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Margaux Herman

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Herman Margaux, (Phd Candidate)

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University of Paris1-La Sorbonne - Department of History

Cemaf-Paris UMR 8171

Supervisor : Bertrand Hirsch

Current Mailing Address:

Herman Margaux

12-14 bd-Richard Lenoir

75011 Paris- France

e-mail:margauxherman@hotmail.com

## Säblä Wängel, the Queen of the Kingdom of Heaven

Starting from a general consideration about the Ethiopian queens from 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, I have come to focus on Queen Säblä Wängel, a notable figure of the royalty of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and on her royal foundation called Mängəstä Sämayat Kidanä Məhrät. This paper is based on an analysis of a corpus of composite sources. We will compare the statements explaining the history of the construction of the church in the sources written after the death of the queen to the records produced when she was alive. Our purpose is to have a better understanding of the 16<sup>th</sup> century's reality.

Nowadays oral traditions associate Queen Säblä Wängel to the history of East-Goğğam. She is currently known as “the Queen of Mängəsto”, the name given to the area surrounding the church Mängəstä Sämayat Kidanä Məhrät, which literally means “The Kingdom of Heaven”. It is dedicated to Mary described her as *Kidanä Məhrät* “The Covenant of Mercy”<sup>1</sup>. Säblä Wängel is in fact considered as the first founder of this church which is located in East-Goğğam, in the district of Ənnämäy, between the rivers Suħa and Yäbärt, not far from Bəččäna and Däbrä Wärq<sup>2</sup>.

Queen Säblä Wängel, called Wänag Mogasa, was the consort of King Ləbnä Dəngəl, called Wänag Sägäd (r.1508-1540). During his reign the political center of the Ethiopian Kingdom was at that time located in the province of Šäwa. The reigns of Ləbnä Dəngəl and his sons and successors, Gälawdewos (r. 1540-1559) and Minas (r. 1559-1563) had seen significant changes. Among other things, the period marked the beginning of direct contact between Ethiopia and Europe. Under the pressure of the Muslim invasion lead by Iman Grañ Ahmed (and later by his nephew Nur), the country opened voluntarily its doors to Europe, especially to the Portuguese. This was also a century when unchristian populations of nomad pastors, the Oromo people, came from the southern periphery to settle in the borders and then in the center on the Christian Kingdom<sup>3</sup>. Facing this mix of population and religion, this century was a time of questioning and changing. It was in such chaotic political context that King Ləbnä Dəngəl (1508-1540), and after him, his two sons, Gälawdewos (1540-1559) and Minas (1559-1563), and then his grandson Šäršä Dəngəl (1563-1597) had to rule. By their sides, Queen Säblä Wängel was a witness and an actress during these times of crises. She married the king some time before 1518<sup>4</sup>, and died around 1568<sup>5</sup>. Thus she saw her two sons and one of her grand-sons reigning.

In an article published in 1994, Tadesse Tamrat states: “Mängəsto in Ennä May virtually<sup>6</sup> became the center of the kingdom with the political heartbeat of the country being felt at Säblä-Wängel's court of Mängəsto for much of the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century”<sup>7</sup>. His analysis is mainly based on a *History of Goğğam* written by Aläqa Täklä lyasus in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The purpose of our paper is to have a deeper

investigation on that subject to understand what kind of “center” Mängəsto was. Is it a late construction or a 16<sup>th</sup> century’s reality? We want to compare what History remembers about it to what we can prove. This is an investigation on the links between Säblä Wängel and Mängəsto, and on their role in the 16<sup>th</sup> century’s Ethiopia.

First we will analyze the sources in our possession. We will present the manuscripts found in Mängəstä Sämayat: two *Tarikä Nägəšt*, one *Nägärä Maryam* and some texts found on separate folios. Next to them we will introduce the work of Aläqa Täklä Iyasus. It will also be necessary to focus on the texts produced at the royal court in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the queen was alive. The first questions we will try to answer are the dating of the foundation and the reasons that make Säblä Wängel come and settle in East-Goğgam. Was the church built during Ləbnä Dəngəl’s reign in the native region of the queen, as stated in the modern sources? It will deal with the identity of the queen and the contemporary stakes of a settlement in East-Goğgam. In a last part, we will try to define the role of this royal foundation during the time of Säblä Wängel, and understand what parts it played in the religious context and in the politics of the royalty during the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

➤ **The sources in our possession:**

▪ **The manuscripts of the church and the work of Aläqa Täklä Iyasus**

For this research, two different topics are interrelated, Queen Säblä Wängel and the Church of Mängəsto. To fulfill this study, we organized two fieldworks in the region of East-Goğgam and especially in Mängəsto, in order to follow the footsteps of this queen, her settlement in the area and the foundation of this church. We found some manuscripts in the Church of Mängəstä Sämayat in 2008<sup>8</sup>, and we have completed this fieldwork by collecting oral traditions in 2009 in the province of East-Goğgam<sup>9</sup>.

The clergy of Mängəsto has in its possession different manuscripts which are copies from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These documents are not yet recorded by the official authorities and would deserve a publication by their own. Some of them perpetuate the memory of Queen Säblä Wängel as the first founder of the church, especially two *Tarikä Nägəšt* (*History of Kings*).

○ *Tarikä Nägəšt or History of Mängəsto*

The first manuscript is called *Tarikä Nägəšt* by the clergy of Mängəsto. It is a late copy of a text produced at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>10</sup>. It ends with the narrative of the death of *negus* Täklä Haymanot, King of Goğgam in 1901<sup>11</sup>. The manuscript is large. It measures 47 cm high by 42 cm large. It is written in blue and red ink, partly in

Amharic, with some ancient forms taken from the Ge'ez. There are 31 pages numbered decreasingly from 280 to 251. There is no illustration or drawing. The text is different from the one of the *Abbreviated Chronicles* also called *Tarikä Nägäšt* produced before<sup>12</sup>. It is not a history of the rulers through a traditional list of kings, reign after reign. Indeed, the central topic of this book seems finally to be the province of Goğğam. The purpose of this narrative is to depict the region as integrated in the Ethiopian Christian Kingdom since its foundation. The first part of this manuscript is all dedicated to this purpose (f. 1r-8v). The last part of this manuscript (f. 9r-15r) is dedicated to *neguś* Täklä Haymanot, the different lords of Goğğam and the history of the province during the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>13</sup>. Finally, it could be assimilated to a sort of regional *Tarikä Nägäšt* as it is dedicated to King Täklä Haymanot and to Goğğam<sup>14</sup>. It is an ethnographic and geographical History of Goğğam. It covers the period of Ancient Ethiopia, from the time of Creation until the death of *neguś* Täklä Haymanot of Goğğam and Käffa in 1901. We do not know the author as there is no colophon. But the author has a deep knowledge of the Ethiopian literature<sup>15</sup> and even quotes foreign sources that have been consulted to write this history<sup>16</sup>. The information given by the text of this manuscript show some close similarities with the work of Aläqa Täklä Iyasus<sup>17</sup>. A deeper investigation is needed. We will call it *History of Mängəsto* for practical reasons of understanding and writing<sup>18</sup>. Next to this book, we found on separated vellum folios some extracts of it written with black ink, as if it had been copied first on separate folios and then copied in the church in one book<sup>19</sup>.

- *Tarikä Nägäšt*

The second *Tarikä Nägäšt* is smaller. It measures 15cm square and is composed of 97 folios unnumbered. It is written in a manuscript on vellum in black ink. The author is unknown. It seems to have been written in the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: Yoħannes IV (1872-1889) is the last King referenced, and nothing is said about King Menelik II or King Täklä Haymanot, *neguś* of Goğğam and Käffa<sup>20</sup>. It is not a regional history. It is less centered on Goğğam. The structure of the text looks much more like a *Tarikä Nägäšt*, than the one introduced before: it follows the traditional list of kings with brief notes on their history and the notes have a different content from the *History of Mängəsto's*<sup>21</sup>. Focusing on the reign of Gälawdewos and Minas, the *Tarikä Nägäšt* of Mängəsto describes a quarrel (folios 45v to 46v)<sup>22</sup> that happened between the King Minas and his wife, Səlus Ḥayla, on one side, and his mother Säblä Wängel and the clergy of Mängəsto on the other. This tradition is an example of the particularity of this chronicle. Most of the time, we do not find it in all the different well-known *Tarikä Nägäšt*. It is not recorded in the *Chronicles* translated by R. Basset. We can also note that the history given for each king in the

*Tarikä Nägäšt* of Mängəšto is not expressed in the same way as it is in René Basset's work<sup>23</sup>. In the other *Abbreviated Chronicles* and complements given by modern historians, only few mentioned this account<sup>24</sup>. Nevertheless, we found it in a tradition collected by A. d'Abbadie then published by C. Conti Rossini in 1899<sup>25</sup>. I. Guidi published some complements in 1926, and added to the corpus of *Abbreviated Chronicles* two different manuscripts<sup>26</sup>: one *māṣḥäfä Kəbrä Nägäšt* undated and another manuscript from Gondär written in Amharic in 1900. The quarrel is described (folios 28r 11)<sup>27</sup>. It is also mentioned in the *History of Goğgam* written by Aläqa Täklä Iyasus (ch. 16 p. 41-42) translated in English by R. Cowley in 1989<sup>28</sup>. A structural and textual study of these texts will highlight the dating of this *Tarikä Nägäšt*. The end of the reign of Täklä Giyorgis, before Yoḥannəs IV ascends the throne in 1872 is for now the terminus post-quem for the date of writing, which is different from the date of the copy.

- *A Nägärä Maryam* and separate folios:

We had also access to one *Nägärä Maryam*, measuring 28 cm high and 21 cm large. On the last four folios, there is the history of the church's foundation produced in 1887 when *negus* Täklä Haymanot of Goğgam decides to rebuild the church<sup>29</sup>.

Next to those three manuscripts found in Mängəšto, there are some separate folios. They are grouped together in 6 unbounded quires. Some of them are exactly the text that we found in the *History of Mängəšto*. For example, the text of the two first quires of separate folios is the same as the one found in the four first folios of the *History of Mängəšto*. The handwriting looks similar as if it has been written by the same person<sup>30</sup>. The text of the four first quires of separates folios is to be compared with the first part of the *History of Mängəšto*. The text of the fifth quire is the text of the church foundation made by Täklä Haymanot that we found at the end of the *Nägärä Maryam*. The text of the sixth quire is totally independent: we did not find any similar narrative in the manuscripts of the church that we were allowed to see. It had been written in 1969 for the commemoration of the late Princess Säblä Wängel Hjäylu who had just passed away.

In the church, they could not inform us about the name of the copyist, or the time of the copy. But one informant of Mängəšto, Təzäzu Gälayä, gives us one interesting account: "The main text of the Glory of Kings had been taken by äšé Yoḥannəs, the present text is a copy"<sup>31</sup>.

Thus, the clergy of the church does not have any preserved manuscript of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in its possession. King Täklä Haymanot, *negus* of Goğgam and Käffa rebuilt the church in 1887 (1880 AM) which has been destroyed a century before<sup>32</sup>, a time when it could have lost its original writings.

- The *History of Goğğam* and the *Genealogy (Zena)* of its rulers by Aläqa Täklä Iyasus

Next to these materials, another text has to be taken into account. It is Aläqa Taklä Iyasus Waqjira's History. Originally called Nägäro Waqjira, Täklä Iyäsus was born in 1875-76 in Gend Bärät. He was brought to Goğğam in June 1878 and baptized Täklä Iyäsus<sup>33</sup>. He grew up being as an attendant in the *däğğazmač* Yälämtu Gošu's family, one of the uncles of Täklä Haymanot. He studied to be a painter in Dima Giyorgis, a famous monastery in Ənnämay, under the supervision of a certain *abba* Sahəlu<sup>34</sup>. He was actively involved in the painting of churches and other artistic works from the late 1880s' to the 1920s'. He died in Däbrä Marqos before the Italian occupation. What seems to be a copy of this manuscript is found in the National Library compiled with other materials<sup>35</sup>. In 1906-07, he started to write a *History of Goğğam*<sup>36</sup> and also a genealogy of the people of the region. The genealogical text is copied and subsequently incorporated in register at the national Library under the title of "የዘመን፡ ታሪክ፡ ማጠራቀሚያ፡" <sup>37</sup>. The original of this manuscript is kept in the hands of *ato* Wudu Fänta who lives in Däbrä Marqos town<sup>38</sup>. The main purpose of this text is to trace the genealogy of the first ancestors who settled in Goğğam for each district. More specifically it aims at listing the lineage of the family of *nəguś* Täklä Häymanot. Its structure and its narrative shows at least close similarities with the text of the *History of Mängəsto*<sup>39</sup>, but a deeper textual analyze has to be done. Using the genealogy produced by this historian from Goğğam, Tadesse Tamrat concluded, regarding our matter, that "*Mangesta Samayat became virtually the center of the Kingdom in the 16<sup>th</sup> century*"<sup>40</sup>.

