

Degezmati Hagos smiling from the Heavens over Tekeze, Tana Beles and now GERD

PM Hailemariam big smile in Cairo

President Al Bashir and PM Hailemariam grinning in Addis Ababa

President Isayas trying to hide his smile in Cairo, but big smile in Asmara

President Al Sisi cautioning media of his country to be careful and forced smile in Addis Ababa



By: Higus Eritrawi 01-29-18

Among all the battles wedged during the reign of Hatse Yohannes against Khadive of Egypt, none was so decisive, so history changing as the battle which Degezmati Hagos was killed. As there were no drones or satellites and radio communication at the time, and even as recent as Weyannie II and EPLF it was traditional for Tigrawot commanders to be at or close to front line. Some of his soldiers have said that it is Tsaeda that shot him. Most likely it is the American Colonel who turned around and saw Degezmati Hagos was pointing to his soldiers to go after the running Egyptian Pasha (weras Arat Prince). That American colonel wrote later that “ It was so humiliating to see the Pasha’s front crumble so fast and the pasha running for dear life while the Abyssinian commander opposite was galloping to capture our Pasha Prince (Son of the Khadive/Emperor of Egypt). Dejzmatch Hagos was hit on his horse and fell. But his soldiers, except for a few taking care of him, did not stop. We did not get any respite, which we expected at the falling of Dejzmatch Hagos, nothing left to do, but to run for dear life and limb”

There was a battle before this one where the Afar (alone) fought about 1500 Egyptian soldiers under command of a Swiss German Colonel, Pasha to boot, were annihilated to a man (Bizey melas awiyat). Not a single Egyptian soldier left to tell their story.

Next was another battle where a Semiyenina Tigray army under command of Raisi Alula, entrapped and annihilated a 3000 man Egyptian army, with only one European (Tsaeda) who was on horseback and 4 Egyptians who were quite a distance back from the battle line made it out. There were also few captured that later were released. In this case Egypt did not allow them, but few left to tell the story.

Both these battles as catastrophic loss as they were for Egypt did not change anything strategic. Egypt did not give up the objective of once and for all controlling the source of the Nile and eliminating the threat from the Habeshi Abyssinian. Actually Egyptians had no news of these

catastrophic defeats. Europeans wrote first about it and there is scant written material from Egyptians. Lucky Khadive (Emperor of Egypt) there was no internet.

The Khadive borrowed money from some Greek and Cypriot bankers and went on buying bigger and better weapons and mercenaries from around the world. From America alone the Khadive hired not less than a hundred. In that future battle alone more than 40 Americans came to what is now Eritrea, who were from captain and up in rank. The highest ranking commander was General Loring, who was appointed the chief of staff of Egypt. General Loring was deputy commander of the Confederates in America. Remington was the latest gun that foreign countries can buy at the time and the Khadive bought 45 thousand of it for the campaign against Hatse Yohannes.

When the Egyptians and their American strategists, advisors and commanders thought were ready to teach the Abyssinian Emperor a lesson, subjugate Abyssinia and control Tana and the Nile, they made their way to Eritrea. More than 20,000 of them. As always Raesi Allula has his military intelligence at work and knew as the first soldier has landed in Massawa. According to the Derg study of the battle of Adwa, more than half of the factors that led to Ethiopian victory was military intelligence. A child can guess who organized this intelligence, but amazingly not many Ethiopians know that the chief operative was named Bashay Awalom who had agents from Asmara to Adwa forming a line of communication with mules and fast travel.

Hatse Yohannes instructed Gojjam and Shiwa kingdoms to guard the north west what was called Semiyenina Tigray and protect Gonder from the Caliphate, that was annihilated and evicted from Sahel and Bogos by Raisi Alula some years back. Gojjam and Shiwa are being assigned for this front since Degezmati Hagos and Raisi Alula have the Semiyenina Tigray regiments in Eritrea. When the time came to face the Caliphate, Gojjam fought alone and was no match, Gonder was ransacked monasteries and churches all violated, holy books thorn and thrown on the road. Shiwa kingdom did not show up to fight the Caliphate. There was good communication and an offer of friendship by king of Shiwa to the Caliphate, but I can't imagine that was reason why Shiwa kingdom did not show up.

