembled his forces there and considered the situation. They said, 'Let us catch them unawares in their [own] country. God will give the victory to whomever He wishes.' So they made their plans and set out for the sultan's town where they arrived just at the afternoon prayer time, called 'Aṣr,[64] in the month of Ramaḍān.[65] They comprised a few more than nine-hundred-and-thirty men.[66]

The companions of the sultan remained holed-up in a fortified place in the town. The imām attacked, then saw that the enemy were in an impregnable position, and withdrew from the fight, away from the town. Each of the forces spent the night in its own position.

The storyteller says: On the second day, the imām Aḥmad set out to return to his village. The companions of the sultan learned about their return and regrouped their forces and their cavalry and set out in pursuit of them, overtaking them at a place called Šamanjūd,[67] but the imām repelled their attack with his cavalry and his infantry and a fierce battle ensued. The companions of the sultan were routed, and the imām captured their entire cavalry, one-hundred or more; and a lot of them were killed.

The imām returned with his own forces to Hārar. He ruled the country, and saw to it that truth prevailed and corruption ceased. The town crier proclaimed, 'Everyone must remain in his own house; and each may observe

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[63]Gujarat: al-Qarbar القربر . (S)

[64] 'Aṣr : halfway between midday, the time when the sun starts to set (Ṣalātu 'ẓ-Ẓuhr), and a few minutes after sunset (Ṣalātu 'l-Maġrib), is the prayer time called Ṣalātu 'l-'Aṣr. (S)

[65]The ninth month of the Muslim calendar - observed as a fast from dawn to sunset. The fast commemorates the occasion when, according to Islamic belief, the *Qur'ān* was 'sent down' by God (see *Qur'ān* ii, 185). Similarities have been noted between the Islamic fast and feast of Ramaḍān and the Jewish fast and feast of Yom Kippur: The Day of Atonement. Ten days of penance are prescribed for Jews prior to Yom Kippur which comemorates God's handing the second tables of Law to Moses. Ramaḍān in 930 AH commenced on Saturday July 4, 1524 AD. (S)

[66]Gujarat reads : 'around the year 930' في سنه بضع وثلثين وتسعمائة . (S)

[67]Gujarat: Samanjūd سمنجود . (S)

his own customs. Do not be afraid, and do not [f°6] grieve and do not be jealous of any of the people.'

The storyteller says: The imām then left for the furthermost parts of the country, to bring peace to the citizens and the poor. And he left behind him in the country an emir responsible to him. The country's population grew and everything went well with it.

The sultan found out about the imām and his taking over his country as well as his horses, and made preparations for attacking him. He assembled a vast army from the country of the Somalis and beyond. Bringing with him innumerable horses and a great army, he drew near to where the imām was.

When the latter learnt of his moving against him, he organised his troops and marched against the sultan who was in a place called Dakkar.[68] The sultan and his forces ascended a fortified mountain called Ḥūn,[69] out of fear of the imām, and of his courage and skill.

Peace between them was brokered by the nobles, the emirs, the sheikhs, the Qur'ānic teachers and the learned men, on condition that the sultan ruled as before, and that the imām should be the emir subordinate to him; that each should live in his customary fashion, and that the country should be shared evenly between them.

The imām was happy to avoid bloodshed, and offered no opposition to the advice of the Qur'ānic teachers and the sheikhs. The sultan set out for the town called Hārar while the imām went to the town of Sim.

[Portents and visions confirming Aḥmad]

The storyteller says: It was the custom in the land of Sa'd ad-Dīn that every emir had the dignity of ruling and of choosing functionaries, and the right to lead a raiding party and a *jihād*. He had vast forces at his disposal as

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[68]Dakar, south-east of Hārar, near Fiyambiro, was, as noted above, a previous capital of Adal, but was replaced by Hārar in 1520. Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, pp. 74, 82; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 87, 101. (P)

[69]Gujarat: Ḥamaḏḥan حمذحن . (S)

by right, while the sultan had only what the *ḵarāj*[70] could dredge up from the city.

So, after this the imām Aḥmad left Sim to go where the sultan was. When he began to get closer to the town and made as if to enter the sultan's presence, an extraordinary sign of the esteem of the Most High God for him was, by His grace, manifested. God willed its manifestation.

The storyteller says: A swarm of bees[71] flew by, like a black cloud that overshadowed his head, until it concealed the eye of the sun from the place called Šamanjūd to the house of the sultan. Upon the imām's entering the Sultan's presence they greeted each other and exchanged pleasantries. In the meantime the swarm of bees remained at the door, until the imām Aḥmad withdrew, whereupon the bees swarmed above his head, causing harm to no one, until he reached his home. The swarm then returned to the tree. This was a portent for the imām, bringing good news to him from God the Most High.

The storyteller says: He was worthy of this sign and for that reason was called thereafter *the Imām.*

The author, may God have mercy upon him, says: the sheikh Muḥammad bin Aḥmad al-Dahmānī al-Maḡrabī told me the following story: 'Once when I was asleep, in the very dark of night, I saw two saintly men. I was at that time between sleep and waking. One of the two was the sheikh Aḥmad son of the sheikh Muḥammad son of the sheikh 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Qaršī al-Tūnisī[72] - may God make him profitable [for us]. The second was our lord the great sheikh who knew God the Most High, the celebrated, endowed with brilliant qualities, with acceptable actions, and authentic deeds, and

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[70]A tax upon land or upon revenue from land. (S) This was a tax from which Muslims were exempt, and its imposition on Christians and other non-Muslims was one of the principal incentives toward conversion to Islam. (P)

[71]The supposed supernatural significance of swarms of bees is said to have played a role in the rise of the Ethiopian Zagwē ruler King Lālibālā half a millennium earlier. Ethiopian tradition has it that the latter, as a child, was surrounded by a cloud of these insects, whereupon his mother exclaimed, 'The bees know that this child will be king'. She accordingly named him Lālibālā, which means, 'The bee recognises his sovereignty'. Wallis Budge, *History of Ethiopia,* I, 280. (P)

[72]Our author's extensive contacts, and presumably those of his master, Imām Aḥmed, can be seen from the fact that these two informants had their origins in North Africa. This is evident from their surnames, which embody the place-names Magreb and Tunis. (P)

unheard of ecstatic revelations, the divine leader, the incomparable one, the everlasting one, our lord the noble Abū Bakr son of the great and famous sheikh 'Abd Allāh al-'Aīderūs. May God make them both profitable for us.

'The two of them said to me: "Do not call him sultan, and do not call him emir, but call him *imām* of the Muslims". And, he said, 'I asked them both, "The Imām of the Last Days?" And they said to me, "Yes, and [this can be known] from his miracles also."'[73]

The storyteller says: I learnt from sources in whom I have confidence, like 'Alī bin Ṣalāḥ al-Jabalī and Aḥmad bin Ṭāhar al-Mara'wī who both heard it from a man called Sa'd bin Yūnus[74] al-'Arajī who said, 'When I was asleep in the darkest part of the night, I saw the Prophet - may God bless him and bring him salvation - and on his right was Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣaddīq, and on his left was 'Umar bin al-Kaṭṭab and in front of him was 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib[75] - may God be satisfied with them.

In front of 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib - may God do him honour - was the imām Aḥmad bin Ibrahīm. So I said to him, 'O Messenger of God, who is this man who is in front of 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib?' And he replied - may God bless him and grant him salvation - 'Through this man God will subdue the country of Abyssinia.' This vision occurred when the imām was only a soldier and the visionary who had this dream did not know him before, apart from seeing him standing in front of 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib - may God pay him honour.

The visionary came to the city of Hārar in the days of Garād Abūn and recounted the dream to the people of the city who asked him, 'Is this one [Garād Abūn] he whom you saw in your dream?' And he said, 'No'. And one emir succeeded another in a continuous line of rulers of the city until the visionary came at the time when the imām Aḥmad was appointed to rule it. When he saw him he recognised him from his appearance which he had first seen in his dream, when he stood in front of our lord 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib - may

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[73] ومن كراماته ايضا : B reads this as the beginning of the sentence that follows. The following sentence is, however, introduced by the author's usual phrase, قال الراوي : i.e. 'The Storyteller says'. (S)

[74] B omits بن يونس . (S)

[75] Gujarat omits 'Ibn 'Alī Ṭālib' here and throughout this narrative. (S)

God honour him. He then said to the people of the city, 'This is he whom I saw before'.

Indeed this is what was told to him in this [f°7] vision. The Messenger of God - may God bless him and give him salvation - has said: 'Whoever sees me in a dream has really seen me, for Satan cannot appear in my likeness.'[76] It was truly as he saw: the vision was confirmed: Aḥmad ruled the country of Abyssinia and brought it peace just as will be recalled later on, if the Most High God wills.

[Aḥmad's first raid into Abyssinia as imām]

The storyteller says: The imām Aḥmad remained close to the sultan in the country. He judged it, and governed it appropriately. He forbade evil, put a stop to highwaymen, and the citizens enjoyed peace in his day. He won the heart of his kingdom by his love for the nobles, the learned men, the dervishes, the Qur'ānic teachers and the sheikhs.

He organised his army, provided weapons, swords and horses and undertook a military expedition against the country of Abyssinia. After thoroughly equipping his army he set forth against the country of the infidels finally arriving at the furthermost part of their country, a place called Dawāro, where they amassed vast booty: horses and mules, slaves, and livestock. Afterwards they doubled back, wanting to return home. But the infidels in Dawāro, all of them, massed a force against him. The imām had one-hundred or more cavalry, and no one could count those of the infidels, who pressed close upon the Muslims in a narrow defile, killing a great number of them upon whom God had put the seal of martyrdom.

They captured seven of the emirs of the Muslims, among them were the emir Ḥusain al-Gāturī, the emir Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad,[77] and the emir 'Abd Allāh, the emir 'Umar and Ura'ī Aḥmad , and Jibrā'īl a Somali, and another [unidentified] emir. These emirs - may the Most High God have

[76]See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukārī, *hadith* 9, 122. (S)

[77]Muḥammad: Gujarat omits. (S)

mercy upon them - were heroes of the Muslims; and their courage as horsemen was renowned.

Regarding the fate of the emir Ḥusain - they went with him to a secluded part of one of their villages and removed his armour and sought to take off his outer garment, as they wanted to kill him. There were seven of them wanting to kill him. Bound though he was, by the grace of Islam and the blessing of Muḥammad - may God bless him and bring him salvation - his bonds were cut and he pounced on one of his captors, taking his dagger from him and cried out with a shout: 'The *jihād* for the sake of God'. And when they heard him crying out 'The *jihād* for the sake of God,' they were put to flight and the emir Ḥusain, though wounded, returned to his companions by night and [soon] recovered.

The other emirs remained in captivity and were sent to the king of Abyssinia; two of them were killed.

[Aḥmad kills the sultan Abū Bakr]

The storyteller says: The imām turned back, returning to the country of the Muslims, after looting much booty and settled down in his town of Za'ka. He then went to see the sultan Abū Bakr and peace was made between the two of them. Afterwards, however, the sultan's mood changed. He treated his subjects unjustly, corruption reappeared, as did hostility towards the imām whom he sought to kill. The learned men and sheikhs did their best to reconcile them both. The sultan, however, opposed these moves and started a war against the imām. He abandoned the path of truth and plotted to deceive the imām, but was duped by his own cunning just as the Most High God says in the masterful passage in his illustrious book: 'The vile ruse entraps him who concocts it.'[78]

The imām killed him, and the country was saved from him. The Muslims found release from his evil ways. The imām Aḥmad remained in the land, putting an end to corrupt practices, and wiping out highwaymen. He ordered the town crier to announce, 'Whoever is envious of one of the

[78] *Qur'ān* xxxv, 43. (S)

Muslims will forfeit his life and his property.' His subjects found peace and tranquillity under his rule.

After the imām Aḥmad had appointed 'Umar Dīn, the sultan's brother, in his brother's stead, the country experienced peace under his sovereignty and his government. Revolutions died down, falsehood was abolished, hypocrisy ceased, the tricks and dodges of Satan were rendered impotent and finally annihilated. 'The command of God prevailed, even though they detested it.'[79]

The storyteller says: In the time of Sa'd ad-Dīn, and in the time of those who governed Hārar after him, and even up to the time of Garād Abūn, the infidels made incursions into the country of the Muslims and laid it waste many times;[80] so that some of the Muslim towns even paid them the *ḵarāj*.[81] This was the situation until the imām Aḥmad ruled. He prevented the infidels' doing this, and conquered their country.

In his time, he would sit with the poor and show them kindness. He was merciful to the humble, and disdained the proud. He was sympathetic to widows and to orphans and just towards victims of oppression, so that justice was given back its rightful place. God, the sternest of critics, found him blameless. He was faithful to all his religious duties, as the Most High says: '[one of] those who, should we establish them in the land, will keep up prayer, and pay the poor-rate, command what is exemplary, and forbid what is contemptible.'[82]

After this, one of the foremost sultans called Ura'ī Abūn came to the imām. When the country had been torn by disputes, he had gone to live with the Somalis. He became reconciled with the imām and the latter gave him a district for his support. A tribe called Girri[83] then came to the imām. A dispute had arisen between them and their companions in another tribe [f°8]

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[79] *Qur'ān* ix, 48. (S)

[80] On this fighting, see Maqrizi *Historia Regum Islamiticorum in Abyssinia, passim.* (P)

[81] See *infra* note[146]. (S)

[82] *Qur'ān* xxii, 41. (S)

[83] The Girri, a branch of the Darod, a Somali clan inhabiting the area in the vicinity of Hārar. I.M.Lewis, *Peoples of the Horn of Africa*, pp. 23, 50. (P)

called the Marraiḥān[84] whose emir was called Ḥirābū,[85] so the imām Aḥmad sent a message to Ḥirābū emir of the Somalis, to make peace between them.

[Incursion by Dēgalḥān: Aḥmad defeats him][86]

The storyteller says: While he was preoccupied with this discussion on behalf of the Somalis, the imām heard about an important patrician, one of the tyrants by name Dēgalḥān,[87] a brother-in-law of the [Abyssinian] king, with a vast number of patricians under him, who had reached the furthermost borders of the country of the Muslims, had plundered it, and taken by force their wealth, and made improper advances towards female members of their families,[88] amongst whom was the mother of one of the emirs of the imām, by name Abū Bakr Qaṭīn. The infidels had more than six-hundred cavalry, while their army was like a plague of locusts.

The imām made preparations for meeting them, arranging his army, its provisions and its number. The number of the Muslim horses and horsemen was two-hundred. They launched the attack, setting out at the time of the sunset prayer. They marched night and day until they reached a mighty river called 'Aqam at sunset on the second day where they encamped. The imām sent a band of the Muslims ahead, to try to ferret out some news of the

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[84]Marraihan: Somali group of the Darod clan. I.M.Lewis, *Peoples of the Horn of Africa*, pp. 20, 48. (P)

[85]Ḥirābū : حرابو . Gujarat: حرابوه . (S) Ḥirābū was the son of Goita Tedrous, mentioned below. (P)

[86]It is at this point that the text of the *Arabic History of Gujarat* (=Gujarat) published and edited in two volumes by Sir E. Denison Ross (London, 1921) takes up the narrative of the *Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša*. Gujarat zig-zags through Šihāb ad-Dīn's text in the following order (references are to Basset's edition of 1897): xvi,20-xx,3; iii,12-xvi,20; xxx,10-xxxviii,18; liii,7- lxii,11; xxxix, 20-xl,2; xxxix, 8; xxxix, 14; xcvii, 8; lxi,1-lxii. Gujarat is, in the main, a paraphrase of selected narratives from the *Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša* not unlike an Arabic version of the paraphrase in Italian to be found in *La Conquista Mussulmana dell'Etiopia nel secolo xvi* by Cesare Nerazzini. (S)

[87]Dēgalḥān is referred to in the Ethiopian royal chronicles of this time as the commander of Emperor Lebna Dengel's army. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, pp. 15-16. (P)

[88]This statement is confirmed in the Ethiopian royal chronicle of the time. This claims that in the nineteenth year of Emperor Lebna Dengel's reign, i.e. in 1526-7, the monarch's commander, Dēgalḥān led his army into the country of the Adal, plundered the people, and enslaved their womenfolk. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 16. (P)

infidels, but not one of them returned with news. So, after this he sent one of his emirs, by name Ḥusain al-Gāturī,[89] as his informant, with seven cavalrymen. These reached the proximity of the infidel army which was an immense force, and then doubled back, returning to the imām Aḥmad, notifying him of their findings.

The imām and his army set out for the neighbourhood of the infidels, and arrived at a point where the only barrier between them and the infidels was a fortified mountain. They encamped there, and he climbed the mountain barrier separating the two armies, along with four of his knights. Among them was the wazir[90] 'Addolī, the emir Baradah[91] and the emir 'Alī. They overlooked the infidels who had made their camp in a place called Dir.[92] Its lights were blazing. The imām and his companions then retraced their steps, returning to their army and settling down for the night, after they had made preparations for the battle.

The day after this, the infidels set out for their own country with the imām and his army on their heels. These had harnessed their horses and mounted them, after donning their armour and taking their weapons[93] just as the poet says:

'How beautiful before the breaking of dawn
is the voice of the herald "Come on the *jihād*,"
to the races of men of noble rank
who give their lives so highmindedly
in order to please the magnanimous One.[94]

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[89]Gujarat: الجواترى . (S)

[90] الوزيـر : title of the principal minister in a Muslim country. Edward William Lane (*Arabian Nights*, vol.i, p.23) notes that under the Turkish Sultans of Egypt the post of wazir was sometimes occupied by an administrator, and sometimes by a soldier. 'Addolī fulfilled both these roles in serving Aḥmed. Note that the names of only three knights are given in the Arabic text, not four. (S)

[91]Baradah. Gujarat: 'Yaradah' يردە . (S)

[92]Dir, a settlement which, according to Huntingford, may conceivably be modern Dire Dāwā. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 122. (P)

[93] During the *jihād* the Muslims rode their horses only into battle. When travelling, their war horses followed as a herd, and they rode on mules. (S)

[94]'To the races .... magnanimous One': Gujarat omits. (S)

On horseback, they are like lions;
Dismounted they are the tent-pegs of the country.'

While they were proceeding in this manner after them, some of the infidels turned around and saw the Muslims in their rear. They notified their companions, and all of them wheeled round and saw the Muslims behind them. Then they turned around, went back and drew up their battle lines, fixing the position of their forces - may the Most High God forsake them.

The imām likewise arrayed his forces - to the right, to the left, to the centre and with some on both flanks - and the advance proceeded.

The Muslims drew near, as compact as a construction whose parts were held together in such a way that there was no space between them; and the cavalry charged. The first of the Muslim knights to do so was one called Farašaḥam Sulṭān bin 'Alī[95] of the tribe of Yamlī. He was one of the most courageous heroes. After exclaiming 'God is Great' he attacked the infidels, breaking through their lines, scattering their massed forces and killing a group of them. He took prisoner one of the patricians, by name Ṣabbarū, son of the patrician Takla.[96] He grabbed him, pulled him from his saddle, and took him into the presence of the imām Aḥmad who sent him to Arabia.[97]

The emir 'Alī also attacked the infidels, killing many of them, and capturing [another] one of the patricians whom he presented to the imām. The Muslims appeared in battle like savage lions, galloping full tilt, with spears held high, army merging with army. The wretched infidels stood their ground before the attack of the noble Muslims as the tide of the battle rolled on relentlessly, with horses interlocked with horses, and infantry with infantry.

On that day, nothing was to be seen but cut-off heads, spirits in the throes of death, and palms of hands flying in the air. The Muslims cried out with a mighty cry: 'There is no God but Allāh,' and 'God is the Greatest,'[98]

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[95]Sulṭān bīn 'Alī. Gujarat: Sulṭān Dīn bīn 'Alī. (S)

[96]Ṣabbarū ... Takla'. Gujarat: صروه بن البطريق بحليه . (S)

[97]Presumably as a slave. Arabia was traditionally the destination of a large proportion of the slaves exported from Ethiopia. R.Pankhurst, *Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia*, pp 339, 347-9. (P)

[98]Literally 'with the *Tahlīl* and the *Takbīr*,' بالتهليل والتكبير . The *Takbīr* is the cry *Allāhū Akbar*, 'God is

and prayed for the bringer of good news, and the herald; and all the tribes responded, and the earth trembled under them.

On that day the battle-cry of the Muslims was *'Yāhū, Yāhū,'*[99] and dismay fell upon the hearts of the infidels who began to desert. The imām showed himself to be a man steady of heart. No cavalryman came near him without being tossed to the ground; and he lunged with his spear at no one whom he did not slaughter. The infidels were as powerless before the Muslims as a flock of sheep or goats before a lion.

How many thousands of infidels died only the Most High God can number. The Muslims took possession of horses, valuables and booty, and on that day they took four-hundred-and-eighty-four prisoners, and livestock and mules too numerous to count. They also recaptured from the infidels the wealth that these had previously plundered from the Muslims.[100] They returned the wealth of the Muslims, in its entirety, to its owners. Not one of the Muslims died; only a few suffered light wounds, from which they recovered.

The imām thereupon summoned the prisoners, who were brought into [f°9] his presence. Some of them he sent to Zabīd,[101] to the emir Suleimān the governor there. They were enslaved to the emir of Zabīd. Some others of them he had killed. Others of them simply died.

How excellent are these Muslims and their imām! They waged the holy war for God whose due it was. They were patient and resolute in confronting the enemy. They made the sacrifice of their *jihād* in order to please God. They did not hold back until they had torn Faithlessness from its throne, and plunged it into its grave. Islam was raised up, and manifested; and Faithlessness was humiliated, and forced to take flight.

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very great'. (S)

[99] ياهو ياهو sic! This conceivably could have been pronounced 'Yāhūwa, Yāhūwa'. (S)

[100] According to the Ethiopian royal chronicle, the imām recaptured the prisoners Dēgalḥān had earlier seized. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 16. (P)

[101] Zabid, a major political and commercial town in south-west Arabia, north of the port of Jeddah, with trading relations with the Horn of Africa. Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, pp. 51, 61, 89, 91. (P)

Nor did they do any wrong, for the Most High God has said of the Muslims waging *jihād* in a passage of his well-known Book: 'Do not consider those who are killed for the sake of God[102] to be dead. Rather they live, and are provided sustenance by their Lord, rejoicing' etc.[103] Know that God shows you mercy, that the martyr goes to his Gracious Lord and lives in a place whose dwellers never know death; and whose young never grow old. As He who is the most credible of speakers says, 'Hardship shall not afflict them [in heaven] nor can they ever be driven out from it.'[104]

The storyteller says: The imām Aḥmad and his army went back, carrying with them vast booty, with the Most High God as his guide and companion on his journey towards his country of Hārar: his status enhanced, triumphant, wearing the victor's crown, joyous. The imām at that time was twenty-one years old.[105]

[Aḥmad wins over the Somali tribes]

Now, having finished this, let us return to the earlier narrative, and look at what happened during the Somali campaign.

When news of the imām's leaving for the outlying provinces of Abyssinia reached them, a certain person, by name Ḥirābū, a chief of one of the Somali tribes called Marraiḥān, had arrived half-way along the route to the country of Hārar. After verifying the departure of the imām to the land of Abyssinia, he doubled back and returned to his own country.

Among the Somali tribes there was another called Habr Maqdī,[106] from which the imām had demanded the alms tax. They refused to pay it, resorting to banditry on the roads, and acting evilly towards the country. The

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[102] في سبيل الله : lit. 'in the path of God'. (S)

[103] *Qur'ān* iii, 169-170; some eds. iii, 168-169. (S)

[104] *Qur'ān* xv, 48. (S)

[105] Gujarat adds: 'This occurred in the years 932 and 933,' which commenced on AD October 18, 1525 and October 8, 1526 respectively. (S)

[106] Probably the Hābr Mākādur, a Somali clan. I.M.Lewis, *Peoples of the Horn of Africa*, p. 25. (P)

imām set out for a locality known as Rā'bud,[107] between the country of the Muslims and the country of the infidels, as if he intended going on to Abyssinia. But then he doubled back towards the country of the Somali evil-doers. The Somalis were routed, and the imām Aḥmad followed them almost to the sea, a day's march. He plundered their territory thoroughly and devastated it. Then he turned round and went back.

Those Somalis who had entered the service of the imām Aḥmad and the previously mentioned Sultan Ura'ī Abūn, were with the imām as we mentioned before, and the tribe of Habr Maqdī, which the imām put to flight, had plundered their territory.

The tribe of Girri complained to the imām, saying to him, 'They would never have ravaged our country if we had not entered your service, and made peace with you'. This distressed the imām Aḥmad who organised his forces and went to the country of the Somalis, to the Habr Maqdī who were engaging in brigandage and plundering the possessions of the Muslims, time after time.

The imām defeated them and plundered their wealth a second time, destroying their cities which he reduced to ashes and then he turned around and went back to his country.

The Somalis wearied of the looting of their possessions and the ravaging of their country, so they accompanied their ruler Ḥirābū and went to see the imām, and all of them became reconciled with him in a covenant that was sincere and agreeable.

[Aḥmad's second *jihād* against Abyssinia]

After this, the imām made preparations for a *jihād* against Abyssinia, assembling his troops and the Somalis with their leader, Ḥirābū, who then set out under his command. The imām then got together a vast throng and launched the attacks, setting out, he and the Muslims, for the infidel territory.

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[107] رعبود. See *infra* p.124 where we find رعبودة. (S)

They arrived with him at a place called Wāduh Mečeg[108] in the country of Faṭagār,[109] meeting no resistance. There was no fighting. Between them and the king of Abyssinia was a day and a half's march, so the Muslims deliberated amongst themselves about going on. The imām and a group of the emirs advised, 'Let us march out and take the king unawares. One of two good things will then happen: either success, with its reward of booty; or martyrdom in the way of God and paradise by the grace of God.'[110] But the majority of the army said, 'Let us go back to our country from over here.' So the Muslims took a great quantity of booty, and went back.

The storyteller says: The imām was desolated, and wept bitter tears until his eyes were bloodshot from the excessive weeping at their returning, and their disagreeableness. And so they went back to the city of Hārar in the land of Sa'd ad-Dīn. The imām could not rest until he had tied a standard to a spear, and entrusted it to the emir Manṣūr bin Maḥfūẓ al-Gāturī. He gave him one-hundred knights, and more than two-thousand infantry. He commanded him to march into the land of Abyssinia to the city named Qay-Gē.[111] So the above-mentioned emir set out until he arrived at Qay-Gē, meeting with no resistance. He amassed a vast booty of slaves and horses and mules, and other things as well. Then they turned round and went back to their country.

Then the imām tied another banner to a spear and entrusted it to the wazir 'Addolī and attached to him five-hundred[112] knights and one-thousand infantry, well-equipped for war, and for battle. He ordered them to march to the land of Dawāro to a place called Wanbārih,[113] so they set off for it, and

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[108] Mečeg, Amharic, a narrow gate. (P)

[109] Faṭagār. Gujarat: Qanaqār القنقار ; elsewhere Gujarat carries the reading Fataqār الفتقار . (S) Faṭagār, a Muslim tributary territory to the south-east of the Christian empire. The area extended, according to Huntingford, all the way from Šawā, in the north-west, to the Wabi Šebellē river, in the south. Ludolphus, *New History of Ethiopia*, p. 15; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 88. See also R.Pankhurst, *Ethiopian Borderlands*, pp. 182-6. (P)

[110] See *infra* note[178] where Wanāg Sagad's ignorance of this expression enables 'Abbās to offer the king an evasive answer. (S)

[111] في حي sic! Gujarat omits and reads 'to the city of Sīm'. (S) Possibly a *qay*, red, or *gē*, country. (P)

[112] Gujarat reads '50' خمسين for '500' خمسمائة . (S)

[113] Wanbārih. Gujarat: Zambārih. (S)

met with no resistance. They took much [f°10] booty, and then turned round, and headed back, seeking the land of the Muslims.

Meantime, while he was returning home along the route, the people of Dawāro met him with their infantry, their patricians and their cavalry. They met up with them in a place called Zamit which was a river flowing with much water. Cavalry confronted cavalry, hero confronted hero.

One of their patricians, Arba' Šamal by name, was a giant; and their cavalry and infantry could not be counted. Battle was joined between them. They struck with their swords and stabbed with their spears until their spears shattered, and their forearms were numb from striking the necks and the heads of the infidels. Then one of the Muslim knights, by name the emir Mujāhid bin 'Alī bin 'Abd Allāh Suḥa, charged. He was an illustrious horseman, and a voracious lion. He attacked the patrician Arba' Šamal,[114] striking him a blow that knocked him from his horse to the ground and God cast his soul quickly into Hell, 'an evil place to settle in'.[115]

Another one of the Muslim knights, by name Nūr, attacked one of the patricians, and struck him on his neck so that he fell off his horse onto the ground. Then the fray grew more savage, and the fighting more brutal. The Muslims fought a deadly battle, raising their voices in the battle cry, 'There is no God but Allāh,' and 'God is the Greatest,' and in prayers for the bringer of good news, and the herald. The infidels turned tail, and the Muslims attacked them with sword blows and pike thrusts, killing an uncountable number of the infidels. Not one of the Muslims was killed. Wazir 'Addolī turned back to the country of the Muslims, flushed with victory and laden with booty.

[The third *jihād*]

The storyteller says: Then the imām Aḥmad bin Ibrahīm made preparations for a military expedition against the country of the infidels, forming a force made up of his valiant leaders and heroes.

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[114] Šamal, شمل . Gujarat reads: Šamā, شما . (S)

[115] *Qur'ān* xiv, 29. (S)

He tied a red banner to a spear and entrusted it to the emir Ḥusain al-Gāturī to whom he detached one-hundred knights from among his warriors and fighters. Then, tying a white banner to another spear he entrusted it to the Wazir Nūr to whom he also gave more than a hundred knights. In those days the banner of the imām was yellow, and under it were two-hundred knights chosen from among the courageous and heroic fighters, skilled in the cut and thrust of war; they were fighters par excellence.

There were seven-thousand infantry, placed under the command of five soldiers.[116] One of them was called Naqdīya.[117] At that time he was a Muslim but he later apostatized - May God save us from that! - and was an infidel when he was killed. The second was 'Abd al-Karīm bin 'Uṭmān known as 'Dawāro'. The name of the third was 'Umar bin 'Abd Allāh. The fourth was called 'Uṭmān bin 'Abd Allāh from the people of Sim. And the fifth's name was Muḥammad. All of these had converted to Islam.[118]

The imām Aḥmad set his forces in order, cautioning that there was to be no retreating, and then set out with his tremendous army of knights and heros, each of whom had previously met in battle with at least one-hundred infidels. He launched the attack and they went on until they reached a place called Zamīr Dīn in the territory of the Muslims, a section of which belonged to the infidels. The cavalry and infantry made ready for battle and there was discussion about what course to follow. It was unanimously decided to attack Dawāro.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Abū Bakr bin Isma'īl told me, and he took part in the events of those days, that they set out for the place called Kaḥal Bari in the vicinity of Dawāro, where they battled with some infidel infantrymen who had assembled in a narrow defile, hemming in the Muslims who were fighting there. The Muslims eventually

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[116]Soldiers, انفار. Gujarat makes them emirs, من الامراء . (S)

[117]Naqdīya. Gujarat reads Ta'zīya. (S)

[118]The extent of Christian conversions to Islam, during the height of the imām's power, was later recognised in the chronicle of Emperor Galāwdēwos (1540-1559). It states that 'many of the faithful renounced their faith in the Church... scarcely one in ten maintained their faith.' Conzelman, *Chronique de Galâwdêwos,* p. 123. (P)

were victorious with the help of the Most High God. The infidels fled, after a group of them was killed.

There was a church there, called Zaharaq, belonging to the ancient kings. The Muslims set fire to it, and then turned back, seeking to return to their own country. The infidels had an encampment at a place called Kub[119] between the country of the Muslims and their own.

The Muslims discussed among themselves what to do. Some of them said 'Let us return to the country of the Muslims,' and others of them said 'Let us go back towards the country of the infidels'. Some of the Muslims fled by night, without the imām's knowledge, seeking to return to their own country. The imām set off after them, overtook some of them and brought them back by force.

The storyteller says: When the army reached Kūb they said to the imām: 'We will not accompany you to Abyssinia unless your wife Del Wanbarā [120] returns to the country of the Muslims. She shall not come with us to the land of the infidels. Not one of the emirs before you ever took his wife with him [on a military expedition]; only you.' His wife, Del Wanbarā, replied, 'I will not go back'. So her husband took her as far as Ifāt[121] in the land of the infidels.

Organising his army and his forces he left by night for Abyssinia, finally reaching the 'Awāš[122] which was a mighty flowing river that

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[119]Kub, or Kubā, the name of both a locality and a river. Huntingford believes that the latter could be the present-day Kabennā, which rises south-west of Ankobar, and flows into the 'Awāš on the edge of the eastern lowlands. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 121-3. (P)

[120]The imām's wife, Bāti, or the equivalent of Lady, Del Wanbarā, literally 'Victory is her Seat,' was a woman of major importance in her own right. She was the daughter of imām Maḥfūẓ, an earlier ruler of Zayla', and the *de facto* ruler of Adal. Maḥfūẓ, a religious zealot, undertook many annual forays in the Christian highlands, and was in that sense the precursor of his son-in-law, imām Aḥmed. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, II, 410-15. (P)

[121]Ifāt, also referred to in Ethiopian sources as Wifāt, lay immediately to the east of Šawā. At times a Muslim tributary territory, it was often occupied by Ethiopian imperial troops, and had by this time been largely assimilated by the Christian empire. Merid Wolde Aregay, 'Political Geography of Ethiopia at the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century,' pp. 622-3; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 76; R.Pankhurst, *Ethiopian Borderlands*, pp. 190-6. (P)

[122]The 'Awāš, the most important river of east-central Ethiopia. Rising in an area south of Mt. Warqē

meandered through many different countries. In autumn[123] it was impossible to cross it except on timber that had cow-hide tied underneath it like a boat.[124] Their name for this is *laḵa*.[125] The river goes from Dāmot[126] until it peters out in the salt sea in the vicinity of Zayla'[f°11].

[Division of the booty]

Then the Muslims deliberated amongst themselves about the booty because when they had entered the land of Dawāro they had agreed amongst themselves that whatever booty they took would be divided equally among the army. However, while some of them had taken plunder, others had not, because of earlier opposition on the part of some of them. So when the Muslims reached the 'Awāš, they brought up the matter of the booty. They declared, 'We will not take any more booty; we will not take anything and what booty we have taken belongs to the Most High God; all of it! But, if anybody does take booty, then [from now on] it will belong to him.'[127]

The imām sought the advice of Garād Dīn of the Sagara[128] tribe. His advice was: 'Do such and such'. Then the imām announced to the army:

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west of modern Addis Ababa, the river's course ran through the Rift Valley, in an easterly and north-easterly direction, before disappearing in the southern end of the Danakil, or Afar, desert. (P)

[123] خريف . (S)

[124] سنبوق : a barge, boat or skiff. (S)

[125] Laḵa. Gujarat: Laḥa. (S) We have been unable to identify this word which occurs in a number of places *supra*. (P)

[126] Dāmot, a territory inhabited by Animists, lay at this time immediately south of the Blue Nile. Subsequent migration caused the people of Dāmot to make their way north of the river, with the result that the area they inhabited was later identified with southern Gojjām. Ludolphus, *New History of Ethiopia*, p. 14; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 118-19. (P)

[127] This seems to contradict the earlier declaration by the disgruntled soldiers who were willing to set aside *all* the plunder for the بيت المال or public treasury. The question of booty is a ticklish one, because the imām was aware that without the motive of plunder, the soldiers would quickly lose interest in the venture. Strictly speaking, four-fifths of the plunder should have been distributed among the troops, whether they fought or not. Cavalry received a share two or three times as large as that of the infantry. See *SEI* ed. cit. *Ghanima*. (S)

[128] Sagara was apparently the name of a Somali clan, whose appellation is preserved in that of a village

'After the *fifth* part[129] has been taken out, then whatever booty someone takes will belong to him who takes it'. So the imām Aḥmad organised his soldiers, dividing the army into three units: in charge of the first unit was the wazir 'Addolī, a person of good counsel, wisdom and foresight, whom he ordered to pass the territory of Ifāt[130] on the right flank. In charge of the second unit was the Wazir Nūr bin Ibrahīm whom he ordered to pass by Ifāt on the left flank. The imām himself was in command of the third unit and with him was the glorious cavalry and the noble heroes. He took the middle position, between both flanks.

[Wanāg Jān is killed by Farašaḥam Saṭūt]

The storyteller says: As for what happened to the unit under the command of the wazir 'Addolī, it was marching on the right flank[131] oblivious of the infidels that were there. As he followed the road, suddenly he came upon tents that had been pitched, with the infidel army and their patricians within them.

The emir of the patricians was called Wanāg Jān,[132] which means in their language 'the king's lion'. Wanāg was well-known as the governor of Ifāt. He was one of the courageous ones. The Muslims did not delay long in attacking them, and they fought a heated battle at first light.

One of the Muslim knights, from the people of Dawāro, was called Farašaḥam Saṭūt. He had been a Christian but had gone down from the infidel country to that of the Muslims, submitting to Islam with a conversion that was

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referred to by the nineteenth century British traveller Richard Burton as Sagharrah. Burton, *First Footsteps in East Africa*, I, 190. (P)

[129]See *Qur'ān* viii, 41 where only six categories are listed: 'And know that whatever thing you acquire in war, a fifth of it is for Allah, and for the apostle and for his family, for the orphans the needy and the traveller.' For eight, see Sura ix, 60. (S)

[130]Ifāt, افـات . Gujarat: ايفـات . (S) The term Ifāt, though usually the designation of a territory, was sometimes also used for a town, in all probability its capital, which was, however, possibly only a temporary one. (P)

[131]Right flank. Gujarat: left flank. (S)

[132]More literally "The lion (*wanāg*) is king". *Jan*, literally 'elephant,' was often used as an honorific to signify the Ethiopian monarch. D'Abbadie, *Dictionnaire de la langue amariñña*, col. 804. (P)

genuine, and of sterling quality. He was one of a rare breed of horsemen, renowned for his bravery. Slim of body, he was a fighter for the territory of Islam. He straightaway attacked the accursed patrician Wanāg Jān and struck him a blow that unseated him and threw him to the ground. And God cast his spirit into Hell, 'an evil place to settle in'.[133]

The infidels were routed and fled. A great number of them was killed, so great as to be uncountable. The Muslims plundered their tents[134] and all their belongings. And as for horses and mules, weapons and livestock and other things - they were innumerable. Along with their belongings they also captured their women, among whom was the daughter of the maternal aunt of the king Wanāg Sagad[135] bin Nā'od bin Admās bin Zar'a Ya'qob,[136] whom the imām gave to the wazir 'Addoli who sent her back to the country of the Muslims. The king of Abyssinia paid a ransom of fifty ounces of red gold for her.

[Anṭokyā]

The storyteller says: The army unit that the imām commanded headed straight for Anṭokyā,[137] a place where the king would sometimes reside.

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[133] *Qur'ān* xiv, 29. (S)

[134] Tents, as Alvares had noted shortly earlier, were in extensive use in Ethiopia, especially at the Emperor's court. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, II, 335, 402-3, 413, 415, 437, 442. (P)

[135] More correctly Wanāg Sagad, literally 'Lion prostrates in front of (or worships) him,' was the throne name of Emperor Lebna Dengel (1508-1540), the Ethiopian monarch whose reign coincided with imām Aḥmed's first incursions, and who, for the remainder of his reign, was to lead the opposition to Adal. Leslau, *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez*, p. 490. (P)

[136] Arabic text (followed by Gujarat) reads زرا قوب sic! (S) This phrase enunciates the paternal descent of the reigning Ethiopian monarch, Wanāg Sagad, i.e. Lebna Dengel. It indicates that he was the son of Emperor Nā'od (1494-1508), who is referred to as the son of 'Admas (a name for Emperor Ba'eda Māryām (1468-1478) not elsewhere specified in Ethiopian literature), who is in turn described as the son of Emperor Zar'ā Yā'qob (1434-1468). (P)

[137] Anṭokyā. Gujarat: Ṭūbiya, طوبية . (S) Antokyā, or Antokyāh, site of one of Emperor Lebna Dengel's palaces, and 'royal towns,' was apparently located in Wallo, according to Huntingford some 55 miles south of Lake Ḥāyq. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp.122, 125-6. (P)

The guide for the Muslims on the road was a certain person called Simū known as Saqara[138]. He was at that time a Muslim but afterwards he apostatised and became a Christian. He seized two infidels and made them stand in the presence of the imām who interrogated the two of them about the infidels. They replied: 'We only know about the patrician Wanāg Jān, that he followed the route of the wazir 'Addolī.'

In Anṭokyā there was a Christian church, which the great emirs among the Muslims entered: the emir Ḥusain bin Abū Bakr al-Gāturī, governor of Dawāro after the invasion; the emir 'Alī, governor of Angot[139] after the conquest; and Garād Aḥmūš; and Kūšem Abū Bakr; the sheikh, the great ascetic Ḥāmad son of the gracious ascetic, the sheikh Wāšara. The imām entered as did his wife Del Wanbarā,[140] daughter of the emir Maḥfūẓ. When they could not find any treasure in it, they set fire to it, and destroyed it.

In the meantime a messenger from the wazir 'Addolī arrived, gladdening them with news of his victorious conquest and booty, and the killing of the patrician Wanāg Jān. The Muslims rejoiced greatly, banging small drums[141] and metal drinking vessels.

The army unit that was commanded by the wazir Nūr passed to the left of the land of Anṭokyā and plundered it before returning to the imām. The wazir 'Addolī did the same. The Muslims assembled in Anṭokyā.

The imām pitched a white tent in the area of Anṭokyā which was part of the territory of Ifāt in the land of Abyssinia. When it was time for the afternoon prayer the Muslims saw the infidel vanguard close by them. The imām galloped after them, accompanied by a troop of horsemen, leaving the camp as it stood. The infidels took flight, and one of their number was killed.

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[138]Saqara. Gujarat: Safara. (S)

[139]Angot was a small Christian province of northern Ethiopia, situated south of Tegrē and east of Lāstā. Ludolphus, *New History of Ethiopia*, p. 14; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 81. (P)

[140]We learn p. 331 *infra* that her name was Bā'tīya Del Wanbarā. (S)

[141]The two main Ethiopian percussion instruments were the *nagārit*, a flat drum struck, usually with a stick, on one side, and the long, slender *kabaro*, beaten by hand on both sides. Powne, *Ethiopian Music*, pp. 12-18. (P)

He was killed by al-Kūšem Abū Bakr who that day was mounted on a horse. He dismounted and killed him.

Then the imām and his companions turned back, and returned to the camp. The next day the Muslims made a foray into the territory of Ifāt [f°12] leaving the tent pitched in its place. The Muslims captured much booty, including slaves and weapons. Afterwards some of them returned to the camp, while others spent the night at the place of the foray: [142] the Somalis and others including the soldiers known [from that time] as 'al-Ḡazū'; and some of the soldiers of the imām. On the following day the imām met up with them on the road, an extraordinary sight, they and their vast booty which included a large number of the daughters and sons of the patricians.

On the fourth day the imām put his forces in order and set out for the city of Gendebelo,[143] with the emir Aḥmūš as his guide, riding with the vanguard carrying the red standard. They marched all that day along a narrow route up hill and down dale, with men and animals becoming exhausted; and on that day, on account of the narrowness of the path, men had to carry the imām's wife on their shoulders.[144]

At sunset the tent of the imām Aḥmad was pitched in a place called Daq, where *qāt* [145] grew in abundance; and the camp of the vanguard was pitched, after great difficulty, by the emir Aḥmūš. The one who pitched camp

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[142] الغـــزو : *al-Ḡazū* : 'raid,' 'incursion,' etc. The soldiers who took part in the raids were nicknamed *al-Ḡāzū*. Imām Aḥmad was known as 'al-Ḡāzī. (S)

[143] Gendebelo. Gujarat: Genbalo. (S) Gendebelo was an important Šawān commercial centre immediately to the south-east of Ankobar, probably in the vicinity of later-day Aleyu Ambā. Crawford, *Ethiopian Itineraries*, pp. 66, 96-7, 173, 175; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 107, 122. (P)

[144] Presumably a reference to imām Aḥmed's principal wife Bāti Del Wanbarā. (P)

[145] القات : Qāt *(Catha edulis Forskal)* - a shrub whose leaves act as an excitant when chewed. See Edward William Lane, *An Arabic English Lexicon*, London 1863 Book I, Part vii, p.2572 (a). (S) The narcotic *Catha edulis* was first mentioned in the mid-fourteenth century by the Arab writer 'Umar Ibn Fadl Allah al 'Umari, who states that it was consumed by the Muslims of Ifāt, where it sharpened the intelligence, and saved adicts from sleep. Čāt was, according to the chronicle of Emperor 'Amda Ṣeyon, also given as tribute to that monarch. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Ibn Fadl Allah, al 'Umari, Masālik al Absār fī Mamalik el Amsār*, p. 26; Huntingford, *Glorious Victories of 'Amda Ṣeyon* p. 56. On the history of the plant, and its usage, see also Mercier, 'Un mythe éthiopien d'origine du café et du kat' pp. 147-8. (P)

for the rearguard was Garād 'Abd an-Nāṣr. Aḥmūš said to him as he was pitching camp, 'When you are tired how God revives you, O 'Abd an-Nāṣr. How strong you are when pitching a tent!'

The storyteller says: The night had already lengthened when the imām Aḥmad arrived with the rearguard and the last of the army at the tent and the encampment. They were so wearied from the harshness of the route that they went to sleep without eating anything; they were so tired.

[Aḥmad and the gold of Gendebelo]

In the morning the army set out for a place called Bāzamlī in the district of Ifāt, in the country of the infidels. It was a forbidding place. They spent the night there and next morning went on to Gendebelo in Abyssinia. It was ruled by the king of Abyssinia but had Muslims living in it who paid the poll-tax[146] to the king.

The people of Gendebelo came to the imām Aḥmad and his army - the sheikhs, the Qur'ānic teachers,[147] the merchants, the people of the villages - and honoured them; and the Muslims [of Gendebelo] helped them with twenty ounces of gold. In those days the imām was poor, and the soldiers and the emirs took some of the gold and said to the imām: 'We will give this gold to your wife Del Wanbarā.' The imām resisted, saying 'this is for the conducting of the *jihād*'.

The emirs tried to talk him round, but he again resisted their efforts to do so. They were the emir Ḥusain al-Gāturī, the wazir 'Addolī, Garād Dīn and the emir 'Alī, governor of Angot. He refused to allow the gold to be given to his wife, and got the better of them in this matter. He said to them, 'It is not

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[146] الجزيـــة : see *supra* note[12]. The term refers usually to the head-tax paid by Christians, Jews, Magians, Sabeans, Samaritans who in return for paying the tax obtain protection from the Islamic rulers. A Qur'ānic term (Sura ix, 29) it basically means 'tribute' paid by conquered peoples. It is contrasted with *ḵarāj*, which is a land tax. (S)

[147] الفقـــهاء : *fuqahā'* plural of فقيه *faqīh*. These are the experts in *fiqh* or Islamic jurisprudence - whose object of study is every aspect of Islamic life: religious, political and civil. *Fiqh* concerns itself with all aspects of private and business life of Muslims - by contrast with *'ilm* which is mainly concerned with knowledge of the *Qur'ān*, and of the legal decisions handed down by Muḥammad and his early followers. Both are pre-requisite skills for Islamic 'theologians'. See 'Fikh' in *SEI, ed.cit.* p.102. (S)

permissible to [give this to] her. This is to help Islam. I won't give her any of it; I will spend it on the *jihād*.' May God forgive him.

So he sent the gold to the sharif[148] Muḥammad aš-Šāṭarī[149] and purchased one-hundred swords with which he gave witness at the battle of Šemberā Korē.[150] This was a help to the Muslims.

The imām intercepted some infidel traders in Gendebelo who had in their possession valuables belonging to the king of Abyssinia. He killed them in the middle of the town, and took their valuables, their mules, and their hacks,[151] along with their loads. The imām stayed with his army two days in Gendebelo, and then set out from there in the afternoon to return to the country of the Muslims taking with him the treasure of the king of Abyssinia. They spent that night close by the 'Awāš and the next day set out again.

This time their guide took them off the beaten track into rocky and heavily wooded territory. The imām questioned the guide about the route and he replied: 'This used to be the best used track, but now it has been overgrown through too little use.' They had not travelled very far when they found themselves in the midst of a forest, with trees growing together, closely entangled in one another; and because of the trees, they lost their way. They discussed amongst themselves what to do, asking the guide, 'How can we get back onto the road?' The guide said, 'If I had taken you by the top road, it

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[148]The term 'sharif' means 'noble, exalted'. Despite sura xlix,13 'truly, the most exalted amongst you in God's eyes is he who fears God the most,' Islam never displaced the old awe for noble birth. Descendants of Muḥammad, the *ahl 'l-bait*, the Banū Ḥāšim (Muḥammad's tribe) were *ašrāf*, or sharifs. It was taught that none of them would enter hell, and that they would be the first to enter Paradise with the Prophet. The heads of the sharifian families were the ones entrusted with the administration of the tribe or the towns. (S)

[149]Gujarat has Aḥmad sending the gold to Zaila' to Aḥmad bin Salām as-Sallātī. (S)

[150] شنبر کوره : elsewhere we find صمبر کوری . See *infra* p. 67 where the expedition of Šemberā Korē is described as taking place 'in the year 935, less six-months'. See note[246]. (S) The battle of Šemberā Korē literally Swamp of Chick-peas, one of the most important engagements of the entire campaign, was fought on 7 March 1529 The fighting took place near the Mojo river, south-east of modern Addis Ababa. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 112, 124. (P)

[151] براذین : Horses of coarse breed, hardy so as to endure travel on mountain roads and rugged ground, in contradistinction to Arabian stock brought from Asia Minor or Greece. See Lane *op. cit.* i, p.186. (S)

would have been long, and there would have been no water; and the journey would have taken an extra day.'

The Muslims found themselves in the middle of the forest, and the guide repeated what he had said: 'It wouldn't have been any different if I had taken you by the bottom road: the people would have been exhausted from the journey because of the scarcity of water.' The Muslims became [even more] bewildered, and their moaning and groaning redoubled. The imām then said to the troops: 'Get to work on the trees with your swords.' The trees were enormous. The army followed his advice, and hacked away at the trees with their swords from the forenoon prayer time, until the sun sank in the west, and eventually broke through to a wide road.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: When the imām advised the troops to hack their way through the forest with their swords, they were exhausted. They said, 'We have been battling infidels; and now we are compelled to battle the forest.' But when they had hacked their way through the forest and arrived at an open road, they were amazed and thanked God, and the imām as well, for his advice.

[Elephants and wild antelopes]

The troop then came upon the river 'Awāš which was full of water, and travelled a further two days' journey [f°13] from the 'Awāš.

On the third day, at the morning prayer time, they arrived at a place named Kūb[152] - a mighty river. They had hardly had time to halt before a cloud of dust swirled up behind them, filling the sky so that they could not see the mountains or the trees for the amount of dust. The Muslims thought that a troop of infidels was pursuing them, so the imām organised his forces, trooped the cavalry, readied their equipment for battle, and then mounted.

The wazir 'Addolī approached him and said, 'Don't go[153] yourself; let us go and spare you the trouble, and we will seek out information.' The imām

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[152] Kūb, كوب. Gujarat: Qūb, قوب. (S)

[153] لا تركب: lit. 'don't ride'. A.-P. treats the imam's reply as ironical: 'non, je ne monte pas à cheval; je suis un moine et je ferai comme les moines'. (S)

replied, 'Why should I not go? I am a God-fearing man. However I will follow the example of other God-fearing men. What should be done is plain enough.' So then the imām sent horsemen off to bring news back to him. These horsemen returned and said, 'this dust cloud is not caused by a troop of infidels, but by the tramping of herds of elephants and wild antelopes.'

After this the Muslims went on until they came to Dir, on the border of the Muslim territory. There the imām pitched the White Tent, and brought out the *fifth* part of the booty even to the very thread and needle. The *fifth* part comprised five-hundred head of slaves, a thousand head of livestock and a vast number of mules. The imām, victorious, his status enhanced, and exceedingly happy then entered his city of Hārar where he divided the *fifth* part among the eight categories that the Most High God described in his illustrious book.[154]

[The fourth *jihād*]

He lingered hardly any time in the city before he organised another expedition - may the Most High God have mercy upon him.

The storyteller says: He sent messages to a group of Somali tribes and others as well. He sent them some of the Abyssinian booty and wrote them a letter in which he goaded them on to a *jihād* and commanded them to respond out of obedience to the Omniscient King. He also wrote down the saying of the Most High: 'Go forth lightly or heavily laden and carry out the *jihād* for the sake of God, with your property and your persons.'[155] He said in the course of this, 'Whoever aids the religion of God, God will aid him; and whoever feels he can do without this, then God will do without him'.

He then despatched three persons with the letters and waited to see what their replies would be. Among those whom he dispatched was 'Alī Goitā bin 'Adrūḥ. His father was one of the courageous heroes who died a martyr in Bālī[156] - may God the Most High have mercy upon him - in the days of Sultan

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[154]The *Qur'ān* viii, 41, mentions expressly only six categories: God, the Prophet, next of kin, orphans, the needy and wayfarers. (S)

[155]*Qur'ān* ix, 41. (S)

[156]Bāli, a subject territory, situated to the far south of the Christian empire. The territory, which was

Muḥammad. The imām sent ʿAlī to one of the Somali tribes called Yibberi.[157]

He also sent [a messenger] to the tribe of Girri which was the tribe whose leader and chieftain was Mattān bin ʿUṯmān bin Ḵāled, the Somali, his brother-in-law[158] who was one of the heroic and gracious knights who died as a martyr in the battle for the Ambā[159] as will be recalled at some length later on.

He sent [another messenger] to the tribe of Marraiḥān whose chieftain was Ḥirābū bin Goitā[160] Tēdros bin Adam, and he also sent [messengers] to the outlying Provinces to spur them on to the *jihād,* for God, and in the way of the Most High God.

The king of Abyssinia, Wanāg Sagad bin Nāʾod, had despatched traders into the country of the Muslims carrying gold, *wars,*[161] ivory, civet cats,[162] and slaves - a vast quantity of wealth that belonged to the king. They had sold their merchandise in the country of the Muslims and crossed

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largely isolated from the latter, had for several centuries been coming under increasing Muslim influence, from the east. Ludolphus, *New History of Ethiopia,* p. 14; Merid Wolde Aregay, "Political Geography of Ethiopia at the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century", pp. 625-6; Pankhurst, *Ethiopian Borderlands,* pp. 71-2. (P)

[157]An apparent reference to the Yibir, a widely diffused Somali outcaste group, consisting largely of hunters and leather-workers, also engaged in circumcision and other ritual services for the Somali population at large. I.M.Lewis, *Peoples of the Horn of Africa,* pp. 51-2, 54-5, 75, 84. 132-3. (P)

[158] صهر الامـــام may also mean 'the imam's son-in-law'. See *supra* note.[32] We know that the imām was only twenty-one when he defeated the patrician Dēgālḥān (see p. 27 *supra*) and that Mattān married his sister Fardūsa (see p. 44 *infra*). (S)

[159]A reference to the battle for Ambā Gešen described below. (P)

[160] Goitā or Goytā, the Tegrenya for 'master,' or 'lord,' Francesco da Bassano, *Vocabolario tigray-italiano,* col.883, seems to have been sometimes used as a title and sometimes as a personal name. (P)

[161] *Wars: memecylon tinctorium,* a leguminous plant from the Yemen whose sap provides a yellow dye; also used as a linament. (S)

[162]Civet cats: prized for the musk obtained from their anal glands. This musk was one of the principal exports from Ethiopia. (S) See R.Pankhurst, *Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia,* pp. 217, 219, 344. (P)

the [Red] Sea to aš-Šiḥr[163] and 'Aden[164] and then they turned back and returned, seeking their own country and the presence of the king.

The imām got to know about them, stole their wealth, which then became booty for the Muslims, and divided it among the tribes for the sake of the *jihād* in the way of God. They were strengthened by this wealth, against the infidels.

Two of the messengers returned from their journey bearing good news about the arrival of the Somali tribes. 'No one heard your letter read out,' the two of them said, 'without responding obediently to the Most High God. They have responded to your plea. Great numbers of them have equipped themselves with armour made from chain rings with overlapping tiers. The tribes have followed one another, kinsfolk in the footsteps of kinsfolk, tribe in the footsteps of tribe.'

[The Somali tribes reach Hārar]

The first of the tribes to reach the imām was Habr Maqdī with their lord and chieftain Aḥmad Girri bin Ḥusain, the Somali. They encamped in a place called Qaša in the heights above the valley of Hārar. They showed off their equipment and their weapons, and paraded their horses. They were knights, and what knights! And they were foot-soldiers; and what foot-soldiers! The imām rejoiced at their arrival exceedingly. They met the imām face to face, and he welcomed them with the warmest of welcomes. He gave them gifts of apparel, and provisions, and treated them graciously, garbing their chieftain, Aḥmad Girri, in particularly exquisite clothing.

After them it was the tribe of Girri who came up. Their chieftain was Mattān[165] bin 'Uṭmān bin Kāled, the Somali. They showed off their weaponry and armour, paraded their horses and had their bows slung sash-like over their

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[163]As-Sihr, a stretch of southern Arabia, between Aden and Oman. (P)

[164]The port of Aden, then as later, handled a large proportion of the import-export trade of eastern Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, and was in particularly close commercial contact with the port of Zayla'. R.Pankhurst, *Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia*, pp. 348-51, 356-8. (P)

[165]Mattan. Gujarat: Maitan. (S)

shoulders as they met the imām face to face. He commanded them then to go ahead to a place called Sim. Their chieftain had brought with him his wife, Fardūsa, the sister of the imām Aḥmad. And he set out ahead, he and his army.

Then the tribe of Zarba[166] came up after them. Their chieftain was the sultan Muḥammad,[167] son of the paternal aunt of the imām. With him were one-thousand-and-sixty notable infantry, and forty knights. The imām made them welcome and showed them his favour. He [sultan Muḥammad] resided at Hārar. The imām was exceedingly delighted at this and gave thanks to the Most High God.

The army camped around the city, with each tribe being kept apart from the others. The tribe of the Marraiḥān was, however, wavering. Their chieftain was a man fond of intrigue and procrastination. Extremely wily, he loved double-dealing and swindles. The imām organised some of his soldiers and went to the Marraiḥān and confronted Ḥirābū and his tribe and said to him, 'Why are you lagging behind in coming on the *jihād* ?' Ḥirābū complained about his plight, and excused himself on the grounds of his poverty-stricken state.

The imām accepted his excuse, and then said to him, 'But no good will come to you from just wishing [that things will improve]'.[168] Thereupon Ḥirābū appointed [f°14] his nephew to command the Marraiḥān and they rallied around the imām - ninety cavalry and more than seven-hundred foot-soldiers - with Ḥirābū bringing up the rear. The imām went back to his city of Hārar, taking the tribe of Marraiḥān with him.

Thereupon the imām made preparations for Abyssinia, for the *jihād* for the sake of the Most High God. The imām equipped his soldiers and his army and all the tribes. He sold the gold and silver jewellery of his wives, and the furnishings of his house in order to provide the tribes and the soldiers with weapons of war, keeping nothing back for himself - may God forgive him, for

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[166]Zarba. Gujarat: Raziya, رزيّة. (S)

[167]Muḥammad. Gujarat adds ' ... bin 'Alī'. (S)

[168] B:'Tu n'as rien a espérer'; A.-P.: 'Il n'y a rien bon à espérer de toi'. (S)

he hoped only for the reward held out by the Most High God, the Gracious One, and sought from God that he might make him dwell in the paradise of delights, and bless him with the *houris* with the intensely white and deep black eyes, and enfold him in His never-ending Favour.

[The expedition sets out: birth of Aḥmad's son Muḥammad]

Then the cry went up for the commencement of the march into Abyssinia. He set out with his soldiers, and the tribes coming one after the other, banners unfurled. The imām set out with his wife Del Wanbarā, daughter of the emir Maḥfūẓ; she was pregnant. They reached a town called Zīfah where they found food and good things in abundance. They were met by Garād Dīn bin Adam, a man of peace who loved the poor and the unfortunate, and who frequently called on the name of the Prophet - may God bless him and grant him salvation. He treated them graciously and hospitably; as did Garād Šama'ūn; and Garād Kāmal the brother-in-law of the imām, to whose sister, Mūnisah the daughter of 'Uṯmān, he was married; and the emir Mujāhid. They paid profound homage to the imām and his army; as did Absamā Nūr. All of them greatly honoured the imām.

The army camped for six days at Zīfah. The imām Aḥmad's wife, Del Wanbarā gave birth in Zīfah, and bore a boy who was called Muḥammad. She deferred going on the expedition on account of this, and stayed with the imām's sister Mūnisah. Thereupon the Muslims set out for Abyssinia until they reached a place called Dir which was a river with an abundance of water. They joined forces there - the Muslims and the heroes who professed the unity of God - small and great alike.

[Wanāg Sagad leaves for Bēt Amḥārā]

The storyteller says: News of the arrival of the Muslims reached the king of Abyssinia Wanāg Sagad when he was in the country of Bādēqē.[169] His

[169]Badēqē, or Badēgē, one of Emperor Lebna Dengel's 'royal towns,' was situated two days' march westwards from the 'Awāš river, and in the view of Huntingford some 20 miles south-south-west of

spies informed him, 'The Muslims are advancing in your direction, devasting your country and burning your churches. This force is deadly serious, and one to be reckoned with.'

The king summoned his patricians and chamberlains and the special military advisers of his kingdom, and then set out from Bādēqē for Bēt Amḥārā,[170] the capital of his kingdom, and of the kingdom of his fathers and his forefathers, of their homes and their official dwellings.

He left behind in Bādēqē one of his patricians called 'Uṭmān bin Dar 'Alī who had been a Muslim, like his father before him, but in the time of the sultan Muḥammad was captured by the infidels, apostatised from Islam and became a Christian. The king made him a patrician, but afterwards he repented and returned to Islam when he had had many children born to him in the country of the infidels. He took part in the *jihād* and died a martyr in the battle for the Ambā as will be described later on.

When the king reached Bēt Amḥārā he assembled his forces, mobilised his troops, and around him gathered the Christian people, the tribes of Tegrē,[171] the tribes of Agaw,[172] the tribes of Gojjām, [173] the people of

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modern Šano. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 90, 123. (P)

[170]The term Bēt Amhārā, i.e. *bēt*, or House (or, in effect, Seat) of Amhārā, was given to the region of Amhārā Saynt, which was regarded as the centre of Ethiopian royalty, as well as of the Christian realm. Ethiopian tradition, as later mentioned in our text (see p.220 *infra*), held that Bēt Amhārā was a vast area, guarded by five gates: one on the road to Walaqā, the second on that of Akhi Afaji (or Aheyya Fājj), the fourth to Miat, in Geddem, and the fifth facing Wasel. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 80, 129. (P)

[171]Tegrē, the most northerly Ethiopian province, was staunchly Christian, and the site of many of the country's earliest, and most important, antiquities, including those of Aksum. Ludolphus, *New History of Ethiopia*, pp. 16-17; Merid Wolde Aregay, 'Political Geography of Ethiopia at the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century,' pp. 618-19; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 98-100. The territory, because of its proximity to the Red Sea port of Massawa, was relatively well supplied with fire-arms, and other imported goods. This was noticed a century and a half later by the Scottish traveller James Bruce. He observes, 'What, in special manner makes the riches of Tigré, is, that it lies nearest the market, which is Arabia;... all the merchandise destined to cross the Red Sea must pass through this province, so that the governor has the choice of all commodities wherewith to make his market. The strongest male, the most beautiful female slaves, the purest gold, the largest teeth of ivory, all must pass through his hand. Fire-arms moreover, which for many years have decided who is the most powerful in Abyssinia, all these come from Arabia, and not one can be purchased without his knowing to whom it goes, and after his having the first refusal of it'. Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*, III,

Bagēmder,[174] the people of Angot, the people of Qedā,[175] the people of Gañ and the people of Baḥr[176].

The whole of Abyssinia was in turmoil. Twenty-four of the patricians were from amongst the most illustrious patricians of Tegrē. Under each patrician there was a force too great to be counted. The same could be said of the people of Bagēmder, the people of Angot, the people of Qedā and the people of Gañ.[177] They made up an army that was like a plague of locusts whose number the Most High God alone knows. All the Christians, and the infidel army, with their soldiers assembled in Bēt Amḥārā in untold numbers,

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251-2. (P)

[172]The Agaw, an Animist and Cushitic people. Many, at this period, inhabited lands south of the Blue Nile, but, as a result of pressure from the Oromo, then better known as Gāllā, later migrated north of the river, where Agawmeder, or the Country of the Agaw, was later situated. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia*, pp. 22-3, 56; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 88, 146; Merid Wolde Aregay, 'Political Geography at the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century,' p. 621. (P)

[173]Gojjām, situated to the north-west of the Ethiopian realm, was a largely Christian province, also inhabited however by some Animist Agaws. The territory was isolated, to the east and south, by the great bend of the Blue Nile. This, in the absence of bridges of any kind, rendered Gojjām virtually inaccessible to invaders, except from the Muslim Sudan. Ludolphus, *New History of Ethiopia*, p. 16; Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, II, 580; *idem*, *Some Records of Ethiopia*, pp. 17-18; Merid Wolde Aregay, 'Political Geography of Ethiopia at the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century,' pp. 521-2. (P)

[174]Bagēmder, according to folk etymology, the *meder*, or land, of *bag*, or sheep, was a Christian province in the north-west of the Ethiopian realm. Situated between Gojjām in the south, Amhārā in the east, and Angot and Tegrē in the north, the territory's importance was later enhanced by the rise in the area of Gondar as the imperial capital. Ludolphus, *New History of Ethiopia*, p. 14; Merid Wolde Aregay, 'Political Geography of Ethiopia at the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century,' pp. 620-1; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 81, 119. (P)

[175]Qedā, a small northern territory in which Emperor Zar'a Yā'qob had earlier placed a garrison. Described by Huntingford as a 'lost province' its former precise location is today uncertain. Perruchon, *Chroniques de Zar'a Yâ'eqôb et de Ba'eda Mâryâm*, p. 15; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 81, 95-6, 101, 123. (P)

[176]A reference to the northern Ethiopian highlands towards, or adjacent to, the Red Sea. The area was often referred to as the Country of the Bāḥr Nagāš, 'ruler of the sea'. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 54-7, II, 428-9; R.Pankhurst, *Ethiopian Borderlands*, 218-20. (P)

[177]Gañ, another unidentified province in which Emperor Zar'a Yā'qob had earlier established garrisons. Perruchon, *Chroniques de Zar'a Yâ'eqôb et de Ba'eda Mâryâm*, p. 16; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 95, 101, 123, 129. (P)

wearing armour composed of chain rings set in neatly tiered rows, and with awesome weaponry.

The author, may God the Most High have mercy upon him, says, I heard this from 'Abbās, one of the Muslims who was in the king's presence at Bēt Amḥārā that day, an apostate who returned to Islam, and what a true Muslim he turned out to be!

He reported that the king said to him, 'What do you say, 'Abbās? When the imām sees this army, will he be able to withstand my attack, or not?' He said, 'And I said, "He personally will continue to follow one of two courses that he finds attractive;[178] but as for what the army will do, that I do not know".' The king said to 'Abbās, 'You spoke the truth. If you had said that the imām's army would resist my attack, I would have considered you a liar, and I would have had no faith in you. You did well when you said to me "I don't know".'

The storyteller says: In the meantime, the patrician Ura'ī 'Uṯmān the apostate, whom the king had left behind him in Bādēqē, gathered together the infidel forces, such as the people of Dawāro, and the people of Bāli, the people of Wanāg Jadab, the people of Wanāg Ambā,[179] the Māyā people,[180] the people of Ar'ān,[181] the people of Ganz,[182] the people of Faṭagār, the people of Dāmot.

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[178] باحد الحسنين : in other words, he will not relinquish the *jihād:* either he will win and be victorious on earth; or he will die fighting, and will be victorious in heaven. The king was unaware that 'Abbās was speaking in a riddle that would make sense only to a Muslim. (S)

[179]The inclusion of the word Wanāg, literally 'lion,' in these two place-names may suggest that these animals were then to be found in the area. (P)

[180]The Māya, a group of uncertain ethnic origin, lived mainly to the east of Šawā, not a few of them in the vicinity of Mount Zeqwālā. Renowned as archers who made use of poisoned arrows, they were originally subjects of Emperor Lebna Dengel, but later transferred their allegiance to imām Aḥmed. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 109, 123-4, 126. (P)

[181]Ar'ān was a locality apparently situated between Faṭagār and the country of the Māya. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 123, 130. (P)

[182]Ganz, an animist tributary territory since the time of Emperor Zar'a Yā'qob, was situated south of the Blue Nile, according to Huntingford, between the Mugar and Gudar rivers. Perruchon, *Chroniques de Zar'a Yâ'eqôb et de Ba'eda Mâryâm*, p.112; Ludolphus, *New History of Ethiopia*, p. 16; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p.117; R.Pankhurst, *Ethiopian Borderlands*, pp. 210-11. (P)

There were seven main patricians, each of whom had a mighty army under him. In the time of the grandfather [183] of the king of Abyssinia among the Faṭagār there used to be only one chieftain who was a patrician. But this [present] king had created seven patricians who had been vying with one another to do battle with the Muslims. [f°15]

So numerous was the army, and the bands of infidels, that no one was left in the kingdom who had not been summoned to make war against the Muslims, or to ward them off from their country, and their churches, and [especially] the king's church which was in Bādēqē, in the same place where his residence was. It was the imām's intention to put it to the torch.

The Christians said 'He will not reach the church until we have been killed, to the last man of us.' The patrician assembled his army and his soldiers in Bādēqē on the look-out out for the imām, just as the king of Abyssinia was on the lookout in Bēt Amḥārā, with his army and his soldiers.

[Aḥmad commissions his commanders]

The storyteller says: Now, as for the situation with the Muslims: when they had gathered together in Dir, they set out thence a journey of two days, reaching a place called Baqal-zār,[184] which was a river with an abundance of water.

At that time the imām assembled his forces and called up his army. He tied a white standard to a spear, and entrusted it to the wazir 'Addolī and the people of Sim rallied to him,[185] from the tribe of the Somalis the Habr Maqdī, and the tribe of Aḥmad Girri, and with them two-hundred cavalry and two-thousand infantry like savage lions.

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[183]Emperor Ba'eda Māryām (1468-1478). (P)

[184]Baqal-zār, a name earlier mentioned in the chronicle of Emperor 'Amda Ṣeyon, was employed for both an area and a river. Their exact location is uncertain, but Huntingford would seem on good ground in arguing that they lay inland from the 'Awāš river, and 'might have been somewhere on the north side of the river Kässäm'. Huntingford, *Glorious Victories of 'Amda Ṣeyon*, pp. 20, 31, 37, 56-7, 106; *idem*, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 89-90, 121. (P)

[185]Elsewhere I have translated ضمّ transitively. For intransitive usages see Lane, *op. cit.* v, p.1801: ضمّ القوم: 'the people joined together'. (S)

The chiefs of the cavalry were from the Malasāī[186]contingent of the *mujāhidūn*: the emir Mujāhid Suḥa, Absamā Nūr, Garād Šama'ūn, Garād Barhān, Balaw 'Abd,[187] 'Alūš[188] bin al-Hegano, Aiyūb and K̲āled al-Warādī: this latter was their guide along the route. They were all drawn from the courageous heroes of the cavalry and foot-soldiers. K̲āled was their guarantee [as guide][189] and he likewise was from the number of knights well-known for courage: al-Ura'ī Nūr Qāṭā bin 'Umar, brother-in-law of Garād Maḥfūẓ; Farašaḥam 'Uṯmān Yemāj;[190] Amājad Aḥmad bin al-Ḥusain; Sār Abū Bakr; Mūminât Abū Bakr; Del Sagad, the knight of Sim; *šum* Waradāī; hegano 'Uṯmān Waradāī:[191] all of these were converts to Islam. Their conversion was sincere, and they fought a fine *jihād* for God.

That consummate lord, the abstemious fighter of the *jihād*, Wāšara sheikh Hāmed, son of the consummate ascetic, was one of the number of learned and pious ascetics who followed these afore-mentioned knights.

Then he [the imām] tied a red standard to a spear and entrusted it to his brother-in-law Mattān bin 'Uṯmān bin K̲āled, the Somali, their chieftain, their knight, and the most courageous, the bravest of them all. There rallied to him one-hundred-and-ten knights and three-thousand infantry, along with the tribe of Hārti,[192] the tribe of Jairān and the tribe of Mazra, all of whom were Somalis.

He tied a third standard, yellow and red combined, to the spear which he entrusted to the wazir Nūr bin Ibrahīm. The tribes of Šawā,[193]and the tribes

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[186]The term Malasai was also used in the royal chronicles, in Ge'ez, and also in Amharic, to signify Muslims. Esteves Pereira, *Historia de Minās*, p. 59; Guidi, *Vocabolario amarico-italiano*, c. 55. (P)

[187] Balū 'Abd. Gujarat omits. (S)

[188] Gujarat: علواش. (S)

[189] ضمن : B reads ضمّ and translates 'il avait réuni des cavaliers ...'. A.-P. reads it as a name, 'Dhamm Kalad'. (S)

[190]Yemāj. Gujarat omits, along with the next three names up to and including Mūminât Abū Bakr. (S)

[191]Haijen. Gujarat: Haijem. I take this to be the title 'hegano'. See note[360] *infra*. (S)

[192]The Hārti were members of a confederacy of the Somali Dārod clan. I.M.Lewis, *Peoples of the Horn of Africa*, p. 15. (P)

[193]This passage does not refer to the well-known Christian province of Šawā, but rather to a Muslim

of Hargāyā[194] rallied to him. At that time their chieftain was Muḥammad bin Ibrahīm, the brother of the imām;[195] and the army of Jarīr whose chieftain was the half-brother of the Sultan 'Umar Dīn from his mother. There were one-hundred cavalry amongst them, and two-thousand foot-soldiers. The imām attached them to the wazir Nūr bin Ibrahīm.

Amongst the leaders of the cavalry were the sheikh Dāūd, the shiekh Zamāla, Garād 'Alī Fanqala, Goitā Ibrahīm lord of Gedayā, Farašaḥam Wasan Jai and Goitā 'Uṭmān. All of these knights were courageous, as were those who followed them.

[The inscriptions on the imām's standard]

The imām's standard, which was in the centre at this time, was white with a red border. Written around its circumference was 'In the name of God the beneficient, the merciful. Surely we have given you a clear victory: that God may forgive you your past faults and those still to come, and make perfect His Favour for you and keep you on the right path: and that God might assist you with a most powerful assistance';[196] 'help from God and victory close by.'[197] 'God has written down: Surely I will prevail, I and my Messengers: God is most certainly strong and mighty.'[198] 'Helping the believers is ever an obligation for us'.[199] 'Most truly we assist our

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political entity of the same name, earlier situated further to the east. Cerulli, 'Il sultanato dello Scioa nel secolo XIII secondo un nuovo documento storico,' *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* (1941), I, 5-14; Huntingford, *Glorious Victories of 'Amda Ṣeyon*, pp. 3, 14-16; *idem*, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 76, 79, 86, 88-9. (P)

[194]Hārgāyā, a locality earlier mentioned in Emperor 'Amda Ṣeyon's chronicle, was probably located, according to Huntingford, between Kwelgora and Baqul-zār. Huntingford, *Glorious Victories of 'Amda Ṣeyon*, pp. 31, 56; *idem*, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 89-90. (P)

[195]The imām's brother, here called Muḥammad, was probably, as Basset suggests, the chief later referred to in the chronicle of Emperor Galāwdēwos as Seyd Mehmad, i.e. cited in the Turkish form of the name. Basset, *Histoire de l'Abyssinie*, p. 87; Conzelman, *Chronique de Galâwdêwos*, p. 133. (P)

[196]*Qur'ān* xlviii, 1-3. (S)

[197]*Qur'ān* lxi, 13. (S)

[198]*Qur'ān* lviii, 21. (S)

[199]*Qur'ān* xxx, 47. (S)

Messengers, and those who believe in the life of this world, and in the Day when the martyrs shall rise up'.[200] 'Surely our word has gone out concerning our servants the Messengers. Most certainly they shall be the assisted ones And most surely our force alone shall be victorious.'[201] 'O our Lord, pour down on us patience, and make our steps firm, and help us against the unbelieving people.'[202] 'O our lord, pour down on us patience, and may we die as submissive ones.'[203] 'Have you not considered the chieftains of the sons of Israel[204] after the time of Moses when they said to their prophet "Raise up for us a king so that we may fight in the Way of God." He said to them: "is it not possible that when fighting is laid down for you, you will not fight?" They replied: "What reason would there be for our not fighting in the way of God? We have been forced to abandon our homes and our children." But when fighting was decreed for them, all but a few of them fled; and God knows the evil ones.'[205] 'God has surely heard the cry of those who said "God is poor and we are rich." We will write down what they say: how they killed the prophets without reason; and we will say: "let them taste the punishment of burning".'[206]

In the middle of the standard there were four consecutive lines: The first line read, 'Have you not seen those to whom it was said: "Restrain your hands, be assiduous in prayer and pay the alms tax. But when fighting is decreed for them, behold a faction of them fears men as it ought to have feared God, or with a greater fear. Say: "O our Lord, why have you decreed fighting for us? Why did you not defer it for us until our appointed time of death drew near?" Say: "This world's riches are as nothing."[207]

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[200] *Qur'ān* xl, 51. (S)

[201] *Qur'ān* xxxvii, 171-173. (S)

[202] *Qur'ān* ii, 250. (S)

[203] *Qur'ān* vii, 126. (S)

[204] Gujarat correctly reads الم تر الى الملا الخ. (S)

[205] *Qur'ān* ii, 246. (S)

[206] *Qur'ān* iii, 181; some eds. iii, 180. (S)

[207] *Qur'ān* iv, 76; some eds. iv, 77. (S)

The second line read: 'I have done good things to you with what is living, and what is authentic; with what [f°16] will never die. I have repelled evil from you by repeating thousands of times: "there is no might, and no power other than in God who is the Elevated One, and all powerful".'[208]

The third line read: 'The next life is exquisite for whoever fears God.'[209] 'Describe for them the true tidings about the two sons of Adam. When they offered sacrifice, the sacrifice of only one of the two was accepted: the other's was not accepted. This latter one said: "I will surely kill you". To which the other replied: "God accepts only from those who fear him."'[210]

The fourth line contained the following two verses that it is said 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, may God be pleased with him, had had inscribed on his standard: 'If you engage in war, then do not be faint-hearted; be patient in its visissitudes, death will come at the appointed time.'

This was inscribed that day by our lord the Qur'ānic teacher, the holy man, the pious Mufti of the Muslims, our Lord Abū Bakr bin Nāṣr ad-Dīn bin Muḥammad also known as 'Aršūna'. He was among those who witnessed the battle of Šemberā Korē with the imām Aḥmad. He witnessed other battles with the imām Aḥmad. He was a devout man, exceedingly attached to reciting the Qur'ān. Whether on the march, or seated, standing or mounted on his horse he would be studying the Qur'ān. He was a preacher for the Muslims and acted as their imām for prayers. When he read the prayers he would only read verses about war and battle, and never ceased reading the verses that honoured the *mujāhidūn* in the way of God. He spurred them on to battle, exciting their desire for it.

[208] The *Tamjīd :* لا حول ولا قوة الا بالله العلى العظيم 'There is no might and no power other than in God the Elevated and all-powerful One' : *Qur'ān* xviii, 40; some eds. xviii, 39. (S)

[209] *Qur'ān* iv, 76; some eds. iv, 77. (S)

[210] *Qur'ān* v, 30; some eds. v, 27. (S)

[The names of the knights fighting with Aḥmad]

That day the imām of the Muslims Aḥmad bin Ibrahīm was in the centre. Surrounding him were two-hundred horsemen who were his companions and his equerries, like raging lions, mounted on harnessed horses.

Among the chieftains of the cavalry renowned for their courage were the emir Ḥusain al-Gāturī lord of Dawāro after the conquest; and the emir Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad, the cousin of the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him. He had been captured by the infidels during the expedition against Dawāro as we have mentioned. They sent him to the king of Abyssinia.

The imām sent a messenger to them who said to the king: 'This prisoner whom you have is my cousin. We will send you money for his ransom.' When the king heard that he was the cousin of the imām he had him sent off to a distant part of the land of Abyssinia called Dāmot. This was just how God wanted it - so that his Muslim servant should be saved from the hands of the idol-worshippers.[211] He rescued him by his power to the extent that he escaped from the prison and his bonds. He would walk determinedly by night, while by day he would hide himself, remaining alone in deserts and wastelands until he finally reached the country of the Muslims four months before the battle of Šemberā Korē .

He was present at Šemberā Korē and at other expeditions, and fought the *jihād* for God, and his was an authentic *jihād.* He was one of the courageous ones, generous, powerful and intrepid, as we will describe later.

And Kūšem Abū Bakr, devout, abstemious, a worshipper of God, a *mujāhid*, an axis: he died a martyr at Dawāro as we will describe later.

And Garād Aḥmūšū bin Aḥmad, a notable hero; an exterminator in horseback. And Garād 'Abd an-Nāṣr lord of Ganz [212] after the conquest; one of the pious *mujāhidūn*, and one of the courageous and renowned ones, who sacrificed his blood, zealous for the way of the Most High God. He was one

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[211] i.e. the Christians. (P)

[212] Ganz. Gujarat: Jatr الجتر . Gujarat attributes to 'Abd an-Naṣr what is said below of Ṣabr ad-Dīn. (S)

of the members of the household of the imām, their servant, who gave him good counsel in all matters.

And Ṣabr ad-Dīn, a fearless horseman who, if ever he saw an infidel, could not control himself until he had seized him. He was like a camel in heat. Blood flowed from his nose, so infuriated did he become for God, and so deep was his longing for the *Jihād* in the way of God.

And Farašaḥam Sulṭān bin 'Alī from the tribes of Yamli. And his companion Nūr bin Naṣr bin 'Alī. And Garād Ṣiddīq bin 'Alī who governed Šārkāh[213] after the conquest.

And Farašaḥam Dīn. He had been close to the Ḥaṭī[214] and was a Muslim who persevered in his religion after the death of the imām.[215] He then went with the emir Nūr, son of the wazir Mujāhid[216] to the country of the Muslims, to the city of Hārar and died there, may the Most High God have mercy upon him. He governed Leqāyah. And Farašaḥam 'Alī, lord of Angot after the conquest.

And al-Ura'ī Muḥammad bin 'Abd al-Wāhed. And the emir Abū Bakr nicknamed 'Qaṭīn' which means 'the gaunt'.[217] He was from among those renowned for their courage, and among the rare horsemen whose exploits became proverbial. And Goitā Tēdros bin Adam. And Jāšā 'Umar who after the conquest governed the land of Walaqā[218] on the border of the Abbāy[219] which is a mighty river that meanders and empties itself into the Egyptian

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[213] شرحـــة : sic! elsewhere شرخة . (S) Šārkāh , a small Muslim territory west of Dawāro. Merid Wolde Aregay, 'Political Geography of Ethiopia at the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century,' p. 625; R.Pankhurst, *Ethiopian Borderlands*, pp. 201-2. (P)

[214] See *supra* note[48]. (S)

[215] B adds 'que Dieu lui fasse miséricorde'. The *Futūḥ* was written, *pace* Paulitschke, after 1542, (S)

[216] Nūr, son of Mujāhid, subsequently became emir of Hārar in AH 959, i.e. AD 1551-2. (P)

[217] *Qatin*, from the Amharic to 'become thin'. Guidi, *Vocabolario amarico-italiano*, cols. 303-4. (P)

[218] ولقه. (S) Walaqā was the name of both a locality and a river, immediately east of the Abbāy, or Blue Nile. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 52, 72. (P)

[219] The Abbāy, or Blue Nile, the principal river of north-west Ethiopia, begins in Lake Ṭānā, after which it almost encircles Gojjām, before passing into Sudan, where it joins the White Nile at K[illegible] detailed description of the river, and of its many tributaries, see Ludolph pp. 34-40, and, more especially, Cheesman, *Lake Tana and*

Nile. And Takla bin Agaw. And Aḥmad Dīn bin Ḵāled bin Hargāyā Muḥammed.

And Garād ʻUṯmān bin Jūhar governor of Jān Zalaq after the conquest. And al-Uraʻī Abūn bin ʻUṯmān Bin Suleimān bin as-Sulṭān Muḥammad bin Badlāī from the line of Saʻd ad-Dīn. He was one of the courageous heroes.

And Bešāra bin Jašū[220] who died as a martyr in the battle of Māyā as will be recalled later on. And of those who followed them, there was not one who had not attacked a hundred infidels or more.

The author says: The Muslims set out from Baqal-zār and reached Kubā which is a great river. Between them and the river ʻAwāš was a journey of two days through the bleakest of deserts, without water. Some of them were for continuing on to [f°17] Abyssinia from this place but they would only be able to travel by night because of the heat of the sun and the scarcity of water. The Muslims deliberated amongst themselves what to do. Some of them said, 'Let us travel by night,' while others said 'Let us travel by day'. They entrusted themselves to their Creator, who provided for all their schemes, and set out by day, saying: 'O our Lord, our Creator, do not abandon us'.

They continued on and none of them knew where water was to be found. While they were travelling in this fashion, their journey became exhausting from lack of water, but thanks to the high-mindedness of the *mujāhidun* and to their putting God first, they found water flowing on the top of the ground even though it had not rained, and the region was not known, before this, for having water. They dismounted there by the water, and watered their horses and their pack-animals, and after drinking their fill of the water, they camped there overnight.

On the second day they reached the ʻAwāš. The Muslims' guide over the route this time was Ḵāled al-Warādī, along with Jimmā ʻAlī, Azerī bin Dalmassi and his brother. These were they who guided the Muslims.

The author says: When the Muslims had spent the night near the ʻAwāš one of the Muslims whose name was Ibn Dalmassi stole one of the

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[220] بن جشو : see *infra* pp. 268, 312, 321 where Bešāra's father is called جوشوا . (S)

horses from the Muslim cavalry belonging to Abūn Dāwah, brother of the emir Mujāhid, and rode it to the infidel camp. The horse's owner informed the imām. The *mujāhidūn* assembled and read out the *Fātiḥa*[221] against him. When the time for the forenoon prayer came, there was the horse, returned all by itself. And what happened to the one who stole the horse is not known even until now. Some said that he was drowned in the 'Awāš; others said that he was killed. All this was because of the merit of the *mujāhidūn*. The Muslims said: 'This is one of the signs of victory, if the Most High God wills it.'

So they travelled from the 'Awāš and arrived at the land of Mergāy. They regrouped there. The Somali tribes complained about the scarcity of supplies, so the imām sent the wazir 'Addolī with his army off ahead to a place called Jilbī, in the land of Abyssinia, to forage for food.

The imām Aḥmad in the meantime took the road for Kassam[222] and reached Amajah. The wazir 'Addolī who had procured some provisions, including cattle and the like, went back and returned to the imām Aḥmad.

[Aḥmad and the Muslims of Amajah]

They gathered in Amajah where they stayed three days. It was one of the towns in Abyssinia that had Muslims living in it. But it belonged to the king. Its inhabitants then went to the imām Aḥmad and said, 'The king of Abyssinia has a mighty force with him; the number of his horses is incalculable. Only the Most High God knows the number of his coats of mail, helmets, foot-soldiers and shields made of hide. Your fathers, your ancestors, the emir 'Alī, the emir Maḥfūẓ your father-in-law, along with Garād Ibrāhīm[223] and the sultans who long ago used to rule in the country of Sa'd ad-Dīn - not one of them ever attacked the king of Abyssinia in his own country, in his own dwelling-place. Instead, they would lead expeditions to the borders of the country, collect booty and then return. And when one of

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[221] The opening chapter of the *Qur'ān*. (S)

[222] The Kassam river, a tributary of the 'Awāš is located due east of modern Addis Ababa. (P)

[223] ابرهيم : elsewhere he is called ابراهيم . (S)

the infidels pursued them they would fight [to protect] what they possessed. But you want to attack the king of Abyssinia in his own country! Watch that you do not bring ruin upon the Muslims.'

