

Research article

Military Expedition of Emperor Tekle Giorgis I to Wolqayt, Northwestern Ethiopia

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Abstract: *The main objective of this study is to show the routes, causes and consequences of the military expeditions of Emperor Tekle Giorgis I (r. 1779–1800) to the regions of Wolqayt, Tsegede and Wogera in the 18th century. The main reason for this expedition was to defeat his opponents, especially Dejazmach Gedlu. The phenomenon paved the way for the emergence of enmity among the local chiefs of Wolqayt, Tsegede and Wogera against the Emperor and the subsequent military campaign of the Emperor. The period refers to the military campaign of emperor Tekle Giorgis Giorgis I to Wolqayt against Dejazmach Gedlu and his victory over his adversaries in 1781. The Emperor was one of the Zemene Mesafint or the Era of Princes (1769–1855) emperors with a nickname 'Fitṣame Mengist' (End of the Monarchy). The chronicle of the Emperor was written in Ge'ez during his*

reign by the chronicler, Aleqa Gebru, who was very close to the Emperor. The research used qualitative techniques, making extensive use of secondary as well as primary sources. After the campaign, Wolqayt became part and parcel of the central government with its political capital in Gondar. Therefore, Emperor Tekle Giorgis I's campaign and his subsequent coercive measures towards these strategically important Northern provinces were to reaffirm his power and dominance.

Keywords: *Ethiopic (Ge'ez) language, Royal chronicle, Military expedition, Era of Princes, Wolqayt*

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1. Introduction

The appearance of a written language since ancient times has provided opportunities for Ethiopia's historical documentations. The inscriptions of Sabeen, Greek and Ge'ez languages are on the forefront from among the cultural accomplishments of the Aksumite civilizations. These inscriptions depict the military expeditions of the various succeeding and unconquered Aksumite emperors with their victories¹. The reign of Emperor Ezana in the fourth century was a testament to the gradual but, steady growth of this documentation. Ezana's expeditions to crush the rebellions which broke out to the south and southwest directions of the Empire, is for xample well documented.² This tendency of depiction for the successes of the king has positive resemblance with the emergence of the royal chronicles many centuries later. The coming to power of Emperor Yekuno Amlak (r.1270–1285) as a restorer of the Solomonic dynasty, opened a new era for the production and documentations of historical deeds in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church or the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church and the state which were two faces of a coin had the lion's share for the documentations of events in the past. After this historical event, texts were composed in the Ge'ez language. When we say Ge'ez historiographical texts, it is mainly concerned with hagiographies and chronicles. Hagiographies were translated in mass from the Coptic and Syria Christian Arabic texts since the 14th century³. The Kibre Negest⁴ (the glory of kings) is one of the best examples from among the translated texts. However, the embryonic spirit for the production of chronicles was drawn from traditions of the ancient Aksumite list of kings inscribed on surfaces like stone, wood or metal. This in turn had its historical linkages with the Greek writing traditions, due to the fact that the Aksumite local ruler Zoskales⁵ was knowledgeable about the Greek language, during the Aksumite period.

The first known strong evidence for the production of chronicles as historical genres of Ethiopian emperors and the highest dignitaries started in the fourteenth century⁶. Chronicles are one of the sources for Ethiopian history. The tradition has continued to survive from the fourteenth to the

¹ Pankhurst 1967, vii–viii.

² Taddesse 1972, 18.

³ Pankhurst 1967, xi.

⁴ Phillipson 2012, 66

⁵ Bausi 2006.

⁶ (Solomon 2016, 5; Sergew 1972, 2; McCann 1979, 387; Hussein 1983,75.

twentieth century with significant changes in the languages used and contents of the accounts in general.⁷

Up to the reign of Emperor Tewodros (r.1855–1868), when Amharic was used, chronicles (both historical and ecclesiastical records) were kept in *Ge'ez*.⁸ On the basis of the mainstreamed knowledge on the production and distribution of royal chronicles in Ethiopia, the period of Tekle Giyorgis I⁹, or the era of princes had ushered in a new chapter in Ethiopian history.¹⁰

The period of the Zemene Mesafint or the Era of Pinces is a period of history which roughly started with the death of Emperor Iyoas in 1769 and lasted until 1855. It was a period characterized by the collapse of central authority and the growth of the power of the regional lords or *Mesafins*. It was a period of intense power struggle between the monarchy and the nobility for political supremacy. The overthrow of the power of the monarchy was heralded in the year 1769 when *Ras Mika'el Siḥul*¹¹ of Tigray, the first of the known “king-maker” got king Iyoas murdered and put on the throne a seventy year old man, Yoḥannes II. *Ras Mika'el Siḥul* attempted to

⁷ Pankhurst 1967, xiii–xiv); Chernestov 1991, 87–88.

