

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF *DÄJAZMAČ* MÄNGÄŠA JÄMBÄRÉ

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ABSTRACT

*For the second time in forty years, a European power, Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935. Until this time, Ethiopia was a traditional polity with a predominantly feudal socio-political system, while Italy was an industrialized nation under the Fascist regime of Benito Mussolini. The invasion was conducted with the most advanced military organization and hardware -vast killing machine-against a spirited people of an old nation. In defiance of the occupation that ensued, the Ethiopians were engaged for five years in a multi-dimensional 'patriotic resistance' to drive the invaders out of their country. Indeed, after defeating all the Rases in the northern front, Italians advanced towards the central part of the country. The invaders utterly routed the Ethiopian force and the enemy continued to march southwards, i.e., to Shire and then to Gojjam. Thus, despite Ethiopia's military collapse in 1935-6, patriotic resistance continued throughout the occupation. Many patriotic Ethiopians were from the outset determined to continue the struggle. One of these was *Däjazmač*, later Biteweded Mängäša Jämbäré, of Mecha north west of Addis Ababa, who since 1936 attacked the Italian invading force. The major purpose of this paper is, therefore, to bring out the early life and career of *Däjazmač Mängäša Jämbäré*. In the course of the study, I have depended mainly on primary and secondary sources, as well as oral informants, and archival materials. For archives, I have used Debre Markos University Archive Center, Addis Ababa National Archives and Library Agency, Institute of Ethiopian Studies of Addis Ababa University.. Indeed, gathering oral information from knowledgeable individuals through interviews was another important source data for the research. The interview was effectively addressed by qualitative approach through purposive sampling method. In the interview semi structured interview questions were designed for acquiring valuable information about the study. The age and the ability to remember the past events and the level of participation in the local affairs were given emphasis for the selection of informants. The data which I collected from oral sources were crosschecked with archival and secondary sources before interpretation. Taking into consideration the nature of the study, the researchers chose a qualitative approach.*

Key Words: *Italians, Ethiopia, Gojjam, Agaw Meder, Mängäša Jämbäré*

GLOSSARY

Abba- ‘Father’, also form of a title to monks, applied at times to and elders and ordinary priests.

Aläqa- Head of a church or a parish

Awrajja- A sub-province before 1991, a sub- governorate general before 1974.

Balabat-Originally hereditary owner of *rest* land

Banda – A collaborator

Bitäwädäd –The third highest title before the Revolution, next to that of *Ras*.

Däjazmač- Literally, ‘Commander of the Gate’, a politico- military title below *Ras*.

Endärasē- Viceroy or local representative of a higher authority.

Fitawrari- Literally, ‘Commander of the vanguard’, a title below *Däjazmač*.

Grazmač- Literally, ‘Commander of the left, a politico-military title above *balambaras*.

Ras- ‘Head’, the highest traditional title next to *Negus*.

Ras Bitäwädäd-the highest title before the Revolution.

Täqlay Gezat-A province or a sub-division

Wanna Abat (lit. main father)

Wäräda- A district

Wäyzäro-A title for a married woman

INTRODUCTION

Mängäša was a descendant of an influential *balabbats* of Méçça in Gojjam district. His paternal genealogy runs as follow: Mängäša-Jämbäré-Imru-Asené- Deräs. All were the rulers of Méçça with the title of *Däjazmač*.¹

His great-grand father, *Däjazmač* Asené Deräs was a very strong man who was said to have opened a new chapter for the family. He was the most dreaded person not only in his own local district, but in the whole Gojjam as well. With his father –in-law, *Däjazmač* Gošu, the grandfather of King Täklä Haymanot of Gojjam, Asené was one of the rebels who opposed the consolidation policy of Emperor Tewodros II in Gojjam.²

¹Informants: Käbädä Dästa and Alameräw Molla.

² Informants: Ayaléw Mängestu and Gäbäyähü Hailu.

Tewedros killed Gošu at Gur Amba in 1852,³ but Asené escaped death and continued his rebellion in Gojjam. Asené became brave and disturbed Gojjam to subdue under him whenever Tewodros had disappeared from the area. Asené in the end, however, could not escape Tewodros's sword. He was caught by Tewodros and hanged in public in his locality. It is said that, Tewodros kept his corpse hanging on a tree for three days to give a lesson to others who might threaten his power.⁴

Before his death, Asené had a daughter called *Woyizäro* Yäšemäbét from *Woyizäro* Denqenäš Gošu, the grandfather of *Däjazmač* Abärä Yemam, who was not on good terms with Mängäša during the resistance movement. Asené had also a son called Imru from another woman. Of all, Imru was said to have been Asené's favorite son and was strong and brave, like his father. He was made the ruler of Méçça with the rank of *Däjazmač* by King Täklä Haymant of Gojjam.⁵

According to my informant, Alamnääh, with the request of King Täklä Haymant as an expression of friendship, the king's daughter, *Woyizäro* Mentwab, was married to Imru's son, *Däjazmač* Jämbäré Imru. This marriage of convenience strengthened the position of Imru's family in Gojjam. The young couples as the children of the nobility and the aristocracy lived pleasant life. Then, Jämbäré was promoted to the rank of *Däjazmač* and became the governor of Méçça district under the over-lordship of his father, Imru.⁶

During the Mahdist threat of 1887 in the north west, when Emperor Menelik ordered King Täklä Haymanot with a large number of Gojjam troops, his officials with his son-in-law, *Däjazmač* Jämbäré Imru and his daughter, *Wäyzäro* Mentwab, left for Metemma. Nevertheless, with the help of the reconnaissance force, the Mahdists heavily defeated Täklä Haymanot in January 1888, many of his men were killed and several women and children were enslaved and went to Metemma. Among these, the King's daughter, Mentwab was one of the victims as well.⁷ However, when she became the victim of Mahdist's threat, Mentwab was separated from her husband, Jämbäré, without any child. Then, he was forced to marry another woman called *Wäyzäro* Terunäš Engeda, a member of a wealthy and powerful family in Däbrä Worq, East

³ Seven Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence*, (London: Heinemann Educational Books LTD, 1976), p. 137.