The imām replied: 'The *jihād* in the way of God is not a hardship for the Muslims'. Then they said, 'Our only desire is for the *jihād*. Whichever one of us is killed will go to paradise;[224] and whoever amongst us survives, will survive happily. We know that the Christian dog[225] Wanāg Sagad is powerful; and numerous. But we do not fight them by force or by numbers; we do battle only by this religion which God has graced us with.' Then the people of Amajah started weeping, put copies of the Qur'ān on top of their heads, treated the soldiers hospitably, called victory down upon them, and triumph over the enemies of the Most High God.

The storyteller says: Then the Muslims set out on the fourth day, at the time of the afternoon prayer, and came to a halt in the land of Jān Zalaq. Near the Muslims there was a mountain called Kassam, upon the top of which they could see the infidels. The imām Aḥmad set out, after choosing from his army thirty horsemen and they approached the mountain. The infidels saw the Muslims and how few of them there were, so four of the patricians came down against them, amongst whom was the patrician Naṣr, governor of Mergāy with fifty horsemen and a great number of foot-soldiers.

The Muslims met them with staunch hearts, and finely-honed swords, and penetrating spears. The first of the Muslims to attack one of the infidel cavalry was Muḥammad bin'Adrūḥ who pierced him with his spear, throwing him from his horse to the ground: then God cast his soul into the fire, 'an evil place to settle in'.[226] Then, after him, Ḵāled al-Warādī attacked one of the patricians, striking him a fatal blow with his spear, and he fell dead from his horse, may the Most High God not have mercy upon him. The infidels then

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[224] See note[285] and its context *infra*. (S)

[225] كلب النصرانية : see *infra* p.119 and *passim* for كلب الحبشة : Abyssinian dog. Dogs are regarded by Muslims as unclean, and 'dog,' for Muslims, is a term of opprobrium, as is the term *idol-worshippers* or *polytheists* - المشركون . See *Qur'ān* vi, 121; ix, 28,33; xii, 106. (S)

[226] *Qur'ān* xiv, 29. (S)

turned tail and went back up the mountain, going down the other side. A detachment of them was utterly destroyed.

The Muslims took booty that included twelve cavalry horses and a great number of mules and pack animals. They said: 'This is the first victory'. Then the imām and his companions returned to the camp, where their [other] companions were. The people of the camp had lighted fires. [f°18] Some of the people were recalling the Most High God; others were blessing the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him salvation; others were reciting the Qur'ān.

The imām Aḥmad had captured a troop of the infidels and he questioned them about the king of Abyssinia and his party. They replied: 'The patrician Ura'ī 'Uṯmān bin Dār ʿAlī has a vast force with him in a place called Dukām,[227] which is a big river not far from you.' Garād Maḥfūẓ, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, had gone to this river. And as for the king Wanāg-Sagad he was in Bēt Amḥārā with his forces and his army. The forces of Tegrē had arrived at Dabra Berhān.[228] Their patrician was [Azmāč] Takla Iyasus. 'Azmāč'[229] in their language means the same as 'patrician' for the Byzantines.[230] He had with him many patricians, among them Feqra Iyasus, and the patrician Wāšū 'Uṯmān who had been a Muslim and then apostatised: may the curse of God be upon him.

The storyteller - may God have mercy upon him, says: Then the Muslims left the land of Jan Zalaq and halted in time for the afternoon prayer at the approaches to a place called Mesk,[231] where they passed the night.

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[227] The Dukham river, another tributary of the Awāš, situated some 20 miles SE of Addis Ababa. (P)

[228] Dabra Berhān, an historically important, and strategically well situated, settlement founded by Emperor Zar'a Yā'qob. It is located some 175 miles north-east of Addis Ababa. Pankhurst, *History of Ethiopian Towns*, pp. 35-40. (P)

[229] *Azmāč*, a lowly traditional Ethiopian military and hierarchical title. Kane, *Amharic-English Dictionary*, II, 1278; Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, p. 485. (P)

[230] The author is here presumably referring to the Greek, or Orthodox, Christians of whom he would have been aware. (P)

[231] *Mesk*, the Amharic for a meadow. Guidi, *Vocabolario amarico-italiano*, col. 75. (P)

In the morning of the second day they set out, and it was the time for the forenoon prayer when they sighted a group of infidels close by them. They sent a detachment of cavalry ahead to bring back news.

These captured a number of the infidels and presented them to the imām Aḥmad who questioned them. They related that the [king's] party was far off, high up [in the mountains]. So the Muslims set out and stopped at the time of the afternoon prayer by a river called Maju[232] in the land of Faṭagār.

On this day there was a driving and cold wind, so they passed the night there. When next day came, they set out, halting only when they came to a place called Masīn, the village of 'Umar Abūn. They set fire to it, as they also set fire to the king's church.

The Muslims never passed by an infidel village without destroying every trace of it.

[The battle for Bādēqē]

Upon the third day they set out, finally arriving in the neighbourhood of Bādēqē which was where the king's houses were and where his treasure was stored. The Muslims made enquiries about soldiers but no one could give them information about them. They [the townsfolk] said to them, 'there isn't a single soldier in Bādēqē'.

So the Muslims advanced towards Bādēqē without organising their forces, and without proper preparations. They dismounted from their awe-inspiring horses and rode their mules, leading their horses with halters.

While they were engaged in entering the village, the infidel army, may the Most High God forsake them, advanced like a locust plague, to trap the Muslims before they entered the village. Their adornments were unmistakeable. With their banners raised aloft, they raced like a lighted flame, protected by coats of mail like David's, [233] by obstructive helmets. In their hands were razor-sharp swords and piercing spears.

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[232]The Maju, or Mojo, river, which was located in what was then Faṭagār, is a tributary of the 'Awāš, some 80 to 100 miles south-east of Addis Ababa. (P)

[233]The *Qur'ān* credits David with special skill from God in ironmongery (sura xxxiv,10), especially in

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: The king of Abyssinia Wanāg Sagad had ordered them, 'Don't attack the Muslims until they have entered the city, and have burnt the houses and the churches.' They desired to extinguish the fire of God with their mouths: and God only consents in order to make his light perfect, even though the infidels attack it.[234]

These were the patricians who arrived at Bādēqē: there was the patrician Sarṣē Behtwadad,[235] like the patrician Dēgalḥān, brother-in-law of the king; the patrician Maḥā Ṭentā Dawāro Nagāš;[236] the patrician Ura'ī 'Uṯmān, the apostate who was the son of Suleimān, the son of Muḥammad Badlāī bin Sa'd ad-Dīn; the patrician Faṭagār; the patrician Takla Iyasus, governor of Tegrē.

The patricians were at logger-heads with one another. They, that is the afore-mentioned patricians, said, 'We will not fight the Muslims until after they have entered the village and burnt the houses and the churches as the king has commanded us. We will not disobey his command.'

On the other hand, the patricians of Tegrē, among them the patrician Robēl,[237] the patrician Asēr[238] and the patrician Aron and the patrician Feqra Iyasus, the patrician Wāšū 'Uṯmān, and all those of Tegrē said, 'We will attack the Muslims before they enter the city until the last one of us perishes.

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fashioning coats or tunics of mail to be worn over armour (sura xxi, 80). Basset remarks (p.101, note 5), that this legend about David's skill in working iron existed in Arabia prior to the rise of Islam. (S)

[234] *Qur'ān* ix, 32. (S)

[235] Behtwadad, literally the (king's) 'beloved,' was a high-ranking courtier, one of the most important in the traditional Ethiopian military, or royal, hierarchy. Guidi, *Vocabolario amarico-italiano*, cols. 310, 339; Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, p. 495. (P)

[236] Nagāš, Amharic, literally King, a title accorded to rulers of certain provinces, among them Dawāro, but not to the overall monarch, or Emperor. Maha Ṭenta is thus here referred to as the provincial governor of Dawāro. Kane, *Amharic-English Dictionary*, I, 1065. (P)

[237] The involvement of Robēl, governor of Tegrē, is mentioned in the Ethiopian royal chronicles of this period. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 17. See also Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 172, 179-80; Huntingford, *Land Charters of Northern Ethiopia*, p. 44. (P)

[238] Asēr's role in the fighting is also noted in the Ethiopian royal chronicles. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia* p. 17. (P)

If we are all killed, then let them do what they wish.' So the infidels incited one another to do battle with the Muslims.

As for the remaining patricians mentioned above: they refused to do battle, and stayed in their places. Then the proud, headstrong and rebellious Satan, the patrician Robēl, arose, and mounted his horse. When he mounted, the patricians of Tegrē mounted with him: the patrician Asēr, the patrician Feqra Iyasus, the patrician Wāšū 'Uṭmān and the patrician Aron; and their followers. Each patrician had under him a mighty army. They marched towards the gate of the city of Bādēqē.

Between the city and the Muslims there was a great river, by name Samarmā.[239] The infidels marched to the river and remained there. They arrayed their forces, dressed their horses and mounted them, after they had been loaded with equipment and weapons, and crossed the river that was the barrier between them and the Muslims.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: when the Muslims approached the city and saw the infidels and how ready their armies were for war and battle, the imām Aḥmad said to his army, 'Mount your horses, but do not be in a hurry to fight. Look for a place that is suitable for war and for cavalry manoeuvres; and hurry.'

The wazir 'Addolī set out at the head of the army, with all of the units following him. The imām Aḥmad brought up the rear of the army, and had with him fifty knights from among the illustrious heroes, people of constancy and strength about whom legends have grown up. With him were two-hundred foot-soldiers, seasoned fighters famous for their courage bearing razor sharp swords and Indian shields. These stuck closely to the imām Aḥmad, and were never ahead of him or behind him throughout all the war. They were ready for battle.

Then they mounted their horses and the imām Aḥmad encouraged them to fight the *jihād*, and to remain firm before the enemies of the Most High God. Among other things he said: 'O you who are believers, be patient,

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[239] A tributary of the 'Awāš river. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 90, 124. (P)

and excel in patience and remain steadfast, and be careful of your duty to God so that you may be successful.'[240]

Now for what happened to the wazir 'Addolī and the Muslim army [f°19] which had advanced with him. They arrived at the river that separated the two forces, and crossed over the water. The first to cross over was a foot-soldier named Ṣabrah, from the tribes of Ganz. He was a humble fighter for the way of God. He attacked the infidels and the Muslims attacked with him, attacking as one man, unit intermingling with unit. The ignoble Abyssinians withstood the charge of the noble believers momentarily. But then the right wing of the infidels broke ranks, while the soldiers on their left wing held firm - the patrician Robēl, the patrician Asēr, the patrician Feqra Iyasus and the patrician Wāšū 'Uṭmān. They and their standards stood firm like mountain crags wearing protective armour of helmets and coats of mail.

At that moment, the emir Abū Bakr, nicknamed 'Qaṭīn,' launched an attack against the patrician Aron. Even though he thrust his spear into his mouth, and the shimmering point emerged under his ear, the patrician sat firmly in his saddle. An[other] infidel patrician then attacked the emir Abū Bakr, striking a blow to his right hand that shattered it. But the Muslims tied it up for him and it was as good as if nothing had ever happened. This was one of the graces of the *jihād* .

Then one of the Muslim cavalry called Kūšem Abū Bakr attacked one of the patricians, striking him a blow on his neck that left no trace because of the quantity of iron armour and equipment that he wore. He struck him a second time, but with no success. He struck him a third blow, but again it left no trace.

The infidel patrician called Wāšū 'Uṭmān, the apostate, may God's curse be upon him, attacked Kūšem Abū Bakr, stabbing him in the chest, the point of the spear piercing his breast-plate and coming out of his back. He stabbed at him a second time in the same manner, but Kūšem Abū Bakr was preoccupied with the first patrician whom he had struck, and remained firmly in his saddle.

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[240] *Qur'ān* iii, 200; some eds. iii, 199. (S)

A Muslim knight called Marfū, one of the vassals of Garād Manṣūr was killed; as was another of the Muslims called Naṣr bin Adam, one of Manṣūr's equerries. A third Muslim to be killed was called aṣ-Ṣaddīq, one of the companions of 'Abd an-Nāṣr.

Also killed was a Muslim foot-soldier who was commander of the infantry. His name was Del Sabbar. One of the infidel patricians was on horseback; he was on foot. He had grabbed hold of the patrician and was trying to pull him[241] from his saddle when an infidel cavalryman attacked Del Sabbar from behind without his knowledge, and he was struck from behind, on his back, with a spear whose point exited through his breast, and he died a martyr. God took his spirit quickly to Paradise; and what a happy repose!

[Aḥmad rallies his troops]

After these had been killed, the emir Abū Bakr and al-Kūšem held their ground, injured though they were. But when they saw that their companions were dead, the two of them turned round and fell back. The Muslims saw the two of them fleeing, so they, too, all fled in the direction of the imām Aḥmad, but as they were crossing the river, a group of them was drowned in it, and the infidels took a great number of their horses.

When the imām Aḥmad saw them fleeing, he confronted them and asked, as he berated them, 'Where are you fleeing? Are you fleeing from Paradise? Is not this the fate that was decreed?' Then the imām Aḥmad dismounted from his horse and sat on the ground and his cavalry dismounted with him. The Muslims milled about, and great was the din they raised. They pressed one against the other in a surge around the imām Aḥmad.

The storyteller, may the Most High God may mercy upon him, says: The imām had dismounted in a place that was narrow, and not at all suitable for cavalry manoeuvres so then the emir Ḥusain said to him, 'O imām of the Muslims, pitch your tent now and we will do battle like the Arabs, that is to say, after the manner of the Companions of him towards whom may God be merciful.' So thereupon he halted and pitched his tent. The Muslims who were

[241] Reading يقتلهه for metathesised يقتعله. (S)

fleeing saw the tent pegged down tightly with the firmness of God, who helps whom he helps.

The infidels, in the meantime, arrived at the river and sought to hinder the Muslims from [crossing] the water. The infidels were attacking the Muslims and being repulsed by them.

Now this river had three crossings. So then the imām Aḥmad divided his forces into three units. One unit in which was the imām, was to hold the middle crossing, in the centre. At the head of another unit he put Mattān, the Somali, who was chieftain of his tribe, whom he ordered to seize and hold the upper crossing on the right. The third unit he put under the control of the wazir 'Addolī, commanding him to seize and hold the lower crossing, on the left. Each of them then set out with his unit.

The unit under Mattān fought a bloody battle at the right-hand crossing. Sometimes they attacked the infidels, and sometimes the infidels attacked the Muslims who drove them back. They were tireless[242] in this, from the time of the forenoon prayer, until the afternoon prayer time.

Then Mattān sent a horseman named Abū Bakr who crossed the river and arrived at where the imām Aḥmad was to seek his aid, because the battle was going badly for them. So the imām sent them around fifty knights from among the people of courage and strength, and the most renowned of the knights, among them the emir Aḥmūšū and the wazir Nūr bin Ibrahīm, and 'Abd an-Nāṣr, treasurer[244] of the imām Aḥmad, and Farašaḥam Sulṭān, and Ura'ī Nūr, and Farašaḥam Dīn bin Adam, along with their followers. They set out for where Mattān was, and fought there a battle to the death. They stood the test, until nightfall separated the fighters. Their's was the bloodiest of battles.

As for what happened to the imām Aḥmad and his companions - they fought in the middle crossing[244] harder than can be imagined: they fought the

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[242] They were 'addicted' to fighting: فكان هذا دأبهم . (S)

[243] دويدار : like A.-P. I cannot find this word in any dictionary. We know that 'Abd an-Naṣr was Aḥmed's *treasurer* (*infra* p.252). Could دويدار be a corruption of خازن ? B reads 'Secretary'. (S)

[244] Reading الطريق for البطريق . (S)

most desperate of battles. But then - the achievement is God's - one of the Arabs called Ḥamzah al-Jūfī engaged in a battle to the death in front of the imām of the Muslims. He was one of the foot-soldiers and stood his ground, and stood the test, confronting war with a full heart. He never struck one infidel whom he did not unhorse, dead. He killed so vast a number of them in the middle of the river, that the river water was turned red by the blood. The idolaters, however, stood their ground against him, but then the Muslims stood firm when they saw him unhorsing the infidels. Ḥamzah did not turn his back on a thousand idolaters.

Then the imām Aḥmad prayed for him, as did the Muslims, that he might stand firm. He kept on fighting for the remainder of the day, and the Muslims with him, until nightfall separated the combatants.

[What happened to the arrows shot at the Muslims]

The emir who was on the left, the wazir 'Addolī, was accompanied by the Somali archers from the tribe of Marraiḥān who had their bows. [f°20] Sometimes, when they fired their arrows, the infidels repelled them; and sometimes they repelled the arrows of the infidels. Among the infidels were the Māyā, a people who used poisoned arrows, and they had archers with them.

The storyteller, may God have mercy on him, says: The imām had said that day to the Muslims, 'When they shoot arrows at you, collect them; don't leave them. For if you leave them on the ground they will pick them up and they will shoot them at you a second time. Gather them all up, and give them to me.' So it happened that when they shot arrows at them, the Muslims collected them, and at sunset, when the battle ceased, each emir came with his force, each of them carrying a sheaf of arrows that he had picked up.

They unfastened the sheaves in the presence of the imām who commanded that they be taken and given to one of his treasurers, the chief of them, whose name was Dāk̲al. All of them were given to him. When night fell, a cow was butchered but there was no wood. Dāk̲al said to his companions, 'Look at these arrows. Tomorrow, if we are captured, the infidels will take them. Why don't we burn them and use them to roast the

meat?' They replied, 'What a good idea,' and did just that. They burnt them and roasted the meat of the whole cow above them. This was one of the most amazing things we saw in the battle[245] of Šemberā Korē in the year 935, less six months.[246]

Regarding what happened to the tribe of Marraiḥān - they and the infidels spent the whole of that day shooting at each other with arrows. The Muslims attacked the infidels, and the infidels attacked the Muslims, until nightfall separated the combatants. And each of them passed the night in his own place.

The *storyteller*, may God have mercy upon him, says: The next day, when the fighting proved difficult for the Muslims some people, from among those whose wretchedness has been decreed, apostatised from Islam and became Christians, and they left to join the infidels. Nevertheless, the imām and his companions stood firm, and survived the night.

Other Muslims also wanted to flee, but the imām thwarted them by egging them on to do battle. For two days the horses remained harnessed: they were not unbridled or unsaddled. The imām said to those who wanted to flee, 'Don't run away at night; the infidels will kill you when you turn your backs. Be patient. It may be that God will send [you] his assistance: "Be patient; excel in patience and remain steadfast. Be careful of your duty to God that you may succeed".'[247]

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[245] في وقعة صمر كـــورى : sic! The chronicler, as B notes, has included under the title of Šemberā Korē a number of skirmishes that occurred around the time of the battle that was so disastrous for the Abyssinians. (S)

[246] B suggests mid-September, 1528. But 935 AH *commenced* on September 15, 1528 AD. The text says 'less six months' which I take to mean six months *into* the year, and hence date the events around mid-march 1529. In support of this date, see only a few paragraphs *infra*, where the battle of Šemberā-Korē is described as beginning in the month of Rajab, 935 AH, or on Wednesday March 11, 1529 AD. Rajab is the seventh month of the Muslem year. (S)

[247] *Qur'ān* iii, 200; some eds. iii, 199. (S)

[Aḥmad deals with deserters]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: When day broke the crowd of soldiers fled, leaving nobody with the imām Aḥmad apart from forty knights from among the leaders famous for their courage; and around twenty foot-soldiers. So the imām and his companions set off after the deserters to bring them back.

It was at daybreak [the same day] that the imām sent two of his Muslim knights of whom one was the emir 'Alī [who was to become] lord of Angot, and the other was the wazir Nūr bin Ibrahīm, commanding the two of them to move the front line of the army forward. He said, 'Kill any of the Muslims who have run away.'

The two knights set out like ravening[248] lions, crossed over the river Dukām, outstripped them, blocked the road against them, cut down four of the foot-soldiers, and demanded, 'Whither are you fleeing?' and swore an oath, 'By God, whichever one of you moves forward, we will be within our rights to kill him. Otherwise, go back and stand your ground and fight the infidels. If any amongst you should be killed, he will go to paradise; and if any of you should survive, he will live happily.'[249]

Thus they goaded the Muslims on to the *jihād*, and the Muslims held their lines until the imām reached them. But a great number of the Muslims were killed, and a group of them was wounded.

It was the Qur'ānic teacher, Saīdī Abū Bakr, who that day roused the deserters to fight the *jihād*, repeating the words of the Most High 'How often has a small party conquered a large one, with God's permission. God is with the patient ones.'[250] On that day the infidels hit him with an arrow, but he was in the river, and was unharmed.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Thereupon the imām Aḥmad stirred up the enthusiasm of the Muslims for the *jihād* in the

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[248]Reading ضاريه for ضاريه. (S)

[249] See note[224] *supra;* also pp. 45,73, 80,85. (S)

[250]*Qur'ān* ii, 249. (S)

way of the Most High God. He said to them, 'There is a great distance separating the country of the Muslims from that of the infidels. And, by God, you won't ride away from here except by the power of your swords, by blows and spear thrusts! Would you escape from the infidels? What is this but the appointed time that was written about.'

So, after that, the Muslims stood their ground. The tribe of the Somalis said, 'it was the tribe of Ḥārlā[251] that gave us away,' while the tribe of Ḥārlā said, 'it was the Somali tribe that gave us away'.

The imām split his forces into three divisions: all the Somalis were in one division whose command he entrusted to Mattān; another division was made up of the [tribe of] Ḥārlā whose command he gave to the sultan Muḥammad, son of the imām's maternal aunt; and the other division was made up of the Malasāī, a people used to incursions and to a thorough-going *jihād*, upon whom he could rely in battle: heroic leaders, over whom was the imām, who ordered them to stand resolute[252] so that they never became disunited.[253]At the time when the Muslims deserted, seeking their own country, these stood firm.[254]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: As for what happened to the infidels: immediately after the Muslims took flight in the early morning, and God directed his blessings towards the Muslims, desiring that His prestige should be enhanced, and that of the infidels humbled, the latter argued amongst themselves.

Some of them said, 'Let us pursue the Muslims because they will be unable to raise any support for themselves.' Others of them said, 'This is a ploy of theirs to entice us to leave this narrow place for a wider one where

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[251]Hārlā, a locality mentioned in the chronicle of Emperor 'Amda Ṣeyon, was a small tributary territory east of Šawā, affiliated to Ifāt. Hārlā, according to tradition, had formerly been occupied by a race of giants. Huntingford, *Glorious Victories of 'Amda Ṣeyon*, pp. 31, 74; *idem*, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 91-2. (P)

[252]I take Aḥmad to be the subject of وامرهم بالثبات as no leader of this third group is named. (S)

[253]B omits 'who ... disunited'. (S)

[254]B omits فحينئذ which I read as 'at the time of the desertion,' based on وسار المسلمون الخ. The text implies that despite the imām's entreaties, the only tribe to stand firm and not head for home was the Malasāī: an interpretation not borne out by subsequent events. See *infra* pp.154, 155. (S)

they will turn upon us.' And others among them said, 'Let us hold our ground until the king rejoins us; for he is close by us, and we should not pursue them. The king should join us today around the time of the forenoon prayer. Were we to follow them there would be a danger of our being defeated, and the king would rebuke us, saying, "I was close by you. Why did you not wait for me until I came to you?".' They approved these words, and held their positions.

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: Some of the infidel forces, when they saw the rout of the Muslims, outdistanced them and occupied a mountain along their route. The Muslims arrived at the mountain and saw the infidels on its summit. Immediately they encircled it, and killed the infidels, all of them. Not one of them escaped.

[The rout of the Māyā people]

The Muslims set out from the mountain for a place called Agamgē, a river in the country of Lāl,[255] of the Faṭagār, not far from Zeqālā.[256] The Muslims dismounted there by the riverside, gave fodder to their horses and mules, and took their own repast: they had not eaten for two days.

They remained there two days. It was on the first day that there came a huge force of infidels, and with them the Māyā people who had long-bows and poisoned arrows. Whenever one of these latter struck someone, the hair on his head fell out[257] from the strength of the poison. They were [f°21] more than three-thousand in number. They were making a beeline for the king of Abyssinia, to aid him, but as God wanted to support this religion [of Islam] it was the encampment of the Muslims that they headed for, assuming it to be

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[255]Lāl, an abbreviation of Lālibālā, a district of Faṭagār, some 50 miles south of Addis Ababa. The Lālibālā here mentioned should not be confused with the Lāstā settlement of the same name, site of the famous rock-hewn churches. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 127-9. (P)

[256]Zeqālā, or Zeqwālā, an impressive volcanic mountain 55 miles south of Addis Ababa, and site of a medieval monastery dedicated to the Ethiopian saint Gabra Manfus Qeddus, also popularly known as Abbo. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 127-9. See also Hapte-Mariam Marcos, Jamal Abdulkadir, and Belatchew Asserat, 'Field Trip to Zequala,' *University College of Addis Ababa Ethnological Bulletin* (1983), I. 2-13. (P)

[257]Lit. 'flew' off, تطاير شعره. (S)

the camp of the infidels. When they realised that it was the Muslim camp, they fled towards the road to Masīn to the side of their king. Thereupon the Muslims pursued them, killed them, and made prisoners of them, to the very last man. The multitude of them was so abandoned by the Most High God that one [Muslim] knight took twenty prisoners; another eighteen; another ten. They were handed over to the imām who ordered them to be put to death so that the ground was covered with their dead bodies.

Their emir, one of the Māyā, was captured by Farašaḥam Sulṭān, and when they handed him over to the imām he said, 'I will ransom myself with two-hundred ounces of red gold.' To which the imām replied, 'We don't need your gold. Kill the dog, the son of a dog.' So they killed him. All the Muslims rejoiced at the victory.

As for what happened to the infidels, their king came to them at Bādēqē at the time of the fore-noon prayer, with his patricians, his army and his soldiers in uncountable numbers. Their king asked them, 'Why didn't you allow the Muslims to enter the city to burn it?' To which the band replied, 'They shall not burn the church of our sister.'

The storyteller, may God the Most High have mercy upon him, says: Now the church which was in Bādēqē had been built in a most beautiful fashion by the king's mother,[258] whose lineage was from the sons of Tegrē, which was why they said 'they shall not burn the church of our sister. We will fight for it, and will die to defend it. That is the reason we prevented the Muslims from entering the city.' The king thanked them that day for what they had done, rewarded them for it, and clad their leaders in garments of honour.

[April 1529 AD: The battle of Šemberā Korē]

Then the king with his army and his soldiers set out from Bādēqē in pursuit of the Muslims: the soldiers accompanying him being so numerous that they covered the land far and wide. They arrived in the vicinity of the Muslims, and passed the night there. Then the next day the infidels sent out

[258]Lebna Dengel's mother was Emperor Nā'od's wife Queen Sabla Wangél. Wallis Budge, *History of Ethiopia*, I, 325, 337, 351, 362. (P)

their vanguard to discover news of the Muslims. They spied on the Muslims, and the Muslims likewise spied on them. And on the third day they set out to return to their country. Around noon-time they arrived at the river Maju.[259] They then dismounted from their horses, watered them and said the mid-day prayer and passed the night on the heights of Šemberā Korē. This was the evening of Wednesday, at the onset of the seventh month of the year nine-hundred-and- thirty-five.[260]

The Muslims spent the night recalling God, praising him, extolling him, worshipping him. The imām Aḥmad rose up in the midst of his companions, and praised the Lord, speaking in the most laudatory terms of him, and prayed for the Prophet, may God save him and grant him salvation. He said, 'You are people of fortitude and of power.' He ordered them to be alert, and to prepare themselves [for battle]. Then he said, 'O people, entrust yourselves to God; and seek refuge in God.' The Muslims got ready their military equipment.

The Muslim knights advanced, each exhorting the other. In the meantime [the imām] asked, 'what is your opinion about this matter?' The companions of the imām Aḥmad talked [amongst themselves] and said, 'As for us, fighting is the object of our desire and of our hopes, and we will never cease holding our own against them [the enemy] despite sword blows and spear thrusts and death itself,[261] "until God judges between us; for he is the best of judges".'[262]

What they said gladdened the imām and he replied, 'May God grant you success and show you the right path: now prepare your weapons for war and for battle.' Thus they passed the night, rejoicing on account of the *jihād*.

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[259] مجوا : B vocalises to read Muju. (S)

[260] The 'onset of the seventh month' (Rajab) of AH 935 (which was a leap year), was Tuesday March 10, 1529. I suggest that the battle commenced on Wednesday March 11, 1529. (S)

[261] الضرب والطعـــن والخـــرب . B: 'les coups d'epée, de lance et de javelots'. For حرب meaning 'death,' and 'destruction,' see Lane, *op. cit.* ii, p.541. 'Spear,' or 'lance' would be حربة . (S)

[262] *Qur'ān* vii, 87. (S)

When day broke, and dawn appeared, dazzling bright, the *muezzin*[263] proclaimed, 'Come to the means of attaining Paradise'.[264]

The Muslims rose, recited the morning prayer, and in their midst th preacher stood up, Saīdī al-Faqīh [265]Abū Bakr also known as Aršūna - ma God Most High have mercy upon him. He inspired the Muslims, preache them the good news of Paradise, and how God has promised this to th *mujāhidūn*; and cautioned them about Hell-fire, which God has promised t those who run away. And he said, 'O you who are believers, be patient; exce in patience; remain steadfast. And be assiduous in your duty to God that yo may be successful.'[266]

Upon this, the Muslims set out in the direction of Amajah, going dow towards their own country, through the centre of Šemberā Korē, in an easterl direction from the star Canopus.[267]

The king of Abyssinia had changed direction, coming against th Muslims from the direction of the Qibla [i.e.] from the eastern side.[268] Wit him was an army like a plague of locusts. He said to his patricians, 'Seiz them; let none of them escape.' The enemy of God imagined that he woul

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[263] مـــؤذن : The announcer of the aḏān or the 'call to prayer'. The root aḏina, 'to listen,' in the II form means to call someone to listen (to prayer). According to Muslim tradition the first *muezzin* was Bilāl the son of an Abyssinian slave-girl. (S)

[264] B: 'venez a l'oeuvre,' evidently reading فـــلاحـــة instead of فـــلاح which in the phrase حي على الـــفـــلاح in the call to prayer of the muezzin means 'hasten to the attainment of everlasting life,' or it equivalent. See Lane *op. cit.* vi, p.2439. B's translation is curious, for only the Shī'ites include an eight formula (between the fifth and the sixth) that invites the believer to 'come to the (best) work'. But see possible reference to 'Alawī *infra* note[335]. (S)

[265] See note[147] *supra*. (S)

[266] *Qur'ān* iii, 200; some eds. iii, 199. (S)

[267] The name of the bright star α in the southern constellation *Argo*. (S)

[268] B omits 'from the eastern side'. The Qibla is the direction of the *Ka'ba* - the cube-shaped ston structure in Mecca. Originally roofless, the *Ka'ba* houses the sacred black meteorite that forms th centre piece of the Ḥajj or pilgrimage to Mecca performed in the month of ḏū'l-Ḥijja, the last month o the Islamic calendar. According to Ibn 'Abbās, Muḥammad said the black stone came from Paradis and that on the day of the Resurrection it will give evidence in favour of all those who touched an kissed it. Maximus of Tyre who travelled through Arabia and Phrygia in the second century, refers t the black meteorite. See Hughes, T.P. *A Dictionary of Islam*, Lahore, 1885, p.154. (S)

achieve what he hoped for. But God saw to it that he received nothing but ignominy.

The king decamped with his army and his weaponry, like water gushing forth. Both rear-guards caught sight of each other, and the infidels set themselves in order, organising their army and their soldiers into seven battle-lines. No line could see its outermost point. The Muslims likewise drew up their battle-lines and organised their soldiers.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: My informant is one of the Christians, Azmāč[269] Ḥaibī by name, who took part in the battle of Šemberā Korē with the king. After his conversion to Islam he recounted to me as follows: 'The number of the king's cavalry that took part in the engagement of Šemberā Korē was sixteen thousand knights, each of whom had a mount from the Arabian sea-coast. The foot-soldiers, more than two-hundred-thousand of them, these carried shields and bows, that is to say, they were archers with poisoned arrows; and they carried glistening spears. And as for the Abyssinian cavalry, their forces were so vast as to be innumerable and uncountable. They blended one with the other like a well-compacted construction with no spaces left between its various parts.'

[Eulogy for Aḥmad]

At this the imām Aḥmad, may God have mercy upon him, applied himself to arranging his forces - to the right, to the left, to the middle and on both flanks. He said, 'O God, make us all patient, and victorious for your religion'. I said about him,

He it is who arranges matters;
who is the regulator of the wars.

Audacious in attacking during battle;
He is [like] the blows of a sword.

For the sake of the *jihād*, he is the destroyer

[269]Azmāč. Gujarat: Azmāt. (S)

of disunity that stubbornly resists, by subterfuge, the
one who knows the divine secrets.

He is the spearman who bests his strong opponent
with his thrust;
And with his iron sword,
he is a wielder of blows.

The infidels he has left wallowing in the dust:
the tear ducts of any who survive, overflow.

He had launched attacks against them with
a tumultuous din:
He struck them indefatigably
with humiliation and torment.

O you who ask me about Aḥmad,
he is a lover of the just,
and hater of a man who lies.

He is the respecter of the law of the religion of
His Prophet:
Humble towards his Lord, and also fearful of Him.

[f°22] He is unceasing in his observance
of the prescriptions [of the Law];
Persevering in his observance
of legally binding acts of devotion.

O Lord, guard him by your grace for all to see;
O Merciful one, make him last as a strong wind lasts.

[Aḥmad disposes his forces]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: The imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, summoned the sultan Muḥammad son of the sultan 'Alī, son of his maternal aunt, and the sheikh Ans, son of the shiekh Šihāb bin 'Abd al-Wāhab, son of the sheikh Būba,[270] and put under their command all the tribes of the Ḥārlā, as for instance the tribe of Zaman Bara, the tribe of Barzara with their chieftain, the tribe of Yaqula, and the tribe of Jāsar, the tribe of 'Arab Tk̲ā, and the tribe of al-Qa: all of these belonged to the Ḥārlā. The imām commanded them to hold the Muslims' right.

Then he assembled the Somali tribes: the tribe of Girri, the tribe of Marraiḥān, the tribe of Yibberi with the chieftain Aḥmad Girri, the tribe of the Hārti, people of Maiṭ, the tribe of Jarān, the tribe of Mazzar. the tribe of Barsūb: all of these were Somalis and they were ordered by the imām to hold the left. Each tribe had its own emir.

In the centre was the imām Aḥmad bin Ibrahīm, may the Most High God have mercy on him, with the cavalry surrounding him, like ferocious lions. The leaders of the knights were the emir Ḥusain bin Abū Bakr al-Gāturī, the emir Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad, may the Most High God show him mercy, and Farašaḥam 'Alī, the wazir Nūr bin Ibrahīm, the emir Mujāhid, Farašaḥam as-Sulṭān, and 'Abd an-Nāṣr, the shiekh Dāwa,[271] the emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn,[272] and Farašaḥam Dīn.

Then Aḥmad addressed the Muslim forces, 'Now I say to you what was said by the Prophet Muhammad - may God bless him and grant him salvation - to his companions: rise up to the "garden of paradise which is as extensive as the earth and the heavens; it is prepared for God-fearers, for those who believe in God and in his prophets. This is a grace that God bestows on those who please Him. And God is the Lord of all-powerful grace."'[273]

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[270]Būba. Gujarat: Būta. (S)

[271] داوة : elsewhere داوا . (S)

[272]Qaṭīn, قطين . Gujarat: قجن Qajin. (S)

[273]*Qur'ān* lvii, 21. (S)

Amongst them was Garād Aḥmadūš[274] bin Maḥfūẓ, brother-in-law of the imām who was married to his sister Del Wanbarā, the daughter of Maḥfūẓ; and Ura'ī Aḥmad Dīn bin Ḵāled, Garād Šama'ūn, Bešara, Ṣabr ad-Dīn, Jāsā 'Umar,[275] Garād Aḥmušū, Ura'ī Abūn, Garād 'Uṯmān bin Jauhar,[276] Aḥmad Juwitā, Barhān, Garād Ṣaddīq, Del Sagad, and others like these from among the knights famous for courage. Then the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God show him mercy, assembled some courageous infantrymen well-known for endurance, from among those who had participated with him in battles, and expeditions, in war and in fighting: five-hundred heroes who never abandoned the imām Aḥmad - may God the Most High have mercy upon him - whether he was present, or [absent] on a journey.

The imām ranged them before the cavalry. Among the leaders of the infantry was Ḥamzah al-Jūfī who died a martyr this day, may the Most High God show him mercy; the commander of the infantry Fanj Sabbar; Jūhūh;[277] Ara'da; Nabī Aḥmad ; Ḥusain Dawāro; Takīa; Jadīd Ḵūrjū[278] - and those who followed them. That day the cavalry of the imām numbered five-hundred-and-sixty, with twelve-thousand infantrymen.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: On the left was the Somali tribe of Hartī, from the people of Maiṭ; a people not given to yielding. There were three-hundred of them, famous among the infantry as stolid swordsmen. In the same way there was the tribe of Yibberi, around four-hundred infantrymen, archers. So the imām attached them to the five-hundred who held the centre, saying to them, 'Hold your positions; don't budge, any one of you.' The tribe of Girri were all horsemen, renowned as riders.

The imām arranged his battle formation, and each group of Muslims prayed the two-fold prostrations after two-fold prostrations, on account of the great things that had befallen them. The Qur'ānic teacher 'Abd Allāh, dismounted from his mule, took his shield and his sword and humbled himself

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[274] Aḥmedūš, Gujarat: Ḥamdūš. (S)

[275] Gujarat omits Bešara, Ṣabr ad-Dīn and Jāsā 'Umr. (S)

[276] Gujarat omits the following two names. (S)

[277] جوجوه : B reads جوجوه : Djoudjouh. (S)

[278] جديد Jadīd : elsewhere he is called, in Arabic, جديد Ḥadīd. (S)

before the Most High God: he was a Sufi,[279] ascetic, pious, worshipful and learned.

Now, about Ḥamzah al-Jūfī: when he saw the infidels he could not have restrained himself from doing battle, had it not been for two of the Muslims foot-soldiers who held on to him. He became as excited as a camel in heat, craving for battle and for the *jihād*, and for the pleasure of the Lord of mankind, that he might grant him his heart's desire. The whole tribe of Hartī was like him. The Muslims had to hold them back, saying to them, 'Be patient until the infidels get closer to you'.

[Disposition of the Abyssinian forces]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: As for the infidels, when they had drawn up their army, they advanced against the Muslims in seven battle lines. The king of Abyssinia, Wanāg Sagad, was this day in the rear-guard.

On each of his flanks he had, to the right, four-hundred men; and to the left four-hundred. On this day he split all of them up amongst his army. He brought out his treasures: weapons of war, Davidic suits of mail, helmets of king Sabur, Egyptian swords[280] and spears of Ḵaṭṭ,[281] and then distributed them to his patricians and to his soldiers.

As for his cavalry, it was beyond counting. The armies drew near, and the advance commenced. Each of the infidel lines was five times bigger than

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[279]A follower of Islamic mysticism known popularly as Sufism because its name, *taṣawwuf*, is derived by some from the Arabic *Ṣūf* - the woollen robe that its devotees wore. It seems undeniable that Sufism existed prior to to the rise of Islam and has close ties with the Vedānta school of Hinduism. Its populariser among Muslims was the adopted son and son-in-law of Muḥammad, 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib. There are many and diverse sects of Sufism. (S)

[280]Reading المصرية for المضرية . For *Davidic* suits of mail etc see 2 Kings 11,10 and Sura xxi,79,80. (S)

[281]The 'spears of Ḵaṭṭ' were highly sought-after weapons. Lane suggests that the name comes either from al-Ḵaṭṭ, a place in al-Yemāmeh where spears from India were taken to be straightened, or from al-Ḵaṭṭ, the Bahraini port where Indian spears were unloaded, and sold. See *op. cit.* ii, p.760, col.3. 'Spears of Ḵaṭṭ' also may refer to spears from Basra or Kufah whose boundaries were 'marked'; or may refer to 'choice,' in the sense of 'excellent,' spears. (S)

that of the Muslims who were like a white birth-mark on the hide of a black bull.

Then the imām Aḥmad addressed the Muslims, 'Remember God the Most High. Don't look at them; look at the ground. Have recourse to God against them. Be patient. God will be with you. Strive for victory and God will be your Protector and your Supporter.'

As the infidels drew nearer to the Muslims there was a cloud above them that shaded them; while the Muslims were exposed to the full heat of the sun. The imām Aḥmad immediately humbled himself, and prayed. In his prayer he said, 'O God, O Living One, O Eternal One, O Creator of the heavens and the earth, O Glorious and Gracious One, these are your enemies, they are the enemies of your Prophet, [282] and of your Messengers; they eat the nourishment you give them, but they adore something other than You. Yet you give them shade,[283] and we Muslims are in the full heat of the sun.'

The storyteller, may God's mercy be upon him, says: The imām Aḥmad had hardly finished uttering his prayer when the cloud moved from above the heads of the infidels to above the heads of the Muslims, shading them from on top. The king of Abyssinia and his host looked towards the Muslims [to see] their state of mobilization, but the cloud was shading them and their serried ranks, and their spears on the ready. Fright and regret came over them.

[Abū Bakr and Aḥmad exhort the Muslims to the *jihād*]

Then the Qur'ānic teacher Abū Bakr, also known as 'Aršhuta'[284] arose and preached near the banner of the imām. He goaded the Muslims on to battle. He harangued them until their hearts were filled with dread, and their eyes [f°23] brimmed full of tears. He said, 'O band of Muslims, paradise is beautifully ornamented; and Hell-fire is shut tight. The angels are gazing

[282] Gujarat: enemies of your religion. (S)

[283] Gujarat adds: from the cloud cover. (S)

[284] Sic! (S)

down; the *houris* with black eyes are preening themselves; rejoice at [the prospect of] life eternal.'[285]

Then he recited, 'Surely God has bought from the believers their persons and their property in order to give Paradise to them! They fight in the way of God; they slay and are slain by virtue of a promise which is binding on Him in the Torah, the Gospels and the Qur'ān. Who is more faithful to his promises than God? Rejoice then in the bargain that you have made with him: for that is a mighty triumph.'[286]

Thereupon the Muslims said to the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, 'Let us attack them'. But the imām held them back from fighting. He said, 'Maintain your positions. Don't begin to fight them until they have begun to fight you. Hold your spears on the ready, cover yourselves with your shields made of hide, and don't make a move with your feet without keeping God in mind.'

As the Muslims moved from their position to do battle with their enemies, the imām was saying to them, 'O people of Islam, steadfastness means resolution, faint-heartedness means failure.[287] Be sure of this, those who persevere are those who will vanquish. Faint-heartedness and cowardice are the twin causes of disappointment. God will see that whoever is constant triumphs over his enemy, for God is with him. Whoever holds his ground against the cutting edge of a sword, he is the achiever of the future; and will never again suffer fatigue. If he walks with God, his dwelling place shall be the more honoured, his efforts acknowledged, for God loves those who persevere.'

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[285] The term refers to the virgins of paradise. Their eyes are thought to have irises so black that they contrast with the white around them. The root ḥāra, from which ḥūr is derived means in the II form to 'whiten' or to 'bleach'. When the believer enters paradise he is made welcome by one of these 'houris'. 'A large number of them are at his disposal; he cohabits with each of them as often as he has fasted days in Ramaḍān and as often as he has performed good works besides. Yet they remain always virgins (*Qur'ān* lvi, 36)'. See *SEI, ed.cit.* p.141. (S)

[286] *Qur'ān* ix, 111. (S)

[287] Reading عجـز for عجز. (S)

[Muslims and Christians join battle]

When the ranks moved forward the Muslims could see a huge army, its sword blades sparkling. Then the enemy of God, the Abyssinian dog, Wanāg Sagad, screamed out to his army to charge. They charged the Muslim right as one man, but the Muslims held firm against them. Then in the same way the right wing of the idolaters charged the left wing of the Muslims, made up of the Somali tribes, while the tribes of Tegrē and the depraved patricians charged the centre where the imām Aḥmad, may God may mercy upon him, was. The imām and his soldiers confronted them with Islamic hearts and Muhammadan high-mindedness.

Army fused with army, swords were unsheathed, spear tips were aimed, emblems and banners were unfurled, flags fluttered, bridles clanked, horses whinnied, vast clouds of dust billowed up, and sweat poured from the breasts of the soldiers on account of the weight of the armour. Nothing could be heard from armies but the battle-cries of soldiers and the neighing of horses at the blows of the swords hitting the hide-covered shields and the iron helmets shaped like ostrich eggs.

The crier proclaimed, 'O people of Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him salvation, be a little patient, and you will obtain much: here is the black-eyed *houri* in the shade of the swords, and at the tip of the spear.' The imām Aḥmad Bin Ibrahīm, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, and those with him, held their ground. Then in the midst of the tumult he burst forth against the infidels, wiping them out most successfully. Above his head the banner of victory streamed.

[Slaughter of the Somalis]

As for what happened to the Somalis on the Muslim left wing, when the fighting became unbearable they took to flight, with the infidels in pursuit, and were killed by them in a devastating slaughter. Some of them were captured, but three-thousand of them died.

Their chieftains, however, stood firm: Mattān bin 'Uṭmān the Somali, brother-in-law of the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon

him, fought a fine *jihād*. Holding firm with him was Aḥmad Girri; and 'Alī Garād, Mattān's brother; and Farašaḥam Tāl, brother of Bešāra; and 'Alī Mād Jira from the tribe of Mattān; and Ḥusain Mūsa Bin 'Abd Allāh Mākida; and Yūssef Lataḥia, from the tribe of Aḥmad Girri. Their achievements this day truly are God's doing.

When [the flight of] their companions was revealed, they returned to the side of the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, and in his presence fought a bloody fight.

Now for what happened to those from the people of Ḥārlā who were holding the Muslim right wing: the first, second and third ranks [of the Abyssinians] charged them, and the fighting between them revolved like a mill-stone, with men's heads being cut off. The Abyssinians committed more forces against the Muslim right. But the Muslims endured with a remarkable endurance.

Another squadron of cavalry attempted to dislodge them, and the infidels drove them towards the centre near to the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him. They fought there a terrible battle. To God alone is due the success of the army of Baḥr,[288] among the Muslim infantry. They fought amongst the cavalry.

The battle intensified until the dust clouds grew so dense that none of the Muslims could recognise his companion, and none of the infidels could recognise his companion; nor could brother see brother.

The fighting went on between the various parties until the Abyssinians were pushed back into those who were following them and thousands of them perished, with the ground being covered with the bodies of those who died. The numbers of wounded on both sides grew, but they were higher for the Abyssinians.

The fighting between them went on from the forenoon until the time of the last of the afternoon prayers. The Muslims were loud in proclaiming 'There is no God but Allāh,' and 'God is the Greatest,' and praying for [Muḥammad] the Herald who announced the good news. God gave them the

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[288] *Bāḥr*, literally Sea, but in this context, and elsewhere in the text, the Country of the Bāḥr Nagāš, i.e. the territory near the (Red) Sea. (P)

victory, and struck terrror into the hearts of the infidels who turned tail, with the Muslims in pursuit, capturing and killing them until darkness intervened.

[Abyssinian casualties]

How many thousands of infidels were killed, God alone knows. Many of the patricians were killed, among them the patrician Robēl, from the patricianate of Tegrē . He was killed by Ara'dī, the equerry of the imām. Also killed was Aqbā Mikā'īl, younger brother of Robēl, powerfully intrepid and intractable. He was killed by the imām Aḥmad, may God the Most High have mercy upon him, who struck him with his spear, and its tip emerged from his back, glistening.

Also killed were two slaves, eunuchs attached to the treasury of the king. One of them was named Jūhar and the other was named Mendel. On that day the two of them were standing, with the king's standard above their heads; the infidels put them on almost the same level as the king. Jūhar was killed by the emir Muḥammad, son of the emir Muḥammad bin Zaḥarbūī 'Uṭmān. Mendel was killed by Del Sagad, a knight from Sim.

The patrician Sirē[289] *Šūm*[290] was killed by Garād Dīn, governor of Māyā after the conquest. A notable patrician, a relative of the king on his mother's side, named Yona'ēl,[291] had his hand cut off by Garād Šama'ūn, and 'Abd an-Nāṣr struck him in the back with his spear, but he fled and was saved.

One of the Muslims, named 'Uṭmān, a sheikh from the tribes of Gedayā, was riding his mule on this occasion, and attacked a patrician named Jān Balaw Rās, striking him in the back. The patrician was wearing protective armour, but the sword sliced through the armour and the coat of mail, and cut him in half. The top half flew to the side while the other half remained on the horse, and finally tumbled off.

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[289]Sirē, a district of Tegrē, west of Aksum, between the Marab and Takkazē rivers. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, II, 577. (P)

[290]*Šum*, Amharic, a local chief. The term, as here, is often combined with the name of a locality. Guidi, *Vocabolario amarico-italiano*, cols. 225-6. (P)

[291] يوعيل . (S)

The *šum* of Ṣalamt[292] was killed by one of the Muslims, as was the patrician Gabra Madḥen[293] one of the king's vassels. His killer was a shrivelled-up toothless man called Aumāyāda; the patrician Zamanjān, nephew of the patrician Wasan Sagad, was killed by the wazir 'Addolī.

The patrician Maḥā Ṭentā was struck in the eye by a spear thrown by a Somali spearman called Adam, the commander of the spearmen. God [f°24] cast his soul into Hell, 'an evil place to settle in'.[294] The patrician Wajāmū was killed by Takla bin Agaw.[295]

The patrician Za-Wangēl, the Baḥr Nagāš,[296] lord of Dokono[297] was killed by 'Abd al-Razāq bin Sūḥa, brother of the emir Mujāhid.[298] The patrician *šum* of Agamē,[299] and the *šum* of Šajarah were killed, as was the patrician of Tambēn[300] and the *šum* of Abargalē.[301] The patrician 'Amdu was killed by a foot-soldier called Addāmu.

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[292]Ṣalamt, or Ṭalamt, a district north of the Samēn mountains and south of the Takkazē river. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia*, pp. 243, 264. (P)

[293] The death of Gabra Madḥen is also referred to in the Ethiopian chronicles for this period. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 16. (P)

[294] *Qur'ān* xiv, 29. (S)

[295] من اجوا : sic! With B, I read بن اجوا . Agaw elsewhere (p.56 *supra*) is written اقوا . (S)

[296]Bāḥr Nagāš, the title held by the Ethiopian ruler of the northern highland provinces of Hāmāsēn, Sarāyē and sometimes Sirē, and of the Bur peninsula. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 114-17, II, 434; Ludolphus, *New History of Ethiopia*, p. 17; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 95-100. (P)

[297]Dohono, also known as Arkiko, or more properly Hergigo, the Red Sea mainland port opposite the island port of Massawa. R.Pankhurst, *History of Ethiopian Towns*, pp. 82-3. (P)

[298]B omits 'brother ... Mujahid'. (S)

[299]Agamē, a district of Tegrē, north of Garāltā. Ludolphus, *New History of Ethiopia*, p. 17; T. Lefebvre and others, *Voyage en Abyssinie*, II, Part I, 34, III, 25. (P)

[300] النبتين : a methathesised version of التنبين , the more usual form of the name in the *Futūḥ*. (S) Tambēn, or Tanbēn, a district of Tegrē around Abi Addi, north of Maqalē. Ludolphus, *New History of Ethiopia*, p. 17; Beckingham and Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia*, p. 129. (P)

[301]Abargalē, a district on the southern borders of Tegrē, east of the Takkazē river. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia*, p. 247; Ludolphus, *New History of Ethiopia*, p. 17. (P)

The number of patricians that were killed from Tegrē was eighty-six,[302] all of them Šūms, marked as such,[303] from among their most prominent leaders. Around ten-thousand of the distinguished people[304] from Tegrē were killed. One-hundred-and-fourteen other patricians were killed. Of all of them [there would be one] having one-thousand cavalrymen under him: another one of them would have five-hundred horsemen under him, and another two-hundred, and yet another six-hundred. They were in this situation. The Muslims on this day hamstrung six-hundred of the horses of the infidels in the fighting.

[Muslim casualties]

Among the leaders of the Muslims who were killed was Ḥamzah al-Jūfī[305] who died a martyr on this day, may God the Most High have mercy upon him. Also killed was Jadīd K̲ūrjū; and the *muezzin* of Garād Abūn, Kabīr Ibrāhīm; and the Qur'ānic teacher Muḥammad the preacher from Sim; Dallū [of] Bāli; Muḥammad [of] Dawāro. Five-thousand Muslims from the tribes of the Somalis, Ḥārlā, Malasāī and desert Arabs were killed. God put his seal of martyrdom upon them, introducing them to the Garden of delights, bestowed upon them the pleasures of the table, *houris* with black eyes, and lavished on them his all-pervasive Favour. 'In it [the garden of paradise] lasting blessing shall be theirs; abiding there for ever. Surely God carries a mighty reward with him'.[306]

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[302]Eighty-six. Gujarat: one-hundred-and-thirty-six. (S)

[303]Wearing their emblems or flying their banners. Following Lane (*op. cit.* iv, p.1476) I read سيمة - a mark on sheep or goats, used in battles - for سيمت. See *Qur'ān* xlviii, 29. (S)

[304] اهل السمت . B 'gens de marque'; A.-P. 'gens de Thimat,' adding in a note 'Le mot Thimat n'est pas expliqué non plus'. Could this be an allusion to the old name for Christians (سمت can be synonymous with طريق) 'people of the Way,' or to the poison - سم - that the archers of Tegrē used? See p.259 *infra* where the archers of Tegrē are called 'Simt'. (S)

[305]Al-Jūfī. Gujarat: al-Jabalī. (S)

[306]*Qur'ān* ix, 21, 22. (S)

The Muslims collected booty of horses, swords, chain-mail and weapons of war so numerous as to be uncountable. They captured one of the most distinguished patricians, Takla Madḥen, the brother-in-law of the king whom they took with them to their own country, whence he was ransomed for five-hundred ounces of red gold. Then the imām turned round and returned to his city of Hārar, happy, rejoicing, victorious, triumphant, wearing the victor's crown, exultant, in the course of the month of Rajab[307] in that year.

[The fifth *jihād*]

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: After the infidels had taken to flight, and God had granted the victory to the Muslims, the imām Aḥmad said this day to his companions, 'Now that God has given us the victory over them, and has humiliated them, now let us march on to Bādēqē the place where the king's residences are, to take him, and to demolish it. Let us occupy Abyssinia, conquering the country, and weakening them.'

They replied, 'O imām of the Muslims, you have already seen what has happened to us, how many of our soldiers have been killed, the injuries that we have sustained, the scarcity of our provisions. So now lead us back down to our own country. If you mobilise afterwards, then we will mobilise our army; and then we will set off on a second expedition. Yet, if you tell us to stay here, we will stay here in order to fight alongside you.'

So, the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, went down with them to their own country, as we have already mentioned. He remained there through Ša'bān, Ramaḍān and half of Šawāl[308].

Then he embarked on an expedition, with his soldiers and army in the direction of Abyssinia, near Dawāro. He set out against them and took the best route via the Wabi.[309]The Wabi is an extremely mighty river, notable for its

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[307]The seventh month of the Muslim year. (S)

[308]The eighth, ninth and tenth months of the Muslim year. (S)

[309]The Wabi Šebellē, a major river in the south-east of the Horn of Africa. Flowing generally in a south-easterly direction, north of Bāli, the river reaches the sea, as the *Futūḥ* implies, south-west of

water, where crocodiles and wild animals breed profusely. It is the barrier between Dawāro and Bāli, and empties itself into the salt sea in the vicinity of Mogadishu.[310]

He came to the country of Dawāro, invading it by night. He split his army into two divisions: he put in command of one division the wazir Nūr bin Ibrahīm, and the second part was with the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him. They raided the people of Dawāro at the time of the morning prayer and encountered no resistance, taking captives and booty, may the Most High God have mercy upon him.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: five Muslim knights, among them al-Kūšem Abū Bakr, had gone apart from the Muslim forces and entered one of the infidel valleys and met resistance from the infidels who had gathered there, preparing themselves for war and battle. They did not dawdle in attacking the Muslims, and a fierce battle commenced between them. The infidels were numerous, so the Muslims fled, apart from al-Kūšem Abū Bakr who stood his ground, held firm and fought a fine fight, crying out, 'The *jihād* in the way of God'. It was his wont to pray, 'O God, bestow martyrdom upon me.' God granted him his wish, and bestowed on him what he asked for, as he died a martyr. May the Most High God have mercy upon him.

He had participated in the battle of Šemberā Korē and in many forays. During the battle of Šemberā Korē he had a dream in which he saw himself riding a mule, and the Qur'ānic reciter was with him, but ahead of him, also riding a mule. He said, 'The angel of Death, peace be upon him, came to me and grasped the top of my head, and extracted my soul. I said to him, "Do not take my soul, but if it is inevitable that you do take my soul let this happen during a *jihād*; take it then". He replied "All right".'

He fought at Šemberā Korē and was unharmed, returning to his city. He fought also in Dawāro as we have described above. His vision was proved

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Mogadishu. (P)

[310]Mogadishu, or more properly Maqdišu, a major port on the Indian Ocean coast, handling much of the trade of the southern Horn of Africa. Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, pp. 61-2, 67-8, 77; R.Pankhurst, *Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia*, pp. 351-2. (P)

to be genuine, and the Most High God gave him what he desired.[311] The Muslims buried him, and spent the night [there].

The second day, the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, sent cavalry against the land of Dawāro, and they raided it, arriving at the land of Jawātir where they took captives and booty. They never passed by a village that they did not lay a curse upon, that it might pass into utter oblivion; and the women who were in it wept.

[The devastation of Adāl Mābrāq]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: When the Muslims reached the land of Jawātir, the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, followed them with the rest of the army.[312]

They then set out from the land of Jawātir to the land of Dawāro, to a place called Adāl Mābrāq[313] where they [again] took captives and booty. The patrician who was lord of Adāl Mābrāq, his name was Abēl, defended his country against the Muslims, and held the narrow road. He fought the Muslims there, and he and his army fled before the Muslims, who took the patrician Abēl prisoner.

His captor was Takīa. He had him taken into the presence of the imām, and he ransomed himself. This Takīa who had captured him had had his right hand and his left foot cut off by order of the imām, out of regard for the Most High God. He captured the patrician even though he had his hand and his foot cut off. He participated in the forays and battles, and fought in the front line, as will be mentioned later on. The Muslims devasted Adāl Mābrāq, and left it in ashes.

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[311]B's omission of 'He fought also ...genuine,' is an homoeoteleuton. (S)

[312]B omits 'the imām ...army'. Another homoeoteleuton. (S)

[313]Adal Mabraq was possibly located in the lowlands of Dawāro. The term was later employed, in Bāḥrey's *History of the Gāllā*, to refer to a military unit stationed in that part of the country. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia*, pp. 115-16. See also Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 124. (P)

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: the principal patrician in Dawāro was called Rās Baniyāt.[314] The king thought so highly of him that he made him a patrician and appointed him above all the other patricians. He was formidable and head-strong: a follower of Satan.

When he came to hear about the Muslims and how they had devastated the countries, he was informed by his spies that the Muslims were trying to return to their own country. So he assembled a mighty army, and held a narrow defile against the Muslims, and pitched his tent there. At that time there was no other route that the Muslims could take, and this presented a difficulty because there was no way the horses could negotiate it.

The Muslims discussed among themselves what to do. Some of them said, 'We have already come too far along the road; now we cannot return.' Others again said, 'Entrust your affairs to God [f°25] and go forward'.

The patrician Abēl was at that time a captive in the hands of the Muslims, shackled in irons. The imām demanded to see him; and he was brought. The imām said to him, 'If these infidels obstruct our path, we will kill you. And after we have killed you, we will fight them. And if we die in the *jihād*, why, what a good thing to desire!'

The patrician Abēl replied, 'You stand to gain nothing by this plan; but I have another idea.' The imām said to him, 'Let us hear your idea; and what you have in mind'.[315] So, he continued, 'I will send to these infidels and to their patrician Rās Baniyāt, and order them to vacate the place in which they are at present. But we make this conditional on your not burning down these churches that we have here; for they are the churches of the king.' Then the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, said, 'If they do this, then we accept your condition.'

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Thereupon the patrician Abēl sent a messenger to where the patrician Rās Baniyāt was, to say to him, 'I have come to an agreement with the Muslims whereby they agree not to burn down the churches of the king, on condition that you quit the road where you are now, and that you open up the way for them. If you refuse this,

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[314] Baniyāt, a name also rendered as Nabiyāt. (P) See A.-P. *ed. cit.* p.87 'Nabyat'.(S)

[315] B omits 'the imām ... in mind'. (S)

God will grant the victory to the Muslims against you and they will burn down the churches of the king; and the king will blame you for this. Now extend hospitality to the Muslims, and give a present for the imām Aḥmad. I have already made a treaty of peace for you concerning this.'

So the messenger set out, and reached the patrician Rās Baniyāt who agreed to the proposal. He, in his turn, sent a messenger to the imām Aḥmad saying to him, 'We have agreed to what the patrician Abēl has proposed between us and you; and we will extend hospitality to you and send the present, and if you go away and leave us, we will pay you the poll-tax.'

The imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, and the Muslims, agreed to this and made peace according to these terms: the patrician and his army turned back from the road, and the Muslims camped in the town of Rās Baniyāt who extended hospitality to them and treated them graciously; and came with a present for the imām Aḥmad. The Muslims made an exception for those who had entered into this peace with them.

Then they set out for two days until they reached a city called Maṣḥīb, part of the country of Waraqāl. Finding no army in it, they plundered it, taking its people captive, and then demolished it, leaving it in ashes. Then they set out for the land called Mai Falaḥ in the region of Jān Ambā[316] where they made an encampment and collected booty of which they took the fifth part [for God; and distributed the other] four portions. They also took ten horses.

[Aḥmad and the renegade Muslim]

There was a man called Rājiḥ who had left the country of the Muslims for the country of the infidels, apostatising and becoming a Christian. The king of Abyssinia gave him land for him to support himself. He raided the outermost boundaries of the Muslim country, ravaging it and causing untold damage. He kept on behaving in this way until the imām of the Muslims, Aḥmad bin Ibrahīm, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, came to power.

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[316]Literally, Royal Ambā. (P)

When he had set out on an expedition into Abyssinia and drew near to it, the imām Aḥmad made camp in Zagbā[317] and sent a messenger to Rājiḥ saying, 'You are a Muslim and the son of a Muslim, a *mujāhid*, and the son of a *mujāhid* from early times. God had fore-ordained what happened to you but now, why don't you repent and return to the religion of Islam and be our brother? Do not despair of the mercy of God, for "surely God forgives all sins".'[318]

After the messenger reached him he sent him back to the imām to say, 'How many things have I perpetrated: I have killed, I have plundered the wealth of the Muslims! I am afraid that if I rejoin your ranks you will take it out on me for this.' The imām sent back a messenger to him who said, 'We have excused you. Return!' Thereupon he replied, 'Send me an emir with a vast army and I will advise them concerning the infidels and their wealth.'

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: This Rājiḥ was familiar with their country, had tramped all of its territory, and knew all its roads. The imām Aḥmad sent him the wazir 'Addolī with his army. He met up with Rājiḥ who told him about the place in which the infidels were hidden. They remained there three days during which they killed, took captives and took booty: a vast quantity of cattle, slaves and pack animals.

Then the wazir 'Addolī and Rājiḥ turned back, aiming to rejoin the imām who had set out from Zagbā and pitched his camp in a place called Tarfar in the region of Da'īn. The wazir 'Addolī caught up with the imām who was camped at Tarfar. The imām, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, welcomed Rājiḥ, clad him in garments of honour, treated him graciously and repeated to him what God said in his renowned Book, 'Surely none despairs of God's mercy except the unbelieving people'.[319]

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[317]Conceivably so called after a *zegbā*, or *Podacarpus gracilior*, tree. Guidi, *Vocabolario amarico-italiano*, col. 631. (P)

[318]*Qur'ān* xxxix, 53. (S)

[319]*Qur'ān* xii, 87. (S)

[Aḥmad and five companions are victorious]

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: It was the custom of the imām Aḥmad, when the army had made camp and had settled down there, to leave the encampment with five of his knights, and sometimes with ten, and sometimes with twenty. So while the Muslims were pitching their camp in Tarfar the imām went out, as was his custom, to reconnoitre the surrounding areas accompanied by ten knights and thirty foot-soldiers.

They arrived at a village near a mountain. There was an imposing house in the village. The imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, said to them, 'Set fire to this house'. The imām was without equal. With him on this occasion was Farašaḥam 'Alī, lord of Angot, and Del Sagad, lord of Da'īn, and Garād Ṣaddīq, and Garād Šihāb, lord of Jawātir after the conquest, the emir Ḥusain bin Abū Bakr al-Gāturī, and Abū Bakr bin Sim.

As they gathered near the village they noticed that there were infidels in a valley there, who were prepared for battle. They had many horsemen and foot-soldiers with them, and the patrician Fanu'ēl from Dawāro was among their number.

When they spotted them, the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, said to his companions, 'There is no way now for us to return to our camp. Let us charge them. God will give us the victory.' His companions agreed, dismounted from their mules, harnessed their horses, donned their armour and took their weapons and mounted their horses. The emir 'Alī pulled his horse up close to the horse of the imām Aḥmad, and they charged; and their companions charged with them. When the infidels saw them, shame and wretchedness overcame them, and they fled without giving battle. Thanks to their steadiness, not one of the Muslims was killed.

[Aḥmad's strategem]

The imām Aḥmad and his companions turned back and returned to their camp, arriving there in time for the evening prayer and notifying them of what happened.

He said to his commanders, among whom was the wazir 'Addolī, the emir Nūr and the leaders of the Muslims, 'The infidels wanted to take us by surprise; but it was God the Most High who took them by surprise'. Then he said, 'We had not calculated on the infidels assembling here. Now they will spend the night somewhere close by us. So now let us discuss among ourselves what we should do about them, and work out a ruse to entrap them.'

So they discussed what they should do.[f°26] The imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, said, 'We will not attack these infidels during the day. Let us rather send out a spy to bring us back news concerning them, and where they have made camp. When we know their location, we will attack them by night and surrounding them, catch them unawares.' The Muslim commanders approved of this plan. They sent out a spy to whom they gave his war pay.[320]

The spy set out to discover the location of the infidels, and then turned back, returning to the imām. He reported, 'The infidels have gathered in a place called Buro[321] which is a mighty, flowing river. During the day they ascend the mountain, but by night they camp by the river.'

The storyteller, may God the Most High have mercy upon him, says: Thereupon the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, organised his forces. He was accompanied by two-hundred knights with whom they intended to surround the infidels. He also had five-hundred foot-soldiers skilled with sword and shield. Rājiḥ went ahead of them. The imām ordered him to march ahead of the cavalry, and to advance until they came near where the infidels were, and to spend the night there, until he joined them.

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[320]There is some confusion over what the spy was given. B translates وجعلوا له جعلا 'avec lequel on fit un prix,' while noting that A.-P. translates 'auquel ils donnèrent des instructions'. We suggest that جعل may have been the pay given to a soldier, rather than a reward for spying: in this case, given lest he be captured or killed. Dozy, *op.cit.* I, p.199 notes that جعالة is an *ex gratia* payment. Salary would be مجعول. (S)

[321] بور : this seems to be the same as the 'river Buro' نهر بور *infra* p.305. Būra بورى (see note[405]) is a different place. (S)

[Adventures of Aḥmad and thirty knights]

So the foot-soldiers set off by night, but, as they mistook the route, they returned to the camp. Meanwhile, the imām Aḥmad, may the mercy of the Most High God be upon him, had quit the camp where it lay, [leaving] in it the wazir 'Addolī and with him the booty and provisions.[322]

The imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, set out and with him were only thirty knights. The remainder of the knights had been overcome by drowsiness, and were sleeping in the camp. So the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, set out from the camp with only a third of the night remaining, and with him were thirty knights, renowned for their courage.

Their guide was Del Sagad, knight of Sim. This was the country in which he had grown up, and so he knew its paths and its roads. The leaders of the cavalry included Aḥmad Goitā, and Zaḥarbūī 'Uṯmān, one of the few knights who were courageous and valiant of heart, with the energy of Paradise. He had taken part in battles and expeditions. He used to fight as he chose: sometimes mounted and sometimes on foot. He died a martyr in the country of the Māyā as we will describe later on.

So they marched until they approached the infidels, seeing their fires. Dawn was just breaking. The infidels were in a very narrow place. The guide Del Sagad stood up and said, 'O imām of the Muslims, these are the infidels, these are their fires and we are close by them.' But the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, was unaware that the foot-soldiers had returned [to the camp].

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: The imām and the foot-soldiers had made arrangements for a rendezvous: and when the imām reached it they were not there. So the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, asked his companions, 'What shall we do?' Garād Ṣaddīq, lord of Šārkāh, replied, 'Let us put all our trust in God and attack them: God will give us the victory.' The Muslims heard his counsel and

[322]Reading الرزق for الرزن. (S)

agreed with his judgement. He [Aḥmad] said to him, 'Your counsel is excellent'. Then they harnessed their horses, mounted them, and donned their armour and breastplates.

[List of the knights]

Among the thirty knights that were with the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, were: Del Sagad; the emir 'Alī, nicknamed Ankarasaḥ; Garād Ṣaddīq; 'Abd an-Nāṣr; Ibn Dār Jūšū; Ura'ī Nūr bin Dār 'Alī; Garād 'Uṯmān bin Jauhar; the emir Ḥusain bin Abū Bakr al-Gāturī; Ura'ī Qāt 'Umar; Qalaša Ura'ī Nūr; Ura'ī Dīn; Garād Naṣr bin Bāli Garād[323] who spoke beautiful Arabic, was strong-hearted and never separated himself from the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, and was impressive in giving counsel; 'Alī Waradāī who converted to Islam on this day and became a fine Muslim. He was a religious person, and a faithful adviser to the Muslims and died a martyr at the Ambā as we will recount later on.

There was also Dāḳal, and Takīa, and Hugan Nūr, lord of al-Karfīn; Rajānī Jūtā Jaddalī 'Abbās brother-in-law of Garād Manṣūr: he had been one of the slaves of Garād Manṣūr who freed him and married him to his sister; the wazir Nūr bin Ibrahīm and Garād Aḥmūša.

When day finally broke, the Muslims cried out with one voice, 'God is the greatest,' and charged into the midst of the infidels. They fought for an hour and held firm against the infidels whose patrician was Fanu'ēl, may God curse him. He charged the Muslims, and came near to the imām Aḥmad. They fought for an hour and finally the patrician fled. When his companions saw him fleeing, they also turned tail.

The patrician Keflē was captured by Garād Aḥmūša and the patrician Zin was also captured. The imām Aḥmad so screamed out against him that he was thrown off guard. The imām said to him, 'Stay where you are'. He was disoriented on account of the scream of the imām Aḥmad who then commanded one of his equerries, 'Capture him, and bring him back to me'.

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[323]The *Garād*, or local ruler, of Bāli. (P)

The patrician and the equerry grappled with each other. The equerry tried to capture him, but the patrician took out a knife that he was carrying, and stabbed him.

'Abd an-Nāṣr had, at that time, captured one of the infidel foot-soldiers to whom he said, 'Go to your companion, the patrician, who has just stabbed one of our companions. Take him captive and return to me with him.' The infidel went, took his companion captive and presented him to the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him. They put him in fetters; and he paid a ransom for himself.

The patrician Kūla was also captured by the emir Aḥmūša; and around one-hundred of the infidels were slain. They took a vast number of horses and mules as booty without any of the Muslims being killed. The Muslims pursued them from Buro, so that they were forced to take refuge at Bus which was a big river below Auwawalada.

The imām Aḥmad, may the most High God have mercy upon him, stopped to raise his banner, and planted its pole there so that the Muslims - that is, the thirty knights - could rally round it. They made their camp by the river, unsaddled their horses, watered them, gave them their fodder and shaded them under an olive tree. They were in a very narrow spot, with the mountains all around them: a kind of rock fault between the mountains. As we have already said, the infidels had fled, and the Muslims had pitched their camp, and had no news of the infidels.

[Aḥmad repulses the forces of Rās Baniyāt]

The imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, had risen to pray by the bank of the river, to recite the morning prayer. When the imām Aḥmad had completed his prayer, he went back to his companions under the tree. While they were sitting there, they noticed a man riding a horse, a white horse: and he was galloping towards them. The emir Ḥusain and Farašaḥam 'Alī said to the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, 'this rider is from among the horsemen whom we put to flight'. The imām replied, 'No, this horseman who is coming now is not one of those who fled: otherwise he would be black from sweat and exhaustion'.

It turned out to be as the imām Aḥmad said. When the horseman drew near to the Muslims they could see that he was being followed by his companions, six-hundred cavalrymen equipped for war, and an army whose foot-soldiers [f°27] were incalculable. They were headed straight for the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, and his companions. Their patrician was Rās Baniyāt, and with him were many of the patricians from Dawāro. The infidels drew closer to the Muslims, and held the mountain against them, throwing down stones at the Muslims who protected themselves from them by the tree.

The imām Aḥmad and his companions were convinced that their Judgement and their Resurrection would occur in this place. The infidels cried out to the imām, 'What you have eaten and what you have done will not be sufficient for you. Today you have fallen into our power and there is no way out for you.' The Muslims entrusted their affairs to God, while the imām kept silent before their taunts, and gave them no answer.

The Muslims then discussed amongst themselves what to do. They asked the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, 'What shall we do now?' At which the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, replied, 'Entrust your affairs to God; call upon God for help against them. There is no might, and "no power except in God" [324] the Most High, the Most Powerful.'

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Then the imām Aḥmad approached his companions and said, 'You and I are in this situation together. Let us ask God to help us against his enemies. Fight for your religion and for your Sharī'a.[325] Whoever from amongst us is killed, will go to Paradise. Whoever remains alive will live happily, "Be patient, excel in patience and remain steadfast. Be careful of your duty to God that you may be successful".'[326]

[*The storyteller*] says: When the infidels saw that their stones did not hit the Muslims, they came closer to them. Then one of the Muslim foot-

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[324] *Qur'ān* xviii, 40; some eds. xviii, 39. (S)

[325] See *supra* note[45]. (S)

[326] *Qur'ān* iii, 200; some eds. iii, 199. (S)

soldiers, Takīa by name, said to the imām, 'O imām Aḥmad, these infidels are now closer to us. What do you say: shall we kill them before they kill us?'

The Muslims had just one musket that 'Uṯmān used to fire. He stood up, lighted it, and fired it at the leader of the foot-soldiers and killed him. Thereupon the Muslims called out with one voice, 'God is the Greatest'. The trees, the stones, the mountains and the earth answered them, and they charged as one man.

Takīa charged. He it was who had had his hand and his foot cut off. He was riding a mule and he went into the middle of the infidels, brandishing his sword above his head. The fighting grew bloody and fierce and the patrician Rās Baniyāt fled, as did his companions; and the Muslims gave them their just desserts with sword blows and spear thrusts.

The number of infidels who were killed was incalculable, while not one of the Muslims died or was wounded. The Muslims took twenty horses as booty, as well as a vast number of mules and breastplates, and pursued them; but not far. They in their turn descended the mountain, to the expansive lowlands which were suitable for cavalry manoeuvres.

[Rās Baniyāt's counter-attack is repulsed]

Then the patrician, the enemy of God, Rās Baniyāt, screamed out to his companions and to his army, 'Where are you fleeing to? What excuse will we give the king when he says, "Twenty of the Muslim cavalry put you to flight. And you are six-hundred horsemen, and your foot-soldiers are innumerable"?'

Thus he goaded his companions on, may God curse him, against the Muslims. They listened to his words, turned back and rejoined him. The patrician was at the front of them and he was swinging his sword over his head. Under him was a pure-bred horse named *Mountain of Gold* [327] because of its beauty, and the yellowness of its colour.[328] The infidels reversed direction, may God curse them, against the Muslims.

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[327] *Jabal al-ḏahab.* (S)

[328] I read وصفـــراء لونـــه for the text's وصفـــاء لونه, as لون refers to 'colour' or 'hue' and the horse's name

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: The imām remained in the rear-guard, while in the van of the Muslims were Farašaḥam 'Alī, 'Alī Waradāī, Bešāra the son of [329]Jūšū, Garād Naṣr bin Bāli Garād, Dāḵal, and Ura'ī Nūr bin Dār 'Alī. The infidels and the Muslim vanguard met head on.

The first of the Muslims to charge was 'Alī Waradāī, against the patrician of Jawātir who was standing close to the patrician Rās Baniyāt. He struck him such a blow that with it he severed his head from his body, and God thrust his soul into Hell, 'an evil place to settle in'.[330]

The Muslims and the infidels fought for an hour that day and God put dismay into the hearts of the infidels, who turned tail and a great number of them was killed. The Muslims set off in pursuit of them as far as a country called Auwawalada, when darkness separated them. The patrician Rās Baniyāt only got away after terrible physical exertion, for his horse was exhausted.

The Muslims praised God, rejoicing in their triumph and victory. They took a vast quantity of booty: horses, mules, breastplates, tents and equipment and weapons of war. Then the imām Aḥmad sent a message to the wazir 'Addolī and to the army of the Muslims announcing the good news of their victory and triumph. The messenger bearing the good news set off for the wazir at the time of the dusk prayer. Travelling the entire night, he reached them just in time for the morning prayer. The Muslims were greatly heartened by the victory.

The imām camped in a town called Gafat Auwawalada, the village of the patrician Balaw. The Muslims entered the home of the patrician Balaw,

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supports the reading صفـــراء. B, reading صفـــاء, translates the phrase 'la pureté de sa nuance'. (S) Traditionally Ethiopians were keenly interested in horses. They often named them on the basis of their colours, or the supposed qualities of their masters, and many nobles were known, and called, by the names of their steeds. R.Pankhurst, 'The early history of Ethiopian horse-names,' pp 197-206. Ethiopian tradition, collected in the early twentieth century by the British traveller and sometime consul R.E. Cheesman, states that one of the imām's horses was buried in the mountains behind Ifag, at a place called Grāñ Bar, where Aḥmad was buried, between Abbā Čārā and Danqaz. Cheesman, *Lake Tana and the Blue Nile*, p. 186. See also Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 168. (P)

[329] بشارة ولد جوشوا . (S)

[330] *Qur'ān* xiv, 29. (S)

and prayed there. They made the Call to Prayer there, and remembered the Most High God. Then the imām Aḥmad sent to ask 'Addolī and his Muslim army to join him. They arrived after two days, and the imām Aḥmad pitched his tent in the house of Balaw. The army made forays into the land of Auwawalada as far as the land of Dawāro.

They set out by night, and the infidels were taken completely unawares as the Muslims raided, killed and captured them. The Muslims remained in the home of Balaw for six days in the same condition. Then they relocated to a district called Zawāḥah where they stayed a few days, taking captives, killing and plundering.

[Aḥmad resolves to conquer the whole country]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: The imām Aḥmad resolved to settle down in the land of Abyssinia and to conquer it. So he sent to the country of the Muslims urging them on to a *jihād* and to join him. The soldiers said to the imām, 'We will not live in the country of the Christians. We would rather return to the country of the Muslims.' Then the emirs said to the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, 'Our fathers and our ancestors never wanted to settle in the country of Abyssinia. Instead they would send raiding parties to the outermost borders of the country for booty, cattle and such like; and then they would return to the country of the Muslims. And we have no precedent for making our home here.'

Thus they prevailed upon the imām Aḥmad not to settle down. They sought to forestall him in his plan to settle down there; but God got the better of them. Thereupon the companions of the imām Aḥmad, his friends, his advisers and those who shared his views, said, 'These soldiers are worn out: they will not agree to staying here. Let us return with them to our own country. And if we go on an expedition after this, and you want to settle down, we will settle down with you.' The imām acquiesced in this.

The Muslims took more booty than they had ever taken before; and many of the infidels embraced the religion of Islam and went down with the imām Aḥmad towards the country of the Muslims. He sent off a raiding party

under the command of Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad, and sent it off in the direction of Abyssinia. It took booty [f°28] and then returned to the country of the Muslims.

It was when the imām had it in mind to settle down there that he sent a messenger to the land of the Muslims for support, as we have already said.

The emir Muḥammad Zaḥarbūī had gone up with his Muslim army, to the land of Abyssinia, and [returning] joined forces with the imām on the road to the land of the Muslims. The imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, was coming down from Abyssinia; and they returned together. The imām and his army came to a place on the border of the land of the Muslims called Dir; it was a mighty river. Thereupon, the imām Aḥmad pitched his camp by the river bank, and set aside the *fifth* of the booty, entrusting it to the care of a man who was frugal, obedient, devout and courageous - one of the most powerful and supportive people named Kabīr Abūn bin Aḥmad al-Janāsarī.

[Aḥmad rebukes the sultan and the emirs]

Then he set out from Dir and entered his city of Hārar triumphant, victorious, wearing the victor's crown, exultant. He divided the *fifth* part and the alms tax between the eight categories[331] whom God mentions in his famous book, and passed a sleepless night there.

Then the imām spoke to the emirs, and to the sultan whom he had appointed in place of his brother Abū Bakr, as we have mentioned above, and whose name was 'Umar Dīn, about the alms tax, because the sultan, the emirs and their other rulers who governed the land of Sa'd ad-Dīn took the alms tax from the Muslims and feathered their own nests, disposing of it for their own profit, instead of giving it to the poor and the wretched and to those who really deserved it.

To these the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, said, 'Praised be God who has graced us with Islam, and made us strong, and enabled us to plunder booty from the wealth of the idol-worshippers. We

[331] See *supra* note[154]. (S)

have collected booty unlike any taken by our fathers or our ancestors, or anyone ever before us. This is sufficient for us to live off, and to enable us to buy weapons of war for fighting. And as for the alms tax, let it be divided among the eight categories.'

Then the emirs and the sultan replied, motivated by fear of the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, 'We agree with what you have said to us about this matter, and we will not oppose you.' Thereupon the imām Aḥmad sent one of his administrative officers to the [better off] people of the country, to the cattle owners and to the farmers, to collect the alms tax from them.

[The plot against Aḥmad over the alms tax]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Thereupon the imām disbanded his soldiers, saying to them, 'Each of you return to your town, feed your horses well, keep your weapons in readiness until I come to you, and you set out [again] on a raid. For the moment I am going to a district called Zarba to pacify the country, to make peace between the citizens and the Somalis, and to mobilise an army; and then I will come back to you.' They agreed with what he had to say, broke up, and each person went back to his own town.

Those of the emirs who stayed behind in the country, stayed close by the sultan, while the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, went down to Zarba with thirty horsemen. The Sultan 'Umar Dīn, meanwhile, consulted with the emirs of the country concerning the matter of the alms-tax: among them were the wazir Nūr, and Garād Aḥmūša, Qaṭīn Abū Bakr, Ura'ī Abūn bin 'Uṭmān, Jāsā 'Umar, Garād 'Alī Ḥūsa brother of the sultan 'Umar Dīn, Garād Aḥmad bin Lād 'Uṭmān.

Amongst the theologians who condoned what they were doing, and corrupted them were the Qur'ānic teacher Abū Bakr, the Islamic judge from Hubat, and the Qur'ānic teacher Aḥmad bin 'Alī, brother of the Qur'ānic teacher Nūr, Islamic judge of the Muslims in the land of Abyssinia.

All these colluded with the Sultan in the matter of the alms-tax, and were that day going around the place acting in a depraved way, saying

amongst themselves, 'This person wants to stop us handling the tax. This has been the custom of our fathers and our ancestors from the time of Sa'd ad-Dīn. He wishes to abolish it; but we will not do so. At this moment he has gone to Zarba, but he does not have his force with him. His horses, all of them, are here. Let us seize them and when he returns to us, we will fight him if he will not leave the country to us and go away, he and his wife Del Wanbarā, the daughter of the emir Maḥfūẓ, whither he chooses, either to the land of Arabia or to Mecca as long as he doesn't come to us; for we do not want to have him in our country.'

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: So they seized the horses that the imām Aḥmad had left in the city in the care of his equerries and his soldiers. They attacked them by night, taking their horses, their swords, and their equipment.

[Abū Bakr sent to Aḥmad with an ultimatum from the plotters]

Then the Qur'ānic teacher Abū Bakr al-Aršūna said to the sultan, to the emirs and to those who were condoning their action: 'What is this reprehensible thing that you have done?' To which they replied, 'We have done it'. And then they said to the Qur'ānic teacher Abū Bakr, 'You, go to where the imām is, and tell him to leave us the rest of the horses and the equipment and to go, he and his wife, to whatever country he chooses. But not to come back to us because we don't want him. And if he does come back to us we will kill him, so that we may rid ourselves of him: "Surely God attains his purpose".'[332]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: So the Qur'ānic teacher Abū Bakr reached the imām Aḥmadwho was in Zarba, sitting and giving commands to agricultural workers, 'Do this and do that'. He knew nothing [of this matter] and had heard no news. Then the Qur'ānic teacher Abū Bakr handed over their letter, and he read it and understood its contents. The imām then said to the Qur'ānic teacher Abū Bakr, 'Return to them and

[332] *Qur'ān* lxv, 3. (S)

tell them that what they want is vile, but let them do what they desire. I shall leave the country to them.'

[Support for Ahmed]

Thereupon the emir Ḥusain bin Abū Bakr al-Gāturī arose and said to the imām Aḥmad, 'This will never happen. If they want war, then we will assemble our armies from the people of Sim and from the Somali tribes: the tribe of Girri, the tribe of Habr Maqdī, the tribe of Ḥārlā, for our armies have been dispersed. How can we do as they wish? We shall not surrender the country to them.'

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: When the emir Ḥusain had said these words to the imām there arose from among those present the emir 'Alī, Ura'ī Aḥmad Dīn, Garād Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad, 'Abd an-Nāṣr, Aḥmad Goitā, Garād 'Ābad, Aḥmadūš, Ṣabr ad-Dīn, Zaḥarbūī 'Uṭmān, Ura'ī Maḥwī, his companion Dīn, Farašaḥam Saṭūt, Ura'ī Nūr bin Dār 'Alī, Tēdros bin Adam, Warajār Abūn,[333] the ruler of Zayla' - all of whom told the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, that they agreed with the opinion expressed by the emir Ḥusain.

So the imām Aḥmad, may the mercy of the Most High God be upon him, set out from Zarba, heading in their direction. They travelled for four days and came to a country called Ganāsar close to the country of the Sultan. Then they travelled from Ganāsar and came to a country called Wilqam which had an abundance of *qāt*, and where all the Muslim [converts] who had gone down from Abyssinia and the land of Tegrē had settled. The imām Aḥmad encamped there.

[Aḥmad and his enemies reconciled]

The first of the obedient emirs to join the imām was Garād Naṣr bin Bāli Garād whom the imām had appointed governor of a country called

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[333] ورجار ابون : elsewhere in the text he is called ورجاي . He was lord of Zayla'. (S)

Nagab.[334] When the sultan heard [f°29] about the arrival of the imām Aḥmad and his soldiers he sent to the sharifs, to the sheikhs and to the Qur'ānic teachers and brazenly put it to them to make peace between him and the imām Aḥmad. They did this, and the imām did not hold against them what they had wanted to do, but entered his city of Hārar, happy, exultant and triumphant.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Then Ḥirābū the chieftain of the Somali tribe of Marraiḥān, killed one of the equerries of the sultan 'Umar Dīn when he was in Nagab. The imām heard about what Ḥirābū had done, and he said to the Sultan 'Umar Dīn, 'This Somali has acted treacherously towards you and killed your equerry.' So the imām, and the sultan with him, prepared himself for an expedition and set out and arrived at the country of the Somalis, as far as Kidād. Ḥirābū, meantime, had fled and was hiding in his own country.

