

# TRADITIONAL ETHIOPIAN *TERGWAME* ON 1 ENOCH: A GE'EZ COMMENTARY ON THE ANIMAL APOCALYPSE

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Western commentary on 1 Enoch is almost as old as the arrival in Europe of its first Ge'ez manuscripts. The pioneering works of Dillmann and Charles relied on these few manuscripts as well as the scattered fragments of 1 Enoch in Latin and Greek. With the publication of the recently discovered Qumran Aramaic and Chester Beatty Greek fragments, various scholars have continued to shed more light on the difficult passages of 1 Enoch.

However, Ethiopian sources for the study of 1 Enoch still remain largely untapped. Indeed, most studies have been content to resort to the Ge'ez text solely to reconstruct from it the Aramaic original.<sup>1</sup> The existence of an extensive Ethiopian commentary tradition and its potential for elucidating 1 Enoch has, for the most part, been sadly overlooked.<sup>2</sup>

The *Andemta*<sup>3</sup> commentary, which is the oral commentary tradition taught in major Ethiopian exegesis schools, took its current

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- 1 The exception to this general bias is the study of 1 Enoch references among other Ge'ez texts in Nickelsburg (2001). [A Commentary on 1 Enoch.](#)
  - 2 The only serious study making use of such commentary for elucidating the 1 Enoch text is Daniel Assefa's (2007) [L'Apocalypse des Animaux \(I Hen 85-90 - Une Propagande Militaire?\)](#).
  - 3 The term *Andemta* stems from the Amharic for "one explanation is ... while the other is ..." An in-depth study of this Ethiopian commentary

shape around the eighteenth century. This exegetical tradition employs various biblical, patristic and local sources to give verse by verse commentary of the Ge'ez text in the vernacular Amharic. Even though western scholars have long known the existence of *Andemta* commentary manuscripts on 1 Enoch, this commentary tradition has yet to be published and adequately studied.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, earlier traditional Ethiopian commentaries on 1 Enoch have been attested as far back as the fifteenth century. At the present stage of knowledge, it is difficult to assess the full extent of these early Ge'ez commentaries (*Tergwame*<sup>5</sup>). In his pioneering synopsis of Ethiopian biblical exegesis, Roger Cowley listed three *Tergwame* manuscripts on 1 Enoch then known to exist.<sup>6</sup> We can now add to the list at least two more *Tergwame* texts.<sup>7</sup> Even with these few manuscripts, we appear to possess early Ge'ez *Tergwame* commentary

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tradition, with sample texts and translations can be found in Roger Cowley's Traditional Ethiopian Exegesis of the Apocalypse of John. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. (1983).

- 4 The earliest *Andemta* manuscript for 1 Enoch dates from the 1840s (Bibliothèque Nationale, D'Abbadie 161). Other known manuscripts are British Library, Or. 13683E; Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cerulli Etiopici 110; and Hill Monastic and Manuscript Library EML nos. 1200, 1202, 1206, 1276 & 1694. The *Andemta* commentary on Enoch has recently been published by the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church.
- 5 The term *Tergwame* stems from the Ge'ez for "interpretation" and is similar in meaning to other Semitic cognates, such as the Hebrew *Targum*.
- 6 Roger Cowley. Ethiopian Biblical Interpretation. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (1988). p. 436. The manuscripts are - i. Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms Eth 107 (Zotenberg 160) ff. 36-40, with commentary on the Book of the Luminaries (1 Enoch: 72-82), ii. British Library, Or. 743 ff. 43-46, 81-84, 209-216 (published in this article), and iii. GundaGundi (Mordini) 172, which has yet to be properly identified and studied.
- 7 iv. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Comboniani Etiopici 280 ff. 1-19, with commentary on the Book of the Luminaries (1 Enoch: 72-82) and the Apocalypse of Weeks (1 Enoch: 93 & 91).

for all five books of 1 Enoch<sup>8</sup>—lending support to the possibility that an extensive *Tergwame* commentary on Enoch might have once existed.

