

## PRESIDENT SALVA KIIR CONDUCTS A TWO-DAY WORKING VISIT IN ERITREA



President of the Republic of South Sudan, General Salva Kiir Mayardit, arrived in Asmara on 18 August, for an official visit at an invitation of President Isaias Afwerki.

Upon arrival at Asmara International Airport, President Salva Kiir was accorded warm welcome by President Isaias Afwerki and senior government and PFDJ officials.

President Salva Kiir was accompanied by Foreign Minister Nyala Deng Nyala and Minister at the President's Office Mr. Mike A. Beng.

In the afternoon hours, President Isaias Afwerki and President Salva Kiir held talks on development of bilateral relations, the current situation in South Sudan and the peace prospect as well as regional issues of interest to both

countries.

President Isaias also hosted state dinner in honor of President Salva Kiir and his delegation.

In the evening hours, President Isaias Afwerki hosted State Dinner on 18 August in honor of General Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of South Sudan, and

his delegation at the Asmara Municipality Hall.

Speaking at the occasion in which senior Eritrean government and PFDJ officials, members of the diplomatic corps and invited guests attended, President Isaias Afwerki said that the bond between the peoples of South Sudan and Eritrea is distinct from other normative or ordinary ties and that the special bond was nurtured through vigorous solidarity in a common struggle for justice and liberation.

President Isaias reiterated that the people of South Sudan have asserted their liberation through precious sacrifices; however, due to external subversion and internal discord, they were embroiled in a relentless spiral of strife and crisis soon after independence as they embarked on the heavy task of nation-building.

President Isaias reassured President Salva Kiir that Eritrea shall continue to shoulder the responsibility to strengthen the

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## SIGNIFICANCE OF PRESIDENT SALVA KIIR'S VISIT TO ERITREA



Presidential Advisor Mr. Yemane Gebreab said that the visit of President Salva Kiir to Eritrea will have significant contribution in the mutual benefit of the peoples of the Horn of Africa.

Noting that the contribution of Eritrea in the victory of the people of South Sudan has been hindered by the then regional and global developments, Mr.

Yemane said that the prevailing peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia as well as Somalia has created conducive atmosphere in the development of mutual cooperation in the region.

Underlining the historic relation Eritrea and South Sudan share in addition

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## EID-AL-ADHA CELEBRATED NATIONWIDE

Eid Al-Adha Al-Mubarek Hejira year 1439 was celebrated with enthusiasm nationwide yesterday, 21 August.

Salat was conducted at Bahti Meskerem Square here in Asmara in which ministers, senior Government and PFDJ officials, members of the Diplomatic Corps, religious leaders and a number of the faithful took part.

Sheik Salim Ibrahim Al Muktar, General Secretary of the Central Office of Eritrean Eftae and Islamic Affairs, said after the Salat that this year's Eid Al Adha is being celebrated in a historic time where Eritrea and Ethiopia signed a peace deal, and expressed his belief that the peace agreement will be an example to many nations with similar problems.

Sheik Salim Ibrahim Al Muktar also called on the faithful to practice mutual cooperation and extend a helping hand to the needy in addition to displaying mutual affection and spirit of harmony.

Sheik Salim wished the Eritrean people inside the country and abroad in general and followers of the Islamic faith in particular a happy Eid.



# REPORTAGE

## Reportage: Peaceful NeighborHood for Mutual Benefit

**Kesete Ghebrehiwet**

Eritrea has for the last two months or so been a venue where leaders of the Horn of Africa come together and reach agreements of cooperation. The peace deal between Eritrea and Ethiopia, visit of the Somali President to Eritrea and of Eritrea's higher delegation to Ethiopia and Somalia, and the most recent visit of President Salva Kiir of South Sudan are some of the notable indications for a bright future in the region.

Last Saturday 18 August, President Salva Kiir of South Sudan conducted a two-day visit to Eritrea at the invitation of President Isaias Afwerki. During his Stay in Eritrea, President Salva Kiir visited various development sites in the environs of Asmara and in the Southern region. The development sites that President Salva Kiir visited include the Tekera and Misilam dams, agricultural projects, dairy farms, transportation infrastructure, as well as solar energy system.