The imām asked the sultan, 'What shall we do now? I am going to send for him to hand over the horses, and to pay the blood-money. If he does so, then all is well; if he does not, then I shall go against him, while you go back to your country.' So the imām sent to Ḥirābū to hand over the horses, and to pay the blood-money to some sharifs of the family of Bā 'Alawī, the Ḥusainites, [335] may God bless us through their means.

[The sixth *jihād*]

The sharifs reached him in the region of the Hawiya[336] where he was. He greeted them courteously, and sent back with them the horses and the

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[334]Nagab, a locality of this name is mentioned in the chronicle of 'Amda Ṣeyon, which notes that the district was allied to Ifāt. Huntingford, *Glorious Victories of 'Amda Ṣeyon*, p. 74. (P)

[335]The reference seems to be to descendants of the second son of 'Alī and Fāṭima, al-Ḥusein. If this be the case then *'Alawī* may refer to 'Alawite' a member of the Shi'ite sect (at present dominating Syria and Lebanon and inhabiting the coastal regions around Latakia, in NW Syria) claiming descent from al-Ḥusain, and his elder brother al-Ḥasan before him. The term *'Alawī* is found *infra* as a name. If this be correct, then there must have been Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims living (and fighting) together in the region of Hārar at the time of Aḥmed. (S)

[336]The Hawiya constituted the largest tribal unit in the southern Somali region. I.M.Lewis, *Peoples of the Horn of Africa*, pp. 28-30. (P)

blood-money. They returned to Kidād and handed over the horses and the blood-money to the imām Aḥmad and the sultan. The imām then said to the sultan, 'This Ḥirābū has done all that we asked of him.' The sultan and the chieftains replied, 'Let us return to our country.' To which the imām rejoined, 'Rather, let us set off on a raid into the country of Bāli.'

The sultan said, 'the army is exhausted and none of us can go on such an expedition'. But you, if you want to, can march with all the chieftains and some soldiers to Bāli; I, for my part, am going back.' The imām remained in Kidād with the soldiers while the sultan returned to his city of Hārar.

Then the chiefs and the soldiers said to the imām, 'How can we mount an expedition? We have no provisions, and we would have to spend at least a month there. Our provisions are exhausted.' To which the imām replied, 'I will obtain supplies for you from the people of the country and from the leading sharifs to assist you with the *jihād*.' And they were satisfied with this.

Thereupon the imām sought out the sharifs, 'Alawī bin 'Alī aš-Šāṭarī, and Muḥammad bin 'Umar aš-Šāṭarī, and 'Alī bin 'Umar al-Ḥusainī - may the Most High God have mercy upon them, and bless us with them. All of them presented themselves and the imām said to them, 'Help us with provisions for the *jihād* for the sake of God the Most High.'

They responded most generously, and handed over to him the provisions; as did the people of the country, and as did Garād Naṣr bin Bāli Garād, for he was in his home country there; it had been a fiefdom[337] of his since the time of the sultan Muḥammad and the emir 'Alī, may the Most High God have mercy upon them. He gave them vast quanitities of food.

So then the Muslims, provisioned from Kidād,[338] set off in the direction of Bāli until they came to one of the Muslim provinces in the land of Jalbi, called Dalfāī: the market place of Jalbi. The people of the country made them welcome and the sharif Hāšem bin 'Umar aš-Šāṭarī, the sharif sheikh bin 'Abd Allāh and Hāšem bin az-Zafaī met with them. This latter was a well-known mystic, God's servant, a holy man and famous. May the Most High God have mercy upon them all; may they shower down their blessings upon

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[337] منقس, an Ethiopian word 'mangest'. See B vol ii, p.153, note[2]. (S)

[338] B: 'Puis, les Musulmans partirent de Kedâd'. (S)

us. They made the Muslims welcome, and these rested four days in Dalfāī. Then they organised themselves, and marched off towards Bāli arriving at a place known as the Wabi, a mighty river that flowed through many countries. We mentioned it earlier on in the book.

Then the Muslims proceeded and suffered much hunger from the scarcity of provisions. Each person among them subsisted on a fist-full of food [per day]. They marched for six days and reached the road of Bāli, coming to a place called Mīza where they camped. The imām split his forces into two sections, putting Ura'ī Abūn in charge of one of them. He then set out taking the Ṣarjad road to Qāqmāh. He said to Ura'ī Abūn, 'We and you will rendezvous in a place called Adal Jallāt.' Then Ura'ī Abūn set out taking the 'Aqrī road from Bāli, while the imām marched along another, shorter, route.

[Aḥmad and the Christian soldiers from Bāli]

All of a sudden, there were some Christian foot-soldiers from Bāli, coming down to the country of the Muslims to convert to Islam. The imām questioned them, 'What country are you from?' They said, 'We are from the people of Bāli. We were going to Jalbi to become Muslims and to embrace your religion.'

It had been customary from the first, among the people of Bāli, that when they went down to Wabāt, they would go into the land of Jalbi, and then on to the sultan.

The imām Aḥmad asked them, 'What have you heard about us?' They replied, 'Nothing. We have had no news at all about you. Nor have the people of the country heard about you.' Then they interrogated them about the country, and which patricians were in it. They replied, 'About the country, it is ruled by Azmāč Dēgalḥān, the brother-in-law of the king. He is with the king and has left, in his stead, in charge of the country, a patrician whose name is Šankur. He is in the country with the army.' The imām asked, 'Which city is

he in?' They replied, 'He is residing in Zallah; and Takla Ḥāymānot[339] is in Qāqmāh.'

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Now this Takla Ḥāymānot had been a Muslim, an equerry of Garād Abūn in the days when he was wazir. When Garād Abūn was killed, he was in the service of the imām Aḥmad.

He was a man of courage, who was entrusted with subjects to govern. His nature changed for the worst, and he wronged them. They complained about him to the imām, who dismissed him. So he left the country of the Muslims for his own country. He reached the king of Abyssinia who put him in charge of this district of Qāqmāh with the office of *garād.*

So afterwards the imām asked them, 'Is he in the lower or the upper part of this district?' They replied, 'At first he was in the upper part, but now he has gone down to the lower part of Qāqmāh.' The imām asked them, 'Would you be able to guide us to him?' They replied, 'Yes, very willingly.'

The imām asked them, 'If we leave now, when would we arrive where he is?' They replied, 'If we were to leave at this moment, we would arrive in the final third of the night, just as dawn is breaking.'

When the imām heard what they had to say, he sent a messenger to Ura'ī Abūn to say to him, 'Stay where you are; for I have another plan.' For he had sent him off to take booty, before he had heard what these infidels had to say.

[Abū Bakr sent to capture Takla Ḥāymānot]

Then he summoned the men of courage amongst whom was Del Sagad, the knight from Sim, Zaḥarbūī 'Alī, Farašaḥam Saṭūt, Garād Aḥmadūš, Qaṭīn Abū Bakr, and the Garād of Hubat, and besides them, thirty other knights. Then he fastened his standard to a spear and entrusted it to Qaṭīn Abū Bakr to whom he also gave some knights.

He summoned the two men to guide them to the infidels, and tied their hands behind their backs to prevent their fleeing. The imām said to the two of

[339] تخلاي امانوت (sic!). (S)

them, 'See that this raiding party reaches the country of Takla Ḥāymānot. If you do so, we will look kindly upon you [f°30] and will treat you in a way that will bring joy to you.' They said, 'Agreed'.

Then he said to the emir Qaṭīn Abū Bakr, 'If you come back to us without having seized Takla Ḥāymānot and put him in chains, we will no longer consider you one of the elite fighters, for there isn't any of you who has not experienced such and such at the hands of the infidels.' They all replied, 'Very well. Let God's will be done'.

After they had recited the *Fātiḥa*[340] the imām bade them farewell; it was the time of the afternoon prayer, and they set out on the march without further ado.

Then the imām sent a message to Ura'ī Abūn telling him to continue on his original course, and himself set out with the rest of the army and reached 'Aqrī by dawn. The people of 'Aqrī were Muslims who were ruled by infidels, so the imām bypassed it.

There was a mountain there which his Muslims climbed and descended into wide country that was part of the land of the Christians. The night was wintry, and they marched until morning broke. Then the Muslims mounted their horses so as to steal some cattle, to take prisoners and to plunder booty. They captured any infidels who crossed their path and finally reached the country of Adal Jallāt in the land of Bāli around noon-time, where they pitched their tents.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Ura'ī Abūn and his companions, entered the land of Qāqmāh from the heights, and plundered and devastated it.

[Takla Ḥāymānot is oblivious of the danger]

Abū Bakr Qaṭīn, meanwhile, marched by night, with the two guides with their hands tied leading them: he had appointed some men to stop them fleeing. They marched all that night, climbing down valleys and up mountains.

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[340] الفاتحة : lit. 'preface,' 'preamble'. Here is meant the first chapter of the *Qur'ān* also known as the *Suratu 'l-Ḥamd* or the 'Chapter of Praise'. (S)

When the moment came for dawn to break, the two guides stopped. He said to them, 'What are you looking at?' They answered, 'We can see his camp, and we can see his fires.'

The emir Abū Bakr and his companions halted, and discussed what they should do. Some of them said, 'Let us attack them immediately, and catch them unawares.' But the emir Abū Bakr replied, 'As for me, I promised the imām to bring the patrician Takla Ḥāymānot back as a prisoner. But if we pounce on him at this time, I am afraid that he will slip through our fingers, so rather let us be patient until morning and then we will attack him.' To which they replied, 'All right; you are our emir; do what seems best to you'. So they dismounted from their mules and waited. The emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn said, 'Recite the sura *Yasin*[341] and call upon the Most High God in prayer.'

Meanwhile, Takla Ḥāymānot knew nothing of them. He had been drinking wine throughout the evening, and as night ended he went out of his dwelling, because he had spent most of it in conversation as a result of the wine. He saw lights on the road where the imām was, for they had set fire to houses along their route. When he noticed this, Takla Ḥāymānot asked his soldiers who were with him, 'What do you think about this fire that I can see?' They answered, 'That is nothing but the fire of people robbing hives; or perhaps some of the robbers have set fire to houses.'

Takla Ḥāymānot retorted, 'As for me, I say that all the signs point to its being the fire of a raiding party; in any case, harness your horses until morning comes. And if it turns out to be a raiding party, then we will go against it, and fight.' Even though he had no information concerning the emir Abū Bakr and the fact that he was close by him, they harnessed their horses and stationed themselves in front of his house, and then returned to their wine-bibbing until morning broke.

The emir Abū Bakr then said to his two guides, 'One of you two will be set free, to accompany three of our foot-soldiers to see what Takla Ḥāymānot is doing, whether he is lying down asleep, or sitting down with company; and then to return to us with the news. Your companion will remain

[341] *Qur'ān* xxxvi. (S)

with us, bound, and if you betray us we will kill him. And may God give us the victory.'

The guide set out with the three foot-soldiers, and by stealth arrived at the dwelling of Takla Ḥāymānot. They saw the harnessed horses in the middle of the courtyard of the house. The guide, along with his companions, returned to the emir Abū Bakr and informed him of this. The Muslims then recited the *Fātiḥa* and prayed for victory.

When day had dawned the emir Abū Bakr mounted his horse which was named *Mubārak*,[342] put on his armour, and took his spear; and the thirty knights who were famous for their courage mounted their horses. They drew up their horses close to one another, and rode shoulder to shoulder as if they were a single, well-compacted building. As they drew near they pointed their spears heavenwards, and slackened their horses' reins, as the crier called out for the attack.

[The capture of Takla Ḥāymānot and his wife]

Takla Ḥāymānot emerged and mounted his horse; and his soldiers mounted theirs. They were stationed within the walled compound around the house. The Muslims drew closer to them and saw that they were within the walled compound around the house. This walled enclosure had just one gate which Takla Ḥāymānot was occupying; and the wall held back the troops who were within.

Thereupon the emir Abū Bakr charged Takla Ḥāymānot who stood his ground at the gate, so that the emir Abū Bakr could find no way for his horse to enter the walled enclosure. Takla Ḥāymānot had a sword in his hand, while the emir Abū Bakr had a spear in his. The two jabbed and hacked but none was able to get the better of the other. The Christian forces were at the entrance to the gate, while the Muslim forces stood behind the emir Abū Bakr.

One of the Muslims, by name Del Sagad, the knight from Sim, attacked. He had gone around behind the wall without seeing anything, galloping his horse around. Then he loosed the reins and then made his horse

[342] مبارك : 'blessed,' 'fortunate,' 'lucky'. (S)

leap the wall. His horse and he jumped the wall at its middle point as he screamed out 'I am a child of Sim'. When his companions saw him, they followed in his tracks, like raging lions. Army intermingled with army and they battled in the centre of the walled compound, while Takla Ḥāymānot and the emir Abū Bakr still fought it out as before, without one of them managing to prevail over the other.

While the Muslims and the infidels battled it out behind the two of them, the forces of Takla Ḥāymānot fled. The latter, when he saw his companions fleeing turned the head of his charger and yelled out to them, 'Where are you fleeing to?' As soon as the emir saw that Takla Ḥāymānot had abandoned the gate, he rode through it, and then Takla Ḥāymānot turned round in the direction of the emir Abū Bakr and the two of them duelled on.

One of the idolaters charged at the emir Abū Bakr, to assist Takla Ḥāymānot, whereupon one of the Muslims named Zaḥarbūī 'Alī charged the idolater who was attacking the emir Abū Bakr, and cut his javelin in two before he could stab the imām Abū Bakr; and struck him a further blow on his head, so that he tumbled off his horse and Zaḥarbūī 'Alī took him captive.

The emir Abū Bakr, meanwhile, lunged at Takla Ḥāymānot with a strong heart and a resolute spirit, like a lion after its prey, and plucked him out of his horse's saddle, and took him captive, leading him, cowering, by a halter. Imediately his companions saw that their lord had been captured, they turned tail and a great number of them was killed. As the horses could not find a way out of the walled compound, they captured all of them.

The wife of Takla Ḥāymānot was also captured inside her house. They sent a messenger bearing the good news to the imām Aḥmad. He found him in Adal Jallāt and gave him the glad tidings of the victory and the triumph, and of the capture of Takla Ḥāymānot and his wife. Then [f°31] the emir Abū Bakr went back to the imām, and handed Takla Ḥāymānot over to him.

Upon returning [to Hārar], the imām made a present of him to the governor of 'Aden, and took his wife as his concubine. She bore him a son took part in the conquest of Abyssinia, and he called her Hājirah.

Then the imām and the Muslims spent the night [at Adal Jallāt] and the next day the imām appointed Kūšem Garād Nūr a commander, and gave him a division of the army and said to him, 'You bring up our rear, carrying th

booty and the baggage,' while the imām and his force marched on ahead until he reached Wanābāt which is a great river like the Wabi.

He sent out the soldiers to the right and to the left in search of spoils. They took a vast booty, and pitched their tents by the river bank. The Muslims then fell back to their camp at sunset and they passed the night by the river. Al-Kūšem spent the night behind them, with the booty and the baggage, and arrived the next morning.

The emir then attached a standard to a spear and entrusted it to Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad his cousin on his father's side, giving him one-hundred knights and a great number of foot-soldiers, ordering him to march to the land of Mālū in the centre of the country of Bāli. Thereupon, the emir Zaḥarbūī set out for the land of Mālū, plundered its wealth, ravaged and burnt it, and then reduced it to ashes. One of the Muslim knights called 'Alī Ḡarrah from Zarba spied from a distance some infidels who were giving their horses free rein; so he gave his own horse, which happened to be a champion racehorse, its head. It bolted from under him like a violent gale so that he fell off, and a branch punctured his chest and he was killed. He died, may the Most High God have mercy upon him; for he left it to God to recompense him.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says, Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad passed the night in the land of Mālū. The next day he returned, with immense booty of slaves, horses and pack animals. The imām was still in Adal Jallāt.

[Šankur counter-attacks and is victorious]

Not far from him, in a place called Zallah, was the patrician of Bāli whom the brother-in-law of the king, Azmāč Dēgalḥān, had set up to replace him. He was three days' journey from the imām when he heard of him and what he had done to Takla Ḥāymānot and the havoc that he had wreaked in Bāli. The patrician's name was Šankur. He mobilised his cavalry and his soldiers, and all of the people of Bāli assembled, and they set out in the direction of the imām, armed and well prepared to wage war against him.

When they drew near to his position, they sent out sixty knights as scouts to bring back information about the Muslims to him. They approached close to the Muslim camp and saw how their hobbled horses were grazing

serenely, so they gave their own horses free rein and took the road to the imām's camp killing many of the Muslims. These latter cried out amongst themselves, rounding up their horses, and saddling them. Then the imām Aḥmad mounted his horse as did Farašaḥam 'Alī and Absamā Nūr. Altogether a third of them mounted when he did. They slackened their reins, and held their spears high and the imām and his companions set out in pursuit of them, without, however, meeting up with them.

By then all of the Muslims had mounted, and set off following the imām who stopped for them until they all caught up with him. Then they buried the Muslims whom the infidels had killed, inhuming those upon whom God had put seal of martyrdom. Then they turned back and returned to their camp, spending the night in it.

The sharifs and the Arabs who lived in Bāli came to visit the imām who welcomed them, and clad them in garments of honour before leaving, when morning came, for 'Aqrī.

Abū Bakr, whom he sent in the direction of the Wabi where there were many head of cattle belonging to the infidels, set out and stole all of them, passing the night by the Wabi.

The imām was in Haibūt, and set out the next morning, leaving Ura'ī Aḥmad Dīn in the Muslim vanguard with the booty and the baggage; he, meanwhile, was with the rearguard who were ready to do battle. They set out with Ura'ī Aḥmad Dīn but the imām fell back a little from Ura'ī and then marched behind him, backing him up.

[Šankur and the Abyssinians attack again]

The companions of the patrician Šankur reached him and gave him news of what had happened. He thereupon split his forces into three sections, and set out in pursuit of the Muslims. Having drawn near to them he ordered one section to attack the vanguard of the Muslim army, another to attack the centre, and the third to attack the rearguard.

The first section set off against Ura'ī Aḥmad Dīn who when he saw them, attacked them; and they responded. A ferocious battle ensued, and the more numerous infidels forced the Muslims into the middle of the cattle.

Ura'ī Aḥmad Dīn stood his ground with the standard, and fought alone. The infidels pierced his body with five javelins, and his horse with two others. But he fought on, with the javelins penetrating his flesh, escaped and eventually recovered.

When the imām saw them engaged in battle, he screamed out to his army that was with him in the rearguard, to slacken their reins and raise their spears - amongst them was Garād Aḥmūša, the emir 'Alī Ankarasaḥ, Bešāra and others like them from among the knights - in order to reach Ura'ī Aḥmad Dīn.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: When the infidels saw that the Muslims were galloping in their direction, they fled. The imām, along with the rest of the army, followed them and reached them but not one of the infidels or of the Muslims was killed.

Then, when the infidels saw that the imām had taken the lead, two of the sections of Šankur's force attacked the rearguard, whereupon the imām and his force turned back to the rearguard, but when the infidels saw them on their way back, they fled.

Only two of the knights pursued the infidels, and none of the foot-soldiers accompanied them. Ura'ī Aḥmad Dīn and Garād Aḥmūša took off after them for a short distance, but then returned to the imām, as their horses were exhausted.

There were some infidels on the mountain who, when they saw the two Muslims rejoining the imām, descended the mountain and pursued them, riding their horses.When they drew near they threw javelins at the Muslims, and some of them even reached where the imām was. The latter said to Ura'ī Aḥmad Dīn and to Garād Aḥmūša, 'What is this I see? Didn't the two of you pursue the infidels?' They answered 'Yes.' Then he said, 'How by God have they now managed to chase you back to here? Dismount, and pitch our tents here; we will not leave.' So they pitched their tents.

When the infidels saw the tents pitched they had a discussion amongst themselves, with those who were for holding back saying to those who were returning from the fray, 'Why did you pursue the Muslims? Now they have pitched their tents and this is all your doing!' Then they fled and returned to their places.

The emir Abū Bakr meanwhile had plundered the cattle from the Wabi and came back the same day. They spent the night there and deliberated amongst themselves on the subject [f°32] of the infidels. The imām said to his companions regarding the people of Bāli, 'We will never be safe from them. They are Satans. Who amongst those of you who are more senior in years knows their situation, and their manner of thinking?' They replied that Garād Kāmal, the brother-in-law of the imām, who was married to his sister Mūnisah the daughter of the martyr Zaḥarbūī Garād 'Uṯmān, was knowledgeable in this matter.

[Garād Kamāl explains the tactics of the people of Bāli]

He said to the imām, 'I know some things about the people of Bāli, and about their situation and their way of thinking.' The imām said, 'Tell us what you know.' He said, 'The people of Bāli never fight in battle lines, and only fight by subterfuge. If you and your soldiers march at the front of your force, they will attack the stragglers at the rear of the army, and if you move against them, they will run away, but not far away. If you march in the rearguard, they will attack the vanguard of the army, and if you move against them they will run away, but not very far.[343] That is their ruse, and their way of acting. So you should understand how they behave.'The imām Aḥmad said, 'We will outwit them with a trick of our own.'

When it was morning, the imām Aḥmad spoke to the emir Abū Bakr, to the emir Mujāhid, to Absamā Nūr and to Jamāl ad-Dīn bin Garād Wadāj, and entrusted to them sixty knights and said to them, 'March in the van of the army, and only pay attention to whoever attacks you: fight them as you march. Do not come to our aid, and we will not go to your aid.' Then he said to the rest of the army, 'You be with me in the rearguard'.

That same morning, the emir and his companions set out in the vanguard of the army, while the booty, the slaves, the pack animals and the baggage brought up the rear. The imām marched behind. The imām had no news of the infidels. They did not even know where they had spent the night, when suddenly they appeared like locusts, their forces split into four divisions.

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[343]B omits 'If you march in the rearguard ... very far.' (S)

Two of the patricians advanced with their two forces to where the emir Abū Bakr was, and fought for an hour. The Muslims treated them as they deserved, with sword blows and spear thrusts, with the emir and his companions counter-attacking with firm hearts. The infidels fled. Their patrician Salmūn was killed by Aḥmad Dīn, the brother of the emir Mujāhid. Another patrician was killed by the emir Abū Bakr. Many of the infidels were killed. The others fled.

[Wanāg Jān tricks the leaders of Bāli]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Regarding the imām and his force - they had no idea what happened to the emir Abū Bakr. Whilst they were marching, suddenly three infidel divisions went against them, with their soldiers and their infantry ready for battle and lined up. Their patrician's name was Simu the son of Wanāg Jān, who was the brother of Wasan Sagad.[344]

Wanāg Jān had once gone down to the sultan Muḥammad and had become a Muslim by a sincere conversion. The sultan had looked kindly upon him, and put him in charge of Ankarasaḥ. He put him in command of a Muslim force to go into the land of Bāli, which he plundered and ravaged. A Christian army mobilised against him, and they fought. The infidels got the better of the Muslims, and the latter fled, and a great number of them was killed.

Wanāg Jān was captured and they took him to the king of Abyssinia, Nā'od, the father of king Wanāg Sagad. They took him into the king's presence, in chains. His brother Wasan Sagad pleaded for him and the king released him into his custody. His esteem for him grew, and he became like a wazir to him. He had become a Christian reluctantly, for his heart was firmly with Islam. The king, as well, appointed him in charge of the land of Bāli, where he settled down, and his power increased. He bought horses, and the number of his cavalry[345] increased; and the soldiers did his bidding.

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[344]A marginal note adds : قصة سيموا ابن وناج جان اخي وسان سجد : 'The tale of Sīmū son of Wanāg Jān brother of Wasan Sagad'.(S)

[345]Or 'horses'. خيل is used for horses and cavalry in the text, though one would expect خيالة for

One day he said to the patricians of Bāli, 'Assemble today so that I can pass on to you some news that has come from the king'. So all the patricians from the land of Bāli came together, sixty of them in all, and each patrician commanded a vast number of cavalry. They assembled in his presence mounted on horseback. So he said to them, 'Come into the house, and we will have a drink of wine'.[346] So they went into the house and sat down and he gave them some well-matured intoxicating wine, and they drank it.

When the patricians had become drunk, he sought advice concerning them from a friend of his called Del Ba-Iyasus who was a Christian then, but afterwards converted to Islam. He was to die a martyr in Bāli with Ura'ī Ṣabr ad-Dīn the cousin, on his father's side, of the sultan Muḥammad.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Wanāg Jān said to his afore-mentioned friend, 'What shall we do with them, now that thanks be to God they have fallen into our hands?' Del Ba-Iyasus replied, 'Let us bind them, tying their hands behind their backs, and let us slit their throats like slaughtered sheep.' Since they were drunk, Wanāg Jān ordered his equerries, saying to them, 'Go into the house where they are, tie them up, bind their hands behind their backs and slit the throats of all of them like slaughtered sheep, in the entrance of the house.'

They did this, and took their horses and their equipment and sent a messenger bearing the good news to the sultan Muḥammad who was at that time in Dakkar in the land of Sa'd ad-Dīn. He was to say to him, 'I am your servant. I have done such and such to the infidels: I have dealt treacherously with them, and have wreaked vengeance upon them.' The messenger set out to say to the sultan, 'Come and join forces with me'.

[Wanāg Jān sends his son to the sultan]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Then Wanāg Jān said to the people of Bāli, 'Convert to Islam and eat the meat slaughtered by the Muslims; otherwise I will do to you what I did to your leaders.' So all of

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'cavalry'. B: 'chevaux'. (S)

[346]The word here translated as 'wine,' is خمر. See *infra*, notes[425, 556]. (S)

them converted to Islam, great and small alike. The sultan Muḥammad was slow in coming to him so he sent a second messenger to him. The sultan decided on going, but his emirs and the people of his country said, 'No one can travel at this time; it is autumn.' So when the sultan still delayed in coming to him, he sent to him a third messenger, his son, Simu the aforementioned, who was to press him and to say, 'Why do you not come and join forces with me? The infidels have come to me. God obliges you, as does Muḥammad bin 'Abd Allāh, may God bless him and grant him salvation, to come and join up with me.'

When Simu reached the sultan, the sultan Muḥammad rose and wept and said, 'I cannot delay one hour longer. So he ignored the counsel of the emirs and set out that day for Bāli.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: 'As for what happened to Wanāg Jān: after he had sent his son off, a Christian army came against him. They were like ants, they were so numerous; sent from the king of Abyssinia. The patrician leading them was Gabra Endreyās, and they and Wanāg Jān fought for two or three days.

When the number of Christians fighting against him increased, and he realised that he could not prevail against them, he took his harem, and his forces, and they marched towards the country of the Muslims. They reached the Wabi where he stopped, only to have Death join him; and he died by the Wabi where his well-known tomb is famous and a source of blessings. May the Most High God have mercy upon him. His companions buried him, and they stayed on two days after his burial.

Then the sultan [f°33] Muḥammad reached them and wept over him. Then he gathered together his cavalry and his [whole] army and set out for Bāli. When the patrician Gabra Endreyās heard that the sultan and his army were heading in his direction, he fled to the king, and the sultan stayed in the land of Bāli for two months, and then went back down to his own country. He appointed emirs under his authority for the country, amongst whom were Garād 'Alī, the father of Garād Mujāhid, Ura'ī Ṣabr ad-Dīn, Goitā Adarah, Wāšū 'Uṯmān, and others like them. Del Ba-Iyasus stayed with them. They lingered on there for two months after the sultan returned home.

The king of Abyssinia decided to go himself against the Muslims. But Wasan Sagad said to him, 'You should not go. The king of the Muslims has gone back down to his own country; I will go against them'. So after that Wasan Sagad left with a mighty army, and a fierce battle ensued. None of the Muslims fled, and they all were killed on the backs of their horses, for God had sealed them with seal of martyrdom. The sharif Nūr bin Aḥmad was captured when the infidels stabbed him in the stomach, but he was cured after Wasan Sagad stitched up his stomach.[347]

[Simū, son of Wanāg Jān]

So, let us return to the story of Simu the son of Wanāg Jān. He returned to his country with the sultan who dealt with him graciously, bestowed favours upon him, and gave him the title of *Garād* like his father, until he made a foray into Abyssinia with the sultan Muḥammad, and the infidels captured him on the day of Del Mēdā [348] and made a Christian of him, and a patrician in place of his father. This was the reason that he came with a mighty force to do battle with the imām.

When the imām saw them he said to his companions, 'Don't mount your horses until they get close to you'. So they went on their way, mounted on their mules, and only when the infidels drew close did they leap on their mounts like ferocious lions. When the infidels came close to them they hurled their javelins at the Muslims. The imām and his force counter-attacked and then some of the infidels headed in the direction of the booty and the livestock.

At this the companions of the imām screamed out, saying, 'The infidels have tricked us; they are after the livestock,' whereupon the imām split his forces into two divisions: one he entrusted to Garād Aḥmūša, composed of the Somali spearmen of the Marraiḥān, the Gorgorāh and the

[347]This is perhaps the first known reference to traditional Ethiopian surgery. Stomach wounds were common in Ethiopia, as a result of fighting. Traditional medical practitioners were reputedly skilful in the surgical treatment of such wounds. R.Pankhurst, *Introduction to the Medical History of Ethiopia*, p. 117. (P)

[348]Del Mēdā, literally, *mēdā*, or Field, of *del*, or Victory. (P)

Hawiya; around one-thousand of them from among the most famous spearmen. And from the soldiers bearing shields, the same number. And about forty knights, amongst whose leaders were al-Kūšem Nūr, Garād Naṣr, Del Sagad the knight of Sim, Garād Aḥmadūš, son of the emir Maḥfūẓ, Farašaḥam Saṭūt, and about forty other knights like them.

The imām Aḥmad set out with the other division to where the cattle were. Garād Aḥmūša stood his ground in the rearguard, along with his companions, and a terrible battle followed.

Del Sagad, the knight of Sim, was the first of the Muslims to charge - against the patrician Asrāt. They stabbed with their spears, and fought each other until Del Sagad struck the patrician Asrāt with his spear, knocked him from his saddle, and threw him prostrate on the ground.[349] At which, one of the Muslims named Naṣr bin Bāli Garād smote him with his sword, severing his head from his body, and God thrust his soul into Hell-fire. Then Aḥmūša charged, and the Muslims along with him. The infidels hung on for a time, but eventually fled, and were killed in great numbers.

The storyteller, may God the Most High have mercy on him, says: Regarding the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, when he reached the centre where the cattle were, the lines of the idol-worshippers and their cavalry moved forward. Then the imām ranged his troops in battle lines, organized his soldiers, and the two armies marched against each other and the two battle lines drew close to each other.

One of the Muslims named sheikh Adam bin Abū Bakr, the *qāḍī* [350]of Dawāro after the conquest, stood up and harangued and goaded the Muslims to the *jihād*, saying, 'Help one another, and God will give you the victory, and support your steps. Know that the garden of Paradise lies under the shadow of the swords.'

The first of the Muslims to charge was Farašaḥam Ḥusain bin 'Abd Allāh who hurled himself into the midst of the infidels, and killed one of the

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[349]B omits 'and threw ... ground'. (S)

[350] قـاضي : a judge. *De iure* the qāḍī decides all cases, including matters concerned with civil and criminal law. *De facto,* depending on the locality and the *maḏhab* or sect, he is the 'religious' judge who adjudicates in contentious areas involving Islamic 'canon law'. See SEI *ed.cit.*, p.201. (S)

knights by felling him from his horse to the ground, dead. Then from behind him charged the emir Zaḥarbūī, and with him charged all of the Muslims who were calling out 'God is the Greatest'. They fought for an hour and stood the test. It was not very long before God granted the Muslims the backs of the idol-worshippers, and those who were fleeing were forced to retrace their steps, with the Muslims killing a great number of them.

That day the Muslims were victorious, all of them: those in the rearguard, those in the vanguard, and those in the centre.

Then they marched on, and regrouped in a place called Del Bād, where each of them warmly greeted the other and praised God. Each regaled his companion with what had happened to him. They laid out the booty, and passed the night there. When morning came they marched until they came to a place called Jaddah. Thence they marched towards their own country arriving at the Wabi after six days. Afterwards they marched into their own country by the Nagab road. The imām reached his city of Hārar covered in glory, and triumphant. He divided the *fifth* among his companions, and then he and his soldiers stayed in Hārar for around two months.

[The seventh *jihād*]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: After the imām had returned from the expedition to Bāli and had rested there two months, his eagerness for an expedition to Abyssinia was rekindled, and he swore an oath that either he would not return from the country of the Christians, or he would die a martyr. It was to be a blessed expedition.

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: When the desire for a raiding party and a *jihād* had been rekindled in the imām Aḥmad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, he went down, first of all, to a country called Zarba, in the region of Ḥārlā. Then he sent to Zayla' to have weapons of war, swords and the like, procured for him. He also ordered them to buy for him some cannon because he wanted to take them with him on the raid into Abyssinia. They bought him what he desired and brought back to him seven cannon.

Around seventy men came up from Mahra[351] attracted by the idea of a *jihād*. Their leaders were Sa'īd bin Ṣa'bān al-Mahrī, and Aḥmad bin Suleimān al-Mahrī,[352] and their overall chief was my lord the esteemed and noble sharif Muḥammad bin Aḥmad,[353] blessed by God[354] who died at Bāb Sari in the land of Dawāro. He went on the raiding party with the imām and fought the *jihād*. After the conquest of Abyssinia the imām handed over to him Bāb Sari, with the right to collect the land tax.

[The Somali tribes gather for the *jihād*]

It was after this[355] that the Mahra party and the sharif Muḥammad reached the imām who feted their coming on account of the *jihād* ; and then he sent to all the districts of the Somalis and to the tribes of Ḥārlā. Then all the tribes rose up.

The first tribe [f°34] to come up was the Habr Maqdī with their lord Garād Dawit, fifty knights and five-hundred foot-soldiers. After them the Marraiḥān came up, with their lord Aḥmad bin Ḥirābū, with eighty knights and seven-hundred foot-soldiers. After them came up the Gorgorāh with Garād 'Abd their chieftain, and thirty knights and one-thousand foot-soldiers.

Then the tribe of Girri came up, with their chieftain Garād Mattān along with eighty knights and one-thousand foot-soldiers. In the same way the tribe of Zarba came up from Ḥārlā with their lord the sultan Muḥammad with twenty knights and three-hundred foot-soldiers. The tribes assembled - all of them volunteers and on good terms with one another. The number of the horses in readiness was around five-hundred, and there were twelve-thousand

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[351]Mahra, a mountainous region of south Arabia, also known as Sihr. (P)

[352]The surname al-Mahri indicates that both leaders were Arabs from Mahra in south Arabia. (P)

[353]B: 'ben 'Ali,' but the text reads احمد بن . (S)

[354] احمد الرزوق : I have taken الرزوق to be a title. B reads it as a name, thus: 'Moḥammed ben 'Ali el-Marzouq' and A.-T. likewise: 'Muḥammad bin Ahmed Marzaq'.

[355]B omits فبعد ذلك but correctly assumes that the narrative has returned to the time of the arrival of the Arabs at the imām's camp at Zarba. (S)

foot-soldiers, not to mention those who carried the provisions and other things besides.

The imām pitched his tent on the outskirts of Hārar. The people of Jur'ila, also known as Māmalih, assisted him with forty mules which they had plundered from the infidels living on the borders of their country. The imām gave these to the delegation from Mahra, and, in addition, gave them thirty mules which the Muslims had plundered.

The imām then set out on the road for Abyssinia, and took with him his concubine called Hājirah, whom he had captured in Bāli, and who had been the wife of Takla Ḥāymānot. The emir Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad[356] also took his concubine, as did the emir Abū Bakr, governor of Hubat. Then the imām and his victorious army set out and arrived at the village of Zīfah in the country of the Muslims. Its people welcomed the imām and his soldiers, and treated them hospitably and graciously, for such was their practice.

Then they set out from Zīfah a day's journey, and encamped at Šiḥ which was a mighty river. Leaving Šiḥ they encamped at Rā'budā where they were joined by the sharif Muḥammad Handūl with three cannon to make up the seven, and twenty foot-soldiers, with a knight as their leader. Four of the cannon preceded him, and the three others brought up the rear as they set out.

They stopped at Dir[357] which was a great river in the country of the Muslims, and the soldiers and the tribes assembled and slaughtered what cattle they had. They then satisfied their hunger and recited the Qur'ān and besought the Most High God. For this is what the *mujāhidūn* were accustomed to do at Dir.

Next, they set out and ecamped at Baqal-zār which is betwen the country of the Muslims and that of the infidels.

[Aḥmad commissions his commanders]

At this point the imām unfurled the standards. He attached a black standard to a javelin and gave it to the emir who after the conquest was known

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[356]B omits 'Muḥammad'. (S)

[357] Dir or Eddir, a tributary of the 'Awaš river. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p.89. (P)

as the emir 'Alī. The green standard he entrusted to Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad[358] who was emir after the conquest, and previously had been *garād* in the country of Nagab. The white standard he entrusted to Ura'ī Abūn. He entrusted another standard to Nūr bin Ibrahīm, wazir after the conquest; known in his own country as Kūšem Garād. He entrusted other standards to Garād Aḥmūša; to Garād Mattān Girri; and to 'Addolī, who was wazir[359] after the conquest but before then had been the hēgano [360] of Sim. The imām's own standard was yellow.

Then he split his force into three divisions. The first consisted of the people of Sim, the tribe of Marraiḥān and Bar Tarrī which are the Habr Maqdī, and the people of Jawātir: they were under the command of the wazir 'Addolī.

The second division comprised the people of Hargāyā, and the people of Šawā, the companions of Kūšem whom he put under the command of Kūšem Nūr; the people of Hubat who were under Abū Bakr Qaṭīn; and the people of Gedayā who were with their lord Ura'ī Šihāb ad-Dīn Gedayā Girri.

The last division was made up of men of strength and valour who were nicknamed 'The Sea,'[361] because of the number of their swords. Their commander was the imām Aḥmad himself.

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'Addolī advises Aḥmad to attack Dawāro first

They then set off from Baqal-zār and camped, after two days, by the 'Awāš. The imām adressed his soldiers, 'Muslim units, as you can see we have at last reached the country of the Abyssinian dog Wanāg Sagad. Close by us is the road to Dawāro. And here is another road that will take us to the village of

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[358] Muḥammad,' from a gloss. (S)

[359] See *supra* note[90]. (S)

[360] هيجن سيم : Hēgano, Amharic, a minor military title used for the ruler of Waj. Perruchon, *Chroniques de Zar'a Yâ'eqôb et de Ba'eda Mâryâm*, p.15. Guidi, *Vocabolario amarico-italiano,* col.11. (P) Could this be a metathesised form of هجين : one whose father was an Arab, and his mother was a slave? (S)

[361] تسمى بحرا من كثرة سيوفهم . (S)

the Christian dog Wanāg Sagad.[362] So, which road shall we take? Let us have your opinion.'

The emir Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad, and Garād Aḥmūša rose and the two of them said, 'The only road that we should take is the one that leads to the Christian dog in Bādēqē. So let us begin by destroying it, and then the other cities will fall into our hands.' And they sat down.

After them, the wazir 'Addolī stood up and said, 'O imām of the Muslims, in this matter the advice you have received is ill-considered.' So they[363] said, 'All right, tell us what your opinion is'. He said, 'If we march towards Bādēqē, then we have to leave the land of Dawāro at our back, and its people will descend on the land of the Muslims and destroy it; especially when there is hardly any distance between us and the army of that city. No, let us begin with Dawāro.'

When 'Addoli had finished speaking, the Muslims and the tribes rose and said to the imām, 'The best advice is that of the wazir 'Addolī.' Thereupon the imām sent off the wazir 'Addolī and his force *via* the heights of the 'Awāš, against the infidels of Duba'ah, to forage for supplies. And while the wazir 'Addolī set out, the imām encamped near the 'Awāš. 'Addolī arrived at the country of Duba'ah,[364] seized some cattle and returned with them to the imām who divided them amongst the soldiers. Then the imām marched with his army towards Dawāro, reaching Argubbā[365].

[Wanāg Sagad orders a trench to be dug in Del Mēdā]

Now, regarding events at Dawāro, the patrician there was called Baḥr Sagad, the son of Wasan Sagad. Wasan Sagad had also been in Dawāro but

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[362]i.e. Badeqē. (P)

[363] فقالوا : sic! Evidently the whole troop was interested in the wazīr's opinion.

[364]Dubā'āh, a Muslim-inhabited territory on the eastern edge of the Ethiopian highlands. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 125. (P)

[365]Argubbā, a district to the east of Šawā, located by Huntingford south-east of modern Dasē, and east of the Berkannā river. The area spoke its own distinct Semitic language. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 91, 129. (P)

before the arrival of the imām he went up to Dāmot, leaving his son Baḥr Sagad there. When the king of Abyssinia had heard about the [raids of the] Muslims he ordered a trench to be dug at Del Mēdā, above Dawāro which was a region that was especially vulnerable, for the sultan Muḥammad had previously raided it, and an incalculable number of Muslims was killed when fortune turned in favour of the infidels. This was the reason for the king's ordering the patrician Baḥr Sagad to dig the trench there.

He did as the king ordered him. When they finished digging the trench Baḥr Sagad assembled his forces and they patrolled the trench. After this, Baḥr Sagad died, may the Most High God not have mercy upon him. Upon his death, his successor was a patrician named 'Adalih from the people of Bāli. This 'Adalih assembled a vast concourse of the people of Dawāro and Bāli and they patrolled the trench for some days.

[Aḥmad by-passes the trench dug by Baḥr Sagad]

When the imām learnt that the infidels had assembled above the trench, he asked some infidel prisoners whom he was holding: 'Are you aware of any route other than the one that passes by the trench?' They replied, 'Yes, we are, and we will point it out to you. And when they [f°35] realise that you have taken another route than the one by the trench, they will abandon their positions.'

So then the imām arranged his forces and set off. The commander of the vanguard[366] was the sultan bin 'Alī Yaḥal who was accompanied by one-hundred-and-fifty knights renowned for their courage, ahead of whom went the guides showing them the way. The imām, along with his companions who never left his side, held the centre of the army, while the wazir Nūr was with the rearguard. Then they set out along a narrow track, finally emerging into a spacious area, with the trench behind them. They reached Del Mēdā at the time of the afternoon prayer, and pitched camp there.

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[366]The text reads مقدمة الجيش. We deduce that it is the vanguard that the Sultan bin 'Alī commanded, and not the entire army, since the guides preceded it, the imām was in the centre, and the wazir Nūr commanded the rearguard. (S)

As soon as the infidels learned that the Muslims had by-passed the trench, they abandoned it and went off to Bāb Sarī in the land of Dawāro, where they assembled. The Muslims, meanwhile, set out from Del Mēdā on the road [to a place] called Ṣadqah, where there were neither trees nor stones, and they spent the night there. Horsemen travelled around the countryside, to right and left, in search of provisions which they took by force and carried back to the Muslims. After this the imām sent spies out into the countryside to bring him news of the infidels. They returned reporting to the imām and to the Muslims that the infidels had gathered at Bāb Sarī with their cavalry and their troops. The imām asked them, 'What do you think: if we go against them, will they fight us, or not?' They replied, 'As far as fighting goes, they won't fight you. If you get close to them, they will flee to another place. However, if[367] you send [only] a detachment against them, they will fight them. But if you proceed against them with your army in a straightforward manner, they will run away.' At this the imām assembled all his followers, and arranged his forces. Each emir stood with his standard, and his troops.

Then the imām addressed them: 'O Muslim soldiers, when you were at the 'Awāš you recommended proceeding to the land of Dawāro. This we have done, but we have met no one who will fight us. They are too weak to engage us in battle. At the outset we have killed them, and ravaged their country, enslaving their women and children, and they have been powerless, thanks to the blessing of Islam and of Muḥammad - may God bless him and grant him salvation. Now, what do you say to our making a beeline for the king of Abyssinia, Wanāg Sagad?'

They replied: 'Merely to hear is to obey God, his messenger and you, O imām of the Muslims. All that we desire is the *jihād*, our sacred trust. Let us head for the king of Abyssinia, no matter where he may be.' The imām thanked them and said: 'May God bless you,' and they spent the night there.

When morning came they set out in his direction, after arranging the army in ranks, with the cannon in the vanguard, in the centre and in the rearguard. The imām Aḥmad was in the centre of the army, the wazir 'Addolī

[367]Reading ⟨ʾl⟩ for ⟨l⟩. (S)

in the van, and the wazir Nūr in the rearguard. Then they entered the land [368] of Waṭmāt. Upon their arrival there they heard that the Christians were assembled in Anṭokyā. The Christians in Anṭokyā heard that the imām was heading against them, so they assembled at the church to deny the Muslims access to it; to stop their burning it. They had with them an army that could not be counted. All of the people of Dawāro came together and they sent news to the king saying: 'the Muslims are marching against your church because they want to burn it to the ground.'

In command of all the patricians and the army was the patrician 'Adalih, the governor of Bāli whom the king of Abyssinia had put in command after the death of the son of Wasan Sagad, until Wasan Sagad could come from Dāmot. News reached him [the king] of the Muslims' arrival in the land of Dawāro from the land of Del Mēdā, and of their going up to Dāmot intending to burn the church of Anṭokyā. So he sent a patrician called Badlaī Behtwadad: this latter word, in their language, corresponds to 'wazir' in Arabic. Ranking above the patrician and the army was the brother-in-law of the king of Abyssinia,[369] married to his sister named Walata Qalamsis. She had died, while married to him,[370] and then he remarried, to the king's second sister by his mother, whose name was Amata Waṭīn.

So the patrician Azmāč Dēgalḥān and the patrician Behtwadad set off for Anṭokyā to prevent the Muslims from entering it. But God did not allow this. Upon reaching Anṭokyā, they assembled there together with 'Adalih and the afore-mentioned army. The messenger read to them the king's brief appointing Dēgalḥān in command of them and they responded: 'To hear the king is to obey him'. Then they remained there.

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[368] Reading ارض for فـرض . (S)

[369] The brother-in-law in question is the patrician Azmač Dēgālḥān. (S)

[370] 'under him'. (S)

The Muslims reach Ayfārs by another route]

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: The Muslims, for their part, marched from[371] the land of Waṭmāt, heading for the land of Ayfārs.[372] Separating Waṭmāt and Ayfārs was a mighty river called 'Arah. There were two routes for crossing the river, a lower one well known to all the people, and an upper one known to but a few.

When the Muslims sought to cross over to the land of Ayfārs, they took the lower route but when they reached it, they encountered a detachment of the infidels who were holding it. It was the time of the afternoon prayer. The Muslims remained where they were, and the infidels likewise held their positions. One of the Muslims, Ḥaidar by name, said to the imām: 'I will guide you by an upper route different from this one.'

The imām selected fifteen of the knights renowned for their courage, among them Garād Aḥmūša bin Dār 'Alī, Absamā Nūr, Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad, the emir Mujāhid, Balaw 'Abduh, 'Alūš, Arša' Abū Bakr from the people of Sim, the wazir 'Addolī, and others of their ilk. So they set out, with the guide leading them until they reached the upper route. The imām asked the guide, 'What is this?' He answered, 'This is what I described to you. No one knows about it, and there are no Christians here to protect it.' At this the imām said to him, 'May God bless you'. Then he said, 'Now, let us cross over the river and pass the night on the other side.' But the wazir 'Addolī said, 'Let us pass the night on this side of the river, and when morning comes we and our forces will cross over.' Then the imām told them, 'Your advice is not sound: for if we spend the night on this side of the river, the Christians will learn of it and will block the route against us. And we will be neither here nor there.'

Thereupon they crossed the river and remained on the heights above it. And they sent a message by night to the rest of the army: 'Come and join

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[371]Reading من for امن. (S)

[372]Ayfārs, or Ay Fārs, an abbreviation for 'Ayn Faras, or 'Spring of the Horse'. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 125, an area which Huntingford locates 'somewhere' on the higher ground south of the Awāš in 'the area of Sire - Guna - Minne,' and thus actually in Faṭagār or Bāli. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 127. (P)

us'. So the army arrived, and crossed over the river by night. With the rearguard of the army were 'Abd an-Nāṣr, and Zaḥarbūī 'Uṭmān, who had the cannon with them. They reached the river at the time of the end of the evening prayer [f°36] and carried the cannon across on their shoulders, crossing the river with them. All those who crossed the river mounted their horses and remained with the imām, maintaining their battle lines and equipped for the fray, until the whole army had been accounted for. Then they camped above the river.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: The idol-worshippers, when they heard that the Muslims had crossed over the river, abandoned their positions and headed for Anṭokyā and gathered there with their army. The third day the Muslims set out from the river and entered Ayfārs.

[Dēgalḥān's ruse to escape the fighting]

Meanwhile, the patrician Dēgalḥān stayed in Anṭokyā five days during which he sent to his wife Amatā Waṭīn in secret saying to her, 'Your brother, the king of Abyssinia has appointed me commander of this army. But I have no energy for this fighting, nor the stomach[373] for it. Should I be killed, you will be left a widow, and your children orphans. But now, use your good offices with the king to send me back to you but don't reveal to him that I have spoken to you about this.'

So his wife spoke about him to the king, without the patricians knowing, and said: 'You have sent your brother-in-law to fight the Muslims. If they kill him, I will be left a widow and my children orphans. Now, send to him to come to you and place another patrician other than him in charge of the army and let him come to you to fight by your side.'

The king listened to what his sister had to say, and sent a messenger to his brother-in-law Dēgalḥān for him to come to him, and to say to the army,

[373] جلد : 'hide,' 'skin'. (S)

'Instead,[374] I am going to send you the patrician Eslāmu, governor of Faṭagār'. He was a courageous fighter, highly esteemed by the king.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: When the messenger reached Dēgālḥān he set out by night from Anṭokyā to rejoin the king. The day after the departure of Dēgālḥān, Eslāmu reached Anṭokyā and with him a mighty army including the tribes of the Māyā, skilled in the use of poisoned arrows. Anyone struck by these poisoned arrows loses all the hair on his head and dies instantly from the strength of the poison. They procure the poison from a tree that is well-known to them and to the Somalis. They collect its branches and roots, light a fire over them to cook them, and then gather the sap and coat the tips of their arrows with it. It is mud-coloured, like tar.

As for the army that was in Anṭokyā, it went out to greet Eslāmu on the road. When he and his troops saw them, Eslāmu was overcome with amazement and exceeded the bounds of decency by his blasphemy, mockery and ranting. He pitched his tent in the midst of them, and the soldiers sensed victory. The patrician Eslāmu had been present in battles with the Muslims before this: when he had been in Dāmot; and that is why they rejoiced in the anticipated victory. They stayed on in Anṭokyā for two days, and on the third day the Muslims entered Anṭokyā, passing the night below the church.

[The battle for Anṭokyā]

When dawn broke, the imām sent some cavalry units against the people of Anṭokyā, around fifty knights, amongst whom were Ura'ī Abū Bakr, Azar Muḥammad and others like them: bound for the church. But the infidels saw them approaching, and set a trap for them. The Muslims kept on coming, for they could see the church, but could not see the infidels who let them have their way until they came up quite close to them, hardly any distance, and then they attacked them. The Christians were from Bāli, well-known for their cunning and double-dealing, and the Muslims were caught unawares when they charged them.

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374 مكانكم : 'in your place,' referring to Dēgālḥān. (S)

The Muslims held their positions for a short while as they hurled javelins at one another, but the infidels outnumbered them. Two of their knights were killed, and the Muslims fled. They had not gone far when they were met on the road by a unit of cavalry amongst whom were Saīdī Muḥammad, 'Alī Goitā bin Goitā 'Adrūḥ, and Takīa whose hand and foot had been cut off.

When they saw the Muslims in full flight they said to them, 'Where are you fleeing to? We have come as your reinforcements!' Their aforenamed companions harangued them until the Muslims who were fleeing turned about and returned with them, and they charged the idol-worshippers as one man, and the Abyssinians turned their backs in the direction of their companions, while the Muslims [for their part] returned to the imām and told him what had happened to them in the fighting.

[Aḥmad atacks those lying in ambush]

The imām asked them, 'Where are the infidel lines? Below the church or above it?' They replied, 'The patrician Eslāmu came from above the church, and arranged his soldiers and his cavalry in the midst of a forest. The patrician Abīt and his companions had camped to the left of the church, and planned one of their ambushes there so that when we marched against Eslāmu these came out from behind us. But God turned their scheming back upon themselves.'

Abīt was a tyrant. He wrote to the imām when he was in the land of Ar'ān a letter in which he said, 'Battle is a matter of give and take.[375] God was guiding you at the battle of Šemberā Korē, when you killed our men and scattered our heroes. Now leave us. Be content with what you have done to us, otherwise God will destroy you as he destroyed the village of Lot.[376] Do not give in to vanity.'

The imām scoffed at his words, and thereupon took counsel with the Muslims. He said to them, 'Look at this infidel Abīt and his letter which he

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[375] Abu'l-Fadl al-Maidānī, *Proverbes*, t.1, p.189. See Edward Lane, op. cit. vol 4, p.1311. (S)

[376] Abraham's nephew. See Qur'ān vi, 86.

sent to me to frighten me. He and his companions have laid a trap for us: if we march against Eslāmu they will attack our rear; and if we march against the infidel Abīt, then Eslāmu and his soldiers will fall upon us from above. So what do you think now?'

The wazir Nūr stood up and said, 'Wars are a matter of trickery'[377] . I have advice to give you, and if you like it, act upon it.' The imām replied, 'Let's hear your advice.' So [the wazir Nur] said, 'Let us send an army against these infidels who lie in ambush, to fight them and drive them back to their companions.' At which the imām and the Muslims exclaimed, 'What excellent advice you have given.'

Then the imām said to the wazir Nūr, 'Now you and your soldiers march against them, while we march against Eslāmu .' To which he responded, 'Willingly'. Then he put him in command over one-hundred knights from among the heroes, amongst whom were Abū Bakr Qaṭīn, the emir 'Alī, Garād Aḥmad bin Lād 'Uṯmān well-known for his courage, Ura'ī[378] Šihāb ad-Dīn Jidāyah Girri who was from among the courageous ones, and Ura'ī 'Umar Dīn, and their ilk.

So the wazir set out against the ambush, while the imām and the rest of the army set out against Eslāmu. The wazir Nūr arrived at the ambush, reaching it from above and fought with them for a short [f°37] while in the morning until the idol-worshippers fled in the direction of their companions. Meanwhile, the imām and his army had marched against Eslāmu. He arrayed his army in its battle lines. The Arabs were lined up in the vanguard of the army, banging their tambourines and their drums, with the cannon going in front of them. The Muslims mounted their horses, put on their armour and their breastplates, proclaiming the unicity[379] and the mightiness of God, and praying for [Muḥammad] the unique Herald.

In the same way the idol-worshippers arranged their forces, and their battle lines. Their cavalry numbered six-thousand and their foot-soldiers around one-hundred-thousand. God alone knows. The Muslims had roughly

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[377] *Idem, op. cit.* p.147. (S)

[378] B omits Ura'ī. (S)

[379] The oneness or uniqueness of God. Lit. 'They recited the *tahlīl*'. See *supra* note[2]. (S)

five-hundred cavalry, and ten-thousand foot-soldiers. The two sides observed each other. The imām pitched his tent. Sometimes it was the Muslims who charged against the idol-worshippers, and other times it was the idol-worshippers who charged against the Muslims. And this went on tirelessly until the end of the time for the afternoon prayer.

On a number of occasions the people of Bāli as one man charged the right wing of the Muslims - held by the companions of the wazir Nūr. They fell upon them from above, and pushed them as far as where the imām was. He lost his temper with them and said to them, 'Don't engage them in battle. This place is not suitable for fighting. Hold your positions.'

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Mattān, and Ḥusain bin 'Abd Allāh Māḥidah and others like them were fighting [the Abyssinians] from above the left of the Muslims. The imām became angry at Mattān and sent for him. They seized him and brought him into the presence of the imām who asked him, 'Who commanded you to fight? Can't you stay in your place?' So he stayed in his place.

Now the imām's *muezzin* called Kabīr Nūr had been fighting with Mattān on the left flank. He shot an arrow at one of the patricians of Bāli, but as he was riding a fleet-footed horse the arrow missed the patrician but hit the horse which dropped down dead. The patrician fled on foot in the direction of his companions. The imām forbade his men to fight; so they held their positions. The Muslims dismounted from their horses and partook of some nourishment.

The Christians of Bāli on the other hand were indefatigable in fighting. They harassed the Muslims, attacking them from right and left because the idol-worshippers held the heights of the mountain, and the Muslims were below them and could not attack the opposing side, or find a spacious enough place in which to fight.

So the imām called for the cannon, and then for ten courageous knights, who were the emir Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad, Aḥmad Goitā, the emir 'Alī, Garād Aḥmad bin Lād 'Uṯmān, the emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn, and Takīa who had had his hand and foot cut off. Takīa said to the imām in his own country, the country of the Muslims, 'God willing, I will strike an infidel knight with this whip which is in my hand, and knock him from his horse

which I shall take.' God heard what he said, and on this day he struck an unbeliever with his whip, knocked him from his horse, and took his horse as booty.

Then the imām ordered these afore-mentioned to accompany him against the people of Bāli, and ordered them to take one cannon with them. So they arrived near the battle line of the people of Bāli whose foot-soldiers were fighting the Muslim foot-soldiers, who were Arabs from Mahra.

Accompanying these was a fighter from Morocco called al-Ḥājj Muḥammad. He shot [an arrow] at one of the idol-worshippers shattering his foot, and he died. To God belongs the credit for [the prowess of] two of the Muslim Arab archers who belonged to the people at Rīf. [380] The name of one of them was 'Abd as-Salām, and the other was called Ḥasb an-Nabī.[381] They never missed a target that they aimed at.

When the imām reached the battleline of the people of Bāli they were fighting the Arabs from Mahra and the foot-soldiers who were companions of the imām.[382] Thereupon the latter called up the cannon and said to the Mahra commander, Sa'īd bin Ṣa'bān, 'Fire upon them, and when you have fired we will charge them as one man.' So they planted the cannon in the earth, and he took a while to point it, and then fired. It hit an olive tree that was standing in the middle of the infidel army and snapped it in two. Then each and every one of them began excitedly milling about, and the imām said to the knights who were his companions, 'Now! Charge!'

They charged, together with the foot-soldiers from Mahra, and the shield-bearers from Malasāī, against the people of Bāli who were in their thousands. The latter fled. They did not return to their companions, or to their patricians but took another route along the heights of the mountain of Anṭokyā, pursued by the Muslims who killed twelve knights and took fourteen horses as booty. Then darkness fell upon them and the Muslims returned to their positions.

[380] Hilly coastal region in NE Morocco. (S)

[381] Reading النبي for الني. (S)

[382] B omits 'and the foot-soldiers ... the imām'. (S)

When the wazir ʿAddolī and the wazir Nūr and the other emirs who had remained in their places, saw that the imām and his companions had charged the people of Bāli, they, too, attacked from their positions.

The first of them to charge was the emir Ḥusain, followed by Goitā Allāh Magan and Garād Mattān and Garād Šamaʿūn and others like them, who attacked the idol-worshippers. Between the latter and the Muslims a river formed a barrier. There were paths across that horses could take, but on the banks there were foot-soldiers of the idol-worshippers[383] whom they charged and pushed back towards their patrician Eslāmu .

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: As for what happened to Ḥusain al-Gāturī who was among those who charged [the Abyssinians]: when he did so they overwhelmed him, and surrounded him. Finding him in their midst, they pelted him with javelins, and threw three javelins at his horse which fell with him, and they hamstrung it. They struck him in the right thigh with a spear-head [384]which emerged from the other side. The spear-head fell out. He returned safely to his companions, and recovered. Darkness separated the two groups and each returned to his own place. The imām went back to his tent, and [the Muslims] rejoiced at the victory.[385]

[Eslāmu strikes camp on a Thursday in the month of Rajab, 937 AH]

The infidels and their patrician Eslāmu could not help being restless. They were frightened. They struck their tents by night, and moved to another place that was not far distant where their patrician pitched his tent and he and his soldiers passed the night there. The Muslims passed the night holding their positions, recalling God's attributes, and glorifying him. The idol-worshippers, on the other hand, remained in their bad faith and their depravity.

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383 رجال من المشركين : B translates '(gardés par) des soldats renommés entre les Chrétiens'. (S)

384 عرداويت sic! I take this to be the حربة or 'spear-head' that is described in the following sentence as falling out. (S)

385 B omits 'darkness ... victory'. (S)

The battle of Anṭokyā took place on a Friday of the month of Rajab[386] in the year nine-hundred-and-thirty-seven from the Hijra of the Prophet[387] upon whom be the most excellent of blessings and peace.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: When the morning shone brightly, and its light gleamed and sparkled, the Muslims said their prayers, mounted their mules, and leading their horses alongside them, set off for the church of Anṭokyā.

The imām and the Muslims stood beside the church which had lofty and imposing pillars. The imām said to them, 'Burn it'. And so they burnt it. Then they marched below the church a short [f°38] distance.

They knew nothing of the whereabouts of Eslāmu the patrician: there was no news, no trace of him. They had no idea that he had moved away by night. The Muslims halted in an open, spacious region and asked amongst themselves, 'Which road has that cursed Eslāmu taken?' Then they came upon two roads, one on the right and one on the left; and both of them showed signs of horses' hoofs. At which the imām said to them: 'They have taken both roads: which road shall we take?' The wazir 'Addolī and 'Abd an-Nāṣr replied, 'Let us take the road on the right; this is the only one that Eslāmu would have taken.' The imām said to them, 'You march along that one, with the cannon in the vanguard.' The imām took the rear.

They had gone only a short distance when one of those to the rear of them cried out saying: 'The infidels have overtaken us.' The imām quickly turned back and rejoined his soldiers, and saw the infidel vanguard and pursued them until they entered a forest thickly matted with trees in the midst of which stood the patrician Eslāmu to whom they said, 'Prepare yourself and your soldiers: those Muslims are behind us'. At which the idol-worshippers got up, and saddled their horses. While they were engaged in doing this the imām and his force stormed them, crying out at the same time, 'There is no God but Allāh ,' and 'Allāh is the Greatest'.

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[386]The seventh month of the Muslim year. (S)

[387]Rajab 937 AH commenced on Friday February 18, 1531. (S)

[Eslāmu's forces are routed]

The first of the Muslim knights to charge was Bešāra bin 'Alī, against one of the patricians whom he stabbed with his spear and brought him to the ground, dead. Then, after him, the emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn charged one of the knights of the idol-worshippers, striking him with his spear so that he, too, fell.[388] Then Ura'ī Abūn charged one of the knights of the idol-worshippers, struck him with his spear, and he fell.

In the same way Ura'ī 'Umar Dīn bin as-Sultān Muḥammad charged one of the infidel knights, striking him with his spear and knocking him from his horse so that he struck the ground, dead. Then the soldiers behind them attacked and the idol-worshippers turned tail, with the Muslims in pursuit of them, killing them, capturing them and plundering booty. The idol-worshippers climbed a wooded mountain that was in their path. There was hardly a tree left standing from the number of them as they fled with the Muslims hot on their heels, in pursuit, killing and capturing them, and taking booty.

The carnage they endured was horrific; there had never been anything like it, except perhaps during the battle of Šemberā Korē. Their patrician escaped and travelled to the land of Hādyā[389] and even though the Muslims pursued him from midday until dusk they never caught up with him.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: then the imām went down into the land of Ayfārs where he pitched his tent. They took a tent that day as booty, and an uncountable number of mules. Some of them even took as many as thirty mules, while others took around one-hundred horses. The numbers of dead and captives were so great and the Abyssinians were so overwhelmed by despair, that one Muslim took ten infidels captive. Some of

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[388] سقط صريعا as used in the preceding sentence means 'to fall dead in battle'. Here, as *infra* p.368 referring to the death of 'Addolī, we take سقط to mean 'was thrown to the ground'. (S)

[389] Hādyā a tributary territory situated west of Waj and Lake Zwāy, and extending westwards as far as the Didessā river. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, II, 453-4. On Hādyā's relations with the Ethiopian Christian state see II, 427-8, 430, 435-6. See also R.Pankhurst, *Ethiopian Borderlands*, pp. 143, 207-9, 254-5, 333-4. (P)

them spent the night chasing the idol-worshippers through every narrow pass, and as that night was extremely cold, a large number of Muslims died.

['Addolī wishes to jettison the cannon]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: The wazir 'Addolī and 'Abd an-Nāṣr in the meantime had been marching in the vanguard of the army with the cannon and the baggage. They learnt, sometime after this, that the imām had turned back and joined his rearguard. They, for their part, had not progressed far because they were weighed down by the baggage. The wazir 'Addolī said, 'Let's jettison the cannon and the baggage and meet up with the imām.' 'Abd an-Nāṣr replied, 'I'll not jettison them; but if you wish to go back, then do so. I, however, will not disobey the words of the imām, nor will I jettison the cannon. On the contrary, I will march with them.' When they understood that 'Abd an-Nāṣr had no intention of abandoning the cannon they concurred with his view. They marched and passed the night on the road in the rear of the imām.

That night was exceedingly cold so they lighted a fire to keep themselves warm. The idol-worshippers whom the imām had routed, in the meantime, had entered the forest and hidden themselves. There was a vast number of them. Noticing the fire, and because they were suffering from the cold, they moved towards it thinking that it was a fire of their companions. But the Muslims grabbed them, killing them. Around five-hundred of them were killed that night; and none had any idea what had happened to the other.

When morning came, the wazir 'Addolī and 'Abd an-Nāṣr marched in the direction of the imām, reaching him at the time of the afternoon prayer. The Muslims met up and exchanged greetings with one another, praising God, and thanking Him for the victory and for having got the better of the enemies of God.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Then the imām summoned one of the Muslim infantrymen whose name was Farašaḥam Dīn, who was to be governor of Māyā after the conquest. He presented himself, and the imām put him in command of thirty knights and said to him: 'Pursue the Christians.' So he set off, following their tracks, but did not meet up with

them, nor did he encounter any fighting. He arrived at a place below Ayfārs called Majlah where he took a vast quantity of slaves, cattle and mules as booty. He remained there four days collecting booty, and on the fifth day he returned to the imām.

[Raiding party sent into Ganbah]

At this, the imām summoned the wazir 'Addolī and said to him: 'March with your force to the land of Ganbah above Šārkāh. If you meet any armed band, fight them, take their possessions as booty, capture their women and kill their men. I shall bring up your rear, because you brought up our rear and saw none of the fighting, and captured no booty.'

'Addolī and his force set out at once and came to the land of Ganbah. The knights raided the country to the right and to the left, plundering and killing. The wazir 'Addolī made camp below Ganbah. When the wazir 'Addolī had pitched his camp there, most of the knights returned to him with booty and slaves; other Muslims however stayed back, plundering, and did not return.

Ten knights renowned for their courage, went on to the land of Šārkāh:[390] Del Sagad, Takla, Ura'ī Nūr bin Dār 'Alī, Abjad bin Abūn, Garād Dawit al-Bartīrrī, Jīnah Saṭūt from the people of Sim, Yūssef, Saīdī Muḥammad bin 'Alī al-Bāqarī whose father was an Arab - he had been the treasurer for the Imām, and was lord of Dawāro - and Abū Bakr bin Yamāg Aḥmad .

They entered the land of Šārkāh without realizing that there were enemies there.The patrician Badlaī Fīt Behtwadad[391] whom we mentioned above, was in Šārkāh. He had gone to Anṭokyā with Azmāč Degalḥān, when the king sent for the latter to go to him, and Azmāč Eslāmu took charge of

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[390]The imām's army, according to Huntingford, was at this time 'many miles' south of Antukyāh. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 127. (P)

[391]In this period there were often two courtiers holding the rank of Behtwaddad. The Fit Behtwadad was so called because his establishment was located in the 'fit,' or front, of the camp, and was thus in charge of the advance-guard. Guidi, *Vocabolario amarico-italiano*, c. 882. On the history of the institution of Behtwaddad, see Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, II, 453-4. (P)

Anṭokyā as we have described.[392] All the patricians went along with the proposal except the patrician Badlaī Behtwadad who would not agree to Eslāmu 's being over him.

He left Anṭokyā and went to the land of Šārkāh, saying to Eslāmu: 'The king has appointed you over me, so you fight in the king's [f°39] interest'. When the Muslims arrived at the land of Šārkāh they knew nothing of him but he knew that they had entered the land of Šārkāh. He mounted his horse and organized his army which was composed of fifty cavalry and five-hundred infantry. They had readied themselves for war, blocking the road of Šārkāh against the Muslims.

So the ten knights who professed the unicity of God arrived, intending to invade the land of Šārkāh. They saw the infidels, and how they were holding an elevated hill that the cavalry could find no means of reaching because of the narrowness of the place; and how the Christians had equipped themselves for battle.

The Muslims halted in their tracks, and deliberated amongst themselves. In their number were some who said : 'Let us return the way we came, to the wazir 'Addolī. We can give him news of them, and he will supply us with infantry'. Others said: 'We had only one desire, the *jihād*, and now this has come to pass: isn't this really just one of two equally good options?'[393] They agreed with this latter judgement, and crying out with one voice 'God is the greatest,' attacked the idol-worshippers. They scaled the hill, and a fierce battle ensued, with hand to hand fighting. Each one was cut off from his companion.

One of the Muslims called Takla, son of al-Ḥabašī, rushed at one of their patricians, knocked him from his saddle and took him prisoner, shackling him cringing and despicable. In the same way another one of the Muslims Abjad bin Abūn attacked one of the knights, a chieftain of the infidels, one of the king's chamberlains who stood close to his throne, and throwing him from his saddle took him prisoner. Likewise, another, by name Yūssef, hurled himself at their knight and leader, the patrician Badlaī Fīt

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[392] See pp.131ff. *supra* . (S)

[393] *i.e.* victory, or death as a martyr. (S)

Behtwadad, like a lion on its prey, seeking to take him captive. But he swerved away from him, to the right and to the left, trying to escape. When he saw death staring him in the face, he threw himself from his horse onto the ground, and ran away, wading into the middle of the river that was nearby and saved himself. Yūssef took his horse.

When they saw that their patrician had fled, and that his charger had been captured, the idol-worshippers were put to flight - with some of them being killed and others escaping. But not one of the Muslims was killed. They took twelve horses and booty and turned back, returning to the wazir 'Addolī whom they reached when he was at the border of the land of Ganbah. They made the two prisoners stand before him.

The Muslims took heart at the victory and the triumph and sent a messenger to the Imām. On the next day the wazir 'Addoli set out to rejoin the Imām and they assembled with him in the land of Ganbah, each one greeting the other. They presented the two prisoners to the Imām who asked them both about their circumstances. They replied: 'we shall ransom ourselves'. The king's chamberlain said: 'I shall ransom myself with two-hundred ounces of gold dust,' and the other said: 'And I shall ransom myself with one-hundred ounces of gold'. But the imām said to them : 'I have no need of your gold', and ordered them to be put to death. The Muslims remained in the land of Ganbah six days.

[Capture of patricians' wives and children]

The *storyteller* says: The first Muslims to die, on this occasion, in the land of Abyssinia were two men, of whom one, sheikh Zammāka, was from the land of Šawā, and the other was 'Uṯmān, a devout man - may God have mercy on them both. Both of them were buried in Ganbah. Then the imām commanded the wazir 'Addolī to proceed to Šārkāh with the wazir Nūr. So they set out, reaching Šārkāh, taking captive the wives and children of the patricians, plundering a vast quantity of fabrics and other things besides. They also took as booty a small[394] quantity of gold which was the first gold to be

[394] شياء يسـير : usually يسير would mean 'paltry,' or 'inconsiderable'. B translates 'en grande quantité'.

taken as booty from Abyssinia in this afore-mentioned blessed campaign in the course of which there were notable conquests.

Among the wives of the patricians was the wife of the patrician Azmāč Arkia, and his children. When the latter learned that his wife and children had been captured, he went and embraced Islam. Arkia was one[395] of the nobles of Abyssinia to embrace Islam during this campaign. At this, the imām gave him back his wife and children.

[The fate of Wasan Sagad's church in 'Andurāh]

Then the wazir 'Addolī and the wazir Nūr assembled with the imām in 'Andūrāh[396] in the land of Dawāro where there was a church with imposing columns that was built for Wasan Sagad. It was a mighty building into whose construction great efforts had gone. It had taken eleven years to build. Its like was not to be seen in Dawāro because of the workmanship that went into its decoration and its construction.

The storyteller says: When the imām with his Muslim army arrived at the church, the custodians fled. There were custodians from Duba'ah there, one-thousand foot soldiers, carrying poisoned spears called *jat.*

The Muslims entered and were astonished at the building and its embellishment. Inside it they discovered Byzantine carpets, furnishings and fabrics, silken wares and other things as well. The Muslims took what was inside the church, and then set fire to it. They made camp in 'Andurāh and stayed there around six days. The cavalry and the army made incursions into Dawāro, taking booty and captives.

The emir Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad, and Garād Aḥmušah heard about a treasure house of Wasan Sagad in the land of Gātur. So they set out for the land of Gātur seeking the treasure house. But when they reached the place described to them, they found in it only half the treasure, which they looted. The Christians had fled with the other half when they heard about the two of

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A.-P. reads 'un peu'. (S)

[395] وكان ممن اسلم من كبار الحبشة : B: 'le premier ... qui se convertirent'. (S)

[396] A locality in Dawāro. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 126. (P)

them. What they did find consisted of fabrics and silks and many other things besides: but no gold was found. Then they returned to the imām at 'Andurāh.

[Wasan Sagad mobilises his forces]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: 'After the imām and his forces had arrived in 'Andurāh the king of Abyssinia learned that the Muslims had reached Anṭokyā; that the patrician Eslāmu had been routed, and his army destroyed; and that the church of Wasan Sagad had been burnt. He was overcome with grief and immediately assembled his patricians, his Chamberlains and his leading citizens and said to them: 'You have heard what devastation the Muslims have caused in Dawāro: the routing of our army, and the killing of them'.

So he sent a message to the people of Tegrē to come to him with their forces. The patricians and armies without number assembled, and the king appointed as commander of the forces the patrician Takla Iyasus, governor of Angot, whom he had put in charge of Tegrē and the seaport of Dokono. The king loved him. He ordered him to march to the land of Dawāro, to seek out the Muslims and to engage them in battle.

[Eslāmu subordinated by the king to Takla Iyasus]

As for what happened to the patrician Eslāmu whom the imām had put to flight in Anṭokyā; he was in hiding in the land of Zāri,[397] an inaccessible and roadless terrain. He sent a messenger to the king of Abyssinia to offer excuses, and to humble himself, saying: 'I had not lined up my forces against the Muslims[398] [f°40] yet they acted treacherously towards me. They took me by surprise, before I had made any preparations; when I was defenceless. Still, the Muslims took from me only a few horses'. The king sent back to him the following intimidatory reply: 'Look - I gave you an

[397] Zāri, a locality said by Huntingford to be situated around Ayfārs. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 126. (P)

[398] انا ما صافـفـت : B: 'J'ai rangé mes troupes'. (S)

army as numerous as a plague of locusts, and it was of no advantage to you. Now see I am sending you Azmāč Takla Iyasus. Follow him. Whatever orders he gives you, follow them. Do not disobey him. Be a help for him against the Muslims'.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Now, concerning the patrician Takla Iyasus. He set off for Dawāro, with a large number of patricians under him. Among the leading patricians were Feqra Iyasus, son-in-law of king Eskender[399] whose daughter he had married[400] - a powerful and headstrong man; the patrician 'Amr from Tegrē; the *šum* of Sirē and the *šum* of Sarāyē,[401] and others of their ilk from among the thirty patricians of Tegrē, each of whom had numerous soldiers under his command, and amongst whom were the people of Angot.

These journeyed until they reached the 'Awāš which they passed, and rendezvoused with the patrician Eslāmu who was in Zāri. Then the king's letter, in which the king appointed Takla Iyasus their commander, was read out to them and to the patrician Eslāmu. in which the king appointed Takla Iyasus their commander. Grudgingly, Eslāmu said, 'To hear the king's letter is to obey it'.

[Takla Iyasus is betrayed]

Takla Iyasus received information about the Muslims. His spies informed him that the Muslims were in 'Andurāh near the church of Wasan Sagad. It was thought that the Muslims were going to return to their country.

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[399]Emperor Eskender (1479 to 1494). On his life see Perruchon, 'Histoire d'Eskender, d' 'Amda Ṣeyon et de Nā'od'. (P)

[400]One of Eskender's daughters, according to Alvares, had married a monk, evidently a personality of some importance, who later reportedly married a daughter of Emperor Lebna Dengel. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, II, 424. (P)

[401]Sarāyē, also known as Sarāwē, the southernmost part of the Country of the Bāḥr Nagāš, situated north of the Marab river. Ludolphus, *New History of Ethiopia*, p. 17; Huntingford, *Land Charters of Northern Ethiopia*, pp. 88, 229. (P)

He addressed his forces: 'We will maintain our position here. And when the Muslims march towards their country we will let them reach Del Mēdā and then pounce on them, taking them by surprise, and killing them'. They agreed with this view and said: 'Your opinion is the correct one, we will follow you'.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: There were two men [present] of whom the name of one was 'Umar and the name of the other was Sakr. They were Muslims who had repudiated Islam and become Christians. They had joined the king who bestowed favours upon them, granting them property in Šārkāh from which they derived income. They had married Christian girls, but when the Muslims arrived at Šārkāh these captured their wives. With the arrival of Takla Iyasus these two men learnt what the infidels were planning to do, and they sought out the imām. They said: 'We deeply regret before God what we have done; we repent of our actions'. Then they informed the imām about what Takla Iyasus had said.

The imām said to them: 'Don't be afraid', and gave them back their wives. Then the imām asked them: 'Do they know about you: that you have come back to us?' And they replied: 'No, they don't know about us'. The imām then said to them, 'I have two small things to ask of you'. They asked, 'What are they?' And he said to them: 'You, Sakr, shall remain with me. And your friend 'Umar shall go back to the infidels and infiltrate them, and bring us back news of them: informing us which road we should take to reach them; which is the widest road. If you do this, then God will forgive your sin'. 'Willingly', he replied. Sakr lodged with the wazir 'Addolī, and 'Umar farwelled him. Then he set out, rejoined the idol-worshippers and stayed two days.

The day after that he went back to 'Addolī, at the time of the afternoon prayer, and 'Addoli went with him to the imām who asked him for news. He said: 'I went to them, saw them and learnt their route'. At which the imām asked, 'What are they scheming concerning us?' He replied: 'They don't have any plan other than their original one'. Then the imām asked: 'How many of them are there?' He replied: 'Well, the people of Bāli, Dawāro, Wanāg

Ambā,[402] and Wanāg Jadab all went back to their countries at the time of their defeat at Anṭokyā. The only ones who remain are their chieftains'.

So the imām asked him: 'And these soldiers of theirs, tell us about them - who are they? How many of them are there?' He said: 'They are from the people of Tegrē, of Angot and of Faṭagār'. The imām then asked him, 'How many horses have they?' He replied: 'Five-hundred horses from Rīf with riders from Tegrē - all of whom wear armour of iron and steel'.

At that the imām asked: 'Where they are - is it wide or narrow? Is there space for the cavalry or not?' He replied: 'Going from here to close to where they are, the terrain is open; but as we get closer to them we hit a steep mountain path which we have to climb, and as we descend we come out into a river valley. The Christians hold the heights above the valley. They have made their camp on top of a hill there, but the hill is cut off, because at the bottom of it there is a cliff caused by a landslide. So when we reach their position, if God gives us victory over them, there is no way they can escape from there. All those who do flee the hill will plunge into the void and be smashed to pieces'.

[Aḥmad decides to attack]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Thereupon the imām summoned the Muslim cavalry at the time of the afternoon prayer and passed on to them what news his spy had brought. Some of them said: 'Let us hold our positions until they come to us,' and others again said, 'Let us march against them'. Then the imām said to the first ones who had said 'Let us hold our positions,' 'I do not share your opinion. Rather, let us set out, but after the prayer at sunset'. To which they replied: 'We agree'.

So they marched out after the prayer at sunset, leaving the camp in place at 'Andurāh, and leaving behind in it 'Abd an-Nāṣr, and with him forty cavalry, the baggage and the cannon. The imām said to him: 'You come after us, in the morning'.

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[402]Ge'ez, literally, Mountain of Lions, animals found at that time in many parts of the country. (P)

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: The imām marched from the time of the sunset prayer until early the next morning: and they marched like running water. The Qur'ānic teacher Abū Bakr nicknamed Aršūna was in their midst, reading the Qur'ān aloud and slowly reciting it, with the soldiers crowding around so that they could hear it; all this until the break of the day when they reached the steep mountain path. Then the guide halted. He said: 'Now that we are close to them let us rest here until morning comes'.

The Muslims made camp, descended from their mules and rested because they were exhausted. Then at dawn the imām sent for the guide who was brought into his presence and said to him: 'You and we must go immediately to check the route and gather some information'. But the guide said: 'Well, I'm exhausted, but you have the patrician Arkia here and he is a Muslim and he knows the way'. So the imām summoned him and he came and the imām said to him what he had said to the guide. He replied, 'With pleasure,' and set off with the imām by night, until the last third of the night. Garād Šama'ūn and Mattān accompanied the imām.

[Arkia deceives some Christian villagers]

The guide mistook the path and they followed a different one. They sat bolt upright [in their saddles], not knowing the path, arguing among themselves and becoming confused. Suddenly they heard barking, like the barking of dogs and the imām asked: 'Is this dogs' barking, or something else?' And they approached closer to the sound. Arkia said to them: 'You stay here: I shall go towards the [f°41] sound and get some news for you. There are no dogs in an army camp. I shall do my utmost to bring you news'.

So, Arkia set off in the direction of the noise and to his surprise it was one of the Christian villages where the dogs' barking was coming from. So then Arkia called out in a loud voice: 'Hello there in the village!' A reply came back asking, 'Who is this that calls out in the dark of the night?' Arkia answered them: 'I am a patrician from Dawāro. I have come from Dawāro'. They enquired: 'Who have you got behind you'. He said: 'With me is my army. Takla Iyasus sent for me to come to him, and now I've come with my

soldiers and want to help him fight the Muslims'. They said to him: 'Go back the way you came to the steep mountain track, and go down into the valley that lies below it, then ascend the high hill beyond. That's where he is. Set out straightaway and you will find him there'.

The storyteller, may the most high God have mercy upon him, says: Arkia noted the directions and returned to the imām and reported to him what the village people had told him. He said: 'The infidels have held their original position, just as the first guide told you,' and they rejoiced exceedingly. So they turned around and went back to their camp, notifying their companions of the news.

They passed the night there and when it was morning they said their prayers and the wazir 'Addolī with the first guide leading him, set out with the vanguard of the army. They descended the mountain path down to the valley and the Muslims saw the infidels' tents. The idol-worshippers [also] saw the Muslims descending the steep pass. Immediately the infidels ranged all their forces, and set off towards the Muslims.

The imām was in the rear of the army, so the Muslims halted in the valley until the imām and his forces reached them. Some of the cavalry, however, had already crossed the river before the imām reached them. Amongst these were Ṣabr ad-Dīn, 'Alī Warādī, 'Abd Allāh bin Nāṣr ad-Dīn al-Ḥamwī, Adiš bin Māḥī, and about twenty other infantry of their ilk; and from the infantry Fanj Sabbar, Haijen Jīta, 'Alī Ṭāī Ijir - around thirty infantrymen [like them].'

They and the Christians engaged one another in battle; and they hurled spears at one another.[403] But the wazir 'Addolī waited in the valley for the imām to arrive. Upon his arrival the imām and the Muslims mounted their horses and set their forces in battle array.

[Takla Iyasus is killed]

Then the Muslim vanguard launched an attack against the Christians who were waiting on the hill. The first of them to charge was Ṣabr ad-Dīn,

[403] فيما بينهم : B 'dans l'espace qui les séparait'. (S)

governor of Wašla on the border of Ganz after the conquest, who plunged into the midst of them, followed by 'Alī al-Warādī. In the same way 'Abd Allāh bin Nāṣr ad-Dīn al-Ḥamwī charged, as did Adiš bin Māḥī who was backed up by 'Alī Goitā bin Goitā 'Adrūḥ. These two attacked Takla Iyasus. Then Adiš unsheathed his sword and struck the head of Takla Iyasus such a blow that it separated his head from his body and he fell down dead; and God thrust his soul down into Hell, and 'a sad place it is'.[404]

Then the imām and the Muslims charged the Christians who were on the hill. A bloody battle followed, with the infidels in full flight, pursued by the Muslims who took captives, killed and plundered.

The patrician Eslāmu was slain by Abū Bakr bin Garād Yumāj Aḥmad . In the same way the patrician of Mergāy whose name was Naṣr was captured by Farašaḥam 'Alī who also captured the patrician Šūtalāī who became a Muslim by a sincere conversion. He took part in the *jihād* and killed, only to be himself killed as a martyr as will be recalled later on. In the same way the governor of Mergāy converted to Islam with a genuine conversion and he fought the *jihād* with the Muslims. Nagada Iyasus, governor of Jīnah, was killed as well. His killer was Garād Aḥmadūš bin Maḥfūẓ, may God the most High have mercy upon him.

The *šum* of Bur[405] also was killed. His name was Zambīl. His killer was the emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn. Also killed was the *šum* of Sirē whose name was Sāma'īl. He was killed by one of the Muslim infantrymen. Ibrahīm the *šum* of Ṣalamt, the name of a city in the land of Agaw, was killed by Absamā Nūr. The *šum* of Hāmāsēn was killed by Ṣāliḥ, an equerry of the emir Mujāhid.[406] The patrician Asēr was captured by Ṭāhar, an equerry of the imām.

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[404] *Qur'ān* xiv, 29. (S)

[405] بسورى : (S) Bur, a Red Sea promontory south-east of Massawa, was generally considered part of the Country of the Bāḥr Nagāš, but was later incorporated into the province of Tegrē. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 151, II, 576; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 97-8. (P)

[406] B adds, 'a qui Dieu fasse miséricorde,' not found in the text. (S)

The patrician Keflē, governor of Qedā, son of Takla Iyasus, was also captured, by an equerry of the imām named Ḥasan. The patrician Giyorgis, governor of Gojjām, was captured by an equerry of Farašaḥam ʿAlī. Azmāč Yesḥāq, governor of Bagēmder, was killed by ʿAlī Mād Jir from the tribe of Mattān the Somali.

The number of high patricians killed was one-hundred-and-thirty - from the people of Tegrē and the people of Amḥārā. Thousands of their cavalry and infantry, were killed. The Muslims captured five-hundred horses as booty - only twenty escaped. God took control of their tents, their belongings, their mules and their slaves, and handed them over to the Muslims[407].

Afterwards, the wazir ʿAddolī and the soldiers who were with him, made their camp on the hill-top on the site of the infidel camp. The imām, on the other hand, along with around fifty knights, pursued the fleeing soldiers from the hill as far as the ʿAwāš and then returned to Del Mēdā where he passed the night.

The next day he went in the direction of ʿAbd an-Nāṣr whom earlier on he had left behind in Andūrah with the baggage, and the imām and ʿAbd an-Nāṣr directed their steps towards a country called Jamīt.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Regarding what happened to the wazir ʿAddolī who remained in the infidel encampment - he set out after two days for Jamīt, where the Muslims greeted one another, praising the most high God for the victory and the triumph, and stayed the night there.