⁸ *Ge'ez* (*Etiopic*/ Classical Ethiopic) (ግዕዝ) is the classical language of Ethiopia. Names used in European literature are “Classical Ethiopic”, “old Ethiopic” or simply “Ethiopic.” The position that *Ge'ez* holds in Ethiopia has often been compared to that of Latin in Europe. However, *Ge'ez* had ceased to be a spoken language since the Medieval period and presently, it is restricted only to the compounds of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

⁹ Emperor Tekle Giyorgis I was one of the Zemene Mesafint or the Era of Princess (1769–1855) kings. The reign of the Emperor is interchangeably also known as *Fitṣame Mengist*, ‘End of the kingdom.’ signifies the end of the Solomonic monarchy in Ethiopia. Emperor Tekle Giyorgis I was Ethiopia’s only Solomonic monarch who enthroned and dethroned six times in eleven years (1789–1800), whose history is fairly well documented in his royal chronicle, written during his reign.

¹⁰ Abbink 2007, 964; Chernestov 2007, 43; Kropp 1994, 94; Guidi, 251. *Ras Mikael Sehul*’s chronicle might be assumed as an extension of the royal, if not official, writings of Ethiopian historiography.

¹¹ Ismail, 1972:1–3; Bruce, 1790, vol.v:422; Seltene, 1972:ii; Ismail, 1972:7–8; Bruce 1790, vol.v:422; Pankhurst, 1979:457; Rubenson, 1966:17; Täklä Tsadiq; 1976:3; Pankhurst, 1990:81. Scholars continue to be interested in *Ras Mika'el Siḥul*’s origins and career. His ancestral claim of noble background, his beginnings as a local ruler with an erratic military and political profession within Adwa; the spiritual sagas he participated in following the passing of Patriarch Krestodolu III in 1742; the political marriages organized by him that helped him to create pleasant terms of employment with the Gondarine a court of law his unforeseen growth as a powerful and wealthy chief of staff with a Machiavellian character as the creator and breaker of emperor.

impose himself as the sole military ruler over the disintegrated states of northern Ethiopia then after.

The last emperor to exercise any authority of his own was Tekle Giorgis I (r.1779–1800), who was enthroned and dethroned six times within eleven years. Ethiopian tradition has nicknamed him *Fitsame Mengist* or ‘End of the Monarchy.’ During the *Zemene Mesafint*, the Christian king of kings or the *Neguse Negest* virtually lost his traditional power and authority *vis-a-vis* prominent regional lords.¹² For instance, Emperor Tekle Giyorgis I was forced to live in exile at a place of isolation, named Sequa in Waldiba.¹³ The chroniclers of this time often tell a narrative of grief due to the frequent civil wars fought here and there for the imperial throne.¹⁴ The authority of Tekle Giyorgis I was, however, constantly being challenged as the chronicler stated.¹⁵ The writer for the chronicle of Emperor Tekle Giyorgis I was *Aleqa Gebru* who is clearly mentioned in the text itself when he was appointed to the office of *Tseḥafe te’əzaz* in 1779.¹⁶ The chronicler had proximity to the event both in time and place and was an eye-witness, thus he wrote with great attention.¹⁷ The chronicle of Emperor Tekle Giyorgis I is divided into five chapters. The second

¹² Rubenson 1966, 17; Abir, 1968, 30; Shiferaw, 1991, 25; Täklä Tsadik, 1976, 3; Zewde 1975, 2–3, 17.

¹³ *EAE*, IV (2010), 1112b-1114a (Denis Nosnitsin). It is an ancient as well as historical area situated in northern Ethiopia. However, Waldiba is very significantly known because of the culture of monasticism, and especially due to its hermits. Collected oral tradition suggest that upon its flight to the country of Egypt the sacred family travelled to the realm of Ethiopia and lived in Waldiba; thus, the monastic life gained its beginning from the Savior of the World himself. According to sources, the name Waldiba is come from the word Wali, the name of a plant “took by Jesus Christ from heaven”. Berrihun Kebbede 1990/91, 36. It appears that, traditionally, the expansion of monastic life in Waldiba was strongly associated with the impact of the same life on the other side of Tigray especially in Temben, Shire and Debre Abbay. The first historically known evidence to the monastery is found in the hagiographic tradition of abune Samu’el of Waldiba, who was active in the locality called ገዳም ዋሊ (gedam Wali ‘the desert of Wali than ‘the monastery of Wali) as an area of tremendous religious Acts of ‘Abiye Egzi’ (Counti Rossini 1938;414).However, Waldiba was not mentioned in the historical books other than hagiography before the 17th century. Despite to the contrary foreign map makers especially Europeans reveal on the where about of Waldiba on their maps beginning from the 15th century. Egyptus Novelo (cp.Almeida’s map, BeckHunt Alm, after p. xcvi, “Oldeba”, and cp.LudHist; as unnamed “hermitage”, on 1564 Castaldi’s map’s. Beck HuntAlvar).

¹⁴ Pankhurst 1969,202.

¹⁵ Blundell 1922, 331; Pankhurst 1982,179.