⁴Informants: Ayaléw Mängestu and Gäbäyähü Hailu.

⁵Informants: Alamräw Hailu and Täfära Yemär.

⁶*Ibid*; Rubenson, p. 383; H. Marcus, *The Life and ...*, p.101.

⁷Informants: Ayaléw Mängestu and Gäbäyähü Hailu.

Gojjam in Bičäna district. It was from this marriage that Mängäša was born in April 1892 in the district of Méçça at the locality called Däbrä Şähay Mariam.⁸

Jämbäré died of illness, leaving behind Mängäša a young child of five years. The infant, Mängäša was brought up in the household of his grandfather, Imru. Again, when Mängäša became fifteen, Imru died. After this Mängäša was put under the custody of his uncle Fitawrari Şefäraw Imru, who had inherited his father's governorship of Méçça. Mängäša was then cared by Şefäraw until he began his individual life.⁹

In Méçça district, like any other parts of Gojjam, there was a tradition of going to hunting wild games like elephants, lions, giraffes and others. Hunting was performed in the area both for prestige and status. It also had some economic significance since it was the only way to obtain ivory and other valuable commodities. Hunters, on the other hand, were mostly from the family of the nobility.¹⁰

Mängäša, thus, who grew as a hunter and killer of elephant and other wild animals, began to get fame and respect. Following this, his uncle *Fitawrari* Şefäraw appointed him governor of Kotä Abola, a sub-district with 33 parishes in Méçça.¹¹ This was thus the beginning of Mängäša's political career in administration. Mängäša ruled the area for some time, but he was not pleasant. He, thus, by giving up his loyalty to Şefäraw, entered to the service of *Ras* Hailu Täklä Haymanot of Gojjam, the then hereditary ruler of Gojjam.

In the service of *Ras* Hailu, Mängäša learnt about court life and discipline and acquired much knowledge in the field of administration.¹² In 1921 *Ras* Hailu made Mängäša the governor of Säkäla. Mängäša ruled Säkäla peacefully for some time but he was dissatisfied with his appointment since his demand was to be the governor of Méçça, which had been ruled by his father. The *Ras*, however, ignored his petition. Mängäša, on the other hand, was waiting for the favorable time to avenge the *Ras* who had deprived his father's governorship of Méçça.¹³

⁸*Addis Zemen*, "Tarik Yalew Aymotem", April 30, 1950, p.3.

⁹Informants: Täfära Yemär and Alameräw Hailu.

¹⁰Abdusemed, "Hunting in Gojjam: The Case of Mätäkäl (1901-1932)", in *the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, IA.(November 26-30, 1984), pp.1-3.

¹¹Mogäs Kiflé, *Yä Mosoloni Mister*, (Addis Ababa:, Artistic Printing Press, 1949), pp.143-144.

¹²Informants: Täfära Yemär, and Alameräw Hailu.

¹³*Ibid.*

The fortune of Mängäša came again in 1924. *Ras* Hailu, who was one of the prominent noble, toured Europe in 1924 with *Ras* Täfäri (later Emperor Haile Selasse), in fact, before he left for Europe in 1924, it seems that *Ras* Hailu took necessary precaution in Gojjam. Thus, the *Ras* made Mängäša the governor of Guta with the rank of *Fitawrari*.¹⁴

Although Mängäša was given the governorship of Guta with the rank of *Fitawrari*, he was not satisfied, because his whole ambition was to become the undisputed ruler of Méçça. Then, in 1927, to show to Mängäša how far he was strong, the *Ras* imprisoned *Fitawrari* Šefäraw Imru, the governor of Méçça, and installed his own son, *Fitawrari* Admasu Hailu as the governor of Méçça.¹⁵ Mängäša, however, was sad because he expected to become the governor of the whole district. Thus, his chance of avenging *Ras* Hailu and fulfilling his great ambition came when the latter was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1932 because of his suspected involvement in the escape of *Lij* Iyasu from Fečé.¹⁶

Ras Imru, a cousin of the Emperor, was appointed governor of Gojjam. Imru, who came with some Šäwan officials, needed some individuals who had considerable influence in Gojjam and who would be loyal to the central government. Imru, thus, made Mängäša the governor of Méçça.¹⁷

Following this, in February 1933, Mängäša was called to Addis Ababa by the Emperor. He was promoted to the rank of *Däjazmač*. Besides, he was awarded with the up-to-date rifle called ‘mouser’. According to informants, *Wäyizäro* Säblä Wongél Hailu, the ex-wife of *Lij* Iyasu, was made his wife. This marriage was even approved by the Emperor himself. It is said that, a big wedding ceremony took place at the house of *Ras* Dästa Damtäw, the son-in-law of the Emperor in a colorful fashion. Then, the newly married couples soon left for Gojjam.¹⁸ From this time on, Mängäša became a dominant and influential figure in the politics of Gojjam.

¹⁴*Addis Zemen*, ‘Tarik Yaläw...’, Col.4, p.5.

¹⁵Informants: Dästa Kedanu, Täfära Yemär, and Alameräw Hailu.