[Dividing the booty]

When morning came, the imām summoned the captives, the horses and the weapons of war. They presented the horses to him, five-hundred of them with their protective armour draped with red broad-cloth and velvet, with silk, and gold brocade of silk shimmering like fiery flames; with Davidic iron armour, helmets from Sābūr, swords from Egypt, and shields made of

[407]This battle is also mentioned in the Ethiopian royal chronicles for this period, where it is referred to as the battle of ʿAyfārs . Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 17. (P)

hide from Abyssinia that resembled white baskets. He gave glory to the most high God, and took the *fifth* part of these and of the mules, and then divided the remaining horses and the mules amongst the *mujāhidūn*.

The storyteller, may God have mercy on him, says: I who witnessed the events at Šemberā Korē with the imām, as well as the rest of the incursions, never saw horses or mules as magnificent as the horses and mules of Zāri, nor a number greater than them.

As for the captives, the patrician Asēr, and likewise the patrician Šūtalāī were beheaded. The patrician Keflē ransomed himself with thirty ounces of gold. Giyorgis was held captive for about two months, and then one night[408] severed his bonds and fled towards Gojjām, only to be killed by one of the infidels.

[Aḥmad's letter to the king]

The imām acted kindly towards the patrician, the brother of Giyorgis, and sent him to Wanāg Sagad, the king of Abyssinia, with a letter. He said to him: 'Go immediately with this [f°42] letter and come back to me with the answer'.

He wrote: 'In the name of God the merciful, the compassionate: glory to God alone: blessing and peace upon Muḥammad the Prophet, after whom there can be no other prophet. From the imām Aḥmad bin Ibrahīm al-Ḡāzī [409] to the king of Abyssinia,' after having wished peace upon whoever follows the true religion, and whoever obeys the celestial king, 'when this letter reaches you, send back to me the two captives whom the patrician Fanu'ēl captured: one of them is Abū Bakr bin Musallem, and the other is Jalatī. After you have sent these back to me, I shall release to you the captive patricians.

'There are four of them: Giyorgis and Keflē, Naṣr governor of Mergāy, and Šūtalāī. They are four, and my companions are two. But then Muslim takes care of Muslim and infidel takes care of infidel. You should not think of us as we were before, making an incursion and then going home. This

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[408] بالليل : B omits. (S)

[409] 'War-lord'. See *supra* note[142]. (S)

time we shall not return until God has conquered the country for us - if it be God's will - or we have died: "Thus he will judge between us, and he is the best of Judges." '[410]

The imām then folded the letter and dispatched it with the patrician, the brother of Giyorgis the captive, commanding him to bear the letter to the king of Abyssinia. So he set off with the letter and reached the king of Abyssinia, and gave it to him. Thereupon the latter saw it and understood what it contained concerning the matter of the prisoners, the head-tax to be paid by non-Muslims and concerning Islam. For the imām had given him a choice between the three, by implication, in the letter.

The king proved himself unfaithful, decadent, tyrannical and arrogant. His vexation could be seen in his face. He flung the crown from his head, called for the two captives and had them put to death - may God have mercy upon the two of them - and sent back no reply.

[The Somali tribes resolve to desert]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: The Muslims set out from Jamīt for Ganburah, above Suq Dawāro.[411] The people of Suq Dawāro were Muslims whom the patrician of Dawāro ruled and from whom he exacted tribute. When the imām and the Muslims reached Ganburah, the people of Suq Dawāro welcomed them and showered them with honours. Then the imām wrote a letter to the country of the Muslims, to the sultan 'Umar Dīn and to his brother Muḥammad bin Ibrahīm whom he had left with the sultan, announcing the good news of his victory and triumph. The imām and the Muslims stayed on in Ganburah for around seven days.

In the meantime the Somali tribes, since they had taken booty and collected horses, mules, oxen, donkeys, slaves and fabrics, held a meeting by

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[410] *Qur'ān* vii, 87. (S)

[411] Suq Dawāro, i.e. the *suq*, or market, of the province of Dawāro. The place, like many commercial Ethiopian centres, great and small, was inhabited by a significant Muslim population. The existence of villages inhabited by 'Moors,' i.e. Muslims, had earlier been noted by Alvares. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 174, 187. See also R.Pankhurst, 'The Muslim Commercial Towns, Villages and Markets of Christian Ethiopia Prior to the Rise of Tēwodros'. (P)

themselves. They said, 'We have taken vast booty, so now let us go to the imām and urge him to make the way clear for us to return to our country. If he agrees, there is no harm done. If he refuses, then we shall run away to our country, without his permission'. Some of the Malasāī people agreed with this. The Somalis said: 'If we go back, the majority of the Malasāī will follow our lead, and that will leave very few with the imām'.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him says: Then a certain person went to the imām. He had been among those present at their meeting, and informed the imām what the Somalis had said, and what they intended to do. When the imām heard, he set spies upon them to observe them, and said to the spies: 'If they do something, see that I am told'.

While they were thus occupied, who should arrive but a senior patrician, Azmāč Ḥaib, governor of Gātur. After the king had removed him from Gātur, he commanded him to go to him. When he reached the king of Abyssinia, the latter wrote a letter to Takla Iyasus, not knowing that Takla Iyasus was among those killed by the Muslims. Then he said to Ḥaib, 'Go to him, and be with him, for you are familiar with the land of Gātur; and fight the Muslims with him'. So Ḥaib left the king. But he went instead to the imām, converted to Islam, and his conversion was genuine. He fought and waged the *jihād* against the idol-worshippers,[412] supported the Muslims, sought to appease the Lord of human beings, and performed deeds in Abyssinia the like of which his fellow countrymen had never performed.

['Amdu offers to conciliate to save Dawāro]

The Muslims in the land of Dawāro, meanwhile, took booty to the right and to the left, utterly devastating its territory. Amongst their number was a man whom they had taken prisoner during the battle of Anṭokyā. When he saw how the Muslims were laying waste the land of Dawāro he said: 'I have a plan. Take me to the imām.' The one to whom he said this asked him: 'What is your plan? What are you saying ?' But he said: 'I won't say anything

[412] المشركين : B omits, and adds 'donna de bons conseils,' not found in our text. (S)

except to the imām'. So the Muslim went and told the imām what the prisoner said.

The imām summoned the prisoner and asked him: 'What is your plan, and what are you talking about ?' The prisoner replied: 'Give me a guarantee that if I speak with you, you will not kill me'. So he gave him the guarantee, and the prisoner said: 'O your highness, devastate the whole country, but don't lay waste Dawāro. Yet you are laying waste the whole of Dawāro, and you are wiping out the people of the country by killing and enslaving them. Now I have something to suggest'.

The imām said, 'So now explain the advantage of what you propose ?' He replied: 'Send me back to my companions and to the patricians of Dawāro and I will tell them that if they pay you the head-tax you will leave them alone, and they will remain in their customary situation, in their country and their religion'.

When the imām heard this proposal of his, he said: 'This suggestion of yours is nothing but a subterfuge so that you can escape the bonds of slavery. And, your companions, if you were to address them in this fashion they would not agree to what you suggest. But if you really know that they will accept your proposal, and you are genuine, then go to them; but if you are being treacherous then you are a dog and a son of a dog; you will do neither bad nor good: you will be neither more nor less. But if you are genuine, then we shall recognize where you stand'.

['Amdu explains his plan to the patricians]

So the prisoner set out and reached the patricians who had gathered in the land of Jān Zajra where the church of Wasan Sagad was. Among the leading patricians was 'Adalih, lord of Bāli, and Fanu'ēl, and Giyorgis who was their superior, and the patrician Atfanil also called Dal Sabbar. When the captive 'Amdu arrived they approached him, welcomed him, congratulated him, and asked him: 'Where have you been up till now?' To which he replied: 'I have been a prisoner of the Muslims. The imām set me free so that I could come to you'.

The patrician 'Amdu was a close relative of Giyorgis, who was his cousin on his father's side, so 'Amdu said: 'Have these patricians move away from you to the side, for I have some important news to convey'. After they had drawn apart from him and Giyorgis he said, 'I have come to you with a proposal from the Muslims. From the outset they have been making incursions into our country and then returning to their own country. But this imām has invaded our country, ravaged it and killed its soldiers. He will not go back: he has in mind to settle in our country. You have seen what [f°43] he has done to you in war, and how the king fled at the battle of Šemberā Korē, and how the army of Anṭokyā fled, and how the king's army fled at Zāri, and how all your patricians have been killed. Now, we have no force left with which to combat them. And if he does settle down in our country he will lay it waste and do even worse things. Now, our Lord Wasan Sagad is in the land of Dāmot'.

The patrician then said to the prisoner 'Amdu, 'Who can make peace between us, and deflect him from us ?' 'Amdu replied: 'I have a plan'. The patrician said: 'Let's hear your opinion and your plan'. So he said: 'I will speak with the imām about peace between us and him. We will pay the head-tax to the imām and be hospitable and make a gift to the Muslims. We will give him three handsome mules, some sugar, some *qāt* and some coffee-beans - for he will not demand extraordinary things from us'.

Thereupon the patrician Giyorgis assembled the other patricians and told them what 'Amdu had said about the gift and the offer of hospitality. They said: 'Hearing is obeying!' 'This is not asking too much,' he went on, 'and if the imām be satisfied with this, then neither the king nor our Lord Wasan Sagad will blame us for acting this way. Now, we want peace for our country, and we will offer him the gift and extend hospitality to him'. To which they replied, 'Hearing is obeying'.

['Amdu and Zin return to the Muslim camp]

They got together the gift and prepared the hospitality and the mules, and then the patricians summoned one who had been captured by the Muslims earlier on in the attack on Bus, had ransomed himself and settled amongst

them. They said to him: 'You go to the imām with this man, for you understand his approach towards a gift, and offers of hospitality. Tell him: "If our patrician learns about our giving a gift to you and our extending hospitality to you, he will not treat the matter lightly, and the king will kill us. So now, accept this insignificant thing from us."

'In the meantime, the imām has gone beyond the 'Awāš and proceeded in the direction of the king and is fighting him. In fact he is now at Gabargē. Were he to overcome him and conquer the country, we would agree to hand over to him all our horses and weapons: and to let whoever amongst us wanted to convert to Islam, do so; and whoever wanted to be a Christian, remain in his religion, and pay the head-tax. And we will further stipulate that were the king of Abyssinia to seek our assistance against the imām, we would not help him, nor would we join forces with him. Another provision: were the imām to withdraw from our country we would make no incursions into the land of the Muslims; we would cause harm to no one, but instead remain in our own homes'.

Then the patrician called Zin who had been with the Muslims, said to them: 'Concerning this matter: if you act in this way, I will travel on your behalf to the imām, and will obtain a guarantee of immunity for you and for the people of this region. He will not move against you as long as you do as you promise. But if you break your word, and violate the agreement, then your double-dealing will hurt only you, for he loves justice, provided you are just'.

The [other] patricians committed themselves by oath, and gave their word, and said to him, 'Go'. So the patrician Zin set off, along with the prisoner who had been with the imām. The two of them went to the imām, who was above Dawāro, and arrived where he was.

The patrician Zin went into the imām's presence and presented him with the gift. The imām questioned him, saying: 'How are you, Zin?' To which he answered, 'Well, my Lord, and in good health, thanks to your blessing. I am your servant. These people of Dawāro have asked me to intercede on their behalf with you.' 'To what end,' asked the imām, 'have they asked you to plead on their behalf?' He replied, 'They asked me to bring this gift to you'.

Then he addressed the imām, telling him all that had transpired, the conditions that they had laid down, and the undertakings that they had given to him. The imām asked him, 'What is this 'present' that you have brought with you: some leaves of *qāt*, some coffee beans and some sugar? I'll not accept it. God has already given us, and handed over to us your wealth, and the right to lay waste your lands. So, now, take your gift and go back whence you have come.'

The patrician took his gift and went to see 'Addolī. Weeping, he sat down beside him and told him what the imām had said to him. Thereupon 'Addolī and those of the imām's circle went to see the imām who said to the wazir 'Addolī and to those with him, 'Don't you see how these people[413] are playing games with us by sending us this gift? We will occupy their region, and lay it waste.'

The wazir 'Addolī and the chiefs replied, 'We gain no benefit by occupying this region. Our view is that we should accept their gift from them, clothe them both in garments of honour, and let them return to their companions. We, for our part, should cross over the river 'Awāš, and attack the king. If God gives us the victory then this region will belong to us, and whenever we want it, it will be ours.'

This view met with the approval of the imām who said, 'What you propose is excellent,' and agreed to the gift.

Then he approached the patrician Zin and said to him: 'For now, we will accept your gift from you both. If we march against the king, don't you invade our country or go to the aid of the king of Abyssinia. You be faithful to all that you have promised us.' Zin replied: 'I agree gladly. Our companions have sworn an oath concerning this, and we swear to you that we shall act justly towards you'.

Then Zin and the captive 'Amdu gave their word, the imām clad them both in garments of honour, and they went and reported back to their companions.

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[413] هولاء : sic! (S)

[Wanāg Sagad thinks that the Muslims have departed]

The imām and the Muslims, drew up their battle lines and set off on the route for Ayfārs.[414] The king of Abyssinia, meanwhile, had received news, that is to say, reports of the defeat of his army and of the killing of his patricians in the land of Zāri. He was in a place called Gebergē in the land of Waj,[415] and was thereupon cast down by a terrible grief. He was under the impression, however, that the Muslims had gone back down to their own country, and commented: 'The Muslims have taken much booty: and have gone down to their own country.' He stayed in Gebergē. The Muslims, meanwhile, had set out from the region of Ayfārs for the region of the Māyā.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Upon the Muslims' entering the region of the Māyā, the imām called his companions together and said: 'The Māyā possess only [a few] cattle. The region's roads are impassable, and overgrown with trees. If you were to steal their cattle, they would harass the Muslims, for they are skilled with the javelin, and their arrows are poisoned. So touch none of their cattle.' They replied, 'Willingly'.

[Aḥmad obliges his troops to abandon their booty]

The imām noted the vast quantity of booty that each person had with him: around two-hundred mules, and slaves. He thereupon summoned the whole army and said to them: 'What are all these work horses, mules and slaves which you have gathered together? Where are you going with them?' They replied: 'We kept them, thinking to return with them to our country, but now we'll take them wherever you tell us.' The imām said to them: 'Are we waging a *jihād*, or are we collecting work horses, mules, heavy baggage and slaves? If you have these things with you, how are you going to be able to

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[414]The battle of Ay Fārs took place, according to the Ethiopian royal chronicle, on 5 Miyāzyā, i.e. 31 March, 1531. Christian leaders killed, it states, included Ras Eslam (also referred to in some texts as Eslamo), and a nobleman called Takla Iyasus, as well as 'many' other chiefs. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 17. (P)

[415]Waj, a locality near Lake Zwāy. R.Pankhurst, *Ethiopian Borderlands*, pp.76-7,141-2, 204-6. (P)

fight the idol-worshippers, preoccupied as you are with this?' 'What should we do?' they asked. He replied, 'I'll let you know what is to be done'.

Then they set out [f°44] until they reached a narrow defile between two mountains. The imām was at the head of the army. He halted on the narrow defile and waited for the army to catch up to him. He said to them, regarding this matter, 'Throw away your possessions. None of you may travel except with his mule, and with whatever slaves he had [before]. Let him ride upon that, and let that suffice. If any of you disobeys me, I will cut off his head.' So they jettisoned their booty in the region of the Māyā, with much weeping and crying. The imām stood his ground on the road, from the time of the morning prayer, until the time of the afternoon prayer while they threw everything to the side of the army. The valley and the roads were filled with slaves, and with the pack-animals that had carried the booty like donkeys.[416]

After this they set out and reached Marzīr, in the region of Māyā, beneath Mount Zeqālā where there was a mighty church built. The wazir 'Adolī was in the van of the army. When they drew near to the church, they gave free rein to their horses around the district, killing, and plundering horses and furnishings. When the Muslims approached, the people of the district who looked after the church had taken its furnishings and cloth, and tried to take them up into the nearby mountain.

[Wanāg Sagad summons Wasan Sagad]

The Muslim cavalry pursued them and killed them, seizing their furnishings and their silk cloth. After the imām and the army arrived with the rear guard, they pitched their camp beneath the church which they put to the torch during the night. The king of Abyssinia was two days' march away from the church. He had no idea that the Muslims had arrived at the church until he saw the fire at night and realised that they were moving in his

[416]It is not possible to say from the text whether only the baggage was jettisoned and the slaves and pack-animals merely abandoned; or whether the slaves and pack-animals were killed to prevent their falling into the hands of the Abyssinians. (S)

direction. He sent a messenger to the patrician Wasan Sagad who was in the region of Dāmot, to say to him: 'Catch up with me, for the Muslims are heading towards me.'

Likewise he sent to Ura'ī 'Uṭmān, governor of Ifāt. He became a Muslim after he had been baptised against his will when, taken prisoner, the king had had him baptised. Ura'ī 'Uṭmān, who had a mighty army with him, met up with the king's messenger on the road and they marched in the direction of the king Wanāg Sagad. Wasan Sagad was then a long way from the king, in the territory of Dāmot.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: with regard to the Muslims, they set out from Zeqālā and reached the region of Lālibālā[417] in the territory of Faṭagār, and spent the night by the river Dukām. Their goal was Bādēqē. They assumed that the king of Abyssinia would ward off their attack and prevent their entering Bādēqē which was the king's village, just as he had resisted them during the campaign of Šemberā Korē.The imām then said: 'We shall enter Bādēqē, and when the king comes against us, we shall give him battle.'

[The king orders the burning of his homes in Bādēqē]

When the Muslims reached the river Dukām they noticed a fire blazing in the middle of Bādēqē. The imām summoned the patrician Ḥaīb, who converted to Islam, and asked him, 'Where is this fire?' Ḥaīb replied, 'This fire is in the king's village of Bādēqē.' The imām asked him, 'Do you know why they have lighted this fire?' 'No, I don't know,' he replied, 'but let us spend the night here, and when it is morning we shall have news.'

While they were cogitating over the matter of the fire, all of a sudden who should come to them but some Muslim merchants who dwelt in Bādēqē. They had stolen some of the king's money, and came with it to the imām and gave it to him. He asked them the reason for burning the houses, and sought news of the whereabouts of the king. They replied, 'With regard

[417]The Lālibālā of Faṭagār, not to be confused with the better-known site of the famous rock-hewn churches in Lāstā. (P)

to the king, he is in the region of Gebergē. With regard to the setting of the fire, the king sent one of his patricians whom he had instructed: "Go to Bādēqē and burn my house, and the houses of my brothers now, before the Muslims outmanoeuvre you, lest they put them to the torch, and say: *we burnt the house of the king.* I will forestall them, and burn them myself" And then he said, "But, do not burn the church as our holy books do not permit us to burn it." So the patrician whom he had sent, burnt the houses, as you have seen.'

[Farašaḥam 'Alī burns down the church at Bādēqē]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: The next morning the imām sent off a raiding party commanded by Farašaḥam 'Alī whose nickname was Ankarasaḥ. Accompanying him was Mattān the Somali. He said to them: 'Burn the church'. They set out, arrived at Bādēqē and burned the church down. Its acroterial ornaments[418] were of gold, and the cross above it was of red gold. They stripped it of its gold and burnt it and plundered its furnishings, which the Christians of the village had left behind in three trenches. But as for gold, they found nothing there apart from what they took from the church.

The imām, meantime, marched with his army from Dukām and entered Andutnā,[419] a village of the king Wanāg Sagad. To return to Farašaḥam 'Alī and Mattān: the two of them joined the imām in the above-mentioned village. In Andutnā was the house of the Abyssinian king, in which were paintings, images of lions, of human beings, of birds, depicted in red, yellow, green and white and other colours.[420] The Muslims entered the house, and were amazed at what was in it; and then burnt it.

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[418]A reference to the *gullalat*, or metal centre-piece, placed at the top of most thatched churches. (P)

[419]Subsequently known as Enṭoṭṭo, a settlement immediately north of modern Addis Ababa. On the remains of the settlement, as discovered in the late nineteenth century, see Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique du règne de Ménélik* II, I, 162-3, and footnotes thereto, and, on the town more generally, I, 281, 283, II, 536-7. (P)

[420]The decoration of Ethiopian royal palaces with paintings was apparently rare. The chronicle of Emperor Bakāffā (1721-1730) nevertheless mentions that his palace at Gondar was beautifully adorned with paintings, both inside and outside. Guidi, *Annales Iohannis I, 'Iyāsu et Bakāffā*, p. 316. (P)

At that moment the king of Abyssinia saw the fire that burnt his house down. Between him and his house there was only a day's journey. He felt angry and extremely grief-stricken, even more than before, when his home in Bādēqē was burnt by his own order. He said to his patricians: 'These Muslims have entered my town and burnt down my house. After this I think that it would be better for me to die, than to have to see the things that the Muslims have done.' And then he wept.

[The 'Awāš in flood separates Christians and Muslims]

He assembled his forces, mobilised his army, arranged his soldiers in battle formation, harnassed his horses, and loaded them with their equipment, and then set out against the Muslims. The river 'Awāš separated them, and was a barrier between them. When the Abyssinian dog reached the 'Awāš, it was so full of water that no one could cross it, neither the Muslims nor the infidels. The king then arrayed his army, and disposed his troops and stood, upstream of the 'Awāš.

The Muslims, meantime, did not know that the 'Awāš was flooded, until they sent scouts to discover news of the infidels for them. The scouts set out and reached the 'Awāš, and discovered that it was flooded, and also saw in the distance the army that the king had drawn up in battle array. So the scouts returned to the wazir 'Addolī and informed him about the Christians. 'Addolī then went to the imām and told him what the scouts had reported [f°45] about the infidels.

Immediately the imām sent thirty Muslim cavalry to find out the truth about the Christians. Amongst them was 'Abd an-Nāṣr, governor of Ganz, Bašarāh, Šam'aūn, 'Alī Warādī and Ṣabr ad-Dīn, and their like. They arrived at the 'Awāš where they saw the infidel army drawn up on the river bank, on the opposite side to them.

After exchanging insults the Muslims turned round and went to the imām and told him what they had seen, and what had happened to them, and that the river 'Awāš was in flood. The imām asked them, 'Who is leading them - their commander?' They replied, 'The king himself is with them.' So the Muslims took counsel amongst themselves, with the imām saying: 'We

will spend the night here, and send out a party to gather provisions, and in the morning we'll set out against them, if God Almighty is willing. If we can find a way [across the river], well and good; if not, then we'll fire our cannon.' They replied, 'To hear is to obey'. Immediately he paraded the troops and sent off some of them to gather provisions.

Wanāg Sagad, the king of Abyssinia, and his army, meantime, remained upstream of the 'Awāš until the sun was low in the west. Then they discussed among themselves saying, 'We have no way of reaching the Muslims, nor have they a way of reaching us. Let us set out for the region of Wārābbā[421] and set up camp there.' So they set out for that place.

The storyteller says: When the idol-worshippers set out from the river 'Awāš, consternation and dread overcame those who were in the rearguard, and they jettisoned by the wayside eight cannon that they had with them.

[Garād Jaušah finds a hidden treasure]

Because it was raining the Muslims delayed their journey for two days. On the third day they set out and arrived at the river 'Awāš which they found to be in flood, and they rested there. Then the imām sent Garād Jaušah to collect provisions.

He set out with a party and arrived above Barārah.[422] There was a church there that belonged to the former king whose name was Nā'od bin Admās, and of which the Muslims had no knowledge. They had only gone there looking for cattle and provisions. When the Muslims reached the church they found it stacked with gold. There was gold plate in the church, gold and silver bowls, and silken furnishings.

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[421]Wārābbā, a district situated, according to Huntingford, south of the Awāš river. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 73, 127. (P)

[422]Barārah, or Barāra, site of an Ethiopian royal residence, or perhaps imperial military camp. Indicated in Fra Mauro's map of 1460 a locality of this name was mentioned as a place of importance, around 1519-24, by the Venetian scholar Alessandro Zorzi's Ethiopian informants. Barāra does not, however, figure in any of the Ethiopian royal chronicles. Crawford, basing himself on little real evidence, identified it with Mount Barāra, 15 miles south-east of Mount Yarar, and 35 miles south-east of modern Addis Ababa. Crawford, *Ethiopian Itineraries*, pp. 85-6, 195-7. (P)

They took vast booty, and turned round and returned to the imām who was then upstream from the river 'Awāš. He questioned them about the district and whether they had encountered any resistance. They replied: 'The infidels are on the other bank, upstream from the 'Awāš. The whole countryside is brimming over with gold and silver, all its mountains and valleys; and its churches are filled with gold, silver and silk.'

The imām said, 'Now let us see if all that they have said is true, just as they have reported it.' So he summoned a man called Mergāy Naṣr whom the Muslims had captured at Zāri, and who had converted to Islam with a sincere conversion. Mergāy Naṣr presented himself, and the imām, may the Almighty God have mercy upon him, asked him about the countryside and what it contained. Naṣr said, 'Your companions have spoken the truth in what they said: the whole countryside is rich in gold and silver. All the wealth of the Christians is in this district because they had never heard of any Muslim arriving in this area, and for this reason they felt confident about leaving their wealth there.' The imām said to them, 'Whatever each one takes, is his.' Then the Muslims raided the district, killing the people and the monks.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: The idol-worshippers did nothing except by the advice of the monks, who urged them to act dishonourably, and egged them on to fight the Muslims.

Afterwards, these plundered a vast booty of gold, silver and silk: the Muslims split up around the region, plundering. As one came back with booty, another set out seeking plunder. This pattern of behaviour went on for quite some time.

After this the imām Aḥmad, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, fell sick. The malady worsened during the month of Ramaḍān[423] and he rested twenty days. The Muslims wept because the imām was ill, and besought Almighty God for him.

While the imām was sick, the Muslims accumulated vast booty. For the flood on the river 'Awāš abated, and its water level fell. Then the Muslim cavalry crossed the river 'Awāš, while the imām remained in his camp. The Muslims took the cannon that the idol-worshippers had thrown away, and

[423]Ramaḍān in the year 935 AH commenced on Saturday May 9, 1529. (S)

plundered an uncountable quantity of gold, silver and silk over twenty days of Ramaḍān. Small and great among the Muslims became wealthy, and there was no longer any poverty amongst them.

[The Muslims burn down the patriarchal church]

They burnt down a mighty church that belonged to the patriarch, the father of the idol-worshippers. For the Christians derive their religion only from a patriarch who comes from Egypt. They pay the ruler of Egypt one-thousand ounces of gold to purchase him, and this Christian then becomes their chief and they call him *abūn*.[424] The king does nothing except at his word and the Christians, the priests and the monks, all pay him honour, and do nothing except at his command.

If he becomes angry at them he will say: 'I take away your religion from you,' 'I annul your marriage to your wife,' 'I forbid you to drink wine'.[425] If he speaks thus to them they never cease to belittle themselves to him, and to ingratiate themselves with him by valuable gifts, and to fast, until he says to them: 'I restore to you your religion, your wives, and your wine.' And in that case, they rejoice.

It happened that this patriarch died,[426] and when he died, they placed him in a sarcophagus in the middle of the church. When the Muslims arrived at the church they took the gold, silver and silk that was in it, and then burnt the church down, along with the sarcophagus with the patriarch in it.

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[424]The Abūn, literally, in Ge'ez, His Paternity, the Metropolitan of the Ethiopian Church, was recruited, as the author says, from Coptic Egypt. He was traditionally in possession of considerable estates, which yielded him extensive revenues. The influence of Mārqos, the Abūn of this time, was noted by Alvares. He states that the prelate and Empress Elēni (the Regent) between them chose Lebna Dengel as Emperor, in 1508, 'because they had all the great men (and all the treasure) in their hands'. The Portuguese cleric João Bermudes claimed that one of the Abūn's estates provided no less than 3,000 ounces of gold a year. Whiteway, *Portuguese Expedition to Abyssinia*, p. 160. On the influence of the Abūn see also R.Pankhurst, *Social History of Ethiopia*, pp. 34-5. (P)

[425] النبيذ : B translates 'boissons fermentés,' adding (*op.cit.* vol.ii, p.219) that even though the text has 'wine, it obviously refers to 'l'hydromel,' or mead. (S)

[426]Abūna Mārqos died in 1535. Rey, *Romance of the Portuguese in Abyssinia*, p. 115. (P)

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: As for the Abyssinian king, when the Muslims crossed over the 'Awāš and reached Gebergē and burnt down its houses, he saw the blaze and his patricians said to him, 'Those Muslims have crossed the 'Awāš and have set fire to your dwellings that were in Gebergē. Instantly he became fearful and full of dread. He set off for Wārābbā, reaching the region of Nazārajaḥ, bordering Dāmot where he stayed.

[Wasan Sagad berates the patricians]

Afterwards, Wasan Sagad his patrician came to him from Dāmot. The king told him what the Muslims had done to him [the king]: the despoliation of his territory, the burning down of his churches. and their incursions into the region of Wārābbā. Wasan Sajag said to him: 'This is a beautiful country: a land of wheat and barley, grapes and fruit: there is no place like it in Abyssinia. It alone provides the support for the king and his army.'

Wasan Sagad grieved over Wārābbā, and grew extremely angry. After prostrating himself before the king, [f°46] he said to him and to the king's [other] patricians, chamberlains and nobles: 'How have the Muslims been able to perpetrate this terrible thing against you? No Muslim was ever able to inflict on your fathers and ancestors who have died before you, what this man - I mean the imām - has inflicted on you. It can only have occurred because of your sins and oppression of your people.[427]

'They have been a scourge upon you, these Muslims who eat only locusts.[428] Despite you, they have laid waste Dawāro and Faṭagār, and Bādēqē, the village of the king, and the region of Berārah. They have burnt your father, the patriarch and head of your religion and of your church. Now

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[427] Reading للرعية for للرعبة. Were the latter the correct reading, the sense might be something like 'to fill you with dread'. (S)

[428] The author of the *Futūḥ* would have been quite familiar with locusts, which were a frequent, and widespread, occurence, as Alvares notes, particularly in the eastern lowlands. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 132-7. The eating of locusts by Muslims was mentioned by the nineteenth century Swiss Protestant missionary Samuel Gobat, who wrote, 'the Mussulmans of Tigre are fond of locusts, as an article of food'. He adds that they collected 'great quantities of them in casks'. Gobat, *Journal of Three Years Residence in Abyssinia*, p. 393. (P)

they have entered Wārābbā which is your Abyssinian paradise. They have seen its beauty and its fruits, and they will never abandon it'.

The storyteller, may Almighty God have mercy on him, says: When the patricians heard what Wasan Sagad their leader had to say, they grieved and wept, and said: 'You are the one we have been waiting for. Now that you have come to us, we shall die with you; we shall fight the Muslims by your side.' For he was highly regarded by them, and they feared him more than they feared the king.' He was a just man, according to their justice and according to their holy book. They used to call him 'Father of the Poor' in their language. Thereupon he said to them: 'Now, what's done is done. Act like men from now on, fight for the king's possessions, for your religion and for your country.'

[Wasan Sagad's letter to Aḥmad]

Then he wrote a letter to the imām. After stating at the beginning his unbelief and immorality and what he desired, he went on: 'Now then, you are Muslims and we are Christians. We have travelled to your country and have devastated it and burnt it. And now God has let it be your turn. But your triumph will not be long-lived. So be content with what you have done and return to your country. You may well say to yourself, and recount, "I put the king to flight at Šemberā Korē," and you may say, "I did [the same] at Anṭokyā, and I did [the same] at Zāri; I defeated the king's army."

'But now, don't gorge yourself to the point of vomiting.[429] For the king's army has grown to its previous size;[430] and with the king now is an army greater than any you've ever seen, or heard of before this. It comprises

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[429]Reading لا تغـــتر بنفسك for لا تغتر بنفسك . B translates 'ne t'abuse pas'. The sense seems to be: 'Don't be so full of self-confidence'. (S)

[430]Alvares had previously observed that it was 'unbelievable how many people always travel with the Court,' and that the latter never moved with 'less than 50,000 mules, and from that upwards, they might reach 100,000'. Emperor Lebna Dengel, he reports, could call '100,000 men... to assemble in two days'. Beckingham and Huntingford. *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 320-1, II, 424. On the size of the Ethiopian army at this time see also R.Pankhurst, *Social History of Ethiopia*, pp. 13-15. See also Wellby, *'Twixt Sirdar and Menelik*, p. 45. (P)

Gurāgē,[431] Gāfāt[432] and Dāmot, people from Enāryā and Zait[433] and Jimmā,[434] and others like them even more numerous than they, from among the king's vassels. So go back home with your booty and your gold.

'Should you refuse to do this, then I challenge you to meet me on Saturday. It was I who long ago killed your brother Garād Abūn, son of Garād Ibrāhīm,[435] who was older than you in years. I routed his army, and did so more than once. Don't imagine that I am like any of the patricians whom you've encountered up till now. I am Wasan Sagad.'

[The dilemma of the Muslims]

He sent the letter off with a messenger who reached the wazir, 'Addolī. The imām, at that moment, was ill. 'Addolī went to the imām and gave him the news. And then he asked, 'What shall we do? If the messenger comes and sees you in this condition he will notify his companions about you and their resolve will be strengthened.'

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[431]Gurāgēs, people of Gurāgē, a tributary territory located on the north-west side of Lake Zwāy, between Hādyā and Waj. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, II, 580; Beckingham and Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia*, p. 237; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 118; Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, p 926; R.Pankhurst, *Ethiopian Borderlands*, pp. 75-6, 138-41. For an account of the Gurāgé people, and their way of life immediately prior to the imām's expedition see *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 497-401. (P)

[432]Inhabitants of Gāfāt, a tributary territory situated between the Blue Nile and Dāmot, east of the Gudar river. Gāfāt, like Dāmot, was at this time located south of the Abbāy but its inhabitants were later forced north of it by Oromo expansion. Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, p. 916; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 88-9. For accounts of the Gāfāt people, by Alvares, see Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 232-4, and, by Bermudes, see Whiteway, *Portuguese Expedition to Abyssinia*, pp. 232-4. See also Beckingham and Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia*, pp. 56, 235-6; R.Pankhurst, *Ethiopian Borderlands*, pp. 89-90, 152-4, 215-16. (P)

[433]Probably the people later referred to by Almeida as the Zeites, who, having possibly by then moved north since the time of the *Futūḥ*, were living in Gojjām. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia*, p. 56; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 94. (P)

[434]Jimmā, a territory west of the Omo river, and north of the Gojab. Though some men from Jimmā were recruited into Lebna Dengel's army the area was apparently never occupied by that of the imām. H.Lewis, *Galla Monarchy*. (P)

[435] ابراهيم . (S)

One of those who was present said, ''Well then, let your cousin Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad stand in for you. And when the messenger comes and looks [for you], we will say to him: 'Here is the imām'. But another of them said, 'No, that won't work, because many of the idol-worshippers would know the imām by sight. And when the messenger returns to them and says, "I saw the imām face to face," and they ask, "What did he look like?' and he describes the appearance of his cousin, they will know that his appearance is different from that of the imām, and will say that the imām is dead, and that another, of this appearance, has been substituted for him.

'No, this is not wise counsel. Rather, let the imām be clad in his gown and his outer garments, and let him put up with his sickness, and take his seat; and let the messenger come in to him.' To which the imām said, 'Your advice is excellent'.

[The response of the Muslims to the letter]

When it was early morning, all the Muslims assembled, arranged themselves in lines, flaunted their decorations, their horses, and their shields in a warlike fashion. Then the messenger came and presented the letter to the imām who learnt of its contents, and then told the Muslims what was in the letter.

One of the Muslims whose name was Balaw 'Abdū,[436] spoke up, saying to the messenger: 'Tell your master this: "With regard to what you have to say about the matter of the vassals - the people of Dāmot and Gurāgē - we know their capabilities only too well: they are nothing more than cultivators of the soil, tree-cutters and carriers of fire-wood in our country. They know nothing of fighting; they have never seen it. So you can't frighten us with the vassals: they are well-known to us. And if you are as powerful as you claim, since you can see that we occupy your country and your land, then fight for your country and your land".'

After him the emir Ḥusain stood up and addressed him: 'Say to your master, "In regard to what you have mentioned about fighting us on Saturday,

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[436] بلو عبدوا - a different person from the بلو عبده referred to *supra* p.130? (S)

our sheikhs have informed us that you will die on Saturday! Of this there can be no doubt, if Almighty God wills it".'

Then the imām said to the messenger, 'Say to your master: "We shall pursue you wherever you are. We shall follow your lord wherever he may be. And as for what you said about forcing us to return, we do not share this opinion. For a battle is to our liking. It is what we came for. But we haven't met up with anybody to fight. If you are worth your salt, fight us for the sake of the king's possessions, for we shall not only never abandon this territory that we have now seized, we shall seize the whole of Abyssinia, if Almighty God wills it, as our Prophet, may God bless him and grant him salvation, has promised us when he said: *The earth was contracted for me: and I saw its eastern and western parts. My people shall impose its ule over all those parts that contracted themselves for me.*[437] We are putting our trust in that saying, if Almighty God so wills it." Now you go back to your master and tell him this.'

So the messenger returned to Wasan Sagad and told him what they had said to him. He immediately went to pieces, overwhelmed by fear. Then he sent a second messenger to the imām, to say to him: 'I only said what I said the first time, out of fear of the king and the patricians. The fact is, I am too weak to fight you, even though the king and the patricians say to me: "Fight the Muslims". That's why I spoke as I did. And now the monks have told me that I will fall into your hands. If this happens, please be merciful to me.'

The messenger came and told the imām what he said. The imām scoffed, and said to him 'Tell him, "If you fall into our hands, we will be merciful towards you,"'

[Aḥmad sends four knights to defend the Muslims of Berārah]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: After this, the Muslim people of Berārah came to the imām and said to him: 'We are afraid: give us some soldiers to watch over us, to protect us.' So the imām gave them

[437] *Ṣaḥīḥ*, by Abū al-Ḥusain Muslim, *hadith* 1342. See Lane, *op. cit.* iii, p.1273. (S)

one of the Muslim knights, Absamā Nūr, along with three other knights, to protect the people of Berārah. These set off with them to their country of Berārah and stayed with them there [f°47].

One day while they were there, it happened that the king of Abyssinia had sent out a reconnaissance party from among the infidels, to bring news of the Muslims back to him. With them was a mighty force led by Ura'ī 'Uṭmān, the turncoat, comprising sixty knights and around one-thousand foot-soldiers. They reached Berārah and asked, 'Are there any of the Muslims here? To which they replied, 'There are four knights, amongst them Absamā Nūr, to protect the Muslims from the army of the idol-worshippers.'[438] When they heard this, they advanced nearer the city.

It was Ramaḍān at that time and they were resting during the day while their equerries were keeping watch. When these heard the infidels and saw them, they rushed to the knights and awakened them with the words: 'The infidels have overtaken us!' Then Absamā Nūr and his companions woke up in a hurry and saddled their horses, donned their breast-plates and body-plates and mounted their horses. When they saw how great was the enemy force, they headed in the direction of the imām.

[Another legend concerning Absamā Nūr]

The Author, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, says: I heard from the imām that someone related of Absamā Nūr the following saying: 'At that moment I heard someone reading in the presence of the imām. He was reading from the *kitāb al-Mušarri'* [439] concerning the grace of the *jihād*: that he who runs away when he encounters people, abandons his soul; while he who confronts them, defends it.'

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[438]The Storyteller puts the term المشركون 'idol-worshippers,' which is a Muslim term of opprobrium, on the lips of the Christians to describe themselves. See B vol.ii p.127 where he translates الكفرة 'atheists,' 'unbelievers' as *Christians;* and vol. ii, p.129 where he renders المشركون which means 'polytheists,' as *Christians.* (S)

[439] في كتاب المشرع : 'in the Book of the Lawgiver'. I take the lawgiver to be Muḥammad. The reading was presumably from the *Qur'ān*, perhaps xxii, 11. (S)

He went on, 'This saying touched my heart on that occasion, and I went back to my companions and said concerning this saying, "I heard such and such in the book." One of my companions whose name was Ṣāliḥ said, "That's right," and Absamā Nūr turned back towards the infidels, accompanied by Ṣaliḥ and his other companions. Then Absamā Nūr charged them, and with him charged Ṣaliḥ, into their midst; and the other two did likewise, breaking up their cohesion and dispersing their throng.

The patrician of Ifāt, Eslāmu hurled himself at Absamā Nūr and they thrust at each other with spears. The patrician pierced Absamā Nūr in the breast, while the latter struck him, and the patrician turned tail and fled. At that, Absamā Nūr struck him a second and a third time and then a fourth. Ṣaliḥ also charged and stabbed at three of the infidels. Absamā Nūr meanwhile charged into the heart of the fray, against the renegade patrician Ura'ī 'Uṯmān. Ṣaliḥ charged with him against Ura'ī 'Uṯmān, who when he saw the two of them making a bee-line in his direction, fled accompanied by his companions, with Absamā Nūr and his companions in pursuit, from midday until nightfall, slaying and taking prisoners. After capturing two important patricians they turned back, and returned to where the imām was.

They sent a messenger to the imām and the Muslims to announce the good news of what they had done. They reached the imām two days after the messenger. The two patricians were made to stand in the presence of the imām. The messenger whom Wasan Sagad had sent was in the presence of the imām when the latter ordered the two of them to be put to death, and saw the two of them killed. Then the imām praised Absamā Nūr and all of the Muslims called down God's blessing upon him. The infidel knights, on the other hand, feared Absamā Nūr and stood in awe of his valour, may Almighty God have mercy upon him.

[Aḥmad sets off in pursuit of Wanāg Sagad on Sunday May 1, 1531 AD]

The storyteller, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, says: When twenty-three days of Ramaḍān had passed, in the year nine-hundred-and-

thirty-seven,[440] the imām recovered from his sickness and determined to set out for the land of Dāmot in search of the place where the king of Abyssinia was. So the imām and the Muslims discussed among themselves the matter of the march.

The Muslims said, 'We have come this far,' and they offered arguments to the imām, saying to him: 'The land of Dāmot is far from here; and none of us knows the road to it, and we have no guide with us. The same can be said for the land of Wārābbā - it is all clay and swamp and paths beaten by the infidels.[441] Horses and mules cannot enter it without stumbling.'[442] The imām replied, 'Stop making these excuses! You want to go home to your country.'

Then he summoned a man who had converted to Islam and was with the emir Ḥusain, and questioned him about the route. He said, 'I am familiar with the whole of Abyssinia, the road to Wārābbā, the road to Dāmot and the road to Gojjām. I will take you to Aksum,[443] and will guide you wherever you want to go. I know it all.'

The imām blessed him, and clad him in garments of honour. They set out, and entered the land of Wārābbā, making camp in a town called Zarārah, a large town where Christian merchants from Egypt and Christians from Syria lived; including some originally from these places who were born in Abyssinia. They dwelt there, and were attached to it because of its wholesome air.

Turning now to the king of Abyssinia, and Wasan Sagad the patrician: the latter said to the king: 'At present the Muslims are behind us. If we all

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[440] i.e. on Sunday May 1, 1531 AD. (S)

[441] For حرث meaning a well-trodden path, see Lane *op. cit.* ii, p.542. (S)

[442] الا سقطت : from the context - the unevenness and swampiness of the terrain - what the Muslims seem to have feared was the possibility of the horses' losing their footing. See *infra* pp. 332 ff for what happened to Ṣāliḥ and the Ḥuseinī sharif when they allowed themselves to be trapped by the Abyssinians in swampy terrain. (S)

[443] Aksum, the capital of the ancient Aksumite kingdom, and, since the early fourth century AD, the principal centre of Ethiopian Christianity. Bent, *Sacred City of the Ethiopians.* (P)

enter Dāmot, the countryside there is hemmed-in, and the Muslims will pursue us, and not give way before us. So, you must go deeper into Dāmot while I withdraw behind the Muslim lines, and march in the direction of their country. When they learn about me, that I am heading for their country, they will pursue me. I, for my part, will let them have their way until they reach Dawāro where they will split up and go back down to their own country. Then I shall rejoin you.'

The king accepted his counsel, and set off for Dāmot while Wasan Sagad turned round and headed for Dawāro. He reached the land of Waj, and set up camp above the Māyā, behind the Muslims.

The storyteller says: The Muslims, meanwhile, remained in Zarārah for around fifteen days and then some of the spies of the imām, may God have mercy upon him, reached him, and informed him, 'The king has entered the land of Dāmot, while Wasan Sagad has turned back to your rear from the land of Waj, wanting to mislead you into thinking that he intends to continue on down into your country. His stratagem is to get you to chase him, and if you do chase him and arrive at Dawāro, your army will break up. This is nothing more than one of his tricks. Now you will know what it is you have to do.'

Thereupon the imām said to the Muslims: 'All right, we are going to go after the Christian dog, their king. We shall pursue him to the land of Dāmot and when Wasan Sagad learns that we have headed for Dāmot he may set out for the land of Dāmot to help out his master; or he may remain where he is, in which case we have no cause to be concerned on his account. And if he does go down to our country, well, let him go if he is able to do so. We for our part will make a bee-line for the king of Abyssinia wherever he may be.'

So the Muslims set out and entered Wiz[444] which was an imposing city with a vast market-place unlike any other in Abyssinia. Only gold was used for trading there.

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[444]Wiz, sometimes referred to as Vis, was, as the *Futūḥ* states, a major commercial centre. One of Zorzi's Ethiopian informants, Brother Thomas, had earlier described it, in 1524, as 'a great warehouse and country of storehouses,' like mercantile Venice. Crawford, *Ethiopian Itineraries*, p. 191. See also Perruchon, *Chroniques de Zar'a Yâ'eqôb et de Ba'eda Mâryâm*, p. 65; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 104. The commercial importance of the town is also evident from our author's statement that trade was carried out with gold, a practice rare in the region as a whole. On

[Wanāg Sagad entrusts the Guragē Gate to Ura'ī 'Uṯmān]

Then they set out from the village of Wiz and entered [f°48] the land of Qob.[445] Setting out from Qob, they entered Maṣar Mečeg. In their language, Mečeg means 'narrow gate,' and Maṣar is the name of one of the regions of Dāmot. The Muslims halted above Maṣar Mečeg and the imām said to them, 'Widen this gate, tear down its stones and cut down its [surrounding] trees until you have opened up a wide pathway, and then pass through the gateway.' This they did, and they passed the night in Suq Wayzaro.[446]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: When news that the Muslims had taken the land of Dāmot reached the king of Abyssinia, he was in an inaccessible mountain, with only one road into it. This road was guarded by a gate called Guragē in the region of Dāmot.

He drew up his troops and his forces on top of the mountain and placed Ura'ī 'Uṯmān bin Dār 'Alī, governor of Faṭagār, in charge of the gate. He was, at that time, an apostate. The king ordered him to hold the gate with his army, while he would remain on the side of the mountain in a place called Dakan Dur[447] which means 'Elephant's Dwelling'.

The Muslims meanwhile departed from Suq Wayzaro and encamped beneath the Guragē gate and they and the idol-worshippers faced one another through the gate. The idol-worshippers drew up their troops above the gate,

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commercial practices of this time, and the use of 'primitive money' instead of coins, see R.Pankhurst, An *Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia*, pp. 260-8, 307-21. (P)

[445]Qob, in the opinion of Huntingford perhaps modern Qobbo, in the vicinity of today's Kombolčā. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 128. (P)

[446]Suq Wayzaro, perhaps a *suq*, or market, belonging to, or somehow connected with a *Wayzaro*, i.e. a princess, or other woman of high rank. Guidi, *Vocabolario amarico-italiano*, c. 588. (P)

[447]Dakān Dur, Elephant's Dwelling, or perhaps more precisely, Elephant's Thicket (or Wasteland) Basset, *Histoire de la conquête de l'Abyssinie*, p. 237. The first word, for elephant, could be the Afar *dakān* or a corruption of the Amharic *zehon*, while the second is probably *dur*, the Amharic for 'wasteland, land beyond the settlement,' or suchlike. (P)

and the Muslims, when they saw the idol-worshippers, conferred amongst themselves. 'Addolī, Balaw 'Abd and their followers said, 'These have blocked the road and the gate against us, and there is no other road we can take than this one. So let us pass the night here, and fire our cannon. And when morning comes let us fight them.'

[Aḥmad decides not to spend the night before the Guragē Gate]

Thereupon the emir Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad, 'Abd an-Nāṣr and Garād Aḥmūša said: 'Were we to pass the night in this place, the patrician Wasan Sagad could come up behind us and hold the gate of Maṣar Mečeg against us, and we will end up between the two mountains from which we'll not be able to go back, or go up. So, instead, let us begin the battle immediately, and go up against them. And may God grant us the victory.' The imām said, 'Your advice is most sound,' and setting aside the counsel of the first two, he drew up his army, making them battle-ready.

So they drew close to the gate that Ura'ī 'Uṭmān was holding, and they and the idol-worshippers confronted one another, while, at the same time, the imām and his army moved away from the gate and went in the direction of *Canopus* to Dakan Dur, in search of the king. He left the wazir 'Addolī at the gate, and arrived at Dakan Dur with his army without the king's knowing that they had arrived in this place. For it was very confined, and no one knew the way to it. This is what the king of Abyssinia believed about it, thinking that no one could reach Dakan Dur.

[The battle for Dakan Dur]

When the imām arrived there he found three gates, into which trees and briars had been squeezed until they were blocked up. He ordered some of his foot-soldiers, commanded by Šamsū, to place their shields over the trees and thorns and to walk on top of the shields, thus passing through the gate, and entering the place they so dearly sought. After they had opened the gate, they moved aside all the trees that had been blocking it, and then the imām and all his army went through.

The king of Abyssinia said to the people of Tegrē: 'Stop the Muslims at the gate, before they pass through it.' So the people of Tegrē set out for the side of the gates, but found that the Muslims had got there before them. And they stood in a narrow defile quite close to the Muslims.

When the latter saw them, some of the Muslim cavalry headed in their direction, among them the sheikh Mīkā'ēl son of the sheikh Dajnah, Mattān the Somali, Saīdī Muḥammed, 'Abd an-Nāṣr, Ura'ī Abūn, the emir Abū Bakr, Ura'ī 'Uṭmān bin 'Alī and Kabīr Muḥammad, and about forty other horsemen of their ilk.

They galloped through a valley there and met up with the Christians. The Muslims charged into the idol-worshippers and the ferocious battle that ensued was unprecedented.

The *šum* of Sarāyē in Tegrē, whose name was Takla charged the sheikh Mīkā'ēl and struck him in the foot with his spear, breaking the bone. The spear came out, glistening, from the other side. He was laid up for two days, and then he died. May Almighty God have mercy upon him, with the mercy that he reserves for the godly.

['Amda Mīkā'ēl son of Robēl is killed]

Then a patrician of the idol-worshippers, called 'Amda Mīkā'ēl bin Robēl[448] whose father was killed in the battle of Šemberā Korē charged against the emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn. Both of them delivered blows with their spears - the patrician struck the emir Abū Bakr's horse - whose name was *Rakmah* [449] - in the neck. The tip of the spear went through to the other side. He pulled the spear out and struck it a second blow, on its right leg.

After that the emir Abū Bakr struck the patrician 'Amda in the breast, with the spear point emerging, glistening, from his back. Then he pulled it out. When the patrician felt the spear thrust, he and the emir Abū Bakr seized hold of each other, and fought each other. Thereupon a cousin of the patrician

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[448] 'Amda Mika'ēl, son of Robēl, apparently the Tegrē official mentioned earlier in the text. (P)

[449] The text is not clear. The name probably means 'Blaze' (referring to a white mark on the horse's forehead), or it could mean 'He made it easy, (or soft, or gentle)'. (S)

charged to his cousin's aid, and struck the emir Abū Bakr in his back. At which 'Abd an-Nāṣr charged the one who had struck the emir Abū Bakr, and struck him a fatal blow with his spear so that he fell, dead, from his horse. May God cast his soul into Hell, 'And a sad place it is'.

Then 'Amdu, may Almighty God not have mercy upon him, fell dead from the spear-blow of the emir Abū Bakr. When their companions saw that the two of them were killed, they turned tail, pursued by the Muslims who were killing and taking captives.

They captured two patricians from Tegrē - one of these was the *šum* of Sarāyē, Takla, who killed the sheikh Mīkā'ēl: Ura'ī Abūn was his captor; and the other was the *šum* of Šajara whose captor was the equerry of Garād Ṣaddīq governor of Šārkāh. Eight patricians from Tegrē were killed, but only one Muslim died. The Muslims took around twenty of their horses as prizes of war; the remainder fled to the king.

[The king learns of the rout]

The leading patrician was Iyona'ēl. He it was who fled with the remnants of the army. When he reached the king he told him that the Muslims had breached the gate, and killed the patricians. Upon hearing that, the king became extremely agitated.[450] He announced: ' 'Amda Mīkā'ēl bin Robēl has been killed,' for he was revered amongst the Christians. His son, who was courageous, then inherited his father's title. There were one-hundred-and-fifty Nubian slaves in his father's cavalry who would fight under the leadership of their lord. In this he was like his father.

The king then left his encampment, abandoning the land of Dāmot, and set out for the country of Waj. Ura'ī 'Uṯmān the apostate, in the meantime, set out from the Guragē gate, when he had heard that the king had taken flight, and rejoined him [f°49] As for the wazir 'Addolī whom the imām had left behind at the gate: he passed the night on the road, and met up with the imām who was above Daḵan Dur. They then set out in pursuit of the king.

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[450]'The king ... agitated': B omits. (S)

[The flight and the fate of the Christians in the depths of autumn]

Now, it was autumn. And it was the custom of the Abyssinians that when autumn arrived they stayed four months indoors, for rain poured from the heavens night and day.[451] The Muslims, nevertheless, marched in the rain and the cold. The ground turned into clay from the excess of rain and the Muslims became exhausted. The camels were being crushed under the weight of the cannon so they jettisoned them. Seven of them were their own, and there were six [others] that they had captured from the idol-worshippers. All of them they threw away, along with their tents, because of the hardship of the journey, and the mud. The king, meanwhile, was fleeing before them. The Muslims pursued him until they drove him into a village called Wiḥ Yaḥar - a place that was deadly cold.

The *storyteller*, may God have mercy on him, says: When the idol-worshippers reached this village, three-hundred of them died from the cold and the rain, but God saved the Muslims. The imām and his army halted when they saw that the idol-worshippers had perished from the cold; and then made camp. As for the king of Abyssinia, Wanāg Sagad: he pitched no camp that night, but set out by night on a forced march until he reached the land of Gabargē.

[Wasan Sagad's exhortation to the king and the patricians]

The patrician Wasan Sagad was in Waj. But he set out from Waj and joined forces with his lord. The king recounted to him what the Muslims had done in the land of Dāmot. Then Wasan Sagad said to the patricians in the presence of the king: 'How could you have done this? It is contemptible! How could you have fled? You have abandoned the land of Dāmot which is inaccessible, with forbidding mountains and narrow defiles. You were

[451] The difficulties of transport implicit in the rainy season were later noted by Ludolphus, who observed that during it there was no war, 'by reason of the inundations of the rivers'. *New History of Ethiopia*, p. 217. (P)

holding the gate and the road against the Muslims, and still you were put to flight. Were you frightened of dying? Your fathers and your ancestors died for the sake of their religion. They never saw anything to compare with this shame. As for me, I shall die fighting for my religion. You do as you think fit, when I am dead.'

The patricians then said to him: 'God preserve you. If you die, then our religion dies. So, do not say "I shall die," for you are our chief.' So he said to them, 'All right now, where did you leave the Muslims?' To which they replied, 'We did not leave them in a place that we recognised, for they were pursuing us.' Then he said, 'Where is the patrician of Waj, Eslām Daḥar, son[452] of Kom Daḥar, son-in-law of king Eskender, married to his daughter who was a cousin on her father's side of king Wanāg Sagad bin Nā'od?'

[Eslām Daḥar's strategy]

The *storyteller*, may God have mercy upon him, says: When the patrician of Waj had presented himself, Wasan Sagad said to him: 'Now, the king has arrived in your country, and you know best where he must go. Inform us about some place that is impenetrable and easily defensible where we can establish ourselves. And when the Muslims reach us, I shall fight them and do battle with them, along with you.' He replied, 'Very well! You are at present in Gabargē. Go down to the market-place of Wiz Gabayā in the land of Waj. When the Muslims arrive, I will take you to a place that no one can reach.' They replied, 'We agree,' and set out from Gabargē and reached the market-place of Wiz Gabayā[453] and camped there.

In the meantime, the Muslims had remained two days in the cold place, and then set out and arrived at the land of Wārābbā on the border with Waj, close to Gabargē. Between them and the army of the Christians was a two-days' journey made with heavy baggage and tents.

They pitched their camp there, and sent some of the knights in the vanguard to bring them back news of the place where the king was. These

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[452]Reading ابن for ابن. (S)

[453]*Gabayā*, literally, in Amharic, a market, so, in other words, the Market of Wiz. (P)

comprised 'Abd an-Nāṣr, and two-hundred knights who were under his command. [The imām] said to him, 'Head for Gabargē, which is the place of the king, and bring back news of it for us.' So he set out immediately and reached Gabargē. They saw the vanguard of the idol-worshippers, who likewise saw them.

[The imām rejects Ḥaīb's counsel]

The idol-worshippers fled on their horses, leaving their mules which the Muslims took as booty. The idol-worshippers fled to their king and told him that the Muslims were behind them because they thought that 'Abd an-Nāṣr was the imām with his army. The king said to the patrician Eslām Daḥar: 'The Muslims have reached us. Where are you going to take us now?' Thereupon the patrician of the land of Waj set out with them and conducted them to a place that was easily defensible, and they made camp there. 'Abd an-Nāṣr, for his part, returned to the imām and told him what he had done. The king fled towards Waj, while the Muslims halted at Tarārāqaṭ[454] in the land of Wārābbā and then took counsel amongst themselves.

Then a man who had converted to Islam, Ḥaīb by name, spoke to the imām, saying: 'At present the king is making for Waj. This is to our benefit, for afterwards he'll not be able to escape. If he flees in the direction of Guragē, his enemies are there; and if he flees to Dawāro we shall pursue him. There is no other road he can take. We can set out from our position and reach him in two days.'

The Muslims were of the following opinion: 'We should not pursue him now, but only when he moves away to another locality.' Others of them said: 'We should not march against the king, especially to Dawāro, for if we reach Dawāro the army will split up on us, and go back down to their own countries, because the majority of them would love to go back down to their own homes. Instead, let us march on the land of Šawā,[455] for that is where the

[454]Conceivably a name incorporating the Amharic word *tarārā*, or mountain. (P)

[455]Šawā, the southernmost portion of the Christian realm. Levine, *Wax and Gold*; Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, pp. 966-7. (P)

king's treasure house and wealth is.' When the imām saw that the greater part of them supported this opinion, he said to Ḥaīb, 'You be quiet; we shall follow the opinion of these others. The king shall be in our power, God willing.'

Then the Muslims returned, marching to the land of Šawā by way of the town of Wiz. The imām sent a raiding party under the command of 'Abd an-Nāṣr to Andāqbātān[456] in the land of Šawā, near which was the spring from which flowed the river 'Awāš. There was a church there which belonged to the former kings, and in which there was wealth and treasure. The imām commanded him to burn down the church, to take possession of the valuables, and to kill the people. Then the party set out. He despatched another raiding party which he entrusted to the command of the emir Ḥusain, ordering him to set out for a place called Dārādbānī[457] in the land of Šawā. There was a church there that belonged to the king Wanāg Sagad. He had given this imposing structure to his son, Fiqṭor,[458] and he called it by the name of his son.[459] It contained treasure comprising vessels of gold and silver, and high quality silk.

[Rivalry between 'Abd an-Nāṣr and the emir Ḥusain]

When 'Abd an-Nāṣr arrived at the church as the imām had ordered him, he found nothing in it, for its custodians had moved what was in it to the country of Gāfāt. So he burnt the church down. The emir Ḥusain set out with his raiding party [f°50] and 'Abd an-Nāṣr followed him. He had a guide with him who said to him, 'I know a route that will enable us to arrive before the emir Ḥusain.' When 'Abd an-Nāṣr heard this he said to him, 'Direct us'. So

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[456] Andāgbātān, a district in Šawā earlier mentioned in the chronicle of Emperor 'Amda Ṣeyon. Huntingford, *Glorious Victories of 'Amda Seyon*, p. 74. See also Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 79-80. (P)

[457] درادبنی . (S)

[458] Lebna Dengel's son Fiqṭor was captured by the imām's forces, as reported in the Ethiopian royal chronicle, which asserts that he was the monarch's first-born son. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 22. (P)

[459] The naming of a church after a prince, or other secular figure, was not traditional in Ethiopia, and the church's alleged name would thus seem improbable. (P)

the guide set out by a different route and they reached the church a day before the emir Ḥusain. He burnt it down, and took the treasure that was in it as booty.

When the emir Ḥusain arrived at the church he found that 'Abd an-Nāṣr had burnt it down. A heated argument developed between the two of them. The emir Ḥusain asked, 'Why did you act in so high-handed a fashion, coming to the place that the imām ordered me to come to?' 'Abd an-Nāṣr replied: 'This is the country of the idol-worshippers: any one of us can do whatever lies within his power.' Thus he placated him, gave him some of the valuables, and pacified him; and they all returned to the imām. Each of the companions of 'Abd an-Nāṣr took his portion of the booty and they gave the imām the rest: silver dishes, and images that resembled animals, including birds and wild-beasts, with each representative animal made of silver; [460] and a vast quantity of fabrics including two curtains the like of which no one - Arab or non-Arab - had ever seen: they were valued at one-hundred ounces of gold.

[A welcome from the king's tailors; and a wild storm]

The imām, at that time, was in the land of Abūrat, above the spring of 'Awāš.[461] The people of Wārābbā and the people of Šawā voluntarily submitted to the payment of the poll-tax, and secured peace for their countries. Then the Muslims set out for Berārah, and during the course of their journey they seized gold, silver and silk as booty. They travelled for ten days on the road in this manner and when they drew near to Berārah the people of Berārah made overtures to the Muslims.

The people of this town were the king of Abyssinia's tailors.[462] They also used to make the protective armour used for the horses, and wherever he

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[460]The making of such silver 'images' is unsubstantiated. It should, however, be noted that the Portuguese traveller Bermudes, no less curiously, claims that the taxes paid by the Gurāgēs to the Emperor included representations of lions, dogs and chickens made from gold. Whiteway, *Portuguese Expedition to Abyssina*, p. 232. (P)

[461]The Awāš rises near Mount Warqē, west of modern Addis Ababa. *Guida dell'Africa Orientale Italiana*, p. 424; Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, p. 886. (P)

[462]The existence of villages of craftsmen, in most cases blacksmiths, weavers, and potters, already

went, they used to go. But when the king fled to Waj, they returned to Berārah and extended to the Muslims a hospitable reception.

The storyteller, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, says: I experienced a fearsome night of wind and rain when we camped near Berārah. The sky darkened, and the darkness became pitch-black. The stars were swollowed up by it. The wind and rain that pelted us was as if from an upturned water-skin. I saw the wind pick up a tent from the ground and make it fly above the tent that stood next to it. All the tents were plucked up. I saw the imām and his concubine Hājarah, and two men from among his companions struggling to hold the tents down, while they proclaimed the Uniqueness and the Greatness of God, as if they were absolutely convinced that they were going to die in that place. Then God removed the darkness, the wind and the rain, from them. The Muslims gathered around the imām and asked, 'How was it last night?' The people said, 'It was Noah's Flood'.

[Abū Bakr and 'Addolī are sent on forays]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: The Muslims remained around six days in Berārah. Then some people from the district spoke to the imām, saying to him, 'Close by you here there is a church building that is very imposing.' The imām asked, 'In which region is it?' To which they replied, 'In the region of Gerārāh.[463] And in that place there is a vast[464] river called Auramah, along the banks of which there is a church called Dabra Libānos[465] which the Christians hold in high esteem, and to

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noticed by Alvares earlier in the century, was a characteristic, and long enduring, feature of Ethiopian economic, social and cultural life. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 149. See also R.Pankhurst, 'The Balä Ejj Community of Shawa,' pp. 131-52. (P)

[463]Gerāyā, which Huntingford identified with modern Gerār, situated immediately west of Dabra Libānos. The area is closely associated with the life of Ethiopia's premier saint Takla Haymanot. Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, pp. 557-8; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 72-4. (P)

[464]كبير: omitted by B. (S)

[465]Dabra Libānos, the most important monastery in Šawā, founded by the leading Ethiopian saint Takla Haymanot, who lived between about 1215 and 1313. Taddesse Tamrat, *State and Church in Ethiopia*, pp. 169-74. See also special issue on Dabra Libānos in *SEB Sociology, Ethnology Bulletin* (1994),

which all people of the Christian religion go in pilgrimage.[466] They make votive-offerings to it of drapes, golden and silver vessels, and wax candles as big as tree-trunks. This was the first church built in Abyssinia.[467] No church can be compared with it, other than those of Aksum and Lālibālā.' He asked them, 'How far away from it are we?' They replied, 'A six-day march'.

Thereupon the imām Aḥmad, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, summoned the emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn and gave him command over three-hundred knights, amongst whom were the emir Mujāhid, Absamā Nūr, and Del Sagad and others of their ilk. They set out with the guide during the rainy season. Before the Emir Abū Bakr and his army had returned, the people of Berārah went to the imām and said, 'We know the whereabouts of the king's treasures that used to be in Bādēqē; and we will lead you to them.'

So the imām sent off the wazir 'Addolī and his army to Bādēqē. He took possession of the valuables, just as they had indicated that he would, and stayed six days there, plundering booty from the regions of Faṭagār and Masīn before returning to the imām who was [still] in Berārah. He took to the imām the treasures - gold and silver plates, and silk of every hue - which the imām, in turn, gave to the people of Mahra[468] who were fighting alongside him.

These stayed permanently by the imām, and consequently were unable to take part in the forays into the surrounding regions like the rest of the army. This was why he gave them to them. 'Addolī also gave him news of the King, saying: 'the King is in the region of Waj, and between us and him lies a

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Vol. I, no. 3. The church was burned down by the imām's men, according to the royal chronicle on 24 Hamlē, i.e. 21 July, 1531. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p.17. See also Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique du règne de Ménélik* II, I, 281, 283, II, 536-7. (P)

[466] ويقصدهـــا ســـائر اهـــل ديـــن النصرانيـــة : could the author be punning on سآئر 'the rest' or 'all' and سائر 'pilgrim'? (S)

[467] The church of Dabra Libānos, though old, was not in fact the oldest Ethiopian church other than those of Aksum and Lālibālā. Many churches in Tegrē were, for example, almost certainly considerably older. (P)

[468] مـــهرة : this is the name of a tribe from the Yemen, or of a place in 'Oman. It occurs *supra* in the narrative (p.123) as a place name. A.-P. takes it to be a plural of ماهر 'experts,' and considers the مهرة to be 'maîtres mécaniciens' i.e. 'artillerymen'. See *supra* note[352]. (S)

journey of two days. But at this moment the river 'Awāš which seperates us is in full flood.'

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Regarding the king of Abyssinia: when he heard that the imām was in Berārah, he said, 'These Muslims have entered Berārah and have laid waste the region; and now they are going back down to their own country. But I will march against them now, cross over the 'Awās, take up a defensible position, and fight them.'

[The Abyssinians cross the flooded 'Awaš]

And then the king said to the foreigners[469] who were with him, forty men in all, 'construct something from your country for me, so that we can cross the river 'Awāš in it.' So they constructed some boats[470] for him. Then he ordered his own people to make, according to the custom of their country, something by means of which they could cross the river: in their language it is called a *laḳa*. They made 500 of them for him.

The patrician Wasan Sagad then arose, kissed the ground before him and said, 'We have done as you bade us. I am your servant. Let me march against them. I will hold the Gate of Amajah, and if they come I will fight them. If they kill me, do as you see fit. But as for you and your ilk, do not set out at this time. This is not the custom of kings. Let me spare you the trouble.'

The king thanked him for what he said, as did the patricians who said to him, 'You are our father. You know all our concerns, and you administer them like some one who treats well those whom he loves.'[471]

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[469] للافرنسج . Emperor Lebna Dengel had in his service, as noted by Alvares only a few years earlier, a score or so of Europeans, the majority of them Italians or Portuguese. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 279, II, 333. See also Crawford, *Ethiopian Itineraries*, pp. 21, 92, 160-2, 166-8; R.Pankhurst, *Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia*, pp. 289-306. (P)

[470] سنابسيق. (S)

[471] Is there irony in attributing this saying to the king? It is an Arabic proverb: طب لمن حب i.e. 'Act expertly to heal one whom you love'. Sometimes the proverb goes من طب حب or 'whoever acts with skill for someone, loves him'. See Lane, *op. cit.* v, p.1819.

Thereupon the King entrusted him with an immense force, made up of the people of Dawāro, the people of Faṭagār and the people of Ifāt with their chiefs, Ura'ī 'Uṯmān the apostate, and others besides. Then the King farewelled him, and they set out, boarding the boats and crossing the 'Awāš. He entered Faṭagār and halted at the gate called Qarqārā.

The storyteller, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, says: When 'Addolī left Bādēqē for Berārah he informed the imām about the King and what he, along with Wasan Sagad, was doing: that the latter had crossed the 'Awāš and had camped at the Qarqārā gate. He said: 'I wanted to go against him, but I feared to do so without your leave.'

[The imām forestalls waverers amongst his troops]

The imām then consulted the Muslims about what should be done. 'We are now in autumn,' they all said, 'and in the rainy season. And if we set out at this time, we will be as worn out as we were in the first instance. We would rather stay here until the rainy season passes. Afterwards we can march against him and fight him.'

When the imām heard [f°51] what they had to say, he said to them, 'Very well, you've said only what is best. Go back to your camp.' So they departed from the imām, who remained by himself.

Then he sought out Garād Aḥmūša, a man of honourable intentions, and of good advice. The imām asked him, 'Did you hear what the Muslims had to say?' To which he replied, 'I was present with them, and heard what they said: they were unanimous about staying until the rainy season had passed.' Then the imām asked him, 'But you, let me have your opinion. 'They want the rainy season to end,' he said, 'and when it is over[472] they will say to you,[473] "Set off with us now, to fight." When you have set out and entered the land of Faṭagār, if you encounter the enemy they will fight; otherwise they will go back to their country in the land of Sa'd al-Dīn. And if you don't run

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[472] B omits 'and when it is over'. (S)

[473] قالوا لك : lit. 'they said,' but the sense requires the future. (S)

into the enemy, they will make out a case with you for their going back down. If you allow them to, they will go down. But if you don't permit them to go down, then each and every one of them will go down nevertheless, and you will be left by yourself.'

So the imām asked him, 'If this is what you have to say, what should we do now?' Garād Aḥmūša replied, 'I know what you should do. Let us remain [here] until the emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn reaches us. He has warriors with him. When he arrives he and his force will take our place in the camp, we will leave our women and our baggage with him, and set out immediately against him [the king]. If God gives us the victory then we will kill the king of Abyssinia, and all its people will convert to Islam. The river 'Awāš will [still] be in flood and there will be no way for the Muslims to go back down. In any case, they will be completely taken up with plundering. On the other hand, if the rainy season passes without any fighting it will be beyond our capability to hold them back. All the soldiers will leave because they want to go back down; and there is no emir, however great or small, who does not want to go down to his own country'. The imām listened to what he had to say and then said to him, 'What you have advised is excellent. But now, keep your reasoning strictly to yourself; confide it to no one else and be patient until the emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn arrives.' So they remained where they were, looking out for him.

[Abū Bakr Qaṭīn spares the church of Dabra Libānos]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Abū Bakr Qaṭīn, meanwhile, set out for the church that we spoke of, and reached it, making camp in its vicinity. The monks who lived there fled to an impregnable mountain. But afterwards some of them went back to their church, saying, 'If they burn our church, which is a place of pilgrimage for us,[474] they will have to burn us along with it.' So they entered it, and stayed inside it, waiting for it to be set on fire.

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[474] A.-P. translates 'qui est le but de nos pélerinages'. Following Ms C which reads وهي حجـــنا for وهي حجـــنا the sense might be 'which is an inviolate sanctuary for us' . B translates, 'qui est pour vous (sic!) un lieu de pélerinage'. (S)

Others of them, on the other hand, sent to the emir Abū Bakr saying to him, 'Burning the church will be of no benefit to you. Give up the idea of burning it, and we will give you whatever gold, silver and silk you desire. And the people of this town and its surrounding districts will pay the poll-tax.' So the emir Abū Bakr assembled his companions and sought their advice concerning this matter. Some of the people amongst their number said, 'Let us take the treasure and leave the church alone.' While others of them said, 'We don't want the treasure. Let us burn the church, because it is of great importance to them.'

The emir Abū Bakr accepted the advice of those who were for taking the treasure, and said to the messenger: 'We will make peace with you in return for the treasure. Go back to your companions and tell them what we have said to you. Let them come to us and when they reach us, we will make known to them what it is that we want. And when they give it to us we will leave the church alone, and not burn it.'

Thereupon the messenger left and told his companions what the emir Abū Bakr had said. They rejoiced and were gladdened at the good news and came to the emir Abū Bakr, and gave him as a token, when he said, 'We will make peace with you,' two robes, covered with gold leaf weighing 150 ounces, and similarly of silver, with leaf of 150 ounces of pure silver. Each robe was identical. They said, 'This is a token gift for you since you acted graciously towards us and bestowed peace. And as for what you command us to do about the poll-tax, and the gold and silver, which is the condition for making peace, tell us.'

While they were immersed in these discussions, one of the Muslims got up. His name was Ura'ī Abū Bakr, from the Maḥawara, of the tribe of Balaw. This is one of the Abyssinian tribes descended from the first Balaw who was their ancestor who had gone down to the country of Sa'd al-Dīn from their own country, Tegrē, in the time of Sa'd al-Dīn who then married him to one of his daughters. His name was Balaw 'Abd Allāh. She bore him children of whom each boy was called Ura'ī and each girl Bā'tīya.

He went stealthily to the church, took a live coal from the fire and set the church ablaze. In the meantime the monks and the emir Abū Bakr were engrossed in their discussion. Their attention was suddenly drawn to the

church which had burst into flames, with the fire reaching the clouds in the sky.[475] When the monks and the emir saw the fire, their peace was sundered, and the monks plunged into the fire, as moths dive into the wick of a lamp; all but a few of them.

Then the emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn questioned Ura'ī Abū Bakr who had set fire to the church. He asked him, 'Why did you burn down the church when we were negotiating a peace?' 'I set fire to it. Do what you like with me. I set fire to it. The imām did not command us to do anything but burn it down. He did not commission us to make peace for the sake of treasure.' So he released him, and they took what booty they could find, and returned to the imām. It took them a twelve days' march to go back, and they reached the imām in the country of Berārah on the day of *'Arafat*.[476]

[The imām defends the burning of the church]

The emir Abū Bakr notified the imām Aḥmad, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, who it was that had burnt the church. The imām said, 'There was nothing wrong in burning it down. After all, wasn't *burning it down* what I ordered you to do, from the very outset - since it meant much more to them[477] than anything else?' Then the imām said, 'Return to your camp. Then come back to me in the morning, for I have a certain matter that I want to discuss with you.' So they returned to their camp.

After him, the imām summoned the emir Ḥusain because he had not been with him in Berārah. He had sent him to the far-flung areas of the country in search of plunder. The imam sat down in his presence, for he was a person of wise counsel and sound opinion. The imām began by telling him what Garād Aḥmūša had said to him, quoting the entire conversation to him.

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[475] B omits عنان 'clouds'. (S)

[476] يوم عرفـــة : the ninth day of Zu'lhijja is spent by pilgrims on the mountain called 'Arafāt (عرفات) and surrounding plain, about four hours distance from Mecca. If Abū Bakr left Dabra Libānos on the third day (with the church having been burnt down on the previous evening) then B suggests that the date for the destruction of the church was July 17, 1531. (S)

[477] ويكون عندهم اعظم من كل شئ : B reads عندكم , and translates accordingly. (S)

After which the emir Ḥusain said to him, 'This advice is excellent. If you set out tomorrow against the patrician Wasan Sagad you will kill him, if it be the will of Almighty God. You will conquer Abyssinia. But if you postpone your departure two or three days, then the words of Garād Aḥmūša will come true as he said. And the disaffected soldiers[478] will go back down to their country.'

[Disaffection amongst Aḥmad's troops]

After the imām heard what the emir Ḥusain had to say, he made up his mind to set out, and said to him, 'Come to me in the morning with your soldiers.' Then he sent a message to the emirs, saying, 'When tomorrow comes, saddle your horses, and all of you come to me with your cavalry and foot soldiers, for I have received some news.'

When it was morning the imām had the small kettle drums and the big bass drums sounded and the emirs and the chieftains came. The imām addressed them, saying, 'I want to set out against Wasan Sagad. What is your opinion?' They replied, 'Our opinion is that there should be no setting out until autumn[479] has ended. Then we will fight him. [f°52] But now, what is this consultation all about?'

At this the imām said to them, 'Cease your prattle. You don't understand, but I do. Our only chance of meeting up with him is during the rainy season and in autumn.' They asked, 'But what will we do with our treasure and our baggage? Will we bring them along with us, or will we have to abandon them?' The imām replied: 'That is no concern of ours.'

Then he said to the emir Abū Bakr: 'This robe that you brought with you: it is yours. You are to remain in the camp to watch over our treasure and ur concubines.'[480] He entrusted to him, from among the warriors, around four-hundred knights, and said to him, 'Don't budge from here. If the king attacks

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[478] B: 'l'intention des soldats'. (S)

[479] الخريف . B: 'la saison des pluies'. See *infra* p 325 where 'autumn,' and 'the rainy season,' are in apposition: الخريف وايام المطر . (S)

[480] سرا ريبا . B: 'nos femmes'. (S)

you, fight him: and may God give you victory over him.' He replied, 'Hearing is obeying' and stayed in Berārah.

[The Muslims march on the feast of 'Arafat]

After reciting the *Fātiḥa* the imām set out. Riding with him were the emirs, with the guide out in front of them, while above them the heavens poured rain. The ground was a muddy morass, and this one tumbled off his horse, while that one tumbled off his mule. Sometimes they would dismount from their mules and march, while at other times they would remount. They continued for three days in this fashion. They spent the night not far from the infidels.

The patrician got to hear of this for the people of the region notified him, 'The imām and his army have been seen arriving at your position: they are close by you.' The patrician replied: 'This is a lie. From what I know, the Muslims will not march on *'Arafat*, which is one of their feast-days; nor will they march in the season of rain and clay.'

The *storyteller* says: The patrician Wasan Sagad spoke to Ura'ī 'Uṯmān the renegade, asking him: 'Tell me if the Muslims usually march during their feasts, or conduct expeditions in the rainy season when their mounts will be exhausted.' He replied, 'Previously, when I was living in our country, they would not mount expeditions during rainy seasons like this, nor would they do so on their feasts, until they were concluded. As for now I can't say what they would do.'

The patrician called for two knights who were chieftains of the people of Dawāro, one of them, Mīkā'ēl and the second Robēl, who presented themselves. He said to the two of them: 'Saddle your horses and bring me back news of the Muslims for the people of this area tell me that the imām and his army are in our vicinity.' So they mounted, and set off in the direction of the Muslims. At that very moment the imām had told his companions, 'Don't camp on the slopes of the hill because the infidels are unaware of our presence, and we want to take them by surprise if it be Almighty God's will.' So they pitched camp at the foot of the hill.

While they were engaged in making camp, one of the Muslims, along with four of his companions, wanted to gather some firewood. This one, whose name was Dalan, rode with his four companions up the hill until, all of a sudden, the two knights whom Wasan Sagad had sent appeared. Of the two, one stayed where he was, while the other drew near to the one called Dalan, who was on the slopes of the hill. The patrician Mīkā'ēl asked him, 'You there, do you know anything about the Muslims?' At which Dalan replied: 'Which Muslims do you mean?' He said, 'The soldiers'. Then Dalan said, 'They are quite close'. When he said 'close' the patrician turned and peered at Dalan, and realized that he was a Muslim. If the patrician had glanced at the foot of the hill that he was on, then he would have seen the Muslims in their encampment.

He tried to turn his horse's head,[481] but God gave the Muslim Dalan strength. He pounced on the patrician and clung to his hooded cloak, dragging him off his horse, and striking him a blow to his face that laid open his skull. He plucked him from his saddle, thrashing the ground with him, and then mounted his horse, dragging him by a rope, humiliated and an object of contempt, until he reached the imām. As for Mīkā'ēl's companion - he fled.

Dalan arrived with his prisoner and the imām and the Muslims rejoiced. The imām asked, 'What are you dragging behind you?' And he recounted to him all that had happened. The imām and his entourage thanked him, as did the Muslims; and the imām made him a present of the patrician's horse, and its finery. Then the imām interrogated the captive patrician concerning the patrician Wasan Sagad. He replied, 'He is close to you. I and my companion came in search of news of you when I fell into the clutches of this young man. My companion fled.' The imām straight away ordered him to be killed, and they spent the night there.

The knight who had fled reached Wasan Sagad and told him that the Muslims were close by, and that his friend had been killed. They were filled with a mighty dread, and spent the night in their places.

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[481] Lit. 'to twist its bridle'. (S)

[The Abyssinians set out for Mount Busāt]

When morning came, the Muslims set out in the direction of the idolaters. But when it was morning, Wasan Sagad assembled his army and took counsel with them. He said, 'The Muslims have spent the night round about you. Now that it is morning they are going to come against you. Prepare for battle.' Their unanimous response was, 'Don't order us to fight at a moment like this.' 'But,' he asked, 'what will you do if you don't fight?' To which they replied: 'You are our religious leader; if you are wiped out, our religion, that is the Christian religion, will be annihilated.'

He asked them, 'So what will we do?' They replied, 'Let us march to Mount Busāt; and we will fight whoever comes to attack us, there. You, you march before us and we shall fight behind you. If we are killed, even the last one of us, the Christians will not decline because of us. But if you be killed, then our religion will be wiped out, and our countries will be pillaged.' They pleaded with him until he said, 'All right.' Then he set out in the direction of the mountain. He said to Ura'ī 'Uṭmān the apostate, 'You bring up the rear,' and entrusted him with half the army. Then he and the [other] half of the army set out.

[The Muslims decide to give chase]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says, The Muslims[482] marched after sun-up in the direction of the idol-worshippers, and the imām and his army reached their encampment before noon. The patrician Wasan Sagad, meantime, had set out with the first part of the army before the imām[483] arrived at the camp.

As for Ura'ī 'Uṭmān, the imām overtook him as he was moving his tents in preparation for the march. The Muslims arrived on the heels of the idol-worshippers who when they saw them fled without giving battle, abandoning the camp along with its tents.

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[482]B omits 'The storyteller ... Muslims'. (S)

[483]B reads المسلمون for الامام and translates 'les nôtres'. (S)

The Muslims said, 'This abandoning the camp to us is a trick of Wasan Sagad. He has prepared an ambush for us and will attack us when we have entered the camp, and busied ourselves with sacking it.' Others of them said, 'This is not one of his tricks. He has simply fled before us; and has left behind him another army.' Then Garād Šama'ūn said to the Muslims: 'If you run into Wasan Sagad in the camp, you can put me to death, for he has fled in the direction of the 'Awāš.' The imām accepted what he said and did not follow the counsel of the others. Then they mounted their horses, and set out in pursuit of him.

[Wasan Sagad stands and fights]

The Muslims then split into four bands: one of them overtook Ura'ī 'Uṯmān, and did battle with him for an hour[484] before he fled; another pursued Wasan Sagad; and the imām went with a third band along a different route. As for Wasan Sagad,[485] when the Muslims drew near to him, he dismounted from his mule and said, [f°53] 'Set up a platform for me.'[486] They made one for him out of iron which he sat upon while spurring his companions on, and having his drums sounded. The Muslims, who by then had caught up with him, attacked. They were few in number and fought for an hour.

Of the Muslim knights 'Abd Allāh al-Tigrāwī[487] was killed, may Almighty God have mercy upon him. He was a man who was valiant and a hero. It was the son of the Nagāš of Gojjām[488] who killed him. When the

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[484] ساعة can also mean 'a short while,' or 'immediately'. (S)

[485] B translates 'pour le chef chrétien'. (S)

[486] Alvares reports that it was Lebna Dengel's practice to have 'a very high platform' erected, on which he showed himself three times a year, at Christmas, Easter and the Feast of the Cross.' He did so, the Portuguese learnt, because the monarch's grandfather, Emperor Eskender, 'was kept by his courtiers dead and hidden for three years,' during which time they were 'masters of the kingdom,' for 'up to that time no one of the people saw their king, and he was not seen except by a very few of his servants and courtiers'. To rectify this state of affairs Lebna Dengel's father, Emperor Nā'od had adopted the policy of showing himself on the three above-mentioned festivals, and Lebna Dengel had continued the tradition. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 324. (P)

[487] By his last name apparently a man from Tegrē. (P)

[488] Nagāš, i.e. King, of Gojjām. (P)

Muslims saw that he was killed they ran away, but not far. Some Muslim cavalry met them and asked them, 'Where are you fleeing to? Go back and fight your enemy. We'll be with you.' So they fought for a little while, and then fled a second, or third time.

While they were running away and turning back, some Muslim knights famous for their valour reached them - amongst whom was Garād Šama'ūn, 'Alī al-Warādī who was a martyr at the battle for the Ambā, Ura'ī 'Umar Dīn son of the Sultan Muḥammad, and Garād 'Ābad and others like them.

These said to those who were fleeing, 'Who put you to flight?' They replied: 'It was this patrician who drew up his battle line. The first time that we charged they killed 'Abd Allāh Tigrāwī who was with us; and put us to flight. We returned to the attack and were routed in the same fashion four or five times.'

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Then Garād Šama'ūn and Ura'ī 'Umar Dīn and their companions said to those who were fleeing: 'Well, now we have reached you. Don't imagine that we are like those who met up with you before us. We will lead you in the charge: so you follow behind us.'

Then Garād Šama'ūn and Ura'ī charged, and breached their battle-lines; he and his companions with him, but he was out in front. The patrician Wasan Sagad was in the midst of the idol-worshippers when Garād Šama'ūn charged them, and burst through their battle lines along with his companions. He met up with the brother of the patrician Wasan Sagad whose name was Garimā, who raised the tip of his spear against Garād Šama'ūn, trying to stab at him. Šama'ūn meanwhile hit him with his sword, cutting his spear in two and chopping off his hand, so that he toppled from his horse.

In the same way Ura'ī 'Umar Dīn, the sultan Muḥammad's son, charged the patrician who was alongside Wasan Sagad and transfixed him with a spear blow that threw him from his horse, on to the ground, where he died: may Almighty God not have mercy upon him. Likewise 'Alī al-Warādī

charged another patrician and struck him such a blow that it severed his head from his body. May God thrust his soul down into Hell 'and what a sad place it is'.[489]

[Wasan Sagad is wounded and unhorsed]

Wasan Sagad's companions immediatedly fell back, but not far. Wasan Sagad chased after them, shouting out to them saying, 'Where are you fleeing to?' While he was berating his companions, Garād 'Ābad bin Rājaḥ mounted a charge against them. His father had been Garād of Hargāyā in the time of the sultan Muḥammad bin Sa'd al-Dīn. When 'Ābad drew near to him Wasan Sagad turned the head of his charger back in Garād 'Ābad's direction, heaping abuse on him and the two of them met in that place.

In the patrician Wasan Sagad's hand was a spear, while Garād 'Ābad held a sword in his. The patrician got under his guard and struck Garād 'Ābad a blow that pierced his left hand. He was wearing protective armour and the tip of the spear went through the armour and the hand, and came out the other side. The patrician tried to pull his spear out, but it broke off in the hand of the Muslim. He then tried to pull his sword out of its scabbard. Garād 'Ābad struck him a blow on his head while he was struggling to pull out his sword. Garād 'Ābad struck him a second time, a little above the top of his neck, and he fell off his horse. He said: 'Don't kill me: I am Wasan Sagad.'