This article presents a Ge'ez *Tergwame* text on 1 Enoch as found in a seventeenth century manuscript.<sup>9</sup> This manuscript contains fragments of four *Tergwame* commentaries. The first commentary text deals with the Animal Apocalypse (1 Enoch: 85-90),<sup>10</sup> whereas the second fragment comments on scattered references to the "Righteous and the Wicked" in the Book of Watchers (1 Enoch: 1-36)<sup>11</sup>. The third text is a commentary on the Book of Parables (1 Enoch: 37-71),<sup>12</sup> and the last text expounds the "Secrets" found scattered in 1 Enoch.<sup>13</sup> Only the first *Tergwame* text on the Animal Apocalypse will be presented in this article.<sup>14</sup>

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8 The only glaring lacuna being commentary on most parts of the Epistle of Enoch (especially 1 Enoch: 94-107).

9 British Library. Or. 743, which is described in William Wright *A Catalogue of Ethiopic Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired Since the Year 1847* (1877), pp. 209-210.

10 Or. 743 ff. 43-46. 1 Enoch: 85-90 is covered in the commentary.

11 Or. 743 ff. 81-83. 1 Enoch: 1, 10 & 11 is covered in the commentary.

12 Or. 743 ff. 83-84. 1 Enoch: 39, 42, 45, 46, 48, 52, 53 is covered in the commentary.

13 Or. 743 ff. 209-216. 1 Enoch: 3, 17, 41, 60, 91 & 93 is covered in the commentary.

14 The other three commentaries in this manuscript, as well as three more *Tergwame* commentary texts in Ms Eth 107 and Comboniani Etiopici 280 are being prepared for publication.

Text 1  
(ራእዮ ትንቢት ዘሄናክ)



(43v) ራእዮ ትንቢት ዘሄናክ ዘይነግር እምኣዳም እስከ ሐሳዌ መሲሕ። መቅድመ ኩሉ ይቤ ላህም ወዕኦ እምድር<sup>15</sup> ዘውእቱ ኣዳም ወሰመዮ ካዕበ ሦር ጸዓዳ። ወለሑዋንኒ ሰመያ ጣዕዋ ኣንስትያዊት። ወለቃየን ሰመዮ ጣዕዋ ጸሊም። ወለአቤል ሰመዮ ጣዕዋ ቀይሕ። ወለሑዋንሰ ካዕበ ሰመያ እጉልት። ወለደቁቁ ለኣዳም ጀሰመዮሙ ኣልህምት ፀዓድው ወእጉላት ጸሊማን። ወለሴት ወለሄናክ ወለቃይናን ወለመላልኤል ወለያሬድ ሰመዮሙ ኣልህምት ጸዓድው። ወለኣዛዝኤል ሰመዮ ኮከብ<sup>16</sup>። ወጀጅእለ ወረዱ ምስሌሁ ሰመዮሙ ከዋክብት። ወለረዓይት እለ ወረዱ መላእክት ሰመዮሙ ናግያት ወአግማል ወአእዱግ። ወለፀሊቃነ መላእክት ለሚካኤል ወለገብርኤል (44r) ወለሱርያል ዘይሰመይ ኣስርዮልዮል። ወሥልሰ ይሰመይ ኡራኤል። ወለሩፋኤል ፀሰብእ ጸዓድው። ወለጅእለ ወዕኩ ምስሌሆሙ ለራጉኤል ወለሳቀኤል ወለፋጉኤል

15 Enoch 85:3ff "ወአውሥኣ ሄናክ ወይቤ ለወልዱ ማቱሳላ ለከ እብለከ ወልድዮ ሰማዕ ነገርዮ ወአዕንን እነነከ ለርእዮ ሕልሙ ኣቡኩ። እንበለ እንሥኣ ለእምከ እድና ርኢኩ በራእዮ ምስካቢዮ ወናሁ ላህም ወዕኦ እምድር ወኮነ ዝኩ ላህም ፀዓዳ። ወእምድኅሬሁ ወዕኦት ጣዕዋ ኣንስትያዊት ኣሐቲ። ወምስሌሁ ወዕኦ ካልእ ጣዕዋ ወኣሐዱ ኣምኔሆሙ ኮነ ጸሊም ወኣሐዱ ቀይሕ ..."