Unfortunately, none of the manuscripts found in Mängəsto seems to have been written during the 16<sup>th</sup> century when Säblä Wängel was alive. It is then fundamental to analyze the official sources of her time, and the context of their writing.

- **The contemporary sources of the life of Queen Säblä Wängel : the Official Chronicles of the 16<sup>th</sup> century**

We will focus our concern on the official chronicles of Ləbnä Dəngəl, Gäləwdewos, Minas and Śärşä Dəngəl, kings of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Generally produced at the royal court, official chronicles were controlled by the sovereigns. Nevertheless the censorship appears to be a trait shared by the Ethiopian historiography and the collective memory<sup>41</sup>. Thus the chronicles of the Ethiopian kings under their royal control tell about events that fix the official view, which is to be taken into account by historians who want to use them as historical sources. The official chronicles dedicated to the kings are found since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century bound together in one manuscript which in fact is a compilation built by the *däğğazmač* Həylu<sup>42</sup>. Focusing his attention on the manuscript tradition of this 16<sup>th</sup>

century's chronicles, Manfred Kropp shows that some manuscripts preserved some "traces" of the original version<sup>43</sup>. He made a lot of essays on this subject, trying to find the author(s) and to analyze how this compilation had been built<sup>44</sup>. He finally concluded that after a last censure of King Susənyos, they have been compiled in one book between 1616 and 1622 and then copied in that form later on<sup>45</sup>. At the time of this reconstruction, the chronicles of Ləbnä Dəngəl, Gäləwdewos and Minas are compiled to be an introduction to the official Chronicle of Śārşä Dəngəl that is censured by Susənyos<sup>46</sup>. The chronicle of Śārşä Dəngəl has been translated by C. Conti Rossini in 1907<sup>47</sup> and M. Kropp translated and published the three previous chronicles in 1988<sup>48</sup>. King Ləbnä Dəngəl and King Minas did not have, apparently, their own official chronicle, except in the texts of the introduction of Śārşä Dəngəl's reign. But we know that for King Gäləwdewos a text written after his death is frequently assimilated by historians as his official chronicle<sup>49</sup>. In fact, it is much more a hagiography where King Gäləwdewos reproduces finally the life of the homonym Saint Martyr<sup>50</sup>.

➤ **The settlement of a queen in Mängəšto:**

Here starts the discussion. We will compare the late statements, related to Säblä Wängel and her foundation, found in the sources produced after her death and in the local traditions of East-Goğgam to the contemporary accounts found in the sources of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

▪ **Dating the foundation of the church:**

- During Ləbnä Dəngəl's reign?

Documents and oral traditions, which have been collected during the different fieldworks, keep for the first building of this church the memory of the royal ordinance of Queen Ətege Säblä Wängel, Ləbnä Dəngəl's consort (1508-1540). They call Säblä Wängel to be the first founder of the church. For example, a recent document found in the separate folios of the church seems to be the last history of the foundation of the church<sup>51</sup>. This is a memorial text written at the occasion of the death of the princess Säblä Wängel, the grand-daughter of King Täklä Haymanot in 1969. We find this account: "She loved Our Lady Mary deeper in her heart and due to this, she built a wonderful church in her name called Mängəştä Səmayat, the country of Säblä Wängel the first, the wife of Ləbnä Dəngəl, King of Ethiopia."<sup>52</sup>. Another mention, written in 1887 when the church was rebuilt by nəguś *Täklä Haymanot* of Goğgam, supports this idea: "It [Mängəştä Səmayat] had been built for the first time on the will of our queen Säblä

Wängel". Thus Säblä Wängel is remembered as the first founder<sup>53</sup> of Mängəstā Sämayat<sup>54</sup>.

What is the dating given by the sources of the church? In the *Tarikä Nəgəst* of the church at folio 45v, a quarrel is recorded between King Minas and his wife Səlus Ḥayla on one side, his mother Säblä Wängel and the clergy of Mängəsto on the other side<sup>55</sup>. In this occasion, it is reported that "[...] Säblä Wängel, built during her husband Ləbnä Dəngəl's reign, the beautiful church called Mängəstā Sämayat"<sup>56</sup>. The author of the *History of Mängəsto* gives a different version. : "its name is Mängəstā Sämayat and it is the Kingdom of Heaven. That's why King Ləbnä Dəngəl and Queen Säblä Wängel celebrate this church<sup>57</sup>. In the *Tarikä Nəgəst*, the royal couple blesses the church whereas in the *History of Mängəsto*, the place is already blessed, and by this way attracts the rulers of the kingdom.

Still, these both books attest that this church exists since Ləbnä Dəngəl's reign, and the first one clearly states that Säblä Wängel built it, like all the sources produced in modern times.

To have a better understanding on the foundation, we have to analyze the sources of the time when it is said to have been edified. The late documents date the construction of Mängəstā Sämayat during Ləbnä Dəngəl's reign. That is why our investigation will start from his chronicle.

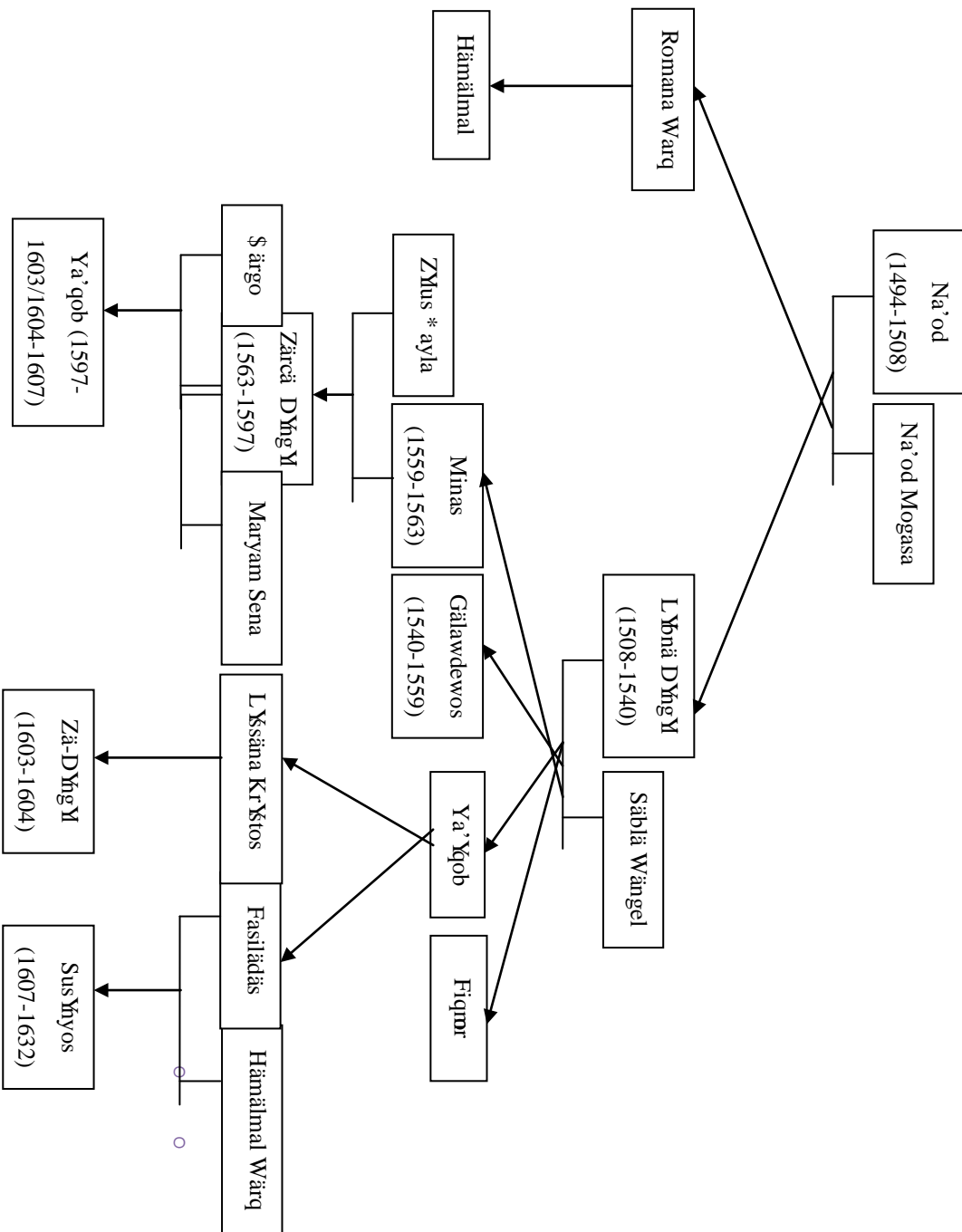


**Mängəstā Sämayat (Herman Margaux June 2008)**



**Simplified Genealogy of the royal family of the 16<sup>th</sup> century**

(Real: Margaux HERMAN)



- A challenged dating in the light of the sources of the 16<sup>th</sup> century

The Chronicle of Ləbnä Dəngəl keeps quiet on that subject: the queen is not directly mentioned and her name not even quoted. The text is mainly based on Grañ's invasion. But as there is no record on the first years of the reign of Ləbnä Dəngəl<sup>58</sup>, we could have imagined that Säblä Wängel built the church before the conflict with Imam Grañ Ahmed began to be too intense, prior to 1527. But at that time, two powerful queens were at the court as regent<sup>59</sup>: Queen Əleni, Bə'ədä Maryam's wife, known to have built Märṭulä Maryam located in the district of Ənnabse, and Na'od Mogasa, Ləbnä

Dəngəl's mother, who made a foundation in Getesemāni in the district of Ənnase<sup>60</sup> These two churches were situated in East Goğğam. Säblä Wängel was a young queen and her main function at the court at that time was probably to give successors to the king. Building a church during this period seems then difficult to achieve for Säblä Wängel.

If Gälawdewos's chronicles remark that Säblä Wängel is the only wife of Ləbnä Dəngəl, nothing is said about the church or the area. The only church foundations recorded in the official chronicles are related to the king, when he decided to build Tədbabä Maryam and Məkanä Säma'ət<sup>61</sup>, both in Amḥara.

Going through the reign of Minas, new details are found on this place. The chronicle says that Minas was established king in the region of Məngəstā Səmayat, where the queen was, and that he went there to meet her<sup>62</sup>. The chronicler says that Minas came during the first month of his reign to Məngəstā Səmayat, from where he left with his mother. We can conclude that Säblä Wängel was in Məngəsto in 1559. It attests that the foundation was linked to her before the reign of Minas.

The first pages of the chronicle of Śārşä Dəngəl record that it was the residence of the queen: « Alors commencèrent les plaintes des principaux du peuple. Lorsque ceux-ci arrivèrent où se trouvait la reine Säblä Wängel, car en ces temps-ci sa demeure était à Məngəstā Səmayat »<sup>63</sup>. This is the first mention in the official texts of the 16<sup>th</sup> century which links definitively Säblä Wängel and this church. This is clearly the residence of the queen.

Thus we can conclude that Məngəstā Səmayat was the residence of the queen in the beginning of Śārşä Dəngəl's reign, in 1563, and that it was already there that Minas came to meet his mother in 1559. We do not have any element that can attest of a construction of the church by Säblä Wängel during Ləbnä Dəngəl's reign.

The chronicle of Minas says that Säblä Wängel was living in Äyba when Minas returns from his captivity in 1541<sup>64</sup>. A record found in the chronicle of Śārşä Dəngəl states that in 1590 the king decides to transfer his residence from Gubä'e to Ayba<sup>65</sup>, the place that is chosen between all the lands of Wägära by Säblä Wängel when Grañ was killed in 1543. The chronicler adds that she built there a royal camp (*kätäma*) which still exists at that time<sup>66</sup>. But that does not mean it was the only place where she used to live. If the chronicler says "*kätäma*" that can also be to distinguish it from another residence. Thus there is no evidence of Säblä Wängel's settlement in Məngəsto before 1559. But there is no proof that she was not there already and we can think that she was living there in 1559 when her son came to meet her.