¹⁶ Blundell 1922, 22, 48, 234, 270,298 (trans); Ms, Paris BN, 143 309.

¹⁷ McCann 1978, 390;Solomon Gebreyes 2018,807.

chapter talks about the king's expedition to the regions of Wolqayt¹⁸, Tsegede against *dejasmach*¹⁹ Gedlu, and his victory over his adversary in 1781.²⁰ The main reason for this expedition was to get the submission of his opponents. Therefore, Emperor Tekle Giyorgis I's campaign and his subsequent coercive measures towards these strategically important northern provinces were to strengthen his power.

I have used Emperor Tekle Giorgis I, unlike other chronicles of Ethiopian emperors, because the five manuscripts of this emperor are the focus of my Ph.D. research. In other words, I am doing my research on Emperor Tekle Giorgis I's, nicknamed *Fitsame Mengist*, whose history was based on five available manuscripts housed abroad in European libraries.

2. Research Methods

2.1. Description of Wolqayt

According to the geographical map for Wegera, Wolqayt is a historic province in northern Ethiopia. It is situated south of the Täkkäze, which separates it from Adyabo; it borders Tsegede to the south, and Mezega, which is actually regarded as "lowland," to the north of Wolqayt. The central highland region of Wolqayt comprised Qafta and Bertukan. Wolqayt was a *woreda* in Wegera awrajja of Begemder.²¹

The Tekkeze separates²² Wolqayt from Tegray, and the majority of its people are Amharic speakers, Tegregna speakers, a small number of Agäw speakers, and others. The smallest areas of Bete Israel existed at least until the 1940s. Only under Emperor Be'ede Maryam, after Tselemt, Semen, and Dembeya were finally subdued, and Wolqayt gained the royal authority. Ayane Egzi, a strong governor of Wolqayt from the 17th and 18th centuries and a favorite of emperor Iyasu I, is said to be a descendent of *Ras* Degenä. Wolqayt served as a refuge for emperor Bekaffa's adversaries, and the two had a cordial relationship. Cherqin Necho became governor of Wolqayt

¹⁸ It is a historical area in northern Ethiopia located just south of the Tekeze River that separated it from Tigray in the north.

¹⁹ *Dejasmach* literally mean combatant of the door, next to *Ras* in the Ethiopian chain of command of nobility directed by the Negus Negest or king of kings.

²⁰ Blundell 1922, 22–38, 234–56 (trans.).

²¹ Cook Anthony 1867, 188. See also Walter Plowden. *Travels in Abyssinia*, London 1868, 31, 382, 384

²² Clapham 1988, 259; Bruce 1790, vol. III, 582. See also Parkyns Mansfield, *Life in Abyssinia*, London 1853, vol. 2, 343–57.

and Tsegede in 1750, and Surahe Krestos in 1754. Emperor Täklä Giyorgis defeated the insurgent local leader, Dejazmach Gedlu, in 1781 and subdued him.²³



1. The arrow shows the Area of Wolqayt within the Wogera *awurajja* of Begemder Province.
2. The map is adopted in 1969 by the Derg Regime, and it is available in the Ethiopian Mapping Agency.

Figure 1.1 Study area map

2.2. Neo-Lachmannian Method

We have thoroughly researched and used primary sources and secondary data, despite the fact that We were unable to obtain information by asking people because of the lengthy historical event. It is undeniably true that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to textual criticism.²⁴ The methods used in textual criticism differ according to the editor's goal. Some researchers are happy to make minor revisions to a manuscript or just duplicate it as accurately as feasible.²⁵ Some sincerely tried to produce a critical text version that was as similar to the original manuscript as feasible. Any methodical, objective, and well-organized study that aims to restore a text's original variety or at least the shape closest to the original text is considered a critical edition. It simply refers to the act of removing sources of corruption from manuscripts and learning how to restore a text to its original state. It also refers to the artistry of re-creating the author's lost or misplaced old

²³ W. Blundell 1769–1840 (text) = 215, 233–50 (tr.).

²⁴ Tedros 2004, 9.

²⁵ Bausi 2015, 323.

manuscripts.²⁶ This is because none of them have been preserved in their original form, so they cannot be said to be entire or faultless.

Additionally, there has been a great deal of textual alteration from one manuscript family to another over the years, perhaps even from the beginning. These days, it is the most used approach, albeit with some visible modifications. It is sometimes referred to as a method of common error (the system of common faults) or a way of family identification.²⁷ The core of Lachmann's approach is that we must first understand the relationships between text versions before we can start to correct or enhance duplicated passages. Stated differently, every copy that has the same errors (common errors) in the same locations was taken from a single manuscript or progenitor that contained those errors. A sequence of shared variations refers to the same ancestor (a downward hierarchical structure that served as the foundation for genealogy) where this error initially surfaced. Therefore, this study mainly relies on the insights of the Neo-Lachmannian theory of archetypes to critically assess the Ge'ez chronicles of Emperor Tekle Giyorgis I. Only a few relevant studies have been conducted, or the region this research is attempting to examine is essentially unexplored. However, the Neo-Lachmannian process was not followed in the critical edition and translation was based on various text variants.