16 Enoch 86:1ff "ወካዕበ ርኢኩ በራእይ ወነጸርከዎ ለሰማይ ወርኢኩ ወነዋ ርኢኩ ከዋክብተ ብዙኃነ ወረዱ ወተገድፉ እምሰማይ በጎን ዝኩ ኮከብ ቀዳማዊ። ወማእከለ እልኩ ጣዕዋ ኣልህምተ ኮነ። ወምስሌሆሙ ይትረዐዩ ማእከሎሙ ወነጸርከዎሙ ወርኢኩ ወነዋ ከሎሙ ኣውዕኡ ኃፍረታቲሆሙ ከመ ኣፍራስ ወኣሐዙ ይእርጉ ዲበ እጉልተ ኣልህምት ወፀንሳ ከሎሙ ወወለዳ ነገያት ወአግማለ ወአእዱግ ..."

ሰመዮሙ ጸዓድው። ወለሰማይ ሰመዮ ማኅፈድ ነዊኅ። ወለኖኅ ሰመዮ<sup>17</sup>  
 ላህም ጸዓዳ። ወለታቦተ ኖኅ ሰመዮ መስቀለ ወመስቀረ። ወለሰማይ ካዕብ<sup>18</sup>  
 ሰመዮ ናሕስ ልዑላ። ወለምድር ሰመዮ ዐጸድ ዐቢይ። ለሴም ሰመዮ ላህም  
 ጸዓዳ። ወለያፌት ቀይሕ። ወለካም ሰመዮ ጸሊም። ወለኩሉ ኦሕዛብ  
 እምድኅረ ሴም እስከ ታራ ሰመዮሙ አራዊት ወአዕዋፍ። ወለነገሥተ ፋርስ  
 ሰመዮሙ አናብስት ወአንስርት። ወለነገሥተ ጽርእ ሰመዮሙ አናብርት።  
 ወለግብጻውያን<sup>19</sup> ሰመዮሙ አዝእብት። ወለኤሎፍሊ ሰመዮሙ አክልብት።  
 ወለደቂቀ ዔሳው ሰመዮሙ አሕርወ ገዳም። ወለይስማዔላውያን ሰመዮሙ  
 አሕርወ ገዳም። ወለአማሊቅ ቁናጸል ወግሒያት ሰመዮሙ። ወለነገሥ  
 (44v)ተ ሮም ሰመዮሙ ዓውስት ወፎቃንስ ወቋዓት። ወለታራ ሰመዮ አድገ  
 ገዳም። ወለአቡነ አብርሃም ሰመዮ ላህም ጸዓዳ። ወለደቂቀ ኪጡራ ሰመዮሙ  
 አእዱገ ገዳም። ወለይስማዔክ ሰመዮ አድገ ገዳም። ወለይስቀት ሰመዮ ላህም  
 ጸዓዳ። ወለዔሳው ሰመዮ ሐረውያ ጸሊም። ወለያዕቆብ ሰመዮ በግዕ ጸዓዳ።  
 ወለደቂቀ ፲ወ፪ አባግዕ። ወለሙሴ ሰመዮ በግዕ። ወለኦርን ሰመዮ በግዕ።  
 ወለሰማይ ሰመዮ ጽርኅ ልዑል። ወለባሕረ ኤርትራ<sup>20</sup> ሰመዮ ዐይገ ማይ።  
 ወለደብረ ሲና ሰመዮ ኩኩሐ። ወለደብተራ ሰመዮ ቤት። ወለዮርዳኖስ ሰመዮ  
 ፈለግ። ወለመሳፍንት ሰመዮሙ አባግዕ። ወለኢየሩሳሌም ሰመዮ ምድር  
 ኅዋዝ። ወለሳሙኤል ሰመዮ በግዕ። ወለሳኦል ሰመዮ ሐርጌ ቀይሕ።  
 ወለዳዊት ሰመዮ ሐርጌ ደጋራዊ። ወለሰሎሞን ሰመዮ በግዕ ንኡስ ወሐርጌ።  
 ወለመቅደስ ሰመዮ ማኅፈድ ነዊኅ። ወለነገሥተ እስራኤል ሰመዮሙ አባግዕ  
 ስትቃን። ወለነ (45r)ብያት ሰመዮሙ አባግዕ። ፩ዘኢተቀትለ እምኔሆሙ  
 ኤልያስ ውእቱ። ወጸውዐ ፸ ኖላውያን ዘይቤ እሉ እሙንቱ እለ አርአዮ  
 ለሕዝቅኤል። ወይቤሎ ርኢ ፸ረበናት እስራኤል እለ ይስግዱ ለጣግት በቤተ  
 እግዚአብሔር እሉ እለ ሤመ እግዚአብሔር እምድኅረ ተዔወወት ኢየሩሳሌም  
 ቀዳሚ ጊዜ ወዘጸሐፈ አስማቲሆሙ ለኖሎት ወኩሉ ሐጉሎሙ። ወዐርገ  
 ኅብ ሚካኤል ውእቱ ፩እም፯ ጸዓድው ወእለ ረዓደ ኖሎተ ፲ወ፪ ሰዓት  
 ዝውእቱ ፲ወ፪ ሰባዔ እሙንግሥተ ኢዮአቃመ እስከ ግብአተ ዔዋ ይከውን  
 ፹ወ፬ ዓመ ወ፫እምአባግዕ እለ ቦኡ ወጎንጹ ቤተ እለ እሙንቱ ዘሩባቤል

