The name of this metropolitan is listed in five texts in Ethiopian literature that comprise the “Cycle of the Holy Monks in Conflict Against the King.” These monks were Basalota Mika’el, abbot of Dabra Gol in Amhara; Fileppos, abbot of Dabra Asbo (subsequently known as Dabra Libanos) in Shewa; Anorewos, founder of Dabra Segaga in Shewa; Aron, abbot of Dabra Daret in Bagemdir; and Samu’el, founder of Dabra Wagag in the southeast of Shewa. Despite the differences and anachronisms, a comparison of the five texts furnishes a sketch of the principal events of Ya’qob’s episcopate.

Having arrived in Ethiopia toward the end of the long reign of ‘Amda Seyon, Ya’qob was expelled and sent back to Egypt soon after the enthronement of Sayfa Ar’ad. According to the Life of Abbot Fileppos, Yaqob’s expulsion occurred between the accession of the king (1344) and Fileppos’ own expulsion (1346); thus, it may be deduced that Ya’qob was sent back to Egypt around 1345. Further, this same text states that upon his return to Egypt, “Ya’qob found the cinders still warm on the hearth in the home he had left seven years before.” Therefore, he must have arrived in Ethiopia around 1338.

Upon his arrival, Ya’qob met Ewostatewos, founder of one of the great monastic orders of Ethiopia, but he maintained close relations with the monks of another order, that of Abuna Takla Haymanot, whom he supported in their conflict with the monarchy.

After his accession to the throne, Sayfa Ar’ad promised to have no more than one wife, but some time later, following the example of his predecessors, he married three. Ya’qob supported the monks in their revolt against this concubinage, whereupon the negus simply hastened to exile the most aggressive monks to the south of the kingdom and dispatched Ya’qob to Egypt.
During his metropolitanate Yaqob divided the territory of central Ethiopia into twelve religious districts, and over each district he appointed an abbot of a monastery, almost in imitation of the twelve apostles of Christ. Thereby, the work of this metropolitan had considerable impact on the life of the church in Ethiopia, despite the brevity of his tenure.

His successor to the See of Ethiopia was Abuna Salama II.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


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