As part of the Ethiopic chronicle tradition, this study has employed a critical edition based on the Neo Lachmannian technique, which aids in reconstructing the text in a manner that is similar to the original text authored by Emperor Tekle Giyorgis I. With the assistance of academics, as well as via attentive reading and text identification, the chronicles that are kept in different European libraries have been collected. BnF Ethiopien d'Abbadie 118, Orient 821, MS or 38 Rüppel, MS Paris, BNF Eth.143, and MS or 39 Rüppel are the Mss that we gathered and utilized. Throughout the investigation, both primary and secondary materials were consulted. The manuscript described in d'Abbadie 118 is the main one that was utilized. The letters are 2.5 mm tall, and there are 28 lines in each column. The manuscript was written in the eighteen century. The primary rationale behind the selection and utilization of this document is its completeness, legibility, full page count, and superior preservation compared to others. The secondary sources include a range of

²⁶ Greetham 1992; C.Bernard, 1991; Witkam 1988; Solomon Gebreyes 2016, 18; Bausi 2006.

²⁷ C.Bernard,1991; Greg 1927; Haugen 2003;Salemans, 2000. J.A. Bengel was in the forefront who tried to group the manuscripts into families but on the basis of geographical factors i.e. 'Alexandrian', ' Byzantine' and 'Western.

academic publications from recent eras. Examining the chronicle of Emperor Tekle Giyorgis I was made possible by the use of this critical edition approach.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Causes for the Expedition

This expedition's primary goal was to subdue his opponents, particularly Dejazmach Gedlu.²⁸ Thus, the campaign and subsequent coercive actions taken by Emperor Tekle Giyorgis I against this strategically significant Northern Province were intended to reinforce his power. With the help of other local leaders, Gedlu rose up in rebellion during these times and surrounded the Janwara area. In response to Gedlu's rebellion, the Negus calmly sent him a message requesting that he return to the land he had given him. Gedlu responded to the Emperor's letter with haughty words and actions that seemed out of character. His words were absurd; the Negus expressed patience and humility to his servant, while the servant expressed haughtiness and rage to his master. While the Negus, whose throne's name was Feqr Seged,²⁹ as soon as he received Gedlu's word, he roared like a lion and burnt like fire. His generosity was equal to his anger, and he declared that anyone who disobeyed him the next morning would not be allowed to attend viewers. As a result, he departed on the fifth day on a Thursday, flashing like the sun's beams and gleaming like illumination.³⁰

Some areas, such as Semen, which were found in the Wolqayt region as a whole, had mountainous terrain, while other areas have plateaus strewn over horizontal tableland. Many deep river valleys, ravines, and gullies splinter the highlands. However, in a final showdown, the Emperor launched a military operation against the rebel Dejazmach Gedlu in the areas of Wolqayt, Tsegede, and Wogera. The Emperor next advanced towards Wolqayt and surrounded

²⁸ Weld Blundell 1922,248. An ally of Kenfu Adam, Gedlu, rebelled in Wolqayt and on January 1781 king Tekle Giorgis I marched on Gedlu and smashed him. Negotiations for Gedlu's give in dragged on short while till 18 March when Gedlu escaped with a hand full of his people to the locality of Bergetta.

²⁹ *EAE*, III, (2007), 1123ab. The name 'Feqr Seged' literary means, 'Love have submitted to him'. The word Seged was used by all Ethiopian emperors as their regnal names ስመ መንግሥት (sime mengišt), since atse Na'od (r.1494-1508) on the way to the Zemene Mesafint (1769-1855) that expressed their earthly undisputed power. However, this Regnal name slowly but steadily diminished and come to an end by the beginning of the nineteenth century that paved the way for its replacement by horse names. See Michael Kleiner 'Regnal names.'

³⁰ MS Paris, BNF-Éth. 143,Zotenberg 1877, fols 288r-310v (1841), 290; MS Paris, BNF -d'Abbadie 118, fols 387r-417v (1842), 192; MS London, BL- Ort. 821, fols 446r-501v (1852),448.

the rebels' stronghold, but this was ineffective since the rebel Gedlu had constructed a formidable castle that was challenging to breach. In the meantime, the Emperor's troops were counseled to manage a tiny creek next to the stronghold that provided the rebels with water³¹. According to the chronicle, the monarch himself was the mastermind of this military strategy. As the chronicler notes:

ጸዎ፡ ንጉሥ ለደጀአዝማች፡ ወሰን፡ ወይቤሎ፡ ሐር፡ ወአኃዝ፡ ሞ፡ ፈለግ፡ ዘሀሎ፡ በእግረ፡
አምባ፡ በከሙ ይቤ፡ ሞክሐፍ፡ እስሙ ቀዳሜ ፅልዕ፡ ዓዲበ፡ ሞይ፡ ወዕቀብ፡ ከሙ ኢይስተዩ፡
ሠራዊተ፡ ገድሎ፡፡ (The next day, Sunday, the 29th Ṭir, the Negus called Dejazmach Wosen and told him to go and take control of the river springs at the base of the Amba as the Bible states that the most crucial thing in war is to enclose and protect the enemy's water supply; as a result, Gedlu's soldiers were not allowed to drink from the springs).³² As a result of the severe water shortage, the soldiers of Deazmach Gädlu were compelled to give up the citadel. For a little period, agreements for Gedlu's concession persisted until Gedlu fled his siege with a small band of warriors to a different location.³³

3.2. Routes for the Military Campaign

Once a decision was made, the Emperor did everything he could to manage and guarantee the expedition's eventual success. The Emperor himself oversaw the campaign. As a result, on January 5, 1781, the emperor left Gondar and traveled to Wolqayt, Tsegede, and Wogera before reaching Angereb.³⁴ Priests wearing the image of Kuer'ate Re'esu³⁵, Ras Ayader, Blattengeta

³¹ Blundell 1922, 248.

³² Gebre Selassie 1959 E.C.,247; Prouty 1986,150. This traditional but successful military tactic was also adopted in the latter periods of Ethiopian military engagement with the Italians just before the battle of Adwa, in the town of Meqele (1896).During this time For example, empress Taytu knew that attacking the well-fortified Italians would result more catastrophe and big fatalities to the Ethiopians. Empress Taytu forwarded a significant and worthwhile suggestion that was to become one of her extraordinary contributions to the war effort. Taytu's war plan was to siege the Italians by controlling their water source. Thus, thanks to the fruitful application of Taytu's scheme, the Italians suffered very much from shortage of water and were forced to accept the unreserved submission of their fortification. See

³³ D' Abbadie 1842,192.

³⁴ The name of a locality as well as a river just to the south of the city of Gondar, where the higher dignitaries of the Emperor placed the tent to encamp.

Adigeh, Basha Menywab, and Aleqa Gebru were among the Emperor's famous ministers and leaders who joined him on the march. After departing Angereb on January 6, 1781, the Emperor stopped in the Kosoge area. Several officers and their armies joined the Emperor when he arrived in Engash. As a result, the army was assembled around the Emperor for the subsequent expedition. The Emperor began his expedition the following evening and climbed the hill, where he could plainly see the rebel Gedlu's camp with his soldiers, tents, and horses.³⁶ Balambaras Wolde Śelassie, Basha Dengaze, Bäjerond Adera Gebri'el, Alem Daru, and Yeworq Wuha Akale were among the Emperor's higher nobles who accompanied him as he ascended the hill.

The emperor began his journey the following evening and arrived at a nearby location called Enqash. A brief march was held early the next day (January 7, the Sabbath) from Enqash and stationed at a location known as Mihurṭach.³⁷ The Emperor and his army marched the long and challenging route from dawn until midday on January 10th, when they moved their camp from Mihurṭach and ascended a high, narrow location. Due to a lack of food, the lengthy and challenging journey, and the almost vertical rock face landscape, the majority of the animals and his followers perished during this period.³⁸ Yeselassie Barya and Azzaz Kabte were on the defensive line that day, while Blatten Geta Kelo, Balambaras Goleja, and Bejerond Gebre Iyesus took the lead.³⁹ On the 11th of January, 1781, his Majesty proceeded to a place named Deradera, where they took a rest for a week because it was the feast of Saint Gebri'el.⁴⁰ During this period, Gebre Abib, another prominent member of the Majesty, joined them with the tent he had taken from the Gedlu rebels.⁴¹

³⁵It is a Ge'ez word which signifies, "the striking of His head"; a picture of Christ, which was carried at whatever time the emperor departed during war time nonetheless during peace time, it was reserved in a church which was sacred in the identical name in Gondar.

³⁶ D' Abbadie 1842,191;Blundell 1922,235.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹ D' Abbadie 1842,191; Blundell 1922,236.

⁴⁰ For the adherence of the Ethiopian Orthodox religion it was the feast day of the Baptism or Epiphany.

⁴¹ D' Abbadie1842,191; Blundell 1922,236.

When the rebel, Gedlu, heard the Emperor's progress, he got extremely afraid and was unable to respond to the Emperor's strength. The soldiers marched down to Bantaro the following day. The Emperor and his soldiers traveled to Adet on January 14, 1781, and spent two days there.