¹⁶Mähari Yohannes, p.33.

¹⁷*Add Zemen*, ‘ Tarik Yaläw...’, p.5

¹⁸Informants: Dästa Kedanu, Täfära Yemär and Alameräw Hailu.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research was undertaken based on descriptive research design. This is because, it helps to achieve the objectives of the study and to find answer to the research questions of the study by allowing the researchers to describe the characteristic of the phenomena under study and by entertaining the research questions focusing on issues like what, how and who elements. In addition, this design enables to narrate the state of affairs prevailed at the time of the study. In this case, the researcher only reports what has happened and is happening. Thus, it is possible to understand that this design is the most appropriate to achieve the objectives set by the researchers. Taking into consideration the nature of the study, the researchers chose a qualitative approach. Moreover, both primary and secondary sources were used.

Early life and career of *Däjazmač* Mängäša Jämbäré

In the meantime, the Italo-Ethiopian relation became worse. In the meantime, *Däjazmač* Mängäša, who had been in his house at Qusquam, following the Širé campaign, left for Dägi in Guta hearing the news that the Italians were advancing towards Bahir Dar. Although he planned to begin guerrilla warfare against them, he was prevented from going into the mountains by his deteriorating health after the Širé campaign.¹⁹ In fact, *Däjazmač* Mängäša, who was the veteran and chief of Méçça district, attracted Italian attention. They sent a physician to check his health, who visited him repeatedly and at the same time urged him to be in their service. Mängäša was initially reluctant to accept their persuasion to be in their service. Later, however, he accepted their idea and took an oath in September 1936 at Bahir Dar Giorgis.²⁰ According to one of my informants, Mängäša submitted to Italian rule by the persuasion of his wife *Woyzäro* Säblä Wongäl Hailu. Perhaps she did so as her father, *Ras* Hailu, had already defected to the Italians side earlier.²² Informants, however, vary in opinion on the point. Some of the informants asserted that, as the Italians reached Gojjam, they spread their propaganda to convince the people.²³ Others stated that, consequently the people submitted to them unwisely and Mängäša, too, accepted Italian invitation in light of the reaction of the people though his idea was not to surrender.²⁴

¹⁹Informants: *Fitawrari* Täfära Asrat, Yäši Endaläw, and Guadu Šifäraw.

²⁰Informants: Mängäša Endaläw, Bäqälä Bogalä, and Yäšaräg Täfära.

²¹Informant: *Qänñazmač* Bäläw Wossän.

²²Informant: *Fitawrari* Dämläw Jämbäré.

²³Informants: *Fitawrari* Täfära Asrat, Yäši Endaläw, and Guadu Šifäraw.

²⁴*Ibid*

Another informant claimed that Mängäša had submitted for a short period of time because he was extremely weary of war and waited for favorable time to rebel against the invaders. This assertion is plausible as many of the veterans, who had seen the strength of Italy and submitted to the enemy. *Däjazmač* Mängäša, who had been the *balabbat* of Méçça and the lord of Acćäfär, was appointed by Italians as the *misläné* of Méçça district. He collaborated with them to disarm his subjects. However, many of my informants asserted that he secretly advised his people to hand over the busted rifles and to keep the steady ones. This was because he did not seem to be contented with the Italians. However, the enemy instantly ordered him to change his seat from Qusquam to Bahir Dar so as to watch him closely. Italian suspicion of his loyalty was clear to the *Däjazmač* since he had previously observed their fraudulent behavior and when, in fact, Italians hanged publicly the veteran chief of Yilmana-Dénsa district, *Däjazmač* Sebhatu Yigzaw, with his son-in-law, *Qäññazmač* Yigzaw Kassa, and his son, *Lij* Bázabeh Sebhatu at Bahir Dar Giorgis in August 1936, on the suspicion that Sebhatu was preparing to organize a rebellion. *Qäññazmač* Gäbäyähü Yimam, one of the *balabbats* of Méçça, was also tied with chains and deported from the area to Injabara, their main fortress. This in turn created a great suspicion in the mind of Mängäša Jämbäré. He was also discontented as Italians intensified their atrocities in Méçça.²⁵

According to my informant, the cause for *Däjazmač* Mängäša Jämbäré's decision to revolt, however, came after Abraha Däboč and Mogäs Asgädom attempted to kill Graziani by throwing bombs at him on 19 February, 1937, and as Italians began to take reprisal indiscriminately.²⁶

This attempt on his life was soon followed by wholesale massacres for three days on February 19, 20 and 21. Graziani initiated the policy of "repressive measures". Terrorism was initiated.²⁷ However, increased terrorism brought increased resistance and unpopularity for the Italians resulting in bitter resentment against the invaders. Terrorism was widely used throughout Ethiopia. In this regard, Harold Marcus writes that, "Throughout the remaining months of Graziani's rule, terrorism and reprisals seem to have been the most important elements of the Italian effort to crush the Ethiopians."²⁸

²⁵Tadesse Gebre Medhin, 'Zenaw', unpublished book in the hands of *Däjazmač* Bázabeh Terunäh. The author was one of the exiles and he was worked in an intermediary for Gojjam and Bägémeder patriots with the exiled patriots in the Sudan and the exiled monarch. He recorded and wrote in detail about Gojjam resistance and the source is valuable.

²⁶R.A. Green field, *Ethiopia: A New Political ...*, p.216, D.Shirreff, p.16.

²⁷Mockler, p185; Del Boca, p.242; Bahru Zwde, *A History of ...*, pp. 168-173.

²⁸Harold G. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 74-77.

