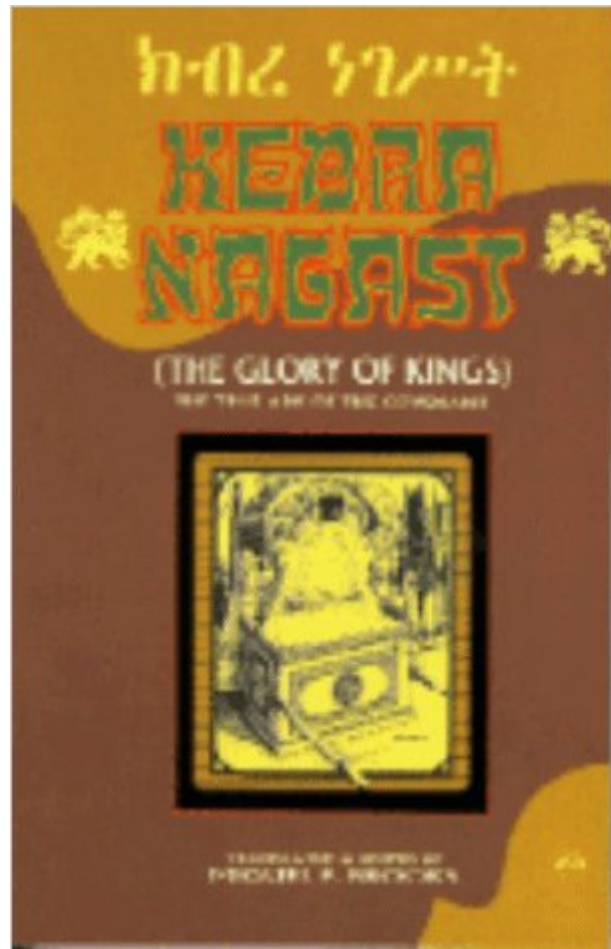


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A Modern Translation Of The Kebra Nagast: (The Glory Of Kings)



Synopsis

Note from the Editor, This volume contains an English translation of the famous Ethiopian work, Kebra Nagast, The Glory Of Kings. This book has been held in the highest honour in Ethiopia for several centuries and has been, and still is, venerated by the people as containing the final proof of their descent from the Hebrew Patriarchs, and of the kinship of their kings of the Solomonic line with Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In other words, the book proves: 1. That the lawful kings of Ethiopia were descended from Solomon, King of Israel. 2. That the Tabernacle of the Law of God, the Ark of the Covenant was brought from Jerusalem to Aksum by Menyelek, Solomon's firstborn son. 3. That the God of Israel transferred His place of abode on earth from Jerusalem to Aksum, the ecclesiastical capital of Ethiopia. Menyelek was performing the Will of God in removing the Tabernacle of Zion from Jerusalem, as God was satisfied that the Jews were unworthy to be custodians of the Ark wherein His Presence was, and the Ark wished to depart. Ethiopia had stretched out her hands to God (Psalm 68:31) and He went to her with the Ark, to preside over Menyelek's kingdom, which was established in accordance with the commandments that He had given Moses and the prophets and priests of Israel. The line of kings founded by Solomon continued to reign even after the Ethiopians became Christians under the teaching of Frumentius and Adesius, and that line continued unbroken until the tenth century of our era. God then permitted the line to be separated from the throne, and allowed the Zagwe Kings to rule over Ethiopia until the reign of Yekuno Amlak, who restored the Solomonic dynasty in A.D. 1270. Ethiopian literature documents a legend to the effect that when God made Adam He placed in his body a "Pearl" or "Seed" which He intended should pass from Adam into the bodies of a series of holy men, one after the other, until the appointed time when it should enter the body of Mary, and form the substance of her firstborn son Jesus, the Christ. This "Pearl" had passed through the body of Solomon, an ancestor of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ and Menyelek, the son of Solomon by the Queen of Sheba, were sons of Solomon, and so, they were akin to each other. But Christ is the Son of God, and therefore, being the kinsman of Christ, Menyelek was divine. The Kebra Nagast asserts that the kings of Ethiopia who were descended from Menyelek were of divine origin, and that their words and deeds were those of gods. The Ark of the Law which Menyelek removed from the Temple of Jerusalem was a rectangular box made of hardwood plated with gold, and measuring about four feet long, two feet six inches wide, and two feet six inches deep. It was provided with a cover upon which rested the Mercy seat and figures of the Cherubim. In the Kebra Nagast no mention is made of the Mercy seat and the Cherubim, but we read there that Moses made a case shaped like the "belly of a ship," and in this the Two Tables of the Law were placed. The case made by Moses

carried the written Word in stone, and later on the Women carried the living Word Incarnate. Although western history is silent as to the place where the Tabernacle of the Law was finally deposited, Ethiopian tradition asserts that it survived all the troubles and disasters that came upon the Abyssinians in their wars with the Muslims, and that it was preserved at Aksum. This complete, modern translation of the Kebra Nagast derives mainly from the Spanish version of the work which appeared in Toledo in 1528 and in Barcelona in 1547, with its French version published in Paris in 1558.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a lover of biblical legends and a peripatetic scholar in the subject area, I encountered a copy of the "Kebra Nagast" while following some thoughts on the travels of the Ark of the Covenant. I have suspected that the Ark had made its way to Ethiopia some time in Israel's history. This was the thesis of Graham Hancock in "The Sign and the Seal," and I expected "The Glory of Kings" to reaffirm that belief. As is often the case with this sort of literature: it does and it doesn't. Set down some time in the 11th Century, the "Kebra Nagast" is the history of the Queen of Sheba's visit to King Solomon, the birth of her son and the eventual removal of the Ark to Ethiopia. It is a remarkable document that shifts from testament style writing to Gnostic Christianity repeatedly. Its aim is to prove that the line of Ethiopian Kings is heir to the throne of David. This is certainly a possibility since there has been a significant Jewish presence (currently referred to as the Falashas) in Ethiopia for several thousand years. There are several things to keep under consideration while

reading the "Kebra Nagast" story of the travels of the Ark. The chiefest of these is that the "Kebra Nagast" was set down during a period of extreme turmoil in Ethiopian history. This was a time when Jewish and Christian and Moslem forces were vying for power, and the "Kebra Nagast" was of vital importance in establishing the legitimacy of the line of Kings that was eventually to include Haile Selassie. As such its real focus was on who was the rightful King of Ethiopia, and the story of the Ark is really an evidentiary tale.

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