Until now, I didn't find any earlier evidence. To conclude, we cannot date the construction of the foundation, and we don't know if Säblä Wängel created it or if she developed an already existing church that would then have said to be built by her. The queen was living in Mängəšto at least during the time of Śārşä Dəngəl and the reign of Minas, and probably before. It seems to be difficult for a queen to have made the project of a royal church foundation during the last part of the Ləbnä Dəngəl's reign and at the beginning of her son's: the war was raging. Thus Säblä Wängel might have begun this project during the return of a certain stability in the country, probably in parallel of Gälawdewos's foundations (Tädbabä Maryam and Mäkana Säma'ət).

The Ethiopian historiography remembers the reign of Ləbnä Dəngəl as being the time of the construction of the foundation. It keeps in mind that Säblä Wängel was his consort and that she founded Mängəştä Sämayat. As there is not any exact dating of the construction in the official chronicles, historiographers replace it naturally during the reign of her famous husband, with whom she is always associated<sup>67</sup>. We can wonder if this was the result of a lack of knowledge or a conscious act of the chroniclers.

- **The Choice of East-Goggam: Why did Säblä Wängel come and settle in Mängəšto?**

Following the same method as used for the dating of the construction of Mängəştä Sämayat, we will focus ourselves on what the sources that were produced after her death say about her origin and the reasons that could have influenced her to settle there. Then we will compare the statements drawn to the records of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

- Does the queen come from Goğgam? A late attribution?

All the documents produced since the 18<sup>th</sup> century attributes to her a Goğgam's background. The chronicler of the reign of Iyasu II and Mentewwab<sup>68</sup>, beginning his work with the genealogy of the king and his mother, says on this occasion that: "Son père [of Ləbnä Dəngəl, who is Na'od] le maria à une femme du Goğgam, qui s'appelait Ǝtege Säblä Wängel<sup>69</sup>." That can mean that she lives in Goğgam or that she comes from there. But that can also be the result in the 18<sup>th</sup> century of a whole life dedicated to this region: because she took root with success in Mängəšto she is remembered as a woman from Goğgam.

During the 20<sup>th</sup>, Aläqa Täklä Iyasus is more precise in his genealogy. He presents Säblä Wängel to be the descendant of Ğara Šum<sup>70</sup> and gives him the title of Ǝnnämay *balabat*<sup>71</sup>. Because Ğara Šum is nowadays known as a place in Goğgam, it is easy for the contemporary readers to think that she comes from Goğgam. And if we read between the lines, the word *balabat* refers to a non-Amhara population. Aläqa Täklä Iyasu uses here

again a modern concept that did not exist in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. But cannot it be a way to say that Säblä Wängel comes from Goğğam, but from a non-Amḥara part of the population? Describing the genealogy of the Šime families, he introduces then Əmašənkor, who married to Həzba Askər, gave birth to Fəṭḥ, Rət', Mār'ata Bəgg'u and Amättä Bəgg'u. Fəṭḥ got married to the Baḥər Nəğaši Tewodros, the ruler of Tigray. They got two children: Säblä Wängel and Ənqopazyon<sup>72</sup>. Aläqa Täklä Iyasu states that her father comes from Tigray. Säblä Wängel would then be the direct result of a political alliance between Goğğam and Tigray. And about the Šəme, this historian says that they are one of the people who settled in East-Goğğam during the Zagwe<sup>73</sup>. So, it is a way to suggest that her family has set in Goğğam a long time ago and before she became queen. By marrying Əmašənkor to Həzba Askər it is a political alliance between the moving Šəme and the local Ğara Šum's family that is described by Aläqa Täklä Iyasu.

Let us compare these statements to the sources produced during the 16<sup>th</sup> century to search some clues about her native region.

- o An obscure background
  - "*Goğğame*" or not?

The chronicle of Gälawdewos, translated by W. Conzelman<sup>74</sup>, describes the religious ceremony for the union of Säblä Wängel and Ləbnä Dəngəl and shows the Holy Blessings that they received. The chronicler states: « elle oublia son peuple et sa famille. »<sup>75</sup>. It implies that she is issued neither from the traditional nobility nor from a people which is integrated in the Christian kingdom under the authority of the King. This attests that this union is in reality a dynastic and political alliance. We are then faced to three different possibilities which derivate from the status of Goğğam in the Christian kingdom at that time. If she is native from Goğğam, the region is then not a province ruled only under the government of the Ethiopian kingdom at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but a region governed by its own rulers with partnership agreement with the Ethiopian kings. On the contrary, if the region is really integrated this means that she is not native from there. But it can also mean that not all Goğğam is Christianized and that she comes from a part of it that has not been yet integrated in the kingdom. At least, we can conclude that she is not from Šäwa, the region of the kings. We will discuss later about the situation of Goğğam in the geopolitical context of the kingdom to determine if she is or not native from this region.

- Is she a Falaša?

Who were her parents? The chronicle translated by M. Kropp gives one interesting detail: her mother's name is Yodit, Gedewon's wife. In 1539, these two persons (from the nobility) have been rapt by Grañ Ahmed<sup>76</sup>. In the manuscript translated by R. Basset, it is

marked that Yodit was a relative of Queen Säblä Wängel. But he describes her not as the step-mother of King Gälawdewos but as her step-sister<sup>77</sup>. Both translators chose a different meaning for the Ge'ez word "ḥāmat". This word comes from the ge'ez "ḥmw" and according to W. Leslau's dictionary<sup>78</sup> it can be as well step-mother or step-sister. We might agree with the translation of M. Kropp. René Basset adds in a note that Gedewon was the ruler of the Falaša of Səmen<sup>79</sup>. Nevertheless we can wonder if Gedewon is the father of Säblä Wängel. I personally think that he is not and that Gedewon may have been the second husband of Yodit. If he has been the true father of Säblä Wängel, when this couple got rapt by Muslims, the chronicler would have say that they were both the step-father and the step-mother of the King. Thus two questions stay unanswered. We don't know neither the native place of her mother, Yodit, (a name that was given to her when she marries Gedewon), nor the name of her father.

Who is Yodit? Gälawdewos on his way to Səmen is said to have been welcomed by the Agaw from Ləware, from Hotsa and from Şälämt<sup>80</sup>. With this add, R. Basset notes that Gälawdewos is related through his mother's side to the Agaw of Lasta<sup>81</sup>.

We found another mention. J. Bermudez relates in his Travel's relation the event that happened to him and to Portuguese in 1542:

« Further that, that territory (the Hill of the Jews) belonged to the Queen (Sablä Wängel), and that the tribute from it alone was sufficient to maintain the army for five or six month. »<sup>82</sup>.

The Portuguese arrived in 1541 and began to fight in the North of the country, in Massawa. After the first battles, they tried to find a safe place to rest. Finally according to them, and especially to J. Bermudez, they settled in a land hold by Säblä Wängel as she is said to get from those lands comfortable incomings. They spent there the rainy season with the queen. Did she receive a tribute due to her personal heritage? Was the tribute given to her because of her royal family ties?

This place is called by the Portuguese the "Hill of the Jews". It is a bit difficult to know if they are talking about the Jews as Falaša, or if the Jews are referred to the so-called "Israelites".

If "Jews" means Falaša, it is in accordance with what we demonstrate before. Yodit, Queen Säblä Wängel's mother, was the wife of the ruler of the Falašas. Then it could have been a possibility for Säblä Wängel, the daughter of Gedewon's wife, the ruler of the Falaša, to have some lands in Səmen. Whenever this union happened, it will have been for the king a good alliance. Marrying himself to the step-daughter of the ruler of Səmen, or encouraging the union of his step-mother to Gedewon was strategic. In fact, Səmen

was the main stage<sup>83</sup> between the political center of the Kingdom in Šäwa and the northern region of Šire and Tigray which were harassed by the conflict with the Muslims. It is then strategic to conclude some trustful alliance with this region. It is effectively there that King Gälawdewos joined his mother and the Portuguese in the outset of his reign<sup>84</sup>.

For all of that, if “Jews” refer to the “Israëlites”, the debate on her origin is still going on. The “Israelites” are for Ethiopians the descendants of Menelik I who are imprisoned in amba Gəšen<sup>85</sup>. As there was no rule of primogeniture, all males were equally candidates, although the proximity to the late ruler was clearly an asset. To hold these conflicts, the kings devised the institution of the royal prison, where the sons, the brothers, and the nephews of the king were confined in and known as the generic terms of “Israelites”. Until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, this prison was located at amba Gəšen in the dynastic heartland. Our purpose here is not to say that the Portuguese were in amba Gəšen. Firstly because they were not in this area, secondly amba Gəšen have been destroyed during the Grañ’s invasion<sup>86</sup>. Nevertheless there is still a possibility that the royal power changed the place of this “royal jail” for a while. But it seems difficult to believe that Queen Säblä Wängel gave the hospitality to an entire army of hundreds soldiers in the vicinity of this royal amba inhabited of potential successors. It could be seen like a “coup d’état” for the new king (who was not there) and for the officials of the kingdom. At this time, the Portuguese have not met the king yet. Indeed, since their arrival they were welcomed by the queen because they arrived from the north side of the country. Säblä Wängel was in this area since the end of her husband’s reign, who in fact died in Däbrä Damo<sup>87</sup>. Gälawdewos was himself in Šäwa. For a while she took his place in his role of diplomacy and military ruler.

On the other hand, we can still wonder if this name of “Hills of Jews”, with “Jews” taken in the sense of “Israelites”, has been given to other places inhabited by members of the royal family. Then the fact that she got the revenue from this place is not to be considered as information on her geographical background or attachment, but more generally as a land which belongs to the royalty.

It is difficult to conclude on her background considering the text produced when she was living.

- **So why choosing East-Goggam ?**

- A policy of integration still going on during the 16<sup>th</sup> century

D. Toubkis comes back on the idea developed in the previous researches which concluded that Goğgam was from the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century integrated in the Christian Kingdom<sup>88</sup>. The steps of this integration were described as a first conquest led

by King Amdä Şəyon (1314-1344), of a region inhabited by Agaw population, followed by policies of conquests and evangelization and finally achieved at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century thus assimilating the region in the Christian kingdom<sup>89</sup>. D. Toubkis confirms that the process of Christianization was going on. He analyzes the names of the different Goğğam *nägäš*, who began to be Christian during the reign of Bä 'ədä Maryam<sup>90</sup>. But in opposition to the idea advanced by Tadesse Tamrat, he states that it was not a convincing proof of its integration. Goğğam was still ruled by its own *nagaš*, a title which implies different realities<sup>91</sup>. Then, following the different roads used by the kings of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, D. Toubkis remarks that the Goğğam under their influence is just represented by the oriental part of the actual region, which follows the flows of the Nile. He also demonstrates that the kings do not have a strong authority on it<sup>92</sup>. He finally concludes that the integration of the territories which cover the actual Goğğam will not be completed until the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The capital of the kingdom was fixed in Gondar in the 1630's, which positioned Goğğam closer to the central power established in its capital. The Nile stopped to be a barrier and began to be more "central" in the Kingdom as it used to be at the outskirts<sup>93</sup>.

Nevertheless the kings were interested in developing their authority in this area and in creating a royal network to control it in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Christianization began by missionaries' activities in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Some small bridges and alliances were already made between the *Goğğam nagaš* and the kings. For example, from his childhood, Eskender, Bä 'ədä Maryam's son, have been entrusted to the ruler of this area, the *Goğğam nagaš* Anbäsä Dawit<sup>94</sup>. This fact attests that the Christian king was on good terms with the local ruler.

At the beginning of this century, two different queens, grand-mother and mother of Ləbnä Dəngəl, chose the region of East Goğğam for their foundations. Eleni built Märtulä Maryam in Ənnäbse and had many lands in Goğğam<sup>95</sup>. Na'od Mogasa, the mother of the king chose the place of Getesemani in Ənnässe<sup>96</sup> to build her foundation. The interest showed by these queens is a proof of the attraction of the region and of the strategy of physical implication of the royalty in the oriental part of Goğğam in the first decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In the 28<sup>th</sup> year of Ləbnä Dəngəl's reign, Grañ reached this region and destroyed Märtulä Maryam<sup>97</sup>. Maybe that is one of the reasons which brought Säblä Wängel to settle there, following the two previous queens.