From Adet, Tekle Giorgis issued the proclamation to the people of Tsegede, thus ኩሉ ሰብአ፡ ፀ ገ ዴ፡ በሙካነ፡ አቡሁ፡ ለይንበር፡ ወይምእ፡ ንቤየ፡ እስከ፡ ሠሉስ፡ ዕለት፡ በትርዖሰ፡ ዘ ቦዘ፡ ሠራቂ፡ ወፈደት፡ ወጉሕልደ፡ አምቀሎ፡ ለንጉሥ፡ ወኢቦአ፡፡ ('Until the end of Tuesday, the people of Tsegede who live in their fathers' land will come to me. But Batryos of Boza, a rogue and bandit who had broken his promise to the Negus, never appeared'). Anshela is where the battle took place, and Bojen⁴² with many other troops were killed in the battle field. Tekle Giorgis and his men were battling valiantly against Gedlu forces, as I witnessed from a strategic location. As a result, the rebel, Gedlu, was heavily beaten and destroyed. His Majesty traveled to a location called Semera on 16 August, 1781, where he prepared a feast for his soldiers and had a lavish celebration supper at a banqueting pavilion to commemorate the victory.⁴³ Resting and reorganizing for the lengthy return march to the capital city, Gondar, took place on Tuesday, January 17. This was carried out over the lengthy and challenging trek across the steep slopy areas, where the majority of the animals and his people were starving due to a lack of food. The return march began steadily from Anshela and came to a brief stop at a place known as Tebershesh. The following day, there was a brief stop at Serqua where the march order was modified and the retainers were rearranged. The Emperor arrived at the Kaza River on Friday, January 20, and crossed it without an incident. That same day, the Emperor's top commanders convinced him to do nothing until ill men, animals, retainers, soldiers, and officials from all across the route arrived and crowded around him. With permission from the Emperor, they set up the tent at night, and their entire body started to relax. The Emperor reached Afe Worq on 21 January, having left the river. On Monday, January 23, His Majesty departed Afe Worq for the Atera region. The Emperor left the area the following day and took up residence in a place called Adi Kokeb. The Emperor's retainers discovered the rebel's, Gedlu's, belongings at Adi Kokeb, where they had been stored. Among the items were carpets, rhinoceros horns, elephant tusks, war drums, honey, butter, and wine. On the morning of January 26, the Emperor departed from Adi Kokeb and traveled to the neighboring towns of Ad Deezmach. Early in the morning of July 27,

⁴² D' Abbadie 1842,192. *Bojen* was one of the top commanders of the rebel Gedlu.

⁴³ D' Abbadie 1842, 192.

1781, the Emperor's force advanced to the Selewa region, where the raiders engaged in combat with the locals. The Emperor left Selewa for Qebteya the following day. Gedlu sent a man with this message to the Emperor while he was at Qebteya: ማሐረ ኒ፡ ወተሠሃ ለ ኒ፡ እግእ ዚእየ፡

ንጉሥ ዘንተ፡ ዘይቤ፡ አኮ፡ በየውሃት፡ ዳዕሙ በጉህሉት፡ ወሰሙ፡ ንጉሥ ዘንተ፡ ይቤሎ፡ ለላዕክ፡ ነዓ፡ ኅበ፡ ሰፈር፡ ወበህየ፡ እነግረክ፡ ኩሎ፡ ('Please pardon me, and pardon me, O Lord, my king. He said this dishonestly rather than with humility. The king informed the emissary of this. "Come to the base, and I'll tell you everything there." "Come over to the camp, there I will tell you everything," the emperor said after hearing it').⁴⁴ Afterward, the Emperor approached the hill of Adäna and observed the rebel, Gedlu, making shift military base situated top of the hill. At Qebteya, the monarch also set up his tent on the front side. The emperor summoned Dejazmach Wosen on January 29 and gave him instructions፡ ዳወዖ፡ ንጉሥ ለደጀአዝማች፡ ወሰን፡ ወይቤሎ፡ ፡ ሐር፡ ወአኃዝ፡ ሙ፡ ፈለግ፡ ዘሀሎ፡ በእግረ፡ አምገ፡ በከሙ ይቤ፡ ሙአሐፍ፡ እስሙ ቀዳሜ፡ ፡ ፅልዕ፡ ዓዲበ፡ ሙይ፡ ወዕቀብ፡ ከሙ ኢይስተዩ፡ ሠራዊተ፡ ገድሎ፡ ('The next day, Sunday, the 29th Ṭir, the Negus called Dejazmach Wosen and told him to go and take control of the river at the base of the amba⁴⁵ the troops of Gedlu must not drink from the stream because, as the Bible states, enclosing and protecting the enemy's water supply is crucial during a conflict').⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Blundell 1922, 239, Ibid.

⁴⁵ *EAE*, I (2003), 217b–218a (Richard Pankhurst). Amba (አምበ) is an Amharic term, also እምበ, amba in Tigre language and, by elongation, Ge'ez word for a mountain (a land mass that projects well above its surroundings; higher than a hill), normally hard of gain access. An Amba can be a place of a town, set of villages, place of churches or monasteries and a military base or fortifications. Citation of unnamed amba is written in the chronicle of emperor of Zä'a Ya'eqob, and of Amba Senet, in the region of Tigray, in the chronicle of his son Be'ade Maryam. In Ethiopian history such areas were extremely had high status specifically during the times of national crisis and were areas with political value. For instance, Amba Gishen, in Bet Amhara (Wollo) was served as a royal prison for undesired male groups of the royal family.