Thus, as the Italians began to inflict reprisal without discrimination, rebellion began in Gojjam as a whole. Moreover, the ruthlessness of the Italian policy and the measures they took to suppress the spirit of the people, who prided themselves as warriors, the insistence of the invaders on disarmament, terrorism, the hunting of the *balabbats*, the burning of villages, and the looting of cattle were among the various factors that led to the outbreak of the insurgency.²⁹ As the rebellion increased the Italians responded with increasingly severe reprisals. They became suspicious of deserters.

The death of several patriots had created a great frustration on, particularly, *Däjazmač* Mängäša Jämbäré and Nägaš Bāzabeh. They feared that the same fate would await them. Thus, they decided to break their relations with the Italians. Before doing so Mängäša asked the Italian representative at Bahir Dar, named “Corbo”, to allow him to go to the mineral water site (traditional medicine, i.e., *ṭäbäl*) for treatment. At first, Corbo did not allow him to go, but later, Mängäša persuaded Corbo to allow him to go after accepting *Fitawrari* Täfare Yimer, his brother-in-law, and *Fitawrari* Dämlāw Čäkol, by being his guarantors.³⁰

For Corbo, it was a usual practice to give his *meslänés* permission to go to places they wanted to visit. *Däjazmač* Mängäša Jämbäré, however, cheated Corbo and went to Guta and began to raise the standard of rebellion. Mängäša, who set out to fulfill his ambition of fighting against the Italians, slowly paved the way for his patriotic activity. As a rebel he was mainly engaged in agitating the people to rally behind him and to attack the enemy establishments. Mängäša, however, avoided open clash with the collaborators or the Italians until he managed to get the confidence of his people.³¹ Meanwhile, like in other places in Ethiopia, Italian atrocity was intensified in Agaw Meder. They urged the people to hand over their arms. In the leaflet which had been written on 26 Ginbot, 1929 (3 June, 1937) the Italians ordered the people of Agaw Meder, Acćäfär, Yilmana-Densa and Méçça to hand their personal arms within ten days.³² To create annoyance, they ordered the people to pay taxes. They even killed priests, burnt churches and villages. Lastly the execution of their chiefs brought the discontent of the people clear and obvious.³³

²⁹Informants: Märäwi Mäkönnän, Guadu Šifäräw, Dässé Engida, and Asmare Gäzu.

³⁰Informants: Alamräw Hailu, Täfära Yemär, and Admasu Yemam. Täfära Yemär soon became follower of Mängäša, while Dämlāw remained in the service of Italians with the title of *Fitawrari*.

³¹Informants: Mulatu Abäjä, and Dämlä Bäqälä.

³²*Ibid.*

³³Informants: Mäkit Zäläqä, Admasu Yemam and Sirag Zägäyā. The enemy killed chiefs of Yelmana-Densa, like *Däjäč* Abeyä Yegzaw, *Qäññazmač* Yegzaw Kassa Ali Bāzabeh; also killed chiefs of Acćäfär, like *Fitawrari* Mäkönnän Adegö, and *Däjazmač* Abärä' Yemam's brother, *Qäññazmač* Gäbäyähü in Méçça.

In response to the atrocities of the Italians, in fact, the people of Méçça in particular, appealed to *Däjazmač* Mängäša to lead them as *Ṭor Aläqa* (war leader). However, the man who was under the influence of his wife, *Wäyzäro Säblä Wongél Hailu*, and who was also the first among the *balabbats* of Méçça to surrender his *Zinar* (cartridge belt) and *minyišir* (Maun lecher) to the Italians, was reluctant to accept the opinion of the people.³⁴

Mängäša, who tried to escape the petitions of his people, appointed his *Endärasé* (representative) *Qäññazmač* Dämläw Čäkol over Méçça and left Méçça and went with Säblä Wongél to their *gult* at Arag, in Buré-Damot in the same month. However, unlike the appointment of Mängäša, the people of Méçça, decided to choose *Lij* Abärä Yimam, one of the relatives of Mängäša and *Fitawrari* Tägäññä Wodajé, one of the *balabbats* of Yilmana-Dénsa as their *Ṭor Aläqa*.³⁵

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE PATRIOTIC MOVEMENT IN AGAW MEDER

Following their invasion, the method that the Italians used to pacify Gojjam, in particular Agaw Meder, was to apply force rather than political persuasion. To this end, they established additional garrisons in several areas of Gojjam. They also declared again a policy of disarmament. They believed that, unless the people who inhabited the country side were disarmed, peace could not be maintained in the region. In addition to this, they ordered the people not to give any kind of tax or tribute to the ruling classes-lay and ecclesiastical. They instituted that tax should be paid only to the Italian officials or the representatives.³⁶ Nevertheless, both policies were not accepted by the people of Agaw Meder. Rather, they served the people as an inspiration to make an armed revolt on the invading force.

Italians, however, had two major garrisons in Agaw Meder: Injabara and Dangla. Until they built a big arsenal and garrison in Dangla, it was Injabara that served as the main centre of the colonial administration. But in 1937 they shifted to Dangla and since then it served as the main colonial center of Agaw Meder, *Accäfär* and Méçça.³⁷

³⁴ Informants: *Qäññazmač* Heruy Worqnäh, and *Fitawrari* Bāyānā Bišaw.

³⁵ Informants: Alamräw Hailu, Täfära Yemär, and Admasu Yemär.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Informants: Atnafu Gässässä, Ayčäw Maré, Sintayähu Täfäri, and Sayiš Dästa.