Wollo sent some regiments to Eritrea and the rest of Wollo kingdom was to keep an eye for any possible destructing attacks from the south East and support Afar sultanates, in case Egyptians also show up there planning to go straight to Tana. All the rest were to head to Eritrea, including the Agew Raesis and Degezmatias of Lasta and Wag. Hatse Yohannes has prepared an army of 60,000 and both Degezmati Hagos and Raesi Allula had about 15 thousand each. Remember that Daero eeila is the separation point for Degezmati Hagos and Raesi Alula. West of Daero Eila that includes Adi Arqay Debariq Endaslassie/Shire Selekleka Dansha was under command of Degezmati Hagos and east of Daero Eila, that includes Seraye, Hamasien, Bogos, Sahel, Kassala..etc. was under direct command of Raesi Alula. This is for military structure for the battle, othersie Raisi Alula was (Hager Gezai) of both areas as Semiyenina Tigray. Hatse Menelik later split this Hager west to the British Empire/Sudan, Eritrea to Italy and what remained in Ethiopia was split in two. One was joined to Tigray and another one to Begemidir and became Semiyenina Begemidir. Tigray was under direct rule and direct command of Hatse Yohannes himself which included Akeleguzay, Saho and north west Afar that is now in Eritrea after agreement between Italy and Hatse Minelik.

So both sides were ready. Let me distract you with a story that has some connection to the battle from Eritrea raesis. There was one restless Raesi in Eritrea with 500 men 300 of them with latest guns obtained from Ottoman Egypt, on the Egyptian side, in this battle, but did not fire a single

bullet. A few days later he sent messengers to Hatse Yohannes to be forgiven for lining on Egypt's side, he had had priests with him to witness that he did not participate in the battle and wants to be given date and place to carry stone on his back and submit as was traditional (Same as King Minelik (later Hatse) did. Since this Raesi comes from an area under governorship of Raesi Alula and Raesi Alula has been looking for this Raesi to punish him, Raesi Alula intercepted this message and the Raesi from Eritrea never got his day at the court of Hatse Yohannes. Why did Raesi Alula wanted to punish the raesi from Eritrea? Some Eritreans will tell you that Raesi Alula deceived him to bring him to be arrested. There is an element of deception, but the deception is only that Raesi Alula took measures and Hatse Yohannes was never involved in the matter. The raesi from Eritrea thought he would be forgiven like Negus Menelik and be made governor of Hamasien. Nobody knows if that may or may not have happened, from our understanding now, of Hatse Yohannes's character he would have forgiven and appointed the raesi in some capacity. Remember Tembien was not part of Semiyenina Tigray.

Raesi Alula had wanted to capture and punish this raesi from Eritrea for three reasons:

1. In a fight to the top between two raesis in Eritrea, one of Hazega and another one of Tseazega they had totally destroyed the capital of Bogos province, Halhal
2. When 2 years later the raesi of Hazega defeated the raesi of Tseazega, he burned down Tseazega which is an absolute no no to do after battle, when there is no excuse of collateral damage.
3. As everyone knows Dibarwa was the most important city after Gonder (Capital of the empire). Its when Dibarwa got invaded and occupied by Ottoman turks that Adwa became important. Everything moved to Adwa. Semiyenina Tigray army had defeated and expelled the Ottoman Egyptians a year later. The city never recovered and Adwa fought (business and political) to keep the windfall she got. The Eritrean Raesi of Hazega went to east Bogos met the Ottoman Egyptians and promised them to return them to Dibarwa, provided they arm and finance him enough. The Ottoman Egyptians gave him 300 latest guns and gifts including a Persian rug. He had no intention of fighting for Dibarwa, but the first time he became raesi was by Ottoman Egyptians. Later Raesi Alula and Hatse Yohannes confirmed him as Raesi as well since he had defeated a Raesi. His name is, the restless, Raesi Weldemichael Solomon of Hazega and the defeated one is Raesi Hailu of Tseazega.