- The coming of Oromo people in the region gives the alarm

In the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, an event pushes the rulers to watch over this direction. Their kingdom was seriously weakened after the Muslim invasion. It was not able to prevent the migratory waves of the Oromo which began by entering in Şäwa

and then penetrated in Goğgam<sup>98</sup>. That may have put the Christian kingdom in a hurry to increase its settlements in this part of the country. Leaders could have seen as a necessity to affirm themselves physically in this region. Firstly, to follow the politics began by their predecessors but also probably in reaction of the coming of the Oromo people, who were apparently not ready to pay their allegiance to the Christian king. At that time, they are described as invaders and pastors in the official sources. The Goğgam is full of water as many tributaries of the Nile flow everywhere, and makes the land fertile. It would have been considered by the royalty as a disaster if the region would pass under the Oromo authority. So maybe the coming of this new population reinforced the will of the central power to increase its physical presence in Goğgam by building royal foundation.

Until now we discussed about the dating and the reasons of the settlement of the queen in Mängəšto. To conclude, we cannot exactly date the foundation but the arrival of Säblä Wängel in Mängəšto happened before 1559 during Gälawdewos' reign. We did not succeed to know where she comes from. But we can attest that she was not from Šäwa, that she had family ties with the Falaša of Səman through her mother Yodit and possibly from Goğgam as it cannot be considered as totally integrated in the royal kingdom in the beginning of the century. She was probably following a royal policy of settlements in East-Goğgam that began in the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century: two queens built there their churches. This choice can also have been influenced by the settlement of new comers in the area.

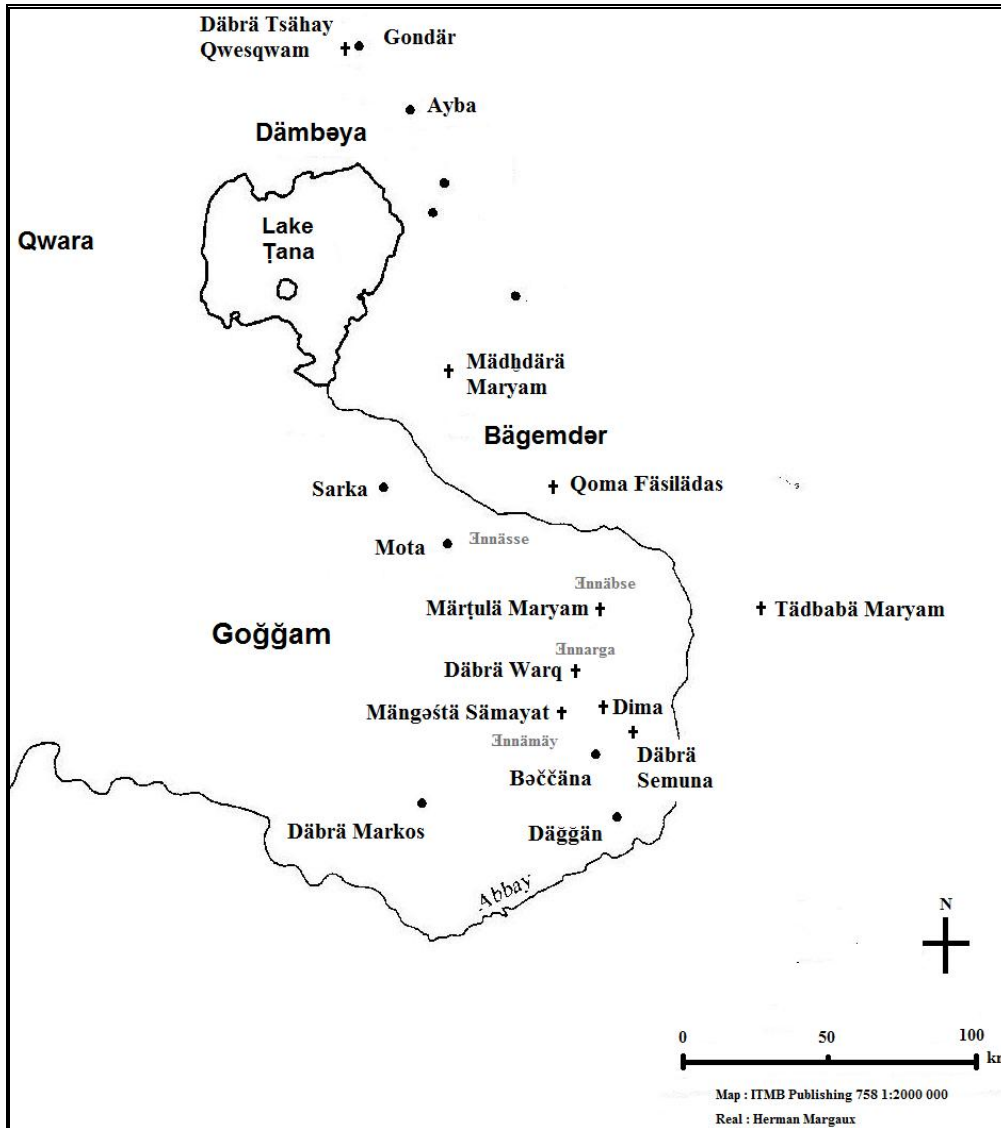
➤ **An Ewoṣṣatewos' center with a strong political attribution**

We will now get interested in the parts of this church in the working of the kingdom. We will try to define the role of this royal foundation during the time of Säblä Wängel, and understand what parts it played in the religious context and in the politics of the royalty during the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

▪ **Mängəštä Sämayat, an Ewoṣṣatewos' center in East-Goğgam**

Let us discuss about its first duty: its religious function. What represents this church in the religious sphere? Nothing is said in the 16<sup>th</sup> century chronicles on the religious position adopted by the queen and then attributed to her church. Was she following the traditional church of Däbrä Libanos or the minor one represented by Ewoṣṣatewos?

After the Queen's death that happened in 1568, two centuries of silence are to come. The church disappears totally from the official sources.



**Figure 1: Sablä Wängel and East-Goğğam in the 16th century**

Nevertheless an interesting mention of the Church is found in the chronicle of Iyasu II and Mentewwab (1730-1755). Mentewwab, native from the region of Q<sup>w</sup>ara located in the west of Lake Ṭana, up north West-Goğğam, is described to believe in a particular religious school followed by both people of Q<sup>w</sup>ara and Goğğam:

« A cette foi participent les gens du Goğğam et ceux de Q<sup>w</sup>ara, car ils avaient été instruits par les fils spirituels de l'abuna Ewoṣtawos, à savoir le rə'sä rə'usan Täklä Maryam de Däbrä Ḫeni ou Märṭulä Maryam, et äbba Särṣä Dəngəl, abbé de Däbrä Sarat; descendu en Egypte pour y apprendre les Livres de l'Ancien et du nouveau testament en 7 langues, il retourna en Ethiopie et enseigna en langue ge'ez, et 'Ämdä Ḫäwaryat qui composa le Mälkə'ä Iyäsus ; leur pays était Tädabä Maryam. Il instruisit abba Zəkre et abba Pāwli, prêtres

de l'église Mängəstā Sāmayat (Royaume des cieux). C'est par les fils spirituels de ceux-là que furent instruits dans l'interprétation des livres saints abba Tātāmqa Mādḥən, du couvent de Gäšola, Gažəge et Wägāda; abba Yoḥānnes de Däbrä Şelalo, abba Şewa Dəngəl, abbé de Däbrä Gonğ. Ce sont eux tous qui enseignèrent cette foi orthodoxe aux habitants du Goğgam et du Q<sup>w</sup>ara. »<sup>99</sup>

Mentəwwab and her son were thus presented as followers of Ewoşatewos and Walatta Petros, a saint woman who developed her activities in the region of Laka Ṭana in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In this spiritual line of thoughts, Zəkre and Pāwli are presented to be two monks from Mängəstā Sāmayat<sup>100</sup> who played a main role in the preaching and the spreading of this belief. R. Cowley, working on Zəkre and Pāwli, introduces them like commentators of the Bible and he concludes his analysis saying that their main activity is dated to the reign of Gälawdewos<sup>101</sup>. A mention found in Gälawdewos's Chronicle shows Zəkre announcing to the Queen the death of this king, her son, which event led to the coronation of Minas<sup>102</sup>. The *Abbreviated Chronicle's* tradition records that Zəkre and Pāwli have been in opposition to King Gälawdewos about the Portuguese's faith (Catholicism), that the King is accused to love<sup>103</sup>. Another late tradition shows these two priests on the side of Queen Säblä Wängel in argue with Minas<sup>104</sup>. These elements attest that Zəkre is a member of the religious community but that he is also close to the royal sphere, often in opposition with the reigning kings and supporting Säblä Wängel.

Unfortunately, except for the presence of Zəkre at the court of Gälawdewos, none of these statements are found in the texts produced when Säblä Wängel was alive. But what is interesting to note here is that in the beginning of this century, two royal foundation supporting two different religious movements have been built: Märṭulä Maryam joined to Ewoşatewos and Getesemani to Däbrä Libanos<sup>105</sup>. It attests of the interest of both royal and religious power to be represented physically in East-Goğgam. Following the hypothesis of D. Toubkis stating that Queen Əleni had family ties with the local rulers of Goğgam, he placed Əleni as representing the Goğgam's position when she joined her foundation to Ewoşatewos. He interprets it as a way to counterbalance the central authority and to mark its independency because usually the kings were supporting and were supported by the church of Däbrä Libanos<sup>106</sup>. After her death and the destruction of the church, Säblä Wängel could have chosen, in the light of these late mentions, to follow this movement to recreate the main Ewoşatewos' center in East-Goğgam that had burnt before.

But they were apparently famous teachers of the Ewoşatewos movement and their activities were important enough in the memory to appear in the genealogy of a royal foundation more than a century after they passed away. They became with time a

reference in the church’s preaching of this movement. For almost a century, it is still surprising not to find any mention of these preachers or of the church. In Mängəšto and in Qoga, they are said to come from Däbrä Şemuna<sup>107</sup> also associated to Säblä Wängel. Susneyos is said to have plunder her possessions in Däbrä Şemuna<sup>108</sup>. We can thus think as we still find some mention of this church in the two centuries coming that it superseded Mängəştä Sämäyat<sup>109</sup>. An investigation on this church might bring some more details.

We can thus conclude that Mängəšto was one of the religious center supporting the Ewostatwos’ movement in East-Goğğam. Its clergy represented by Zəkre and Pawli turned their activities in the commentaries of the Bible and were apparently religious teachers. Their teachings seem to have been spread amongst the inhabitants of Goğğam.

- **Mängəšto, one main political center during the second part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century**

As we state previously, Minas was in Mängəšto at the beginning of his reign<sup>110</sup>. A textual analysis of this account has to be done to get a better historical point of view on its function at that time.

ወእምድኅረዝ : ተንሥእ : ዝንቱ : ንጉሥ : እምመግሥተ : ሰማያት : ዘይእቲ : መካነ : መንግሥት። እስመ : ሀልዎቶሙ  
 : አሜሃ : ኮነ : በምድረ : ገዢም ። ወእመሂ : ንግሥት : ሐረት : ምስሌሆሙ : ወኢተፈልጠት : እምኔሁ፤ ታስተጻንዕ :  
 ሎቱ : ሕገ : መንግሥት።<sup>111</sup>

Manfred Kropp, translating his chronicle, interprets “ዘይእቲ: መካነ :መንግሥት”<sup>112</sup> as “dem Orte, wo er die Herrschaft angetreten“. Does it mean that the king have to come to Mängəšto to see his power recognized? Does Minas receive his crown there? Was it the place from where he organized his actions? For D. Toubkis, we have to see Mängəšto as “his royal residence”<sup>113</sup>. Literally it means “in the place of his kingdom”<sup>114</sup>. Whichever meaning we choose, we cannot deny the importance of the foundation in regards of this extreme association made between Mängəştä Sämäyat and the royal sphere. But to go further, we can see that in the beginning of his reign, in 1559, Minas and his mother Säblä Wängel were in Goğğam. It is said that Minas came to Mängəştä Sämäyat where he met his mother, and from where he moved with her. But “angetreten” is prior to “brach auf”. That can give us two solutions. The first is that Mängəšto was his royal residence and he had to move from it with his mother who will never separate from him. The second is that on his way, Minas had to come to Mängəšto to receive his power, having his sovereignty confirmed by his mother.