In August 1937, however, the people of Aććäfär, Säkäla, Yilmana-Densa and Agaw Meder in general, having witnessed Italians injustice, decided to fight them. In the same month and year, the patriots of Agaw Meder organized themselves under the leadership of *Grazmač* Qoläç and exchanged ideas with the patriots of the neighboring districts on how to combat the fascist force. After wards, the patriots of Agaw Meder, Säkäla and Aććäfär, who knew his military skill while he was fighting against the Italians at Širé front, were getting ready to ask Mängäša to be their commander. Then, they elected delegates such as *Agafari* Akalu Fanta, *Ato* Tägäññä Wodajo and *Ato* Täsfaye Aynaläm to request his willingness to be their war leader. He received the delegates at Guta on 23 August 1937 and accepted the offer and agreed to meet the people at a place called Kuwakura on the banks of the Abay, some fifty kilometers to the east of Dangla.³⁸

On 29 August 1937, through their clandestine messengers, all the delegates of the patriots of Damot, Bälaya, Aććäfär, Säkäla and Agaw Meder met at a place called Kuwakura. On the appointed date *Däjazmač* Mängäša, with some of his loyal servants arrived at the place. He was given a warm and friendly greeting by the people. After the reception, some of the elders spoke turn by turn about the objective of the meeting. At last, Mängäša made his historic speech about the objective of the meeting, as well as the crimes of the Italians and his full commitment to fight against the Italians. Mängäša and the people as well as the delegates, following the tradition of their ancestors, made a pledge to be loyal to each other and made an oath to fight their common enemy jointly. In addition, the clergy condemned those who would break the oath. To stay unified and to fight the enemy jointly the people swore an oath in the Churches found in each parish, and a word used in swearing was: literally, in Amharic it reads as follow, “፳፻፲፱ ጥፋት ለሰጠው ገሰት ገሰት ገሰት”, literally, “If any one betrayed [the patriots] let his wife give birth to a black dog.” This practice of swearing an oath continued until the invaders were expelled.³⁹

Meanwhile, in November 1937, the Italians sent a huge army under Colonel Umberto Carrano from Gondar to Yidibi in Yilmana-Densa district. The aim was to relieve the besieged troops that were overwhelmed since September 1937 by *Däjazmač* Deräs Šefäraw of Yilmana-Densa, the Lieutenant of *Däjazmač* Mängäša Jämbäré, who understood the concentration of the enemy at Yidibi, circulated his circular letters to his war commanders of Kuwakura, Méçça, Säkäla, Aććäfär and Agaw Meder. There is also evidence that Mängäša was reinforced by the followers of *Däjazmač* Wond Wäsän Kassa, refugee from Gondar. Mängäša called upon the war chiefs of various regions to encircle, exhorting them with the slogan of “*Erda Lämatäbeh*” or “fight for your religion”.

³⁸ Informants: Asayä Antänäh, Atnafu Aynaläm, Aynaläm Ayçäw, and Täšagär Bälay.

³⁹ Interview with Fäntahun Tadässä (*Hamsa Aläqa*), *Emahoy* Azaläc Däbäbä, and *Däjazmač* Qoläç Mäläsä.

He, then, led a large army to Yidibi. He divided his troops into different sections under their respective commanders and began his offensive battle on 29 November 1937 and stayed up to December 3, 1937. Militarily, Mängäša's force outnumbered the Italians force and it cut the enemy off from the supply of logistics. They gave Italians a heavy blow and many Italians and collaborators were killed and wounded. Carrano himself was badly wounded but escaped. It was at this battle Mängäša enjoyed the maximum in capturing a large amount of arms. A large number of weapons were captured. The latest rifles, Albin (Alpine) were captured in a large amount. New rifles, pistols, bullets, bombs and mules loaded with ammunition, rations, bags and medical logistics were captured by Mängäša's troops. According to my informants, they also captured six *Bawza* (flood-light) and three Italian flags.⁴⁰ This victory took *Däjazmač* Mängäša to the peak of his power and most of the areas which constituted his power base were incorporated areas to various patriotic leaders under him.

Thus, following this battle, *Däjazmač* Mängäša's domain was increased to Agaw Meder-Bahir Dar-Bäläya. In addition, his sphere included Lejambära and a large portion of Säkälä. His domain was very large and also important because it brought the historically semi-autonomous districts into one territorial entity, which gave it common borders with the Sudan.⁴¹ *Däjazmač* Mängäša extended his territories to include Aläfa-Ṭaqusa from Čilga district of Gondar. He further took another engagement with the enemy forces. When they came from Bahir Dar, on their way to Dangla, he, who had been tipped about the advance of the enemy's force, rolled big stones and heaped logs across their path and stopped them at a place called Girifit, the border line between Agaw Meder and Acćäfär. After heavy fighting, Mängäša captured many arms from the enemy. The enemy also suffered heavy casualties and the survivors escaped with the help of an airplane to Dangla.⁴²

Anyway, the success of Mängäša did not upset the Italians only in Gojjam but in Bägémeder, too, in places like Quwara, Ṭaqusa, Gazege and Aläfa. People in these areas began to take the example of Agaw Meder and scaled up their operations against the enemy. *Däjazmač* Mängäša, in fact, was said to have given advice that raised their morale. He also gave titles and awarded the commanders of these areas with machine-gun.⁴³

⁴⁰Tamru Ambaw, 'Yäfašist Ṭalian...', pp.42-43.

⁴¹Informants: Asayä Antänäh, Admasu Akalu, Admasu Tariku, Asfäräw Yimam, and Täsäle Worqu.