Back to the battle that created an earthquake in Egypt. The battle was fought over two days. The two armies were testing with scouting teams and gathered enough information where to attack. Mobility and not digging trenches or building stone walls is the style of war in both Tigray and Semienina Tigray. Even Weyannie I and II are both famous for this style of battles. It becomes tradition and culture that is ingrained and wired to coming generations. Finally the Ethiopian side decided to attack the central front where the Egyptian side was lead by the Prince and two American colonels. The Ethiopian side was led by Degezmati Hagos. The Egyptian line broke at the center of the central front and the Pasha Prince started to run. His army followed in disarray. The rest was chasing and capturing. Its at this time of chasing Degezmati Hagos was hit and fell. At the end of the battle the Ethiopian side captured more than 12,000 latest guns and 6 cannons.

When those who made it alive to Massawa reached Egypt:

1. All Americans contract cancelled and sent back home
2. The son of the Khadive the prince, no more prince
3. Egypt was so shaken and thinking that Hatse Yohannes will march on Egypt, called the British Empire and went under the protection of the British Empire. Egypt became a protectorate of the British Empire.

What made me write this article focused on GERD and Degezmati Hagos? The smile of your prime minister Ato Hailemariam Desalegn in Cairo and a grin in Addis Ababa (the great Al Bashir between your PM and the president of Egypt). I have been thinking of writing something when I heard Mengistu Hailemariam and his Dergists in DC and London talking about the GERD being Weyannie conspiracy to wage war against Egypt. Those cowards have been ringing their hands for something to happen to the children of Hatse Yohannes for a long time, but the smile of your PM reminded me the bravery of Degezmati Hagos.

As for Mengistu, his Derg and even his daughter, my answer as an Eritrean is we never saw your kingdom face Egypt even by mistake, out of all the kingdoms and sultanates in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Always begging for friendship of Egypt and your Hatse or Dictator always intimidated by Egypt. What you never knew and your ancestors never told you is that the first time Egypt was ruled by an Egyptian is president Jamal Abdunnasser. It may have been reasonable for Hatse Hailessassie to be intimidated. And for Mengistu to totally go chicken to threats of president Anwar Sadat.

I am not sure if this will be published, but for what its worth here I declare president Isayas Afwerqi is also a hero on Tekeze, Tana Beles and now the GERD. He gave the bad news to the Egyptians. He told them what he has learned from his intelligence:

1. The Weyannie is not Mengistu, Hatse Hailessassie or Hatse Minelik that will sign their right to use the Nile as Hatse Minelik did (This document is filed at UN by Egyptians in 1945 immediately after their membership which was before Ethiopia became member).
2. I was here when president Husni Mubarek threatened Meles for Tekeze and Tana Beles projects and Meles response was simple: "Nobody in our history that came to control the Nile or subjugate us for the Nile has ever lived to tell their story. If you president Mubarek want to be the first one to achieve that feat, you have your horses, I have the mountains, fields and my people, the same people."
3. Militarily you cannot bluff or intimidate them. They have latest radar systems, Laser weapons, they have human reconnaissance in Sudan up to your border and through Libya, Jibouti and Kenya is their backyard, Somalia is like an extension of their country, all this in addition to space and drone. You know that the Chifra Weyannie are drone manufacturing and selling country.
4. On the ground is impossible. They will send the Agazi and fight you in Eritrea or Sudan just as Hatse Yohannes, Ras Alula did. Chifra Weyannie has ten thousand army in Sudan close to you.
5. By air they have more than enough to fight you coming from long.
6. Your navy is out of this game. You cannot block their trade.
7. Whatever was tried in Ethiopian towns to kill and burn Tigreans and their property and start chaos did not work. It is not expected to get results to disrupt the GERD. Actually its backfiring now that the rest of Ethiopia has realized something not intended to be known. Who was behind it has been exposed. The Chifra weyannie PM might bring you some proof tomorrow or after tomorrow when he comes here.