17 Enoch 89:1ff "ወአሐዱ እምእልኩ አርባዕቱ ሐረ ኅብ እልኩ አልህምት ፀዐዳ ወመሀሮ ምስጢረ እንዘ ኢይርዐድ ውእቱ ላሕም። ተወልደ ወኮነ ሱብአ ወጸረቦ ሎቱ መስቀረ ዐቢዮ ወነበረ ዲቤሁ ወሠለስቱ አልህምት ነበሩ ምስሌሁ ውስተ ይእቲ መስቀር ወተካድኑ ላዕሌሆሙ ..."

18 ms ከዕብ

19 ms ወለግብጻውያን

20 ms ኤርተራ

ወናሐምያል ወዮሴዕ ወልደ ዮሴድቅ ካህን ዐቢይ እስከ ዘመን ከመዝ ይሬዕዩ ቫወጂ ኖላውያን እሉ እሙንቱ ዘይቤ ነገሥተ ጽራእ ዘመደ እስክንድር እለ ነግሡ ላዕለ እስራኤል። ወርኢኩ እስከ ዘመን እስከ ይ (45v)ርዕዩ ጳወቺ ኖላውያን<sup>21</sup>። ወፈጸሙ በበጊዜሆሙ ፻ወ፰ ጊዜያት ዘይቤ ነገሥተ ሮም እሙንቱ። ወመሐስእ እለ ተወልዱ እምአባግዕ እሉ እሙንቱ ሕዝበ እስራኤል። እምኔሆሙ ተወልደ እግዚእን በመንግሥተ ሮም ወቋዓትኒ እለ ሰረሩ እምዲበ መሐስእ ሄሮድስ ወመኳንንቲሁ እለ ቀተልዎሙ ለሕፃናት ፩ዘተቀጥቀጠ እምነ መሐስእ ዘካርያስ ካህን ውእቱ ወቀርን ዘበቁለ ክርስቶስ ውእቱ። ወደቤላት እለ ርእይዎ ወሮጹ ኃቤሁ ሐዋርያት። ወወሰት ወቋዓት እለ ሰረሩ ዲበ መሐስእ ወቀተልዎ ለ፩እመሐስእ ሄሮድስ ውእቱ ዘቀተሎ ለዮሐንስ። ቋዓት እለ ተባኣሱ ምስለ ዝኩ ቀርን ይቤላ ጸሐፍት ወፈሪሳውያን እሙንቱ ወዘርእየ እግዚአ ከባግዕ እስከ መጽአ ጎቤሆሙ በመግት ወነፈጹ ኩሎሙ ወወድቁ ውስተ ጽላሎት ዘንተሰ ርእየ በእንተ ትንሣኤሁ ለክርስቶስ ፲ወ፪ ደኃርያን ኖሎ (46r)ት እለ አሕጎሎ ዘይቤ ፲ወ፪ሕዝበ እስራኤል እለ ኢተወከፍዎ ለክርስቶስ። ወሰይፍ ዘተውህበ ለአባግዕ ቃለ ወንጌል ዘተውህበ ለሐዋርያት። ወዘወዕኑ አባግዕ ዲበ አራዊተ ገዳም ዘይቤ አሕዛብ እሙንቱ እለ ሰበኩ ሐዋርያት ሎሙ። ወአራዊት ወዕዋፍ እለ ጎፈጹ እምቅድመ ገጸሙ አጋንንት እሙንቱ። ወመንበር ዘተንንጸ በምድር ሐዋዝ ቤተ ክርስቲያን ይእቲ ወመጻሕፍት ጎቲማን እለ ፈትሐ ቃለ ኦሪት ወነብያት እሙንቱ። እለ ፈጸሞን በትንሣኤሁ ወእለ ጸውዐ ፯ጸዓድው ፯ሊቃነ መላእክት እሙንቱ። እለ አምጽእዎ ለኮከብ ቀዳሚ ዝውእቱ ስምያዝ ወብእሲ ዘጸሐፈ በቅድሚሁ ወእምገጸዓደው ወይቤሎ ነሥኦሙ ለጅኖሎት እለ መጠውከዎሙ አባግዕ ዘይቤ ሚካኤል ውእቱ ዘአሰር ለእለ ስሕቱ መላእክት ለጅ ትውልድ። ወጅትውልድ ዘይቤ ጅጅአዝማነ ዓለም ውእቱ። ወመካን (46v) ቀዳሚት እለ ተጠብለለት ምኩራብ ይእቲ። ወቤትኒ ሐዲስ ቤተ ክርስቲያን ይእቲ አዕማዲሃ ሐዲስ ፯ስዮማን እሙንቱ ወለሰይፍ ዘአስከብዎ ቃለ እግዚአብሔር ውእቱ ወተፈጸመ ወላህምኒ ጸዓዳ ወአቅርንቲሁ ዐበይት ክርስቶስ ውእቱ ላህም ዘይጠባህ በኩሎ ጊዜ። ወዐ ዘይቤ ወልደ አንበሳ ውእቱ ዘይነግሥ ሻዓመተ። ወውእቱ ነገር ኮነ አርቁ ሐሳቁ መሲሕ ውእቱ።