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³*Ibid.*

As the resistance was strong in Agaw Meder, Italians launched a new large-scale offensive. General Gallina, who was the commander of the Agaw Meder district, was ordered by the governor of Amhara, General Mezzetti, to attack enemy positions in north western Gojjam and to reinforce his army from the main Italians command center. This time as an experienced tactician, *Däjazmač* Mängäša drew the enemy to a more inaccessible mountainous terrain where it was difficult for the Italians to get supplies or reinforcements without hazard attack.⁴⁴ On the other hand, until he studied the places where patriots were positioned, Gallini did not start his offensive. He stayed up to middle March 1938.

A violent combat broke out on 25 March 1938 and continued for three consecutive days.⁴⁵ Since the operation was accompanied by heavy air bombardment on the patriots, initially Italians However, as the patriots' resistance got stiffer and fighting became intense, Mezzetti ordered Gallina to retreat to Injabara and Galina did it.⁴⁶

The patriots remained in full control of Fageta. Casualties on both sides were reported to have been very high. According to my informants, however, towards the end of the fighting, patriots who fought bravely took the upper-hand and captured a number of arms, provisions and medical supplies. The outcome of the Battle of Fageta (25-27, March 1938) was controversial. Local and Italians reports are contradictory. The Italians command described the battle as intense and full of "violent combats [fought] daily and nightly and often with furious hand to hand combat".⁴⁷ An Italians report of 31 May 1938 described the engagements as neither a defeat nor a success. The report pointed out that "The combat was quite dogged and would have been resolved with a crushing victory for our troops if General Galina had not received an untimely order of retreat".⁴⁸ Moreover, Ugo Cavallero, the general who prepared and guided the large scale operation in Gojjam, had a similar view. He said, "The action conducted by the Governorate of Amara in the territory of Fageta in March 1938 was not a turning point in our favour".⁴⁹

⁴⁴Seltene Seyoum, pp.141-143.

⁴⁵*Ibid*; Mulusaw Meteku, *YäArbaññoč Tegel Kä Fašistoč...*, pp.55-63; Taddässa Zäwoldä, *Qären Gärämaw...*, p.189.

⁴⁶*Ibid*.

⁴⁷AUSSME, 1-4, rac.4/6, I, Colonnello di S.M. Capo Ufficio, 'Promemoria' per S.E. II Capo di Stato Maggiore Generale, Roma, 30.3.1938', Cited in Seltene Seyoum, p.142.

⁴⁸"ACS, FG, b.52 f.43/15.il Capitano [illegible] Comandante. 3.3.1938", cited in Seltene Seyoum, p.142.

⁴⁹Cavallero, Gili avvenimenti military Nell'Impero dal 13 Gennaio al 14 April 1939, Testo II, (Addis Ababa, 1939)', p.95, cited in Seltene Seyoum, p.142.

As the hero of the Battle of Fageta, Mängäša and his force was naturally deemed worthy of being recorded by Cavallero, the commander in-chief of the Armed Forces in Italian East Africa.

Elders often described about the war in Fageta and its conditions as follow:

If you say let's narrate, let it be in Fageta,

*After three days of darkness, it dawned on the fourth.*⁵⁰

This is a testimony of who the victor was. In addition, the son of a participant in the combat, *Qäññazmač* Bäläw Wossän, said, "We made the enemy return in disgrace".⁵¹

Several other informants emphatically stress that Fageta was an Ethiopian victory over the enemy who was forced to flee. Indeed, the invading force was able to escape from total annihilation with the cover provided by airplane sent from Bahir Dar.

Following this success, Mängäša is said to have boasted about the victory at Fageta as follows:

My army, who refused to surrender to the invading force and who fought courageously

Scored a brilliant victory at Fageta Front

Though the number of my followers armed with modern rifles is less than fifteen

*They are able to send back Galina from the gate of Fageta.*⁵²

The Italians, who aware of Mängäša's strength as one of the most patriotic leader who had taken for the early entrance of the Emperor in intense, began to lose hope of freezing Mängäša by force and changed their method. They began to use words rather than force and started to launch propaganda to antagonize him with the other prominent patriotic leaders of Gojjam.

⁵⁰Seltene Seyoum, p.143: Informants: Dägnäh Molla, Aläne Täräfä, Asfäraw Yimam, and Asayä Antänäh.

⁵¹Seltene Seyoum, p.143.

⁵²Informant: Asayä Antänäh, Admasu Akalu, Admasu Tariku, and Asfäraw Yimam.

To this effect, on November 18, 1940, Italian planes dropped a leaflet that was a kind of *Awaj* all over Gojjam. Primarily, the leaflet hold of the Emperor's seal and signature and on the top of the corner of the left hand side, there was his picture. Then, the *Awaj* stated that *Däjazmač* Mängäša was resistance fighter in Gojjam who had led the people to victory. For his service he was awarded the title of *Ras* and he would be made *Negus* of Gojjam after the defeat of the Italians.' The leaflet was asserted to have been forged and dropped over Gojjam by the Italians. Anyway, when one observes the leaflet; in the first place it shows how Mängäša won the favor of the Emperor. In the second analysis, whether the proclamation was forgery or not, it resulted to favor the Emperor's cause. When this proclamation reached to the three patriotic chiefs, Haylu Bäläw, Bälay Zäläqä and Nägaš Bäzabeh, it angered them but the confusion was soon settled when they were told that it was an Italians propaganda deception and trick. Thus, the possible civil war was averted when *Azazh* (later *Däjazmač*) Käbädä circulated a letter informing the patriots of Gojam how the leaflets were dispersed by the Italians.⁵³ At any rate, this circular made the Italians propaganda ineffective. Hence, Mängäša remained their threat and was able to continue with his offensive attacks against Italians forces until liberation.