Mängəştä Sämäyat is another time called “መካነ” after the death of Minas, when his son Śārşä Dəngəl was chosen to ascend the throne<sup>115</sup>. Śārşä Dəngəl was faced to an

opposition that brought him to reach the “place of his grand-mother Säblä Wängəl, Mängəštä Səmayat”<sup>116</sup>. For a second time, the succession appears to have happened in Mängəštä Səmayat. She kept him with her for some time. But there was a strong opposition to his reign. She was probably not the only one who had the power to choose the king. This resistance forced her to help the young king of 13 years old to flee<sup>117</sup>. Does it mean that she have less influence than before? But at that moment, she kept the crown with her<sup>118</sup>. The fact that she had in her possession the attributes of the royalty shows her main status in the hierarchy of the officials of the royalty. She finally succeeds to maintain the young Śārşä Dəngəl in his sovereignty<sup>119</sup> and thus to keep her rank of regent until she died in 1968<sup>120</sup>.

All these elements confirm that she was a very influential character of the royalty of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. She was active during the successions. The Queen showed her ability of diplomacy by negotiating in 1541 the return of her son Minas, who had been captured by the Muslims almost three years before<sup>121</sup>. She was at that time in Ayba where she built a *kātāma* (a royal camp). She was thus already an active member of the royalty and the fact that she built there a camp attests, amongst other things, of her great authority since the death of her husband in 1540. Later on, she is the one to whom the death of Gälawdewos is announced, before Minas ascends the throne while she was in Mängəšto<sup>122</sup>. Then during the succession of Minas, she acted strongly to push her grandson Śārşä Dəngəl on the throne as another branch of the Solomonic’s line tried to come over him. Finally she imposed her family and only one branch of royal kings ruled, all sons or grandsons in direct line of King Ləbnä Dəngəl and Queen Säblä Wängəl. Amongst others, the lords of Goğğam were actively involved in the succession, and tried to impose their own choices against the designated king<sup>123</sup>. The presence of this royal foundation in the area was maybe a way to gain more control over them.

The majority of the mentions of the official chronicles related to her foundation appeared during the successions of Minas and Śārşä Dəngəl. Now as these texts were dedicated to the kings we cannot take them as simple descriptions. And as it is presented in the chronicle, she executed her actions from her own residence. Mängəštä Səmayat became the recognized residence of the queen under Śārşä Dəngəl’s reign and the place where his succession and the previous one happened, the place of the power of Queen Säblä Wängəl. We can thus see the influence of this place in the working of the royalty. It reflects the power of this Queen. From the death of Ləbnä Dəngəl until her death, she was the one who made the kings. To conclude, Säblä Wängəl is one important decision-maker of the royal power which placed Mängəštä Səmayat, her residence, as one of the political center of the kingdom. It was the place to be to ascend the throne. If one of the duties of the Queen when she marries a king is to give a successor to the dynasty, Säblä Wängəl fulfilled it with success from Mängəšto. That is why we can consider Mängəšto as

one of the political center of the country, maybe the first that had been created in Goğgam.

### **Conclusion:**

It seems that Queen Säblä Wängel and her foundation have always been part of the major stakes since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. She came in Mängəšto before 1559, during the reign of Gälawdewos. Even if we did not find any exact dating of the construction in the official chronicles, we can still think that she built a church. Indeed, we do not find any mention of a pre-existent foundation. Thus she would have begun her project in parallel of her son's foundations, increasing the royal control on the other side of Abbay River. If we cannot conclude on the exact background of this queen, according to the chronicles of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, we remark that she was involved in a significant union of the royalty with the kingdom of Səmen, as her mother was married to Gedewon, the ruler of the Falaša. She might also have family ties with some Goğgam ruler as the region cannot be considered as integrated in the royal kingdom in the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Nevertheless she chose East-Goğgam for her royal foundation. She was following a policy begun by her predecessors which was probably quickened by the fear felt at the arrival of Oromo people in the region. After she died, in 1568, the kings keep on increasing their physical presence in Goğgam. They stayed in different royal residences that they built in the area: for example in Säbrad located at the south of Lake Ṭana, in Q<sup>W</sup>arab located next to Moṭa and in Sarka. Susneyos received from his father, the queen's grand-son, some lands in this area. East-Goğgam became a place of royal interest and appeared much more in the official chronicles<sup>124</sup>. Mängəštä Səmayat was a strong local base for the royalty during her lifetime. It was not the only political center of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but it was the place where the successions were played, attesting of the great influence of this queen in the political game. However, considering that it was the residence of the Queen, a main character of the 16<sup>th</sup> century's royalty, we cannot ignore its effective influence and the importance of this province in Ethiopian History. She had been behind the scenes of every reign when she was alive and imposed herself as the "Key-Queen" of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

But apparently the church did not succeed to maintain its part in the geopolitical map of Goğgam considering the silence about this place during two centuries. The documents found in the church attest that it was destroyed by the Oromo during the reign of Iyasu and never rebuilt before *negus* Täklä Haymanot<sup>125</sup>. Säblä Wängel supported the Ewoṣatewos' movement, following the steps of Queen Eleni in Goğgam. The priests became important in the later lists of teachers of the *qebat's* school. The tradition attributed to Mängəštä Səmayat to be involved in the development of the School of *qebat* (Unction) which had strong influence in Goğgam. Däbrä Şemuna, another

Ewoṣṭatian church connected to Säblä Wängel may have superseded Mängəstä Sämayat in its religious duty<sup>126</sup>. Nevertheless to go further on this point, some more historical researches have to be done on this movement and its birth<sup>127</sup>. The *qebat* did not exist before 1620 as an independent school of thoughts<sup>128</sup>. It is then difficult to go further on. If Säblä Wängel was supporting a school of thoughts which have been then condemned, the silence in the official sources is not surprising. The link with this movement and its potential role in the theological debates is probably the reason of its decline in the official sources until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At this moment, Säblä Wängel and her foundation of Mängəstä Sämayat became essential in the histories produced in Goḡḡam as it is proved by the texts of the manuscripts of Mängəstä Sämayat and by the works of Aläqa Täklä Iyasus.

<sup>1</sup>The Covenant of Mercy is a Pact made between Mary, Jesus and God. The Christian community can intercede directly with God by praising Mary. (voir C. Bosc-Tiesse, "How Beautiful She Is!" in *Her Mirror: Polysemic Images and Reflections of Power of an Eighteenth-Century Ethiopia Queen*, *Journal of Early Modern History*, Brill, v.8, 3-4, p. 300-318)

<sup>2</sup>See the map, from the Ethiopian Map Agency, records under the n° 1038 A3.

<sup>3</sup>The Oromo people are called pejoratively in the Christian texts "under the name of "Galla". E. Fiquet by studying the structure of the Oromo society points in his analyzes the fact that the Oromo were not all nomad pastors. Their tribal system based on the Gadaa reinforced the spirit of conquest and combined to the idea of exogamic marriage marginalized a certain part of their population and specially the cadet sons. This part of the population was then expelled on the boarder of their territory in dry lands and then they were obliged to practice pastoral activities. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century this branch of the Oromo population was in lack of space. So after the attacks ruled by Grañ who disorganized the Christian kingdom, they had the opportunity to come and settled there, expanding by this way the Oromo territories, and finding there a better way of life.( Fiquet E.,2003, «Dynamiques générationnelles et Expansion des Oromo en Éthiopie au XVIe siècle », *l'Homme*, 3-4, Paris, n°167-168, p. 235-251. )

<sup>4</sup>We did not find any record speaking about the exact date of their union, but they give birth to four sons: Fiqr, Minas, Yä'Yqob, and Gälawdewos. Gälawdewos mounted to throne in 1540 at the age of 18. Thus he was born in 1522. The birthdates are not recorded in LYbnä DYngY's chronicle, but according to Asma Giyorgis, Gälawdewos was the youngest son. Asma Giyorgis (in Bairu Tafla, 1987, *Asma Giyorgis and His Work: History of the Galla and the Kingdom of Šawa*, Stuttgart, p.151) We can conclude that at least the wedding must have happen before 1518. (And we don't count here the daughters!)

<sup>5</sup>Basset, 1882, p. 117 : « La cinquième année, le roi fit la guerre au bâchâ ; alors mourut Ité Säblä-Ouengèl, mère du roi. » around 1568 but in the Chronicle of Zärcä DYngY tells (Conti Rossini C., 1907, *Historia regis Sarsa Dengel (Malak Sägäd)*. C.S.C.O. 20, Paris, p. 103) also that in 1579, « ce jour, qui était le 2 du mois de hëdar, c-a-d de kanum 1er, fut le jour de la mort de la Grande reine Säblä Wängel , qui aimait le jeûne et la prière, craignant le Seigneur et aimant les hommes, que le Seigneur reçoive son âme dans le royaume des cieux avec les âmes de ceux qu'il fait grandir dans la religion. ». Both texts don't give the same date. We might believe the Chronicle of Zärcä DYngY as is it has been written more contemporarily than the *Abbreviated Chronicles* who start to be written in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. But it might also appear that the mention found in the long chronicle is just to remember the day of her death, like a memorial "tazkar", 10 years after the official date. We found another mention in the text related to the campaigns of Zärcä DYngY against the Falaša translated by J. Halevy in 1907 in the *Bulletin of Geographie* gives the day of the 25 H•dar, the 1<sup>st</sup> kanoun for the death of Säblä Wängel.(p. 129).

<sup>6</sup>He shows the ability of the narrative to describe MängYto as the center of the kingdom by linking it to King Efremer who is said to have settled there at the center of Go••am on his way back from Jerusalem with Menelik I. Tadesse Tamrat thus shows an interesting example of historical reconstruction.

<sup>7</sup>Tadesse Tamrat, 1994, "Ethiopia in Miniature: The Peopling of Gojjam", *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies, Proceedings of the Twelfth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Michigan State University, v.1, p. 959.

<sup>8</sup>We have visited this church on 20 Genbot 2000 with Habtamu Mengiste, a Ph.D. Candidate from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. We found the church in restoration. One year after, it was not yet finished.

<sup>9</sup>It is frequent that the literate clergymen in charge of the history of the Christian community found their knowledge not in their own manuscripts but from recent published books written in Amharic as the one of

Täklä bädYq Mäk<sup>w</sup>Yriya (1958-59) who used the work of Aläqa Täklä Iyasus (Täklä Sadéq Mäk<sup>w</sup>ériya, 1958/59 A.D, (ዶክተር ዶ/ር ታሪክ፡ከአጼ፡ልብን፡ድንግል፡እስከ፡አጼ፡ቴዎድሮስ፡, ('History of Ethiopia: From ase Lébnä Dégél to ase Tewodros), Addis Abäba; and also as the work of Ädmasu Jambare printed in 1954 in Addis Ababa(መጽሐፍ፡አሚን፡የሃማናት፡ሚዛን፡ከመልአክ፡ብርሃን፡አድማሱ፡ጃንበሬ፡ትዘጋጅ፡, 1954, Addis Ababa.) But strangely, they do not seem to know that Aläqa Täklä Iyasus was from the area.

<sup>10</sup>The documents has a seal but it is unfortunately illegible.

