



### **THE SECRET BOOK OF AKSUM**

*The Secret Book of Aksum* is an eclectic collection of ancient documents revealing a “true history” of the founding of the Ethiopian Church, Saint Frumentius of Tyre, and the reign of King Ousanas. Of particular note among these documents are the “Testament of the Kesate Birhan” and the “True Testament of King Ezana”, purportedly written in the hand of Frumentius himself.

#### **TESTAMENT OF THE KESATE BIRHAN** (Bringer of Light, i.e. Saint Frumentius)

In youth I walked often on the pilgrimages of my uncle, the great and holy Meropius of Tyre. In my tenth year we walked from the harbors of our homeland to the black peaks of Pannonia. We brought the word and the truth of Christ. Meropius sought to break open the shadows of the heathen beliefs which still clutched those murky hills...

... We came to stand before the flint-shaded monolith which we had been told the people venerated. It was octagonal in shape, some sixteen feet in height and about a foot and a half thick. Its surface gleamed with a darkened light. Characters our guide did not know and which even my uncle's learned eyes could not decipher spiraled in a broken and yet unbroken line around the shaft to its very top. It seemed to my young eyes that the whole was merely the base of some long-vanished column.

... Meropius brought workers to the monolith. They labored to break it or mar its surface. But despite the mightiest of holy labors, their hammers did little more than flake off small bits of stone. The surface seemed thickly dinted by their efforts, and yet its sepulchral gleam seemed somehow undiminished. One night, after the workers had ceased their labors and the stars gleamed above, I entertained a thought that my faith might succeed where their labors had failed: I took the small vial of blessed water my father had entrusted to me. Leaving the camp I approached the monolith, gave lengthy prayer unto our Holy Father, and then cast His water upon it.

A dark ecstasy followed. And in that ecstasy I saw the master of that place: A huge, monstrous, toad-like thing which squatted atop the monolith...

... I was found feverish and ill at the foot of the monolith the next morning. My uncle took me and retreated back to the capital and later that year we returned to Tyre.

In my sixteenth year, my brother Edesius and I traveled with my uncle once more, this time to bear the word of Christ unto the lands of Axum.

We were betrayed in the port of Batsi... during the attack, my uncle and all of the ship's crew were killed. Only my brother and I were left alive, valued for our youth.

...And I spoke unto King Ousanas and I told him of the many learned gifts I had and I told him how they could be used. And in his wisdom he saw the value of these gifts and all that my learning could bring unto him and his people. And so I pled for him to take back from his Twin King my brother. And King Ousanas went unto King Wazeba and paid for my brother so that we could both serve him together.

...When I saw Wazeba's Obelisk, I saw in it the same contours – however different, however refined by human craft into something less terrible than the alien monstrosity of Pannonia...

...Know now and for all time that the blade which slew Wazeba was that held righteously in the hand of Edesius. And no sin shall pass upon him for this, for in this deed he rid the world of an evil spawned from beyond holy countenance.

### **TRUE TESTAMENT OF KING EZANA**

(excerpts)

The *True Testament of King Ezana* documents a secret history of his reign.

His widowed mother prevailed upon Frumentius and Edesius to remain and instruct King Ezana in learned ways. Frumentius, in particular, “taught me the truth of Christ and his holy ways” and began spreading Christianity throughout the Kingdom of Axum.

In the sixth year of Ezana's reign, the “Cult of Wazeba” attempted to assassinate him. In the aftermath, Wazeba's Obelisk is pulled down and the cult is driven underground. Edesius returns to Tyre, but Frumentius journeys to Alexandria where he petitions for Athanasius, the Patriarch of Alexandria, to send Christian missionaries to Axum to help wipe out the cult. Athanasius consecrates Frumentius as a bishop and sends him back as the church's envoy.

Frumentius returns to Axum and erects his Episcopal see. He baptizes King Ezana and comes to be known as *Kesate Birhan* (Revealer of Light) and *Abba Salama* (Father of Peace). The cult's presence in Axum is completely suppressed.

Twenty years later, however, the remnants of the Cult of Wazeba have taken hold in the Kingdom of Kush. King Ezana wages war on Kush, conquering the kingdom in order to suppress the cult once more. In the aftermath of the campaign, the Ezana Stone is erected. Of this, Frumentius writes:

“The blasphemous statue taken from the inner chambers of that place was inverted and half of it pared back until it was a tablet upon which could be written as much of the Truth as could be safely known. And that other half beneath our Stone was buried in ground consecrated so that Truth might be above it and God's grasp might be all about it.”