Däjazmač Mängäša, who had learnt about the early entrance of the Emperor, collected pack-animals to transport war supplies brought by the Emperor. He also enhanced for the entrance of the military force under the Emperor which came to be known as Gideon Force under Wingate to make short the enemy's stay. He then sent pack-animals with a number of mules to the Emperor, who came through Omedella, on the Ethio-Sudanese border on 20 January 1941.⁵⁴

On 20 January 1941, the Emperor, by crossing the Ethio-Sudanese border, hoisted the Imperial Ethiopian Flag at Omédella issuing the following proclamation: "You the People of Ethiopia; Listen; I am in Gojjam, I hoisted my Flag. Your Slavery is over. Come to restore order and peace".⁵⁵

⁵³Käbädä Tässäma, p.241.

⁵⁴W.E.D. Allen, *Guerilla War in Abyssinia* ...p. 41.

⁵⁵Käbädä Tässäma, *Ye Tarik* ..., pp.250-312.

The Emperor then proceeded to Bälāya. His entry into Gojjam had great impact on the population, particularly on the patriots at large. Mängäša ordered his right-hand man at Bälāya, *Fitawrari Täfära Zäläqä* to make a temporary station there along the Burji River. The area was cleared by Mängäša's men sent from Kuwakura, Agaw Meder and Aččäfär with the help of *Fitawrari Täfära Zäläqä*.⁵⁶ Mängäša chose the area because of its strategic importance as it was surrounded by thick-wooded forest and it would be easily defended by a small ground force in case the enemy would attack.⁵⁷

The Emperor with Gideon Force reached Burji on 9 February 1941 and was well received by *Fitawrari Täfära Zäläqä*. Mängäša's men who were sent to receive the Emperor expressed their allegiance to him and their activity during the resistance through their valor and dance.⁵⁸ Although the Emperor reached safely at Burji, he faced problems of transport and provisions. In this situation, the Emperor wrote to Nägeš on 7 Yäkatit 1933. The former asked the latter to collect flour and to pay fee for the people for their grinding service, other than asking him to send pack-animals in earnest.⁵⁹

Däjazmač Mängäša, after he sent his circular to his commanders and organized his force, on Yäkatit 6, 1933 (14 February 1941) made an offensive attack against the enemy's magnificent military camp at Dangla. Mängäša, with the help of some British men who were sent to him to serve as military intelligence by the Emperor, inflicted a heavy loss on the forces of the enemy. With his force, Toller, the leader of the Italians force, was forced to evacuate Dangla for Bahir Dar possibly to meet another Italians commander, Nasi.⁶⁰ The soldiers who camped at Injabara fled towards Buré. *Däjazmač* Mängäša then entered Dangla triumphantly and installed himself as its ruler. He then looted many war materials from the enemy. He gave a great banquet for the people that escorted him to express his joy.⁶¹

⁵⁶W.E.D. Allen, *Guerilla...*p. 41.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

⁵⁸Käbädä Tässäma, *Ye Tarik...*,pp.250-312.

⁵⁹Informants: Dägnäh Molla, Alänä Täräfä, Asfäraw Yimam and Asayä Antänäh.

⁶⁰D. Shirreff, *Bare Foot and...*, pp.82-86.

⁶¹Informants: Dägnäh Molla, Alänä Täräfä, Asfäraw Yimam and Asayä Antänäh.

In the banquet ceremony, *Däjazmač* Mängäša expressed his joy as follows:

Thanks to our Savior! Thanks to God!

*We entered (Dangla) and ate on the table of the Italians.*⁶²

Within a few weeks, *Däjazmač* Mängäša forced the enemy forces to evacuate from all outlying stations and the enemy evacuated Yesmala, *Accäfar*, *Zägé*, *Dabra Mawi*, *Mäšänti*, *Ankäša* and *Adét*. The early success of him to evacuate the enemy from *Bälaya* made it possible for His Majesty to enter Ethiopian soil through *Gojjam* in safe; with this he freed completely his war time domain. The Emperor, who was still at *Burji* was delighted by Mängäša's success at *Dangla* and immediately issued a leaflets and spread all over *Agaw Meder*. The first couplet from the leaflet runs as follow:

When Mängäša Jambare forced the enemy to evacuate from Dangla

It is favorable for Nägaš also to make a surprise attack at the enemy at Buré.

Fighter Patriots, you- men of battle

*Do not let the enemy of your country.*⁶³

On hearing of the evacuation of *Dangla*, Major *Simonds* (who commanded the *Mission 101* temporarily, then commanded *Bägémeder Force* at *Bahir Dar* and *Däbrä Tabor*), initiated further actions against *Injabara* and *Burie*, reported to *Sandford* a small force of *Mission 101* soldiers, and suggested that *Mission 101* should move to east *Gojjam* to stir up patriot activity there.⁶⁴

⁶²Tameru Ambaw, "Yä Fašest ...", p. 33, Informants: *Imru Mäkonnän*, and *Asayä Antänäh*.

⁶³*Ibid.*

⁶⁴David Shirreff, *Bare Feet and Bandoliers*, ..., p85.