<sup>11</sup> When Yo%annes IV assumed the throne in 1872, he created four administrative units: Go••am and Käffa, BägämdYr and SYmen, Shewa and its dependencies and Tigray and its dependencies in the north. Täklä Haymanot (1870-1901), ras of Go••am under the name of *ras* Ädal Tessema, received the title of *negul* of Go••am and Käffa in 1881, at the same time Menelik II received the Shoa. (Getatchew Haile, 1986, « The Unity and Territorial Integrity of Ethiopia », *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Cambridge University Press., Vol. 24, No. 3, p. 465-487)

<sup>12</sup>The writing of *Abbreviated Chronicle* began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and have been definitely fixed in the monastic circles after Bäkaffa's death in 1730. (C. Bosc-Tiesse, 2008, *Les Iles de la mémoire, Fabrique des images et écriture de l'histoire dans les églises du lac Iana*, XVIIe-XVIIIe siècle, Paris, p. 19 and ch.VI; A. Caquot, 1957 « Les «Chroniques abrégées» d'Éthiopie », *A.E.*, p. 187–192, and especially the works of M. Kropp, 1983-84, « Réédition des chroniques éthiopiennes : perspectives et premiers résultats », *Abbay*, 12, Paris, p. 49-72)

<sup>13</sup>The first four folios define the history of Ancient Ethiopia as the blessed country chosen by God. The Nile compared to the biblical river Gyon is one vector of this narrative, and all its tributaries are given. At folio 4v the author begins to focus on Go••am with the construction of churches made by AbrYha and AcbY%a (two mythic kings: to get more information on these kings see the paper of B. Hirsch and F.X. Fauvelle-Aymar (in, 2001 « Aksum après Aksum. Royauté, archéologie et herméneutique chrétienne de Ménélik II (1865-1913) à Zära Yaqob (r. 1434-1468) », *A.E.*, 17- 1, p. 73-76.)). Then the narrative focuses on the story of queen Azeb, her visit to Jerusalem, and the meeting with King Solomon, the return of Menelik I with 12 mythic kings who each received one region of Ethiopia. King •Efreem received Go••am. (It is an interesting development of the *KYbrä Naga[ft]*. It finally ends at f. 8r-8v with the construction of MängY[to] by Queen Säblä Wängel and King LYbnä DYngM. (This part enhances the place of Go••am and especially of MängY[to] in the history of the Kingdom: this foundation appears like the third most important moment of Ethiopian history! The story of Menelik I's birth and the myth of AbrYha and AcbY%a are the most famous national myths: they are the symbol of the first and of the second Alliance of the Kings with God, with the Old and with the New Testament.) At the end of folio 8v, there is a break in the narrative marked by a seal. Then the author starts the genealogy of *negul* Täklä Haymanot. On this genealogy, the author gives developments on Queen Mentewwab and finally gives us the name of the different families who ruled Go••am since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Folio 9v is dedicated to the different policies practiced during the *zämänä mäsaFYnt*. It focuses on Go••am. Folios 10r deals with the 19<sup>th</sup> century's policy applied south of Abbay River, folio 10v with the lords of Go••am. Folios 10r and 11v are related to the administration of the region and to the settlement of different families in East-Go••am: it gives their genealogy. There it seems that the copyist is not the same. He comes again on the history of the settlement but focuses more on the administration of Go••am. From folio 13r to folio 15v historical events of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are described: the battle of Žmbabo, the history of the conflict between Menelik and Täklä Haymanot, the campaign against the Mahdist, the campaign of Yo%annes IV in Go••am, the battle of Täklä Haymanot in Mätäkäl and the marriage of his daughters. The text ends with the death of King Täklä Haymanot in 1901.

<sup>14</sup>*ras* Mikä'el SYhul of Tigray gives us an example of the possibility, since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, to produce a personal chronicle next to the official's one dedicated to the ruling King. (Kropp Manfred, 1994, « La théologie au service de la rébellion - Chroniques inédites du *ras* Mikä'el », *Etudes Ethiopiennes, Actes de la Xème Conférence Internationale des Etudes Ethiopiennes* (Paris 23-26 aout 1988), Paris, Vol. 1, p. 225-236.)

<sup>15</sup> He uses historical books on Ethiopian History as the *Mächäfä Giyorgis Wäldä Amid* (f. 1 v/ n°279, f. 3 r/ n°276, f. 7v/n°267), *ÄbushäkYr Mächäfä* (f. 7v/n°267) and ), a book written by a certain Dane'el (f.4 r/n°274, f. 8r/ n°266). He also makes some reference to religious works like the *Mächäfä Qelementos* (f. 1 v/ n°279), the *SYnksar* (f.4 r/n°274), *Zena ŽskYndYr*(f.4 r/n°274), *Tä'ämrä Iyasus*(f.4 r/n°274).

<sup>16</sup>Aristotle (f. 1r /n°280) and a certain Sofonias (f.3v/ n°275; f.4 r/n°274) are the historical reference for the history of the kingdom in Ancient Time. Later, the author, talking about the Nile, says he found some proofs in a French book called "Larus" (Larousse) (f. 3 r/ n°276).

<sup>17</sup>We will present briefly the work of Aläqa Täklä Iyasus in this study. But a deeper analyze has to be made.

<sup>18</sup>The text of Aläqa Täklä Iyasus is currently known as the *History of Go••am*: we had to find a different name for this manuscript.

<sup>19</sup>The book is tall by its size. We may then think that it has been copied in the church as it would not have been easy to carry on a journey. In case of emergency, it is also easier to take away some folios with the most important histories than a tall and heavy book. It might also be the opposite; the clergy could also have copied the main events on separate folios, maybe more useful for the different ceremonies of the year.

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<sup>20</sup> Like the Chronicles of the *zāmānā mäsafYnt* translated by Well Blundell, 1989, in *The royal chronicle of Abyssinia 1769-1840*, Osnabrück, 543 p.

<sup>21</sup> Folios f. 1r to f.2v are blank. Then from f. 3r to f. 4v we have a list starting from Adam to Noah. It continues and ends with the last biblical Kings. On folio 5r we find the genealogy of Mary and Jesus. Then folios f.5v to 15r are the narrative of King Constantin, and all the genealogy until AbrYha and AcbY%a is given. Folio 10v is related to Yared. From folio 15v to 20v, it is the story of Queen Azeb, Solomon and their son Žbnä \$ äkim. On folios 21r to 22r, we find the genealogy of the kings after Queen Makeda until the coming of Christianity in Ethiopia during AbrYha and AcbY%a's reign. The genealogy continues from folio 22v to folio 24v and presents the coming of the 9 saints (f. 22v), Kaleb, Del Na'ad and the Zagwé dynasty. Folios 25r to 30r are dedicated to the change of dynasty focusing on the arrival of YKunno Amlak and Saint Täklä Haymanot. Then the genealogy goes on with his royal descendants f. 30v to 34r with special interest on Saint Ewosmätewos, and then with the kings Amdä beyon and Sayfa Är'ad. The next folios (f. 35r to 40v) give long development on Dawit II and the coming of the True Cross in Ethiopia. Folio 41r is related to Zär'ä Yä'Yqob and his son Bä'Ydä Maryam, the folios 41v and 42r to Eskender, Amdä beyon, Na'od, and LYbnä DYngY. The history of the campaign led by LYbnä DYngY against Grañ and the coming of the Portuguese is the main interest. Nothing is said on his wife, not even her name. Folios 42v to 45r are related to the reign of Gälawdewos, his military successes, the building of two churches (Tädbabä Maryam and Mäkänä Sämä'Y) and the religious debates that happened during his reign. Then, folios 45v to 46v deal with the reign of Minas and the conflict he had with his mother Säblä Wängel. It continues with the reign of Zärcä DYngY and his wife Maryam Sena(f. 46r to 49v). There is a little digression on the history of different monks in Ethiopia since the time of Lalibella. (f.50r-51v). The text goes on with the reign of Ya'Yqob, Zä-DYngY, SusYnyos (f. 52r-53v). At folio 54v the genealogy stops and starts again from the Biblical Kings. On folio 59v, the genealogy comes back to the reigns of Zärcä DYngY, Zä-DYngY and SusYnyos, but goes this time further until the death of this one (f.65v). Then it continues with the reign of Fasilädäs (until f. 68r), Yo%annes I (f. 68rv) and Iyasu I (69r). Nothing is said on his son Täklä Haymanot, and brief notices are found on Tewoflos, Yosms, Dawit, and Bäkaffa (f. 69v-70r). It is followed by the history dedicated to the reigns of Iyasu II and Iyo'as until the *zāmānā mäsafYnt* (f. 73r). Then the handwriting seems to change, but it gives long development on *ras* Mika'el during the reign of Iyo'as.(f. 74r to 77r). It continues with the reign of Täklä Giyorgis and of different famous lords (f. 77v-84r) until the reign of Yo%annes IV. On folio 84r-v, there is a genealogy of *abuna* starting from abba Salama (Frumence). The handwriting changes here again. It goes on with another genealogy starting from Arwe –what has already been seen on folio 59r- followed by Queen Azeb and Žbnä \$ äkim, and ending with the Zagwe (f. 85v-.87r). It is followed by brief notes on the kings from YKunno Amlak to Yo%annes IV (f. 87v-95v).

<sup>22</sup> This tradition explains the end of the reign of Minas who wanted to dismiss his mother. Minas wanted to crown Žtege his wife SYus \* ayla, while his mother was still alive. Säblä Wängel was supported by two monks called ZYkre and Pwawli who stood up for her and excommunicated the king. Minas imprisoned them. Pwawli died. After a time, Minas regretted and took ZYkre out of jail. The monk revenged and used trickery. Following the subterfuge of the monk, the king forced all the monks to strip off their clothes. Seven days after that, the king died. This tradition would deserve a further study.

<sup>23</sup> The history of Minas in Rene Basset's work is found on p. 23 and the translation is given p. 116. He uses for his studies the manuscript Paris BN Ethiopien 142 and to complete the gaps, the Paris BN Ethiopien 143. (R. Basset, 1882 « Etudes sur l'histoire d'Ethiopie », Paris, *Journal Asiatique*, p. 103-116)

<sup>24</sup> Let us discuss on the versions of the *Abbreviated Chronicle* which do not mention the quarrel. J. Perruchon gives the difference found in the Paris BN Ethiopien 141 in comparison to the text translated in 1882 by R. Basset. (J. Perruchon, 1894(2), "Le règne de Minas", *R.S.*, II, p. 86-90). C. Foti uses an abbreviated chronicle of Däbrä BYhan of Gondär and Dombrowski translated the Tanasee 106. There are some different groups of *Abbreviated Chronicles* which are classified by region of production. As nothing is said neither on the tragic death of King Iyasu I nor on King Täklä Haymanot (1706-1708), that distinguishes the *Tärika Nägä[t* of MängYto from the group of Qwäram- Daga. (a detailed study of this group is found in the work of C. Bosc-Tiesse, 2008, ch. VI, p. 187-192).

<sup>25</sup> C. Conti Rossini, 1899, « Note per la Storia dell'Abissinia. « Il libro delle leggende e tradizioni abissine del l'Ecciahiè Filpós », *R.R.A.L.*, p.699. Conti Rossini dates the original period of production of this text in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>26</sup> These manuscripts were given to him by Prof. Gallina.

<sup>27</sup> I. Guidi, 1926, "Due nuovi manoscritti della "Cronaca abbreviata" di Abissinia », *R.R.A.L.*, ser. 6, vol. 2, p. 371 : • E regno Min•s Quattro anni, e quando monto sul trono, depose la sua madre, la regina • l•ni. Costei aveva costruito anteriormente, sotto il regno del suo marito Lebna Dengel, una bella chiesa chiamata Mangesta Sam•y•t, e vi raccolse molti sacerdoti dottori nei libri (nella S. Scrittura), Min•s sposo una donna e la proclamò regina. Quando i sacerdoti di • l•ni, della chiesa da lei costruita, udirono che egli aveva deposto sua madre e fatto

regnare sua moglie, si affliissero molto ed inviavano due preti i quali avevano nome P•wlos e Zakr•, che erano quelli che avevano disputato coi Franchi su questioni di fede”.

<sup>28</sup> Roger Cowley, 1989, « Zekre and Pawli - Ethiopic Bible translators or interpreters? », *Journal of Semitic Studies* 34(2), p. 392-393.

<sup>29</sup> “In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God. In the second year of the reign of our King Täklä Haymanot, who beloved God, in the year of John the Evangelist in the month of October (Teqemt) 1880 (AM), happened the reconstruction of the Church of Our Lady Mary, the God bearer, which is called MängYtä Sämayat (Kingdom of Heaven). It had been built for the first time on the will of our queen Säblä Wängel, the wife of the King of Kings LYbnä DYngY. And the restoration of the Church has been made thanks to the praises of Our lady Mary, the God bearer. Let the intercession and the blessing of Our Lady, the Virgin Mary, be with our King Täklä Haymanot who beloved God, forever and ever, Amen! Let us remember and speak again on the event of the first destruction of the Church during the reign of Iyasu, the King of Kings of Ethiopia. The reason of the destruction can be found in the History of this King. Since the time of King Iyasu until now, the church of MängYtä Sämayat has faced many challenges. ”Then it continues saying how *negu* Täklä Haymanot rebuilt the church of his great ancestor Säblä Wängel and how to please the community he made for the church the same rule that Säblä Wängel did before. (last four folios of the *Nägärä Maryam*)

<sup>30</sup> Only few details are different and they do not change the meaning.