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: When the idolators saw that he had been unhorsed, and when he told Garād 'Ābad that he was Wasan Sagad, Garād 'Ābad called out to his companions so that the idolators would know that their chief had fallen. Then the Muslims started yelling out that Wasan Sagad was dead. The patrician who was lying on the ground, injured, called out *alaḵ balā, alaḵ balā,* which means, 'I'm alive.[490] Keep on fighting.' When the idolators heard that their leader had been killed

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[489] Qur'ān xiv, 29. (S)

[490] It is impossible from this passage in the *Futūḥ* to establish the exact Amharic intended by the above words. They could have been *Amlāk bāla,* 'It is the will of God'. (P)

they fled in a blind panic, pursued by the Muslims who were capturing prisoners and killing.[491]

[The imām refuses to follow 'Addolī's advice]

The imām, meanwhile, had gone in another direction as we have already mentioned, along the road to Zeqālā. While he was on the road, the wazir 'Addolī reached him. He had captured the patrician of Adal Anbāj whose name was Jan Nahad. When the imām met the Wazir 'Addolī along the route, he had the prisoner stand before him and said to the Wazir 'Addolī: 'Keep him with you. Take the standard and gather the Muslims to you. We will set out in pursuit of the idolators'.

Then the imām dismounted from his mule in order to mount his horse. The Wazir 'Addolī restrained him, speaking out of his affection for the imām, 'Don't you go. Rather you take your standard, and stay close by it. Let someone other than you go and pursue the infidels.' The imām scorned his words and mounted his horse. Along with him was the emir Ḥusain, Garād Aḥmūša and 'Alūš bin Bešara.

They set out, left the army behind, and outstripped the Christians on the road. They met up with a herdsman whom they asked, 'Do you know the whereabouts of the patrician Wasan Sagad?' He replied, 'He set out this morning with the vanguard of the army'. They thought that he was ahead of them, when in fact he was behind them, captured by Garād 'Ābad as we have mentioned.

[The imām prepares an ambush]

So, after the imām followed an open road without seeing any trace of the horses along it, they said: 'If this is the route they took, there isn't a hoof

[491]The death of Wasan Sagad, according to the royal chronicle, took place on 5 Nahāsē 1524, i.e. 29 July, 1531. Béguinot, *La cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 17. (P)

mark on it. The infidels must, without doubt, be behind us.' So, craftily, they hid themselves. They were four knights, including the imām.

Then ten infidels came riding by, mounted on their mules. The imām and his companions charged them when he said, 'This is their vanguard', and they fell upon them. They in turn took to flight, leaving their mules behind. The imām then returned to his place, and they hid themselves in the same fashion.

Then a troop of infidels approached. As they drew near to them they saw that they were carrying the baggage of the infidels, along with their women, and boxes belonging to the patrician, filled with silks and other baubles besides. When they saw them they kept out of the way of the road, so as not to tangle with them, for they were looking out for the warriors, their knights.

After the baggage porters had passed by, an army appeared: made up of all those who had been with Wasan Sagad and had taken to flight. When they saw them, they realized that they were running away, and the Muslims said to the imām Aḥmad, 'This is the infidel army: now let us attack them face on, because they are in flight.' The imām replied: 'This will not do. We now are but four and this is a mighty army. Were we to attack them they would see that there are only four of us knights, while they have shieldsmen with them. We will wait until they have gone on ahead, and then we will attack them from their rear so that they will think that we who follow them are part of those who put them to flight.' They replied, 'This is excellent advice.'

Now, the Christians had forty knights, with horses clad in armour [f°54] of iron. They were the protectors of the troop from the vanguard of the army that had fled. After [those passed by] the Muslims said: 'There are no more Christians after these', and they attacked. They were four knights against the forty knights of the Christians, and they fought a fierce battle.

The *author*, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, says: I heard the imām Aḥmad, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, relate, 'We struck them until our forearms were exhausted from the effort of fighting them'.

When one of the four Muslims struck an infidel, all of them struck out at whomever their companion had hit. The imām attacked the leader of the army, striking him on his head. Garād Aḥmuša, the emir Ḥusain and 'Alūš then struck him as one man, and he tumbled from his horse.

In the same way Garād Aḥmūša hurled himself at the patrician and hit him a blow that was of no avail on account of the vast amount of harness and ironware that he wore. Then 'Alūš threw himself at him, and struck him a savage blow in the eye with his spear. He forced him upwards with his spear, and he fell down dead.

[The fate of Takla Hawāyāt]

A patrician called Takla Hawāyāt,[492] the Nagāš of Gojjām, highly thought of by the king and by Wasan Sagad, charged like a tower of iron. The emir Ḥusain confronted him, and he and the patrician grappled with each other, with the emir Ḥusain unseating him and throwing him to the ground. The patrician's horse took off, and grasping his spear, the emir Ḥusain set off after the horse, and caught it. He then returned to where the patrician was. But, lo and behold! he was among some trees, while the rest of the idol-worshippers fled.

The imām came to where the emir Ḥusain was and said to him: 'The patrician went in to the middle of the brush while you were chasing his horse.' He looked into the middle of the trees and found where he was standing. Then the emir Ḥusain struck at him, but his blow did him no harm, as he was in among the trees. The imām struck at him, but succeeded only in hitting the trees. The emir Ḥusain said: 'I'll go down after him on foot, and go into the trees'. 'Refrain from doing that,' the imām said.

Just then two men approached, one of whom was Abū Bakr. The imām said to him: 'Dismount and strike that man a blow with your spear.' He thereupon dismounted, and approaching the patrician struck him two blows on his chest with his spear, but these had no effect. The patrician was holding

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[492] تخلى هوارات . (S)

a whip in his hand, by means of which he reached the Muslim, and struck him, forcing him backwards.

So the imām said to the other one whose name was Ṣabr al-Dīn, 'You dismount and kill that man,' for this one was a swordsman, famous for his skill as a fighter and at overcoming difficulties. He dismounted from his mule, and struck the patrician's hand, cutting it off, and the patrician fell onto the ground. Ṣabr al-Dīn pulled him out from the trees, killed him and took his weapons and armour.

Then the Muslim army caught up with the imām who said to them, 'Here, close by you, is the baggage of the infidels, along with their horses, mules and riches. Now, let us set out.' They answered, 'Willingly' and the imām and his companions, around sixty knights, set out. They forced their march until they met up with them, and then the imām attacked, as did Farašaḥam 'Alī, Garād Šama'ūn, Garād Aḥmūša, Farašaḥam Dīn and their ilk. Their swords prevailed against the idol-worshippers, whom they killed.

Only ten had escaped - these were they whom the imām had encountered on the road with the baggage, before the arrival of the forty knights who were the protectors of the infidels. Because of this[493] they pursued the latter and took as booty what they had been carrying. Then they returned to their army that was with the Wazir 'Addolī, which had been anxious about the whereabouts of the imām.

[Interrogation and fate of the patricians]

The imām reached them after the last evening prayer. They offered thanks to God, and the imām informed them what had happened. Then the imām asked 'Ābad, 'Why did you kill Wasan Sagad before I had seen him?' He replied: 'Why would you want to see the dog? I had said to him after I made him my prisoner, "I intend to take you to my lord." But he stretched out by a tree[494] that was there and refused to get up. He said: "Kill me here where I am" and roundly abused me. So I ordered him to be killed.'

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[493]That is, the defeat of the forty Christian knights who had been protecting the fleeing army. (S)

[494]Reading شجرة for شجرة. (S)

The storyteller of the *Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša,* may God have mercy upon him, says: The imām thereupon had the prisoners brought, and they were presented to him. Amongst them was the patrician Jān Nahad whom the wazir 'Addolī had captured; and the patrician Qāsim, lord of Jān Amorā.[495] He was an apostate whom the king had put in charge of Jān Amorā, which is between Tegrē and Angot. He fought fierce battles, and he brought back to the fray all the idol-worshippers who had fled, and protected them. His actions caused the Muslims a great deal of anguish. It was one of the Somalis from the tribe of Mattān who captured him; and the patrician Hanna, lord of Lālibālā.[496] The patricians whom the imām ordered to be put to death were thirty-three in number.

As well there was a patrician called Gabra Endreyās who was killed when Wasan Sagad was defeated. He had said: 'There is no part of the land of Abyssinia that I have not governed, from the time of King Admās,[497] of Eskender and Nā'od, up to the time of King Wanāg Sagad, and I have governed all the provinces'. He was killed at the age of ninety years. May God not have mercy upon him.

After Wasan Sagad was killed, the country was conquered, the infidel armies were humiliated, and the greater part of them embraced Islam, as we will mention later on.

They remained in the land of 'Awāš Tabbū[498] for three days and then they went up to Jān Zalaq where they pitched camp. The imām sent a messenger to Berārah, to the emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn, to inform him of the killing of Wasan Sagad, and of the flight of the idol-worshippers, garbing the messenger in garments of honour.

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[495]Jān Amorā to judge by a subsequent eighteenth century Ge'ez text, the *Ḥegga Waser'āta Mangest,* or Law and Institutions of the Kingdom, was situated in Tegrē. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia,* p. 247. The word *Jān,* as we have seen, implied something of importance, while *Amorā,* the Amharic for Eagle, indicates that the place was probably located in the high mountains. Guidi, *Vocabolario amarico-italiano,* p.421. (P)

[496] Lālibālā, site of the famous rock-hewn churches of Lāstā. Monti della Corte, *Lalibelà.* (P)

[497] i.e. Emperor Ba'eda Māryām (1468-1478). (P)

[498]Awāš Ṭabbu, thought by Huntingford to be probably the Tabbo of later times, north-east of Sirē. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia,* p. 128. (P)

[Naṣr wins Šajara over to the Muslims]

The storyteller, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, says: When the imām arrived at Jān Zalaq its inhabitants fled to the district of Šajara. So the imām sent for Naṣr, the governor of Mergāy, who had been captured during the battle of Zari and asked him: 'Do you know the district of Šajara?' He answered, 'Yes, I am familiar with it: my children and my wealth are there. I shall go and make peace with the country, and all of them will become Muslims when you arrive.' So the imām sent Farašaḥam Dīn with him - along with some soldiers.

He set out for Šajara and its environs. They were met by the inhabitants of the region upon their arrival. These came to them[499] from the villages round about and embraced Islam.

In the same way he sent the Wazir 'Addolī to Zeqālā and to Lālibālā. He set out with his army, but the emir Mujāhid had got there before him. For when he heard of Wasan Sagad's death he had set out for Zeqālā and had taken an immense booty and afterwards returned to his camp at Berārah. He was with the emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn in Berārah when 'Addolī [f°55] arrived [in Zeqālāh] to find that the inhabitants were Muslims. They had become Muslims the day the emir Mujāhid plundered them.

The Wazir 'Addolī set out for 'Awāš Tabbu, and its inhabitants became Muslims. The imām, for his part, went from Jān Zalaq to the district of Anṭiṭ where there was an imposing church, dating from the time of King Eskender, filled with gold. The Muslims pitched their camp alongside it.

The inhabitants of Jān Zalaq had not become Muslims and had hidden in the deserts and in the mountains. So he had sent Kāled al-Warādī, accompanied by a troop of knights, to fight them. Kāled al-Warādī was familiar with their country and said to them, 'I am Kāled al-Warādī. You know me, and I know your country and all its by-ways. So now, become Muslims before fighting breaks out between us and you.'

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[499] الجهم . B: 'devant eux'. (S)

[Ḵaled al-Warādī makes a pact with the people of Jān Zalaq]

When his messenger reached them, the inhabitants of Jān Zalaq came together and said amongst themselves, 'If we don't go along with Ḵāled al-Warādī he will send a message to the imām, his master, who in turn will despatch an army against us, from this direction and from that. Most of Abyssinia has embraced Islam, and the Muslims are dispersed throughout it. If they hear of us that we have stood firm against them, not one of us will live to tell the tale. Our lord Wasan Sagad has been killed. So let us now become Muslims.'

Then they sent a messenger to Ḵāled al-Warādī who said: 'Grant us an assurance of protection and we will become Muslims. We shall go to the imām and he will give us a guarantee of protection. We shall all go, and the people of Qawāt[500] along with us.' Thereupon Ḵāled al-Warādī gave them the guarantee of safety, and rejoined the imām who was in Anṭiṭa where the church was.

Ḵāled al-Warādī asked the imām, 'Why have you come up to Anṭiṭ and left the area of Jān Zalaq whose people asked me to obtain from you an assurance of safety for them? I have myself given them this assurance.' The imām replied, 'It was my plan to go to Berārah where we are camped, and send out cavalry into the countryside.' To which Ḵāled al-Warādī replied, 'But if you set out for Berārah the people of Jān Zalaq will not become Muslims, nor the people of Qawāt. So now let us return to Jān Zalaq and remain there for then all of the idol-worshippers will come to you - they and their patricians, and will accept Islam.'[501]

The imām accepted his counsel, and then told the emir Muḥammad Zaḥarbūī [may God have mercy upon him] and Garād Aḥmūša, what he had counselled. He informed the two of them what Ḵāled al-Warādī had said to him, and they both said: 'This is unquestionably good advice.'

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[500]Qawāt, a mountainous area on the edge of the eastern escarpment of Šawā 40 miles north of Ankobar. Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, p. 958. (P)

[501]Reading يسلمون for the metathesised يسملون . (S)

[The church in Anṭiṭ is burned]

So the imām sent a messenger to the emir Abū Bakr who said to him, 'We are returning to Jān Zalaq, while you are to remain within Berārah as far as Bādēgē; don't leave it for Faṭagār until our messenger reaches you.' He then took all of the gold that was in the church which was in Anṭiṭ; and they burnt it.

The imām set out for Jān Zalaq, and sent a message to Kāled al-Warādī and Garād 'Uṭmān bin Jūhar, saying to the two of them, 'March to Qawāt and prepare them for Islam.' So they set out and reached the district and the inhabitants of Jān Zalaq and of Qawāt all came to them. Then they returned to the imām who was in Jān Zalaq where the people had accepted Islam.

[Aībīs Laḥaṭī defies the imām]

One of the patricians who became a Muslim was called Ḥaizū; another, Dalū and another Daballa. These three became Muslims and their submission was genuine, for they gave witness at the memorable events that were to follow. As for two other patricians; one of these was called Aībīs Laḥaṭi - a kinsman on his mother's side of the king. He was an abominable demon who loathed Islam and the Muslims. No one was as deeply entrenched in unbelief as he. He said to himself, 'Only if there is no way of escaping will I follow those three'.

When they stood before the imām along with the people of Qawāt - one-hundred cavalry and four-thousand infantry - and the imām urged them to become Muslims, all of them did so, except for this patrician Aībīs Laḥaṭi. In fact he said on the occasion: 'I will not become a Muslim. I did not come to do that. I will not separate myself from my religion, in which my fathers and my forefathers died.' The imām said to him, 'You are more admirable than those who embraced Islam; you are stronger in your faith than they.' He replied, 'As for those, they are ignorant people who know nothing of their own religion, or of yours. If they become Muslims there is no dishonour in that for them; but if I were to become a Muslim I would be dishonoured before the King and the monks who would say, "Aībīs Laḥaṭī has converted to

Islam," and this would bring immense shame upon me. I will not separate myself from the religion of Māryām.'[502] The imām said to him: 'Then don't do it. You are a great Christian. And between us and you there is a relationship of marriage.'

The storyteller, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, says: As it happened, one of the concubines of the imām, Hājirah, was a relative of his, his cousin on his father's side.

The imām said to him, 'You can be a help to us on behalf of Islam.' But he refused, and said to the imām, 'I am related to you, and I will help you. But I will keep my religion. And if conflicts arise between you and the Muslims, or the Christians, then I will fight alongside you.'

But the imām said to him, 'Be silent. I do not wish to be helped by idol-worshippers. You can neither help us nor harm us. Surrender your horse and lay down your arms. Pay the poll-tax and keep your religion.'

Thereupon his companions, the patricians who had become Muslims, said to him: 'It is only the imām who has given you a guarantee of safety. You will receive no such guarantee from the rest of the army. We are going to cut you down to size. We will kill you unless you become a Muslim. So you [think you] are more admirable than we are!'

He straightaway became afraid, and embraced Islam. He remained with the imām for around three months and when the latter set out on an expedition to Bēt Amḥārā he ran away, reverted to Christianity and joined up with the king. The other patrician fled a few days after him.

The imām appointed 'Uṯmān bin Jūhar in charge of the people of Jān Zalaq and Ḵāled al-Warādī in charge of the people of Qawāt. He went with them to their country and made Muslims of their wives and children; and their conversion was sincere.

[502] دين مريم : sic! This form of the name Mary is the more usual one in the text, though we also find مارية, i.e. Maria. (S)

[Aḥmad plans fresh forays]

Kāled al-Warādī took from Qawāt the treasures of the idol-worshippers, and their belongings made of gold, and other things as well: horses, mules, swords and weaponry. He sent all these goods along with the horses, to the imām, who wanted to remain in the Faṭagār region until the waters of the river 'Awāš subsided and he could pass over to Dawaro to make its inhabitants Muslims. But the local people told the imām: 'It will take the waters of the 'Awāš two months from now to go down.'

When he heard this the imām said: 'Why should we wait two months to no purpose? Instead, let us set out for Šajara and for the region of Dabra Berhān.' So he said to the emir 'Alī, lord of Angot: 'You go to the region of Dabra Berhān by the Sarmāt[503] and Darja roads.' [f°56] Then he entrusted him with one-hundred knights, among them Bešāra, and sultan 'Alī, 'Alī al-Warādī, Garād 'Ābad the slayer of Wasan Sagad, Ura'ī 'Umar Dīn, Ura'ī Qāṭ 'Amr and Garād 'Uṭmān along with the people of Jān Zalaq.

He said to them, 'March along the upper road, and I will march along the lower road and, Almighty God willing, you and we shall meet near the church of Dabra Berhān. So they set out the same day, while the imām took the road to Šajara.

Upon the imām's reaching Šajara, Garād Naṣr met him and said, 'Our regions, our children and our families have all embraced Islam by the blessing of Almighty God, and by yours as well.' So the imām said to him: 'I put you in charge of all those in your region who have become Muslims. You must march against those who have not accepted Islam, take them prisoner and bring them to me.'

The imām included with him a man called Fanj Sabbar, along with some infantry. They set out by night, catching the Christians unawares, killing them there, and capturing two patricians. Thereupon they returned to the imām, and brought the two of them into his presence. He said to them, 'How

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[503]Sarmāt was, according to Huntingford, a settlement between Dabra Berhān and Šano. Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, p. 966; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 128. (P)

about the two of you? Why on earth didn't you become Muslims when all the country converted?' To which they both replied, 'It never occurred to us that we would be in this situation'. He said, 'Our judgement concerning you, is that your heads should be cut off''. Their reply was, 'So be it'. The imām was astonished at what the two of them said. But he ordered them to be killed, and they put the two of them to death.

[Šamsū burns down the church at Ifāt]

He said to the commander of the army of Baḥr whose name was Šamsū, 'Procede to Ifāt and conquer it for I have already appointed you its ruler.' So Šamsū set out for Ifāt. He arrived there - a country virtually impassable, with no bridle-path for horses - and its people who were on foot, put up a resistance. Eventually he defeated them, and conquered it by force. Its people became Muslims after he besieged them in the mountains.

There was a church there that had belonged to the previous king, Eskender; with much gold within it. The king had donated a number of vessels of gold and silver to it, as votive offerings. It possessed a massive book, with leaves and binding of gold, upon which they had written their Gospel. Only exceptionally sturdy men were able to carry it.[504]

Šamsū went inside the church, set fire to it and took everything of value that it contained, including a chasuble that belonged to king Eskender. In its hem there were fifty ounces of gold. Then the imām rejoined Šamsū, meeting up with him at Abunah on the border of Ifāt. Šamsū handed over to the imām all the valuables. The imām and the Muslims marvelled at the Golden Book and at its illustrations.

The emir 'Ali, having taken the high road, entered the land of Darja which he conquered and upon which he imposed the poll-tax. Then he set out for Dabra Berhān. After he and his army reached the place he remained there, biding his time until the imām arrived. The latter, meanwhile, had settled

[504]A few highly prized Ethiopian manuscript copies of the Gospels were in fact bound with gold, and, like other huge manuscripts, were in some instances so heavy that they were difficult for one man to carry. (P)

down at Abunah. He sent Garād Aḥmūša on to Ifāt, saying to him: 'Do battle with its people until you have conquered it; I will be at your rear.' So Garād Aḥmūša set out. Garād Mattān went with him while the imām stayed behind, with five knights. Ifāt was quite close by.

The Muslims said to the imām, 'You've kept on sending your troops away, so now the point has been reached where you have only five knights left. From now on, don't do anything.'

The following day he caught up with Garād Aḥmūša.[505] The number of emirs whom the imām had despatched in various directions, was fifty.

[Ura'ī 'Uṭmān sets out to betray the king]

The storyteller, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, says: The apostate Ura'ī 'Uṭmān was in Ifāt when Wasan Sagad was killed. He had gone to his home region of Ifāt and remained there. He summoned his forces, and the armies of Gāfāt and Wanāg Jarrā. When the imām had entered the land of Abunah, Ura'ī 'Uṭmān said to his forces, 'I am going to fight the Muslims. They will not enter my territory.'

He then sent a message to the imām, unbeknown to his companions: 'From the outset I was a Muslim, the son of a Muslim. The idol-worshippers captured me and made a Christian of me, but my heart has remained always at peace with the faith. So now I throw myself upon God's mercy, the Prophet's mercy, and yours. If you accept my contrition, and don't hold what I've done against me, then I will turn to God in repentance. I will outsmart this army of the king that I have with me, so that they come over to your side, and convert to Islam.'

He sent the imām the letter that he wrote, by means of some Muslim people of Ifāt whom he cautioned: 'Don't let any of the Christians know about this matter'. The letter reached the imām on the very day that Garād Aḥmūša had set out. He read it, and understood all its contents and then sent a message to Garād Aḥmūša to return 'for I have news'. He returned to the imām, who informed him of what Ura'ī 'Uṭmān had written. They remained

[505]B reads 'Garād Ahmouchouch vint le (Aḥmed) retrouver'. (S)

on in Abunah, all of whose people, meanwhile, along with their patrician Eslāmu, became Muslims. After the imām had set out for Bēt Amḥārā, their leader Eslāmu apostatised and joined forces with the king. His army remained faithful to Islam and they fought with Šamsū throughout the whole conquest of Abyssinia.

[Aḥmad's reply to Ura'ī 'Uṭmān]

After the imām had seen what was in the letter that Ura'ī 'Uṭmān had sent to him, he despatched his reply which ran thus: 'If you act in this way, Almighty God has said, "Say to those who disbelieve that provided they desist, they will be forgiven whatever they have done in the past".[506] Don't be afraid, don't be grief-stricken. We will rendezvous, we and you, in the land of Ṭobyā.[507] I am setting off for it, and we will meet up there, we and you.' The imām sent him his rosary as a pledge of his protection and good faith towards him. The letter and the rosary were sent to him secretly.

Ura'ī 'Uṭmān unsealed the letter, studied its contents thoroughly and from that moment on was overcome by anxiety. He said: 'I'm but one person; this army is numerous and all of them are Christians. What can I do about them? Were I to go empty-handed to the imām, after having done what I have done to the Muslims, I would be very fearful of them. And were I to say to these idol-worshippers that they become Muslims with me, either they will kill me or put me in prison.'

[Ura'ī 'Uṭmān seeks allies]

Now with him were two men who had been Muslims, and servants of the imām. One of the two was called Sakr; the other's name was Ya'qīm. Sakr had killed a man who was the imām's friend. One night he had taken him by

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[506] *Qur'ān* viii, 38; some eds. viii, 39. (S)

[507] Ṭobyā was a notable settlement in Ifāt, where Emperor Ba'eda Māryām had earlier established a fine palace and garden. Perruchon, *Chroniques de Zar'a Yâ'eqôb et de Ba'eda Mâryâm*, pp. 107, 129. See also Taddesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia*, p. 152. (P)

surprise and killed him. The imām had him seized and thrown into irons until he could be punished according to Almighty God's Law. He burst his bonds and vanished into his own country. He went to the king of Abyssinia and became a Christian. The king bestowed a village of Ifāt upon him, and settled him with [f°57] Ura'ī 'Uṯmān, the patrician of Ifāt. Ya'qīm for his part had incurred a debt in the territory of the Muslims, and his creditors sought him out, claiming what was rightfully theirs. As he had no way of discharging the debt he fled, without the imām's knowledge, to the king of Abyssinia and apostatised. The king of Abyssinia endowed him with land in Ifāt.

Ura'ī 'Uṯmān sought out these two men and took them aside, to be alone with them discreetly. He asked, 'Has either of you any advice, for this imām is close by us and will reach us either tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow. He will arrive in our territory, and will lay waste to it. What do you think? Shall we flee now to the king with our armies, or shall we fight on our own ground, and die for the sake of it? Give me your advice.' They replied, 'We are your servants; we don't know about advice: if you order us to flee, then we will flee. If you order us to fight, then we will fight. If you order us to become Muslims, we will become Muslims.'

He said to them, 'What you said about becoming Muslims is better than the other options that I mentioned to you of fleeing, or fighting. Let us go to the imām, and repent of what we did in our unbelief. For I have written a letter and said to him what you both have just said. He sent me a letter, and his rosary, as a pledge and a guarantee for me and for you. So now, what shall we do about this vast army? How can we get it to follow us, since it is entirely made up of Christians?

[The advice of Sakr and Ya'qim]

They said to him, 'Since you have given us this assurance we will recompense you: now, summon your servant 'Anānīya.' 'Anānīya was the commander of the army directly under Ura'ī 'Uṯmān; and he was a Christian. Ura'ī replied, 'If we confide in 'Anānīya, will he follow us in this matter that we are resolved upon?' They said to him, 'Yes, he will follow you. If you

enter the fire, he will enter it with you.' So he said to them, 'You both seek him out and bring him to me.'

They set out to where 'Anānīya was, and brought him back to Ura'ī 'Uṭmān who said to him: 'You are my son, and a senior officer of mine. What is your opinion about what is happening to us? What shall we do?' 'Anānīya replied, 'I am your follower; wherever you go, I shall go before you. If you say, "I'm going to fight,' then so be it; if you say, "Let's flee to the king," then so be it. I am your servant. Whatever important task you command me to carry out, I shall do it.' Ura'ī 'Uṭmān said to him, 'Swear this in my presence'. So he swore him an oath that he would never disobey any command that he might give him.

Thereupon he told him that he had become a Muslim. 'Anānīya replied, 'I have wanted to become a Muslim before this. When I was in the land of Mergāy, at the time that you made me governor there, I sent a message to the imām *via* some travellers.[508] And I have only stayed here until now for your sake.' When he heard what he had to say, Ura'ī 'Uṭmān rejoiced exceedingly. He said to 'Anānīya, 'How shall we address the army? What language shall we use when we speak to them?' 'Anānīya replied, 'I will be able to handle this matter for you. I shall speak to your elite force, your supporters, and to the rest of the army. If they obey us, well and good. If they oppose us, then we will fight them. But they won't be able to fight against us once I have spoken to our friends and our troops.'

'Anānīya then addressed the elite force of Ura'ī 'Uṭmān, comprising fifty knights and two-thousand infantry armed with shields. They said to him, 'If our lord enters the fire, we will enter with him. Our business is to follow his orders.' So 'Anānīya reported back to his lord Ura'ī 'Uṭmān that the elite force had said that they would obey him. He was very happy at this.

[Ura'ī 'Uṭmān makes his move]

After brooding over it for two nights he said to his companions, 'We are on a mountain that is not very favourable for fighting. Let us now go to

[508] Reading مسافرين for السفارين . B opts for 'intermediaires,' though this would normally be سفراء . (S)

more spacious ground, more suitable for cavalry manoeuvres.' Then he said of the rest of the army, 'If they obey us, then God Almighty has prepared the way for us; if they resist us, then we shall fight them.' They replied, 'The counsel that you have given is wise'.

Then he ordered that they leave the mountain. They descended the mountain - his companions, his elite force and the patricians of Ifāt, following him - the eight patricians of Ifāt with their forces, and also the army of Gāfāt.

[The army of Wanāg Jarrā remains loyal to the king]

The army of Wanāg Jarrā - a thousand foot-soldiers armed with white shields made of hide, like a cloud-covered hill-top because of their dazzling whiteness; there was nothing like them in the army of Baḥr Ambā - held back. When they had heard that Ura'ī 'Uṯmān planned to become a Muslim they hung back on the mountain.

After he had descended the mountain to more spacious ground, and had drawn up his troops in battle array, Ura'ī 'Uṯmān said, 'How is it that I don't see the army of Wanāg Jarrā. What has befallen them?' His companions replied that they hadn't come down. And when they looked closely at the mountain, there they were, ready for battle on the mountain top.

That same day Ura'ī 'Uṯmān sent to them, asking them, 'What has happened to you? What is it that has come to you concerning me?' They replied, 'We know of your plan, and of your betrayal of the king. We for our part are his elite troops, and his servants. We may die in his presence, but we will not join forces with you. But now, if you want to do battle with us, come up to us.' They dismissed his messenger, held their shields over their heads, and set out for Bēt Amḥārā. Ura'ī 'Uṯmān set out for Ṭobyā that was adjacent to Ifāt - he and all the Muslims of Ifāt who set out for Ṭobyā with him - and settled down there, waiting for the imām Aḥmad.

[Ura'ī 'Uṯmān joines forces with Aḥmad]

The storyteller, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, says: The imām for his part had been in his camp in Abunah. He set out for Ṭobyā for

the rendezvous between himself and Ura'ī 'Uṯmān. He reached Ṭobyā and saw the tents of Ura'ī 'Uṯmān. He pitched his own camp nearby.

On that same day Ura'ī 'Uṯmān left his place, drew up his cavalry and his soldiers and advanced close to where the imām was. Ahead of him went the sheikhs and the doctors of the Law, to use their good offices on his behalf. He reached the imām, and with him were the two men mentioned beforehand who had been equerries of the imām and had become Christians, the lord of Ifāt who was Ura'ī 'Uṯmān's maternal uncle, and Garād Ādam. He went into the imām's presence, kissed his hand, and the imām greeted him most warmly and said to him, 'Don't be afraid.' Then he said to the troops, 'Become Muslims,' and all of them did so, from midday until sunset - around 20,000 of them, including their wives and their children. The imām gave thanks to God and spoke appreciatively of Ura'ī 'Uṯmān and thanked him. They remained at Ṭobyā.

He then wrote to the wazir 'Addolī who was in the land of Zeqālā. Between him and the imām there was a solid twelve days' march. He gave him the news about Ura'ī 'Uṯmān who along with all the people of his region, had become Muslims, and said, 'You must gather to yourself all the emirs who are scattered around about, and their armies. It is I who have put you in command over them. Send to the emir Abū Bakr at Berārah, and to all the Muslims, summoning them to you. Do not split them up. Remain in Faṭagār. As God is to be feared, our families and our children will remain with you.'

The storyteller, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, says: The only reason that the imām put him in command over all the emirs, was because they all wanted to go back down to their own countries. This was the reason that he made 'Addolī their chief. [f°58] He had been a slave of the imām Aḥmad's father, and had brought up the imām and his brothers. The imām would do nothing without taking his advice.

The letter reached him while he was in the land of Zeqālāh. He left it and set out for Masīn which was close to Faṭagār. He then sent a message to all the emirs scattered near and far to come to where he was. All of them came. Amongst those who joined him was the emir Abū Bakr who came from Berarah with the family and the concubine of the imām. They all assembled.

He read them the imam's letter by which he made him the senior emir. They said, 'Hearing is obeying'.

[Farašaḥam 'Alī is sent on a mission]

Farašaḥam 'Alī was based in Dabra Berḥān. He sent a message to the imām, saying, 'I am awaiting a letter, or a messenger, from you. All that you gave me to do I have done. Will I go to you; or will you come to me?' The messenger reached the imām and informed him about what Farašaḥam 'Alī had said.

The imām sent his reply to him in a letter in which he said, 'I have entered the land of Ifāt. Your brother-in-law Ura'ī 'Uṭmān has become a Muslim, along with the people of Ifāt. I am remaining in Ifāt'. Farašaḥam 'Alī had married the sister of Ura'ī 'Uṭmān in the land of the Muslims; that is why he said to him: Your brother-in-law Ura'ī 'Uṭmān has become a Muslim. [The imam went on] 'Don't stay in Dabra Berhān to no purpose. March on the land of Tagulat,[509] on Wagdā[510] and Mugar.[511] Enter this territory, and do battle with them until they become Muslims or pay the poll-tax.' As soon as the letter reached him, he set out for the places exactly as the imām had commanded him.

[The Advice of Ura'ī 'Uṭmān and Azmač Ḥaīb]

The storyteller, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, says: the imām in the meantime remained in his camp in Ifāt around ten days. Then he

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[509]Tagulat, or Tagwelat, also known to early fourteenth century Muslims as Mar'ādē, was a locality in eastern Šawā south of Manz. Emperor 'Amda Ṣeyon is said to have had a capital of that name, and Emperor Zar'a Yā'qob later settled in the area. Huntingford, *Glorious Victories of 'Amda Ṣeyon*, pp. 54-5; Perruchon, *Chroniques de Zar'a Yâ'eqôb et de Ba'eda Mâryâm*, p. 55; Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, p, 972; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 78, 80, 85, 89. (P)

[510] وقدة . (S) Wagdā, a district east of Dabra Libānos, intimately associated with the life of Saint Takla Haymanot. Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, p. 981; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 69, 72. (P)

[511]The Mugar river is a tributary of the Abbāy, or Blue Nile, and has its source immediately north of modern Addis Ababa. (P)

sought the advice of his companions. He said to them, 'We are going to go up to Dabra Berhān. We will join up with our companions who are with Farašaḥam 'Alī and then we'll return to Faṭagār. We are going to do battle there where we hear talk of war.' At that moment two men spoke up to the imām - one of them was Ura'ī 'Uṯmān who had become a Muslim. The other was Azmāč Ḥaīb who had become a Muslim beforehand. The two of them said, 'Don't go up to Dabra Berhān.' He asked, 'How would the two of you advise me?' They said, 'It is inadvisable for you to back-track. That province has already become Muslim. Rather let us march against provinces that are ahead of us, as far as Gedem and the provinces round about it.' Straightaway the imām summoned a man called Garād Abjad bin Abūn and put him in charge of the army of Ura'ī 'Uṯmān. With him were Ya'qīm, Goitā Nūr and Shakr. Then he marched on Gedem, [512] all of whose inhabitants became Muslims.

[Wanāg Sagad sets out for Bēt Amḥārā]

The storyteller, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, says: The king of Abyssinia, Wanāg Sagad, in the meantime, had been in the land of Waj. He stopped there until the rainy season passed. When news had reached him of the death of Wasan Sagad and of the defeat of his army, he was saddened exceedingly and called together his patricians, his chamberlain and his more distinguished companions. He said to them, 'So now, what shall we do; how do you advise me in this matter? Which region will make us welcome?' They deliberated amongst themselves, and then the king said to them, 'I prefer that we march to the house[513] of our fathers and of our ancestors, the birthplace of our royal authority, and that we make a stand there. We shall hold the gates and do battle with the Muslims. We shall leave them in possession of the territory that they have conquered. We shall die in Bēt Amḥārā .' All the patricians responded, 'What you have said is good, O

[512]Gedem, a small territory located according to Huntingford to the east of Manz. Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, p.920; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp.81, 87, 95-7. (P)

[513]i.e. the land. (S)

king. And we shall die in your presence.' So they set out from the land of Waj for Bēt Amḥārā.

They marched continuously through the rainy season, and after a month arrived at Bēt Amḥārā which is a spacious land, with vast resources, and mountains all around it. In fact it is situated in the midst of mountains. There are paths and gateways through the mountains to it.

[The king appoints guardians for the Gates]

It is the residence of their king and there is no road into it that is not protected by gate-ways and guards. From the land of Abbāy[514] to the land of Angot and to the lake of Ḥāyq,[515] mountains surround it for a distance of twenty days' march. It has five entrances, one gate on the Walaqā[516] road, another on the Aki Faj[517] road, another on the Manz[518] road, a fourth on the Miyāt road from the land of Gedem, and the fifth from the direction of Wāṣal.[519] So he made his encampment there.

The patrician Dēgalḥān, brother-in-law of the king, held the gate at Miyāt. The king said to him, 'Guard your gate; may it never fall because of you.' Dēgalḥān dug a trench on the mountain as an obstruction between his position and the road that led to the gate and assembled there the army of Gedem and half of the army of Tegrē.

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[514]The Abbāy, or Blue Nile. (P)

[515]Lake Ḥāyq, site of the important medieval monastery of Eṣṭifānos, or Stephen, situated in Wallo, 14 miles north-east of Dasē. (P)

[516]Walaqā, a district beside the river of that name, south of Amhārā. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 72, 80. (P)

[517]Aki Faj, a contraction of Aheyyā Fajj, or Destruction of Donkeys, a name given to a precipitous highway, often therefore a locality where these beasts of burden were taxed. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 29, 116, 129. (P)

[518]Manz, a small, highland district north of Tagulat. D.N. Levine, *Wax and Gold*, pp. 28-49; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 80. (P)

[519]Wašel, possibly a locality in Wallo, in Huntingford's opinion in the vicinity of modern Dasē. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 104, 106. See also Perruchon, *Chroniques de Zar'a Yâ'eqôb et de Ba'eda Mâryâm*, p. 151. (P)

Over the gate of Manz was the patrician Rās Baniyāt, who was joined by some soldiers. He had a trench dug on the top of the mountain. The gate of Aki Faj, however, required no army to guard it: six men were enough to hold the gate and to stop anyone from approaching it, because of the extreme difficulty of access to it. As for the gate of Walaqā, he stationed there the patrician Daḥrāgot with his army. Each gate had some armed forces in it, to do battle with the Muslims.

[Description of the royal church at Bēt Amḥārā]

The storyteller, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, says: There was a church in Bēt Amḥārā that had no peer in Abyssinia. King Nā'od, the father of king Wanāg Sagad had built it. He exhausted himself in its construction, in its planning and in every detail of the work. He adorned it with gold, and spent thirteen years in its construction. He never saw the work completed, because he died after thirteen years.[520] His son Wanāg Sagad became heavily involved in it and took over its construction, after him. He took more pains over it than his father. He spent twenty-five[521] years until he had completed it.[522] It was entirely plated in gold leaf;[523] it blazed like a fire. He made for it vessels of gold and silver.[524] Its breadth was one-hundred

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[520] Emperor Nā'od died on 7 Nahāsē 7000, [i.e. 1550 Ethiopian calendar AD]: 31 July 1508. Wright, *Catagogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts in the British Museum*, p.vii. (P)

[521] The text reads 'twenty-five years,' and adds in numerals '24'. (S)

[522] This church, of Makāna Sellasē had earlier been visited by Alvares, who confirms that its construction had been begun by Emperor Nā'od (1494-1508) and finished by Lebna Dengel. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 256. If we accept our author's dating it would appear that work on the church began around 1495, and was completed in the early 1530s, i.e. only shortly prior to its destruction by the imām's forces. This occurred, according to the royal chronicle, on 22 Teqemt 1524, i.e. 3 November 1531. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 17. See also Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique du règne de Ménélik* II, I, 169, 308, II, 563. (P)

[523] Gold leaf in Ethiopia was highly regarded, and skilfully worked. Emperor Lebna Dengel, writing to King Manoel I of Portugal a few years earlier, had requested the latter to supply him with 'craftsmen in gilding with gold leaf, to make the gold leaf'. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, II, 501. (P)

[524] The prevalence of church vessels in several of the richer Ethiopian churches of the area had earlier been noted by Alvares. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 80, 82, 89. (P)

cubits,[525] its length was one-hundred cubits and its topmost height was one-hundred-and-fifty cubits: wholly covered in gold, inlaid with gems, pearls and corals.

The king named it in their infidel tongue, Makāna Sellasē.[526] The meaning of their expression is 'House of the three gods'.[527] May Almighty God be honoured, glorified, 'and exalted in the highest possible way'[528] May he be praised, 'for he is One,' unique, 'he begets not, nor is he begotten; there is none like him'.[529]

The sepulchre[530]of King Nā'od bin Admās bin Zar'ā Yā'qob[531] is inside the church. Bēt Amḥārā has other churches in it that belonged to earlier kings, but a construction like this church was not to be found.

[His troops reassure Wanāg Sagad]

After the king had divided his forces to defend the gateways, he entered the church of his father and gazed around it, to the right and to the

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[525]A measure of length common among Greeks, Romans and other nations: originally the length of the human forearm from the tips of the fingers (or the wrist) to the elbow: roughly equal to a foot and a half. (S) The Ethiopian cubit, known in Ge'ez as *emnat*, was considered as the distance from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, i.e. about 17 inches. R.Pankhurst, 'A Preliminary History of Ethiopian Measures, Weights and Values, I,' 32-5. (P)

[526]Makāna Sellāsē, literally Place of the Trinity. Leslau, *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez*, pp. 299, 529-30. (P)

[527]بيت ثلاث الـــه : sic! See *Qur'ān* ix, 30,31 etc. The name, however, means the House of the Trinity - i.e. three Divine Persons in the Christian sense, not three gods. (S)

[528]*Qur'ān* xvii, 43. (S)

[529]*Qur'ān* cxii, 3-4. (S)

[530]The building, and endowing, of churches was, as frequently reported in the Ethiopian royal chronicles, a major preoccupation of the country's rulers, many of whom were subsequently buried in the places of worship they had built. Alvares recalls that emperors prior to his time had made the province of Amhārā 'a great foundation of churches for their tombs, and endowed each one with large revenues'. He states that Nā'od's remains were taken to Makāna Sellāsē in the early 1520s, during the Portuguese residence in the country. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 256-7. (P)

[531]زراقوب . (S)

left, [f°59] and said, 'Those Muslims[532] want to burn down this church which is the Royal See, and the dwelling place of earlier kings'.

The storyteller, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, says: Every king who ruled Abyssinia built churches in Bēt Amḥārā and when he died, he was carried there, and they buried him inside the church in a tomb.

After the king had spoken as we have related, those who were with him said to him, 'O king, don't grieve and don't distress yourself. The Muslims will never come as you have described. We would rather give our lives in fighting to save it.' He answered them, 'In the light of what you have said, each of you must hold his respective Gate.' They replied, 'Hearing is obeying,' and then set out, each in his assigned area. The king, meanwhile, marched towards the gate of Wāṣal, and remained there.

[Goitā Nūr sacks and burns the church at Kesāyah]

The imām, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, after Abjad had marched out, set out behind him. He commanded Goitā Nūr to march to Kesāyah[533] in the region of Gedem, and he duly set out. A mighty church that belonged to earlier kings was to be found there, in which there were one-thousand monks. He arrived there and burnt it down, seizing the gold and much more besides, that was in it. The imām set out after him for the region of Kesāyah, with a much depleted force. Arriving there he pitched camp there and sent a messenger to the land of Gañ, calling upon them to become Muslims. When he reached them, some people amongst them converted to Islam.[534]

As for Abjad, he met up with the imām in the region of Kesāyah, as did Wanāg Jān from among the Christians, who had with him five-hundred foot-soldiers armed with white shields. They became Muslims by means of him. The people of Abyssinia took more pride in their white shields made of hide, than they did in their horses.

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[532]Reading المسلمون for المسلون. (S)

[533]Kasāyah, an area in Gedem. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 129. (P)

[534]B omits 'When ... Islam'. (S)

[Šāfa'ū seeks immunity, and betrays the king]

One of the Muslims, a man from the province of Aršūna, had been in the service of the king, who esteemed him. When the imām reached Kesāyah, the above-mentioned man sent a message to the theologian[535] Abū Bakr al-Aršūna asking him: 'Could you get a promise of immunity for me from the Imām? I am afraid that he will punish me because I, who am a Muslim, have served the king. So the theologian went to the imām and obtained the promise of immunity for him. The imām sent his *muezzin*, Kabīr Nūr, to the man whose name was Šāfa'u,[536] from the people of Aršūna, the province of the theologian al-Aršūna. The *muezzin* went to him, and this man accompanied him back to the imām with rare gifts and with sweet-natured mules from the king's herd.

The imām questioned him about the king: 'What region is he in?' He replied, 'In Bēt Amḥārā. He has split up his forces to guard the entrances. His brother-in-law Dēgālhān is quite close to you, at the Miyāt gate. The king himself is at the Wāṣal gate. The patrician Dāgālḥān had sent for me to join him. But when I heard about you, that you had reached the region of Kesāyah, I deserted him and I came to you.' The imām asked him, 'How great a distance is there between us and the king?' To which he replied, 'Six days' march; and to Dēgalḥān, four days. And between you and Rās Baniyāt, there is only this daunting mountain: one day's march.'.

[The messengers sent to Farašaḥam 'Ali are killed]

When the imām heard this news he sent a messenger to the emir 'Alī saying to him, 'Leave the region where you are and come to me as quickly as you can, for I have need of you.' The messenger set off, but was killed before he could reach the emir 'Alī. The imām was unaware of his having been killed.

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[535] الفقيه : see *supra* note[147]. (S)

[536] شافعو . (S)

In the same way he wrote to the wazir 'Addolī on the day that he made him chief emir over the emirs. He said to him, 'Send me Absamā Nūr with an armed force.' So he sent him with sixty knights and a great force of infantry. He reached the imām in Kesāyah carrying with him a letter from the wazir 'Addolī in which he said, 'We have done what you commanded us to do. We are based in Lālibālā in the region of Faṭagār.

When Absamā Nūr arrived, the imām - may Almighty God have mercy upon him - welcomed him, and questioned him about the emir 'Alī, 'What province is he in? I have sent him a messenger, asking him to come here; but no reply has come from him.' The imām had no knowledge of what had happened to the messenger. So the imām sent him a second messenger, and a third: but each was killed on the road. Then the imām asked Absamā Nūr, 'What shall we do? We have no idea where he is. But let us send a messenger to the wazir 'Addolī because the army that is with him is as numerous as dust particles. Part of the army can be sent to us, and the rest can remain with him.'

[The imām writes to the wazir 'Addolī]

Thereupon the imām wrote a letter to the wazir 'Addolī in which he said: 'In the name of Allāh the All-merciful, the Compassionate. Praised by God, the Lord of the worlds. May God bless and grant salvation to our lord Muḥammad and his family. From the imām of the Muslims, Aḥmad bin Ibrāhīm, the holy-warrior, to the wazir 'Addolī: I render homage to God - there is no other God but Him - and I bless his Prophet Muḥammad - May God bless him and grant him salvation. Know, O 'Addolī, that we have reached the land of Gedem and that we have stationed ourselves at Kesāyah; and that the king Wanāg Sagad has entered Bēt Amḥārā, and scattered his army along all the routes and they are holding the gates against us. I sent off a letter to the emir, 'Alī, in which I commanded him to come to me. But no news or reply has reached me. I have no idea where he has gone. The only army I have with me is a much depleted force. Could you send me a section of the army with the emir Abū Bakr, and as well the emir Mujāhid with two-

hundred cavalry, and some of the infantry of the army of Baḥr? Peace be upon you and upon all the Muslims who are with you.'

The messenger set out straightaway, making the journey by night and day, and reached the wazir 'Addolī, who was in Zeqālā, after ten days. He gave him the letter, and he assembled the Muslims and read it to them. He counted off two-hundred cavalry, and five-hundred infantry armed with shields from the Muslims in the army of Baḥr,[537] and a considerable number besides. He said to them, 'Take your weaponry and set out to join the imām as he commanded you.' He put the emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn, the emir Mujāhid, and others like them, in charge.

[The scattered emirs rejoin the imām]

The imām, meantime, remained at Kesāyah for one month and ten days waiting for them, calling together the various dispersed troops that were nearby to him. The first to come in to join him was Šamsū with his troops; with him was Kabīr Muḥammad,[538] the imām's *muezzin*, who had fifteen cavalry and one-thousand foot-soldiers.

Up till that time [f°60] the emir Farašaḥam 'Alī had not arrived, for he had been in the region of Tagulat, Wagdā[539] and Mugar[540] for around two months. He returned to Dabra Berhān and remained there. He sent some people to Ifāt seeking news of the imām for him. They arrived at Ifāt and entered Ṭobyā where the deputy of Garād Aḥmūša was. They went to him and gave him news of Farašaḥam 'Alī. He asked them, 'In which province is he? The imām has sent messengers to him three times'. The unbelievers killed them along the route. The imām knew nothing of their fate.

They replied, 'Farašaḥan 'Alī was in a far distant region. Now he has gone to Dabra Berhān and awaits our reply.' He said to them, 'Go now to him and say to him that 'The imām has sent messengers three times to you' - they

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[537] *Bāḥr*, sea, but here, as elsewhere, refers to coastal or semi-coastal lands towards the Red Sea. (P)

[538] B omits the name of the imām's muezzin. (S)

[539] Wagdā, a district of northhern Šawā. Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, p. 981. (P)

[540] مجور . (S) Mugar, a tributary of the Blue Nile. (P)

had been killed along the route - 'The imām has waited for you to come to him. Now, don't sit down, don't sleep. You must commence your journey immediately upon the arrival of your messenger. The imām is in the land of Kesāyah.'

[Farašaḥam 'Alī fears the imām's wrath]

The messenger set off and reached Farašaḥam 'Alī and gave him the news. After they gave him the news, Farašaḥam 'Alī was stricken with fear of the imām. He said, 'We have not done well. We have left the imām with a depleted force.' He straightaway set out from Dabra Berhān to join the imām who had formed an ill opinion of Farašaḥam 'Alī, and had changed in his regard.

He reached the imām in Kesāyah after six days, and the latter said to him: 'You took my army, and you did what you have done. What region have you conquered?' In reply he said, 'I have sinned, O my lord,' and gave no reply save this one.

Garād Bešāra, Garād Aḥmadūš and Garād 'Ābad then said, 'We did not do well; we left you without any army. We went where you sent us. We have no excuse.' The imām said to them and to the soldiers, 'Return to your places,' and the Muslims met up with one another again, and praised Almighty God.

Two days afterwards, the emir Abū Bakr arrived. When they were near to the imām's camp, they mounted their horses and drew up the troops of Baḥr in front of their horses and went into the presence of the imām armed for battle. The latter gave thanks for all that they had done, and afterwards he ordered them to dismount from their horses. They dismounted, and spoke openly. The imām asked them, 'Where was the wazir 'Addolī when you left him?' They replied, 'We left him in Zeqālā.' He asked them, 'How far from us is he now?' They replied, 'It took us twelve days to reach you. Each day we mounted our mules early in the morning, and we did not dismount until close on sunset, so that we could reach you as soon as possible.' The imām called down God's blessing upon them, then bestowed honours upon them and treated them hospitably, and related to them news of the king.

[The suggestion of Aḥmad's *muezzin*]

After this the imām called together his closest companions and said to them, 'Our soldiers and our cavalry have been assembled; now pool your advice concerning Bēt Amḥārā for I am committed to this line of action: we will proceed straightaway against the king of Abyssinia.'

Immediately, Kabīr Muḥammad, the *muezzin* of the imām, stood up and addressed the Muslims, 'You have put your best effort into marching against Bēt Amḥārā. But the people of this region of Šajara that we have left behind us have already become Muslims. There is no need for all of us to march away, leaving Šajara without anybody. We came to you, I and Šamsū, without leaving anybody remaining in the region. At least one of us should now return to it, for if it is left in a vacuum, its people will apostatise.'

The imām said to him, 'What you said is right. Return with those of your soldiers whose experience of Islam is recent, but don't let any of the soldiers follow you who came up originally from the country of Islam; you be wary of them.'[541] Then he said to him, 'Leave with the blessing of Almighty God; may God help you'.

So Kabīr Muḥammad returned to the land of Šajara. He entered the region of Warrābā[542] and stayed only one day there. Some soldiers who came from the locality said to him, 'Close by the church that Šamsū burned down is a golden treasure that king Eskender gave as a votive offering to the church. Those who are with you,' and they pointed to a troop of his soldiers, 'know the way to the treasure. They will get it out.'[543]

When he heard what they had to say, he had the soldiers tied up, and after treating them harshly, they produced twelve golden patens for him. Then

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[541] i.e the more seasoned *mujāhidun* would be likely to desert, if given the chance. Those who had only recently converted to Islam were considered less likely to do so. How wrong the imām was in his judgement will emerge as the story unfolds. (S)

[542] Warrābā, or Warab, a locality in Šawā, mentioned in several earlier Ethiopian manuscripts. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 73, 83. (P)

[543] Fom the context it is clear that they had no intention of giving the muezzin the treasure. (S)

he asked those who had informed on them, 'Is there anything else remaining of the treasure?' They replied, 'Yes, a very large paten weighing seven-hundred ounces. It has two handles, which weigh one-hundred ounces.' Immediately he flew into a rage with them and said to them, 'Bring the paten which remains.' 'Willingly,' they replied, and then they took counsel amongst themselves. They said, 'If we give him this paten which is a votive offering to the church, given as an offering to it by the king Eskender, and regardless of whether the Muslims return to their own country, or perish here, the king will ask us, "Why did you give away the treasure?" and will punish us for having done so. Let us devise some stratagem to kill this man, and let us send a message to our companions to help us against him.'

[The soldiers plan to kill Kabīr Muḥammad]

One of them said, 'I know some Christians who are hiding in the forest. Send to them and say to them, "Come down to us as soon as day breaks and when you reach us we will turn - we and you - against him. For there is no one with him apart from our companions and he has no soldiers with him apart from us".'

So they immediately sent to them in secret and notified them about their plan. These left at night and reached the town, and Kabīr Muḥammad was oblivious of their intentions. When they observed them coming down the mountain he asked his soldiers, 'Who are these?' and they replied, 'They are idol-worshippers who are coming to do battle with you.'

Straightaway he saddled his horse, put on his body armour, and mounted. Then he said to his soldiers, 'Prepare to do battle.' They replied, 'Willingly'. And they positioned themselves in front of him.

When the idol-worshippers drew near to them they straightaway hurled slingshots, as if they were engaging them in battle. The others then left Kabīr Muḥammad by himself, and joined forces with their companions.
He charged amongst them and made a breach in their ranks, but because of the narrowness of the road there was no room for his horse to manoeuvre. All of the idol-worshippers, on the other hand, were on foot. He offered them very stiff resistance, but they so weakened him by the buffeting from the

stones, that he suddenly fell, dead, off his horse. May Almighty God have mercy upon him.

Recollection of their march against the king of Abyssinia, to Mount Wāṣal.[544] *The storyteller* says: The imām marched from Kesāyah and after two days entered the hand of Ganburah and pitched camp there. Kaled al-Warādī joined him, along with the soldiers of Yejju[545] from the people of Qawāt. Then he left Ganburah and entered Miyāt after two days, and arrived at the gate where Dēgalḥān was.

[Dēgalḥān attacks the Muslims]

When Dēḡalḥān saw the Muslims, he clad his horses in armour, drew up his army in battle array on the top of the mountain and had the drums beaten, and despatched the archers with their poisoned arrows. He said, 'Go down to the Muslims and fight them.' So they went down from [f°61] the top of the mountain as they had been commanded.

The imām, when he saw them, marched against them until he was close up to the mountain. Then he stopped under a tree which was there. He marvelled at the mountain which had only one narrow track up it, that no one could climb except on foot. The top of the mountain was cultivated, with green crops, and rivulets that cascaded down through the ploughed furrows.

Instantly, a troop of the Muslim foot-soldiers went up to the mountain, without the imām's knowledge. Some of them were Arab archers, amongst whom were 'Abd as-Salām ar-Rīfī[546] and his brother Ḥasb an-Nabī. They reached the Christian archers who were coming down to the foot of the mountain and then engaged them in battle there. They shot off their arrows. The idol-worshippers loosed one flight of arrows against the Muslims, and these fell there like rain. They fought a bloody battle there.

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[544]This appears to be a gloss that has entered the Arabic text. Note that the customary blessing for the Storyteller has been omitted. (S)

[545]Yejju, or Ejju, a district east of Lāstā. Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, pp. 908, 990. (P)

[546]The name indictes that he was a man of Rif, in Egypt. (P)

What excellent archers the Arabs are! For they fought a battle to the death. Ḥasb an-Nabī hit one of the idol-worshippers, and killed him. And his brother also hit one of them, and killed him. The Muslims and the idol-worshippers milled and thronged. One of the Muslims, the one called 'Abd as-Salām ar-Rīfī, charged at one of the idol-worshippers who struck his foot and sliced it off. At this, his friend al-Ḥājj 'Alī came to his assistance and killed the Christian.

[The keeper of Aḥmad's horse is killed]

One of the Muslims also was killed. His name was Abūn. He was the keeper of the imām's horse. The idol-worshippers on the mountain top who were hurling down stones, hit him on the head with a boulder. It fell on top of his skull and he was brained. He said, 'Now my dream has come true'. He became a martyr, may Almighty God have mercy upon him. For this man had a vision during the course of the march with the reinforcement which came to the imām with the emir Abū Bakr. He said, 'I saw something like a green flying thing which fell on top of my head and extracted my spirit, and I fell down dead.' He narrated his vision to his companions who said to him, 'What you saw is good,' to which he replied, 'I say that I will be a martyr during this expedition.' And his dream, as he described it, was proven to be right.

When the imām looked towards the mountain, what should he see but Muslims who had engaged the idol-worshippers in battle at the foot of the mountain. He became very angry and asked, 'Who ordered them to fight?'. He sent people to them to bring them back. They carried down Abūn the martyr, and buried him.

[The counsel of Aībīs Laḥaṭī]

The imām and all the Muslims then pitched camp. He assembled the Muslims, and sought out Ura'ī 'Uṭmān and the guides who were going to show them the way, that is, 'Anānīya, Ḥaīb, and Aībīs Laḥaṭī who had apostatised, and they presented themselves.

Aībīs Laḥaṭi spoke up, saying 'Now you see the mountain and the difficult path, which offers no foothold for horses. And if you say, 'We will go up without the cavalry,' what good will it do you? Even if you do engage this patrician in battle and God gives you the victory over him, you still have no way of reaching the king, or Bēt Amḥārā. Ditches have been dug at the foot of the mountain, and there are gorges and narrow defiles this side of Bēt Amḥārā, where they will do battle with you over it. As for my opinion, it is this: You should forget about this patrician, and about fighting him; proceed immediately against the king who is at the Wāṣal gate; do your fighting there. If God gives you the victory there, no one can prevent your access to Bēt Amḥārā. This patrician is of no consequence. He will not remain in his position if the king is routed. The right and proper course to follow is what I have proposed to you.'

'Anānīya then rose and said, 'What Aībīs Laḥaṭī has said is correct. He is acting in good faith in giving this advice. I am familiar with the whole of this territory. This mountain that we are on offers no foothold for cavalry. But the cavalry can move along the road that the king is guarding, the Wāṣal road, until they reach the king.'

The imām passed this information on to the emirs and his table companions: Garād Aḥmūša, the emir Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad, and the emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn. He recounted to them the advice that Aībīs Laḥaṭī and 'Anānīya had given him. They said to him, 'This advice is sound; it is right and proper. We will not attack three of the four gates. We will press our attack against only the one gate.' They were unanimous in this opinion, and they passed the night at the foot of the mountain.

[Surprise attack on Aḥmad's camp]

The storyteller, may Almighty God have mercy upon him, says: When a quarter of the night had passed, there was a surprise attack on the perimeter of the camp by the idol-worshippers who had fought the Muslims on the terrace of the mountain. They shot their arrows into the area where Mattān the Somali was. He mounted his horse and put them to flight in the dark until he drove them back up the mountain. Then he returned to his camp. None of

their arrows hit a single Muslim. When morning broke, their arrows were embedded firmly in the ground and in the tents.

As for Dēgalḥān, as soon as his companions, the archers, had returned to him in the night, he wrote a letter to the king on the spot. In it he said, 'The imām reached me with his army, but I held the entrance against them and I fought them. I killed around one-hundred-and-fifty of the imām's infantry; I captured thirty horses and killed their riders. The Muslims have fallen back and pitched camp in a spacious place. When evening fell, I sent against them archers from the people of Tegrē who mounted a surprise attack. Their accomplishments were impressive, and they killed many of them. They no longer have any stomach for fighting. They are seeking to flee towards Faṭagār.'

[The king is deceived by Dēgalḥān's letter]

He sent the letter with two men who set out that night and arrived where the king was and gave him the letter. When he had understood its contents his joy was unbounded. He blasphemed, he indulged himself, he placed the crown on his head, and seated himself on the throne. Then he assembled his people and gave them the news. They immediately beat their drums and said, 'The Cross and Māryām have saved you from your enemies.' They then passed two days in rejoicing and happiness. The king said, 'My brother-in-law has satisfied all that I hoped for'. But all this was a lie.

[Aḥmad sets out against the king]

After spending the night with his soldiers, the imām uttered a cry on the next day, and split his army into two halves. He put the wazir Nūr in command of one half, and allocated to him the cavalry, including the emir Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad, the son of the uncle of the imām, Farašaḥam 'Alī and Ura'ī Šaḥāb [f°62] al-Dīn Gedayā Jiri, son of the uncle[547] of the Sultan

[547] i.e. the Sultan's cousin. B: 'neveau du Sultan'. (S)

'Umar Dīn, and Ur'aī 'Umar Dīn, son of the Sultan Muḥammad, Garād Aḥmūša and their ilk - two-hundred knights.

He said to them, 'Hold the rear; if Dēgalḥān attacks you, fight him. I'm going to march at the head of the army, and we will attack the king of Abyssinia.' They replied, 'Hearing is obeying'. Then the imām set out at the head of the army along the narrow track. 'Anānīya went before them, pointing out the way. Ura'ī 'Uṭmān, all the while, was with the imām; he scarcely ever left his side. So they set out, taking extreme care. The patrician Dēgalḥān in the meantime, when the Muslims set out on the road to Gujmah in quest of the king, was setting out himself from the mountain, heading for where the king was, zig-zagging along a very hazardous path. As for the army that was bringing up the rear - the imām had entrusted them with the rear-guard and they were on full alert, ready for battle. So they set off.

[Dēgalḥān's brother is defeated by 'Anānīya]

While the imām was travelling at the head of the column, along with 'Anānīya his guide, Dēgalḥān's brother, called Ḥanṭās, accompanied by cavalry and soldiers, was seeking his brother the patrician Dēgalḥān. He had heard nothing of the Muslims' having left the mountain. He and the guide 'Anānīya encountered each other. The latter, who had cavalry and infantry with him, immediately encircled him, and took his soldiers, along with their horses and mules, in one fell swoop. The patrician Ḥanṭās, meanwhile, had taken cover in some trees, after dismounting from his horse, so the Muslims seized it[548] and 'Anānīya returned to the imām who gave everything to Ura'ī 'Uṭmān because the guide 'Anānīya was his servant. Ura'ī 'Uṭmān, who rejoiced exceedingly, gave everything, in his turn, to 'Anānīya.

After this, the imām pitched camp in a place called Abšalū Zarāf in the region of Gujmah, and they spent the night there. The rear-guard reached the camp after dusk. The imām had the guide 'Anānīya summoned, and when he

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[548]The text is ambiguous: واخذوه المسلمون : either Hantas or his horse or both of them could be the object of the verb. As there is no further reference to the fate of Hantas, I incline to the view that they took the *horse*, and not its rider. (S)

presented himself, commented to him, 'The road that we travelled today was very narrow,' to which 'Anānīya replied, 'And the road that we take tomorrow will be even narrower than the road we have travelled.'

['Anānīya advises the imām]

The imām asked him, 'So, what shall we do now?' He replied, 'Divide the army into three divisions: one division with you, one in the van and the other at the rear. You travel at the head of the army, with a division in the middle.

When the imām heard this counsel, he said to Garād Aḥmūša, 'You shall take the centre of the army.' He assigned men to him, among whom were Bešāra, 'Alī al-Warādī, Garād 'Ābid and others of their ilk: fifty knights. Then the imām ordered them to move out, with him in the van of the army, and their guide, 'Anānīya, at their head.

From dawn until midday they trudged, made heavy going of the march along the hazardous road, walking in single file because of the difficulty of the path and because of the trees. Then the mountains of Wāṣal loomed up before them. The imām asked the guide, 'What mountains are these that we can see? What region are they in?' 'Anānīya replied, 'This is the region of Wāṣal. It is alleged that the king is on top of this mountain range.' The imām asked, 'And is the king residing there now?' The guide replied, 'About this, I know only what we have heard while with you. But I will mount and set off and bring you back news.' So he mounted his horse, and four knights accompanied him.

['Anānīya captures some shepherds]

They had not gone far with him when they met some of the idolaters' shepherds who asked the guide, 'Who are you from?' 'From the army of the companions of Dēgalḥān. He has sent us to the king; we have with us a letter for him. Do you have any knowledge of the king's whereabouts? What town is he in?' The shepherds replied, 'Yes, the king is on top of these mountains,

in the region of Haga.' Immediately they made them captive, but they did not let them know that they were Muslims. They said to them, 'You will act as guides for us on the way to the king,' and arrived with them at where the imām was.

'Anānīya said to the imām, 'These are shepherds belonging to the idol-worshippers. We seized them, and they have informed us about the whereabouts of the king. He is on top of the mountain.' The imām said, 'Kill them now, in case they carry news to the idol-worshippers.' 'Anānīya replied, 'These know nothing about us; nor do the people of the region know anything about us. If we kill them, then the people of the region will know that we are Muslims and they will carry news concerning us to the king. If we let them go, then they will not be any the wiser about us.' The imām said, 'You are right. Set them free.'

[The Muslims see the king's pavilion for the first time]

Then the imām and the Muslims set out on their way.[549] The imām instructed his soldiers, 'If you meet up with one of the Christians, speak to him only in their language.[550] Don't tell anyone that you are Muslims. If you encounter anyone, say, "We belong to Dēgalḥān's army and we are travelling to the king".'

So they set out in earnest on the journey. They had gone only a short distance when, from afar, they saw something white on the mountain top. What had caught their attention from afar was the king's pavilion, pitched on the mountain top. They were able to pick it out from two days' journey away because of its great size. It was sixty cubits long, and fifty cubits high at its topmost point. This kind of structure was commonly erected by the Abyssinian kings. When the Muslims realised that what they had seen was the king's pavilion,[551] and that it was impossible for them to proceed as before,

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[549]B reads في طريقهم as 'la route indiqué par les bergers'. (S)

[550]Presumably the imām is asking them to speak in Amharic. (P)

[551]Lebna Dengel, according to Alvares, made use of a number of white tents, as well as one red one, which were erected on occasion of major festivals. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the*

they marched slowly so that those coming after them could catch up with them. They had put on, had dressed themselves in Christian apparel. The imām said to them, 'By God, do not speak except in the Yejju[552] language.'

While they were proceeding along the way, there were Christians in their vicinity. All of the idol-worshippers were at their work. They never suspected that the Muslims were not Christians.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: While they were on their way, a Christian woman came, crying out to the imām, thinking him to be the patrician Dēgalḥān. She drew near to the imām, and he sought to speak to her in the Yejju language. But he spoke in the language of the Muslims,[553] saying 'give back her possessions.' She understood his language, fell back towards the rear and sat down, saying, 'These are Muslims,' but no one paid any attention to her.

The Muslims continued on their way, while the Christians went about their business: some of them were tilling the soil; others were washing their garments; others were transporting the King's flour to the mountain where he was; others were ascending the mountain to seek the king's judgement. They were so ignorant of the presence of the Muslims that the latter arrived at the town of Wāṣal, which they bypassed on their right, and went on until they reached the mountain on whose [f°63] summit the king of Abyssinia was. They rested below the mountain.

The Christians had no inkling of them. They were rejoicing and happy because of the message that Dēgalḥān had sent, in which he said, 'I was victorious over them; they have gone down to Faṭagār.'

Indies, I, 267. See also R.Pankhurst, 'The Tents of the Ethiopian Court,' pp. 181-95. (P)

[552] العجـــو : sic! seems to be the name of a district. See *infra* p.292 where Bešāra leaves with 'soldiers of 'Ijjū'. B: 'en langue 'idjdjou (barbare?).' (S) Possibly a reference to the language of Yejju, a locality in Wallo, or, perhaps more generally, to Amharic, a tongue which is nowhere specifically mentioned in the *Futūḥ*. Yejju today speaks a regional dialect of Amharic significantly different from that in most other areas. Basset's suggestion (*Histoire de la conquête*, p. 291) that the passage refers to an Agaw language would seem improbable in that there is no evidence of a presence of Agaws in the Yejju area. (P)

[553] Presumably a reference to the Adaré, or Hārari, language. (P)

The guide 'Anānīya went looking for the imām and said to him, 'This is the place; we have reached it.' The imām asked him, 'Let us have your opinion: what do you think?' He replied, 'This is what I think: let us remain here until your force is at full strength. Let us spend the night here and when morning comes we will line up the cannon that we have with us. By then the rear guard will have caught up with us. The foot-soldiery will proceed ahead of the cavalry, and then we will ascend the mountain. Then may God grant us the victory.'

[The imām decides to attack the king immediately]

The imām asked, 'Have these Christians worked out that we are Muslims; do they or do they not think that we are Dēgalḥān's army?' The guide replied, 'The idol-worshippers are not at all aware that you are Muslims. They have no idea that you are anything but Dēgalḥān's army.'

Then the imām replied, 'If they know nothing about us, what are we waiting for? Let us ascend the mountain now.' 'But,' the guide asked, 'Where is the army of cavalry and foot-soldiers that was bringing up our rear? Shouldn't we wait for them?' The imām replied, 'We may be only thirty knights and fifty foot-soldiers, but the latter will proceed ahead of the horses, and we will begin the climb putting our trust in God. The rear-guard will catch up with us as we are making the ascent. And as for passing the night here, the idol-worshippers would get to know about us, take their battle positions, and block the way against us. It would take only one man to dislodge a boulder on top of us to cause more devastation than our cannons of which you speak. No, let us make the ascent now.'

When the guide saw that the imām was determined upon going up, he said, 'As for me, I have no opinon aside from this. It is for you to command'. Then the emir Abū Bakr, and Balaw 'Abduh, rose and said, 'O our Lord, the guide spoke the truth in what he said.' The imām gave no reply, but said to Absamā Nūr, 'Didn't you say to me, "Let us go up by the path held by Dēgalḥān"? Now I say to you that I know a point of entry easier of access than the one guarded by Dēgalḥān. This is that point of entry.' At which

Absamā Nūr said, 'You are right; it was as you say. So now let us die, or[554] let us make the ascent.'

[The battle of Wāṣal begins]

The imām mounted his horse and said to his companions, 'Make your preparations for battle; and may God bless you.' So his companions put on their armour, among them Absamā Nūr, the emir Mujāhid, the emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn, Aḥmad Goitā, Ādmūš, Ura'ī Abū Bakr, 'Alī Goitā, Balaw 'Abduh, 'Alī Ṭāī Ijir, Ura'ī 'Uṭmān bin Dār 'Alī, Ya'qīm, Azmāč Ḥaībī, Farašaḥam Sulṭān and the night-watchman of the imām, by name 'Aīsa, who was a Ṣūfī.

The imām mounted his horse called *Sakb*,[555] and then summoned Šamsū, the commander of the infantry and said, 'Divide into two sections: go up by the side of the mountain and make your way among the trees. We will proceed by the road. If any one of the Christians obstructs us, then you will be above them. Attack them.'

To the other division under the command of Fanj Sabbar he said, 'You march before our horses.' Instantly they unsheathed their swords, held their shields on their heads, and set off.

After they had gone, the imām addressed Absamā Nūr, one of the Muslim knights, and said to him, 'Go on ahead and march with the infantry, along with the emir Mujāhid, with Ādmūš, and Aḥmad Goitā.' The imām was with the emir Abū Bakr, Farašaḥam Sulṭān 'Ali Goitā, 'Ali Ṭāī Ijir, and Balaw 'Abduh. These followed them, along with the remainder of his companions in the cavalry who were behind them. Thus they ascended the mountain, and the idol-worshippers had no knowledge and heard no news of the Muslims.

The imām and his companions had travelled half the distance when one of the Muslim foot-soldiers, who was heavily addicted to *qāt* and to dried

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[554]Reading او for و. (S)

[555] سكب : a popular name for a horse: wide in step, fleet-footed, brisk, lively, sprightly. The first horse possessed by Muḥammad bore the name السكب and a horse of this name belonged to Šebīb Ibn Mu'āwiyāh . See Lane, *op. cit.* iv, p.1388. (S)

green dates[556] and was below the mountain, set fire to a big church that was there. The idol-worshippers could see the conflagration from the mountain top, and excitement spread from one to another.[557] The Muslims wheeled around in the direction of the fire and when the imām saw it he said, 'May God not bless whoever did this,' and then said to his companions, 'Give your horses the whip and ascend, for the idol-worshippers have noticed the conflagration.'

Some of the idol-worshippers meantime saddled their horses, while others took hold of their shields. While all this was happening, the Muslim cavalry that had gone ahead with Absamā Nūr broke through their midst crying, 'God is great,' and slackened their reins.

The first one of them to attack was Admūš. He struck one of the soldiers of the idol-worshippers, and made him tumble down off his horse, dead. Absamā Nūr was in their midst calling out, 'There is no God but Allāh, and Muḥammad is the Prophet of God,' and the idol-worshippers fled to the pavilion of the king, and took refuge there. Some of them deserted in full view of them.

[The king supervises the defence]

Then the king emerged from his pavilion and mounted his horse along with his chamberlains who numbered around four-hundred knights. The king was in their midst as they formed a protective perimeter around him. The rest of the army that was carrying shields asembled in a throng.

When the idol-worshippers closed ranks around the pavilion of the king, the Muslims stood their ground until the imām reached them. The latter was reviewing the infidel forces that had gathered at the king's pavilion when they were joined by fifteen Muslim knights who were like raging lions. Among them was 'Abd an-Nāṣr, Ṣabr ad-Dīn, the knight of the Muslims and

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[556]'Green dates'. The reading is obscure. B takes ـــرء to be an alcoholic substance 'que je n'ai pu identifier'. See *supra* notes[346, 425]. (S)

[557]B omits 'from one to another'. (S)

of all of them the most courageous, with Garād Mattān, 'Abjad and others of their ilk.

[Jūšū changes sides]

The Muslims were holding their ground, and the idol-worshippers were doing the same, when a knight rode out at full pelt from the midst of the infidel army in the direction of the Muslims. Ṣabr ad-Dīn moved out to engage him, and raised his spear to stab at him when the knight uttered the cry, 'There is no God but Allāh, and Muḥammad is the Prophet of God,' so he held back from striking him for he was astonished at what he said. The imām had heard his cry, and asked him, 'Who are you?' He answered, 'I am Jūšū . I believe in God and in the Prophet. My son Bešāra is with you; I am his father.' The imām replied, 'God is the greatest. Leave him be. He is a Muslim.' Thereupon Ura'ī Abū Bakr exclaimed to the imām, 'What are we waiting for now? God is with us,' and the imām Aḥmad replied, 'Charge, and I will be at your head'.

The storyteller, may God Almighty have mercy upon him, says: While they were concerned about making the charge, their primary concern was with pleasing the Most Holy, as the Most High says, 'Of the believers there are men who remain true to the covenant that they have entered into with God.'[558]

They charged as one man, jostling one another so that they could get the better of the idol-worshippers, and broke through their midst, scattering their massed ranks, and engaged them in battle.

[The Abyssinian forces are routed]

An hour had scarcely elapsed before God cast fear into the heart of the infidel army and they turned tail with the Muslims in pursuit of them, killing them until they arrived at a mountain which was there, a lofty mountain named Ḥaguh. When the idol-worshippers reached the mountain the Muslims advanced, and moved against them, [f°64] to do battle with them.

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[558] *Qur'ān* xxxiii, 23. (S)

One of the Muslims whose name was Āū[559] Abū Bakr Faqīr[560] aš-Šaiḵ al-Barḵallī - God bestowed a benefit upon us through him Amen - charged one of the infidels who was one of the king's nobles. He plucked him from his saddle, and demanded of him 'Are you the king of Abyssinia?'. 'No,' he replied, 'I am not the king of Abyssinia. Don't kill me. This is the king of Abyssinia,' and he pointed to where the king was, with his finger.

Abu Bakr replied, 'You are trying to deceive me.' While they were speaking, some soldiers noticed that their lord had been captured by the above-mentioned person. So they charged. Some of them seized his horse, while others struck him. The imām, who arrived after the idol-worshippers had captured that *faqīr*, saw him in their hands, and then charged, rescuing him from them.

[The imām is recognized]

The king of Abyssinia looked at the imām, and at the sword in his left hand - for he was left-handed[561] - and recognized him from the trappings of his horse, and from the sword in his left hand. He cried out to his companions, 'Satan has come to you in person,' and his soldiers yelled at the imām, saying 'You have betwitched us; you have bewitched us,' by which they meant in their language that he was a sorcerer who knew the trees, and cut pieces off them to use them in sorcery. But they were lying.

The imām broke through their midst, and split their ranks, doing battle with them with no false show of bravery. They fled to the mountain, but could find no track in it so they dismounted from their horses, held their reins in their hands, and went about looking for a path by which they could climb the

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[559] *Au*, an Adaré, or Hārari, title used for an old, and respected elder. (P)

[560] فقير : a person physically or spiritually needy. The term is sometimes used as a self-deprecatory one by authors. It is used also of a Sufī mendicant. (S)

[561] This passage, which has perhaps not received the attention it deserves, establishes beyond doubt that the imām was in fact left-handed, as Ethiopian tradition consistently asserts. See for example Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique du règne de Ménélik II*, I, 39; Marcus, *History of Ethiopia*, pp. 31-4. (P)

mountain. Then the imām cried out at them saying, 'Leave our [562] horses and save yourselves because we are are catching up with you.'

[Desperate attempts to escape the carnage]

When the idol-worshippers heard their cries and their words, they became frightened. In the grip of terror they abandoned their horses, and climbed the mountain on their knees. One of them grabbed hold of a tree to pull himself up, but the branch of the tree broke and he fell to the ground below, and the Muslims killed him. Another of them scaled the mountain but only after strenuous effort on his part.

The imām sent to the place where the horses that had been abandoned by their riders were to be found. There were around seventy of them, with their saddle clothes made of crimson broadcloth.

The remainder of the Muslims, meanwhile, were all at some distance, similarly killing and taking prisoners.

In the imām's force was Absamā Nūr, Ya'qīm, Ādmūš, the emir Mujāhid, Garad Aḥmadūš son of the emir Maḥfūẓ, Farašaḥam Saṭūt and 'Abd Allāh bin Muḥarram al-Mahrī.

[The fate of the king of Abyssinia]

The storyteller of the *Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša* says: The king of Abyssinia dismounted from his horse and proceeded cautiously. He had with him five led horses that he guided ahead of him by their reins and their harnesses because of the narrowness of the path.

The imām had left by a different route with his companions. They dismounted from their horses and travelled by foot. The rest of the Muslims, that is to say Garād 'Uṭmān bin Jūhar and Ura'ī 'Uṭmān, had outdistanced the king *en route*, and, when he saw them he hid himself in some trees there and they had no idea that he was there. While all this was going on, the imām

[562] خيلنا : sic! B: 'les chevaux'. (S)

reached them with his companions who were biding their time, waiting for the king to reach them from below, for they had reached the top ahead of him.

Suddenly a knight galloped towards them. Ura'ī 'Uṭmān charged him and took him, seizing him by hand. He was a distinguished patrician, of a high rank close to the king. When the imām saw him he ordered that he be put to death, and God cast his soul into the fire.

While they were waiting, the sun set, the clouds came swirling in and the rain started falling. The cold was bitter, so the Muslims retraced their steps in order to re-group with their companions.

After they had gone back down, the king emerged from his hiding place and took the path for the Ambā,[563] travelling through the night.

The Muslims meawhile had rejoined their companions who had lighted their fires and entered with joy and gladness the tents of the idol-worshippers which were crammed full of booty - gold, silver, horses and mules, silk, innumerable royal robes, silk brocade furnishings that belonged to the king and to his courtiers, women of surpassing beauty, the daughters of patricians, the sons of patricians, and thousands of other items. The domed tent of the king remained on its site, with his throne and his weapons inside it.

[The king's pavilion
is cut to shreds on Friday October 27, 1531 AD]

When the imām arrived there he gave glory to God the Most High for the victory, and asked his companions, 'What have you done with what was inside the king's pavilion?' They replied, 'The Muslims have taken all his weapons, but the king's throne and the silk brocades are still where they were.' The imām said, 'As for the pavilion, I don't need it; cut it up and take it away. But bring me the throne and the silk brocade drapes'. So the soldiers went to the big tent that belonged to the king, and cut it to shreds with their knives.

The Muslims passed the night in joy and contentment, and only a little of the night had passed when the division that was bringing up the centre

[563] Ambā Gešen (see *infra*, note[588]), a mountain where sons of former rulers were kept in detention. (P)

arrived, with Garād Aḥmūša. As they were climbing the mountain, the horse of Garād Aḥmūsa - its name *Ḏu al-Jinā* [564] had been given to it by the Imām - had that very day lost its footing, fallen down, been smashed to pieces and died on the spot. Garād Aḥmūša wept for his horse, so the imām gave him a choice one from among the led horses of the king.

The rear-guard had not taken part in the battle and spent the night *en route*. They arrived the next day, and the Muslims greeted them, one the other, and they rejoiced exceedingly because the Most High God had given them the victory. To each one of them the imām gave a horse, saying, 'Since you were not with us at the battle, you haven't taken anything.'

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him says: The battle of Wāṣal took place on Friday 16 Rabī' al-awwali, in the year 938 of the prophetical *hijra*.[565] May the most gracious blessing and peace be upon him who won it.

[Introduction to the invasion of Bēt Amḥārā]

The recollection of their journey to Bēt Amḥārā which is a region of flat arable land, standing crops, rivers and copious rain, of wheat and barley. In it are their scribes,[566] their priests and monks. It is also the residence of their kings, but the king does not reside there permanently. No king who reigns over Abyssinia can exercise his rule unless he has been enthroned in Bēt Amḥārā. They call the people there who serve the churches, *Dabtarā*,[567]

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[564]'Master of Paradise'. (S)

[565]i.e. October 27, 1531. (S)

[566]Elsewhere (p.273 *infra*) it is noted with some pride that Kabīr Abūn knew how to write and count. (S) A reference to Dabtarās (see the following note). (P)

[567]*Dabtarā*, a lay 'cleric,' or cantor. Members of this group, who, like Ethiopian Orthodox priests could be married, were in many cases highly reputed for their learning, and varied skills. These, according to the modern American social anthropologist Donald Levine, 'combined those of chorister, poet, dancer, herbologist, scribe, and wizard'. Levine, *Wax and Gold*, pp. 171-3. See also Hyatt, *The Church of Abyssinia*, p. 59; and Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, p 92. The term *dabtarā*, contrary to the *Futūḥ*, does not signify 'eloquent theologian,' but is related to the term for 'skin, leather or parchment,' i.e. recalls the clerics' writing skills. Leslau, *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez*, p. 122. (P)

which means in their language 'eloquent theologians'. These are Christian people whom the king regards with beneficence and diffidence. Some of them become advisers to the king, while others are related to him by marriage.[568]

The imām set out on the third day after the battle for Bēt Amḥārā and passed the night in a place called Lālibālā where the water was so frozen that some[569] Muslims perished from the cold. When somebody wanted to drink, he had to stab the ice with an iron pick, [f°65] and smash it to get the last drop of water.

Then they left Lālibālā, and the king's church that was in Bēt Amḥārā loomed up before them. When the guide saw it, he stood in his tracks and said to the imām, 'This is the church that you see; you have arrived'. The imām asked the guide, 'Shall we, or shall we not, wait here until our army and our soldiers catch up with us? The guide replied, 'We should remain until we and the army can enter it together; and we should be armed and ready for war.'

[The churches of Bēt Amḥārā]

So the imām waited until the Muslim force was at full strength. Then he asked the guide, 'What is the number of the churches that are here?' He listed a great number of churches, among them the church called Makāna Sellasē; the church Atronsa Māryām [570] that king Zar'ā Yā'qob, son of king

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[568] Though monarchs were often advised by members of the clergy, many of whom would be attached to the royal court, there is no record of any *dabtarā* being related to the Emperors by marriage. (P)

[569] ناس من المسلمون : B and A.-P. translate 'beaucoup'. (S)

[570] Atronsa Māryām, or Atronsa Egzetena Māryām, literally Throne of Mary, was a settlement in the district of Kelanto, in Amhārā, and site of a fine church of that name. Emperor Sayfa Ar'ād (1342-1370) is said to have first contemplated building a church there, but failed to do so. The work was, however, later carried out by Emperor Ba'eda Māryām, who, having cleared a forest in the area, constructed, and endowed, an important church. Perruchon, *Chroniques de Zar'a Yâ'eqôb et de Ba'eda Mâryâm*, pp. 119-20, 123-4, 126, 130, 144, 169-70, 177. It was there that Ba'eda Māryām was later buried by his son Emperor Eskender, though the body was later transported to Dabra Warq, in Gojjām. Perruchon, 'Histoire d'Eskender, d' 'Amda Ṣeyon et de Nā'od,' pp. 327, 363 See also Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, p. 886; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 80, 150. One of the paintings at Atronsa Māryām, a representation of the Virgin and Child, painted by a *Farang*, or Frank, was reported by an Ethiopian chronicler to have incurred the 'anger of the Ethiopian people,' but survived until the reign of Emperor Tēwoflos (1708-1711), when it was destroyed by

Daāwit, built; the church Dabra Nagwadgwād[571] and the church of Bēt Samāyāt.[572]

The imām sent Muslims against all of the churches, with the exception of the church of Makāna Sellasē to which the imām himself went. Against the church of Atronsa Māryām he sent the wazir Nūr bin Ibrahīm, may the Most High God have mercy upon him. To the church of Dabra Nagwadgwād he sent Saīdī Muḥammad with his army. Bešāra bin Juša was sent against the church of Bēt Samāyāt.

[The pillaging of Makāna Sellasē]

For his part, the imām went to Makāna Sellasē pausing with his force at its wall, and the imām, in amazement, entered it. His close friends entered with him. When he saw it, he was almost blinded by its dazzling brilliance. The church was embellished with gold and silver plates, encrusted with pearls. The door panels were made of wood ten cubits long and four cubits wide. They had covered the top of it with embellishments of gold and silver, and above the gold there were precious stones of many colours. The church was one-hundred cubits long, and its width was the same. The height of its topmost point was one-hundred-and-fifty cubits. Its ceiling and its courtyards were covered in plates of gold, and with images of gold. They were stupified

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Oromo raiders. The earlier destruction of Atronsa Māryām, by the imām's forces, is also mentioned in the royal chronicle. It states that the place was burnt down by the imām's men on 6 Hedār 1524, i.e. 3 November 1531. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, pp. 13, 17-18. (P)

[571]Dabra Nagwadgwād, literally Place of Thunder, was at this time a notable monastery in Amhārā. The establishment, according to the chronicle of Emperor Zar'a Yā'qob, was actually built by that ruler, and not by his son Ba'eda Māryām. The monastery's importance is evident from the fact that it was at Dabra Nagwadgwād, that the former monarch buried his father, Emperor Dāwit I, and his mother, Queen Egzi'e Kebra. Perruchon, *Chroniques de Zar'a Yâ'eqôb et de Ba'eda Mâryâm*, pp. 28, 53, 65, 86-7, 89, 116-17, 120, 126, 130, 169, 172; Perruchon, 'Histoire d'Eskender, d' 'Amda Ṣeyon et de Nā'od,' pp. 329, 365; Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique du règne de Ménélik II*, II, 564. (P)

[572]Bēta Samāyāt, literally House (or Church) of Heaven. A mountain of the same name, in Tegrē, later figured during the reign of Emperor Iyāsu II (1730-1755) Rās Mika'él, the notable ruler of the province, stored away his gold on that mountain. According to Bruce, on one occasion he punningly declared that, 'All the gold he had was in Heaven,' by which he of course meant the mountain of Samāyāt. Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*, III, 657. (P)

by the workmanship. The Muslims who had not entered it, yelled out to the imām saying, 'Open the door so that we can enter it, and take some pleasure in looking at it.' So he opened to them, and the Muslims swarmed in. The imām said, 'Whatever anyone takes shall be his, apart from the plates.' So they set to work with a thousand axes, ripping out the gold and the precious stones which were in the church, from the time of the afternoon prayer, until the time of evening prayer.