⁴⁶ Blundell 1922,239, D' Abbadie 1842, 192 Gebre Selassie 1959 E.C., 247; Prouty 1986,150; Greenfield 1965, 122. Surprisingly enough, this military strategy seems to be an Ethiopian traditional military system employed so as to force the enemy for surrender. This inherited traditional Ethiopian military strategy which was adopted by the forces of emperor Tekle Giyorgis I's was also applied by the forces of empress Taytu. The Italians fortified themselves at Meqelee, where *etege* Taytu's forces laid siege in 1896. The Italians were eventually forced to surrender as the Ethiopian forces under *etege* Taytu had control of the stream from which the Italians used to fetch water. Thus, the woman won a major battle at the Italian-constructed fortress in the town of Meqelee when she routed the Italians by shutting out their drinking water source.

Therefore, it is true that the Emperor's army then controlled the river, and Gedlu's troops suffered heavily from a lack of water.

Following the instruction, Dejazmach Wosen and Azzaz Worqe engaged Gedlu's warriors in a direct fight. They fought and many Gedlu's soldiers were killed and injured. But this was ineffective because Gedlu's men had constructed a formidable fortification that was hard to breach. The warriors of Gedlu were obliged to give up the castle because of a water scarcity, but the Emperor's army battled valiantly. An overwhelming victory against his enemies was achieved by the Emperor's army on Friday, April 11. The monarch thereupon pardoned Gedlu and left Adena for Selewa on the Sabbath of April 24⁴⁷ after given Gedlu a pardon. With the help of his top officials and retainers, the emperor departed Selewa on Monday, April 26th, and traveled to the Bil Amba neighborhood. In honor of the day of Mädhane Alem (the "Savior of the World"), His Majesty's force rested in Bil Amba on April 27, 1781. The emperor stayed in Bil Amba from May 7 to May 10 in order to resolve the issues with Wolqayt and Tsegede.

The march started on May 12 and continued to the area known as Feqara, where the Emperor walked toward the Adiqebay's steep slopes.⁴⁸ On Saturday, May 13, His Majesty disbanded his camp at Adiqebay and proceeded to Amba Abreham. The Emperor marched to the Fätqa district after marching down Dequtu the following day. The following morning, the army and the monarch left toward Zarima. The Emperor and his troops traveled to Diba Bahre on May 6, 1781, where locals provided him with food and drinks.⁴⁹ The following day, the emperor got up and climbed Limalimo's almost vertical rock wall before making his way into Debareq with considerable difficulty. The lengthy, challenging march prevented further advance for a few days; the soldiers were beginning to exhibit indications of fatigue, and the entire army unit would not

⁴⁷ *EAE*, IV (2014), 492a (Wolbert Smidt-Richard Pankhurst). Selewa (ሰለዋ) is called Çalaoâ or Salaoa in Portuguese sources which is a historical area in northern Ethiopia. Up until the 1970s it served as a wereda, located south of Temben and Sehart Samre, west of Wojirat, at the Southern delimitations of central Tigray. In the chronicles of Ethiopia it first comes along as an administrative area within its own administrators, named shum selewa. Since 1964 Samre was served as a political center for Selewa. Selewa become a battle ground between Emperor Leben Dengel and Aḥmad Ibn Ibrahim al-Ġāzi in 1539. Selewa was also distinguishing mentioned by a Portuguese traveler named Manoel de Almeida in the beginning of the seventeenth century as one from Among the areas of Təgray. This historical area is also mentioned by Ludolf's series of narration of Tigray (Ludolf 1682:17).

⁴⁸ Blundell 1922,253, D' Abbadie 1842, 195.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

arrive. Following his successful pacification of Wolqayt, Tsegede, and Wogera with strong hands, the king triumphantly returned to Gondar or his palace on May 23, 1781.⁵⁰

4. Discussion

The study's conclusions demonstrate the many approaches or strategies the emperor employed when leading the military expedition to the Wolqayt, Tsegede, and Wogera regions. These routes extended from the capital, Gondar, to the northwest, where they bordered the international border with Sudan. It also identifies the primary causes that compelled the Emperor to send an expedition to the aforementioned regions. The study shows the governor of Wolqayt varied reactions and resistance to Emperor Tekle Giorgis I's military campaigns.

The emperor's reactions to the local people's objections demonstrated two distinct ideas. First of all, the Emperor was kind and liberal toward the local populations, and he made an effort to convince them to surrender to the central government in the same peaceful manner as before. Second, the monarch launched a massive military campaign and used heavy hand to control the provinces after a disagreement with Dejazmach Gedlu, the governor of the areas. These results are discussed in light of the research concerns regarding how, since the Middle Ages, different Christian kings have shown interest in the area of northwestern Gondar that borders the Sudan in general and Wolqayt in particular.