<sup>31</sup> This account is still mysterious. If the “*KYbrä Nägä[t*” that he is talking about is the *History of MängYto*, it appears difficult that Yo%annYs took it, as it goes until the death of Täklä Haymanot, almost 30 years after the death of King Yo%annYs IV. Maybe it could also be only related to the first part of the manuscript or maybe he made a reference to the other *Tarikä Nägä[t*.

<sup>32</sup> Last four folios of the *Nägärä Maryam*.

<sup>33</sup> Täklä Iyäsus was born Oromo but he grew up and was completely assimilated into the Go••am culture, a fact attested by his writings.

<sup>34</sup> Tadesse Tamrat, 1972, *Church and State in Ethiopia 1270-1527*, Oxford, p.196, 203.

<sup>35</sup> We found this text in the National Library of Addis Ababa registered under the number 382/63.

<sup>36</sup> *Tarikä Nägäst* known as “*the History of Go••am*”. The manuscript has 249 pages and it is now in the National Library of Addis Abeba bearing the number 402/83 (*yäbYranna tära qwYm*) and 61 (*yädäbtär tära qwYm*). The volume has not been microfilmed for the EMLL project. [The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was productive: many histories of the kingdom were written. (Bahru Zewde, 2002, *Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia: the reformist intellectuals of the early twentieth century*, Addis Abeba, 228p.)]

<sup>37</sup> This text of Aläqa Täklä Iyäsus is also called *History of Go••am*. This manuscript have been studied for a Phd in the Philology Department by Girma Getahun [“The Goggam Chronicle: introduction with edition, translation and annotation of select chapters”, University of Oxford -Mansfield College, 1991. An Amharic version of this text can be read online at: <http://www.britac.ac.uk/pubs/src/fha/goggam/index.cfm>. [This text is waiting for publication in *Fontes Historiae Africanae Sources of African History*, New Series 10] It corresponds approximately to the second part of the *History of MängYto*. [Let us just remark that after the death of ras Makonnen (1906) and with the serious illness of Menelik II, queen Taytu was more focused on her husband and their history. That can give more freedom for historians of regional powers. The few years coming did not see no strong central power until Hayle Sellasie’s coronation. These years were productive: a lot of different Histories of the Kingdom were written. (Bahru Zewde, *Pionneers of Change in Ethiopia: the reformist intellectuals of the early twentieth century*, Addis Abeba, 2002, 228p.)]

<sup>38</sup> Abebaw Ayalew Gela, 2002, “A history of painting in East-Go••am in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: a study of the “second Gondärine” Style of painting”, Master degree of Arts in History (Social Sciences), Addis Ababa University.

<sup>39</sup> The first part of the *History of MängYto* (ex: f. 8r/266-265) corresponds the developments found in the *Genealogy of Go••am (Zena)* written by Aläqa Täklä Iyäsus (ex: *Zena* p. 77-78), as well the second part of these texts have a common history. We found also some mentions in the *Tarikä Nägä[t* of MängYm (f. 45v-46r) which are found in the *History of Go••am* (ch. 16 p. 41-42)

<sup>40</sup> Tadesse Tamrat, 1994, p. 959.

<sup>41</sup> M-L. Derat for the chronicle of Zar’a Ya’qob, and M. Kropp for the 16<sup>th</sup> century’s chronicles. M.L. Derat, under publication, “Censure et réécriture de l’histoire du roi Zar’a Ya’eqob (1434-1468) : analyse des deux versions de la “ chronique ” d’un souverain éthiopien”, in *Mélanges Jean Boulègue*, F.X. Fauvelle et B. Hirsch (dir.), Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne. Kropp M., 2001, “Un cas de censure politique en Ethiopie au XVIIIème siècle: chapitre 8 et 9de la chronique de Zärca DYngY », *A.E.*, 16, p.257-277.

<sup>42</sup> The main models for this compilation are given by the Paris BN Ethiopien 143 and Oxford ms. Or. 88 of the Bodleian Library. (Kropp M., 1989, •Die äthiopischen Königschroniken in der Sammlung des Dä••azma• \* ayilu, Entstehung und handschriftliche Überlieferung des Werk”, *Heidelberg Orientalistische Studen*, 13) .

<sup>43</sup> Revisiting all the different analyzes produced before he shows the importance of the manuscript BN Abbadie 42 as a conservator of the original tradition, before the censorship applied by Susñynos. (M. Kropp, 2001).

<sup>44</sup> M. Kropp (1983-84, p. 49-72, 1989,2001)

<sup>45</sup> Starting from Zär'ä Yä'Yqob's Chronicle. (M. Kropp, 2001, p. 265)

<sup>46</sup> M. Kropp, 2001 p. 264.(His campaigns against the Fala[a are censured, just like the activity of a certain Malk'a bYdYq of Go••am)

<sup>47</sup>C. Conti Rossini (1907) uses the manuscript Oxford 29 (Bodleian Library), Paris BN Ethiopien 143 and Orient 38 (Frankfurt-Rüppel) for his edition but he do analyzed in details the structure of these texts. In 1907, J. Halévy had already published some extracts related to the wars of Zärçä DYngY against the Falaša taken from the Paris BN. Ethiopien 143. The manuscript Paris Abbadie 42 gives some corrections to this edition and has to be taken in account as the Paris Abbadie 52 and Paris Mondon Vidhaillet 27. (M.Kropp,1983-84, 2001).

<sup>48</sup> M. Kropp, 1988.; E. Pereira had published the third chapter of this "introduction" about Minas in 1887 on the base of the ms. Paris BN Ethiopien 143 which was unfortunately a good choice for M. Kropp. I Guidi complete it with the difference given by the ms. Oxford 29. (M.Kropp,1983-84, p. 52-53). (E. Pereira (F.M.), 1882 (Ge'ez)/1900 (trans.), *Chronica de Susneyos*, Lisbonne, , II., 2 vol.;M.Kropp, „Die Geschichte des Lebna Dengel, Claudius und Minas“, C.S.C.O., 1988.)

<sup>49</sup>This translation is based on the manuscript Oxford 29, but W. Conzelman gives also the differences of the manuscripts London BM 821 and Paris BN Ethiopien 143. W. Conzelman, 1895, *Chronique de Galäwdewôs*, Paris, 190 p.

<sup>50</sup> D. Toubkis, 2004, « "Je deviendrai roi sur tout le pays d'Ethiopie", Royauté et écriture de l'histoire dans l'Ethiopie chrétienne (XVIe-XVIIIe siècles) », Thèse d'Histoire, Paris-La Sorbonne, sous la direction du Pr Jean Boulègue, Ch. 1.

<sup>51</sup> The figure of Queen Säblä Wängel was revitalized by one of her descendant King Täklä Haymanot, *negus* of Go••am and Käffa who rebuilt the church in 1887 (1880 AM). It came to light once again after his grand-daughter, called also Säblä Wängel, who rebuilt it again in 1956. She was King Täklä \*aymanot's grand-daughter through his son \*äyly Täklä Haymanot and got married to LYdj Iyasu (r.1913-1916). Nevertheless when he was deposed, she got divorced. They had one daughter called Aläm bä%ay. There are oral traditions related to her, her ancestors, and her descendants.

<sup>52</sup> In the sixth group of the separate folios.

<sup>53</sup> It is interesting to note here that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many churches of Go••am changed the history of their foundation.The original founders were replaced by more prestigious one: Kings AbrYha and AcbY@a. For example, in the churches of Märmla Maryam, Getesemani or Däbrä Zäyt, people modified the history of their construction, to keep the names of those mythic kings of the Aksumite dynasty.

<sup>54</sup> The presence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century of one wäyzäro Säblä Wängel, descendant and homonym of LYbnä DYngY's wife, makes the confusion easy. If the fact that she came in this area did revive the figure of the first Queen Säblä Wängel, it also erased her, people mixing different local traditions between these two homonym ladies. Informants get easily confused in their interviews because they are not always sure about which Säblä Wängel they are talking. Sometimes, they make a distinction between them and call them Säblä Wängel "TYlYq" ("The Great") or "Qädamawit" ("The first") to speak about the Queen of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and Säblä Wängel "\*äyly", in remembrance of her father, or "Dagmawit" (The Second) and "TYnY" ("The Little) to speak about the late princess. They never mention another well-known Säblä Wängel in Ethiopian history, the wife of Yoännnes I (1662-1682), who seems to be missing from the local traditions.

<sup>55</sup>This tradition has been introduced in the first part of this paper. See n. 22.

<sup>56</sup>*Tarikä Nägä*[t of the church at folio 45v: ለእሙ፡ ዕሌኒ፡ ንግሥት፡ ዘይእት፡ ሰብለ፡ ወንግል፡።ዘሐነዕት፡ ቀድመ፡ በመንግሥተ፡ ንብለ፡ ድንግል፡በእሲሃ፡ ቤተ፡ ክርስቲያን፡ ሠናደተ፡ዘይብልዋ። መንግሥተ፡ ሰማያት፡

<sup>57</sup> *History of Go••am* of MängYto, folio 8r n° 266.

<sup>58</sup> The text describes the accession to the throne of LYbnä DYngY and goes directly to the 19<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of this King. (M.Kropp, 1988.)

<sup>59</sup> M. Kropp, 1988, p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> M.L. Derat and H. Penneç, 1997, "Les églises et monastères royaux (XVe, XVIe et XVIIe siècles : permanences et ruptures d'une stratégie royale", F. Katssuyoshi, K. Eisei,S. Masayoshi (ed.), *Ethiopia in broader perspective*, Kyoto, p. 17-34.)

<sup>61</sup> Tädbabä Maryam was built in 1542, Mäkanä Säma'Y in 1537 A.M. according to a *Tarikä Nägäst* of the church seen by Habtamu Mengiste and Anais Wion in one of their fieldwork report. See W. Conzelman, 1895, ch. XLII à XLV, and R. Basset, 1882, p. 109.

<sup>62</sup>E. Pereira, 1882, p. 27/48, M. Kropp, 1988, p. 54.

<sup>63</sup>Conti Rossini C., 1907, p. 7. / p. 5 : “ወእሜሃ፡መጠኑ፡ነገር፡መላሀቅተ፡ ሕዝብ። መሰብ፡ በጽሑ፡ገብ፡ ሀለወት፡ ንግሥት፡ ሰብለ፡ ወንግል፡ እሰመ፡ ውእቱ፡ ጊዜ፡ ኮነ፡ መካነ፡ ሀላዌሃ፡ በመንግሥተ፡ ሰማያት። »

<sup>64</sup>M. Kropp, 1988, p. 49 (geez) /48 (trad): ጎበ: ከተማሃ: ለንግሥት: ሰብለ:ወንግል: ፤ ፋራተ: እግዚአብሔር: በምድረ: ወገረ: ዘይትበሀል:ዐይባ።

<sup>65</sup> Ayba is located in the land of Wägära, north of Gondär, next to the region nowadays known under the name of Dämbya.

<sup>66</sup> C. Conti Rossini, 1907, p. 156 (transl.), p. 137 ( ge'ez).

<sup>67</sup> F. 266 of the *History of MängY[to]* and the folios 45v-46r of the *Tärikä Nägäst* of the Church.

<sup>68</sup> Mentewwab was the wife of Bäkäffa (1721-1730) .Her son Iyasu ruled the country with his mother from 1730 to 1755. He was then succeeded by his son 'Iyo'as (1755-1769) also seconded by his mother Mentewwab.

<sup>69</sup> I. Guidi, 1913, p. 7. (In « Annales regum Iyasu II et Iyo'as », dans *C.S.C.O.* 1913, p. 7)

<sup>70</sup> • ara `um is the name of \$ ሂታ ላሳዊ who is sometimes called Tarbinos. (in reference to oral traditions collected in May-June 2009). • ara `um is nowadays a place of East-Go••am, located on the road which links BY••äna and Däbrä Wärq at the intersection of the road which brings to Dima Giyorgis et Däbrä bemuna. • ara ህum is never mentioned before the end the 19th century. It is nevertheless frequently quoted in the work of Aläqa Täklä Iyasus.

<sup>71</sup> Aläqa Täklä Iyasus, *Zena*, p. 81, 148. The title of *balabat* attributes to him the quality of being the local chief of Žnnämay. It was an Amharic title given in modern times to traditional authorities in other ethnic groups to further the indirect rule process of the government in the contemporary times.