Each took as much gold as he could carry. They enriched themselves with so much booty that they would never more be in want. More than a third of its gold was burnt in the church. The imām spent the night close by the church.

[The fate of the king's palaces]

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: The imām asked all the Arabs who were with him, 'Is there the like of this church, with its images and its gold, in Byzantium, or in India, or in any other place?' They replied, 'We never saw or heard of its like in Byzantium or India or anywhere in the world.'

[The treasure of Atronsa Māryām]

Close by the church there were three dwellings belonging to the king who resided in them. Inside them were wondrous things for those who saw them. The imām entered one of them and resided there. A second he gave to the emir Aḥmūša and to the emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn. The two emirs entered the dwelling with their forces and it accommodated all of them. The third dwelling, the imām turned into a mosque.

The emir Nūr, in the meantime, had arrived at the church of Atronsa Māryām, entered it, and was astounded at its workmanship. But as for gold, they found none in it. The idol-worshippers who looked after it had taken the gold that was in it away. In its vicinity they found four monks. The emir Nūr asked the monks, 'Where is the church's treasure?' They answered, 'We

won't show you, even if we die for the religion of Māryām.' So the Muslims killed them.

One of the Muslims, named Farašaḥam 'Alī, rose and noticed a house in the vicinity of the church, locked up with iron bars. He smashed some of them, and then poked his head in so that he could see what was inside. He saw boxes, piled one on top of the other, from the floor to the ceiling of the house. So he returned to the wazir Nūr and told him about the house.

The wazir accompanied him to the house, and stood at its door. Then he counted off some of his soldiers, around one-hundred of them, and said to them, 'Go in and bring out the treasure.' Each one of them carried out a bundle of silk brocade, and came out with it many times, but the house looked the same. They grew exhausted from the labour, and sat down. The wazir Nūr asked them, 'What are you sitting down for? Is the house empty?' They replied, 'Even though we have brought out a great deal, the house still looks the same, and we are exhausted.' He said to them, 'You have brought out only the brocades made out of crocodile skin[573] and velvet cloth and other plush material, and silk. Isn't there any gold inside?' They replied, 'There is gold in a corner of the house, but we began to remove from the area where the boxes are which contain the brocades.'

So he said to others of them, 'You bring out the gold, and leave the brocades.' So they went in and brought out to him the gold and the silver, and vessels of gold, like thuribles, and cups,[574] all of them gold. Ten strong men carried them and put them down before him.

The wazir Nūr summoned his companions, one-thousand men in all and said to them, 'This is my share; and this is the imām's share. Now you go into the house, and take out for yourselves whatever is in it. Whatever each one takes, that is his.' So they went in, and each man carried away some red

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[573] lit. 'silk brocade from the crocodile' : ديباج من التمساح . B: 'et de la soie'. I take this curious phrase to mean brocade made out of crocodile skin, or with a crocodile-like design. ديباج usually means silk brocade. See *infra* note[654]. (S) Were crocodile skin the correct reading the use of such skin would be remarkable in that the crocodile was an abhorred animal. (P)

[574] فناجين : an Arabicized Persian word that means small porcelain or earthenware cups out of which coffee is drunk. As they were of gold, and from the church, they were, presumably, chalices. (S)

gold, silver and silk. Some of them took out three loads; some of them took out four loads. And they never ceased carrying out treasure from afternoon until evening; and from evening until morning.

The wazir said to them, 'Now that you've satisfied your appetite for booty, you have no camels to carry it for you: so you carry it on your shoulders, and on your mules. The house is still full of treasure and of silk, but we are not going to leave this immense quantity of silk for the idol-worshippers. We will burn it.' Then he said, 'Burn the house,' and they burnt it along with its silk brocades. And the church they burnt to a cinder.

Then they returned to the imām, and arrived to find him dwelling in the king's house. The imām received his share of the gold and the silk brocade. The amount of gold could not be calculated. Among it was a golden calf with four feet that they used to call *Tābot*[575] and which weighed more than one-thousand ounces - a book of gold, with a human image inside it; representations of birds and lions and golden plates from which four persons could eat. The imām gave four plates to Saīd aš-Šarīf Mujāhid Jamāl ad-Dīn Marzūq - may God assist us through him; and one of them to Saīd Muḥammad Handul; [f°66] the rest of them the imām put in the treasure house of the Muslims.

With regard to Saīdī Muḥammad and Bešāra who had set off for the Church of Bēt Samāyāt which the mother of the king Wanāg Sagad[576] had built: they entered it, and saw marvellous things in it. But they found no treasure. In it they met four monks whom they questioned about the treasure and the gold. These said, 'The mother of the king was interred in a sarcophagus in the church. When news of your coming reached them they

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[575]The reference is evidently to a *manbara tābot*, an often elaborate wooden container, or contraption, in many cases painted, or perhaps gilt, which served to hold the *tābot*, or altar slab, said to represent the tablet on which the Ten Commandments were written, and other holy or valuable articles. Besides a *tābot* the *manbara tābot* in question could well have contained other valuables, including a manuscript bound in gold, as the author says, and 'golden plates'. The said manuscript might very likely have been adorned with one or more Biblical or other religious image, embodying the human image, which was anathema to Islamic thinking. For a photograph of a not untypical large *manbara tābot* see Hyatt, *Church of Abyssinia*, p.119. See also R.Pankhurst, 'The Ethiopian tābot, or altar slab, and the manbara tābot, or altar,' pp. 460-4. (P)

[576]Lebna Dengel's mother was Emperor Nā'od's consort Queen Sabla Wangél. (P)

took the mother of the king and the treasure that was with her, and took them to the Ambā. So, on the spot, the two of them set fire to the church, at which the monks wept and entered it and were burnt to death inside it. May the Most High God fight them.

[The fate of Dabra Nagwadgwād]

Bešāra then regrouped with Saīdī Muḥammad and they set off for the imposing church of Dabra Nagwadgwād that king Admās son of Zar'ā Ya'qob had built. They arrived at it, entered it and discovered vast treasure in it. King Admās was interred in a chest in the middle of the church. They took away its treasure, including a golden calf as tall as a man's height. They took away treasure, all of it gold from Šemberā,[577] in loads whose weight they could not estimate. They burnt down the church,[578] and then turned back, returning to the imām who was in the king's house. He gave each of the two of them his share of the gold and silk; and the rest he put into the treasure house of the Muslims.

[What happened to the church of Ganata Giyorgis]

'Abd an-Nāṣr, meantime, arrived at the church called Ganata Giyorgis.[579] King Eskender had built it. The imām had been informed of it by two prisoners, treasurers of the king. On the day that their king fled they said, 'Don't kill us. And we will show you the way to the king's treasure of gold, silver and silk that will take five-hundred men to carry it.' 'In what region?' asked the imām. To which they replied, 'In the region of Walaqā. It is in a church there, on the mountain top.'

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[577]Could this be Šemberā Korē, the site of the famous battle? See *infra* note[585].(S)

[578]The burning of Dabra Nagwadwād took place, according to the royal chronicle, on 6 Hedar 1524, i.e. 3 November 1531. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, pp. 13, 17-18. (P)

[579]Gannata Giyorgis, or Garden (or Paradise) of (Saint) George. Lesau, *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez*, p. 199. (P)

Because of this information, the imām had sent 'Abd an-Nāṣr, with the two captives to show him the way to it. When they reached the church they found nothing inside it, so they burnt it down.[580] They went on to the place of the treasure in the region of Walaqā, preceeded by the guide. Whenever they met any Christians they said to them, 'We are Christians from the king's army, heading for Gojjām,' for the king had set off in the direction of Gojjām on the day that he fled. Finally they reached it. The guide went and said to 'Abd an-Nāṣr, 'We have arrived at the place of the treasure. You can see this mountain, and the church on its top, in which is the king's treasure, which belonged to his fathers, and to his ancestors.'

[The way to the church is open to the Muslims]

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: Fifty of the king's slaves, along with a chief, guarded the mountain road. But this day, it happened that the mother of the chief of the guards died in a village below the mountain and the chief had left with his companions, the fifty guards, to bury his mother. And so it was that the Muslims took their place upon the mountain. There was nobody in the church except four monks and three eunuchs.

When they arrived below the mountain, 'Abd an-Nāṣr took his shield and his sword, and his companions took their shields and their swords, and they climbed the mountain. They arrived at the church and stood before its door. The eunuchs and the monks stood there too. They told them, 'Bring out the treasure.' The Muslims killed the monks, but the eunuchs brought out the treasure consisting of brocade heavy with gold, five-hundred loads worth; and in the same way they carried out even more magnificent red gold; and from the marvels of the church many crowns[581] that belonged to the king, or to the

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[580] The church was put to the flames, according to the royal chronicle, on 12 Hedār 1524, i.e. 9 November 1531, Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 18. (P)

[581] الزنـــــوط : though the general sense is clear - they were something worn by the king - the specific nature of these objects is obscure. I take them to be 'crowns,' 'coronets,' or tiaras,' *used* by the king. B translates 'manteaux (?)'. But see *infra* p.288 where الزنوط are contrasted with تيجان الذهب (which could be gold 'mitres' or 'crowns') and translated by B as 'parures,' ornaments, headdresses, etc. (S)

kings who went before him, among which were crowns that the king wore, on the outside of which were gold plates with gem stones;[582] golden cinctures, gold armlets, and gold daggers, the hafts and sheaths of each one of which were of gold; golden maces and a golden calf whose feet were encrusted with precious stones, and whose neck was two cubits;[583] golden bridles for horses; and plates and cups all of them of gold.

[Arrangements for transporting the booty]

'Abd an-Nāṣr gathered all this together, for he was the imām's treasurer, and listed it all in his register. He split up his companions, in order for them to carry it: they numbered three-thousand. Each group had one of their number as chief. Then he summoned the chiefs and shared out the treasure amongst them. Some of them carried two-thousand ounces of gold; some of them one-thousand-five-hundred; others of them one-thousand; and others again five-hundred. Then they went back to the imām who, when they reached him, was at his earlier camp site.

The imām and his companions were astonished at something the like of which they had never seen. The imām split the brocades into three shares. One share he took, and placed it in the treasure house;[584] the other two shares he gave to 'Abd an-Nāṣr and his companions. As for the gold, the imām took as his by right those objects that were beautiful or of exquisite workmanship; the rest of the immense quantity of the gold that they call *Šemberā,*[585] so much that it could not be weighed, he divided amongst them (all) and they stayed on in Bēt Amḥārā.

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[582]Crowns, in Ethiopia as elsewhere, were a symbol of monarchy. It was customary for Ethiopian monarchs to present, or bequeath, their crowns to important churches. Rulers in this way assured themselves of ecclesiastical support, and, to maximise this, often had multiple copies of their crowns produced, so that they could give them to more than one politically significant religious establishment. For photographs of typical Ethiopian crowns see E.S. Pankhurst, *Ethiopia A Cultural History*, plates XIX and XX; Pierre Pétrides, *Livre d'or de la dynastie salomonienne d'Ethiopie*, p. 176. (P)

[583]Another apparent reference to a *manbara tābot.* (P)

[584] بيت المال : B translates 'le trésor des Musulmans'. (S)

[585]Conceivably a reference to the gold captured at the battle of Šemberā Korē. (P)

[The treasure of the church of Walāh]

Then the imām heard that there were Christians who were seeking refuge in a district at a point above the Nile called Abbāy - the district was known as Walāh[586] for it was between Abbāy and Amḥārā - and that there were churches there that belonged to previous kings who were the ancestors of the king.

When the imām heard about these, he sent against them Ura'ī Abūn to whom he entrusted the white ensign, and assigned men to him amongst whom were Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad and the emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn, the emir Mujāhid, Absamā Nūr, Aḥmad Goitā, the sheikh Dāwa and Ura'ī Aḥmad Dīn. The guide was Azmāč Ḥaīb, and there were two-hundred cavalry and one-thousand-five-hundred foot-soldiers. He handed over the standard to him and sent with him the one who had told him about the church. So all of them set out and they reached the region of Walāh and found four churches there.

Two of the churches were embellished with gold ornaments, and the other two were without gold, but had been painted and sculpted, and were of meticulous workmanship.

They entered the churches with the gold ornamentation, and set to, stripping off the gold with axes, and took away all the gold that was in them.

Then they entered the churches made of timber and within them they discovered a collection of golden calves, each of them on four pillars. Each of the chiefs took one calf. Every calf weighed either two-thousand ounces or one-thousand-five-hundred ounces or one-thousand ounces - of this kind and of this weight. They took away all that was inside the churches, and whatever they found in them in addition to the gold and silken things. Then they burnt the churches down.

As for the imam - after he had equipped Ura'ī Abūn for his expedition, and six days after he had set out, a Christian came to the wazir Nūr and said to him, 'I know where [f°67] the king is. He has concealed himself in a

[586]Walāh, according to Huntingford, a locality above the Abbāy, and south of the Bašelo river. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 129. (P)

wooded desert. He has fifteen knights with him. I will lead you to him; what will you give me if I lead you to him?' The wazir replied, 'We will give you whatever treasure you wish. And we will exempt you from the poll-tax.' To which he replied, 'I will guide you.' Then the wazir Nūr informed Garād Aḥmūša. He repeated to him what the Christian had told him. Then they went to the imām and told him what the Christian had said. The wazir Nūr asked him, 'Shall it be I, or Garād Aḥmūša, who goes against him?' The imām replied, 'Let Garād Aḥmūša go.' So Aḥmūša went. The imām gave him 'Ura'ī 'Uṭmān with his army, Farašaḥam 'Alī, 'Alī Warādī, Farašaḥam 'Uṭmān, Farašaḥam Saṭūt, Šamsū the commander of the Sea, and 'Abbās the nephew of the imām.

The guide went ahead of them and they arrived at the place where the king was; but they did not find him. They asked the guide, 'Where is the king?' He replied, 'He was here; and this is the site of his camp fires.' Straightaway Aḥmūša sent his knights into the countryside and they captured two farmers whom they questioned about the king. They said, 'He was here, but when he saw your fires during the night he left here and crossed over the river Bašelō and reached Bagēmder. Garād Aḥmūša then set off after him, a journey of two days. But when they reached the river Bašelō[587] they did not find him. Then they stopped where they were and said, 'We will not meet up with the king after this; let us return to the imām.' So they went back two day's journey and camped in a place.

[Aḥmuša decides to attack the Ambā]

Aḥmūša then assembled his troops and said to them, 'This Ambā[588] is quite close to us; let us attack it and beseige it until we capture it.' The sharif

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[587]The Bašelo, a tributary on the left bank of the Abbāy. Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, p. 893; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 34. (P)

[588]Ambā Gešen, a flat-topped mountain 10 miles north-east of Maqdalā. The mountain, to which reference was made earlier, was used for several centuries as a place of detention for unfavoured members of the ruling house, to prevent them conspiring for the throne. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 237-42, 252, 254; Beckingham and Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia*, p. 227. (P)

Nūr then rose up, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, along with the Assembly, and they spoke out. He said that the Ambā was a difficult place, with lofty mountains, gorges and well-guarded forts. The only way to get up to it would be with ladders. The sharif Nūr also said, 'The imām did not command us to march to the Ambā. Instead, let us return to the imām.'

Garād Aḥmūš asked the sharif Nūr, 'Are you the emir or am I?' The sharif Nūr replied, 'You are the emir.' Then he said, 'If I am the emir, then obey me; and let there be no talk like this amongst you.' Then they set out on a difficult path through the mountains and along river beds until they arrived at the above-mentioned Ambā.

They saw the mountain, lofty, and as if hewn out of wood.[589] There was no way of going up without a ladder. On its summit there were more than a thousand dwellings in which the kings' children lived. [590] On the summit there were rivers, and treasure houses[591] and the kings' children.

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: For every king, when he bore a son, would have him taken to this mountain of the Ambā lest there be a dispute in the nation. When a king died, they brought down one of the kings' sons who were on the Ambā, and invested him with the kingdom. This was their practice, and the practice of their fathers and of their ancestors. On the Ambā there were two-thousand-three-hundred sons and daughters of the kings. The king provided for their sustenance and their apparel.

[The Muslims lay seige to the Ambā]

When Aḥmūša reached the Ambā, and lay seige to its gates, he attacked them by night at the gates. The Muslims made the rounds of the gates by night, and used ladders by means of which to climb the mountain. But the idol-worshippers upon the gates lighted fires and strengthened the

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[589]Perhaps because of the wooden gates, and other wooden fortifications. (S)

[590]According to Alvares, the Ambā was the site of 'innumerable houses and dwellings'. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 244. (P)

[591] خزائن : B translates 'des depôts'. (S)

guard on the pathways, and went about with torches[592] keeping a watch out for the Muslims. The latter were trying to climb up. Sometimes they would put their ladders against the side of the mountain, and get ready to climb up when the infidels, who were aware of them would throw boulders down. The Muslims would then pull back.

One night, while all this was going on, some of them organised an attempt to scale the mountain. They were seven Muslims - 'Abd Allāh bin Nāṣr ad-Dīn al-Ḥamwī, Naṣr bin Dalan, the sharif Nūr, Admaš the killer of Takla Iyasus, Sa'īd, the equerry of Garād Aḥmūša, Anas, one of the pages of the imām, and 'Abd Allāh aṣ-Ṣomālī.[593]

They set off by night for the gate and they said, 'Without doubt, we will scale the mountain today, if the Most High God wills it.' They climbed up, keeping themselves out of sight, and said amongst themselves, 'Let none of you say a word.' They stood erect at the bottom of the mountain and saw that the guard was sitting at the gate. The mountain had three gates that gave access to it. And every gate had guards. When they saw that the guards were lighting their fires, they spoke quietly amongst themselves, saying, 'This guard is sitting down. Let us remain seated until he goes to sleep, for their fires have been kindled, and they are making them flare up. Let us wait patiently until it has gone out. When it has died down, we will know that he has gone to sleep.'

[Sharif Nūr's cough alerts the guards]

So they waited patiently until the guard fell asleep, and his fire went out. Immediately, Naṣr bin Dalan got up, and his companions behind him, and they started to climb up, crawling on their hands and feet, on all fours,[594] and drew near to the gate. Naṣr ad-Dīn was at the head of them. He climbed up and drew his dagger so that he could slit the guard's throat. The sharif Nūr[595]

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[592] بالشماع : lit. 'candle-maker'. I read بالشموع 'candles,' 'torches'. (S)

[593] i.e. one of the imām's Somali followers. (P)

[594] B omits 'on all fours'. (S)

[595] B omits reference to the sharif Nūr, and has Nāṣr ad-Dīn responsible for the coughing, owing to his

had grown exhausted, and he coughed two or three times. The guard woke up, and the others cried out, 'thieves, thieves,' and hurled stones and boulders at them. The Muslims raced back down, one tumbling on top of the other. The sharif Nūr, meantime, when he saw his companions tumbling all about, and being unable to follow them down, remained under a rock that was there until dawn and then went back down by himself, and rejoined his companions. Each greeted the other.

Ura'ī 'Uṭmān went to one of the gates, and he and his force remained at the gate of the Ambā. Garād Aḥmūša was at the other gate. Ura'ī 'Uṭmān fought them all through the night, and they fought a bloody battle the entire night. Then the idol-worshippers fled and some of the Muslim soldiers climbed up the mountain, among them Fanj Sabbar, Bāl Sūr Ibrāhīm, Garād Amīs, Barbarī, 'Alī Warādī the martyr, and 'Alī Ṭāī Ijir. They were universally accepted as courageous. They went up and reached the first gate which they broke through and then proceeded in as far as the second gate. But this gate was elevated and locked shut with iron bars. They pounded the gate trying to break it down, but there was a keep above the gate. In the keep there were idol-worshippers who hurled enormous stones - each stone as big as a cooking pot - at the Muslims from a leather catapult. The Muslims went back down [f°68] the mountain after expending a great deal of effort.

Garād Aḥmūša sent to the imām, saying to him, 'I have laid seige to the Ambā; will you catch up with me?' He sent his messenger to the imām who was in his original camp. He saw Aḥmūša's letter and then the imām asked the messenger, 'Who ordered you to proceed to the Ambā?' The messenger replied, 'After our setting off against the king, and not finding him in his camp, and after following him for two days, and still not meeting up with him, we retraced our steps two days' journey. After this Garād Aḥmūša said to the army, "I am going to invade the Ambā." The Muslims found this invasion repugnant. But he asked them, "Am I not your commander?" They replied, "Of course," and then he said, "So, obey me." He attacked the Ambā with them, and passed a night. Then he sent me to you.'

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tiredness. (S)

[The imām disapproves of the tactics of Garād Aḥmūša]

The imām asked him, 'Is there room there for the cavalry to manoeuvre; otherwise, what kind of access does it provide?' 'There is no access,' he replied, 'either for the cavalry or the infantry: the only way of scaling it is with ladders.' The imām said to him, 'You go ahead, and I will come after you.' Then he added, 'Tell them, and Garād Aḥmūša, to fall back from where they are, and to stay in an accessible place until I come to them.' The messenger set off at a forced march until he reached Garād Aḥmūša and told them what the imām had said to him.

The imām, meanwhile, waited two days, expecting Ura'ī Abūn who reached him on the third day with the gold to which we have already referred. The imām took his share and gave a share to each one of them. Then, on the fourth day after the departure of the messenger, he set out from Bēt Amḥārā for the Ambā and Garād Aḥmūša. For three days he marched, and when there was only a day's march between him and the Ambā, he pitched camp there.

[The princes and princesses appeal to the king]

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: As for the inhabitants of the Ambā, the children of the kings - when the Muslims beseiged them and bore down heavily upon them, they sent a messenger to the king by means of whom they told him, 'The Muslims have us hemmed in on all sides in our city and have laid seige to us. Send us your army before we have to surrender the region. If your army delays in coming then we may have to relinquish the district to them, however reluctantly we may do it.'

Their messenger set out and reached the king. When he heard him, he sent three patricians with their armies, among whom was the patrician Behtwadad Sarṭi the son of 'Amdu, the patrician Yona'ēl, and the third was Azmāč Yeshāq. The patricians set out and arrived on the night when the Muslims broke down the gates during the battle waged by Ura'ī 'Uṯmān, and in the morning they caught up with them. They reached them *via* the Angot road.

The Muslims were unaware of their presence; being totally absorbed in the attack on the citadel. The Muslims had no knowledge of any idol-worshippers other than those at the gate which Ura'ī 'Uṭmān was attacking.[596] Neither Ura'ī 'Uṭmān nor his companions had their horses with them; they had left all of the horses with Garād Aḥmūša.

When Ura'ī saw that the king's forces had caught up with him, he began to egg on his companions. He prepared for battle, took his shield and his sword, and his companions did likewise. The ground where the battle was fought was not suitable for the cavalry; only for foot soldiers.[597]

The idol-worshippers abandoned their horses and each one took his spear and his shield, and the fighting grew intense. Among the idol-worshippers were many archers from the people of Tegrē called Simt,[598] and others as well from the people of Agamē. The Muslims charged, with 'Alī al-Warādī, the knight of the Muslims, and Fanj Sabbar, of the army of Baḥr, at their head. They charged as one man. Among them was the emir Gāfāt, a renowned fighter, Barbarī and 'Alī Ṭāī Ijir. There was a man from the army of Baḥr called Sanbatāī who charged with them; and God gave him success, for four soldiers of the idol-worshippers were killed in his attack. They waged a battle to the death, before Ura'ī 'Uṭmān.

[The ploy of the Abyssinian fighters]

The infidels fled to a distant place, with the Muslims in pursuit, behind them. Then the forces of the idol-worshippers turned in their tracks, headed back towards the Muslims and met up with them where they were. They fought, and then, as before, the idol-worshippers fled a second time. Then they returned to the attack, but the Muslims held their ground and they fought a third time. Then the infidels fled as before. And then they fought, a fourth time, the bloodiest of battles. The fighting was hand to hand. 'Alī al-Warādī burst into their midst and a soldier from Tegrē struck him in the breast

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[596]B: 'Ils ne connurent leur approche que lorsque les infidèles arrivèrent à la porte que menaçait...'. (S)

[597]B omits 'only for foot soldiers'. (S)

[598] See note[303] *supra*. (S)

with his spear. He said, 'I have gained Paradise with the Master of the Ka'ba,'[599] and to his companions he said, 'Don't be afraid; fight them; it doesn't matter to me.' Then the emir Gāfāt charged the soldier whose spear had struck 'Alī Warādī, and dealt him a blow with his spear, so that he fell dead. The soldiers of the idol-worshippers overwhelmed the Muslims, and fired a volly of poisoned arrows against them.

[The Muslims are routed; Ura'ī 'Uṯmān is killed]

When the number of arrows loosed against them increased, the Muslims fled, apart from one of their number, by name Fanj Sabbar who was as roused up as a he-camel. God gave him the victory that day. When his companions fled he stood his ground, alone. He took his sword in his hand and fought a battle to the death. The swords of the idol-worshippers rained down so many blows on his shield, and they lopped so many pieces off it that all he had left was the handle of the shield. He straightaway struck one of the idol-worshippers in the face with it. The idol-worshipper was befuddled, and Fanj Sabbar stood firm, struck him with his sword and cut him in two. Then Fanj Sabbar followed his companions who had fled, and rejoined them. Then, all together, they pulled back.

Ura'ī 'Uṯmān was martyred, may God the Most High have mercy upon him; and 'Alī Warādī was killed holding his ground. The rest fled, descended from the mountain top and went into the valleys and the forests.

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: When Garād Aḥmūša and his companions saw the companions of Ura'ī 'Uṯmān take flight, they fled without engaging in the battle, went back down and arrived one by one at the bottom of the mountain. That day God gave the victory to Šamsū, the commander of the Baḥr, to Šūtalāī and to Wasān Jān. For when the Muslims took to flight, they held fast to the rear-guard, and fought from behind them. All the Muslims who fell they saved, and kept on like this until their companions found breathing space. Afterwards they blocked the road from Bēt Amḥārā.

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[599] See note[268] *supra*. (S)

[Garād Aḥmūša is captured on Sunday November 26, 1531 AD]

Garād Aḥmūša was taken prisoner. Garād Mattān aṣ-Ṣomālī, and 'Abd Allāh bin Nāṣr ad-Dīn al-Ḥamwī, Ṣālīḥ, 'Umar, Ṣa'īd, and 'Alī Dūqalāī aṣ-Ṣomālī [600]were all killed. The idol-worshippers took fifteen[601]of the Muslims' horses. They were routed on a Wednesday, the 14th night had passed[602] of the month Rabī' II,[603] nine-hundred-and-thirty-eight[604] from the Hijra of the Prophet upon whom may there be the most gracious blessings and peace. This was calculated by al-Jaīzānī, may the Most High God have mercy upon him.

They took Garād Aḥmūša in chains into the presence of the king of Abyssinia. They cut the heads off those who died in the fighting, [f°70][605] and took them, with the horses, to the king. The king[606] and the Christians rejoiced exceedingly. The king had Garād Aḥmūša held in custody for some time, and then, afterwards, had him killed.

[The imām reacts to the defeat]

The companions of Garād Aḥmūša who had been routed, reached the imām on the day of his march against the Ambā. They informed him about what had happened. He was saddened on account of his brother-in-law Mattān, said the prayer 'Truly to God we belong, and unto Him do we return,'[607] and wept. Then he assembled those who were routed, had them sit

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[600]Two other Somalis in the imām's service. (P)

[601] خمسة عشر فرسا . B: 'onze chevaux'. (S)

[602]B omits 'night had passed'. (S)

[603]Rabī' II, the second month of spring, and the fourth month of the Muslim year. (S)

[604]i.e. Sunday November 26, 1531 AD. (S)

[605]B's Arabic text does not indicate where folio 69 begins or ends. Because there is no obvious lacuna in the narrative here, and judging from the average length of the folios, I suspect that folio 70 should be numbered 69. (S)

[606] الملك . B: 'les princes'. (S)

[607]*Qur'ān* ii, 156. (S)

down and said, 'Let all those who witnessed the affair present themselves.' After they had presented themselves, the imām said to them, 'We know that the only ones who fought in the attack were Ura'ī 'Uṭmān and his companions. They fought, and their emir was killed, as was 'Alī Warādī and others as well. You companions of Garād Aḥmūša, what is your reason for fleeing without giving battle, and for abandoning your emir, along with your horses and weapons?'

They kept silent, and hung their heads and were reluctant to reply. So he ordered that their chiefs be tied up. Those whom they tied up were Farašaḥam 'Alī, lord of Angot after the conquest, Garād Aḥmadūš and around one-hundred knights. He wanted to kill them, but the theologians and the emirs pleaded for them and they released their bonds. Then he said, 'I will not let this matter rest here. I will march with you against the Ambā and you will fight there'.

[The chiefs force the imām to back down]

Then the leaders said to the imām, 'You want to finish us all off in this heavily fortified place. If you want to kill us all, then march. If not, then you know [what to do]. And even if God gives you the victory and you conquer it, all you will find will be the kings' children: there are no horses there; there is no army there, thanks be to God, and as for treasure, what we already have is as vast as the dust of the earth. The people are tired from carrying it. For all that Abyssinia has not been truly conquered. Dawāro, Bāli, Šārkāh, Hādyā, Waj, Ganz and Dāmot. None of these provinces has been conquered and these are in their pristine state of infidelity. All of these provinces have armies, horses, patricians and cavalry. So now, let us retrace our steps, and regroup with the wazir 'Addolī and our forces which we left in Faṭagār.'

The imām pondered their words, and said, 'What you have said rings true,' and gave up attacking the Ambā. Then he said to 'Anānīya, lord of Margāī after the conquest, 'You know the road to this above-mentioned region.[608] You have said to us, "Give up going to the Ambā," and we have

[608]From the context it seems clear that the 'region' in question is 'Angot. B omits المذكورة 'the afore-

given it up. We are going to the region of which you spoke, so you guide us to it, and to the church of Dabra Azhīr.'[609] He replied, 'Hearing is obeying. I know where it is, and the roads that lead to it.'

The imām spent the night where he had halted, and on the second day would have headed off had not Ura'ī Šahāb ad-Dīn, the son of the paternal uncle of the Sulṭān 'Umar Dīn, and Ḵālad al-Warādī, died. He remained where he was that day out of respect for them, and on the third day they set out for the region of Angot - four days away.

They pitched camp by lake Ḥāyq, with refreshing water in whose midst there was an island. In the middle of the island there was a church and orchards. In the orchards were fruits like sweet pomegranate, peach, tasty quince, and grapes.[610] There was also sugar, bananas, ginger, aromatic plants and every kind of fruit. In the church there were monks drawn from among the people of the region.

[Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad obeys the imām]

Against Dabra Azhīr the imām sent the emir Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad, the son of the imām's paternal uncle, with the wazir Mujāhid and 'Abd an-Nāṣr, and their forces, along with Garād Ṣaddīq, Ura'ī Aḥmad, and others of their ilk. The imām seconded to Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad three-hundred cavalry, and said to him, 'March, you and your troops, against the church of Dabra Azhīr. 'Anānīya will guide you. Scale its mount, and if you encounter resistance, do not fight them until you have informed me. I will come to you

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mentioned,' (which seems to imply that the region is one of the seven mentioned in the preceding paragraph), and translates بـــلاد as 'provinces. The distinction between بلاد the plural of بلد 'country,' 'town,' 'city,' etc., and بلاد the singular of بلدان 'countries,' 'provinces,' is not finely drawn in the text. I assume that the بلاد in question, 'Angot, is one of the بلدان referred to in the preceding paragraph, but not named explicitly. (S)

[609]Dabra Ezgi'abhēr, an important church, the burning of which is recorded in the Ethiopian royal chronicle of the period. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 18. See also Taddesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia*, pp. 36-7; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 34. (P)

[610]Alvares had likewise reported that the island, which he described as 'small,' possessed 'many lemons, oranges and citrons'. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 244. (P)

and will decide what is the most suitable place for the cavalry and the infantry.' He replied, 'Hearing is obeying.'

The army and its emir Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad set out immediately and arrived at Dabra Azhīr at the time of the evening prayer. He saw that the army of Angot and the army of Badēl Naṣr[611] had fortified their position on the mountain top, near the church. And around the church there was a moat. When the emir Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad saw the army, he camped where he was until the sun rose. Then he sent three knights to the imām to notify him of the army, so they set out and gave the imām this information.

After the sun had risen the soldiers and the chiefs asked, 'Why are we resting here?' He said to them, 'There's nothing for us to do.' And they said, 'Let us scale the mountain,' to which he replied, 'The imām did not command us to fight. So organize your camps, stand your troops in military formation, and let us await the imām's reply.' They accepted what he said, harnessed their horses, formed their battle lines and rested there.

The guide, afterwards, went up the mountain, and conversed with the Christians. He said to them, 'Don't imagine that our holding back from fighting is out of panic or fear. On the contrary, the imām said, 'If you encounter any resistance there, however weak it may be, do not fight them until you have informed me about it; and I will come to you.' We are waiting for the imām. So now, save yourselves. The imām has cannon with him which, if he fires them at you, will devastate your mountain and your churches.' Fear overcame the hearts of the idol-worshippers because of what he said to them, and 'Anānīya returned to the Muslims and remained with them.

As for the imām, as soon as Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad's messenger had reached him, he immediately marched out. When he drew near to the mountain the idol-worshippers saw a dust cloud that filled the air, and immediately fled, followed by the Muslims who killed them or took them prisoner. The remainder of them were scattered around the mountain.

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[611]B notes that his Ms C reads بلد نصر - the town or region of Naṣr - for بدل نصر . (S)

[The treasure of Dabra Azhīr]

The Muslims climbed up to the church, entered it and saw marvellous things in it. The church sparkled with gold. In it there were golden calves,[612] each of which even five men could not carry. Zaḥarbūī said to the Muslims, 'As for the house, its contents are a blessing from God upon you. Whatever anyone takes, that is his, except for the golden calves; don't go near them.' Then Zaḥarbūī commanded some men to take out the golden calves, and they laid them before him.

After this, the army entered the church, jostling one another: some of them cut away the gold plating with their swords; others used daggers to cut it away. Every single one of them took some of the gold plates that were on the ceiling of the church. Its whole interior surface was clad with gold plating. It had been designed and built by the former king Sayfa Ar'ād. [613] The day that it was burnt to the ground it bore the date of the year seven-hundred-and-twenty.[614] Its date had been inscribed on it on the day this king built it.

Also inscribed on the church was the amount of gold treasure that was in it[615] [f°71] nine-hundred-and-nine-thousand, nine-hundred-and-ninety ounces, not counting the calves, the vessels, the plates and the glistening swords,[616] that it contained. So the Muslims took all of it, and then burnt down the church.

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[612] اعجلة من الذهب : B translates 'quatre veaux d'or'. (S)

[613] Sayfa Ar'ād (1342-1370), also known as Newāya Krestos. (P)

[614] This sentence cannot be taken literally. Ethiopian churches never bear the date of their construction. The date 720 was that of the Muslim calendar, and corresponds to 1320 AD, apparently the first year of Sayfa Ar'ād's reign. (P)

[615] This statement must also be taken figuratively. It is inconceivable that any church would have been inscribed with an indication as to its wealth, which in any case would presumably be always changing. The actual number itself, with its repetition of nines, would likewise seem imaginative. (P)

[616] الابـــاريق : a Persian word Arabicized. B opts for ewers for water and wine with long, slender spouts and a handle, and translates accordingly 'aiguierès,' i.e. silver or crystal vessels. See Lane *op. cit.*, i, p.192. (S)

They returned to the imām who had camped near the mountain, and rejoined him. They gave him the calves; and the soldiers took the gold from the church.

[The imām demands the release of a Muslim prisoner]

The imām then returned to Lake Ḥāyq and camped there. He sent off a messenger to the people of the island saying, 'Offer obeissance to me, and release the prisoner that you have with you whose name is Ura'ī Ḥarb Ar'ad bin Ṣabr ad-Dīn Mujāhid.

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: This prisoner had been on an expedition with Sulṭān Muḥammed, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, and when the Muslims were put to flight at Del Mēdā, the idol-worshippers made him their prisoner.

When the king learnt that he was related to the Sulṭān he had him sent to Lake Ḥāyq, to the centre of the island, with the monks. He commanded them to convert him to Christianity, so they taught him the Gospel and he learnt it until he could recite the whole book off by heart. He remained there with them on the island sixteen years, though his heart remained at peace with Islam.

When the imām reached this place he sent a messenger to them, on his account. The messenger entered the lake, and swam until he drew near to them; but they threw rocks at him.

He said to them, 'I am a messenger to you; do not stone me. The people of the island answered, 'If you are a messenger don't come near us, for this sorcerer has sent you to us,' they meant the imām, 'say what you have to say to us from a distance.'

So he told them what the imām had said to him and they replied to him, 'Say this to your lord: we will give him neither this island, nor our obeissance. Nor will we hand over to you the prisoner. Let him do what he is able against this island.[617] We know that he scaled the mountain with cavalry

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617 عليه : B translates 'contre nous,' but I read the pronoun as referring to the island. (S)

and foot-soldiers. But this is a lake: let him attack us if he is able.' So the messenger went back to the imām and told him what they had said.

[The Arabs and the soldiers from Oman build rafts]

The imām then assembled all the sharifs, with the Arabs and those from the Maġreb, and other from Mahra. He said to them: 'We know only open country and mountains. The sea is your livelihood; you know what concerns it. So now, let us hear your opinion. What would you do in this situation?' They replied, 'We need some pieces of thick wood; then watch what we do.' So the imām commanded the soldiers to bring all the pieces of wood. They gathered together for him a vast quantity of wood, and laid it down by the shore of the lake.

Then they said, 'Bring us some ropes.' The imām said, 'Get a large quantity of rope now.' So, within an hour, they presented him with more than ten thousand ropes and he said to them, 'Now do what you said, for we have supplied you with the pieces of wood and the ropes.' The Arabs came together and said to the imām, 'We will do as you command us with pleasure; but grant us a respite of three or four days so that we can get to work on it.' The imām responded, 'So be it!' They then made three large log-rafts[618] and two smaller ones.

They completed their task very proficiently and made them very sturdy. [619] The imām said to them, 'Try out one of the rafts on the lake, so that I can observe how it works.' So they brought one of the little ones to the middle of the lake and the imām saw that it performed very poorly. The imām said to them, 'Were you to travel on this raft you would not reach them before they had killed you by loosing rocks and arrows at you. This will be useless, unless you come up with something else. So make it for us, and let us know about it.' They held their peace.

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[618] I read ارماث for the text's ارماس. Dozy notes, however, that رومس means 'radeau,' or 'raft' and says that it is found in *The Thousand Nights and One Night.* See Dozy, *op.cit.*, tome premier, p.558. ed. cit. See *infra* note [620,635]. (S)

[619] واحكموها : B translates 'et ils le firent transporter'. (S)

[Jūšū's idea works]

Then a certain man stood up, his name was Jūšū, the father of Bešāra. He said, 'I have an idea.' The imām replied, 'Let us hear what you think.' So he said, 'Slaughter a cow, skin it, then make it into a water-skin, and then inflate it. Make a lot of water-skins, and then do as I say. I will show you how you have to do it.' So they made the water-skins according to what the man said. Then, underneath every raft, he ordered them to fasten the inflated water-skin; tied underneath it. They put nine water-skins under every raft - three at the front, three joined under the middle, and three at the back.[620]

The imām said, 'Test one of them in the lake.' So they took the raft, climbed aboard it and, lo and behold, it travelled like an arrow. The imām rejoiced when he saw this, and he said to this, 'This is what I wanted.' The man had seen some lake people in Abyssinia making what is called in their language *Laḳa* by means of which they ferry across.

Then the imām said to the commander of the Mahris,[621] Aḥmad bin Suleimān al-Mahrī from Bait Ziād,[622] 'Get yourself and your companions ready.' The imām spurred on his companions, asking, 'Who will embark now on the lake, with the Arabs?' quoting to them the *hadith* : 'He will be recompensed who travels by sea on behalf of God and His religion.'[623]

One of them rose up and said, 'We have sold ourselves in the service of God and His Religion,' and they swore allegiance by placing their hands in the hand of the imām as a pledge of the contract. May God bless them for it.

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[620] This was a common method of crossing rivers in Ethiopia. Almeida subsequently reported an occasion when a group of Ethiopians, led by his fellow Jesuit Antonio Fernandez, having no other way to cross a river, 'crossed on a raft of poles roughly fastened together with gourds among them which helped them float. Young men swam in front and guided the raft and others pushed it from behind'. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia*, pp. 145-6. On the problems of river-crossing see also R.Pankhurst, *Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia*, pp. 272-8. (P)

[621] Individuals from Mahra, as the name signifies. (P)

[622] A locality on the Mahra Gulf of Aden coast of Arabia. See Basset, *Histoire de la conquête de l'Abyssinie*, p. 333. (P)

[623] See Abū Dāwūd, *hadith* 1027.

So all of the Mulims got into a state of readiness - making sure their weapons were serviceable: this one his sword, that one his bow, and that other one his javelin.

Then Aḥmad bin Suleīmān al-Mahrī spoke: 'Now is the time of the afternoon prayer. If we embark now the darkness will overtake us, and there will be no battle at night, with us in the middle of the lake. What's more, today is Wednesday, and sailors say that you shouldn't sail on Wednesday for it is ill-omened according to them. Tomorrow will be Thursday, and we will rise in the morning to a battle, if this is what God and His Prophet desire.' When he heard these words the imām said, 'So be it, if the Most High God wills it,' and retired to his tent. They spent that night calling upon God the Most High.

Meantime, when the Christians who lived on the island saw the progress of the raft which the Muslims were trying out, and how it sailed like a bird, panic overwhelmed them. They took counsel amongst themselves and said, 'These Muslims have constructed something against us the like of which we have never before seen.[624] The Arabs have made this, and they have cannon with them. If we go against their wishes they will come against us by force, fight us, burn our church and we have no means to use against them. It is encumbent upon us to make peace with them.'

Then their *Abūn*, the patriarch,[625] spoke to them, saying: 'Let us send to them this prisoner whom we are holding. He will obtain a guarantee for us and for the church. Let them take all of the treasure.' So they sent for the prisoner and spoke to him. He said, 'Gladly,' and they put him on board a boat[626] during the night, along with two of them to whom they said, 'Disembark him on the shore; then return, the two of you, and the Muslims

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[624]The implication is that the rafts constructed by the Arabs were significantly different from the traditional Ethiopian boat, the *tankwā*. (P)

[625]The term *Abūn* is here used to refer not, as more usually, to the Ethiopian Metropolitan, but to the head of the monastery of Ḥāyq. (P)

[626] السنبوق : the word means 'skiff' or 'boat' or even 'barge'. Here the vessel would have been a slow moving reed boat, made from the papyrus reeds. (S)

will be none the wiser regarding you.' So they did this. They let him down on the shore by night. and returned to the island with their boat.

[Ura'ī Ḥarb meets the imām]

When [f°72] morning came, the imām went out to say the morning prayer with the troops. They said their prayers and then the imām returned to his tent and invited Absamā Nūr to breakfast with him. As Absamā Nūr was on the way he met the prisoner whom the Christians had sent. Absamā Nūr asked him, 'Who are you?' He replied, 'I am Ḥarb Ar'ad bin Ura'ī Ṣabr ad-Dīn.' He asked him, 'Where are you from?' He replied, I was a prisoner on the island, and the island people sent me to the imām.'

Absamā Nūr went in to the imām and gave him the news. He asked, 'Where is he? It was for his sake that earlier on I sent the messenger to them.' He said, 'He's standing at the door.' He said, 'Let him come in.'

Then he went in to the imām who noticed how his appearance had changed during captivity. The imām wept out of pity for him, and the prisoner wept and then the imām asked, 'How long were you on this island?' 'Sixteen years,' he answered, 'but afterwards, when they had seen what the Arabs had constructed, they were afraid and sent me to intercede with you on their behalf that you might give them a guarantee that you won't kill them or burn down their church; you may take all their wealth.'

[The imām agrees to their terms]

The imām spoke with those of his companions who were with him - the emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn, the wazir Mujāhid and Absamā Nūr - and asked them, 'You have heard what he said about making peace, now what do you say?' They spoke, saying, 'These people are seeking to trick us. They will not give us all of the treasure.' 'Stop speaking like this,' the imām said, 'this prisoner whom they have set free means more to us than a mountain of gold.'

Then the imām said to the prisoner, 'Go back to them and tell them that what they request will be granted.' So the prisoner embarked on one of the rafts and set sail. When he drew near, he shouted out to them, 'I have

obtained for you the assurance of your safety, and that of your church which they will not desecrate by any misconduct provided you keep your word. Let your *Abūn*, the patriarch, embark and conclude the peace for you.'

The prisoner went back to the imām who then went to the shore and stood erect there. Also lined up in battle array were the Arab foot-soldiers, the Mahras, those from the Magreb,[627] the sharifs, including sharif Nūr bin Aḥmad and sharif Muḥammad Handūl, along with the soldiers of the army of Baḥr who were sitting down.

[The patriarch and the imām]

Their *Abūn*, the patriarch,[628] was at this moment coming out of the church. He boarded a boat and reached the imām. He went into his presence and wanted to kiss the ground but the imām forbade him saying, 'Miserable wretch, do not kneel to people.' So he raised his head, and then the imām said to him, 'State the cause that which you've come to plead.' He said, 'All the monks desire that you grant them a guarantee of safety for themselves, that you will not kill them; and for their church, that you won't burn it down.'

The imām replied, 'On the proviso that you do not conceal any of the church's treasure, nor anything of the treasure you possess apart from that.' To which he said, 'Hearing is obeying. If you grant us the guarantee then I will go to the island and bring the treasure to you.'

They exclaimed, 'You dog, we don't trust you. Our companions will accompany you to the island and they will take away all that they find in it.' The patriarch said, 'If it is absolutely necessary for your companions to come with us, charge them not to do any damage to our church, and let them not break your covenant.' The imām replied, 'When I have given you a guarantee, no one will be able to act contrary to what I have promised.'

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[627] Lit. near the place or time of sunset; usually what is called today north-west Africa. (S)

[628] البترك : not to be confused with the word that we translate as *patrician* - البطريق - which is thought to be derived from Latin - *patricius* - and denotes a military leader or a chief of noble rank. See Lane *op. cit.*, i, p.217. (S)

The patriarch was heartened, and the imām said to Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, 'Now, you go,' and he seconded to him some of the Arab foot-soldiers, the Mahras, those from the Magreb, the sharifs and a troop of the army of the Baḥr. He said, 'Go to the island with your infantry,[629] accompanying the patriarch. Do not burn the church and do not kill the monks. Take away the treasure that is in the church and on the island; don't leave behind a *dirham*[630] or a *dinar*.' [631] He said 'Gladly,' and then boarded the rafts.

The emir Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad entered the church, and also took away all the treasure that was in the holes in the ground, and in houses. There were gold and silver crosses that took a hundred men to carry; there were countless golden lamps, and their golden chains; an innumerable quantity of golden idols[632] - each of the Muslims soldiers took one idol weighing three-hundred ounces - gold plates, each one of which could satisfy three men.[633] They also took a vast quantity of silks and other fabrics. [634]

Zaḥarbūī spent the night on the island, gathering together all the treasure. When morning came he sent to the imām three rafts, each one of them loaded down with gold and silver and silk, with only two soldiers accompanying it, and three others on the bow.[635] The rest of the raft's space

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[629] برجلك : B omits. For رجل as a collective noun meaning a force that travels by foot, rather than on horseback, see *Qur'ān* xv, 64. . (S)

[630] An Egyptian coin, which, by the first part of the fourteenth century, had acquired some limited circulation in the Ethiopian coastal province of Ifāt. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Ibn Fadl Allah, al 'Umari, Masālik al Absār fī Mamālik el Amsār*, p.14. (P)

[631] An Egyptian coin in limited use in Ifāt since at least the early fourteenth century. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Ibn Fadl Allah, al 'Umari, Masālik al Absār fī Mamālik el Amsār*, p. 14. See also R.Pankhurst, 'A Preliminary History of Ethiopian Measures, Weights and Values, III'. pp. 76-7. (P)

[632] صنان الذهب بغير عدد : from B's Ms. C. B precedes this with the following, taken from an unidentified source: 'des livres en or ainsi que les feuillets et la reliure'. (S) Statues being unknown to the Ethiopian church, the reference was perhaps to icons, or, more generally, church paraphenalia. (P)

[633] See *supra* p.249, referring to the number of men who could eat off the plates. (S)

[634] The looting of the treasures from the island occurred, according to the royal chronicle, on 10 Tāhsās, i.e. 3 December, 1533. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 18. On the survival of some of the Ḥāyq manuscripts see Sergew Hable-Selassie, 'An Ethiopian Manuscript EMML 8509,' pp. 8-9. (P)

[635] It is not clear from the text who was guiding the raft, if the two were perched on top of the booty, and

was crammed full of treasure. Each of those rafts could carry one-hundred-and-fifty men.

They offered all that they contained to the imām. He was astonished at it, and became oblivious of the treasure that he had seen beforehand. The rafts went back to the island, and were filled up with treasure a second time. They went back a third time, and were filled up as before. Then they returned to the island and the soldiers boarded them. Zaḥarbūī returned on the second day, going to the imām at dusk. He then returned to his camp.

[The imām apportions the *Fifth*]

When morning came, the imām summoned him, and divided the treasure: one share he gave to the Arabs, another share went to Zaḥarbūī Muḥammed, and to the army of the Baḥr; the other shares he split up amongst the Muslim soldiers.

On the fourth day, the imām and the army set out to rejoin the wazir 'Addolī whom he had left behind in Faṭagār. They travelled until they reached the region of Wāṣal where they pitched camp. When it was morning the imām assembled the Muslims and said to them, 'Apportion the *fifth* of your booty, and be careful not to be niggardly.' The Muslims spoke up, all of them, 'We will give you all of our treasure so that you can apportion the *fifth* and give us back what remains.' He replied, 'God is your witness; let each of your emirs apportion the *fifth* for his army.' So the emirs immediately split up, and apportioned the *fifth* for their armies, and went to him with it. He estimated its weight in *rotls* [636] and the amount was incalculable. He entrusted it to Kabīr Abūn, who knew how to write and to count, may the Most High God have mercy upon him.

They stayed in Wāṣal six days apportioning the *fifth*, and then marched out and arrived at the region of Gujmah and camped at Abšalū Zarāf.

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the other three were 'in front of it'. Perhaps the two others were at the back, by the tiller and rudder, responsible for directing it to the shore of the lake. See *supra* notes[618, 620]. (S)

[636]A measure of weight (one pound, or 12 ounces) or a measure of capacity (one pint). (S) On regional and other variations in this unit of weight see R.Pankhurst, 'A Preliminary History of Ethiopian Measures, Weights and Values, III,' pp. 62-3. (P)

Then the imām set off for Bēt [f°73] Amḥārā with the army of the Baḥr, because there were still two churches there. This was the reason he went back to Bēt Amḥārā. As for the two churches, one of them was Makāna Māryām,[637] and the other was Dabtarā Māryām.[638] The imām left the wazir Nūr in the camp in his stead and reached Bēt Amḥārā and burnt the two of them to the ground. He then returned to the encampment.

[The imām seeks news of the wazir 'Addolī]

At the time of the afternoon prayer, Aibīs Laḥaṭī, who had become a Muslim under duress, fled; as did the patrician Eslāmu. The two of them went to Bēt Amḥārā to join the king.

The imām and his army went from the region of Gujmah into the province of Ganburah in the land of Gedem and pitched their camp there. The people of that country had made a treaty with the Muslims and welcomed them. Some people came to this place from the land of Sa'd ad-Dīn and were staying there, among them Warajār Abūn the lord of Zayla' and his companions; and, with them, gifts. The messenger whom the imām had sent to the Sulṭān 'Umar Dīn with the good news of the killing of Wasan Sagad[639] was also there. They remained with the people of the village until the imām reached them. The imām asked them for news of the land of Sa'd ad-Dīn, and also of the wazir 'Addolī: 'Have you heard in which country he is to be found?' They answered, 'Regarding the wazir 'Addolī, we heard on our way here that he was stationed in Faṭagār. And as for news of the land of Sa'd ad-Dīn, the people are content.'

So the imām sent off Garād 'Uṭmān, lord of Jān Zalaq, to the wazir 'Addolī, and seconded men to him, among them Del Sagad, and 'Umar,

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[637]The church of Makāna Māryām, literally 'Place of Mary,' was probably one of that name founded by Emperor Zar'a Yā'qob. Perruchon, *Chroniques de Zar'a Yâ'eqôb et de Ba'eda Mâryâm*, pp. 54-5, 87, 132. (P)

[638]Probably the church of Dabtarā Māryām founded by Emperor Zar'a Yā'qob. Perruchon, *Chroniques de Zar'a Yâ'eqôb et de Ba'eda Mâryâm* pp. 132, 177. (P)

[639]The death of Wasan Sagad, who held the title of Rās, is also mentioned in the royal chronicle of the reign. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 17. (P)

along with fifty knights. He said to him, 'Travel to him, no matter where he is. Give them the good news of our victory and of our triumph, in the conquests that the Most High God has granted to us. Say to them, "We are returning to you"; let him come to us at Dabra Berhān with our children and wives; we will meet up with him there.'

[Ura'ī Abūn is appointed lord of Ifāt]

They set out that same day for Faṭagār, in search of the wazir 'Addolī. The imām meanwhile remained in Ganburah ten days. His remaining there was caused by the sickness of the sharif Aḥmad al-Qadīmī, may the Most High God show mercy towards him. After he had died and they had buried him, the imām prayed for him, as did the theologian Abū Bakr al-Aršūna and everybody among the Muslims.

Then they set out from Ganburah for Kesāyah in the land of Gedem. The people of Ifāt came there with their chief Azmāč Fessaḥā. The imām asked them about the region and about the idol-worshippers, and they said to him, 'We endured extreme hardship after you left us; but now, thanks be to God, you have arrived in our region with victory and honour; and the past insults and wrongs caused by the infidels no longer matter to us.' For Kesāyah was close by their region.

That day, the imām despatched Ura'ī Abūn, to whom he assigned some men, saying to him, 'I have put you in command of the land of Ifāt; travel with the Ifāt people and remain there.' Ura'ī Abūn replied, 'Gladly,' and set off with his troop to Ifāt.

The imām, meantime, went up to the summit of Manz and stayed there. Then he sent off Absamā Nūr to whom he gave thirty knights, and he said to them, 'Bring us news of 'Addolī; if he has come to the place that we indicated to him for a *rendezvous* with him.' So they set off for Dabra Berhān.

[The wazir 'Addolī]

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: 'As for 'Addolī, when the imām set off for Bēt Amḥārā, he re-united all the

emirs who had been scattered, as we mentioned earlier on, and stationed himself in Faṭagār in the village of Ganburah. The wazir 'Addolī sent off Ura'ī Nūr to whom he assigned seventy knights among whom were Garād Šama'ūn, and Garād Aḥmad bin Lād 'Uṭmān, Garād Zīnāī and Garād Ṣaddīq, and others of their ilk. He said to them, 'Go to Dawāro, and continue on until you reach the 'Awāš river.'

They found it in full flood, and, on the other bank, a troop of infidels from the Māyā and some patricians of the idol-worshippers, amongst whom were Azmāč Fanu'ēl, lord of Waj, and Arkīya, lord of Lejābah. These had ranged their forces on the high ground above the river, and the water prevented the Muslims from finding a way of getting to them.

The Muslims stayed there three days, during which the idol-worshippers loosed arrows at them by night. After this they sent to 'Addolī, saying to him, 'We reached the 'Awāš, and found its waters in full flood. On the opposite bank are two patricians with their armies, but the water obstructs us.' Their messenger reached 'Addolī, who was in his camp, and repeated to him what they had said to him. The wazir 'Addolī said to him: 'If it is only the water that obstructs them, what help can I be to them? If it were an enemy troop that was blocking their way, I could send some soldiers to them as reinforcements.' He replied, 'There is nothing blocking their way except the water.' So he said, 'They know what it is they must do: if it be to return, then let them return; if it be to fight, then let them fight the idol-worshippers.'

[Garād Šama'ūn suggests a strategy]

So the messenger went back and informed them of the reply that the wazir 'Addolī had given to them. When they heard it, they relocated themselves to a different place, and pitched camp. Then the idol-worshippers left their earlier encampment and took up a position opposite the Muslims on the other bank of the river. They were lined up in battle array, their cavalry and their foot-soldiers. The Muslims organised themselves in like fashion, and then took counsel amongst themselves. They asked, 'How can we overcome the problem of this water?' Then one of their number, Garād Šama'ūn, got up. He was a famous knight, 'a lion that slays its prey and

breaks its bones.' He said, 'let us charge into the water; our horses can swim it. The water isn't as before - it has dropped a little from what it was like earlier on. Now let us go forth against them; let us fight them, and may God give us victory over them.' So he and his cavalry charged into the water, and the Muslims charged behind them. The idol-worshippers loosed arrows at them when they were in mid-stream, but they gained the other bank and Garād Šama'ūn burst through the middle of their ranks, hurling to the ground their heroes and the coarsest and sturdiest of the unbelievers amongst them. They shot thirty-five arrows into the neck and withers of his horse, yet he was saved. His companions were with him in the charge, and the idol-worshippers were routed with three-hundred-and-fifty of their soldiers being killed. Six of their horses were taken as booty. On the Muslim side, only three persons were killed: Dalūš, Farašaḥām Abū Bakr and another man.

They pitched their camp there and had unsaddled their horses when a troop of the Māyā attacked their camp. The Muslims mounted their horses, and fought a bloody fight. The idol-worshippers were routed, and a hundred and fifty of them were killed, or even more.

They passed the night there, and then, on the next day, set off with the guide and reached Jīnah where they camped above the river, unsaddled their horses and watered them. Just then a troop of the idol-worshippers took them by surprise. Garād Zīnāī had not yet unsaddled his horse, so when he saw them he fought them by himself until his companions had harnessed [f°74] and mounted their horses; he never ceased fighting them, single-handedly. The idol-worshippers fled. Some fifty of them were killed and four of their horses were captured.

They passed the night there. After that they set off until they arrived at a place called Kattārah where they remained until their spy re-joined them. Their spy arrived after three days, and told them, 'Ahead of you are four patricians, one of whom is Azmāč 'Addalū, lord of Bāli, the second is Sāfu bin Wasan Sagad, the third Maḥūh, and the fourth, Azmāč Amḥā bin Maḥā Ṭentā. Bringing up your rear is Azmāč Yonādab,[640] a relative of the king

[640]Yonādab's role in the fighting is confirmed in the Ethiopian royal chronicle. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 22. (P)

who married the daughter of his brother, the patrician Yoḥannes - and the patrician Tasfā.'

When they heard this news they left their encampment for the region of Ayfārs which is open country suitable for the manoeuvring of cavalry. They camped there.

['Addālū seeks news of the Muslims]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says, 'When the idolatrous patrician known as 'Addalū lord of Bāli heard that the Muslims had arrived at the river 'Awāš and that the Christians had been routed, he sent scouts out, with the patrician Amḥā, to enquire about the Muslims. The idol-worshippers went to Ayfārs, not knowing that the Muslims were in it. The Muslims saw them from afar. Without delay they mounted their horses and galloped in the direction of the idol-worshippers. When the idol-worshippers saw that the Muslims were coming towards them, vying with one another for the lead, they took flight while at a distance, and the Muslims returned to their camp and passed the night there. The idol-worshippers then went to their patrician 'Addalū who was in Zāri and told him about their being routed. 'Addalu was afraid when he heard this, and entered the region of Waṭmāt, where they pitched their tents.

[The story of Farašaḥam 'Alī]

It was while the Muslims were encamped in the region of Ayfārs, that Farašaḥam 'Alī came to them, accompanied by six knights and two-hundred foot-soldiers. He embraced Islam, and his conversion was genuine. This man had been a Muslim who had gone up from Jalbī, a Muslim district, at the time when the Somalis had taken control of it after the death of the Sulṭān Muḥammad, may the Most High God have mercy upon him. He made up his mind to go up to the land of Abyssinia, with Aḥmad Goitā and soldiers from the people of Najab.

When the king heard that some Muslims had settled in Bāli, he summoned him to him, and after he had stayed two years, he had him made a

Christian against his will and, for his livelihood, gave him a region in the land of Ayfārs. When he heard about the Muslims, he re-converted to Islam and reached them. The Muslims rejoiced at his conversion and he infomed them about the situation of the infidels.

After they listened to what he had to say, they marched by night against the patrician 'Addalū. They marched all that night until sunrise, and then sent scouts off to ferret out news of the idol-worshippers for them. They took two Christian farmers captive and questioned them about the patricians. They said, 'When they heard about you, they set off by night, and now they are in front of you.'

From that moment on they forced their march, and set off hard on their heels. When it was noon they could see their tents pitched in 'Andurāh; but by the same token the idol-worshippers caught sight of their dust behind them. So they sent out scouts - sixty knights - to bring news back to them concerning the Muslims. These drew near to the Muslims, recognised them, and turned on their tracks with the Muslims in pursuit. The infidel scouts reached their companions and told them the news. These were afraid, fled, and abandoned their tents. The Muslims chased them until evening separated them before they had joined battle.

[Ura'ī Nūr returns to 'Addolī and is reprimanded]

One of the Muslims was killed - a man called Kāled. He was killed by the patrician Abīb. The patrician Kabīr from the people of Bāli was captured, and two of the Muslims were captured by the infidels. They released them in exchange for this patrician.

The Muslims took all of their tents, as well as twelve horses, and a great number of mules, and they spent two nights in the tents of the idol-worshippers. They then headed off for the region of Amorā Gadal[641] and passed the night there. On the third day they set off and entered Šarka. A man

[641]Amorā Gadal, literally 'Eagle Precipice,' a rugged mountain, in Wallo. Esteves Pereira *Chronica de Susenyos*, pp. 131; Isenberg and Krapf, *Journals of the Rev. Messers Isenberg and Krapf*, p. 364; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 106. (P)

who had been an apostate and afterwards reverted to Islam came to them them. His name was 'Alī. Then his companions came.

The patrician Abīb, with his army, attacked their rear-guard; but the vanguard turned back to fight him, and he fled. The patrician was struck by a spear, but got away. They took two horses as booty and then set off, making a beeline for the wazir 'Addolī, reaching him finally when he was at Ajamji. The wazir 'Addolī asked (Ura'ī Nūr), 'Who commanded you to proceed to 'Andurāh with such little support? Did you want to slaughter the Muslims?' Then he had him (Ura'ī Nūr) put in chains, but the Muslims pleaded for him, and he forgave him.

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: Then the wazir 'Addolī sent Del Sagad, the knight of Sim, with some men among whom was Zaḥarbūī 'Uṭmān and the sharif Aḥmad, with fifty cavalry. He said, 'Proceed to the region of Gabargē for provisions.' So they went and made forays in the provinces.They entered Gabargē and found some Christian merchants in it who were in the employ of the king. They caught them unawares, plundered their baggage and their children, and returned to the wazir 'Addolī. They enslaved all of them.[642] Then he sent a raiding party comprising around one-hundred cavalry, into the region of the Māyā. Zaḥarbūī 'Uṭmān was their leader. They set out, and entered the Ar'ān region which they laid waste, and took horses and mules and other things besides, as booty.

Returning in the direction of the wazir 'Addolī they entered the region of Aram, and they spent the night on the road. By the time they awoke in the morning, the patrician of Wāj had caught up with them. His name was Yonadāb, and with him were archers from the Māyā. The king had sent him to fight the wazir 'Addolī, and while they were en route he had been informed that there was a troop of Muslims in Aram. He said to his army when he heard this news, 'Let us proceed straightaway against the troop and fight them; afterwards we will go on to 'Addolī.' They replied, 'Gladly,' and pursued them. They were in Aram, which is a district.

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642 غنمو١ : B translates 'prirent' but غنم usually has the sense of taking by force, sacking or looting. (S)

When the two columns of soldiers that were proceeding on the road came into each other's view, the idol-worshippers mounted a charge against the rear-guard of the Muslims. Those in the rear held their ground, and mounted their horses. Among those in the rear was Zaḥarbūī ʿUṯmān, the sharif Aḥmad and the hēgano ʿAbd Allāh, ʿAlī Farašaḥam and the sheikh Ḵalīl, a descendant of Aubūbah - may God bless us through him, Amen. They were ten knights, and the idol-worshippers were around two-hundred. The Muslims charged the idol-worshippers, and a bloody battle was engaged, until their forearms became exhausted.

[Zaḥarbūī ʿUṯmān kills Yonādab, and is himself killed]

Zaḥarbūī ʿUṯmān charged the patrician and struck him a blow with his spear on his chest. The spear went right through, shimmering at his back, and broke off in the patrician's body. He continued to pummel him with the haft of the spear, until it was totally worn down. They clung to their horses and fought one another until Zaḥarbūī ʿUṯmān seized the patrician by the hand and jerked him out of his horse's saddle, and he hit the ground, dying on the spot. May God cast his soul into the fire [f°75] 'and what an evil place it is to settle in.'[643]

At that moment the idol-worshippers were routed and many men among them were killed. Zaḥarbūī ʿUṯmān's horse was wounded, hit by an arrow, and died. They turned and went back, going down from the region of Aram. Not one of the Muslims was killed. After the second day the emir Dīn set off for the wazir ʿAddolī with the booty, accompanied by ten knights.

Their commander, Zaḥarbūī ʿUṯmān, taking another route, reached Jīnah, took some booty, and arrived at the river ʿAwāš. Zaḥarbūī ʿUṯmān crossed over the river and as he waited on the bank for them to cross over with the booty, a soldier from the Māyā people who was hidden among trees there, drew his bow and aimed his arrow. It struck Zaḥarbūī ʿUṯmān who was felled to the ground by it, and died a martyr, may the Most High God have mercy upon him. Uraʿī Nasrūī buried him.

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[643] *Qur'ān* xiv, 29. (S)

When they saw that their emir Zaḥarbūī ʿUṯmān had been killed, they abandoned the booty and took to their heels, and reached the wazir ʿAddolī. As for the plunder that was with the emir Dīn, the latter arrived with it at Maju, where the wazir ʿAddolī was.

[The wazir ʿAddolī seeks drinking water for his charges]

The wazir ʿAddoli and his army then set out for the land of Dawāro with their heavy baggage, their wives and their children and their tents. They arrived close by the river ʿAwāš and they took counsel amongst themselves. Some of them said, 'This route of ours offers little water, and we are afraid that our people will die of thirst.'

The storyteller, may have mercy on him, says: 'They had amassed a lot of booty[644] and had captured a vast number of concubines, young slave boys and slave girls. Because of this they were afraid of suffering from lack of water. So the wazir ʿAddolī said, ' Let's go back to Faṭagār where there is ample water,' so they set off and reached the land of Faṭagār.

Then some of those who were in this place, Maju, died, amongst whom were Garād Kāmal bin Ḥaumal, and ʿAlūš, the knight of Sim who was worth one-hundred knights, and Goitā Dāk̲al - from among the heroes: may the Most High God have mercy upon them.

[False rumours concerning the imām's death]

After this, news reached the wazir ʿAddolī that the imām had met up with the king and that the Muslims had been routed, and that they had killed them all, to the last man. This report was a lie and a slander. It had no substance to it. But when the wazir ʿAddolī and the Muslims heard it, they grieved with a heavy grief.

Those amongst them who had embraced the religion of Islam out of fear of being killed, rejoiced. This falsehood and this lie originated with them. For they said, when the wazīr ʿAddolī asked them, 'We heard it from the

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[644] غنايم : B translates 'troupeaux,' perhaps reading انعام meaning sheep, goats and small cattle. (S)

Christians; the imām's army was completely wiped out by the idol-worshippers. The imām was saved, and fled with a small band of soldiers.' But when they left his presence they said, 'the imām is dead; no one escaped.' Those were they who had become Muslims only out of fear of being killed. While those who had converted to Islam out of an attraction for it, were thoroughly desolated by the news. The greater part of the army that was with the wazir 'Addolī in the camp was composed of those who had converted to the religion of Islam. Of the Muslims who had left their countries on the expedition, only a small number was with him.

So the wazir 'Addolī assembled all the emirs, among them the emir Ḥusain, Garād Fanjānat, the emir Dīn, Garād Aḥmad bin Lād 'Uṯmān and the emir Šama'ūn. The wazir 'Addolī brought together the whole army, including the Somali tribes, and others besides, and then he said to them, 'If the imām be dead, then we are one man fewer. It was only on account of the *jihād* that we left our countries.' Then he said, 'Any one among us who is spying for the idol-worshippers or pretending to be what he isn't, let him speak up or let him rejoin the king. For we will remain in his country for the sake of the *jihād*. We will not depart from this place until the imām comes. And if something has befallen him, then he was just one of us. There are enough of us for the fight.'

[The wazir 'Addolī seeks news of the imām]

After this, they dispersed to their camps, and he said to the emir Ḥusain, 'Now, since we have no knowledge of the imām, nor of where he is to be found, you are going to march to the land of Wiz and of Wārābbā, to obtain news of the imām for us.' He replied, 'Gladly,' and set off with fifty cavalry. They arrived at Wiz and Wārābbā and captured two of the local farmers. One of these Christians was an extremely well-built man. They returned to the wazir 'Addolī with the two of them, for them to give him information. They presented the two prisoners, and then the wazir 'Addoli interrogated them concerning the imām and his whereabouts, and concerning the king of Abyssinia. They replied, 'The imām took the Wāṣal road and met up with the patrician Dēgalḥān. Then he and his army set off in the direction of the king. The king and his army were oblivious of them until they had

caught him unawares and routed them. A great number of the idol-worshippers was killed.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says, 'Then the wazir 'Addolī and the Muslims rejoiced at the rout of the king. 'Addolī said, 'I wish to march to Dabra Berhān to obtain sure news of the imām. You remain in camp guarding the women, the children and the baggage.' The two to whom he spoke were the emir Ḥusain and Garād Fanjānat who had gone off earlier on. They replied, 'Gladly,' and the wazir 'Addolī set off. He said to Garād Šama'ūn who had with him one-hundred-and-fifty cavalry, 'You take the lower road, and we will meet up with you in Dabra Berhān. 'With pleasure,' Garād Šama'ūn said, and then he, too, set out.

[Garād Šama'ūn outfoxes the governor of Bāli]

The wazir 'Addolī outdistanced him in reaching Dabra Berhān, and encountered no resistance, even though he had heard that there were troops there. Garād Šama'ūn lagged behind, for at that time he had commanded the Muslims to make incursions into the countryside.

They penetrated deeply into it and met up with a patrician called Ibrahīm who was governor of Bāli, under the authority of Degalḥān who was, at that time, with the king. When the imām had pounced on them, they had split up and he had headed for Bāli. The Muslims sent by Garād Šama'ūn caught up with him, and he fled.

They captured a group of his slave boys and presented them to the wazir 'Addolī who questioned them about the imām and the Muslim army. These said to him that the imām had routed the king, and that great numbers of them had been killed, and that they had taken their horses as booty and that not one Muslim had been killed. The Muslims rejoiced at the victory over the king, and spent the night in their camp.

Before this happened, the king had sent to the patrician of Dawāro to join forces with the patrician of Bāli, for them to unite in attacking the wazir 'Addolī, 'If you do not attack him, I will kill all of you myself.'

The wazir 'Addolī then returned to his camp in the land of Faṭagār. They arrived there and he told the emirs and the Muslims what the imām had done. The Muslims were overjoyed.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Garād Šama'ūn went on his way, and reached Dabra Berhān but did not find the companions of 'Addolī; only the patrician Giyorgis who had a vast army with him, drawn up in battle array. So the Muslims did likewise, and Garād Šama'ūn led the charge, and his companions charged with him. The two armies fought one another in a bloody and fierce battle. The idol-worshippers were routed, and thousands of them were killed. Not one Muslim died.They went back to the wazir 'Addolī [f°76] who was in Faṭagār. During the time they were there, a messenger reached them from Garād 'Uṯmān, Del Sagad[645] and Ura'ī Qāṭ 'Umar[646] whom the imām had sent to the wazir 'Addolī and his companions to give him the good news of their triumph and victory over the king. These had arrived at Jān Zalaq but lingered there because they were unable to continue their journey that day on account of their road weariness. They had been painstaking in their travels and they sent to him, saying, 'We shall reach you around breakfast time in the morning. Our mules and we ourselves are exhausted.'

[The wazir 'Addoli fears the worst]

Because the messenger had informed the Muslims of their intention to delay *en route*, and because they had sent someone other than themselves to deliver the message, the Muslims were perturbed on account of the evil rumours that they had heard earlier on. They said, 'If the imām was going to send them to bring us good news, then they would not send somebody else in their stead. Nor would they have sent anyone other than one of them to us as a

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[645]The context, and the use of the dual جلسا, وصلا, لاقيا, etc implies that the author (or the source) equiparated Garād 'Uṯmān and Del Sagad. Yet see *supra* p.274, where the narrative differentiates between them. (S)

[646]*Supra* p.274 he is simply called 'Umar. (S)

messenger, unless the news that they bear be bad.' The Muslims passed that evening worried sick.

Then the wazir 'Addoli sent without delay to Garād 'Uṭmān, saying, 'The imām sent you to us, but you have delayed *en route*. Then you sent a different messenger on to us. If the news were good, you would surely not have delayed, and you would surely not have sent someone else.' His messenger reached them, and they set off, immediately, by night.

All this took place before dawn, so they reached the wazir 'Addolī in the forenoon, and then they gave him the good news, saying, 'The imām has truly prevailed over the king of Abyssinia; the king and his patricians have been routed; the king has barely managed to escape with his life, and even then only with great difficulty; the Muslims have taken possession of the women who were accompanying them, along with an innumerable, uncountable, [647] quantity of valuables: gold, silver, and silk. And the imām says, "We will rendezvous, we and you, for a face to face meeting, at Dabra Berhān".' Immediately the Muslims rejoiced, and began to beat their kettle-drums and their big, double-faced drums.

Some of the soldiers who were with the wazir had wanted to go back down to their homes. But when they heard what the imām had done they were buoyant, and said, 'We won't go back down to the country of Sa'd ad-Din until we have seen the imām.' The whole army made preparations for the march.

['Addolī sets out for Dabra Berhān]

The people of the countryside who had become Muslims went to the wazir 'Addolī and said, 'So, now, you are leaving us to go to the imām; and our country will be laid waste.' He replied, 'Don't be afraid. We are going to Dabra Berhān to see the imām; and we shall return. Don't be frightened, and don't be sad.' When they heard what the wazir 'Addolī had to say they rejoiced, and their spirits were lifted.

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[647] لا يحصى ولا يعد : sic! The narrator was impressed by the quantity of booty. (S)

Then he ordered the march to commence, and they set out, heading for Dabra Berhān. When they arrived at the district of Waj they met up with Absamā Nūr and Garād 'Anānīya whom the imām had sent with a robe of honour for the wazir 'Addolī. They presented him with it, and he gave a gilt tunic and a horse to Absamā Nūr, because of the good news, and a gown to Garād 'Anānīya. Then 'Addolī sent a messenger bearing a letter, accompanied by twenty knights, to the imām. In it he said to him, 'The Muslim armies[648] are well and happy since news of you reached us.' So the messenger set out, with the wazir 'Addolī bringing up their rear, finally reaching Dabra Berhān where he stayed, awaiting the imām.

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: The imām was in the land of Manz when the messenger of the wazir 'Addolī reached him and gave him news of the Muslims. The imām was overjoyed that they were safe, and that they had arrived at Dabra Berhān. So he gave the order to leave, and they departed and entered Tagulat and spent the night in the town of Qedūsgē[649]- a place with plentiful resources. He proceeded from Qedūsgē to the region of Ṭārimma[650] which is an excessively cold place whose people[651]died in the freezing conditions. From there he continued on until he was about three and a half miles[652] from Dabra Berhān.

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[648] جـــيوش : B translates 'l'armée'. I think the narrator's use of the plural is deliberate: to stress the motley nature of the Muslim force. (S)

[649]A locality of this name was later mentioned in the chronicle of Emperor Susneyos (1606-1632). Esteves Pereira *Chronica de Susenyos*, pp. 203. (P)

[650]Huntingford speculates that Ṭarimma might have been the modern Tarma Bar, a mountain 9,000 feet above sea level, north of Dabra Sinā, and hence also an extremely cold place. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 130. (P)

[651] الناس : If the Muslim soldiers were meant, the narrator would have said المسلمون or used some similar expression. (S)

[652] فـــرســـخ : a *parasang*. Ancient Persian measure of length, between 3.5 and 4 miles (5.6 and 6.4 km). Herodotus, Suidas, Hesychius and Xenophon all say that one *parasang* equals 30 Greek *stadia*. One *stadium* contained 606 feet 9 inches - being the exact distance of the foot-race course on Mt Olympus measured between the pillars of the two extremities of the course. Other ancient sources give 21, 40, and even 60 stadia per *parasang*. Our estimate approximates to that of Herodotus. (S)

['Addolī makes preparations to greet the imām]

Then he sent a messenger to the wazir 'Addolī, saying, 'We have reached your vicinity.' The wazir 'Addolī, in his turn, sent a messenger who said to the imām, 'Would you deign to command us to meet you in military fashion: with the soldiers arrayed as for battle, with the tribes, and the cavalry and the infantry ready for war; and could you do similarly? For we are in the land of the idol-worshippers and there are spies in our midst'.

The wazir 'Addolī's messenger reached the imām who was delighted with what he had to say. He was in admiration at his proposal and ordered him to do as he suggested. Then the imām moved closer to them and stopped. He said to his companions, 'Now, the wazir 'Addolī is about to come to us, to greet us. Everyone in the camp must prepare himself: let the knights harness their mounts with their weaponry, and let your[653] accoutrements glitter.'

The imām opened up the treasury that they had plundered from the idol-worshippers - golden armour, tiaras, and golden crowns. He took out gowns studded with gold, each one of which weighed one-hundred ounces, and clad his page boys in them so that they shone like fiery torches. The army of the Baḥr under the command of Šamsū drew itself up in battle array in front of the cavalry, and then the wazir 'Addolī arrived with his armies under fifty pennants, each of which was led by one of his Garāds or emirs. 'Addolī lined up his forces in three sections. It was impossible to see where any section ended, because of the vastness of their numbers.

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: The wazir 'Addolī's cavalry that day numbered three-thousand knights bearing armour, and three-thousand knights without armour. There were twenty-thousand soldiers carrying white shields and, as well, archers, and others of their ilk.

The imām's cavalry included five-thousand knights clad in protective armour made of crocodile skin,[654] and of velvet, weighed down with gold.

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[653] زنتكم : B translates 'leur ornements,' and puts the preceding sentence in *indirect* speech. (S)

[654] See p.248 and note[573] : بتحا فيف التماسيح . B: 'vétus de brocart'. (S)

Only the pupils of their eyes could be seen through their armour. Their helmets shone like mirrors.

[Aḥmad reviews his troops
and divides the booty in January 1532]

The companions of 'Addolī entered, with the first unit, made up of the Somalis with their commanders and their cavalry. They paraded before the imām, saluted him, and wheeled round, towards the side of the camp. Then the second unit entered, with the people of Faṭagār, of the Māyā, and of Šawā, and those who had converted to Islam. These faced the imām, saluted him, then wheeled round towards the flank of the first unit. Then the third unit entered, composed of the wazir 'Addolī and the emirs. Amongst these fifty emirs entrusted with pennants, were the emir Ḥusain, the emir Šama'ūn, the emir Ura'ī Nūr, and the emir Dīn. They were a great multitude, and they appeared[655] by degrees, arranged unit by unit, on account of the vast numbers in their armies. Had they all entered at once, the space [f°77] would have been too confined to hold them. They paraded before the imām, saluted him, and then seated themselves and began to talk.

The imām was overjoyed, and wept tears of happiness. Seven months had elapsed from the time the imām had divided his forces to this time when he met up with them again. He left them in the month of Zu'lhijjah[656] and met up with them again in the month of Jumda II[657] in the year nine-hundred-and-thirty-eight of the Hijra of the Prophet[658] upon whom be gracious blessings and peace.

The imām took the treasure of gold, silver and silk and distributed it among the armies of the Muslims which were with the wazir 'Addolī. The imām gave a golden platter to each one of the fifty chieftains, companions of

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[655]Reading وورد for وزد : B translates 'avec des cottes de mailles'. (S)

[656]The last month in the Islamic calendar which began on Saturday July 16, 1531. (S)

[657]The sixth month of the Muslim year. (S)

[658]i.e. Tuesday January 10, 1532. (S)

'Addolī. To the rest of the soldiers he gave each his share of the gold, the silver and the silk.

They had so vast a quantity of gold that at this time they made any deals with gold. When someone wanted to buy some necessity, he would take a fistful of gold, go to the market and use it for the purchase. They ignored the scales. The price of a mule went up to forty ounces of gold because gold was so plentiful.[659]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: If one of your[660] friends whom you loved[661] came and asked you for something from the treasure that you had plundered, and you were one of the chieftains, and you offered him some of the silver, he would not accept it, whether it were one-hundred ounces or two-hundred ounces.

A certain person gave one of his friends fifty ounces, which he scorned to accept, even becoming infuriated at him for offering it.

This was one of the consequences of the booty taken at Bēt Amḥārā. where they found more gold and silver than anywhere else in the whole of Abyssinia.

[Ura'ī Abūn moves against Simū]

[*The storyteller*] says: While the imām was stationed in Dabra Berhān a messenger reached him, whom Ura'ī Abūn had sent to say to him, 'Your equerry Simū, whom you put in charge of the region of Abunah, has apostatised, and become a Christian. I am setting out to engage him in battle, but he is holding a position on the mountain and has with him the armies of Abunah. I have no way of moving against him. Will you send me some units along the Dabra Berhān road so that they can fall upon them from above?' The messenger arrived, and gave the imām the message he had been given.

After the imām heard what he had to say, he dispatched Šamsū, the commander of the army of Baḥr, with his troops. These set out, taking the

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[659] لكـــزنه : B omits. (S)

[660] B puts this passage in the third, rather than the second person. (S)

[661] B omits 'whom you love'. (S)

Dabra Berhān road against Simū the apostate, and fell upon them from above. When they saw them, they took to their heels - leaving their tents standing in their places, and also their horses - and descended the mountain, fleeing to another place.[662] Šamsū collected their horses and mules and their baggage and remained there. He sent a messenger to the imām to say to him, 'Simu has fled. We have taken all their horses, their mules and their baggage.'

The messenger reached the imām and informed him what had happened. The imām asked the messenger, 'By which route did Simu flee?' 'By the Kassam road,' he said, 'heading for the land of Šawā.' So the imām said to the wazir 'Addolī, 'You stay in our encampment, while I set out for Kassam.' So the imām set out, seeking the land of Kassam. He had no news of the apostate; nor did the apostate have any news of the imām, who forced his march. The imām met up with the apostate on the road, at the time of the afternoon prayer. The imām sent his cavalry in against him[663] from every side. They made inroads against him, and as he had no forewarning, they killed all his troops. Simu alone escaped, and they captured his women and his horses of which there were five. The Muslim cavalry took them, and then returned to the imām with the prisoners, the booty, the mules and the women, as the sun was setting. The imām ordered the women to be beheaded, and then spent the night above Kassam, with his army.

The Qawāt people, a part of the people of Yejju,[664] who had converted to Islam said, 'We are Muslims, and have been guarding our region. If one of the Christians came to us, we would kill him, waiting for you to reach us.' The imām was delighted, and clad their leaders in robes of honour. The region of Qawāt had been under the command of Kāled al-Warādī. The imām had placed them under his charge because he was responsible for their becoming Muslims. Since he[665] perished of the plague, Bešāra was put in charge of them. Qawāt is a delightful district that the people of Abyssinia call *Lesser*

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[662] الى مكان آخر : B translates 'd'un autre côté'. (S)

[663] B omits 'against him' found only in C. (S)

[664] العجو : See *supra* p.236. (S)

[665] Kāled. (S)

Gojjām because of its plentiful blessings. Bešāra set off with soldiers from Yejju, for their country, and remained there.

[Šamsū in disgrace. The imām seeks the head of Takla Giyorgis]

The imām returned to the Muslim encampment at Dabra Berhān, and stayed a few days there. He sent to Šamsū, giving him the good news of the victory over Simu, 'We killed his soldiers, while you have been dallying in the district of Šajara. Come to me. There is no point in your remaining unless you fight.' Šamsū was afraid when the messenger passed on to him what the imām had said to him, and went back to the imām who rebuked him.

Thereupon the imām sent Absamā Nūr and the emir Šama'ūn to the district of Šajara along with five-thousand men.[666] They were all on foot, apart from the emir Šama'ūn and Absamā Nūr, for this terrain was unsuitable for fighting on horseback; only for infantry. Then he said, 'I have placed the two of you in charge of the land of Šajara, but if you don't bring back to me the head of him who killed Kabīr Muḥammad, I will not number you among the heroes.' They said to him, 'Pray God that we will be able to achieve this.' So the imām prayed to God for them and bade them farewell. They set out and arrived in the land of Šajara.

The imām then said to Šamsū, 'You neglected to fight the killer of Kabīr Muḥammad, so I have taken your country, and given it to Garād Šama'ūn and to Absamā Nūr. Now, go with your army by a different route; change your route, and hold one of the gates of the country. And if the patrician who killed Kabīr Muḥammad comes to you - his name is Takla Giyorgis - fight him, and may God grant you victory over him.'

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: The patrician Takla Giyorgis was one of the bravest of the idol- worshippers; a knight who would take the field and fight against ten men. Then Šamsū[667] set out for Šajara and held one of the gates. Garād Šama'ūn and Absamā Nūr, for their part, took up their position on top of the mountain and fought the

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[666]Following C who reads الرجال . (S)

[667]From the context, Šamsū is the subject of فسار . (S)

patrician who was routed and headed for the gate that was held, although he did not know it, by Šamsū. Šamsū had forestalled him, so he captured him, killed him and cut off his head. Then Šamsū sent a messenger with his head to the imām. When his head reached him, the imām was ecstatic, and prostrated himself in thanksgiving before the Most High God. He gave a golden wrist-bangle, and a gown, to the one who had come with the idol-worshipper's head.

[The imām reinforces Ura'ī Abūn]

Ura'ī Abūn wrote a letter to the imām in which he said, 'The only army that we have is composed of the people of Ifāt who only lately became Muslims. Could you, now, perhaps, send us some of your troops?' So he sent the mesenger off with the letter. [f°78] Immediately the imām summoned the wazir 'Abbās - though he was not *wazir* at that time - and ordered him to set out for Ura'ī Abūn with fifty knights, amongst them Ṣabr ad-Dīn, the knight of the Muslims, 'Alī Goitā bin 'Adrūḥ, Farašaḥam Muḥammad and others of their ilk.

The imām then said to 'Abbās, 'Fight the *jihād* with Ura'ī Abūn for he has sought troops from us to assist him.' 'Abbās set out and went down to the region of Ifāt. He met up with Ura'ī Abūn in a town of that province called Ṭobyā and they stayed there together.

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: Two days after 'Abbās set out, the Māyā people came with Wazarī Faqīh and Nūr al-Ašram al-Māyūwī and said, 'Our country has been devastated, and now the people of Waj and the people of Ganz, who are above us, descend upon us and plunder us night and day.' He asked them, 'What is it that you want now?' 'We want you to give us,' they replied, 'some of your troops, and one of your emirs who will go ahead with us, while you remain behind us as far as Faṭagār where you will stay.' At that, he sent them Garād 'Uṭmān lord of Jān Zalaq and one-hundred of the cavalry, among them Ura'ī Qāṭ 'Umar and Jāsā 'Alī. The imām said to him, 'Go down to Jān Zalaq and defend the country. See to it that no harm comes to the Muslims on your account. Protect the people of Zāri.' So Garād 'Uṭmān set out and reached them, and stayed above Suq Amajah.