On the other hand, following the Italians evacuation, the collaborators and the patriots were on the verge of war and made a great problem to *Däjazmač* Mängäša. In the letter he wrote to the Emperor on 24 February 1941 Mängäša expressed his being anxious to set out immediately so as to offer his congratulations in person to the Emperor. He also explained that there was disturbance in the towns of Dangla, Injabara, and some other places because of looting. *Däjazmač* in particular stated how larceny had disturbed the region. In fact, to him the *Lébas* (thefts) were bands who appeared on the fringe of every quarrel and robbed whatever they could get. He also expressed his tireless effort to reconcile the possible clash between the *collaborators* and the patriots.⁶⁵ Then, the Emperor who had entered Ethiopia with war supplies, demanded pack-animals and wrote a letter to Mängäša again. In the letter written on 1 Megabit 1933, the Emperor asked Mängäša to send at least one hundred pack-animals with mules.⁶⁶

On 23 March 1941, the Emperor arrived at Bahunk (the present Koso Bär). On his arrival more than 10,000 patriots of Agaw Meder, under the leadership of *Däjazmač* Mängäša lined up the left and right sides of the main road and expressed their joy with *Fukära* (valor). The people of Agaw Meder received His Majesty with a special cultural dinner like *Injära*, cabbage, wheat, potato, mead and other kinds of feast.

Here, I do like to express one surprise issue that happened in the Bahunk (Koso Bär) banquet ceremony. In the banquet ceremony, 'how the Italians effort was good and to memorize their gratitude', one minstrel whose name is Biräs Yesmaw with his single-stringed violin was said to have composed the following couplet:

Your Majesty, do not be furiously and let me raise a man who went away

Whose weaponry was important, where as its street was smooth

*In spite of his maltreatment, it is unforgettable whenever and at any time.*⁶⁷

⁶⁵Informants: Dägnäh Molla, Alänä Täräfa, Asfäraw Yimam and Asayä Antänäh.

⁶⁶For the Emperor's letter, see appendix No.XV.

⁶⁷Informants: Dägnäh Molla, Alänä Täräfa, Asfäraw Yimam and Asayä Antänäh.

However, the destiny of this man was not apparent; either he was in jail or killed my informants could not remember. But as one of my informants said, he was immediately taken to prison. At the same banquet ceremony and on the same night, one man, named *Grazmac' Čäkol Bälay*, who had been a *banda* but later became an eleventh hour patriot, to explain how the Emperor was 'generous', composed the following couplet:

Why do you invite us a banquet

*It was enough that you emancipated us.*⁶⁸

In fact, the verse was ironic and stealthily. It was aimed at making sarcastic comments or insults in seemingly pleasant words. Anyway, after he spent a night at Bahunk (presently Koso Bär), on 25 March 1941, Haile Selassie resumed his journey towards Buré.

Then, the Emperor proceeded from Buré to Wojät (which was later renamed as Finotä Sälam by the Emperor himself), and then to Däbrä Marqos and reached at Däbrä Marqos on 6 April 1941. In fact, Gojjam was already liberated by *Gojjamé* patriots before Gideon force entered into the region, but under Gideon force which came with the Emperor, Gojjam was utterly liberated. Before Emperor Haile Selassie crossed the Abay River for Addis Ababa, he appointed Mängäša as the governor of his war time domain the districts including Agaw Meder, Acćäfär, Kuwakura, Méçça and Yilmana-Densa as a whole. In fact, Mängäša escorted the Emperor until he crossed Abay river and then the Emperor entered Addis Ababa on 5 May 1941. The end of the patriotic struggle in 1941, therefore, became the beginning of a new political career to *Däjazmac' Mängäša Jämbäré*. Mängäša, thus, started his political career and tried to bring peace and order for his districts. Anyhow, finally he was appointed the governor-general of Wolläga province on 11 Hamle, 1938 (19 July 1946).⁶⁹

⁶⁸Informants; Šefäraw Laqe, Aynätaw Bälay, and Sintayähu Taddässä.

⁶⁹*Negarit Gazeta*, 21st March, 1945, p.51:Col. 1.

DÄJAZMAĆ MÄNGÄŠA’S POLITICAL CAREER FROM 1946 TO 1950

In Wolläga Mängäša played an active role in constructing a number of Churches, Schools and roads. His constructive tasks and good administration in Wolläga was relished by the people. His initiative was aborted, however, when his health began to deteriorate. Owing to his illness, the *Emperor sent him a Doctor, named Dr. Gäbrä Mäsqäl to treat him. Nevertheless, Mängäša did not* feel better and he was brought to Addis Ababa for treatment. He was allowed to be treated in Haile Selassie’s Hospital (now *Yäkatit* 12) by the Emperor and treated in the hospital for five months. However, Mängäša became seriously ill and he died on 6 Miazia 1942(14 April 1950) at 1;00 A.M. *Bitwädäd* Mängäša Jämbäré was buried at St. Selassie Church in Addis Ababa.⁷⁰

When His Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie notified Mängäša’s death, he gave order that Mängäša should be accorded with the honor of an important patriot funeral.

Meanwhile, the Emperor, the Empress, the Princes together with the high ranking Officials, Ministers and Generals accompanied the corpus in the burial place. Following the burial ceremony, the Generals and the troops gave honorable salutation.

Anyhow, after he did several heroic deeds by being one of the patriot war lords in Ethiopia, Mängäša died in Addis Ababa and it was for such creditable efforts of him that the Emperor, while he inaugurated the Haile Selassie I Bridge of Abay River on 22 *Miyazia* 1942 (30, April 1950), in his speech spoke the following:

“We feel profoundly sorry when we do not see among us your distinguished leader at that time, Bitwädäd Mängäša Jämbäré, who has recently been claimed by death and who was Our rear-guard with the patriots when crossing the Abay river. Nevertheless, his famous name being in Our hearts, he celebrates the same ceremony with Us.”⁷²



⁷⁰Addis Zemen, “ Tarik Yale...”, Col.5, p.3.

⁷²Addis Zemen, “ Tarik Yale...”, Col.5, p.3.