<sup>72</sup> Aläqa Täklä Iyasus, *Zena*, p. 148.

<sup>73</sup> Aläqa Täklä Iyasus, *Zena*, p. 71, 78, 148.

<sup>74</sup> Manuscript Oxford 29 of the Bodleian Library in Oxford.

<sup>75</sup> W. Conzelman, 1895, p. 122. p. 3-4( geez).

<sup>76</sup> M. Kropp, 1988, p. 16: « Gêdêwon und Yodit, die schwiegermutter des Königs, wurden gefangenommen, auch das ganze Heer des Königs. » It happens during the 31<sup>th</sup> year of reign of King LYbnä D'Yng'Y according to the chronicle. p. 17 : ወተደወወ: ጌዴዎን: ወየዲት: ሐማተ: ንጉሥ: ወኮሎሙ: ሠራዊተ: ንጉሥ፤ ወንዋይኒ: ጠፍአ: ዛልቦ: መስፍርተ።

<sup>77</sup> R.Basset, 1882, p. 16 (ge'ez) / 106 (transl.): ወተደወወ: ጌዴዎን: ወየዲት: ሐማተ: ንጉሥ: ወበዙኃን: ሠራዊተ: ንጉሥ፤ ምስሌሆሙ: ወንዋይኒ: ጠፍአ: ዛልቦ: ጎሉልቀ: ወበውእቱ: ዘመን: ተናፈቀ: ሐዘበ: ኢትዮጵያ: በእንተ: ፋሲካ: እምብዝኃ: ስደት።

<sup>78</sup> W. Leslau, 1991, *Comparative dictionary of Ge'ez*, Wiesbaden, p. 235.

<sup>79</sup> R.Basset, 1882, p. 106 n. 159; In his work (translated in English in 1987), Asma Giyorgis says “The Fälaša of SYmen also called (their leader) Gedewon, the equivalent of *ace*.” (p. 151). Like Gedewon is the title of the ruler of SYmen, Yodit is the equivalent name attributed to his wife. Thus her mother might have another name.

<sup>80</sup> Locality in Lasta, (see maps of the Ethiopian Map Agency n° 1338); M. Kropp, 1988, p. 22, R. Basset, 1882, p. 110, J. PERRUCHON J., 1894, « *Le règne de Galâwdêwôs* », *Revue Sémitique.*, II, p. 263.; R. Basset added in the note 136, that bälämt is a district of the Am%ara region located in the north of SYmen on the left side of Täkkäze River.

<sup>81</sup> W. Conzelman, 1895, p. x ; R. Basset, 1882, p. 110. n. 174: « Gälawdewos était allié par sa mère aux Agaws du Lasta ».

<sup>82</sup> R.S. Whiteway, 1902, *The Portuguese expedition to Abyssinia in 1541-1543 as narrated by Miguel Castanhoso with some contemporary letters, the short account of J. Bermudez*, London, p. 177.

<sup>83</sup> W. Conzelman, 1895, p. 127.

<sup>84</sup> M. Kropp, 1988, p. 24.

<sup>85</sup> This idea derivates from the text produced in the *KYbrä Näga[ft]*.

<sup>86</sup> M. Kropp, 1988, p. 19.

<sup>87</sup> Whiteway R. S.,1902, p. 14., Martin Correa, attests that she was imprisoned there for almost four years; SANCEAU E., 1944, *The land of Prester John*, London, New York, p. 123 « *Sabla Wangel, with her mother, two fair daughters and a younger son had found a certain refuge from their foes* » , p. 124: « *This Säblä Wängel and her children suffered no hardship on their island in the air, which Castanhoso observes « appeared made by the hand of god expressly to save this lady & her people from captivity, & that a monastery of friars established up there should not be destroyed.* »

<sup>88</sup> D. Toubkis, 2004, ch. VII.

<sup>89</sup> D. Toubkis, 2004, ch. VII. p. 686; Tadesse Tamrat, 1972, p. 73, 132,190-205.

<sup>90</sup> For example, the *Go••am nägâa* was Anbäsa Dawit during the reign of Bä'Ydä Maryam, and Zärcä Maryam then Täklä b'Yon during LYbnä D'Yng'Y's reign; D. Toubkis, 2004, ch. VII, p. 689-695; Tadesse Tamrat 1972, p.202; *Les Chroniques de Zar'a Yâ'eqôb et de Ba'eda Märyâm, rois d'Ethiopie de 1434 à 1478*, Paris, p. 160.

<sup>91</sup> D. Toubkis, 2004, p. 669-730 analyze the diversity of titles worn by the rulers of Go••am (*Go••am nägâa*, *sYyum* or *šum*) and the study of the different types of lands they had (*fimät*, *gult*, *rYst*). He shows that during the concerned period, this region was not a country politically unified.

- <sup>92</sup> D. Toubkis, 2004, p. 698-700.
- <sup>93</sup> D. Toubkis, 2004, ch. VII; A. Wion, 2003, « *Aux confins le feu, au centre le paradis* », *Qoma Fasilädäs, un monastère royal dans l’Ethiopie du 17<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Thèse doctorat d’Histoire, Paris I, under the supervision of J. Boulègue, p. 169-177.
- <sup>94</sup> J. Perruchon, 1893, p. 158-160.
- <sup>95</sup> C.F. Beckingham and G.W.B. Huntingford, *The prester John of the Indies*, 1961, p. 425-427. This is a translation of the narrative of Francisco Alvarez who stayed in the Christian Kingdom from 1520 to 1526.
- <sup>96</sup> Žnnäbse and Žnnässe are two districts of East-Go••am.
- <sup>97</sup> Žleni’s original building is said to have been sacked by Ahmed Grañ a few years after her death and may also have suffered earthquake damage, but the site was obviously regarded as important and rebuilding took place at least twice during the next 100 years. (P.B. Henze, *Layers of time*, London, 2000, p. 74-76)
- <sup>98</sup> Tadesse Tamrat, 1972, p. 203. ; C.F. Beckingham and G.W.B. Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia*, p. 56.
- <sup>99</sup> I. Guidi, 1913, p. 16.
- <sup>100</sup> In MängYto and in Qoga, they are said to come from Däbrä bemuna. (*Tarikä Nägäft* of MängYto f. 45v, 46r, and *Mäshäfä ZYkre wa Päwli* of Qoga f. 8v) This church is situated in the same district of •Žnnämäy, not so far from Dima Giyorgis. They have in their possession a book called *Mäshäfä ZYkre wa Päwli*, and they also have oral traditions related to Queen Säblä Wängel. Unfortunately I couldn’t have access to the manuscript and I only did some interviews. We can find different manuscript of this text in the East-Go••am churches of Däbrä Wärq, Qoga, Goncha Mäd+ane ‘Aläm (close to Märmlä Maryam) and in Abba Asrat Gädäm. This book called *Mäshäfä Mestir* is known in Go••am under the name *Mäshäfä ZYkre wa Päwli*.
- <sup>101</sup> R. Cowley, 1989, p. 396-397.
- <sup>102</sup> M. Kropp, 1988, p. 52 / 52; E. Pereira, 1900, p. 766 ; Ms London BM 821, f. 151 a. ; A certain äbba ZYkre with other priests were send to inform Säblä Wängel of her son’s death.
- <sup>103</sup> The references are given in the note 32 p. 392 of R. Cowley, 1989. This tradition is also found in the *Mäshäfä Mestir*. (ex.: f. 8v of the Qoga’s manuscript)
- <sup>104</sup> This quarrel has already been presented before. (See the *Tarikä Nägäft* of MängYto and n.23 )
- <sup>105</sup> H. Pennec and M-L Derat, 1997, p. 22.
- <sup>106</sup> D. Toubkis, 2004, p. 707-713.
- <sup>107</sup> *Tarikä Nägäft* of MängYto f. 45v, 46r, and *Mäshäfä ZYkre wa Päwli* of Qoga f. 8v.
- <sup>108</sup> F.M.E. Pereira, 1900, ch. 8, p. 13.
- <sup>109</sup> See the place of Däbrä bemuna in the construction of Qomä Fasilädäs in BägemdYf. (A. Wion, 2003, p. 210, 239-246)
- <sup>110</sup> E. Pereira, 1882, p. 27/48 (in *Chronica de Susneyos*, Lisbonne, 1882-1900, II., 2 ) M. Kropp, 1988, p. 54/53.
- <sup>111</sup> M. Kropp, 1988, p. 54 : “Danach brach der König von MängYtä-Sämayat, dem Orte, wo er die Herrschaft angetreten, auf; denn damals befand man sich im Lande Go••am. Auch seine Mutter, die Königin, zog mit ihnen, denn sie trennte sich nicht von ihm, um der Rechtsordnung des Reiches Stärke zu verleihen, und alle Welt folgte ihm. Lediglich Hämälmal blieb zurück, um gegen Nur zu kämpfen in seiner Eigenschaft als *dä••azma•* vom (Flusse) Äbawi bis zur Grenze soweit seine Macht reichte. Auch eine der Schwestern (des Königs) blieb zurück, ämätä Giyorgis die in Märmlä Maryam die Regenzeit verbrachte..”
- <sup>112</sup> M. Kropp, 1988, p. 54 and E. Pereira p. 27/48.
- <sup>113</sup> D. Toubkis, 2004, p. 702.
- <sup>114</sup> W. Leslau, 1991, the verb form *kwn* is derivate in *mākanä* which means in the place of (p. 299); and *mängYt* means kingdom, kingship, government, reign, majesty, realm, royalty or dominion (p. 393).
- <sup>115</sup> C. Conti Rossini, 1907, p.7-8. (transl.) p. 5-6 (ge’ez)
- <sup>116</sup> It has been translated « résidence » by C. Conti Rossini (1907, p. 7).
- <sup>117</sup> R. Basset, 1882, p. 116.
- <sup>118</sup> C. Conti Rossini, 1907, p. 13 (tranl) /p. 10: “ለነ፡ዘውደ፡ጌራ፡መንግሥት፡።”
- <sup>119</sup> On the 10th of January 1579, he went in Aksum to achieve the Sacre. (D. Toubkis, 2004, p. 421-433.)
- <sup>120</sup> C. Conti Rossini, 1907, p.7-16, R. Basset, 1882, p. 117.
- <sup>121</sup> M. Kropp, 1988, p. 51.
- <sup>122</sup> M. Kropp, 1988, p. 52-53, E. Pereira, 1888, 27/48.
- <sup>123</sup> It appears that the lords of Go••am disturbed every succession of the second part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. They managed some different “dynastic” alliance with some princesses, daughters and grand-daughters of Säblä Wängel or they got unite with other province’s rulers to weaken the “central” power. Hamälmal, the son of Romäna Wärq, LYbnä DYngY’s sister, was opposed to Zärcä DYngY. His *kätäma* was located in Däbrä Wärq, not so far from MängYto. (C. Conti Rossini, 1907, p. 6-14°. Romäna Wärq is also known in the oral traditions of Žnnämäy and of East-Go••am as the ancestor of many *gult* holders, especially in the area of Lamtchan.
- <sup>124</sup> D. Toubkis, 2004, p. 702.
- <sup>125</sup> See the last four folios of the *Nägärä Maryam* of MängYto.

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<sup>126</sup> The clergy of this church is one of the representatives of the position of Go••am during the successive councils of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>127</sup> Abraham Adugna, a student in theology, analyzed this movement and dated its foundation as soon as the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. He also argued that it had been organized and theorized under the influence of Queen Säblä Wängel. But his paper is more based on theology and he didn't make a historical critic of the sources that he studied. (in 2007, "Reconsidering the history and teaching of qebat school of thought based on Mäc%äfä ZYkre wä Pawlī", Paper of master of arts in linguistics, under the supervision of Dr. Amsalu Aklilu, University of Addis n Ababa)

<sup>128</sup> Wion Anais, 2004, "Why Did King Fasilädäs Kill His Brother? Sharing Power in the Royal Family in Mid-Seventeenth Century Ethiopia", *Journal of Early Modern History*, v. 8, 3-4, p. 270-293.

#### Bibliographic Abbreviations

C.S.C.O. : Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium- Scriptores Aethiopici

A.E.: Annales d'Ethiopie

R.S.: Revue Sémitique

R.R.A.L.: Rendiconti della.Reale.Accademie dei.Lincei, Scriptores Aethiopici, seriales altera