[Wanāg Sagad counter-attacks]

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: With regard to the king of Abyssinia Wanag Sagad: when the imām returned to Dabra Berhān the king set out for the region of Ḥiffin in a country called Baḥr Dābbā, which was a lake with sweet water. He instructed the patrician Rās Baniyāt - one of his knights, and the most courageous of them, much admired among the Christians, who had a vast army with him - saying, 'The Muslims have gone up to Dabra Berhān and settled down there, while Ura'ī Abūn has stayed behind in Ifāt. You march against him, and take him and his army as they fall into your clutches.' He was unaware that the imām had sent to Ura'ī Abūn numerous troops as reinforcements, with the wazir 'Abbās.

So Rās Baniyāt set out, with the patrician Feqra Iyasus and their two forces, until they arrived at the district of Kesāyah where the Muslims had pitched their camps. The patrician came, expecting to take them in one fell swoop, as the king had said to him. When the Muslims saw him they lined up their troops, and the idol-worshippers did likewise, facing them. The patrician advanced with his army towards the Muslims, and Ṣabr ad-Dīn led the charge, with the Muslims charging behind him. Army mingled with army, and their lives hung in the balance there.

'Abbās charged at the patrician Rās Baniyāt and struck him on the helmet with his sword, and cut away a third of the helmet, and his horse's ear. At that, the patrician fled back the way he had come, and all of them were routed. The Muslims pursued them from midday until sunset, killing them. The carnage was horrendous. They captured their horses and their mules, and then they returned to their camp, sending a messenger to the imām with the good news of the victory over the patrician and his army. The messenger set out, and reached the imām in Dabra Berhān. He was overjoyed.

Then the imām sought the advice of the emirs. He asked them, 'What do you think about the region of Dawāro? Should we send an army against it, while we remain in Dabra Berhān?'

Farašaḥam Dīn replied, 'This is not a good idea. There are regions from the river 'Awāš to the river Wabi which have not converted to Islam;

and the same goes for the regions of Bāli, Ganz and Waj. But you go yourself, and we will remain on in Gebergē, or in Zeqālā - a district that will be close to you; and you can send out your forces in all directions.'

[The imām prepares his Dawāro campaign]

The imām replied, 'You have spoken well, but what shall we do about the regions that have converted to Islam - Ifāt, Gedem and Šajara? If we leave here, and leave them without an army, their people will apostatise.'

So Farašaḥam Dīn said to the imām, 'If you say that, then those regions that have become Muslim have merely donned a mask as a means, thereby, of improving themselves. If you were to go to Dawāro and stay there but one day, a thousand knights would come to you from Bāli and from Hādyā. But as for these provinces [of which you speak], there is no special advantage in our staying there.' The imām said, 'You are right. Let us send for Ura'ī Abūn and 'Abbās to join us. Then we will add around four-hundred knights to their number, and let them stay on in these provinces that have converted to Islam. Should the army of the Abyssinian king, or the king himself, come against them, let them fight him.' So he straightaway wrote a letter to them both in which he said to them, 'Catch up with us immediately'.

[Ura'ī Abūn is unwilling to remain in Ifāt]

The messenger set out and reached them and gave them the letter which he had with him. As soon as they read what was in it, they set out from Ifāt that same day and went to the imām who was in his encampment. The imām said to Ura'ī Abūn, 'We are leaving for Dawāro. We will give you and 'Abbās reinforcements and you are to remain in Ifāt.' He replied, 'I cannot remain in Ifāt, for autumn will have commenced by the time you leave for Dawāro and the river 'Awāš will be in flood. There will be water between me and you, and the king will come with his armies and I will not be able to fight him'.

The imām said, 'Enough of this. I have commanded you, so be off with your army. You have enjoyed the benefit of the land tax that they pay,

and yet you would abandon them now; you would go away from them. If they say[668] to you, "Take us with you to the imām,"[669] then so be it. But if they say, "Stay in our country," then remain there.'

The imām then said to the emir Abū Bakr and to 'Abbās - to whom he had detached around three-hundred cavalry - 'Travel with Ura'ī Abūn and do as I told you. If the Ifāt people wish to stay in their region, then you remain with them; otherwise, return to us with them, and with your emir Ura'ī Abūn.' Since the imām had got the better of him in the matter of travelling to Ifat, Ur'ai Abūn and the army set off for Ifat. They arrived there and pitched camp in Ṭobyā.

Those people of Ifāt and Ṭobyā who had converted to Islam, along with the people of Gendebelo, and its merchants, came and gathered in a group before Ura'ī Abūn and asked him, 'What news is there?' He said to them, The imām is going to go to Dawāro. Now you gather yourselves together and we will accompany you to Dawāro.' They replied, 'We will not evacuate our country and march away. You have a vast army, and the king will not be able to get the better of you.' He said to them, 'It is not possible for me to stay here; nor will I stay. Rather I will set out to join the imām.' 'If that be so,' they said, 'then we will make some compromise for the sake of our region.'

So Ura'ī Abūn set out to join the imām, and the people of Ifāt with their cavalry, around fifty knights and two-thousand infantry, with their wives and children, went with him. They marched on, and reached the imām who was *en route* for the land of Dawāro and had pitched camp at the river Maju, and assembled there. Then they set out for Gebergē.

[Bešāra is foolhardy and is killed by a poisoned arrow]

Before he had gathered with Ura'ī Abūn at Dabra Berhān the imām had sent Farašaḥam Dīn, with Bešāra and Garād Šama'ūn, the knight of the Muslims, and Garād 'Uṯmān bin Jūhar, with about two-hundred cavalry, to

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[668] 'They' appear to be the mercenaries from Ifāt commanded by Abūn. (S)

[669] عندنا : There is confusion of direct and indirect speech in this sentence. (S)

the land of the Māyā to fight its people. [f°79] They set out, and entered the country of the Māyā, guided by Nūr al-Ašram. The Māyā people had built fortifications in the mountains, in thickly forested valleys and in inaccessible places.

The Muslims pitched camp by the river 'Aram in the middle of the territory of the Māyā. Bešāra's army decamped and penetrated into the heart of the forest. Here they encountered a Māyā unit composed of archers with poisoned arrows. They wasted no time in engaging them in battle there. The crier sounded the war-cry and Bešāra knew that his troops had joined battle, so he mounted his horses and set off in their direction.

Farašaḥam Dīn sent him a message, 'Don't go into the middle of the forest. It is not suitable for cavalry fighting, only for the foot-soldiers.' But Bešāra was foolhardy, and paid him no heed. For when he saw a fight, he could not control himself. He ignored the advice of Farašaḥam Dīn and went into the midst of the forest with his army and engaged the Māyā archers in battle. They numbered five-thousand, while Bešāra had three-hundred soldiers from Yejju and twenty knights. A fierce battle ensued.

Farašaḥam Dīn for his part was infuriated at Bešāra because he had not heeded his warning; and he held his ground and remained where he was. Bešāra fought on the whole day, until mid-afternoon. Then a Māyā archer hit him with a poisoned arrow, which struck him in the face and he died a martyr - may the Most High God have mercy upon him. His companions took to their heels, with the Māyā firing arrows at their backs.

Farašaḥam heard the news, and Garād Šama'ūn and Garād 'Uṭmān rose saying, 'If Bešāra has been killed, then why remain here? You can stay, but we are going to fight. Don't you leave the camp.' Farašaḥam Dīn replied, 'Very well,' and remained there, ready for battle. The companions of Garād Šama'ūn accompanied him. They met up with Bešāra's body which was being carried by his companions, and the Māyā who were firing at them from their rear. The two of them charged at them, breaking through their midst and killing them. The achievement of the two knights Garād Šama'ūn and Garād 'Uṭmān was God's doing. For the two of them threw the idol-worshippers' army back on its heels, and they were routed.

The Muslims pursued them into the midst of the forest and the rocks. Nūr al-Ašram was firing arrows at the idol-worshippers, for he was an archer;[670] and each time he fired one he would say, 'This is in revenge for Bešāra'. He killed a large number of them, until he had exhausted all the arrows in his quiver. By sunset the idol-worshippers had been routed and forty of their chieftains had been killed. The Muslims buried Bešāra, and then went back to Farašaḥam Dīn. They found fifty arrows in the breastplate of Garād Šama'ūn, but the Most High God saved him. Likewise the Muslim cavalry, some had thirty arrows in them, others fifteen, and they were saved.

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says, When morning broke, the Muslims made preparations for battle. Farašaḥam Dīn mounted his horse and spurred his companions on. The foot-soldiers went ahead of the cavalry, and they proceeded to the spot where Bešāra had been killed; but they did not find one Māyā. For when these saw how many of them had been massacred each of them took his wife and child and, in disarray, fled during the night to Fātagār.

When the Muslims learnt of their flight, and of their panic, they sent their cavalry into the land of the Māyā, plundering its treasure and capturing them. This went on for some days, until they pledged their obedience and became Muslims - all except their chieftain whose name was Zarjī. He refused to submit, saying, 'I will become a Muslim only by the hand of the imām.'

When the imām entered the land of Waj, Zarjī became a Muslim in the presence of the imām. The rest of them, however, converted to Islam by the hand of Farašaḥam Dīn. The people of Zeqālā also became Muslims, with their chieftain Tasfā, even though they had dug a trench before than, and had been on a war footing. After they realised that the trench could not protect them, all of them converted to Islam.

Farašaḥam Dīn then sent a messenger to the imām with a letter in which he said to him, 'The inhabitants of the land of the Māyā have embraced Islam; as have the regions of Zeqālā, Jitu,[671] Arḵatlū and Šajan - all of them

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[670] رامیا : The more usual word in the text for 'archer,' is قواس . (S)

[671] Jitu, conceivably Gito, a place earlier mentioned in the chronicle of Emperor 'Amda Ṣeyon. Huntingford, *Glorious Victories of 'Amda Ṣeyon*, p. 75. (P)

have become Muslims.' The messenger reached the imām who was in Suq Wazjībā[672] and gave him the letter. When he understood its contents he rejoiced exceedingly at the subjugation of the provinces, but grieved at the death of Bešāra whom he loved.

['Abd an-Nāṣr and Mujāhid are sent off]

Aḥmad then sent 'Abd an-Nāṣr to the land of Ganz as emir of that region. Previously another person had held that position. He said to him, 'Head for the region of Ganz, and do battle with its people, until either they become Muslims or they pay the poll-tax.' Similarly, after him, he sent off the wazir Mujāhid, saying to him, 'You proceed straightaway to the land of Waj and Gebargē, and engage their peoples in battle until God conquers their territory. I will bring up your rear.'

The wazir Mujāhid set off and entered the regions of Waj and Gebargē. Their peoples offered him no resistance, and submitted to him, so he imposed the poll-tax on them. Their patrician, Eslām Daḥar son of Kom Daḥar, and the patrician Yonādab the brother-in-law of the king, refused to become Muslims, and went to Upper Gurāgē. Then the imām went, after Mujāhid, to Waj and pitched camp in a place called Duj.

The two patricians, meantime, when the imām had made camp in this place, split up: Yonādab took his wives, his children and his treasure along with one-hundred-and-fifty knights and headed for the land of Dāmot, seeking the king. He took the road to Angot. Eslām Daḥar, fearful lest his country be devastated and his churches be burned down, sent his son, and the patrician Asēbo[673] to the imām.

[The imām refuses Eslām Daḥar's offer]

They set off and reached him where he was, in Duj. The imām asked them what they wanted. Asēbo, who spoke Arabic well and was a reasonable

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[672]Suq Wazgibā, perhaps the *gabayā*, or market of Wiz. (P)

[673] عسبوا : (S)

man, spoke. He said, 'This boy is the son of Eslām Daḥar. I am his relative by marriage.[674] We have come to you so that you do not burn down our churches, or lay waste our country. We will pay the poll-tax if we may continue in our religion.' The imām asked them, 'Why is it that your patrician has not come with you?' 'He did not come to you,' Asēbo replied, 'because he would be shamed before the king. As for his son, his father said to take him to you, and if you wish that he be a Muslim, then let him be a Muslim, and let him be with you. His father, however, will pay the poll-tax.'

So the imām sought the opinion of his companions. They were unanimous in saying, 'We do not wish the patrician to pay the poll-tax and remain in his religion. As for his son, we think it far better that he become a Muslim and be with us.' The imām agreed with their opinion. So he said to them: 'Say, "We acknowledge that there is no God but Allāh , and Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh".' The patrician Asēbo repeated the formula and became a fervent Muslim. The patrician's son, on the other hand, said, 'I will not become a Muslim unless you swear an oath to God that you will take me as your son.' The imām scorned his proposal, but said to him, 'Become a Muslim and I will grant all that you ask. Say, "There is no God but Allah - Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah. [f°80] May God bless him and grant him peace".' He said this. His thirty companions, the knights, also became Muslims, and the imām bestowed robes of honour upon them, and said to them, 'Do not be afraid'. And they remained with him.

Tasfā, the commander of the Māyā, sent to the imām saying, 'Do not devastate my country, for I have converted to Islam by the hand of Farašaḥam Dīn. I should like to come to you. Send to me for an army, and I will gather together cavalry and foot-soldiers, and I will come to you'.

[Tasfā's submission accepted by the imām]

The imām sent Ya'qīm to him. He set out, and reached Tasfā, who welcomed him, treated him graciously and entertained him hospitably. Tasfā rounded up thirty knights and two-thousand foot-soldiers who were also

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[674] صهره : He could be either his son-in-law or his brother-in-law. (S)

archers, and who hardly ever missed what they fired at. They reached the imām and Tasfā stood before him and gave him a costly gift which the imām accepted, and then gave to Ya'qīm. Then he said to him, 'You are under his command'. To which he replied, 'As you wish'.

The imām then said to Ya'qīm, 'Take this army and join 'Abd an-Nāṣr in the land of Ganz; and lend him assistance.' So Ya'qīm set out and caught up with 'Abd an-Nāṣr. Then the imām set off from Duj and camped at the foot of Mount Gurāgē.[675] The wazir Mujāhid went to the imām with the people of Waj who had converted to Islam, and with those of their patricians who despite having fortified themselves in the mountains with their lord, Eslām Daḥar, had become Muslims. After the arrival of the wazir Mujāhid, Farašaḥam Dīn arrived with those who had converted to Islam by his hand: the inhabitants of six large provinces, with their cavalry and their patricians and their infantry in their thousands. They arranged themselves in line, and when the imām saw how many they were he worshipped God in thanksgiving; and prayed for Farašaḥam Dīn.

Meanwhile, the people of Ganz had made peace with 'Abd an-Nāṣr and he imposed the poll-tax on them. Some of them refused, and left their country and fortified themselves in the mountains. When they did this, 'Abd an-Nāṣr set off for the land of Kambāt,[676] on the border of Ganz, whose people had joined forces with Gāfāt. 'Abd an-Nāṣr fought them and routed them, killing a large number of them until he imposed the poll-tax on them. Then he went back to the district of Jaiṭu on the border of Hādyā, whose people had likewise fortified themselves in valleys and wooded places.

'Abd an-Nāṣr went against them and fought them there. Two of the Muslims were killed. One of them was al-Ḥājj Ibrahīm al-Tigrāwī[677] and the other was Abyat Kun. The greater part of the army was routed and only ten[678]

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[675]Known to this day as Mount Gurāgē, 40 miles north-west of Lake Zwāy, it rises to a height of 3,458 metres above sea level. *Guida dell'Africa Orientale*, p. 548. (P)

[676]Kambāt, or Kambāta, a small state between Gamo and Ganz. Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, p. 932; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 118; R.Pankhurst, *Ethiopian Borderlands*, pp. 77, 211-2, 334. (P)

[677]Tigrāwi, i.e. a man of Tegrē. (P)

[678]This should be 'twelve,' judging by what follows. (S)

renowned knights held their ground with 'Abd an-Nāṣr. Among them was Ṣabr ad-Dīn and Ezer Muḥammad. These, with their ten companions, held their ground until those who had fled returned. After this they routed the idol-worshippers and killed the majority of them. 'Abd an-Nāṣr remained on in their country.

[The Dawāro campaign gains momentum]

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: The imām was in the land of Waj fasting during the month of Ramaḍān. He ended the fast in Gurāgē, and said the prayer of the Feast,[679] staying on two days. Then he handed over the pennant to the emir Ḥusain, along with twelve other emirs among whom were the wazir 'Addolī, the emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn, Garād 'Uṭmān bin Jūhar and Absamā Nūr. All of them bore pennants. They had six-hundred knights with them, and large numbers of foot-soldiers. The imām ordered them to set out for the land of Dawāro. The emir Ḥusain was their commander in chief. So they set off for Dawāro. They were a vast company,[680] like overlapping tiers of chain mail. They entered the land of the Māyā, and the army of the Māyā, with its commander Nūr al-Ašram, joined forces with them. Then they set off with them and went into the land of Zāri, whence they entered the district of Waṭmāt and heard the news that the patrician Sāfu the son of Wasan Sagad, and Fanu'ēl and Amḥā were joining forces in Dawāro. So they set off by night from Waṭmāt, forcing their march, until when morning broke they had crossed the borders of the land of Dawāro.

News reached the patricians of Dawāro: 'The emir Ḥusain and wazir 'Addolī with their two armies have crossed the Dawāro frontier; and the two of them are headed in your direction.' [681] At that, they took fright, set out and arrived at the Sāri gate.[682] Then they sent their vanguard ahead to

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[679] That is, of عيد الفطر : the feast of breaking the Ramaḍān fast. (S)

[680] في عدد عديد . B: 'bien équipés'. (S)

[681] نحوكم . B: 'contre eux'. (S)

[682] I take this to be the gate at the confines of Dawāro, that leads onto the road to Sārī; not the gate at Sārī that leads to Dawāro. (S)

[reconnoitre] the Muslim camp. The Muslims, meanwhile, reached the encampment of the idol-worshippers that had been abandoned by them. Local people gave them news of the patricians, saying to them, 'When they heard news of you they first of all went off to the Sāri gate; beyond that we don't know what became of them'.

The vanguard that the idol-worshippers sent with the patrician Amḥā was composed of thirteen knights. They arrived in the vicinity of the place where the Muslims were, and met up with some persons who were cutting hay for the Muslims' horses. They rode among them, killed three of them. Not far from them were around five of the Muslim knights, Takia whose hand and leg had been cut off, and Ṭalīla, Garimā, 'Umar Qumāš and Goitā 'Umar. When the Abyssinians moved against their companions they slackened their reins and raised the tips of their spears. When the enemy of God, the patrician Amḥā, saw them, he fled, returning the way he had come and three of his companions were killed. Ṭakīa pursued Amḥā, and when he drew near, the patrician had two javelins in his left hand and a sword in his right hand.[683] As it was, he escaped only after a bitter contest, and went to the patricians and gave them the news that the Muslims were above Suq Dawāro[684].

[Ḥusain and 'Addolī differ over strategy]

The storyteller of the *Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša* - may the Most High God have mercy upon him - says: The Muslims disagreed amongst themselves. The emir Ḥusain said, 'So now, let us march against them and fight them'. But the wazir 'Addolī said, 'The imām clearly told me that the patrician Sāfu wants to convert to Islam. He said to me, "If he goes into the land of Gātur, don't pursue him. Wait for me until I come, and he becomes a Muslim at my hand. But if he goes down the 'Awāš road, towards Ifāt, pursue him and fight him." So now let us see which will be the road he takes'. The emir Ḥusain replied, 'It is not up to you to be giving this advice. Let us set out, and fight him'. At which 'Addolī replied, 'This isn't what the imām said to me; I won't go with

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[683] وسيف بيده اليمنى . B: 'et un sabre dans la main gauche'. (S)

[684] Suq Dawāro, i.e. the market of Dawāro. (P)

you'. And he pitched his tent. Then he said, 'I won't budge from this place'. When he pitched his tent the Muslims pitched their tents.

The emir Ḥusain was totally at a loss, and said, 'If I had known that you would act in this way, I would never have set out with you'. Then he said to Absamā Nūr, 'March to the land of Zamit. I have heard that the children and the wives of the patricians are there. Plunder what is there and return to me speedily, within two days.' He detached to him one-hundred knights and many foot-soldiers bearing shields. So Absamā Nūr set off, for Zamit, captured their wives, their children and their treasure, and laid their country waste. Then he went back to the emir Ḥusain and they all went and pitched camp on Gurāgē, above Suq Dawāro. The local people came and gave them news of the idol-worshippers, saying, 'Sāfu, son of Wasan Sagad has left the Sarī gate and entered [f°81] the land of Jān Zajra. A vast church that was built by Wasan Sagad is there. They used to slaughter for it five-hundred cattle in one day. His son has stopped there'.

[Sāfu escapes the emir Ḥusain's net]

When the emir Ḥusain heard this, he commanded the emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn, 'Travel by the lower road, and enter the land of Jān Zajra, for the patrician Sāfu is there. We will take the upper road, and we and you will join forces at the church of Wasan Sagad.' So the emir Aū Bakr set out.

The storyteller says: When Sāfu heard that the Muslims were making a beeline towards him, he assembled the monks, his brothers, his kinsfolk, his wives and his children and took the road for Zagbā so as to reach Ifāt. He fled towards it until he reached Zagbā which he skirted around. He crossed over the 'Awāš, finally reaching Ifāt, heading in the direction of the king, Wanāg Sagad. He journeyed after that for a month, reaching him in Angot, informing him of what the Muslims had done, and of what had happened to him. The king was grief-stricken.

The emir Abū Bakr, meanwhile, entered the land of Jān Zajra, devastated it, and burnt down the churches. The wazir 'Addolī and the emir Ḥusain took the route that they had said they would take, and joined forces with the emir Abū Bakr in Jān Zajra, and he gave the two of them news of the

movements of the patrician Sāfu. They said to him, 'He has taken the Zagbā road to join the king'.

The emir Ḥusain summoned the emir Abū Bakr and gave him a detachment of fighting men, amongst them Absamā Nūr, Garād 'Uṯmān bin Jūhar, Ura'ī Qāṭ, Garād 'Anānīya, and others of their ilk - in all, one-hundred knights and one-thousand foot-soldiers. He said, 'Travel by the lower road, go around behind Zagbā, and catch Sāfu unwares. If you catch up with him, you will take booty.'

The emir Abū Bakr travelled night and day, forcing the pace until he entered Zagbā where the local people gave him news of the patrician Sāfu, the son of Wasan Sagad. They said to him, 'He has outstripped you by three days. He has traversed a great deal of our territory; you won't be able to catch him'.

The emir Abū Bakr felt chagrin at his having slipped from his grasp, and he and his companions set off. They said, 'Let us enter the land of Jarāūrārī and let us fight, until they either become Muslims or pay the poll-tax'. Their suggestion delighted him, and he set off against it and pitched camp above the river Buro.[685] The first to come to him was the patrician Jarāūrāī who enbraced Islam. Then the patrician Robēl, and the patrician Wasan Jaš, and Tēdros, all became Muslims, and their conversion was sincere.

Five other patricians, however, amongst them Balaw Jas, Sarṣēya and Qart Kaflūh who became Muslims after this, and Sim and Aūḥašah, decided to dig in. Garād Hanū also became a Muslim.

The emir Abū Bakr moved against the five afore-mentioned patricians who had fortified their positions, and fought them on the mountain top. God gave the victory to the believers. The five patricians were captured, along with their horses, their wives and the children and the emir Abū Bakr returned victorious to the land of Ar'ān, and sent a messenger to the emir Ḥusain and the wazir 'Addolī, with the glad tidings of Jarāūrārī and the surrounding countryside's having converted to Islam; and that they were such a throng, that God himself alone could count their number. When the messenger reached the two of them they were in Gadārah. They were overjoyed.

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[685] نهر بور : (S)

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says, The emir Ḥusain and the wazir 'Addolī had set out from Jān Zajra and reached the Sarī gate. They pitched camp at Gadārah. As for the idol-worshippers - when Sāfu had set off, leaving the patricians Amḥā and Fān'īl, he said to the two of them, 'Don't come along with me to the king'. They said, 'What kind of a welcome would the king give us, when we haven't done as he wished? We will go, instead, into the territory of Gātur. Perhaps we will meet up with a small band of Muslims, or a force that has split up, with which we can present ourselves to the king, and he will be pleased with us.' So he left them, and they went into Gātur.

The Muslims had camped in Gadārah as we mentioned already. The people of Adal-Mabraq went to the emir Ḥusain and all of them became Muslims, as did the people of Auwawalada, Watan, Ajyat and Arqūī: all were from Dawāro which had fifty patricians, each one of whom governed a considerable area of the territory. All became Muslims.

The imām set off from Gurāgē [and after] two days pitched camp above lake Zwāy[686] whose water is sweet. Their[687] boats[688] took three days to cross it. There were three islands[689] in it, at a distance from one another, and each island had three churches upon it. The imām wanted boats to be made to cross it, but the Muslims complained of the paucity of their supplies and said to him, 'Leave the lake, and go up to the land of Hādyā and the people of this region who have become Muslims will suffice against the islanders'. So the imām withdrew from the area and set off for Hādyā.

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[686]Lake Zwāy, the most northerly of the Ethiopian Rift Valley lakes. For modern accounts see Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, p.999; Henze, *Ethiopian Journeys*, pp. 108-12. (P)

[687]i.e. the Abyssinians' boats. (S)

[688]These would have been *tankwā*, or local boats made of papyrus reeds growing by the lake-shore. They are described in Henze, *Ethiopian Journeys*, pp. 109-12. (P)

[689]There are in fact five islands, but only three seem to have ever had churches. The most important, that of Dabra Ṣeyon, or Mount Zion, was on the largest island, later called, by the Oromos, Tullu Guddo. The other churches were Galilā, called after Lake Galilee, and Dabra Sinā, called after Mount Sinai. Henze, *Ethiopian Journeys*, pp, 109, 111. Though the imām sought to destroy these churches, that of Dabra Ṣeyon retained an important collection of ecclesiastical manuscripts, on which see Harris, *Highlands of Aethiopia*, II, 31-2; Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique du règne de Ménélik II*, I, 335-8; Sergew Hable-Selassie, "An Ethiopian Manuscript EMML 8509," pp. 6-7. (P)

[The people of Hādyā join forces with the imām]

Then the governor of Hādyā, who was a Muslim, came to him. He used to pay the poll-tax to the king; and in the same way, every year, he would give him one of their daughters to be baptised a Christian by him. It was customary in their country for them to do this.

The above-mentioned governor of Hādyā went, with his army, to the imām. He said, 'I am a Muslim, and you are Muslims; I am ready to obey whatever command you give me.' The imām welcomed him for he had been hospitable to the Muslims. The imām gave him a sumptuous robe of honour, and clad all the chieftains in gowns. There was a vast throng of them. The imām questioned them about their conciliatory practice, every year, of giving one of their daughters selected for her beauty, comeliness and nobility of birth, in spite of the fact that they are Muslims. They said, 'The king imposed it on our fathers who have gone before us; he was more powerful than they. He has also obliged us not to wear armour, or to carry a sword, or to ride our horses with a saddle; only bare-back. And he also obliged us to give our daughter[690] whom we give out of fear that he will kill us or burn down our mosque. When he sends someone to us to receive the girl and the money[691] we bring the girl out to him on a divan, we wash her, drape her in cloth, pray over her and treat her as if she were dead. And then we hand her over to him. Our fathers and our ancestors did this, but now the Most High God has brought some Muslims to us.You have routed him who had dominion over us and you have destroyed his armies. Let us fight with you for the sake of God. If you went away [f°82] after this,[692] he would not be able to reduce us to

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[690]B adds 'chaque année'. (S)

[691] لال : Presumably the tax. (S) Money, as such, would in fact not have been used. The reference was probably to gold, which, because of Hādyā's location in the south-west of the region, had relatively easy access to the gold-producing territory of Dāmot. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, II, 455, 457. (P)

[692] B omits 'If you ... this'. (S)

impotence because of what you have done to him; because of how you have treated him: draining his power.'

The imām said to them, 'Don't be afraid; fight with us'. They replied, 'Willingly'. The imām remained in their country five days, and then he set off. With him was the governor of Hādyā. He entered the territory of Ayfārs and pitched his camp there. Then he sent Aḥmad Goitā to the land of Šārkāh with the brother of the governor of Hādyā. He said to him, 'Stay in Šarkah until Garād Ṣaddīq, the emir of the place, comes to you. So Aḥmad Goitā set off, with fifty cavalry, and the local people welcomed them, and all of the idol-worshippers who were there became Muslims.

[Allāh Majan bin Aḥmad is killed in battle by 'Addalū]

He likewise sent Goitā Allāh Magan to the emir Ḥusain and to 'Addolī in the land of Gadārah with the glad tidings that the governor of Hādyā and his companions had gone over to the imām. Allāh Majan bin Aḥmad set off and entered the region of Ganburah.

While he was thus *en route* to the emir Ḥusain and to 'Addolī, who should join the patricians who were in Gātur - Amḥā and Fanu'ēl - but the patrician 'Addalū. 'Addalū asked them both, 'What news of the Muslims; how far have they got? And the two of you - what benefit is there in your remaining here?' They replied, 'As for news of the Muslims, they are in the land of Gadārah; the emir Ḥusain and 'Addolī have pitched camp there. The emir Abū Bakr Qaṭīn has set off to Jarāūrāī. [693] It is thought that the imām has not yet come, but there are those who think that he is in the land of Hādyā.'

The patrician 'Addalū said, 'If this information be correct, then let us leave here this evening. Let us enter by the Sarī gate, and fall upon the emir Ḥusain at first light. If the imām comes and they join forces, then we will not be able to do anything. So let us move against them now, while they are separated. Let us attack them - that is more to our advantage than our remaining inactive until they join forces.' They arose that evening and set off - in all, three-hundred cavalry and six-thousand infantry.

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[693] sic! جراورای. B reads جراوراری. See *supra* p.305 where the names are differentiated. (S)

Allāh Majan bin Aḥmad, meantime, set off from Ganburah and passed the night on the road leading to the Sarī gate. The companions of Allāh Majan saw the vast army on the move. This is how they saw it:[694] the patrician Amḥā on the right, Fanu'ēl on the left, and the patrician 'Addalū in the middle. The companions of Allāh Majan who saw the infidel cavary went to Allāh Majan who was bringing up their rear[695] and said to him, 'There is an enemy force at our back; and we won't be able to prevail over these troops, for we are only twenty knights. So let us rather return to the imām and inform him about it.'

In reply, Allāh Majan said, 'My only reason for leaving the country of the Muslims was for the *jihād* and for martyrdom. The imām entrusted me with his pennant; am I to flee with my pennant, without having fought? If you want to flee, then flee. But if you want paradise, and the black-eyed *houris*, then follow me. I will be the first of you who bursts into their midst'.

He then donned his breastplate and his armour, girded himself with his sword, mounted his horse whose name was Lazāzā, [696] and headed in the direction of the Abyssinians while egging on his companions. These were Zaḥarbūī 'Alī; Abū Bakr bin Arsā; Ḵāled bin 'Adrūḥ - a companion of Garād Aḥmadūš; Šajara; and the people of Kūšem. Others of his companions were marching with Ura'ī Nūr. As companions Allāh Majan had five knights only: not more.

So they set off, glancing neither to right nor left - intent only on their goal. When they saw the idol-worshippers, Allāh Majan said, three times, to Zaḥarbūī 'Alī, 'I am the son of Aḥmad '. Then he said, 'This is my wished-for end; what I have desired'. Then he struck his horse with his whip, and it bounded twenty cubits. He burst into their midst, breaching their lines and destroying their compactness, penetrating to the spot where the patrician 'Addalū was.

The patrician who was in the centre, emerged to meet him in combat after he had killed six of the idol-worshippers. They both received spear thrusts, but Allāh Majan got under his guard and struck the patrician, who

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[694]B omits 'This ... it'. (S)

[695]B: 'A cette vue, ils allèrent trouver leur chef qui marchait en arrière'. (S)

[696] لزازا : I can find no meaning for this name. (S)

was wearing protective armour, a blow on his breast. The spearhead became stuck in the armour plating and when Allāh Majan tried to pull it out, the spear snapped. Then he pulled his sword out of its scabbard, wheeled around, left him and rode into the middle of the fray, killing their champions while he searched for 'Addalū. Meanwhile some foot-soldiers bearing shields made of hide came up behind him and hurled javelins at his horse. These struck it in the belly and emerged from the other side. The horse collapsed, and Allāh Majan was unseated. He struggled to get up, sword in hand, but the patrician 'Addalū charged at him, and stabbed him with his spear. He died a martyr - may the Most High God have mercy upon him, Amen.

[Zaḥarbūī 'Alī and Šajara escape by lying doggo]

His four companions had charged when he did. 'Adrūḥ Abū Bakr and the patrician Fanu'ēl grappled with each other, striking each other blows with their swords, so that the army was astounded at their contest. Then the idol-worshippers joined forces against him and killed him - may the most High God have mercy upon him. The same happened to Abū Bakr bin Arsā. They hamstrung the horse of Zaḥarbūī 'Alī - and so weakened him with wounds that they abandoned him thinking him to be dead. He managed to get away after that - long may he live - and took part in the conquest of Jīnah. The same thing happened to Šajara - the idol-worshippers so weakened him that they left him for dead. But he recovered and took part in the conquest of Tegrē.

When Allāh Majan penetrated the massed lines of the idol-worshippers, Ura'ī Nūr and his companions took to their heels without doing battle. The idol-worshippers pursued them, killing four of their knights and more than sixty of their foot-soldiers. They captured whatever horses and booty[697] of the Muslims they could find, and then returned to Gātur.

The emir Ḥusain and the wazir 'Addolī heard news of what happened to them, and sent a large contingent of knights to the scene of their battle. They buried Allāh Majan and then returned to the emir Ḥusain.

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[697] واسلاحهم : B translates 'les armes'. (S)

The storyteller says: The imām, meanwhile, after pitching camp in Ayfārs heard the news of the idol-worshippers joining forces. So he set off from Ayfārs, leaving the wazir Nūr behind in the encampment. His army accompanied him. He camped, in mid-afternoon in the land of Ṣadqah, and took captive two farm labourers from among the local people. He asked them, 'Do you have any news of the idol-worshippers?' 'Yes,' they replied, 'the patricians who had been in Gātur left the Sarī gate wanting to do battle with one of your emirs, either the emir Abū Bakr or the emir Ḥusain. Then they encountered your troops, whom you had sent with Allāh Majan and his companions, at the Sarī gate. They fought, and Allāh Majan and his companions were killed. Then they returned to their camp at Gātur'.

[The imām takes Gātur]

The imām was desolated with grief over Allāh Majan, and the next day set out from Ṣadqah for the land of Dāneq, passing the night there. The idol-worshippers got to hear of the imām's spending the night at Dāneq.[698] The local people told them, saying, 'The imām himself is heading in your direction. Don't imagine that they are the emirs [f°83] whom you know about - this is the imām with his army.' Terror and apprehension overcame them and they left Gātur for a different place.

The imām left Dāneq, set off and approached the vicinity of Gātur. But when they wanted to enter it, they found that the horses could not negotiate the road and the mountains. So they pitched camp, and took the saddles off their horses. While they were engaged in doing this, news reached them that the idol-worshippers were in Gātur. Once the imām had stationed himself above Gātur, the inhabitants of that region, and the people of Jān-Jaī - in very large numbers - became Muslims. 'Uṯmān bin Takla also became a Muslim - because his father had been a Muslim, and had apostatised in the days of the sultan Muḥammad. His brother Ḵāled bin Takla, likewise converted to Islam, along with a vast throng of knights and infantry.

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[698]B adds 'ils s'enfuirent,' which is not in the text. (S)

The imām and his army set off next for 'Andurāh, and the church of Wasan Sagad which he had previously burnt to the ground, as we have already described. He appointed Garād Šihāb governor of Gātur; and after the conquest he gave the territory of Astar Gātur to the emir 'Umar. Then he sent for Garād Jūšū, the father of Bešāra. He said to him, 'Go down to Dawāro for I have made you its governor'. Garād Saddīq he sent to Šārkāh as its governor, and he departed. In one day the imām divided his emirs among the various provinces: in all he sent out fifty emirs to all the regions. The imām remained on in 'Andurāh.

Garād Ṣaddīq set off for Šārkāh and was welcomed by its inhabitants, offering him their obedience. The lord of Hādyā gave his daughter to the imām. Her name was ... [699] She was with him only three months and then, after that, died.

['Abd an-Nāṣr reports to the imām]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: 'Abd an-Nāṣr remained in Ganz, and its people submitted to his authority. The lord of Hādyā said to the imām, 'Since you have told 'Abd an-Nāṣr to stay in Ganz, and since my country and Ganz are adjacent, O my Lord, send for him to join you, and forge an alliance between me and him. When we have made this pact between us, nothing will be able to prevail over us.' So the imām sent a messenger to the lord of Ganz, 'Abd an-Nāṣr, to come to him.

The messenger reached him while he was in Ganz. As soon as the imām's messenger reached him he made preparations for the journey. He got together some gifts for the imām - well broken-in mules and *objets d'art* from Ganz, many head of cattle of a buffalo-like species. Twelve days later he reached the imām who was in 'Andurāh. He greeted the imām and presented him with his gifts. The latter sought news of the region, and of what had

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[699]None of the MSS. gives the name. B: 'appelée Mourias,' a detail added by Cesare Nerazzini, *op. cit.* p.131 'Il padrone di Adia dette la sua figlia all'imān: essa si chiamava Murias' . A.-P. 'L'imām donna au gouverneur de Hadiya une fille en mariage'(sic!). (S)

happened to him in Ganz, and in the district of Bāṭēr-Amorā. So he informed him of all this.

The imām was astonished and asked him, 'Why did you enter this region, and why did you ascend mount Kambāt?' 'When I entered the land of Ganz,' he replied, 'I heard of the treasure of Wanāg Sagad. When Wanāg Sagad, the king of Abyssinia, entered Ganz, he left his treasure behind here. So when he set off for Bēt Amḥārā, I set off after them, and fought them on top of the mountain, and captured the treasure.[700] Here it is. I have brought it to you.'

Then he presented it, and gave it all to the imām. It included money [701] and wondrous things like golden statues, and vessels, and a vast quantity of Byzantine[702] brocades and carpets. 'Abd an-Nāṣr stayed three days with the imām who formed an alliance between himself and the lord of Hādyā. The imām also married him to the sister of the lord of Hādyā. Afterwards, the imām said to him, 'Proceed to the land of Jīnah and don't be concerned about yourself, because you will have a mighty army with you. I will join you after two days.' 'Abd an-Nāṣr set off for Jīnah with his brother-in-law, and stayed there.

[Simu and Ṣabbaru betray the Abyssinians]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: The imām left 'Andurāh and arrived at the encampment which was in the suq of the district of Jīnah. Then messengers reached him from the two patricians who were in Bāli. They said, 'The two patricians, Simu son of Wanāg Jān the *mujāhid*, and the patrician Ṣabbaru of Bāli, sent us to you. This is their message: "We are not on the side of the people of Bāli. We are with you. Send an army to us and

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[700] الخزآئن : (S)

[701] اموال : a term that can mean possessions, wealth, property, fortune etc. Here it seems to be *money* or gold because it is part of the *treasure* that 'Abd an-Nāṣr presented to the imām, and is contrasted with the عجآئب or *wondrous things* which the text describes. (S)

[702] الروميـــات : refers to the Eastern Roman Empire, Byzantium and Constantinople. (S) Presumbly a reference to Turkey or the Levant. (P)

we will be the first to fight alongside you." Simu son of Wanāg Jān the *mujāhid*, says: "I will act towards the people of Bāli as my father acted towards them in the days of the sultan Muḥammad; and even more harshly than he".'[703] The imām rejoiced and questioned them, seeking all the news from them. Then, delighted, he sent a messenger[704] to them both, saying, 'Don't be afraid, and don't be anxious. Patrician Simu, you remain in the country until my companions reach you. And let your companion and friend, the patrician Ṣabbaru, come to me.' Then the messengers left, after he had clothed them in gowns of honour, and informed the two patricians of everything that the imām had said.

[Ḥusain stays in Dawāro; 'Addolī returns to the imām]

The imām then wrote to the emir Ḥusain, lord of Dawāro, and to 'Addolī, and said to the two of them, 'The two patricians Simu and Ṣabbaru and the people of Bāli have sent a messenger to me saying, "We are with you; not with our people. Send your armies to us, and we will fight with them and we will do what is sufficient to place you in charge of our country." So now, both of you, come to us, if you have concluded all that you had to do in Dawāro; otherwise, let the wazir 'Addolī come to me.'

He gave the letter to Ura'ī Abū Bakr and said, 'Set out'. So he set out and reached the emir Ḥusain and the wazir 'Addolī and gave them the letter. When they had understood what it contained the emir Ḥusain said to Ura'ī Abū Bakr, 'As far as Dawāro is concerned, we have wound up everything here. They have all become Muslims. But the emir Abū Bakr is in the land of Jarāūrārī. He has gathered together throngs of the Dawāro people who have become believers and embraced the religion of Islam: there are thousands of them, patricians, knights and foot-soldiers. It is impossible for me to undertake a journey until he comes back to me with these people.' So Ura'ī Abū Bakr said to Wazir 'Addolī, 'You come with me. The emir Ḥusain can

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[703]See above for the earlier killings in Bāli. (P)

[704]Aḥmad appears to have sent a messenger to the patricians *before* the two messengers from the patricians had returned to them in Bāli. (S)

stay here until the emir Abū Bakr returns to him.' Then the wazir 'Addolī and his army thereupon set out with the messenger in the direction of the imām.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says, The imām was residing in his base in Jīnah when the wazir 'Addolī arrived in the encampment with half of his army. The emir Abū Bakr had the other half of the army. He was in the presence of the imām and his companions when 'Abd an-Nāṣr and his brother-in-law arrived. The imām was speaking with the wazir 'Addolī.

The emir 'Abd an-Nāṣr and his brother-in-law[705] said to the imām, 'We have heard that idol-worshippers have devastated some parts[706] of the regions of Hādyā and Ganz. So now, what shall we do? You [f°84] know what should be done. News of the devastation has reached us from the two regions.' The imām said to them, 'The two of you should travel to your respective districts before they are laid low. 'Abd an-Nāṣr, you remain in your region, Ganz, with your army; and let your brother-in-law remain in his region, Hādyā.' He recited the *Fātiḥa*, farewelled them, and they set out and entered Šārkāh.

After this, the patrician Ṣabbaru came to the imām in Jīnah and informed him about 'Addalū, the patrician of Bāli. He said, 'I have come to you without his knowledge'. Ṣabbaru became a Muslim by the hand of the imām, and his witness was a genuine one. He said, 'I acknowledge that there is no God but Allāh , and I acknowledge that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh - may God bless him and grant him peace.'

The imām then sent the wazir 'Addolī to Bāli, saying to him: 'I have made you governor of Bāli'. So 'Addolī set off with the large group mentioned above, including Absamā Nūr, the wazir 'Abbās, son of the imām's brother, Garād Aḥmad Goitā, Ura'ī Qāṭ 'Umar, Garād Aḥmadūš bin Maḥfūẓ, Farašaḥam Saṭūt, the much lamented Farašaḥam 'Alī, Ura'ī Aḥmad bin Harjāī Muḥammad, and Ḥāmed bin Suḥah. They set off and reached a country called Zanbābatan.

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[705] i.e the governor of Hādyā.

[706] الذى في بلاد الخ : or possibly the '*inhabitants*'. B: '(les polythéistes ont ravagé) les pays' . (S)

[Ṣabbaru acts as guide for the imām]

Afterwards, the imām learnt that the lord of Bāli was at full strength, with a mighty army. So he sent to the wazir 'Addolī saying to him, 'The lord of Bāli is at maximum strength. To reinforce you, I have sent you 'Abd an-Nāṣr, lord of Ganz, and his brother-in-law, lord of Hādyā, and Garād Ṣaddīq, lord of Šārkāh.' Then he wrote to them to travel to the wazir 'Addolī to reinforce him against the idol-worshippers. The messenger got through to all of them, and they joined forces in Zanābatan.

Their guide was the patrician Ṣabbaru who had converted to Islam and was a famous knight. They set off down the Hādyā road, and crossed over the river Wabi. Here, the patrician Simu bin Wanāg Jān joined them: it was he who had sent to the imām and said, 'I will be the first to join your companions; and I will fight with them'. He did as he said, and became a Muslim. The wazir 'Addolī questioned him, asking 'Where is 'Addalū the patrician of Bāli; what region is he in?' He replied that 'Addalū was in the district of Zallah. So they set off, with the cavalry detachments filing, one after the other, and the two patricians, Simu and Ṣabbaru, in the lead. They reached the vicinity of Zallah and pitched camp there.

['Addalū's response to Simu's proposal]

After this, the patrician Simu came looking for the wazir 'Addolī. He said to him, 'I will send to him[707] and say, "There is no way that you could fight the Muslims. You have heard about their fighting. They have dominated a great number of our provinces; and have given promises of security to their inhabitants in return for their submission. Numbers of the the Abyssinians have become Muslims. They put the king and his armies to flight. So now, if you wish to be a Muslim, become one; if you refuse to do so, and prefer to retain your religion, then pay the poll-tax, and provide us with provisions and horses. If neither of these suggestions pleases you, then prepare to do battle.'

[707] i.e. to 'Addalū. (S)

The wazir 'Addoli said to him 'Go ahead and do it,' and Simu sent one of his equerries to the patrician 'Addalū to repeat his words to him. The patrician said to the messenger, 'What you have said to me does not correspond to what I believe to be the truth. You say that I won't be able to fight the Muslims. How many of them are there now?' The messenger replied, 'The number of original Muslims whom they can rely upon is five-hundred cavalry. But there is a vast throng of those people of Yejju, and Dawāro and Waj who have entered their religion and become Muslims at their hands.' The patrician said to the messenger, 'Say to your master Simu, "As for what you say about how multitudinous the Muslims are - to my way of thinking they are few. And as for the poll-tax, I won't pay it. And as for becoming a Muslim, I won't do it. On the contrary, I will die fighting for my country".'

So the messenger returned to Simu and told him what the patrician had said. Then he took him to the wazir 'Addolī to tell him the news. Then they passed the night where they were. When day broke and they had said their prayers they readied themselves for the fight. They raised their pennants aloft, and set off. The patrician of Bāli, meanwhile, had risen and drawn up his divisions and ordered the Public Crier to make the following proclamation: 'Bring your womenfolk and children from the countryside, and you march together with them to fight the Muslims.[708]

The patricians then assembled before him and said to him, 'Why have you ordered us to act in this way towards our children and our womenfolk: turning them out for the battle? Rather, we will go up with them to the mountains, and then we will fight alongside you.' He said to them, 'You will not act thus: rather you will bring your womenfolk and your children with you; and I will bring my womenfolk with you. And each one of you will put his womenfolk and children behind him, and fight in front of them. For if he is tempted to flee he will see his womenfolk behind him, and will not be able to continue fleeing. However, if you were to leave your womenfolk and

[708]Such proclamations were traditionally often made at market places. Walker, *Abyssinian at Home,* pp. 120, 153, 162, 173. (P)

children in a safe place, and you were to flee, having done this would not help you, and you would find no sanctuary. But now you want to act differently. You will not. Die [if necessary] for your country and for your womenfolk and your children.'

After they had heard his words, and how he had spurred them on, they brought their womenfolk and children and made their preparations for the fight against the Muslims. In the same way the Muslims marched out against them.

[The battle for Bāli]

When the two forces caught sight of each other on the confines of Zallah, each of them stood stock still where they were. Their soldiers[709] were ranged on the right, the left and the centre. In the centre was the wazir 'Addolī with his companions - Ura'ī Aḥmad Dīn, Aḥmad Goitā, 'Alī Farašaḥam, Farašaḥam Saṭūt bin Dawāro[710] - like ravening lions. On the left was 'Abd an-Nāṣr lord of Ganz and his companions; and on the right was Garād 'Abbās the imām's nephew, the Baḥr Nagāš, and Garād 'Uṭmān. Leading the charge were Absamā Nūr, and Ṣabr ad-Dīn - the most famous of the heroes of the cavalry,[711] and the emir Abū Bakr bin Yemāj Aḥmad, the killer of the patrician Eslāmu in the battle of Zāri, and others of their ilk.

The Muslims encouraged one another, each man reminding his companion of the benefit of the *jihād*: what good things God had prepared in paradise for the *mujāhdūn*. Then the Muslims felt loathing for life in this world, and yearning to meet their Lord - may he be praised and exalted. All the Muslims were convinced that whatever happened they would be victorious.

The *Author*, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: As for the patrician 'Addalū, lord of Bāli, when the Muslims advanced against them he arranged soldiers carrying shields in front of the cavalry, then mounted his horse and held the middle position like a tower of iron. Then he

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[709]Reading عساكرهم for عساكم . (S)

[710]Perhaps the son of the ruler of Dawāro. (P)

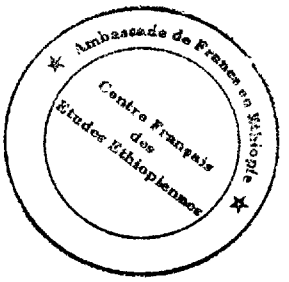
[711]I apply this encomium to Ṣabr ad-Dīn. B attributes it to Abū Bakr. But see *supra* pp.55 and 239. (S)

summoned his womenfolk and his children and placed them at his back, saying to them, 'Take your ornaments and put them on. This day will be famous. Its memory will be recalled until Resurrection Day.' [f°85] His womenfolk did as the patrician ordered them. When the other patricians saw what their lord had done, all of them did as he did, and placed their womenfolk at their backs, as he had previously commanded them to do.

Then the Muslims marched against them with a God-inspired tranquillity and dignified bearing, placing all their hope in what God had promised them in his perspicuous book in which he says - and he is the most trustworthy of speakers - 'Reckon not those who are killed in the path of Allāh as dead; nay, they live, and are provided sustenance by their Lord, rejoicing,' etc.[712]

['Addalū is killed, and the Abyssinians routed]

The first of the Muslims to charge was a man called Ādaša; and the Muslims charged at his back, with Islamic hearts and Muḥammadan zeal. The idol-worshippers likewise charged. The fighting was hand-to-hand, and the struggle intense; hero facing hero. The patrician 'Addalū charged into the middle of the Muslims. The battle that ensued was the fiercest possible: with the two armies commingling confusedly. Then the voices of the Muslims were raised in the *tahlīl,*[713] and the *takbīr,*[714] and in prayer for the bringer of good news, the herald.[715] Farašaḥam 'Alī charged at the patrician of Bāli until he dislodged him from his horse's saddle and threw him to the ground. Both fell together. Then 'Alī Farašaḥam drew a large curved and double-edged dagger that he had with him and cut off his head - may God thrust his soul into Hell, and 'an evil place it is to settle in'.[716] When the idol-worshippers



[712] *Qur'ān* iii, 168; some eds iii, 169. (S)

[713] Saying, *lā ilāha illā llāh*: 'There is no God but Allah'. (S)

[714] Saying: *allāhu akbar*: 'God is very great'. (S)

[715] i.e. Muḥammad. (S)

[716] *Qur'ān* xiv, 29. (S)

saw their patrician had been felled, they turned tail pursued by the Muslims who killed and captured them.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: To God goes the credit for the achievement of the Muslim women on the day of the battle of Bāli, for when the Muslims charged the idol-worshippers, their wives charged behind them, on their mules; and when the Abyssinians had been routed, each woman could say, 'I have captured four of the women of the idol-worshippers,' or others of them could say, in the same way, 'five,' or 'six' or 'seven'.

Many thousands of the idol-worshippers were killed that day, along with an incalculable number of patricians, among them the patrician Yesḥāq whom Absamā Nūr killed; Abīb, lord of Gātur, a notorious *Satan* whom the patrician Simu, son of Wanāg Sagad the *mujāhid*, killed; the patrician Līmu, lord of Šārkāh, whom Garād Aḥmadūš bin Maḥfūẓ killed; and Ḡafānī, killed by one of the Muslim converts. Also killed was Za-Mankir, the son of the patrician of Bāli, 'Addalū, whose killer was Tamāš Abūn, the slave-boy of the sultan; the patrician Majan whose killer was Ṣabbaru, who had become a Muslim with Simu. The total number of high-ranking patricians who were killed was one-hundred.

Those who were captured were numerous: among them were the Azāj Zaḵirah,[717] one of those close to the king, and one of his arbitrators among the patricians; Naqdīya the apostate;[718] Giyorgis, the son of Daḥrāgot whom Farašaḥam Adal captured; and Ḵārej, whom Manṣūr captured. The total of the patricians who were captured was around two-hundred. Three-thousand infantry and cavalrymen whose names are unknown, were killed.

The terrain was covered with dead. And blood flowed like water on the ground. God delivered their horses, their womenfolk, their children and their tents, and everything that they owned, into the power of the Muslims. Praise be to God, the all-powerful, the opener of the gates of sustenance, the all-wise, for of the Muslims two men alone were killed - upon both of whom

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[717] *Azaj*, a title given to a commander, or governor, and later to a major domo, or judge. Guidi, *Vocabolario amarico-italiano*, c. 486. See also Esteves Pereira, *Chronica de Susenyos*, p. 15. (P)

[718] نقدية المرتد : some MSS read تقدية . (S)

God had set the seal of martyrdom: one of them was Bālī Nūr, and the other was Āhāwamīh. The wazir 'Addolī camped in the house of the patrician 'Addālū in Zallah. He assembled the prisoners, the wives of the patricians and their children and asked them, 'Is there any patrician of Bāli remaining?' 'Yes,' they said, 'the patrician of Qāqmāh, Aīdabis, and Badlū, patrician of Dawāro, and five others of their ilk'. Then he asked, 'Where are they now?' Simu answered, 'They can only be heading for Qāqmāh and the patrician Aīdabis'.

['Addolī consolidates his victory]

When 'Addolī heard this he assembled forty Muslim knights from the cavalry and said to the patrician Simu, 'Travel with these forces,and pursue those who are fleeing wherever they may be. For you know their territory; it is your country.' Simu said, 'Willingly,' and then set off with them to the land of Qāqmāh, where he encountered the patricians hiding in the forests.

He employed a ruse against them, and captured them. He killed one of them, the patrician Dal Sabbar, one of the Dawāro patricians, the brother of the accursed Fanu'ēl who until now has not converted to Islam; nor has he fallen into the clutches of the Muslims, despite all the battles that he has fought in. Simu killed his brother. They captured the remainder of the patricians - they were around fifty knights - along with their horses, and returned victorious to the wazir 'Addolī who was in Zallah. Then he presented him with the horses and the prisoners.

The patrician Haja, meanwhile, had crossed the Wabi and was heading for the road to Dawāro. In Dawāro was Garād Jūšū, father of Bešāra, whom the imām had made its governor. It so happened that when the wazir 'Addolī set off for Bāli the imām said to Garād Jūšū, 'Take the lower road to Bāli and hold the Dārah gate. No one leaving Bāli will be able to slip past you'. While he was on the road, that is, the Dārah road, the patrician approached, descending the Bāli road after crossing the Wabi. He was seen by the guards whom Jūšū had ordered to take up positions in the heights, so that they could observe the road from a distance. They informed Garād Jūšū, saying to him, 'We have spied a force descending the mountains on the Wabi side'. He asked, 'Are they many, or few?' We can't tell now. We won't be able to be

sure of their strength, until they get closer to us. We'll come and tell you then'. He said to them, 'Quickly, go back to your positions, and you'll be able to ascertain what is what'.

[Jūšū kills Haja and sends his head to the imām]

So they set off, and then returned not long afterwards, saying, ' He is close by us; hold the position with your troops; we have seen them descending nearby us'. Jūšū arranged his troops at a point where the road narrowed, and waited there. The idol-worshippers had no idea that Garād Jūšū was holding the spot where the gate was; and the only road they could take was *via* this gate. When they reached the gate they saw him there with his troops. They were unable to flee[719] because of the narrowness of the road. When Jūšū and his troops attacked them, they yelled out out, 'Mercy,' 'Mercy,' but he did not hear what they said. He ordered them, 'Throw down your weapons,' so they threw their weapons on the ground. Then he took them captive: five patricians with sixty cavalry, including a son of 'Addalū the patrician who had been killed. They took all their horses, weapons and equipment. Then he ordered them to be beheaded.

They killed all of them, apart from one patrician called Fārēs. When they tried to tie him up one of the Muslims went towards him, but the idol-worshipper had a dagger with him and when the Muslim tried to grab him, he took the dagger in his hand and stuck it in the Muslim's [f°86] throat and he fell down dead - may the Most High God have mercy upon him.

The idol-worshipper fled while all the other Muslims were engaged in killing their prisoners. Only when they had finished killing the prisoners did the Muslims notice that that man was dead, as well as his equerry. The name of the man whom the idol-worshipper killed was Alḥamaī Sulṭān, who had been a flute player in the land of Sa'd ad-Dīn. The imām loved him. He was a courageous knight who had forsaken his flute playing and become one of the cavalrymen. They buried him. Garād Jūšū had cut off the head of the patrician Haja, and sent it to the imām who was in Jīnah. The imām was exasperated at

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719 فسلم يمكنهم الهرب : B: translates 'il n'y eut pas pour eux possibilité de combattre'. (S)

this patrician because he had sent him a letter saying, 'I want to become a Muslim,' but when the imām sent a messenger to him and he arrived, Haja killed him and then went off to the land of Bāli. That is why the only head he had cut off was Haja's,[720] in order to give the imām pleasure by so doing.

When the messenger carrying the head of the patrician reached him, the imām proclaimed the power of God, and glorified him. He had no news of the wazir 'Addolī or of what he had achieved in the battle of Bāli, or of his victory over the idol-worshippers.

When the imām saw the head, he asked the messenger, 'Where did you meet up with the person whose head this is?' The messenger asked him, 'Hasn't the messenger from the wazir 'Addolī come to you? Haven't you received the glad tidings of what he did?' 'What has he done?' asked the imām. So he told the imām about the killing of the patrician 'Addalū, and the routing of him and his army, and the coming of the patrician whose head Garād Jūšū had cut off.

Hearing this the imām prayed to God in thanksgiving, prostrating himself twice, and then gave the messenger and his companions matching[721] garments of honour, and two golden bracelets for their hands.[722]

Overjoyed, the imām went out and camped in the countryside. Then he ordered that the small copper drums, the big bass drums and the Abyssinian drums made out of hollowed tree trunks, be sounded. Then the Muslim army assembled before him, and asked him, 'What is the news?' He held up the patrician's head in front of them, and informed them of the news of the victory. Their joy knew no bounds.

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[720]As all the patricians save Fārēs had been beheaded, the sense seems to be that the only patrician whom *Jūšū* personally had beheaded was Haja. See *supra* this § lines 7ff; also *infra* the following two §§. (S)

[721] تامة : should this be ترجمة ? B omits. (S)

[722]B omits 'for their hands'. (S)

['Addolī's messenger arrives belatedly]

The wazir 'Addolī, meanwhile, when he had completed his subjugation of Bāli, wrote the imām a letter, giving him the good news concerning the killing of the patrician in Bāli and sent it with a man called Ibrahīm. He arrived in the land of Jīnah two days after the arrival of Garād Jūšū's messenger. The messenger bearing the good news entered the presence of the imām and gave him the letter, and kissed his hand. The imām asked him, 'What held you up on the road? We heard the news two days before your arrival'. He answered, 'We were delayed by the river Wabi which was in spate'. So the imām read the letter, and absorbed its contents, especially the part that asked, 'What shall we do with the captives: the patricians' womenfolk, their children and their horses?'

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: The imām wrote him a letter in which, after the *Basmala*[723] he said, 'With regard to the patricians,[724] their womenfolk and their children and their horses, which you have taken as booty: take out the *fifth* and divide the rest among the *mujāhidūn*, keeping the wife of the patrician 'Addalū as your concubine. Of the patricians whom you captured, keep with you those who become Muslims; kill anyone who refuses. Execute the apostate Naqdīya by hanging him at the gate of the city of Zallah. As for Kārej, and Azāj Zakirah the one-handed, and Giyorgis and the son of Daḥrāgot - send them to me, and also four horses. As for 'Abd an-Nāṣr, and the ruler of Hādyā and Garād Ṣaddīq lord of Šarkāh - give them their share of the horses which they took as booty, and the womenfolk of the patricians, and send them on their way back to their countries. Send to Simu a sword whose hilt is made of red gold weighing twenty ounces for the way he acted towards the Muslims, and for not betraying them.'

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[723]i.e. the invocation, 'In the name of God, the beneficent, the Merciful' بسم الله الرحمان الرحيم (S).

[724]The letter of 'Addolī as outlined in the text, does not ask about the patricians; only about their womenfolk, children and horses: ونساء البطارقة الخ . (S)

['Addolī divides the booty, and hangs Naqdīya - June/July 1532]

The messenger set off and reached the wazir 'Addolī in Bāli. He presented the letter to him. After he had understood its contents, he summoned Naqdīya, and hanged him, as the imām had commanded, at the gate of Zallah. Then he took out the *fifth*, and divided the horses, and the patricians' womenfolk, among the Muslim soldiers; the wife of the patrician 'Addalū he took for himself, making her his concubine.

Then he sent the imām the captives whom the imām had mentioned to him, and the horses which the imām had told him to send, with his slave. The slave set out and reached the imām who was in Joraji which was in the land of Dawāro, where he was to stay until autumn, and the rainy season, had ended. He presented him with the horses, the captives, the mules, gold, and the treasure of Wasan Sagad which had been in Bāli and which they had plundered. He gave all of this to the imām, including silks, brocades and valuables. The imām ordered the captives to be beheaded.

The Muslims intervened on behalf of Kārej the apostate, saying 'He grew up in your home, when he was little. He is sorry. Forgive him his unfaithfulness.' So the imām forgave him and attached him to his troop of soldiers.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: All of the people of Bāli, young and old, became Muslims at the hand of the wazir 'Addolī, may God have mercy upon him. As for 'Abd an-Nāṣr, and the lord of Hādyā, and Garād Ṣaddīq, lord of Šārkāh - each one of them set out for the respective country over which the imām had placed him as governor.

[Eslām Daḥar's ruse fails]

The storyteller of the *Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša* says: The battle of Bāli took place on a Friday of Zu'lhijjah, the day of the Great Pilgrimage[725] in the last

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[725] الحـج الاكـبر : In contradistinction to the Lesser Pilgrimage, or الحج الاصغر also called *al-'umratu*

of the months of the year nine-hundred-and-thirty eight,[726] from the pilgrimage of the Prophet,[727] upon whom be the most gracious blessings and peace.

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: When the imām had consolidated his position in Dawāro, he sent the wazir Mujāhid to the land of Waj. He and his army set off.[728]

He likewise sent off Farašaḥam Dīn to the country of the Māyā which he had conquered; the rest of its people were there. So he and his army set out and reached the land of the Māyā. Its inhabitants welcomed him, and he settled down there.

The wazir Mujāhid, meanwhile, had entered the land of Waj. Half the inhabitants accepted him,[729] while the other half supported the patricians of Waj. Their principal patrician was Eslām Daḥar, son-in-law of the afore-mentioned[730] king Eskender. They had built fortifications in the mountains; there were thirty patricians among them.The wazir Mujāhid came against them to fight them.

When the patrician saw the Muslims heading in his direction he cried out to his companions, 'Now, let us set aside our horses, dismount, and fight the Muslims on foot. This place is not suitable for the cavalry. The Muslims are moving against us'. He grasped his sword and his shield, and all the patricians and their soldiers did as he did. They left their horses on the mountain. At that moment, the wazir Mujāhid charged with his foot-soldiers [f°87] in front of the cavalry, and they headed towards the mountain. The Muslim infantry fought the infantry of the idol-worshippers; all of them on foot. Then the Muslim cavalry came up from behind the infantry but they

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because it may take place at any time in the year, and need not necessarily fulfil all the requirements for the Haj properly so called. (S)

[726]The last month of the Muslim year. (S)

[727]i.e. some time between Monday June 26 and July 24, 1532 AD since Zu'lhijjah began on June 26 in 938 AH, and it has 29 days. (S)

[728]B omits 'He... off'. (S)

[729]Reading تقبله for تقتله. (S)

[730]See *supra* pp.182, 204. (S)

could not find a path that they could take up to the mountain. The idol-worshippers prevented them from climbing the mountain.

At that time, one of the Muslim cavalry named Ura'ī Abūn al-Qāūdah, along with four other knights, went stealthily around the side of the mountain, and found a way up it. When he saw it, he climbed up it, and with him climbed his companions, the four knights mentioned above.

The idol-worshippers knew nothing about them until they cried out against them from above them. When they heard the shouts, they fled and the Muslims pursued them. The companions of the wazir Mujāhid, who were at the foot of the mountain killed them, and took the patrician Eslām Daḥar captive, and then they killed him. They killed the patricians, and the forces of the idol-worshippers who were with the patricians. Not one of them escaped.

Of Eslām Daḥar's army of thirty patricians, none escaped save one patrician. They captured all their horses,[731] and killed them. Of the soldiers carrying shields some were killed, and some others managed to escape. Not one of the Muslims was killed. God conquered the country - its plains and its mountains - and all its inhabitants submitted.

Then the wazir Mujāhid sent the imām the good news of the victory, the triumph, the conquest, and the killing of the patrician. His messenger reached the imām who was in Gurāgē; and he praised the Most High God.

['Abd an-Nāṣr defeats the patrician Aīker]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: After 'Abd an-Nāṣr had set out and arrived in the land of Hādyā, news reached him that king Wanāg Sagad had sent a patrician named Aīker, with his army, and he had entered the territory of the land of Ganz. 'Abd an-Nāṣr asked, 'How many days have elapsed since his arrival until now?' 'A month,' they replied. So 'Abd an-

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[731] واخذوا الخيول كلهم منهم وقتلوهم : sic! B: 'les nôtres prirent tous leurs chevaux et égorgèrent leurs cavaliers'. As their riders (الفرسان) had dismounted before battle was joined, and the horses would have been in a separate place, I differ from B who understands 'them,' (the object of وقتلوا) to be 'the riders'. I take the sentence to refer to the fate of the Christians in general, not just of the knights. (S)

Nāṣr set off from Hādyā for the territory of Ganz, travelling night and day for five days. On the sixth day he caught the patrician unawares as dawn broke. The patrician mounted his horse and fled alone. The remainder of his soldiers and his horses fell into the clutches of 'Abd an-Nāṣr who proposed to them that they become Muslims; and all of them did so. Their conversion was genuine and they took part with him in the periodic battles for Abyssinia. He stayed on in Ganz and its people submitted[732] and then he sent a messenger with the good news of the victory, the triumph and the conquest of the region. He reached the imām who was in Dawāro, and informed him how things were, and what had occurred in the battles. The imām praised the Most High God, and spoke in the most laudatory terms of Him.

[Mujāhid conquers Wārābbā]

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: The imām then sent to Ya'qīm who was with the wazir Mujāhid and said to him, 'You and your soldiers march to the region of Wārābbā, and fight its inhabitants until God conquers it by your hand'. The letter reached him when he was in Waj and when he understood its contents he immediately organised supplies for thirty knights. So he set off heading for Wārābbā and entered it. All of the inhabitants of Wārābbā gathered around. There were some people from the Sudan[733] in the vicinity, and also with them were some Arabs, some riff-raff, [734] and some foreign travellers, who gave him gifts, and made him welcome. Nearby them was a patrician called Aklil[735] who was an arrogant *Satan*. Some of the infidels went to him and said, 'We have appointed you our chieftain; fight with us for our country'. He listened to what they had to say, and was delighted because the king had never before given him any

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[732] But cf. *supra* pp 301ff. (S)

[733] i.e. the Muslim-inhabited country west of Ethiopia. (P)

[734] B: 'des marchands forain,' 'pedlars'. But while السوقة can mean a 'rabble,' or a 'mob' it properly refers to the subjects of the ruler, whether they engage in commerce or not. People of the 'sūq' or market would be سوقيون. (S)

[735] Literally, in Amharic, crown. A common Ethiopian name is Aklilu, or His (God's) Crown. (P)

responsibility. He lived in the territory of Wārābbā, but had never before had any authority. It was the inhabitants of Wārābbā who were idol-worshippers, who put him in authority over them so that he would fight Ya'qīm. They beguiled him with their words, and he set off in the direction of the Muslims to engage them in battle.

Ya'qīm, all the while, knew nothing about him. While they were in their tents, suddenly the idol-worshippers' cavalry was attacking them from a distance. A scream went up from the camp, 'A surprise attack on us!' and they made a dash for their horses, mounted them, armed themselves and hurried to the tent of their commander, Ya'qīm, who mounted his horse. They stood in battle array before his tent. The idol-worshippers advanced, and the Muslims, as one man, made a charge against them, and they fought one another there. Hardly an hour had passed before the idol-worshippers turned tail with the Muslims pursuing them, killing them. They found their freedom in death. That day, a thousand or more of the idol-worshippers' foot-soldiers were killed. The patrician whom the people of Wārābbā had seduced, managed to save only himself.

[The people of Wārābbā pay the poll-tax, and side with Mujāhid]

Ya'qīm sent a messenger to the imām, bearing the good news of the victory, the triumph and the conquest. In the letter he said, 'All the people of Wārābbā have requested, "Allow us to pay the poll-tax," so, now, what shall we do? We await your reply'. After the messenger had reached the imām, and he had understood its contents he said to the messenger, 'Go back to Ya'qīm and say to him, 'Let them pay you the poll-tax'. So the mesenger returned to Ya'qīm who was in Wārābbā, and repeated to him all that the imām had said concerning the poll-tax. So he ordered them to bring the following poll-tax: fifteen thousand loads[736] of wheat, one-thousand ounces of gold, and one-thousand *kadūjah*[737] of honey and clarified butter - every year. They agreed to this, and Ya'qīm remained in their country.

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[736] حمل sic! (S)

[737] A unit of measure I have been unable to identify. (S)

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: News of the conquest of Wārābbā reached the king of Abyssinia who was in Angot. He grieved at its being taken and then said to a patrician named Rās Banīyat, 'You set out for Wārābbā and drive the Muslims from it - for if Wārābbā is taken from us, we lose our glory and our crown, since it is our country's garden of paradise'. The patrician set off with his army and arrived at its frontier. The inhabitants of the country went to Ya'qīm and informed him of the arrival of the army of the idol-worshippers, and of their patrician. Ya'qīm asked them, 'So now, what are you suggesting?' 'You,' they said to him, 'are dearer to us than the idol-worshippers are. We will have no peace of mind apart from with you. Our people[738] are oppressive, taking our wealth from us by force, over and above what we freely give them. Let us fight alongside you, for we are stauncher enemies of them than you are. Be in no doubt about us.'

While all this was happening, a messenger from the patrician reached the people of the country. He said [f°88] to them 'I have come for your sake, to drive the Muslims from your country'. The king has sent me to fight on your behalf'. But they heaped insults upon him, and cursed him. So the patrician's messenger returned to him and informed him what the people of the country had said. He was dismayed at the words of the inhabitants of the country and at their good-will towards the Muslims. While the patrician was in this frame of mind, Ya'qīm set out from his base and headed in his direction. When news of this reached him, the patrician set off for another place, leaving his tents just as they were. Ya'qīm arrived at his camp, seized his tents and marched behind him, in pursuit, for two days, without catching up with him. Then he returned to the country and remained in his camp. The patrician had thought that the people of Wārābbā would help him in his fight against the Muslims; but they would not.

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: After all the provinces, the lands of Dawāro, Bāli, Hadya, Ganz, Waj, Wārābbā, Faṭagār and Ifāt - along with their outlying regions - had been conquered, and all that remained unconquered was a section equivalent to a

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[738] i.e. the Abyssinian ruling class. (S)

quarter or a third of Abyssinia. The imām called an assembly of his emirs, his chieftains and all the Muslims.

[The imām announces his intention of staying in Abyssinia]

He said to them, 'Praised be God who has conquered the whole of the land of Abyssinia. Now let us send to the land of Sa'd ad-Dīn, to bring up our wives and our children. Let us make our homes in Abyssinia. It is no longer possible for us to go back down to our country, or to leave this one. What do you say; what is your opinion?' 'It is up to you,' they said, 'to command. Whatever you order us to do, we will obey you.' So, thereupon he sent a messenger with a letter to the country of Sa'd ad-Dīn, to the sultan 'Umar Dīn, and to his brother,[739] Muḥammad bin Ibrahīm. He said in the course of his letter, after the usual salutations, 'After our messenger reaches you with this letter, send our wives and children to us'. Each of them, whether emir or lowly soldier, wrote to his wife that she should go up, accompanying the wife of the imām. Then he sent the letter, along with priceless Abyssinian artifacts as gifts, to the sultan. He also sent gifts to all the chieftains. Likewise, each one of the *mūjāhidūn* sent his wife some gold to help cover the cost of the journey, and for whoever stayed behind:[740] some of them sent thirty ounces, others twenty and others again, ten. Each according to his ability to provide. They also sent large numbers of mules for them to ride, and to carry their belongings.

The messenger set off, and reached the country of Sa'd ad-Dīn, and presented the gifts and the letter to the sultan 'Umar Dīn, who permitted the wives of the *mujāhidūn* to go up to their husbands. The imām's wife, whose name was Bā'tīya Del Wanbarā, the daughter of Garād Maḥfuẓ, made preparations for the journey up, as did some of the wives of the *mujāhidūn.* Others of them refused.

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[739]i.e the imām's brother. See *supra* p.51. (S)

[740]Probably this refers to concubines or servants or other family members who were not able to make the journey. (S)

After that, the wives of the *mujāhidūn* arrived in the land of Ayfārs, and met face to face with the imām. Then the imām and his companions made a beeline for the land of Tegrē, and he ordered his dispersed emirs to assemble before him.

The wazir 'Addolī who was in Bāli advanced with his army to the imām who had set off from Ayfārs and had pitched camp in Waj, in a village known as Wiz Gabayā. He left the emir Ḥusain behind in Dawāro, and Garād Ṣaddīq in Šārkāh. Also in Dawāro was Garād Jūšū. The wazir 'Addolī's brother, whose name was 'Umar, was in Bāli.

[Ambush at Wallāmo]

The wazir Mujāhid was stationed in Waj, but could not be there the day the imām arrived, since before the imām's arrival he had set off for a far-off locality known as Ṣūf Gāmo [741] and Baḥr Gāmo.[742] The king of Abyssinia only ruled there by agreement, for they were barbarians and had neither religion nor a book.[743] Mujāhid entered their country, and put them to death, and afterwards they submitted under an agreement that involved their paying the poll-tax. 'Send your representative,' they said, 'and we will pay him our poll-tax'. So he sent his equerry Ṣāliḥ who was a courageous hero, with them. He detached to him ten knights and around one-hundred foot-soldiers. Amongst their number was a sharif of the Ḥusainī tribe. His name was 'Alī.

They travelled for one whole day, accompanied by some of the people of the country who led them into a locality whose earth was clayey and like quicksand. Its name was Wallāmo.[744] They said to them, 'Remain here while we gather together the poll-tax for you'. But what they said was a ruse.

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[741]Suf Gamo, a tributary territory west of Lake Čāmo. Mentioned in a soldiers' song of the reign of Emperor Yeshāq (1412-1427), the locality may have been called Suf after the *suf*, or safflower, *Carthamus tinctorius*. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 94. (P)

[742]Bāḥr Gamo, an area adjacent to Suf Gamo. Probably so called after Bāḥr, or Lake, Čāmo, it also figures in a soldiers' song of the reign of Yeshāq. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 94. (P)

[743]i.e. a *sacred* book, like the books of the Christians and Muslims. (S)

[744]Wallāmo, a small animist territory, sometimes tributary to the Christian empire, and in more recent

Ṣaliḥ and his companions waited there for them to assemble the tax for them. But, instead, all of the people of the country assembled, and advanced in the direction of the Muslims, and attacked them. The Muslims tried to mount their horses, but were unable to do so. They could neither escape nor charge, for their horses' legs got stuck in the soft clay of the terrain where they were. They killed all of the Muslims, including the sharif and Ṣāliḥ: they killed both of them; may the Most High God have mercy on them both.

[Stubborness of Mujāhid and its consequences]

When the wazir Mujāhid heard the news of the killing of his companions, he became exceedingly angry and said, 'I will not budge from here until I have revenged my companions'. All the Muslims who were with him said to him, 'This terrain is unsuitable for cavalry battles. There is no point in beseiging it, because it has meagre supplies of food. Rather, let us return to our country before they seize the gate that we left behind us. It is a very confined space. If the idol-worshippers get to it before us, we will have no way of escaping through it; and they will deal with us as they dealt with Ṣāliḥ'.[745]

The wazir Mujāhid refused to follow their advice, and remained there. He stayed there a month, and the local people fortified themselves in a mountain there. The scarcity of food weighed heavily upon the Muslims, and they suffered grievously. Finally the wazir Mujāhid wanted to return the way they had come, so he sent some knights to reconnoitre the gate for him. They found that the idol-worshippers had preceded them to the gate, so they returned and informed him. The Muslims were worn out, and at their wits end. If they remained where they were, they would have no strength as they were starving: their provisions were exhausted; and yet they had no other route that they could take.

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times known as Wolyata. Located between Lake Awāsā and the Omo river, it was mentioned in a soldiers' song of the reign of Yeshāq. Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique du règne de Ménélik II*, I, 360-1; Huntingford, *Hist. Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 91; R.Pankhurst, *Ethiopian Borderlands*, pp. 7, 211. (P)

[745]B adds 'et ses compagnons'. (S)

['Abd an-Nāṣr saves the Muslims]

'Abd an-Nāṣr was in Ganz when he heard the news that the people of the country had trapped the wazir Mujāhid. 'Abd an-Nāṣr travelled from Ganz night and day, and after eight days arrived at the gate, coming up behind the idol-worshippers from the Ganz road, and killing those who were there. Then he stayed at the gate, and sent a messenger to the wazir Mujāhid telling him to go to him. The Muslims rejoiced, and set off, and met up with him, and thanked them[746] for what they had done.

The storyteller says:[747] Since news of the wazir Mujāhid, and of 'Abd an-Nāṣr, was slow in reaching him, the imām immediately sent for the emir Šama'ūn and Absamā Nūr and said to them, 'Travel to the emir Mujāhid and 'Abd an-Nāṣr wherever they may be, and come back to me with them'.

So they set out for Ganz with their forces and met up with the two of them there, as they were heading in the direction of the imām. Together with them they went back and reached the imām who was in Wiz Gabayā. He asked them 'Where were you? [f°89] What kept you?' So they told him what had happened, and what 'Abd an-Nāṣr had done, and the imām, and the Muslims thanked him.

['Addolī is sent to conquer Dāmot]

After this, the imām set off and entered the land of Gebergē. The emir Abū Bakr came from Faṭagār to the imām; and Ya'qīm came from the land of Wārābbā. The Muslim forces assembled in Gebergē. Then the imām despatched the wazir 'Addolī against Dāmot, saying to him, 'Conquer the land of Dāmot and fight its people'. So off he went, with his celebrated army. Accompanying him was Saīdī Muḥammad whom the imām had appointed governor over it. 'Abd an-Nāṣr and his army set off with them.

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[746] وشكروا لهم فعالهم : i.e. 'Abd an-Naṣr and his companions. B translates 'et lui rendirent grâce'. (S)

[747] Here, as in pp.326, 364, the text adds ر ج after *'The storyteller'*. (S)

They travelled and reached the land of Dāmot. Stationed there with his army was one of the king's patricians, by name Daḥrāgot. When he heard how the Muslims were heading for the land of Dāmot, he was afraid of them, and fled to Gāfāt, one of the regions of Dāmot.

The people of Gāfāt are desert nomads with no knowledge of the Book,[748] and no religion. They warned the patrician, 'Don't enter our country,' but he ignored them, and entered their country by force.[749] So they joined forces against him, to fight him.

[Daḥrāgot's force suffers the fate of Ṣaliḥ]

The land they held against him was swampy and clayey, and the four hooves of any horse that entered it would sink into it. The patrician advanced with his army, to do battle with them. There were some trees there, amongst which they hid themselves until the patrician entered the swampy ground. He knew nothing of them until they attacked him. Now all the people of Gāfāt went on foot; they had no experience of horse riding. Fighting in the swampy ground with the patrician were two-hundred knights. The horses could not move, and their four hooves were no sooner stuck in the clay than the people of Gāfāt slaughtered them[750] and their riders - dragging them down [into the mud].

The patrician fled, and only a few of his cavalry were saved. A great number of his soldiers were killed, amongst whom were three of the patrician's sons. Fifteen of the patricians of Dāmot, inferior to the patrician Daḥrāgot, were killed.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: The wazir 'Addolī meanwhile was in Dāmot, and had split up the emirs who set about capturing prisoners or taking booty.

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[748]Presumably the *Qur'ān*. (S)

[749] قهرا : may also mean 'of necessity'. The patrician may have thought that he had no alternative. (S)

[750]Usually by hamstringing. (S)

[Treachery of the slave of Dāmot who betrays Balaw Sagad]

When the Muslims entered the land of Dāmot another of its patricians - his name was Balaw Sagad, a brother of the patrician Eslāmu who had been killed at the battle of Zāri - fled the region, along with thirty knights.

He crossed the river Baḥr Zibi[751] and asked a slave from Dāmot, in a region called Enāryā, for help in delivering him from the Muslims. The slave received him hospitably, bade him welcome, and vacated a place where he and his companions could stay. So the patrician and his companions dismounted from their horses and made camp.

Then the slave took them unawares; they [752] attacked the patrician, binding his hands behind him; and they took their horses. The slave then sent a messenger to the wazir 'Addolī, saying, 'I have captured the patrician, and have tied all of them up. Send some of your companions[753] to me, so that I may come to you'.

Immediately the slave's messenger reached him, 'Addolī sent to him, and he straightaway sent the poll-tax and gifts, with the captives and their horses, and a great quantity of gold, for his region is a gold mine. They went off to the wazir 'Addolī, and upon reaching him handed over the patrician and his thirty companions all tied up like merchandise, and their horses. They also handed over the poll-tax which was one-thousand ounces of gold, to say nothing of the gifts. The wazir 'Addolī greeted him warmly, gave him a robe of honour, and agreed to the terms of the poll-tax. Then the slave went back to his own region.

News of Gāfāt then reached 'Addolī, and of what they had done to the patrician Daḥrāgot. He sent off to them some of the people of Gāfāt who were among his companions and who had converted to Islam. These set off and

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[751]The great Gibé, one of the principal rivers of south-west Ethiopia. Presumably it was because of the size of the river that the *Futūḥ* refers to it as a *Bāḥr*, i.e. the Amharic for Lake or Sea. (P)

[752]As the patrician had thirty companions, for this treachery to succeed would have involved more than the 'slave'. The text reads وشـدوا : 'they attacked ...'. (S)

[753] اصحابك : sic! B: 'plusieurs des tiens'. (S)

reached their idolatrous compatriots, calling upon them to accompany them to the wazir 'Addolī.

They concurred, and reached the wazir 'Addolī bringing the horses that they had captured from the patrician Daḥrāgot, along with their trappings and their smallish copper and wooden drums. The wazir 'Addolī's joy knew no bounds. He clad their leaders in robes of honour, and they returned to their country.

Then he sent Farašaḥam Dīn off to carry the good news to the imām, informing him 'Gāfāt has put to flight the patrician Daḥrāgot, lord of Dāmot. He has fled from it. Having entered the land of Gāfāt, they dealt with him as we should have wished'[754].

Then he sent the messenger, Farašaḥam Dīn, off to the imām who was in the land of Wārābbā. He handed him the letter, and gave him the news. The imām rejoiced exceedingly and sent the wazir Mujāhid to the wazir 'Addolī to get him to come to him, because he wanted to lead a raiding party.[755]

The wazir Mujāhid reached 'Addolī who was in a district called Ṭequr Waha [756] in the land of Dāmot. 'Addolī set out straightaway and reached the imām who was camped near Dabra Berhān. He stood the patrician Balaw Sagad and the horses in the presence of the imām who commanded that the patrician be beheaded.

[The Muslims decide to attack Tegrē]

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: then the Muslim armies and their emirs assembled in Dabra Berhān. The imām said, 'Thanks be to God, Abyssinia has been conquered. Only Tegrē, Bagēmder and Gojjām are left: these are the only regions remaining. Shall we march against them, or shall we stay on in this region for a year until we have settled it down? What is you opinion? May God's blessing be upon you'.

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[754] Daḥragot died, according to the Ethiopian royal chronicle, on 7 Miyāzyā 1527, i.e. 2 April 1535. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 21. (P)

[755] لان الامام يريد الغزو : B translates 'car il voulait faire l'expédition d'Abyssinie'. (S)

[756] Literally, in Amharic, Black Water. (P)

Some of them said, 'Let us remain a whole year or even longer in this place now, to set it in order. After that let us go wherever you command us.'

Others of them - including Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad and the wazir 'Addolī and 'Abd an-Nāṣr - said, 'But now we have the military advantage and the necessary forces: let us set off for the land of Tegrē.[757] Let us ferret out the king wherever he is'. The imām approved of the latters' advice and said, 'The counsel that you have offered is wise'.

So he sent for a man called Fessaḥī,[758] an inhabitant of Ifāt who had converted to Islam. He said to him, 'Set out for Ifāt, and we will meet up with you in Amajah'.

In the same way he sent for the wazir 'Abbās bin Abūn, who was the Baḥr Nagāš at that time,[759] saying to him, 'Go on ahead to Gedemgē and remain there'.

Likewise he sent for the emir Ḥusain and his army, and detached to him the army of Faṭagār. He said to him, 'You march to the land of Manz'. So he set off with Ya'qīm for Bēt Amḥārā and reached Manz without encountering any hostile forces.

The imām then set out, bringing up their rear and arriving at Manz where he rendezvoused with the emir Ḥusain.[760]

['Abbās appeals for help]

Garād 'Abbās, meantime, had entered Gedemgē and was laying seige to the infidels who were on the mountains with their wives, their valuables, their children, their horses and their armour and weapons. They fought him night and day and their assaults wore him down. Moreover, they were

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[757] I translate قـوة metaphorically: as 'advantage,' or 'superiority'. (S)

[758] فسحي . See *supra* p.275 فسخى (S)

[759] He was to become chief wazir on the death of 'Addolī, and 'Afrā became Baḥr Nagāš. See *infra* p.373. (S)

[760] The royal chronicle gives a somewhat different account of these events. It states that Grāñ, after pillaging the island on Lake Ḥāyq went to 'his country,' presumably Adal, where he spent a year before returning to the highlands. This he did in the month of Miyāzyā 1524, i.e. March-April 1531. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 18. (P)

cunning and cut the road, thus isolating 'Abbās from the imām, so that the imām received no news of them, because they were between the two Muslim forces.

The imām had marched to Lake [f°90] Ḥāyq on the border of Angot, above Wāṣal. 'Abbās then sent off a message[761] that contained news of the idol-worshippers: 'They have cunningly broken off contact between us and you, and thus have disadvantaged us. We have genuinely tried to engage them in battle, but there has been no means of our fighting them. If[762] this letter reaches you, march against them from your side; I meanwhile will go from my side.'

The letter succeeded in reaching the imām, who was at Lake Ḥāyq. When it reached him, the imām questioned the messenger about the idol-worshippers: 'Upon what mountain have they placed their fortifications?' The messenger, who had arrived with the letter, replied, 'They are upon the mountain that the patrician Dēgalḥān had fortified when he was in the land of Gedem, at the time that you fought the Ḥaṭī[763] in Wāṣal.'

The imām asked, 'Who is their paramount patrician?' He replied, 'They have around five patricians with their forces, and two other patricians on another mountain who have with them the patrician Dēgalḥān's son whose name is Takla Ḥāymānot'.