Thank you president Isayas. Nobody will sing your praises due to current situation, I am not even sure if AIGA will publish this, but when time comes and information is made public, I have no doubt what so ever, many books will be written about it, complete web sites will be opened on it.

You must have felt the same as I did when 2 days after your visit to Cairo, PM Hailemariam of Ethiopia was all smiles and Al Sisi was going out of his way to calm the Egyptian public. 18 members of Egyptian parliament filed a case to prevent PM Hailemariam visit to Cairo and prevent him speaking in their parliament. One of them was son of president Anwar Sadat, the president of Egypt that physically intimidated, that fascist but coward, Mengistu Hailemariam till he begged for mercy.

President Isayas, did you remember from our old history when our ancestor, Bahri Negash Isaq sent his army along with the Portuguese? When the Eritreans found out that one of the kings (kingdoms) in Ethiopia was hiding the whole time, the Ottoman Zeila (Ahmed Gragn conquest of Habesha) campaign and never came out of his hiding until absolutely assured that Gragn has been defeated and killed. Bahri Negash Isaq when told had only one word for that kingdom. Cowards. I am sure when children of that kingdom ask you to fight the Weyannie, what they call the Ethiopian government or Chifra Weyannie as you call the Ethiopian government, you have in mind what Bahri Negash Isaq said about their ancestors. Its in the back of the head of most Eritreans, since its a history told by parents.

The Weyannie I fighters are also smiling. They knew who should and should not lead your country. Their mantra was "zihademe aynegis zefrese ayqidis". Even though they lost to the British Empire and her scorch earth bombing that later was used in cities like Dresden in Gemany, and their women and children abused by Hatse Hailesslassie army that followed, those fighters had the bravery to destroy four serawit, capture four generals, free four provinces in a couple of weeks. Belay Zeleqe after whom my cousin is named, Waqo Guttu, Sultan Abdella Mirah etc and the treachery they confronted have all been avenged. Even as recent as Walelign, Birhanemesqel, Tilahun are smiling since their dreams and aims have materialized. Above all else, Egypt is not threatening and fighting, but negotiating. Egypt needed someone to bring her to the table. You do not bring Egypt to the table when you try starving your own citizens to submission or vengeance like Mengistu and Hatse Hailesslassie tried.

Eritreans are speaking Tigrinya, conducting our activities in Tigrigna as our ancestors did, and no one is capable to close our printing presses, burn our books, punish children for speaking tigrigna in school yards and attempt to destroy our heritage thereby exterminate our identity.

Other colonizers or opponents will come and go, but Egypt is a gift of nature to you Ethiopians. She will always be around. If you are strong as a friend, if you are weak as opponent and sometimes as enemy. That is nature, not manmade want of minerals, oil or some other thing. Egypt is also gift of nature to us on the red sea. We will always be interacting. The Italians came and went, the French came and went, the Ottomans came and went, Caliphates from North or South came and went. The British empire came and went. Egypt will never go away. She is a gift of nature. President Isayas understands this more than most of us do.

A big thank you to President Al Bashir. You also made your ancestors smile from the heavens. You brought the people to people relationship your ancestors had with ours (you know it) restored after centuries. You have good memory and respect for roots. You have been a gift to Eritrea and to Ethiopia. At the right time in the right place. You have earned a place in our long history. Your people and ours have been through a lot of pain and suffering, wars endless ones, but you all are

putting a stop to it. Egypt has shown respect to Sudan. Now there is no colonizer Egypt can call and get protection against you or us or Ethiopia.

Happy negotiating
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