### Translation of Text 1

21 ms ኖላውን

## (On the Animal Apocalypse)

(43v) The vision of prophecy - which gives an account of the events from Adam to the false prophets. First of all he says, "A bovine animal will emerge from the Earth" - and that is Adam. He also<sup>22</sup> names him "a snow-white bull." And he called Cain "a dark calf," and he called Abel, "a red calf." He also called Eve, "a calf." And the ninety children of Adam he called "snow-white bovine animals and dark calves." He called Seth, Enoch, Qaynan, Malael, and Jared "snow-white bovine animals."

He called Azazel "a star," and the two hundred who descended with him, he called "stars." And the giants - the angels - who came down, he called "elephants, camels, and donkeys." And the four archangels, Michael, Gabriel (44r) and Suryal - who is called Aseryelyel as well as<sup>23</sup> Urael - and Rufael he called "the four snow-white persons." And the three who came out with them - Raguel, Saquel and Fanuel - he called them "snow-white."

And he called the sky, "a high tower." And he named Noah, "a snow-white bovine"; the ark of Noah, "a cross" as well as<sup>24</sup> "a boat." And the sky, he also named "a high brass"; the Earth, "a big fence"; Shem, "a white bovine"; and Japhet, "red." And Ham, "dark"; all the people after Shem until Terah, "wild beasts and birds." The Kings of Persia, "lions and eagles"; the Kings of Greece, "leopards"; the Egyptians, "hyenas." The Ilofeli, "dogs"; the children of Esau, "wild donkeys"; the Amalkites, "foxes and rabbits".

And the Kings (44v) of Rome, "vultures, ravens and crows." And he named Terah, "a wild donkey"; our father Abraham, "a snow white bovine." And the children of Qetura, "wild donkeys"; and Ismael, "a wild donkey"; and Isaac, "a snow-white bovine." He called Esau, "a dark boar"; Jacob, "a snow-white lamb"; and his children, "twelve sheep." And Moses, he called "a sheep"; Aaron, "a sheep."