The imām said to the messenger, 'Let us spend the day patiently here: at daybreak we will equip ourselves for war against Angot. The day after tomorrow, if the Most High God is willing, we will set out'.

Then he summoned Farašaḥam Emir 'Ali [who was to become] lord of Angot, and 'Abd an-Nāṣr, saying to the two of them: 'Set out for Angot, and the land of Badēl Naṣr, for I have heard that there are cavalry, foot-soldiers and patricians there: march against them and fight them. And may God give you both victory over them, if it be God's will.'

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[761] ورقة : Literally 'a leaf' or 'sheet' of paper. (S)

[762] اذا : B translates 'quand ...' but I prefer 'if,' granted the uncertainty of the situation of 'Abbās. (S)

[763] The *Ḥaṭī* is the Emperor of Ḥabaša. See *supra* note[48] . (S)

[April 8, 1533:
The imām seeks advice, and decides on a pincer movement]

The imām took counsel with the emirs. He asked, 'What do you advise about this patrician who has fortified himself on the mountain?' The wazir 'Addolī said, 'I will march against him and fight him'. The imām replied, 'On the contrary, you are to remain in the encampment'.

Then the emir Ḥusain said, 'I will march against them and fight them, but they will lack the advantage and the physical strength only if you march against them yourself'. The imām replied, 'I know this mountain; and even if all of you set out, you will only prevail if I march out tomorrow. You, 'Addolī, remain here'.

The imām set out on the fourteenth day of the celebrated month of Ramaḍān in the nine-hundred-and-thirty-ninth year[764] of the Hijra of the Prophet: may the choicest blessings and peace be upon its originator.

He maintained a fast pace, and halted below Wāṣal, where he pitched camp. Then he sent Admūš off with fifteen knights to 'Abbās, to whom he said, 'You can see that we have arrived here by the road that is facing them; you now take the road that is behind them'. So Admūš set out.

The imām summoned the emir Ḥusain, saying to him: 'Climb up to Bēt Amḥārā, and station yourself on the upper road and be above them until we come at them from below. May God give us the victory. When they have been put to flight, they will find no route by means of which they may escape'. The emir Ḥusain set out. The imām also took to the road. At nightfall he pitched camp at a place called Bašelō-Azāf[765] in the district of Gujmah.[766]

When morning came, the imām said to the soldiers, 'Break your fast today' and they broke it and marched towards the mountain to the idol-worshippers. They arrived there in the forenoon. When the idol-worshippers

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[764]i.e. on Tuesday, April 9, 1533. (S)

[765]Doubtless, as Huntingford has suggested, a locality near the Bašelo river. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 130-1. (P)

[766]Reading with B ﻗﺠﻤﻪ for ﺳﺠﻤﻪ. (S)

saw the imām's army, the patrician descended the mountain, and lined up his soldiers at the gate to the mountain. The mountain had two gates.

At that moment the imām divided his forces into two parts. One part he entrusted to the emir Šama'ūn, saying to him, 'Hold the gate that is on the left side, and fight them'. The imām then set out for the gate that was on the right side. The infantry marched ahead of the cavalry, and they fought there and God routed all of the idol-worshippers at the two gates, within a single hour. Some of the Muslim infantry climbed the mountain.

The idol-worshippers, for their part, climbed up as far as the mountain peak, planning to go down by the other side, but they ran into the emir Ḥusain who had preceded them along the other route, and forestalled them. When they saw the emir Ḥusain there, they backtracked, fleeing to the gate where the imām was. The imām and his forces captured them: they numbered four-thousand men - seasoned infantrymen - along with their patrician who was the son of Dēgalḥān.

Islam was explained to them and they became Muslims and their patrician converted to Islam along with them, and they remained with the imām. However the son of Dēgalḥān escaped after having spent four months in Qedā in the district of Zubil.[767]

[Personal aside by the author]

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: this incident occurred while we were with a caravan which was travelling from the land of Sa'd ad-Dīn, as we tried to find the encampment of the imām. The lord of Dāmot, Saīdī Muḥammad, treated us hospitably. At this time he was in Ifāt, in the region of Bahyah. After Ifāt we were *en route* while the rest of the skirmishes were taking place, until we arrived within a *parasang*[768] of the mountain without having heard anything of the imām. We

[767]Zobul, a high tableland 15 miles south-east of Alomata, in southern Tegrē. Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, p. 998; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 81. (P)

[768]About three and a quarter miles. (S)

pitched our camp in the middle of the day in Ramaḍān.[769] We noticed that the whole of the top of the mountain seemed to be ablaze. Homes were burning and we said, 'This fire is the idol-worshippers' doing; without doubt we cannot avoid a fight'.

Around the time of the afternoon prayer some people came to us and said, 'Don't be afraid: this is the imām's conflagration. He has been victorious over the idol-worshippers and has climbed the mountain'. But, we said to them, 'If the imām be here, why didn't Saīdī Muḥammad tell us about this, in Ifāt?' So we sent two men from the caravan up to the mountain, saying to them both, 'Find out who it was that lighted that fire'.

They set off without delay. Now some of the idol-worshippers, in their disorderly flight, had hidden themselves in forests on the mountain side, and in ravines running from the valleys, until darkness could give them cover. These attacked the two of them from the midst of the trees; and they turned tail and fled back to us. As a result we thought that the fire was the work of the idol-worshippers, and we passed the night with our arms at the ready: each one of us clutching his sword and his weapons.

When day broke, and the morning star shone and sparkled we set off in the direction of the imām.[770] Then, all of a sudden, there they were full of happiness and rejoicing at the victory. We kissed his hand and he bade us welcome, treated us with honour and sought news of the country from us.

[The Muslims beseige Ambā Gešen]

The imām went back to the land of Ḥāyq with the booty; as did the emirs whom he had spread around on the mountain. He set out and arrived at the encampment and rejoined the wazir 'Addolī. All the Muslims rejoiced in the imām's victory.

Then he struck camp, transferring it to the Ambā of which we spoke earlier in connection with Ura'ī 'Uṯmān: when Garād Aḥmūša beseiged it, and Ura'ī 'Uṯmān was killed. This was the same Ambā that had the kings'

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[769] See *supra* note[65]. (S)

[770] سرنا . B: 'rejoignîmes ...'.

children on its summit. Whatever gold or silk or other things of which they had need would be taken up to it. Every time a child was born to them, it would be taken to the summit of this mountain; and would never be brought down except upon the death of a king. Then they would bring one of them down and invest him with the kingly office. There was no other way to get up this mountain except by means of ladders.

The imām beseiged the Ambā and the forts.[771] For two months they fought over them. The king of Abyssinia had commanded all the forces of Tegrē, with their cavalry, their most valiant warriors and their patricians to march against the imām [f°91] and to fight him from below the [lower] fort.[772] The imām fought for two months, until finally they took the [first] fort. Boulders and rocks rained down like hailstones upon the Muslims while they were advancing, until they captured it.

In disarray the idol-worshippers then scrambled up to the second fort. The Muslims had captured only the first. Among the Tegrē patricians, all of whom fled, were the Azmāč 'Umar and Tasfā Iyasus who was Azmāč of Baḥr Ambā. Azmāč 'Umar was poked in the eye by a branch as he was fleeing, and his eye was plucked out: may God curse him.

Tasfā Iyasus, for his part, was stabbed in the stomach by a branch while he was running away, and died. May God not have mercy upon him.

[The imām buys cannon from Zayla']

The imām spent the night above the fort. Now the Christians [773] and the people of Tegrē possessed cannon and muskets that two Arabs would fire at the Muslims for them.[774] One of them was called Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and the

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[771]From the context, these must have been stretched from the top to the bottom of the mountain: not around it. (S)

[772] من دون الحصـــن : i.e. to prevent Aḥmed's gaining access to the fort, and so that the fort could provide some protection for the defenders below. B translates 'pour défendre ce chateau'. (S)

[773] النصارى : a rare use of this term. The more usual term is the opprobrious المشركون 'polytheists'.

[774]This passage indicates that the people of Tegrē, because of their vicinity to the coast, had already acquired significant quantities of fire-arms. On the province's superiority in such weapons, which, for this reason, was to continue for several centuries, see R.Pankhurst. 'The History of Fire-arms in

other was 'Abd Aṣfar Turkī.[775] They[776] used to recite the Qur'ān, but then they apostatised, and became Christians. May God curse them. They were part of the army. The next day the Christians[777] fled from the second fort, pursued by the imām from dawn until dusk.

The imām had sent Warajār Abūn to Zayla' to buy cannon for him so that he could take this fort. He bought a large bronze cannon, and two little ones made of iron and carried them by camel as far as the city of Gendebelo. The imām's nephew 'Abbas, whom the imām had left in the land of Gedem, met up with him [there].

'Abbas then had them carried on mens' backs, because the camels could not traverse the path, and accompanied by the army of Gedem reached the imām who was beseiging the fort, with them. Accompanying the cannon were two skilled handlers - Indians - to whom the imām paid a hundred ounces of gold. He said to them, 'Fire on those who are milling around, blocking our path, so that our infantry can get past them, and we can get above them, by means of ladders'. The imām had already prepared the ladders.

Then he assembled the army, and the infantry who were well skilled in mountain fighting and gave them gold bracelets. He put his cousin, Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad, in charge of them. Garād Šama'ūn commanded the remainder.

The imām said to them, 'Go down and attack the fort and fight them'. Now the fort had two gates. Half the army was with Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad, and the other half was with Garād Šama'ūn. The imām situated himself above, in a spacious place that was favourable to cavalry manoeuvring, to prevent reinforcements coming from the king of Abyssinia to the defenders of the fort.

Ethiopia prior to the Nineteenth Century,' pp. 202-10. (P)

[775] i.e. probably one was from Basra, and the other was a Turk. (P)

[776] I take this and the following two sentences to refer to *both* Arab gunners. The text reads the singular throughout. (S)

[777] B translates النصارى here as 'les polythéistes'. (S)

This was the fort that the imām had, earlier on, commanded Ura'ī 'Uṯmān to capture, [778] but the latter neglected to put any of his companions in this spacious place to protect his back when the enemy attacked him while he was fighting the defenders of the citadel. The Christian army had advanced through this place with their cavalry and infantry, and had killed him. May the Most High God have mercy upon him. Amen. The imām, on the other hand, was astute and knowledgeable in matters of war - that was why he stationed himself in this place.

[Aḥmad raises the seige of the Ambā]

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad and his companions went down to the fort, and fought. The Christians directed their cannon against the Muslims: it was Ḥasan al-Baṣrī who fired them. He was captured in the war of Gojjām and the imām forgave him as we will describe in the last section.[779]

The fighting went on from morning until the time of the midday prayer.[780] Large rocks and stones were hurled down from the fort upon the Muslims, but none of the Muslims was hit by anything. Then the imām came down and said, 'Fighting on this mountain serves no useful purpose'. Then he gave orders for a withdrawal from the fort; and they withdrew.

After they arrived at their encampment, they set off and entered Angot. He attached a pennant to a spear for the emir Šama'ūn, to whom he entrusted it. He also detached to him sixty knights from the cavalry wearing coats of mail, and said to him, 'Set off for Gedemgē[781] for I have appointed you its governor'. The imām then set out after him,[782] and entered Qedā, a

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[778]This contradicts *supra* pp. 255 ff. (S)

[779]This section has not come down to us. (S)

[780] وقـــت الظهر : B translates 'la fin de la journée'. (S)

[781]Probably the Amharic gē, or country, of Gedem. (P)

[782]B omits 'after him'. (S)

region on the border with Tegrē. The son of the patrician Dēgalḥān, whom the imām had captured in the mountain, had fled here.

The storyteller, the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: then the imām made preparations for proceeding towards Tegrē. He left his encampment, and supplies in the region of Qedā, with some of the soldiers[783] and the wazir 'Addolī, and set off for Tegrē.

[The imām sacks the church called Lālibālā]

After he had heard that the idol-worshippers had assembled near a church called Lālibālā,[784] the imām set out into the mountains, by a difficult route, to attack them. Rain fell on them from above. They marched by night, and still he forced their march. Some of their number died from the piercing cold before he arrived at the church.[785]

He found its monks there, milling around and willing to die for its sake. The imām gazed at the church. He had never seen its like. It was carved out of the mountain. Its pillars were likewise cut from the mountain.[786] The

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[783]Literally, 'with the armies'. (S)

[784]Lālibālā was not the name of a church, but of the famous ecclesiastical centre in Lāstā. Originally called Rohā, the town was later re-named Lālibālā after the thirteenth century Zāgwē king of that name. Lālibālā is the site of eleven churches situated in close proximity to each other. Whether the imām and his men ever reached them is uncertain. The Ethiopian royal chronicle, which lists many of the churches he destroyed, makes no mention of his ravaging Lālibālā, as would have been expected if he had actually done so. The *Futūḥ*'s reference to but a single Lālibālā church would suggest that the author was not familiar with the town, for it would have been remarkable if the Adal soldiers had attacked the one church without seeing, and looting, those immediately adjacent to it, some indeed only a stone's throw away. None of the Lālibālā churches, it may be added, show sign of extensive damage attributable to the fighting of this period. (P)

[785]The royal chronicle states that Grāñ's army arrived in the month of Miyāzyā 1524, i.e. February-March 1531, and spent the winter, i.e. the months of July to September, pillaging Warwar. This was the district in which Lālibālā was situated. No mention is, however, made of any destruction to the town of Lālibālā, or of any of its churches, as such. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 18; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p 136. (P)

[786]If the imām and his men in fact reached Lālibālā as is often assumed, the reference must be to its church of Madhāné Alam, or Saviour of the World. This was by far the largest of the Lālibālā churches, and the principal one with both internal and external pillars cut out of the living rock. Monti della Corte,

only things made of timber in the church were their statues and their sarcophagi. It had a large water cistern carved out of the mountainside.[787] The imām had the monks[788] grouped together and then ordered firewood to be strewn inside [the church]. He had it set alight, and when the heat intensified he said to them, 'One of you shall enter it; and one of us,' to find out what they would do; to put them to the test. Their chief said, 'I shall enter willingly'. Thereupon one of the women rose up, she was a nun, and said, 'This is he who taught me the Gospel. Shall he die while I am watching him?' So she entered the fire and threw herself down in it. The imām said, 'Pull her out'. So they pulled her out. Part of her face had been burned.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Then the imām set fire to their [wooden] sarcophagi and smashed to pieces their stone statues and took whatever golden patens or silken furnishings he found in it.

[The king's niece is taken]

The Muslim foot-soldiers set off with their commander Šamsū on a journey of two days: on a reconnaisance mission. They arrived at the river Ḥarār which the idol-worshippers had just crossed, leaving their personal belongings, their heavy baggage and their supplies as well as the daughter of the sister of the king of Abyssinia, on the river bank. The Muslims confiscated the heavy baggage and the daughter of the king's sister and returned to the imām who made the girl his concubine and she bore him a child.

The imām then turned back in the direction of his encampment, after appointing Šamsū commander of the vanguard. He set off two days ahead of

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Lalibelā pp. 41-6; E.S.Pankhurst, *Ethiopia A Cultural History*, pp 157-9. See also plans of the church in Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 210-12. If, on the other hand, the Adal army did not reach Lālibālā, either because they lost their way, or were deliberately led astray, the reference may be to the church of Gannata Māryām, 10 miles east of Lālibālā which likewise has a colonnade of pillars cut from the mountain, as in the building described by the *Futūḥ*. Monti della Corte, *Lalibelā* pp. 103-5; E.S.Pankhurst, *Ethiopia A Cultural History*, pp. 164-5. (P)

[787]Several churches had cisterns containing water, used either for Baptism, or for the *Ṭemqat*, or Epiphany, celebrations, on which see Bidder, *Lalibela*. (P)

[788] الرهبان . B: 'les prêtres'. (S)

the imām and pitched his camp. While they were making camp the idol-worshippers, who were on foot, fell upon them without warning. They had archers[789] with them and some warriors. They came with rope, with which to tie up the Muslims; but God tied them up with their own rope. Šamsū engaged them in battle, killing three-thousand of their infantry. The rest took to their heels. Some of the idol-worshippers were tied up with their own ropes and when the imām arrived on the fourth day he had the prisoners beheaded. Then they set off, and arrived at the encampment that was in the district of Qedā.

['Addolī is tricked into leaving the encampment]

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: The wazir 'Addolī had heard that the army of the idol-worshippers had assembled in great numbers and were *en route* to attack Garād Šama'ūn whom the imām had left in the region of Gedem. So 'Addolī set off to assist him, and abandoned the encampment, vacating it. Some of the soldiers said, 'Don't leave the camp undefended,' [f°92] so he left a small party behind and then departed.[790]

The emir Abū Bakr and Absamā Nūr then returned to the camp with their two armies. 'Addolī meanwhile set off for Šama'ūn whom he reached. As it turned out there was no need for him to fight because what he had been told was untrue. So the wazir 'Addolī returned to the encampment, only to find that the imām was there in the camp, in the mountains of Maḥqūah.

The storyteller, may God have mercy on him, says: News that the Muslims were heading for the land of Tegrē reached the king Wanāg Sagad. He summoned the patrician Dēgalḥān who presented himself. He detached to him the armies of Tegrē and said to him, 'Hold the road of Maḥqūah. Don't allow a single Muslim to get past you into Tegrē. For nothing remains of

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[789]Bows and arrows were little used in Ethiopia as a whole, except by minority, or marginalised, groups, most notably the Māyā. (P) See note[180] *supra*. (S)

[790] خلف فيها حزبا قليلا : A.-P. took this to mean 'because the *imām* had left behind only a small group of armed men'.

Abyssinia but Tegrē and Bagēmder. If the Muslims penetrate it we will have no sanctuary left for us to go to'.

[Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad is killed]

The patrician set out and occupied the mountains and the route that led into Tegrē. The imām also set out from the land of Qedā, and pitched his camp in a spot in the mountains in the region of Maḥqūah. Each day he would go out into the mountain to spy out the field of battle. One day the imām went out, as was his usual custom, with six mounted knights. His cousin, Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad, was one of them.

The idol-worshippers, meanwhile, had hidden themselves among trees at the foot of the mountain and when the imām reached the mountain, checking the route and fighting those who were by the mountain, suddenly those unbelievers who were among the trees attacked them. The cavalry charged them, and they turned tail and ascended the mountain. But Zaḥarbūī Muḥammad was struck in the right breast by a poisoned arrow, and died a martyr: may the Most High God have mercy upon him. Amen.

The imām grieved over him with an inconsolable grief. Many were the tributes paid by the people at his tomb. They said, 'See what has happened before we even enter Tegrē'. To which the emir Ḥusain replied, 'We have never left our homeland without killing. How many of their provinces have we not ravaged? How many of them have we not killed? This is but one of us who has been touched by the fate that was written down for him. God, may He be praised and exalted, has granted him what he loved and sought: he has died a martyr'.

[Birth of the imām's son Aḥmad an-Nagāšī]

The next day, the imām set out with his army eager for a *jihad* and to avenge his cousin. He set off for the mountain where the idol-worshippers had lined up their forces against him. Some of the Muslim foot-soldiers managed to break through to them, warding off their stones with their shields. God put the idol-worshippers to flight and the Muslims ascended the mountain against

them, pitching their camp at the church of Māryam.[791] The wife of the imām, Bā'tīya the daughter of Maḥfūẓ, gave birth there. They named him Aḥmad an-Nagāši.[792] He was the first child [of the imām] born in Tegrē and he died in the land of Sarāyē as shall be mentioned later on.

The imām set out and pitched camp in the district of Qarqārā[793] which is part of the land of Tegrē. It is a spacious land, with an abundance of wheat and honey. The Muslims were suffering from famine when they were beseiging the mountain, but God relieved their distress in Qarqārā.

The imām set up his base there, and sent the wazir Mujāhid off to collect supplies in the regions of Saḥārt[794] and Abargālē and in the districts surrounding them. 'Addolī [also] set out and entered Abargālē which he completely ravaged, plundering their cattle. Some Muslims came across things made of gold: the first gold they encountered in Tegrē.

One of the Muslims, by name Abūn Dāwah, died a martyr. The infidels blocked his path between two mountains, and killed him. May the most High God have mercy upon him.

[Aḥmad routs the forces of the *šums* of Tambēn and of Agamē]

The wazir 'Addolī and the imām returned to Qarqārā. Then the imām, after entrusting the encampment to the wazir 'Addolī, set off for the land of Endartā[795] which he laid low. He killed its leading inhabitants and plunded its wealth and then returned to the encampment.

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[791] Lit. الكنيسة مارية : the Church of Mārīya. (S)

[792] As the imām's first child to be born in Tegrē the infant was named after a much respected Muslim believed to have lived in the area at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad. Regarded as a saint the former's grave was shortly afterwards visited by Aḥmad and his wife Bāti Del Wanbarā. (P)

[793] Qarqārāh, or Qwarqwāra, a locality in Tegrē 15 miles north-north-east of Ambā Alagi. The settlement was visited by Alvares, who referred to it as Corcora. *Guida dell'Africa Orientale*, map between pp. 304-5; Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 181-5, 577-8. (P)

[794] Saḥart, a district of Tegrē known since ancient times. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp.61,67-8. (P)

[795] Endartā, a district of Tegrē, 25 miles some north-east of Maqālé. Lefebvre, *Voyage en Abyssinie*, I, 287, III, 43-4. (P)

After this he went off to Tambēn which he entered. He encountered the *šum* of Tambēn who was accompanied by a troop of soldiers, so the Muslim cavalry and infantry mounted a charge against them on the top of the mountain, putting them to flight and killing more than three-thousand of them. Of their cavalry they captured seven horses. All were on foot apart from these cavalry.

The imām heard that the patrician who was *šum* of Agamē, whose name was Rāqāt, had assembled his cavalry and infantry and was holding the road to his country to prevent the Muslims from entering it. The imām and his companions departed from Tambēn. They presented a solid mass, like running water.

On the second day out they reached the tomb of Aḥmad al-Nagāšī[796] who lived in the time of the Prophet - may God Bless him and give him peace. The Muslims said, 'Today, let us visit Aḥmad, the famous Aṣḥamat al-Nagāšī;[797] tomorrow we will go into battle'. The imām replied, 'Today we are involved in a matter of considerable importance; let us pay the visit tomorrow'.

He then set out against the *šum* of Agamē and met up with him. He was holding the mountain that was on the road leading to his country. The Muslim infantry led the advance against the mountain. Stones and arrows hit the shields of the Muslims like drops of rain, but still they advanced against the idol-worshippers who then took to flight, pursued by the Muslim cavalry.

They arrived at the mountain there, at the foot of which the land fell away into a gorge. The *šum* of Agamē, when he found himself being overtaken by the Muslim cavalry, flung himself into the gorge and broke his arm, but managed to escape. They captured eight of his cavalry and the rest were scattered.[798] The imām went back, with the intention of marching

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[796]The tomb, and adjacent mosque, of Aḥmad an-Najāši, or Nagāš, 10 miles north of Wukro, in Tegrē. Trimingham. *Islam in Ethiopia*, pp. 78, 152, 252; Taddesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia*, p. 34; Camerapix, *Spectrum Guide to Ethiopia*, p. 298. (P)

[797] المعروف اصحمة النجاشي : a gloss. (S)

[798]The imām's advance into Tegrē was apparently not universally opposed. The chronicle states that, on entering the province, in the month of Teqemt 1524, i.e. September-October 1531, Grāñ was peacefully received by the people of Sirē and Sarayē. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 18. (P)

against the city of Aksum.[799] It is said of it that it is a most ancient city. No one knows who built it. Some say that Alexander the Great[800] built it. God knows the truth of all this. There were stone columns inside it, eighty cubits long and ten cubits wide; freestanding.[801]

The imām pitched camp in Ara'da and made his base there. Some of the local people who belonged to the tribe of the Balaw, went to him. These dwelt in Tegrē. They were Muslims. 'The people of Tegrē,' they said, 'have assembled with their wives, their children and their wealth, in this mountain which is close by you. The only way that you will find them is by trickery'.

[The people of Tegrē are betrayed: 10,550 are slaughtered]

So the imām spent the night in the encampment; until sunrise. Then he divided his forces into two divisions: 'Abd an-Nāṣr set off with one division. The imām ordered him to climb the right-hand side of the mountain. The imām himself then set off with his army which was the second division, taking the left-hand side of the mountain. The sun had not risen before the imām reached the mountain. The entire two divisions ascended the mountain, taking their two [different] routes.

On the summit, the idol-worshippers had fortified themselves in their citadels. The Muslims penetrated their fortifications and the Christians were put to flight, and captured. Then he commanded that they be beheaded. There was no way of their escaping from there. Not a single one managed to slip away. They killed them in the forts, in the valleys and in the gorges. The

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[799] On the history of Aksum, and its principal archaeological remains, see Munro-Hay, *Aksum, An African Civilisation of Late Antiquity*; Phillipson, *Ancient Ethiopia*. (P)

[800] ذو القرنين. (S) Alexander the Great was in no way connected with the founding of the city. The *Futūḥ*'s remark nevertheless illustrates the widespread Ethiopian and other Eastern attention accorded to the former Greek conqueror. See Wallis Budge, *Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great*. (P)

[801] See B p.231 note[3] for a reference to two, of the alleged fifty-five obelisks that once existed in Ethiopia, that were still in existence in the nineteenth century. (S) A reference to the city's famous monolithic stele, or obelisks, which Alvares had a generation earlier described as 'very large and beautiful'. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 156-7. (P)

ground was so thickly covered with their corpses, that it was impossible to walk in that place because of the dead bodies.

It is said that some people who were with them on the mountain top counted the number of idol-worshippers. It transpires that their number, including their patrician, came to ten-thousand five-hundred-and-fifty.[802] Not one of them survived. The Muslims [f°93] plundered their cattle and livestock in quantities that could not be counted or calculated.

The imām then turned back to Ambā Sanet[803] and sent the treasure on to the encampment where the wazir 'Addolī was. It was while the imām was staying in Ambā Sanayt that he heard news of the patricians Amḥā and Azmāč Fanu'ēl who had assembled in Tambēn with the lord of Tambēn. So the imām set off against them at the time of the afternoon prayer, marching the whole night. At sun rise they slackened the reins of their horses, trying to outdo one another in the speed with which they arrived at the city of Ḥasaru. But they never encountered even one idol-worshipper. So they settled down in the town.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Then news that the Muslims had arrived in the region of Tegrē and ravaged it, reached the king of Abyssinia who was in the land of Wagdā [804]in Bagēmder. When the king[805] heard the news he grieved inconsolably. Then he gathered together all of his soldiers, and his patricians and his armies and set off for the city of Aksum. Their number was incalculable.[806]

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[802] A.-P. reads 'dix mille personnes'.

[803] انبا سنيت. (S) Ambā Sanet was an *ambā* or flat-topped mountain, south east of Entičo in southern Tegrē. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 167-9, II, 569-70. (P)

[804] وقدة. (S) According to Huntingford, a rendering of Wagarā, i.e. the territory north of Dambyā. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 132. (P)

[805] i.e. Wanāg Sagad or Lebna Dengel. (P)

[806] The royal chronicle states that Lebna Dengel spent the rains of 1534 in Dambyā which he left in the month of Ṭeqemt 1526, i.e. September-October 1534, to go to Wagarā . He departed in the month of Tāhsās, by the route of Ṣalamt and arrived in Aksum in time to celebrate the festival of Ṭemqat, or Epiphany, in January 1535. He then made his way to Ṣagadē. He was there pursued by Grāñ who burnt the monastery of Abbā Samu'ēl, on 23 Ṭerr, 1527, or January 18, 1535. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 18. (P)

[The king removes the great white statue from Aksum]

They removed the great statue from the church of Aksum.[807] It was of white stone, studded with gold. So large was it that the statue could not be taken from the church through its principal gate. Because of its size they were obliged to make a hole in the church['s wall] through which they took it out. It took four-hundred men to carry it. They took it to the citadel known as Tābr[808] in the land of Sīrē, where they left it.

The imām was in his camp in the land of Tambēn when a man from the tribe of the Balaw from the city of Aksum, came to him. His name was 'Abd al-Wahāb. He said, 'Are you aware that the king of Abyssinia has arrived at Aksum?' Then the imām immediately ordered them to strike camp; and they did so.

By the next day they had reached the district of Abbā Garīmā,[809] two *parasangs* from Aksum, [810] where they made camp. Some of the local people said to the imām, 'The idol-worshippers here at Abbā Garimā have barricaded themselves up in three forts, because they have no means of fighting you'. When the imām heard this news, he pitched his camp there, and then set out against them.

The inhabitants of two of the forts yielded to him, and he imposed the poll-tax upon them. The defenders of the third fort refused, so he fought them and God put them to flight and he killed them to the last one of them. On full

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[807]The renowned church of Māryām i.e. St Mary of Zion, which Alvares had earlier visited, and described in some detail, the only foreign traveller in fact to do so prior to its destruction by the imām's soldiers. The statue of 'white stone, studded with gold' mentioned in the *Futūḥ*, was conceivably the 'altar stone' mentioned by the Portuguese author, who quotes a legend to the effect that the Apostles had it sent to Aksum from Jerusalem. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 151. (P)

[808]Tabr, a large and high *ambā*, or flat-topped mountain, in Sirē, where Lebna Dengel, according to the royal chronicle, subsequently found refuge. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 23. (P)

[809]Abbā Garimā, a wealthy monastery 10 miles east of Adwā. The establishment was founded around the fifth century by one of the Nine Saints, a Syrian monk of that name. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 165-6, II, 571. (P)

[810]Ancient Persian measure of length, between 5.6 and 6.4 km. See *supra* note[652]. (S)

battle-alert the Muslims set off for Aksum. They arrived there without encountering any hostility. So the imām then sent some soldiers off to bring him back some local people. They set out and seized some local people, returning with them to the imām who questioned them about the king. 'He was here. Where has he gone to now?' The local people replied, 'He set out six days before you arrived, intending to go to the land of Mazagā,[811] to the sultan Mākāttēr'. The imām made camp in Aksum.

[Sultan Mākāttēr appeals to the *mujāhidūn* for help]

At the time of the afternoon prayer, a man came from Mazagā, bearing a letter from the sultan Mākāttēr to the imām. This is what he said to him: 'Hurry up and come to me before the idol-worshippers kill me'. The imām set out the day afterwards. Some monks in the city of Aksum said to him, 'Spend today with us so that we can pay you the poll-tax in gold'. The imām refused, and set out on a strenuous journey to Mazagār to assist the Muslims. So they set out, but the Muslims had no chance to provide themselves with supplies.

At dusk, he pitched camp in the church of Abbā Samu'ēl [812] in the land of Sīrē. This church was a glorious building, embellished with every colour. Its monks assembled together and they killed them all inside the church, so that the blood flowed through the doors. There were five-hundred of them.

The next day the imām set out on the road for Walāh, intending to reach Mazagā *via* the desert and the uninhabited parts. He marched night and day. They had only very meagre provisions with them. En route some of them, driven by appalling hunger, even ate the Indian *tamarind*[813] which grew luxuriantly beside the road.

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[811]Mazagā, a Muslim-inhabited territory to the west of Tegrē. For a discussion of its possible location see Beckingham and Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia*, pp. 239-40. (P)

[812]The Ethiopian royal chronicle states that this church was burnt down by the imām's men on 23 Ṭerr 1527, i.e. 18 January 1535. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 18. (P)

[813] *Tamarindus indica*. (P)

[A fatal case of mistaken identity]

They camped by a river there. While they were making camp some soldiers of the idol-worshippers, from among the people of Ṣalamt, coming as reinforcements for the king, mistook the Muslims for idol-worshippers and went up to them. The imām was sitting down when one of the Muslims said to him, 'Some of the infantry of the idol-worshippers have entered the perimeter of our camp'. When they drew nearer to the camp, they could see that they were Muslims: for they saw their dress which was different from the dress of the Christians. They twisted around to right and left. The imām said to the Muslims, 'Seize them,' as they tried to flee.

The idol-worshippers scattered, striking the mules of the Muslims with their daggers. But the Muslims killed them, to the last man of them.

Then the imām set out, but their mules and horses were exhausted from the strenuous pace of the journey. It was between midday and the time of the afternoon prayer on a hot day. The Muslims wanted to climb up a mountain that was there, but they had no knowledge of the path. So they set off through trees that were intertwined, lost their way, and finally came back to where they started.

The king[814] Mākāttēr, meantime, had seen a dust cloud filling the air and heading in his direction, so he sent off some knights to investigate the dust cloud. They set off in the direction of the dust cloud, and reached the rearguard of the imām's forces, made up of those who were exhausted, and had stopped. They captured some mules and donkeys and returned.

[Aḥmad reaches the sultan]

The Muslims, however, had seized one of them, and went with him to the imām who questioned him, 'Who are you?' He replied, 'I am a Muslim; and my companions are Muslims. We came from Mazagā when we saw your dust cloud filling the sky. We thought that you were the king of Abyssinia, so we infiltrated your rearguard to steal the mules from the stragglers of the

[814] الملك : sic! (S) A reference to the ruler of Mazagā. (P)

army'. The imām asked him, 'Where is Mazagā?' He replied, 'It is close by: a journey of two *parasangs*'. Then the imām pitched camp, and said to the man, 'Go to your country. Say to your lord the sultan Mākāttēr, "You know, we are coming to you. Don't be afraid. We have come to you".' So the man set out.

The idol-worshippers had hemmed the sultan in. They had seized their road from the local people. When they fought the idol-worshippers, the companions of Mākāttēr were put to flight, and three of the children of Mākāttēr's sister were killed. That day Mākāttēr was ill and unable to fight. His army had fled.

It was while they were in this situation that the imām's messenger reached Mākāttēr and gave him the good news of the imām's arrival. He rejoiced exceedingly, and despite being ill mounted his horse, and put on his armour, and set off in the direction of the imām. With him were fifteen thousand Nubians,[815] and five-hundred foot-soldiers, some of them 'Ašārīs.[816] For ten days he fêted the imām and his army.[817]

[The king flees along the Gojjām road]

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: the king of Abyssinia had no idea that the imām had come. Then a monk came to him and flung himself down in front of the king's pavilion. The king questioned him, and asked him, 'What news?' 'Save yourself,' he replied, 'you know, the Muslims have overtaken you in their thousands'. So he sent for some knights and said to them, 'Bring me back news of the Muslims, to verify what this person has said'. They hurried away on the road to Sīrē and they saw the cloud of dust that filled the air. They informed him of this [f°94] and fear gripped him. He set out immediately on the road to Gojjām, and his army with him.

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[815] i.e. the Muslim people of Nubia, or Sudan, to the west of Gojjām and Dambyā. (P)

[816] بعضها عشارية : could these be Bedouin tribesmen? (S)

[817] The royal chronicle confirms that the imām and his men entered the Mazagē, or Mazagā, country, where he was warmly welcomed by its ruler, Makatter, who afterwards guided them as far as Dambyā. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 18. (P)

The imām, meanwhile, arrived a day after the departure of the king and pitched camp by a cultivated field of the country of Mazagā. The imām married the daughter of the sultan Mākāttēr, and after having delayed ten days he said, 'I am going to set out after the king, and will never cease pursuing him'.

[The sultan dies. Nāfa' succeeds him in the sultanate]

So he set out, and with him was Ḥasan, the son of sultan Mākāttēr's sister, with twenty stallions; he it was who acted as guide for the imām along the way. They marched along the road to Takzī - a mountain in the land of Mazagā at the foot of which they pitched camp.

Three days after the imām had set off from Mazagā, sultan Mākāttēr died: may the Most High God have mercy upon him. His sister Ja'wah concealed his death from the soldiers for three days and she sent a messenger to the imām to inform him of Mākāttēr's death.

Her messenger reached the imām who was camped at the foot of mount Takzī, at the time of the midday nap, and informed him of the death of Mākāttēr. The imām had the kettle-drums beaten, assembled the Muslims and gave them the news. He proclaimed sultan the son of sultan Mākāttēr whose name was Nāfa'. He was a minor under the guardianship of his aunt, Mākāttēr's sister, who administered the sultanate during the life of her brother. She was a wise and prudent woman; and a good organiser. The imām said to Ḥasan, the son of Mākāttēr's sister, 'Return to Mazagā and act *in loco parentis* for the sultan's children'. He replied, 'Willingly,' and set off for his country.

After Ḥasan had set out for his country, the imām gave orders to depart, and they set off at a forced march and entered the land of Dambyā,[818] endowed with plentiful resources: rivers that never run dry; verdant gardens;

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[818]Dambyā, the flat territory immediately north of Lake Ṭānā, and hence, as the *Futūḥ* suggests, particularly well watered. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, II, 578; Beckingham and Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia*, p. 232; Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, p 902. (P)

and where famine is unknown. A country of pure air and lush soil, it has neither mountains nor forests. A land of plains, its green crops and fruit have no equal in Abyssinia.

The imām pitched camp there and enquired about the king of Abyssinia. Its inhabitants said, 'He has eluded you by eight days. And even if you march after him you'll catch up with him only after two months, in the land of Dāmot'.

['Abd an-Nāṣr catches up to the king's rearguard]

A man came to 'Abd an-Nāṣr and Saīdī Muḥammad and said to them, 'You know, the king's treasure is here, quite close by you'. So 'Abd an-Nāṣr went to the imām and told him. The imām said to him, 'You set off with your army by night; and I will march after you, either tomorrow, or afterwards'.

'Abd an-Nāṣr set off by night, lighting their way with torches made of wax. The night was pitchblack, but God shortened the way for them. The imām followed them on the same day. On the second day the companions of 'Abd an-Nāṣr reached the idol-worshippers' rearguard. They saw some of the idol-worshippers' knights who were straggling in the rearguard of the king of Abyssinia.

When the Muslims observed them, they halted and sent off some knights to inform the imām about the idol-worshippers. These reached the imām on the road, as he was intending to pitch camp there because of the extreme exhaustion from the march. When they had informed him, the imām set off at a forced march at the time of the evening prayer. He pitched camp by the church at Enfrāz,[819] which he put to the torch. The next morning he set out along the route by which 'Abd an-Nāṣr had outdistanced him. The king of Abyssinia was four days' journey away. For a day and a half the imām marched, until their mounts were exhausted. Then, in the forenoon, some of

[819]Enfrāz or Emfāz, a territory north-east of Lake Ṭānā. Esteves Pereira, *Chronica de Susenyos*, p. 366; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 96. (P)

the Muslims slackened their reins on their horses so as to outstrip the others and gather some news.

[Abūn, brother of the wazir Mujāhid, is captured by the Muslims]

Amongst them was 'Alī Goitā who caught up with one of the knights of the idol-worshippers, seized him and made him his prisoner. This was the brother of the wazir Mujāhid. His name was Abūn, and he had apostatised earlier on. So he took him to the imām who asked him, 'Where were you?' He replied, 'I was with the king, but I left him yesterday, wanting to join you'. The imām asked him, 'Will we not catch up with him if we march after him now?' 'No,' he replied, 'because he has covered a great deal of the province'. The imām struck this man, but then forgave him.

His words, however, were a lie, because he was frightened. The Muslims set off, and after an hour what should they see but some of the king's curtained canopies, and some of his cooking utensils - with some food inside them - that they had discarded. The Muslims remained an hour eating their breakfast, and then set out at midday. What should they find then but some tents that the idol-worshippers had thrown away! However they continued marching, ignoring them. Then they found some boxes of the idol-worshippers, that they did not touch. Rather, they quickened the pace of their march.

['Abd an-Nāṣr again catches up with the Abyssinian rearguard]

Now, 'Abd an-Nāṣr was in the vanguard. He marched until mid-afternoon and then sent out some Muslim knights to bring back information to him. These marched until they caught up with the king's rearguard, and then returned to inform 'Abd an-Nāṣr who, for his part, sent off messengers and informed the imām. He wanted to pitch camp because of the extreme tiredness that overcame them. It was exhaustion, too, that kept the companions of the imām from catching up to him.

The imām asked the messengers, 'Have you seen the king's rearguard with your own eyes?' 'Our companions,' they replied, 'have seen it. They

infiltrated it, and informed us about it'. The imām set off, before he even dismounted from his mule, and marched until sunset. They reached Baḥr Gumarā,[820] a flowing river, and the Muslims dismounted from their mules, mounted their horses and donned their armour, and then took to the road again.

[Taki and Ura'ī Aḥmad Dīn deceive the king]

Some of the Muslims caught up with the Abyssinian king in the rearguard. With the king were two apostates: one's name was Taki and the other's name was Ura'ī Aḥmad Dīn. Taki said to the king, 'May I have a spirited horse so that I can fight the Muslims, and charge against them'. This was a ruse of his.[821] The king gave him one of his horses that was being led[822] whose name was *Zabīl*.[823] He charged at the Muslims, and when he got close to them he said, 'I have come turning in repentance to God the Most High'. Ur'aī Aḥmad Dīn charged with him.

The two of them went to the imām who forgave both of them. Then the imām set out until he could see the dust cloud of the people at sunset. He said to the Muslims, 'Speak the language of the Christians when you move amongst them. Don't strike with the sword or the javelin until you are close by the king. God willing you will take him unawares, and capture him. And do your hair like the Banī Dūwa'.[824]

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[820]Bāḥr Gumarā as its designation implies, was a sizeable river, and lagoon, on the eastern side of Lake Ṭānā. Local tradition, collected by Cheesman, claims that the river prevented the imām's army from reaching the nearby church of Ṭānā Qirkos. The church's possessions, he says, included a 'heavy bludgeon' made of dark wood, 3 feet long and 3 inches in diameter, supposedly taken from the imām's follower Farašaḥam 'Alī. Cheesman, *Lake Tana and the Blue Nile*, pp. 172, 176, 182. On the death of the latter see Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 20. (P)

[821]B omits. (S)

[822] من جنبيه : lit. ' by his side' i.e. his favourite mounts which were led until needed in battle. (S)

[823] زبيل : if this be Arabic it is a curious choice for the name of a horse: its primary meaning is 'manure'. It can also mean 'saddle-bag'. (S)

[824]This passage apparently refers to an unidentified group. (P)

[The Muslims mingle with the Christians]

They set out in this fashion until darkest night fell. And when it was night the Muslims mingled with the wives of the idol-worshippers, and after journeying an hour, mingled with their cavalry and their infantry, without their knowing anything about them. Even when they struck them and killed them, they did not know that they were Muslims. Sometimes they would cry out, saying in their language, 'O king, stop him' or 'attack him' or sometimes 'O patrician, stop him'. The imām would cry out in their language *'taū taū,'* which means, 'leave them alone,' 'don't hit them'.[825]

They proceeded in this fashion as long as it was darkest night and the darkness was pitch black. [f°95] The Muslims travelled up to the vanguard of the army in search of the king of Abyssinia. It happened that when one of the idol-worshippers grew tired, he would sit down, light his fire and eat his bread. Now the Muslims travelled along without anybody recognizing who was beside him because the darkness was pitch black, and because they spoke only the Christian language.

They were in this situation when, suddenly, flares were lighted and everything that was in their vicinity was illuminated by the flickering and bobbing lights. The Muslims thought that this was the king,[826] so they unsheathed their swords and advanced to the place where the flares were, and charged. The idol-worshippers smothered the lights as the Muslims moved into their position. It was not the king, but one of his sisters.

[The imām bluffs his way out of a dangerous situation]

They set out on their way. When it was the time before daybreak the king went down a narrow road at the head of the river Abbāy whose waters flow into the Nile in Egypt. The idol-worshippers were treading one another underfoot because of the narrowness of the road. The imām who was in their

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[825]Literally, 'Stop, stop!'. (P)

[826]'They thought .... king'. B omits. (S)

midst was carrying his weapons in his hand, but he could not strike a blow against them because the place and the path were so constricted.

Some idol-worshippers grabbed hold of his horse, and when one of them questioned him, he said to them, 'I am patrician so-and-so'. And in the same way his companions said as he said, 'We are so-and-so and so-and-so, and we have come with our soldiers to assist the king'. When they heard this, they cried out and said, 'Light up the flares, for this is patrician so-and-so who has come to join us,' and they lighted their torches, and before the imām could say another word someone of them said in their language *'Ḥarbanna tamallas,'* which means 'Every commander of a force must go back behind him and fight at the king's back'.[827]

He had not known that the king of Abyssinia was ahead of him. So the imām retraced his steps and some of the Muslims came to him. He said to them, 'The king has returned behind you'. The imām and his companions remained on the road until dawn. Absamā Nūr then said to the imām, 'I will go on down ahead of us and gather some news'.

So he set out with five knights, crossed the river Abbāy, and what should they see but some knights of the idol-worshippers who had given their horses their head as they fled. Absamā Nūr and his companions set off after them. They managed to catch up to one of the knights whom they captured. He was Anas, an apostate who had apostatised earlier on in the land of Qedā. He had left with the son of the patrician Dēgalḥān. He had been one of the imām's pages, and the imām cut off both of the apostate Anas's hands.[828]

Anas said to Absamā Nūr, 'You see that knight galloping off? That is the king of Abyssinia'. So Absamā Nūr took off in the direction of the knight, in hot pursuit. But the Abyssinian king's horse was speedy and a thoroughbred. The only one of his companions whom they succeeded in overtaking was a patrician whose title was 'Aqabē Sa'āt,[829] who was their

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[827] Literally, in Amharic, something like *zabaññño tamalsu*, i.e. Let the Guards return! (P)

[828] Presumably after his capture. (S)

[829] The Aqābē Sa'āt was a major Ethiopian ecclesiastic attached to the royal court, and, as such, often exercised an influence virtually as great, or at times perhaps even greater, than that of the *Abūn*, or metropolitan, or the *Ečagē* or head of the monks. Perruchon, *Chroniques de Zar'a Yâ'eqôb et de*

qāḍī. He was also their second patriarch because the idol-worshippers had two patriarchs: one of them was from Egypt, and they paid one-thousand ounces of gold for him. They called him *Abūn*.[830] The other one was Abyssinian from among their own number.[831] Without him they had no religion. He owned a quarter of the kingdom.[832] When Absamā Nūr realised that he was not the king, he killed him.[833] God cast his soul into Hell. 'It is an evil place to settle in'.[834]

The storyteller says: The sister of the king of Abyssinia[835] was captured. Her name was Amata Dengel. [836] The imām remained on in the land of Gojjām for a month.

Ba'cda Mâryâm, pp. 25, 27, 36, 167-8; Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*, III, 201. The official referred to in the *Futūḥ* was called Nagada Iyāsus, and was killed on 22 Yakātit 1527, i.e. 16 February 1535. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 19. (P)

[830]The *Abūn*, or Metropolitan, traditionally came, as the text states, from Egypt. He was selected, at the Emperor's request, by the Coptic Patriarch of Egypt, from among his monks. The prelate, though a foreigner unfamilar with the Amharic language, and with the country's traditions, was invariably regarded by the Christian population of Ethiopia with immense reverence. Hyatt, *Church of Abyssinia*, p 45, and for a list of *Abūns*, pp. 288-91. (P)

[831]The reference to one of 'their own number' is to the *Ečagē*, or head of the monks. He was, unlike the *Abūn*, a native Ethiopian. Hyatt, *Church of Abyssinia*, pp. 50-1. (P)

[832]The *Abūna*, as well as the clergy, and the country's many ecclesiastical establishments, were generally not the actual owners of land, but recipients of revenues from estates allocated to them for this purpose by a succession of rulers. The lands in question in most cases belonged to the peasantry, who worked it for themselves, but at the same time provided the *Abūn*, or ecclesiastics, with the tax, or tribute,which on other land would accrue to the monarch. This contribution was usually payable in kind or labour services. Ecclesiastical lands were considerable in extent, but it is doubtful whether they ever amounted, as the *Futūḥ* claims, to as much as a quarter of the kingdom. Pankhurst, *State and Land in Ethiopian History*, pp. 38-47. (P)

[833]Lebna Dengel, according to the royal chronicle, proceeded to Dāra, or Dārha, but was followed by the Muslims, who fought against him by the Abbāy, or Blue Nile, on 22 Yakātit, 1527, i.e. 16 February, 1535. Those killed included the 'Aqābē Sa'āt Nagada Iyāsus, his son Be'esa Ezgiabhēr, and Qañgētā Wasangē. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, pp. 18-19. (P)

[834]*Qur'ān* xiv, 29. (S)

[835]i.e. Wanāg Sagad or the Emperor Lebna Dengel. (P)

[836]Amata Dengel, according to a genealogical table published by the nineteeenth century Portuguese scholar Esteves Pereira, was Lebna Dengel's daughter. Esteves Pereira, *Historia de Mines*, p. 58 (P).

[Tribute by the author to Aḥmad bin Ibrahīm]

The *Author*, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: here is a poem about this war:

O son of Abraham, O lion of the fray:
Your Lord has granted you what you sought in its entirety.

You have roamed the country with the cavalry:
You have ruled it from the land of Sa'd ad-Dīn to Nābilā[837].

Then you turned around with your army:
In the midst of Gojjām you pitched your camp groaning with booty.

After you crossed the desert in its entirety:
Dambyā, Enfrāz and Egalā.[838]

The Ḥāṭī[839] passed the night with his fleeing army:
You marched behind him from the morning of pursuit.

An exacting march, like running water your might,
Until you infiltrated their lines under cover of night.

Blows against the infidels, severed heads that fall:
Until they wake in the Nile's midst,[840] beyond recall.

Muslims on their laden horses:
Know neither sleep nor material resources.

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[837]A locality, which by the context, must have been west of Adal, and, conceivably, a mis-spelling for Babilā, perhaps the Babilē valley 13 miles south-east of Hārar. (P)

[838]There are several places of this name, some of them in the vicinity of the Marab river. See Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 98. (P)

[839]i.e. Wanāg Sagad, the Emperor, Lebna Dengel. (P)

[840]i.e. the Blue Nile. (P)

Two days and a night, and a third day:
It comes to; with booty for the taking away.

[Aḥmad sends reinforcements to Garād Ṣaddīq]

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: The imām set out from Gojjām with half the army, heading for Tegrē and the wazir 'Addolī *via* the road to Amḥārā. He crossed the river Abbāy fearing that the idol-worshippers whom he had put to flight might have attacked Garād Ṣaddīq whom he had left behind in Dawaro. He sent for Saīdī Muḥammad, for the emir Ḥusain al-Gāturī, lord of Dawaro, and for Farašaḥam Dīn, lord of the Maya, with his army. He said to them, 'Set off for the land of Dawaro and offer assistance to Garād Ṣaddīq should something unexpected occur'.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: the imām then set off and arrived at Lake Ḥāyq. There he met up with the emir Šama'ūn who remained behind in his country. The imām arrived in Tegrē and rendezvoused with the wazir 'Addolī in Aksum. The Muslims were completely exhausted.

[Famine and inflation in Tegrē]

The land of Tegrē was suffering from inflated prices and famine[841] caused by the scarcity of food. The price of three *asa'*[842] of food was two *miṭqāl*[843] of gold; but it was unprocurable. The local people wore out the

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[841]Famines were common in Ethiopia throughout its history. See R.Pankhurst, *History of Famine and Epidemics in Ethiopia Prior to the Twentieth Century*. (P)

[842]A measure of weight, usually used for corn. As a rule of thumb it may be taken as 'four times the quantity of corn etc that fills the two hands, that are neither large nor small, of a man'. See Lane, *op.cit.* iv, p.1746. (S)

[843]A certain weight, considered by some to be one *dirham* and three-sevenths of a *dirham*, or the seventh part of ten *dirhams*. See *supra* note[636]. (S) The *mitqāl* remained a unit of value in Ethiopia for several centuries. R.Pankhurst, 'A Preliminary History of Ethiopian Measures, Weights and Values.

Muslims with their pilfering: they would steal their mules. When they entered the land of Tegrē each Muslim had fifty mules; some of them even one-hundred. When they left, each one of them had only one or two mules.

[*The storyteller*] says: most of their fighting in Tegrē was over food supplies. Now, before the arrival of the imām, the wazir 'Addolī had sent the wazir 'Abbās to the land of Sarāyē. The latter who was, at that time, Baḥr Nagāš, entered Sarāyē and granted protection to its people.

When the imām arrived with his army from the land of Gojjām he sent for the wazir 'Addolī, saying to him, 'Go with your army to the land of Sarāyē and help the wazir 'Abbās'. So he set out with Farašaḥam 'Alī and his army, and Garād 'Uṭmān bin Jūhar, with his army. They were made up of people who were Muslims by birth, or who had embraced the religion of Islam. So they set off.

[Tasfā Le'ul kills Tēdros]

Now, in Sarāyē, there was a patrician, Tasfā [f°96] Le'ul.[844] When the wazir 'Abbās moved against him in Sarāyē, he hid himself in one of its forests. His cousin, whose name was Tēdros, was one of the principal patricians in Sarāyē. He went over to the wazir 'Abbās, and the wazir 'Addolī made him lord of Sarāyē, subordinate to the wazir 'Abbās who was stationed in Sarāyē. Tēdros set the people's minds at rest.

While all this was going on, Tasfā Le'ul had somehow managed to get close to him without his being aware of it. While Tēdros was sitting in the camp he took him unawares and they fought: Tēdros was killed.[845]

The wazir 'Addolī reached Sarāyē, and Tasfā Le'ul got to hear of his arrival, hid himself in a forest there, between the wazir 'Addolī and the wazir 'Abbās. Nobody knew he was there. Now, the trees in that place where he

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III,' p. 78. (P)

[844] تسفو لولو . (S)

[845]The death of Tēdros, there referred to as Tēwodros, is also mentioned in the royal chronicle. It states that he was killed, on 19 Hedār 1527, i.e. 24 November 1535, when two nobles, Ma'eqa Ezgi'e and Serāg -Māsarē Takla Selus also fell. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 19. (P)

drew up his infantry were all intertwined. The path was so narrow that the cavalry could only make their way in single file, until they broke through to more open country.

[The wazir 'Addolī is ambushed and killed]

When the wazir 'Addolī arrived at the beginning of the narrow path he said to his soldiers, 'None of you should lead, for fear of creating a bottleneck; [846] I will go first'. So the troops halted, and the wazir 'Addolī took the lead. With him was Kabīr Muḥammad and Garād Haījū, with the Muslims filing behind them. When they were half-way along the path, without his knowing about them, some infantry attacked him, throwing spears and javelins at him, until they so weakened him by the wounds they inflicted, that he collapsed,[847] may God the Most High have mercy upon him, Amen. [848]

God be praised for two of the Muslims. The name of one of them was Barbarī. When the wazir 'Addolī had been utterly exhausted by the wounds they inflicted, he went up to him and took him, with the last spark of life still in him, on his back, so as to flee with him. 'Addolī was on his back like a little child. The javelins were falling like rain, and the wazir 'Addolī said, 'Take me off your back; I can't breathe. Save yourself'. So then he put him down, off his back, while the soldiers halted along the pathway, for there was no way of their reaching him on account of the narrowness of the place.

Then a knight called Kabīr Muḥammad, who was one of the pages of the wazir 'Addolī, went ahead, and they killed him. May the Most High God have mercy upon him. Amen.

Another man called Garād Haījū then went forward, only to die a martyr. He was one of the people of Bāli.

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[846] من الازدحـــام : The 1810 ed. of Richardson's *A Vocabulary of Persian, Arabic and English*, p.24, lists ازدحام as 'concourse, crowd, mob, multitude'. The sense here is overcrowding, crushing or jamming. (S)

[847] Wazir 'Addolī was killed, according to the Ethiopian royal chronicle, on 27 Sanē 1527, i.e 21 June 1535. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 19. (P)

[848] The royal chronicle gives some additional information. It reports that Addolī was killed, by the afore-mentioned Tasfa Le'ul, of Sarāyē on 27 Sanē 1527, i.e. 21 June 1535. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 19. (P)

When the Muslims saw that every one who took the lead was killed on account of the narrowness of the path, they turned round and went back to more open country, above the path. There they made camp, under the open sky.

[Aḥmad learns of the death of 'Addolī]

The idol-worshippers cut off the wazir 'Addolī's head and sent it off to the king of Abyssinia on the following day. Then the idol-worshippers fled. The Muslims took the body of the wazir 'Addolī and buried it. They also buried his companions who died as martyrs along with him.

They then went on their way to the wazir 'Abbās, with Farašaḥam 'Alī in command. The latter wrote to the imām informing him that the wazir 'Addolī had been killed and saying to him: 'You see, we are on our way to the wazir 'Abbās as you ordered us'. When the letter reached the imām on the third day, he was in the country of Abbā Garimā. When he grasped its contents he hid news of his death until mid-afternoon because the troops were scattered about, with the wazir Mujāhid, foraging for food. They arrived back on that day at the time of the afternoon prayer. 'Abd an-Nāṣr also arrived from Wādlā[849] after having been pursued by the idol-worshippers while he was *en route*.

When they were gathered together, the imām had the kettle drums sounded and then all of the Muslims assembled around him. Most of the army consisted of those who were converts to Islam. He commanded the crier to proclaim, 'One of the imām's most loyal servants, the wazir 'Addolī', has died, but someone will take his place'. [850]

The camp was stunned into silence, broken with weeping and wailing on account of the wazir 'Addolī. They were inconsolable in their grief. The wazir 'Abbās succeeded him as chief wazir.

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[849]Wādlā, a territory south of Lāstā. Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, p. 980; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 78, 85, 96, 130. (P)

[850]Granted 'Addolī's unswerving loyalty, the imām's reaction to his death seems muted by comparison with his reaction to the deaths of others recorded in the history up to this point. (S)

After the patrician Tasfā Le'ul had cut off the head of the wazir 'Addolī, he had it sent to the king of Abyssinia. When it reached him he was in the land of Wafla.[851] Immediately, they beat their large drums, sounded their horns, and beat their kettle-drums[852] and their small copper drums. The king called for a platform made of iron and told the patrician Dēgalḥān to go up on the platform and speak.

He went up and flaunted his unbelief, may God curse him. He said, 'O you monks, deacons, patricians and priests, know that 'Addolī has been killed, along with so-and-so and so-and-so,' and here he named some of the emirs, alleging falsely and deceitfully that they had been killed. 'Fortune,' he said, 'has turned towards us and away from the Muslims'. But God disdained this. Then they rejoiced exceedingly, and for eight days they sat beating their big drums, and their little copper drums, flaunting their ornaments, attired in their best clothes, and drinking wine.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: Tasfā Le'ul who had killed the wazir 'Addolī, overstepped the bounds of decency, and acted outrageously. He said, 'I killed the wazir 'Addolī, and Tēdros who became a Muslim; and I will kill all of those who remain'. He then assembled his army and his soldiers and set off in the direction of the wazir 'Abbās.

[The inhabitants of Abbā Hallēlo lie to the imām]

The imām heard that he was marching towards him, so he set off, and the whole camp with him, halting on the border of Sarāyē near the church of Abbā Hallēlo.[853] Its inhabitants, and those who lived round about it, had

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[851]Wafla, a locality south of Lake Ašangē . Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 133. (P)

[852]Reading نقاريستهم for نسقاقيرهم . (S)

[853]Abbā Hallēlo, also known as Halē Luya, a monastery 20 miles north-west of Aksum. The establishment was earlier mentioned in the chronicle of Emperor Zar'a Yā'qob and had been visited by Alvares, who states that it possessed 'great revenues' and 'many monks'. Perruchon, *Chroniques de Zar'a Yâ'eqôb et de Ba'eda Mâryâm*, p. 27, Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, I, 172-3, II, 578. See also Beckingham and Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia*, p. 232; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 133. The burning of the monastery is confirmed by the royal chronicle, which states that imām's men at around this time also ravaged Aksum, and burnt the nearby

accepted his protection and paid the poll-tax. These came to the imām and told him, 'The patrician Tasfā Le'ul and his army has moved against the wazir 'Abbas. They, and those with him, arranged their troops in battle array on open ground and they fought there. The Muslims were defeated, and not one of them escaped'. What they said was a lie, to stop the imām from delaying in their country.

The imām was instantly overcome by a grief more terrible than his grief over 'Addolī. So he sent one of the Muslims to the church there, to verify the tidings. They[854] came to him with a monk. 'This monk,' they said, witnessed their battle, and came to the church people to inform them'. So the Muslim went with him to the imām and the imām questioned him. 'The truth is', he said, 'that the Muslims have been defeated,' and he gave the imām the news.

['Umar offers some advice to the imām]

The imām hid this news from all but five of his companions, amongst whom were the emir 'Umar, lord of Qedā after the conquest, Absamā Nūr and the wazir Mujāhid. The emir [f°97] said to the imām, 'Why are you grieving? For six years we have been in their country killing them, capturing them and stealing from them'.

So the imām was silent and left their country. He placed 'Abd an-Nāṣr in the vanguard of the army and he had not marched very far when he met some Muslim cavalry - among their number was Aḥmad Goitā and the brother of Tēdros whom Tasfā Le'ul killed; his name was Tasfāwī - from the wazir 'Abbās, whom the latter had sent to the imām to give him news and to say to him, 'We are well; and the country is well'. When they and 'Abd an-Nāṣr met it was night-time, and they did not recognize one another, and wanted to do battle on the road. But after they spoke in their language they knew who they were. The night was pitch-black. They questioned them, and gave them their hand. 'The country is well,' they said. The Muslims passed

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monasteries of Bankwal, Lagāso, Dabra Karbē, and 'many others'. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, pp. 19-20. (P)

[854] فجاء : I take the subject to be the inhabitants of Hallēlo. (S)

the night where they were. And when morning came the imām arrived with the whole company, and halted. Then he questioned the people of the church who had lied to him. He asked them, 'Why did you lie to us?' 'We acted wrongly,' they said, 'forgive us'. He forgave them.

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: When the patrician Tasfā Le'ul heard that the imām was making for the land of Sarāyē to join the wazir 'Abbās, he assembled his troops from amongst the inhabitants of Sarāyē armed with bows, lances and shields, and hurriedly marched off against 'Abbās.

In the vanguard of the army of the idol-worshippers was a monk riding a donkey who said to the idol-worshippers, 'Today you will be victorious if you fight the wazir 'Abbās,' beguiling them with his words. The patrician marched ahead with thirteen of his knights, seduced by the words of the monk. His foot-soldiers, who could not be counted, were from the people of Simt. The Muslims had around one-hundred cavalry, and five-hundred armed with shields. The patrician sounded his drums and the Muslims heard them, and came out in front of him and lined up in battle array. The idol-worshippers lined up their troops in the same manner.

When the two armies drew near to each other, the patrician's sons dismounted from their horses. They were Aron and Balaw Sagad who was younger than Aron. They grasped their shields, and donned their armour and said, 'Each one of us is worth five of their knights'. They advanced, holding their lances aloft and hurled them at the enemy. They were famous for their courage.

The Muslims mounted on their horses stood their ground against their attack, and then the Muslim cavalry charged. Leading the charge was one of the senior emirs, Abū Bakr Qaṭīn. A lance that was hurled at him hit him in the thigh. Then Barbarī charged, but they hamstrung[855] his horse. Then 'Uṯmān bin Jūhar charged, plunging into their midst and bursting through their lines, with lances falling on him like rain. After him, Saīdī the sharif 'Abd ar-Raḥmān charged, along with with the people of Dambyā, the theologian Hubata, Garād Aḥmadūš, and Farašaḥam Saṭūt. Farašaḥam

[855]Reading فعرقبوا for فعقروا. (S)

'Uṯmān, mounted a charge at their patrician Tasfā Le'ul. A Muslim infantryman struck him a blow on his shoulder and he fell off his horse, dead.[856] When the idol-worshippers saw that they had flung the body of their patrician, killed in battle, onto the ground, they turned tail.

The Muslim cavalry and infantry pursued them into open country where there was neither tree nor rock; only desolate wasteland. They killed them, to the last man. Not one of them escaped. They captured all their horses They killed the monk while he was on his donkey. They killed all the sons of the patrician. May the Most High God not have mercy upon them. Amen.[857] 'Abbās avenged the wazir 'Addolī and conquered the country of Sarāyē which voluntarily offered him obedience, and paid the poll-tax. They cut off the head of the patrician and cut off his sons' heads, and sent them to the imām. The Muslims were overjoyed at their victory and triumph.[858]

[Famine, plague and backsliding aflict the *mujāhidūn*]

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: the imām gave the land of Sarāyē to the brother of Tēdros, and they were under the wazir 'Abbās whom he invested as chief wazir in place of 'Addolī. The patrician 'Afrā he made Baḥr Nagāš, and he gave the seaport of Dokono to the sharif Nūr. The wazir 'Abbās was above all of them.

The Muslims remained a year in the land of Tegrē until their supplies were exhausted. Staying there caused the Muslims grievous harm. Many people died from the plague in the land of Sarāyē: Ura'ī Abū Bakr died, just as the imām's son Aḥmad al-Nagāšī died and was buried next to the wazir 'Addolī; the widow of the wazir 'Addolī, Ṭāūsī, died; Garād Simu, the son of

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[856]Tasfā Le'ul, according to the Ethiopian royal chronicle, was killed by Abbās in Hamlē 1527, i.e. June-July 1535. (P)

[857]B omits 'They killed all ... Amen'. (S)

[858]The royal chronicle confirms that many of Tasfā Le'ul's men perished in the fray. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 19. (P)

Wanāg Jān, died. The *šum* of Simt died as a martyr, killed by a javelin while foraging for food. Garād 'Abd an-Nāṣr, and his wife Bilqīsah also died.

Many of the Muslims, whose wretchedness was foreordained, apostatised: may God preserve us from that. Among these was the brother of Farašaḥam Sulṭān, along with a great number of those who had converted to Islam: on account of the weariness that settled on the Muslims. The Muslims witnessed an amazing phenomenon in Tegrē: all on account of foraging for food. There was no mule or donkey left for them to use for carrying things: most of them carried their furniture on their backs, and travelled by foot.[859]

[Aḥmad elects to leave Tegrē for Bagēmder]

At this time the imām assembled the Muslims and said to them, 'You see what has happened to the Muslims on account of exhaustion and famine: so now, shall we leave this country, not remaining in it, and go to some country other than this one? What is your opinion? Where shall we head for?' They replied, 'It is your prerogative to advise, and your prerogative to command. We will follow you'. So then the imām said, 'Let us go to the land of Bagēmder, for it has abundant resources. We will take it as our capital, and dwell in it. We will build mosques in it, and when we mount an expedition against another country we shall leave our belongings there, with our wives and our mules, and march wherever we want to'. They answered, 'Willingly'.

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: when the imām settled on departing, he appointed rulers: among them were Tasfāwī, whom he appointed lord of Sarāyē; 'Afrā, as the Baḥr Nagāš; and Zar'ā Sanāy over Ḥamāsēn. Then the imām set off for Bagēmder. He deprived the sharif Nūr of Dokono, and gave it to sultan Aḥmad bin Ismā'īl, from Dāhlāk. The Muslims came to the imām from every province and the imām set off from Tegrē for Bagēmder.

In Sīrē was the patrician whom the imām had appointed to rule it. His name was Dijnah. He obtained protection for his country by paying the poll-

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[859]See *supra* p.367. (S)

tax with horses,[860] and preserved his province. With him from among the companions of the imām were fifty knights who assisted him in fighting the people of Ṣalamt [f°98] who were idol-worshippers, and in fighting [other] idol-worshippers, and in offering advice to the Muslims.

When he was driven to it, the imām set off with his army in the direction of the mountain in which Yohānnes[861] had fortified himself. He reached the mountain in the morning, only to find, at sunrise, that there were two gates to it. So he divided his army into two halves. Each of the horses was clad in protective armour, and the companions of the imām also donned two coats of mail in layers. He gave each foot-soldier and shield-bearer a golden bracelet.

The infantry preceded the cavalry into the mountain, and they fought there. The idol-worshippers were on top of the mountain hurling their lances, stones and slingshots.[862] The Muslims advanced towards them. The Hamaj and the Nubians were with the idol-worshippers. They never stopped fighting from morning until evening and a great number of the Muslims were wounded, for the people of Sīrē were famous in Abyssinia for throwing the javelin and for their courage. When evening fell, the imām saw how many injuries there were, and ordered the infantry to fall back to their camp, with the army,[863] close by a village of Bagēmder.

When dawn broke, the brother of Dijnah, whose name was Takla Ab, came with his wife and son to the imām, and embraced Islam. Having given his son to the imām for him to teach him the Qur'ān, the patrician fled and went to the king.

[Aḥmad spends Ramaḍān 941 AH (1535 AD) in Mazagā]

The imām then set out, heading for Bagēmder and entered Mazagā. He fasted there for the month of Ramaḍān in the year nine-hundred-and-forty-

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[860]Reading الخيل for الجبل. (S)

[861]There seems to be a lacuna in the text. Yohannes has not been mentioned up to this point (S)

[862]B omits 'and their slingshots'. (S)

[863]B omits 'with the army'. (S)

one.[864] The people of Mazagā treated the Muslims hospitably, and the imām celebrated the breaking of the fast there. Then he set off for Bagēmder. While he was *en route* he learnt that the idol-worshippers had assembled in the place through which one reaches Bagēmder. There were four patricians: Yohānnes, and the patrician of Ṣalamt, the patrician of Wagarā and the patrician of Bagēmder. Senior to all these patricians was the patrician Sā'ūl, son of Takla Iyasus. These held the road.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: When the imām heard this, he split his army into two parts: the first part marched with him; the second part with the wazir 'Abbās was to march after him. The imām and his army reached the idol-worshippers to find them lined up in battle array at the gate, which was very narrow. The imām ordered the commanders of the infantry to take the lead, ahead of the cavalry. They did so,[865] and they fought from morning until midday without being able to prevail over them.

[Aḥmad reconnoitres an alternative route]

Then a Muslim came to the imām. His name was Azmāč Taklu. He said, 'I know a narrow road, apart from this road, into the mountain'. When he heard this, the imām chose around twenty knights from amongst the cavalry[866] of the *mujāhidūn*, and a few infantry. He left the armies with the emir Mujāhid, and said to him, 'Hold your position. I am going to march in the direction of this road, to see it for myself'.

So the imām set out, disappearing from sight with his companions. When they reached the gate they found there the idol-worshippers who were guarding it, including the patrician Sā'ūl, and Yohānnes mounted on horses like fiery torches. Then the imām put the foot-soldiers from the army of the

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[864]i.e. from Friday March 6, 1535 when Ramaḍān commenced that year. (S)

[865]B omits 'The imām ordered ..... so'. (S)

[866]The royal chronicle, reporting on these events, states that the imām's soldiers climbed towards Mazagā and Wagarā, after which they attacked Sā'ul, and defeated him, on 12 Miyāzyā 1528, i.e. 7 April 1536. Those on the Christian side falling in battle included Azmāč Yohānnes, Ganzāy, or Ganzāwi, and a certain Bulā. The 'infidels,' i.e. Muslims, then made themselves the masters of Samēn, Dambeyā and Bagēmder. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, pp. 19-20. (P)

Baḥr in the lead, and the Muslims charged them, with the cavalry climbing up behind them. The idol-worshippers fled, but the Muslim cavalry headed them off on the [second] path, while the wazir Mujāhid fought them on the original path. They put them to flight and pursued them, killing and capturing them. Yohānnes grabbed hold of a tree, and was dangling from it when the tree fell and he died. May God not have mercy upon him.

[The patrician Sā'ūl escapes to Samēn]

Then the imām returned to the mountain where Yohānnes had fallen, and sent the foot-soldiers up to this place. They encountered all the patricians there, and took them captive. They captured the younger brother of the patrician Sā'ūl, whose name was Ganzāy, along with the patrician of Bagēmder, whose name was Bāmān, and the *šum* of Sarāyē, and around twenty infantry as well as the patricians.[867]

The only one of the patricians to escape[868] was Sā'ūl who fled to Samēn[869] which is rugged country, dotted with fortified citadels and lofty mountains where there is no access to cavalry. There is no country in Abyssinia more impassable than it.

Now when the imām said, 'we will pursue those who are fleeing' some people from the Balaw came to him, amongst them the *šum* Muḥammed and his companions. They said to the imām, 'Don't enter the country of Samēn. You won't prevail over him, even if you remain there a long time'. The imām replied, 'We will not leave Samēn until we have pacified it. It is the crown of the whole region. If it embraces Islam, then the whole region will do so.

The imām then entrusted the government of the district to Ganzāy, the brother of the patrician Sā'ūl; until he himself should enter it. Ganzāy left his

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[867] B translates 'environ vingt autres patrices'. (S)

[868] ولم سلم الا الخ : A.-P. reads 'le patricien Saul fut le seul qui se fit musulman; il s'enfuit cependant ...'. (S)

[869] Samēn, a mountainous region north-east of Lake Ṭānā. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia*, p. 232; Bairu Tafla, *Aṣma Giyorgis and His Work*, pp 968-9 (P).

wife behind with the imām as a pledge of his good faith, so the imām gave him his freedom and he left, and set about pacifying the region. But then he broke his word, and to save his skin, he fled, abandoning his wife.

[Aḥmad executes the prisoners from Baḥr Ambā]

In Samēn there were inaccessible fortresses and many safe refuges. In it there was also a fortified and precipitate mountain peak. Its summit was a half-day's trek and on it there were cultivated fields and ploughed land. If one man blocked the road, even a mighty army could not climb up because of its narrowness.

The imām sent Absamā Nūr to the mountain. He set off, and climbed it without their noticing him, and seized it. Then he returned. The imām had the forty prisoners from Baḥr Ambā[870] brought to him, and had them beheaded.

Jewish Abyssinians (once) controlled the district of Samēn. They are called, in their own language, Falāšā,[871] because they chant the praise of the One God and have faith in none other. They have no Prophet and no saint. For forty years the people of Baḥr Ambā had enslaved them and put them to work as servants. They tilled the fields for them.

[The Falāšā assist the imām who pacifies the region]

After the imām had won the victory over the patrician Sā'ūl, all the Falāšā came - from deep valleys and even from mountain caves - because they did not dwell in the lowlands, but in the mountains and in caves. They said to the imām 'For forty years there has been hatred between us and the people of Baḥr Ambā. Let us kill them now, those who are left. And let us occupy their

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[870]Bāḥr Ambā a flat-topped mountain in Ṣalamt near the confluence of the Atbārā and Takkazé rivers. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 129, 133. (P)

[871]The Falāšā, or Béta Esra'él, were an Ethiopian minority group, consisting largely of blacksmiths, weavers, potters, and some masons, who, though in many ways identical to other Ethiopians, practised a Judaic form of religion. Kaplan, *Beta Israel (Falasha) in Ethiopia*. See also Pankhurst, 'The Béta Esra'él (Falashas) in their Ethiopian Setting,' pp.1-12. (P)

strongholds now that you have conquered them. We will be sufficient to do this to them. So, remain in your camp, and what we will do to them will astonish you'.

The imām sent some soldiers with them and they set out for the mountain. They climbed it and bound the people of Baḥr Ambā in chains, and then went back to the imām with them.

The imām stayed in Samēn until he conquered it. He took away all the people of Baḥr Ambā from it, and killed them. The people of Samēn in the meantime became reconciled with the Falāšā [f°99] who 'paid the poll-tax in acknowledgement of superiority, and were in a state of subjection'. [872] Garād 'Uṭmān bin Jūhar was left in charge of it, along with Farašaḥam 'Uṭmān. Its people became peasant farmers for the Muslims.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: After the Muslim victory the wazir 'Abbās climbed the mountain[873] of Wagarā and stationed himself in it. Then he sent the wazir Mujāhid to Bagēmder which he entered and conquered. Its inhabitants made peace, became peasant farmers for the Muslims, and paid the poll-tax.

The imām then left Samēn for Wagarā which passed over to the Muslims in the same way. Over it, the imām appointed Garād Ṣabr ad-Dīn, and built towns and mosques in it that are there today.[874]

He also appointed Farašaḥam 'Alī along with Farašaḥam Ṣulṭān, 'Adil, Šamsū and Takla over the land of Darḥā[875] which extends from Bagēmder to Gojjām. He built towns and mosques there, and its people remained on as peasant farmers for the Muslims.

In the same way he appointed Abū Bakr Qaṭīn who had his army with him as governor of the district of Wafla and Kanfāt,[876] from Bagēmder to the

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[872] *Qur'ān* Sura ix, 29. (S)

[873] B reads 'les montagnes'. (S)

[874] At the time of writing, i.e. 950 AH (1543 AD). (S)

[875] Reading دوحسة for دوحسة. (S) Darḥā, a district south-east of Lake Ṭānā. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Prester John of the Indies*, II, 579. Beckingham and Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia*, p. 233; Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 133, 142. (P)

[876] Kanfāt, identified by Huntingford as Kinfaz, south of Darasgē, in the Samēn mountains. *Historical*

land of Wāg.[877] With Abū Bakr were forty knights from Balaw, with the *šum* Sakr and the *šum* Muḥammad. He pacified it and its people remained on as peasant farmers for them. He built towns in it, and mosques.

[Aḥmad chooses Dambyā for his place of residence]

Then the imām set off from Wagarā for the region of Dambyā which he entered. It is a country with an abundance of resources and without an equal in Abyssinia: never having known drought.

It has a market in which you can find horses so numerous that they are like cattle.[878] It is the 'gold seaport,'[879] and around it there are many countries, like that of the Nubians, from which the gold comes.

He organized it, and chose it for his residence.[880] He utterly pacified it, and its inhabitants remained on as peasant farmers for the Muslims. The imām built mosques and divided the territory amongst all the Muslims, down to each of the knights.

He gave the frontier-territory [881]of Tākā,[882] which abutts the country of Homjān,[883] to the wazir 'Abbās. The Muslims enjoyed a period of rest.

The storyteller, may God have mercy upon him, says: [f°100] In Dambyā there was a lake of sweet water,[884] that took four days' journey by

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Geography of Ethiopia, p. 133. (P)

[877]Wāg, the area north of Lāstā . Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 81. (P)

[878] فيها الخيول متل البقر مـــن كثرهـــا : B translates ' ... des chevaux gros comme des boeufs à cause de sa fertilité'. (S)

[879]بنـــدر الذهـــب . B: 'c'est le marché de l'or'. (S) The author of the *Futūḥ*, being familiar with the Gulf of Aden port of Zayla', perhaps had this maritime simile in mind. (P)

[880]The imām's choice of Dambyā for his residence, and the stated reasons therefore, foreshadow Emperor Susneyos's selection of his capital at Gorgorā a century later. The latter site was also in Dambyā and an area of considerable fertility. R.Pankhurst, *History of Ethiopian Towns*, pp. 102-7. (P)

[881] ثغر : I take this to mean the area that formed the boundary between the territory occupied by the Muslims and that still held by the Abyssinians. (S)

[882]Tākā, the Kāssālā area west of Ethiopia. Huntingford, *Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, p. 171. (P)

[883]Homaj, a Muslim people inhabiting the Sudan frontier. (P)

[884]A reference to Lake Ṭānā, on which see Cheesman, *Lake Tana the Blue Nile*. (P)

boat to cross it. There were thirty islands[885] in the middle of it, that produced sweet smelling plants [886] and an abundance of fruit.

[Refugees flee before the *mujāhidūn* to the thirty islands]

All the patricians and soldiers of the idol-worshippers who would not obey the Muslims crossed over to the islands. The imām sent to them asking them to pay the poll-tax. They refused, and were very inaccessible on their islands. They had boats that they made from rushes from the papyrus plant.[887] They laid it down, layer upon layer, and from it made a boat that flew like a bird. No wooden vessel could overtake them; only one similarly made to theirs. They had fortified themselves on their islands. They constructed barricades,[888] and would moor a small vessel to a big vessel alongside the barricade.

The monks and the soldiers who were with them asked, 'Who can do anything against us? We are in the middle of the lake. No one can make vessels [like ours] apart from us; only if they do as we do'. The idol-worshippers and the monks were presumptuous and vain. The king of Abyssinia appointed a monk, Nabrāzūn, as their leader, because he knew that the monks were resolute in the practice of their religion, and took no pleasure in the world.

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[885]There are thirty-seven islands on the lake. Camerapix, *Spectrum Guide to Ethiopia*, p. 85. For a map of the lake showing the principal islands see *Guida dell'Africa Orientale*, between pp. 368-9, and for a modern description Rasmussen, *Welcome to Ethiopia*, pp. 195-9. (P)

[886] رياحين pl. of ريحان : 'sweet-smelling plants, associated with the *ocimum basilicum*, or common sweet basil. See Lane *op. cit*, iii, p.1181. (S)

[887] من الحشيش عـــود شجـــر المـــوز : literally, 'from hemp stalks of the banana tree (*musa paradisaica*)'. The author seems to have confused the botanical features of banana (موز) and papyrus (بردى). (S) These boats, known as *tankwā*, were made not from banana stalks but from papyrus stems. Cheesman, *Lake Tana and the Blue Nile*, pp.90-2. Traditionally we do not know of the use of any large boats on the lake. (P)

[888] دروبـــا : I take these to be fortifications built to protect the vessels from attack by sea. The word درب usually means 'path' and 'narrow track,' and it is in this sense that B translates it as 'des passages'. But it can also mean a gate (and therefore, presumably, a closed gate). Cf. Dozy, *Supplement aux Dictionnaires Arabes*, tome premier, p.429: 'دروب barricades'. (S)

[Aḥmad plans to attack the islands]

After the imām and the Muslims had settled down in the land of Dambyā, the imām commanded that some big trees be felled, and that they be hollowed out into boats, because those from the country of the Arabs need pitch and ..... .[889] And we had no tar or ..... .[890] So they cut down the trees. They hollowed them out so that each boat could carry thirty men. In charge of the making of the boats was an Arab, Aḥmad bin Suleimān al-Mahri .[891] He cut down eight trees.[892]

The imām found waiting for the boats to be made tiresome, so he ordered them to leave them [to be made], and set off with the Muslims to the land of the Nubians and the land of Gojjām.[893] He laid them waste, and enslaved their inhabitants. In Gojjām, the imām met up with the emir Šama'ūn and his army,[894] whom he had left in Gedem. Šama'ūn had come there, as we described earlier on, when the imām had set off from the place after the king of Abyssinia had marched against him with a vast troop. He departed to confront him, with forty knights, and put him to flight, capturing all his wealth and his soldiers.

As the land of Gedem proved to be incapable of supporting his vast army, he moved away to the the land of Gojjām, and made his residence there as will be described in the clear account of this battle and of what happened

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[889] قـــبـــار : I have not been able to identify this word. (S)

[890] See previous note. (S)

[891] An Arab from Mahri, in South Arabia. (P)

[892] From which he made only six boats. See *infra* p.383. (S)

[893] The royal chronicle states that the imām's men entered Gojjām in the twenty-eighth year of Lebna Dengel's reign, i.e. in 1535-6, at which time Grāñ killed 'many people' in the province. The Adal leader then proceeded once more to Sarāyē, where he likewise reportedly exterminated numerous inhabitants. Béguinot, *Cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 20. (P)

[894] The difficulty of providing provisions for their large armies was a problem which also faced Ethiopian emperors, before and after this time. R.Pankhurst, 'The Ethiopian Army of Former Times,' pp. 118-42. (P)

during the second war in which the Most High God was benevolent towards him.

[Aḥmad embarks on the boats]

The storyteller, may the Most High God have mercy upon him, says: When the imām returned to Dambyā from his foray, he pitched his camp by the lake there. The boats were built. So the imām ordered the people to embark on the lake, to fight. The soldiers said to the imām, 'Travelling on the lake, and fighting will succeed only if you are there. If you embark with us, then the soldiers will fight'. So he made a raft [895] from two of the boats, and, in all, made three rafts.

The imām embarked in one of them, and the Arabs and the soldiers in the rest of them. Before this, the Malasāī[896] had never embarked on the sea, and knew nothing of fighting on it. The boats set off for an island called Galilā[897] When they were in the middle of the lake, the Christians set out from their island in their boats - around fifty of them. They flew from the island like birds and meeting up with the Muslims on the lake, fought them with slingshot and stones. The boats of the Christians being from the interior of the island, were small, and made of papyrus stems [898]and they could not approach

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[895] سنحارا : I cannot identify this word. B suggests 'radeau,' or 'raft': a plausible guess. (S)

[896]i.e., as we have seen above, Muslims, or soldiers of Adal. (P)

[897]Reading قليلة (with B) for قلبة . (S) Galilā island, called after the Biblical Galilee, was located to the far north of Lake Ṭānā. The island was the site of the church of Iyasus, said to have been founded in the early fourteenth century, during the reign of Emperor 'Amda Ṣeyon. The church was burnt down, according to the royal chronicle, on 23 Genbot 1537, i.e. 18 May 1545. Béguinot, *La cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia*, p. 20. Oral tradition, collected by Cheesman, holds that the imām's soldiers crossed to the island on 'planks of wood,' after which they burnt down the church, but failed to destroy its manuscripts, because these 'became invisible'. This meant, the Englishman assumes, that they had been 'removed to a place of safety'. The church, he adds, was soon duly rebuilt, according to one account by Emperor Sarṣā Dengel (1563-1597), and, according to another, by Emperor Susneyos (1606-1632) and his son Emperor Fāsiladas (1632-1667). Cheesman, *Lake Tana and the Blue Nile*, pp. 203-5. Ethiopian tradition, quoted by Cheesman, also holds that the imām's forces burnt down the church of Māryām, further north on the island of Mitrata, when they 'threw fire from the mainland'. Cheesman, p. 190. On the survival of Lake Ṭānā's numerous manuscripts, which can be seen to this day, see Sergew Hable-Selassie, 'An Ethiopian Manuscript EMML 8509,' p. 9. (P)

[898]Literally, 'hemp' من حشيش . (S)

those of the Muslims without their overpowering them. When the Muslims drew near to the island which had the barricades in it, they found water as deep as twice the height of a man, [899] and surmised that they had arrived and that the land was near by the barricades. So they disembarked and fought at the barricades.[900] The Christians were routed.

The conquest was achieved, and the Muslims had the victory and the triumph over the idol-worshippers.

To God be the praise, who supplies his blessing, and whose superabundance suffices. We cannot ennumerate Your glories in the way that You glorify Yourself.

Forty nobles, knights, from Dambyā, went to the imām, all of the nobles, with their chiefs: sharif ad-Dīn bin 'Ali, sharif Maḥmūd, and sharif 'Abd ar-Raḥmān. The imām received them hospitably, and gave them the borderland of the province, to the border with Nubia. All of Dambyā to the region of Nubia was pacified.

[Conclusion]

God be praised for the religion of Islam, that God has enabled to gain the upper-hand over all other religions, and has made sincere *mujāhidūn* one of its pillars. May God bless and grant salvation to our lord Muḥammad, the favourite among the sons of 'Adnān,[901] and upon his family, and his companions, and, as day succeeds night, upon those who succeeded them, and upon the successors of those who succeeded them.

Praised be God, the Lord of the worlds: bountiful, upright and blessed praise as befits our Lord, the Most High. May He be pleased.

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[899]That is, two fathoms (12 feet). (S)

[900]The account is vague. I assume that the faster, more manoeuvrable Christian boats were unable to prevent the slower but heavier Muslim vessels reaching the barricades ahead of them, and the disembarking Muslims had the military advantage over the Christians who were unprotected in their lightweight boats. (S)

[901]The legendary ancestor of the North Arabs. (S)

[Colophon]

Thus ends the first part of the Book of the *Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša*, known as *'Destiny's Splendour'* [902] with which God has blessed and shown himself gracious towards us. It has been composed by the poor and insignificant servant of God, Šīhāb ad-Dīn the sheikh Aḥmad bin 'Abd al-Qāder bin Sālem bin 'Uṯmān, who dwells in Jīzān.

May God pardon him, and his parents, and all the Muslim men and women, and all believing men and women.

[902] بهجة الزمان, following MS C. Basset's Arabic text reads 'Destiny's Gift' تحفة الزمان . (S)

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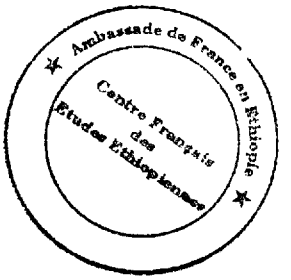

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