5. Conclusion

The article made an effort to disclose the reasons for, routes of the expeditions, and conflicts between the rebel, Gedlu of Wolqayt and Tsegede, and the military expeditions of Emperor Tekle Giorgis I (1779–1800). Known as Fitṣame Mengist, or the “End of the monarchy,” the Emperor was one of the Zemene Mesafint, or the Era of Prince's (1769–1855) Emperor. He was the most puppet emperor ever in the history of the country.

Although the existence of a written language dates back to the Aksumite period, the first recorded evidence of the creation of chronicles as historical genres of Ethiopian Emperors and the highest officials belong to the fourteenth century. Tekle Giorgis I's reign, also known as the Era of Princes, marked the beginning of a new chapter in Ethiopian history, according to widely

⁵⁰ Ibid., 256;195.

accepted facts about the creation and dissemination of royal chronicles in Ethiopia.⁵¹ Between the fourteenth and twentieth centuries, the tradition persisted despite notable shifts in the languages employed and the overall content of the narratives. The end of the Gondarine period and the beginning of a period of civil and feudal political struggle or violence were caused by a slow process of political decline. This period was recorded in Ethiopian history as ‘Zemene Mesafint’⁵² or the Era of Princes. It was a period characterized by the collapse of central authority and the growth of the power of the regional lords or Mesafints.

The last emperor or king of kings to exercise any authority of his own was Tekle Giorgis I (r.1779–1800) who was enthroned and dethroned six times within eleven years. During the Zemene Mesafint, the Christian king of kings or the Neguse Negest⁵³ virtually lost their traditional power and authority *vis-a-vis* the prominent regional lords. The chroniclers of this time often tell a narrative of grief due to the frequent civil wars fought here and there for the imperial throne. The authority of Tekle Giyorgis I was, however, constantly being challenged as the chronicler stated.

The main cause for Emperor Tekle Giyorgis’s campaign towards the regions of Wolqayt, Tsegede and Wogera in 1781 against dejazmach⁵⁴ Gedlu and Kenfu Adam was to reaffirm his authority.

⁵¹ Sergew 1972, 3; Chernetsov 1994,97&98; Chernestov 1991, 94; Kropp 1986,362 EAe, III, 2007, 43b.. The beginning of the Zemene Mesafint in 1769 depicted us for the emergence of new official historiography. This clearly demonstrated how the Gondarine Christian kings virtually lost their traditional power and authority *visa-vise* the regional lords. Some strong local rulers dominated the politics that also eroded the status of court chronicles. A good example of this was the short chronicle of *Ras* Mika’el Sihul of Tigray that disrupted the long maintained old tradition of the composition of royal chronicles. Chernestov argued that, the *Ras* has introduced a princely historiography in Ethiopian history. In effect, his argument compares the old aged (four-hundred years) preserved tradition of the production of royal chronicles by *Tsehafe Tezazat* in retrospect. After the collapse of the period of the Era of Princes in 1855, royal chronicles come in to view from its disappearance when Tewodros II come to power.

⁵²The Zemene Mesafint’ is a period of Ethiopian history which roughly begun with the death of Iyoas in 1769 and ended till 1855. It was a period characterized by the collapse of central authority and the growth of the power of the regional lords. It was the erosion of the traditional power and authority of the Christian monarch. See details on Abir Mordechai 1968.

⁵³ It is an Amharic title equivalent to king of kings.

⁵⁴ EAe, II (2005), 62–63 (Biru Tafla). ደጃዝማች (*Dejazmach*) Amharic ደጃዝማች, short form *dejach* was one of the top as well as notable military titles within the most ancient and historic Ethiopia military hierarchy. The prestigious

Once the final decision had been taken, the Emperor made every effort to conduct and ensure the eventual success of the expedition. After a cautious examination of the difficulties of the march, resting places were chosen along the way to Wolqayt, Tsegäde and Wogera. Finally, the Emperor was able to reestablish his authority over the strategically important regions of Wolqayt, Tsegede and Wogera through military expeditions with heavy hands.

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and level of the holder of the title differ little or not in the long history of the country till the military title was scale down in the post 1941. According to the undocumented source for protocol of ranks of Mahtme Sellasie Wolde Mesqel (Mah Zekr 642f.) the title is second to *ras*. The term is from the composition of two words: *deji* (meaning rear-guard) and *azmach* (commander). In a belike definition the word from where it springs into being is d-g, connoting exterior of probably from the administrative center or either from the Emperor's tent or palace's doorway. (Cp. Ge'ez ደጋ ደጋ, dede, Amh. ደጋ, deji, Tgn. ደጋ, deji), as a result, 'vanguard' or the one who can command the lord's door'. According to oral tradition the title was come in to being during the reign of Emperor Dawit II. The man who holds this title had three main duties: he was administrator of the province, Main judge of his administrative area and the military leader of his soldiers recruited in his particular region in times of crisis.

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