The two presidents have also held discussion on the

enhancement of bilateral relations between the two nations. A dinner

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### President Salva Kiir Mayardit's Speech

*Your Excellency President Isaias Afwerki,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen*

In South Sudan, our people are suffering and dying because of the positions of individuals. On the other hand, a best example of reconciliation was taken by my two brothers President Isaias and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in Addis Ababa and in Asmara; they alone without any mediation were able to reconcile the peoples of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Prime Minister Abiy came here and President Isaias also went to Addis Ababa. I congratulate the two leaders for their wise decision to come together and bring these two countries together. These are the two countries which made us what we are today. We are now South Sudan as a state. So, the agreement between the two countries reached in Addis Ababa and in Asmara will now help us solve our current problem.

We are here in Asmara for bilateral agreement that benefit the peoples of Eritrea and South Sudan. These people have fought for a very long period of time and they need to be compensated. They need to see something tangible for generations to come.

I once more thank His Excellency President Isaias and all his Government and the people of Eritrea for the warm reception that I received today with my delegation right away from the airport and all the way to the Presidential Palace and back to Asmara Palace Hotel. I thank you all very much for attending this occasion. I hope to see all of you once in Juba.

*Thank you very much.*



### President Isaias Afwerki's Speech

*Your Excellency General Salva Kiir Mayardit*

*President of the Republic of South Sudan,*

*Distinguished Members of the Delegation,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Allow me to take this occasion to welcome – again - Your Excellency and your distinguished delegation to this country on behalf of the people and Government of Eritrea.

The bond between the peoples of South Sudan and Eritrea is distinct from other normative or ordinary ties. This special bond was indeed nurtured through vigorous solidarity in a common struggle for justice and liberation; a colossal task that had exacted precious sacrifices of heroes and heroines.

The government and people of Eritrea are proud for their participation in this endeavour in a gesture of brotherly solidarity.

*Mr. President,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The struggle for justice and liberation is inherently onerous. But, the struggle, challenges and trajectory of nation building are much heavier.

The people of South Sudan have asserted their liberation through precious sacrifices. But due to external subversion and internal discord, they were embroiled in a relentless spiral of strife and crisis soon after independence as they embarked on the heavy task of nation building. This is extremely distressing. As it happens, the mission of liberation has yet to be fulfilled.

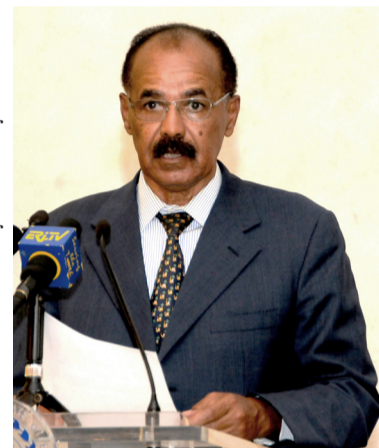
The people of Eritrea will stand, as ever, on the side of, and in solidarity with, the people of South Sudan until and beyond the achievement of the mission of liberation.

I wish success to the domestic efforts that are being conducted under the leadership of the SPLM and Your Excellency to overcome the numerous challenges that the country is facing. In this respect, I urge the people of South Sudan to nurture and consolidate ties of friendship and cooperation with all the peoples of the Horn of Africa in general and with the people of the Sudan in particular.

For our part, we shall continue to shoulder our responsibilities to strengthen our joint efforts and cooperation programmes – modest as they are – in various matters and sectors.

Let me again wish you, Mr. President, success in your current visit and enduring peace and prosperity to the people of South Sudan.

