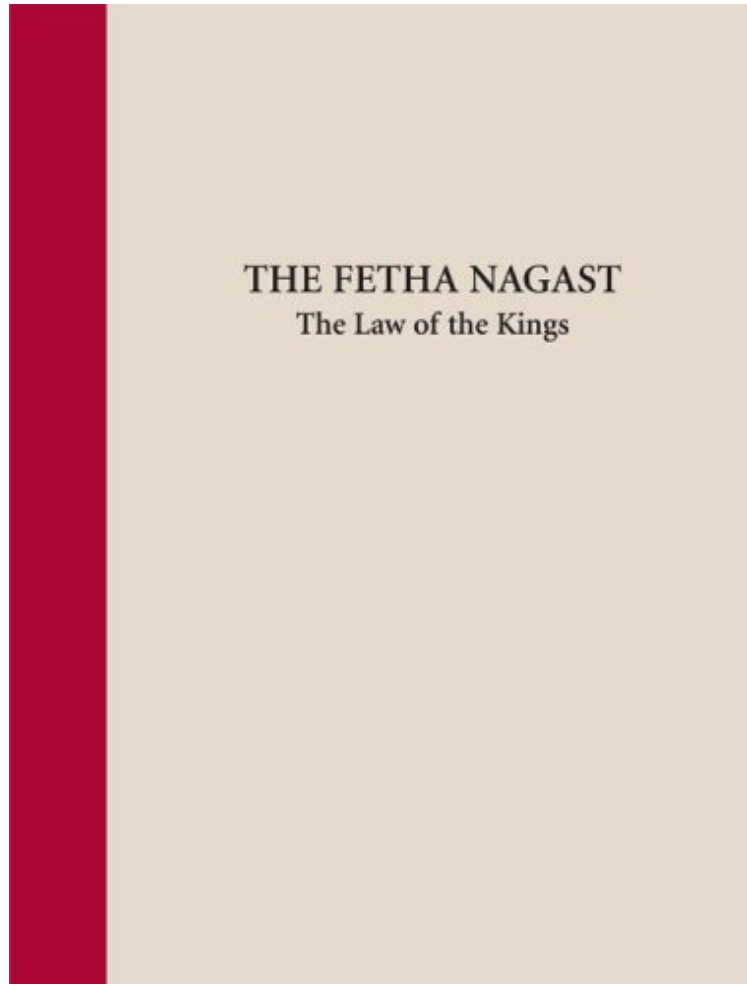


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The Fetha Nagast: The Law of the Kings

Abba Paulos Tzadua

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The Fetha Nagast, or The Law of the Kings, is the foundation of Ethiopian law, and was perhaps the first written law of sub-Saharan Africa. Derived from Roman Law and church canons of the Eastern Rite, it was brought up the Nile in the fifteenth or sixteenth century, and there translated into Ge'ez, the local church language. While its early use is uncertain, by the end of the nineteenth century it had become the basis for the development of national law. Translated into Italian then, this English translation by Abba (later Cardinal) Paulos Tzadua was first published in Ethiopia in 1968, edited by Peter Strauss. This new edition, with added historical notes by Cardinal Tzadua and the German

scholar Peter Sand, faithfully reproduces the first edition and makes this historic text readily available to American readers.