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PEDRO PÁEZ'S  
*HISTORY OF ETHIOPIA*, 1622

VOLUME I

Edited by

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Which deals with the animals, both domestic and wild, that are found  
in Ethiopia

I have travelled through many and varied lands of Christians, heathens, Moors and Turks and in some of them I have stayed for a long time. I have passed through many thick woods and long deserts, in which there were many and varied animals. But nowhere have I seen or heard say that there are so many animals or such different kinds of them as they say there are in Ethiopia and that I in part have seen, because first of all there are all the races of domestic animals that there are in Europe, such as very good horses in the kingdom of Tigrê and even better ones that come from the kingdom of Dequin, which belongs to the Moors called *Balôus*, opposite Çuaquên, but they do not last long in this land, because they develop sores on their feet, from which they die. The other horses in the empire are commonly small but strong and run fast. There are many mules and they are good for riding, although they are ordinarily smaller than those of Europe. The emperor told me that two mules in the kingdom of Gojâm gave birth and then died with their foals; but reliable people have told me that a mule gave birth in the kingdom of Tigrê a short while ago and that until ...<sup>1</sup> the dam and the foal. They never shoe either mules or horses, and so they often go lame. There are many camels, domestic donkeys and wild donkeys. But the *chatins*<sup>2</sup> and those who are going to war usually only carry loads on oxen. There is a great multitude of cows, and in some parts of the kingdom of Tigrê, such as the provinces of Amacên, Bur and others, they give birth more often than those in Europe, because they enjoy {[variety of winters in the Red Sea and kingdom of Tigrê]}<sup>3</sup> two winters, when they find long grass that is full of flavour. Because when in the region of the Red Sea it is winter, which begins there at the end of October and lasts until February {or} <and> March, here inland it is summer; and when here it is winter, which begins at the {[f. 98]} end of May and lasts until October, there it is summer. And it is a marvellous thing that certain mountains are always the limits of winter and summer. So they always take the cattle to the side where it is winter, because they find plenty of grass, and even though it rains a lot, it is not cold. They have some very large oxen that they call *guêch*,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A blank space has been left at this point in both manuscripts.

<sup>2</sup> Traders. *Chatim* was an Indo-Portuguese term for a merchant from Coromandel (Dalgado, *Glossário Luso-Asiático*, pp. 265–7), which only later acquired its pejorative meaning of ‘trafficker’. See also Yule and Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, s.v. *chetty*.

<sup>3</sup> A marginal note written in a different hand in ARSI, MS Goa 42. The handwriting is similar to that used in the whole of bk II.

<sup>4</sup> Amharic *goś*, buffalo, here presumably a domesticated form.

and they raise them from the time they are very small on the milk of two cows. They do not plough with them: ordinarily they are only used for the lords to eat. Their horns are so long and thick that people use them for carrying honey wine when going to war or making long journeys. There are not many goats and sheep, and their meat is not good, but in some areas the rams are good, and some have four large horns; as for small horns, <[f. 94v/84v]> I once saw an ox with eleven, two like a goat's and the others all around, the length and thickness of a little finger or a little more, which they exhibited as a {very} extraordinary thing. Some rams have a tail a span or more in length, and almost as much across. Others, even though they are very tall, have tails that almost reach the ground and are a span or more in thickness and, as they are very heavy, they walk slowly; these are commonly white. There are many dogs, come very strong, but those they use for hunting are not as good as the greyhounds of Spain; most are like podengos.<sup>1</sup> There are also wild dogs, and I saw one once that had been captured young, and they are hardly any different from domestic dogs, except in their muzzle which is much longer, and they call them *taculá*,<sup>2</sup> and say that they are found in very thick forests. And they say that, when they hunt, some hide in the places where the prey ordinarily passes, and the others search for it until they raise it and then pursue it, trying to drive it to where the others are, and when these leap out it rarely escapes from them. And they also attack people. There are also many fine cats.

There are many more differences among wild animals than in Europe. Some sons of Portuguese have told me that in the kingdom of Gojâm, in a land called Naninâ, when they were going hunting, they saw in a valley a fine horse with a very long mane and a tail that reached the ground, and many animals, like wild goats, gazelles and *merus*,<sup>3</sup> accompanying it. On seeing them, it fled at high speed into some very dense woods, and all those animals followed it. And even though they could not make out whether it had a horn on its forehead or not, they thought it could only be a unicorn. There are other animals which, according to what I have been told about them, seem to be rhinoceroses or *abadas*,<sup>4</sup> because they say they have a body as fat as or fatter {{f. 98v}} than a cow, very small eyes and a skin so hard that it would be difficult for a spear to pass through it. I just wonder whether they are *abadas*, because they have two horns, one on the nose and one on the forehead, while I do not remember whether the *abada* that I saw in Madrid in 1587 had more than one, sawn off.<sup>5</sup> The ones here have two, and a short time ago they brought some to Emperor Seltân Çaguêd, still attached to the skin, which he showed me and he gave me one of them. The one on the forehead was black and thick at the root; a little higher up it was nearly three fingerbreadths wide and less than one thick, and about three spans long, and its tip was not sharp. It

<sup>1</sup> An ancient Portuguese breed of dog used for hunting rabbits.

<sup>2</sup> Amharic *takwelâ*, African wild dog (*Lycyaon pictus*).

<sup>3</sup> From the Konkani (Goan) word *merum*, deer. Deer are not found in sub-Saharan Africa, so the writer may be referring to some kind of antelope.

<sup>4</sup> Term adopted in Portuguese from the Malay *badaq*, rhinoceros.

<sup>5</sup> Both African species of rhinoceros (the black rhino, *Diceros bicornis*, Amharic *aurâris*, formerly widespread in Ethiopia, and the white rhino, *Ceratotherium simum*, not historically found in Ethiopia) have two horns, the Indian species, *Rhinoceros unicornis*, only one. An Indian rhino was shipped to Lisbon in 1579 and then transferred with Philip II's court to Madrid in 1583, where Páez saw it four years later. See Rookmaaker, *Rhinoceros in Captivity*, pp. 80 and 91.