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22 ms "secondly"

23 ms "thirdly"

24 ms "and"

And the sky, "a high castle"; the Red Sea<sup>25</sup>, "a pool of water"; Mount Sinai, "a rock"; the Tabernacle, "a house"; the Jordan, "a river." And the Judges, he called "sheep"; Jerusalem, "a beautiful lamb"; Samuel, "a lamb"; Saul, "a red ram"; David, "the succeeding ram." And Solomon, he called "the small lamb" as well as<sup>26</sup> "ram." The Temple, he called "a high tower"; and the Kings of Israel, "the erring sheep". And the (45r) prophets, he called "sheep" - "the one who was not killed from among them" is Elijah.

And he mentioned<sup>27</sup> the "seventy shepherds", as he says, these are the ones revealed to Hezekiah. And he said to him, "See the seventy chiefs of Israel who will worship<sup>28</sup> the idol in the house of God." These are the ones whom God appointed after Jerusalem is captured the first time, and the shepherds whose names and all their destruction.

And one of the seven snow-white ones ascended to Michael, the one whom "the shepherds shepherded for twelve hours" which is the twelve Sabbaths of the kingdom of Joachim until the return from exile becomes eighty four years.

The "three from the sheep who came and built a house", these are Zarubabel, Nehemia, and Josie<sup>29</sup> the High priest<sup>30</sup>, until the time when the thirty six shepherds will shepherd in this manner. These are, as he says, the Kings of the Greeks - the relatives of Alexander, who ruled over Israel.

And I kept seeing again through the time when<sup>31</sup> (45v) the twenty three shepherds were shepherding. And they completed each one fifty eight periods according to their respective periods. And he says, these are the Kings of Rome. And the "lambs which were born from

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25 ms "Sea of Erythrea"

26 ms "and"

27 ms "called"

28 ms "prostrate before"

29 ms "Yose'e son of Yosedeq"

30 ms "great priest"

31 ms "until"



the sheep", these are the people of Israel. From them, our Lord was born during<sup>32</sup> the Roman Empire.

As for the "crows which hovered over the lambs", those are Herod and his noblemen, who massacred<sup>33</sup> the children. The "one from among the lambs that was crushed" was Zechariah, the priest. The "horn that grew out<sup>34</sup>" was Christ. And the "bulls which saw him and ran to him" were the apostles. The "vultures and crows that hovered over the lambs" represent<sup>35</sup> Herod, who murdered John. The "crows that fought with that horn" are the scribes and the Pharisees. And he kept seeing "until the Lord of the sheep came upon them with a plague, and they fled and fell into darkness." This matter he saw in respect to the resurrection of Christ.

The "twelve latter shepherds (46r) which perished" are, as he says, the twelve tribes<sup>36</sup> of Israel, which did not accept<sup>37</sup> Christ. And the "sword that was given to the sheep" is the word of the Gospel which was given to the Apostles. And the "sheep that went out to the beasts of the wilderness" are, as he says, the nations to whom the Apostles preached. The "beast and birds which fled from before their face" are the demons.

The "chair<sup>38</sup> that was built upon the beautiful land" is the church. The "closed books which he opened" is the word of the Old Testament<sup>39</sup> and the Gospel which he fulfilled in his resurrection. The "seven snow-white ones which he summoned" are the seven archangels which brought the "first star" which is Semyaza.

The man who was scribing before his presence, a member of the seven snow-white ones to whom he said, "Raise up the seventy shepherds to whom I had given sheep" is as he says, Michael who

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32 ms "in the time of"

33 ms "killed"

34 ms "sprouted"

35 ms "were"

36 ms "people"

37 ms "receive"

38 ms "seat"

39 ms "Orit"

bound the angels that erred for seventy generations. The seventy generations are, as he says, the seven thousand years<sup>40</sup> of the world.

That (46v) "first place that was wrapped up" is the synagogue. As for the "new home", it is the Church. Her "new pillars" are the seven prompted ones. The "sword which lay down" is the word of God, and it is fulfilled. The "snow-white bovine animal whose horns are large" is Christ, a bovine animal that is being sacrificed all the time. There are those that say he is the son of the lion, who shall reign for forty years, and "this very thing became the beast" which is the false Messiah.

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40 ms "periods"