*I thank you*



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**Acting Editor  
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Tel: 11-41-14

Fax: 12-77-49

E-mail:

eritreaprofilenews@gmail.com

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**Layout  
Azmera Berhane  
Aida Johar**



# The Technological and Historical Aspects of Ge'ez Parchment Manuscripts

Abraham Zerai

Located in the Horn of Africa, Eritrea is one of the most ancient civilizations in the world, a place where traditional culture, firmly fixed in the past, continues to be challenged by the customs of modernity. One of the remarkable treasures of this country is the rich manuscript culture, inseparably tied to the monastic institutions. Many monasteries in Eritrea store parchment manuscripts (brana in the Tigigna vernacular) which contain ancient and sometimes unknown religious texts. The common writing surface of ancient Ge'ez, the "brana," is a parchment made from animal skin and because of its organic nature is subject to degradation over long periods of time. It was a fairly common practice to transfer aging texts onto new brana in order to preserve the written word. It is impossible to date ancient manuscripts using common scientific methods. Yet, it is generally agreed upon that the Ge'ez writing has been stable for over 2000 years, achieving perfection by the fourth or fifth century and further culminating in to its height with the development of the production of parchments during the medieval period.

The libraries of many old monasteries in Eritrea contain a variety of parchment manuscripts. Gianfrancesco Lusini, for instance, has reported that the greatest manuscript collection in Eritrea is at Däbrä Bizän, holding 572 manuscripts. Jacek Tomaszewski and Michael Gervers stated that the ancient monastery of Däbrä Libanos in Eritrea is known to have had at least 84 manuscripts in 1994. The libraries of these monasteries not only hold the standard set of books needed to perform the liturgy and other services, but also important texts for the study of the history of Eritrea and the Eritrean Orthodox Church, the literature of the Christian and Eritrean Orthodox Church, and



the history of the manuscript, book. Most of the manuscripts appear to have been copied in the course of centuries and attract the attention of cultural heritage experts, conservators, archivists and historians when viewed from technological and historical perspectives.

The examination and recording of manuscripts in Eritrea recently has until recently been tackled by the Research and Documentation Center permitting an inventory of the parchment manuscripts housed in several monasteries. A broader study of the technological and historical features of the Eritrean manuscripts, however, remains to be systematically addressed and, thus, it will be important to highlight certain aspects revolving around the technological and historical importance of these manuscripts. From a technological perspective, Ge'ez parchment manuscripts are interesting through the analysis of the writing and painting layers, the construction of the book blocks and the binding process. Ge'ez parchments have distinctive features that differentiate them from their European counterparts. Dissimilarities result mainly from different methods of manufacturing and indirectly from the type of mainly goat leather used to produce Ge'ez parchments. The making of Ge'ez parchments often involved

a fairly basic process, without strong chemical processing and often resulted in a relatively raw, rigid, uneven and sometimes hairy product, with large areas of gelatinization on the surface.

It is believed that structure involved in the binding process of Ge'ez parchment manuscripts is very similar to that of early Coptic codices. Presumably, all decorative elements of the binding also stem from this

early period in the development of the codex. It is also believed that patterns have travelled as the tradition of writing and bookbinding spread particularly across the Levant, Nile Valley and the northern Horn in the medieval Period and, accordingly, the technological aspects of Ge'ez manuscripts found in Eritrean monasteries should be seen in light of particular ornamentation and binding processes inherent to manuscripts found in the Nile Valley, Levant and elsewhere in the Horn. A comprehensive study of manuscripts from the early Coptic period is, however, required to trace the direction of influence involving these regions. Another intriguing aspect that involves the technological process of Ge'ez parchment production deals with the use of adhesives in the binding of book blocks. It is mentioned in some cases that a starch paste is commonly used for this purpose currently and starch glues, gums and gum resins have been suggested as adhesives originally used on the binding of manuscripts. Yet, survey tests through physico-chemical

studies are required to identify the binder material and provide a full comprehension of these technological processes. The decorative conventions visible in several Ge'ez parchments and the tools prescribed in the bookbinding process are also interesting aspects of the technology of manuscript production that was established centuries ago in this part of the world. Decorative motifs, subtle differences in design, representation of holy figures in miniatures as well as the use of different pigments in the writing and paint layers of these old manuscripts further resonate around the technological aspects of the production of Ge'ez parchment production. An overview of traditional manuscript repair and their scope is indeed important to note to understand the maintenance of the integrity of the whole book and its binding. Therefore, when viewed from these the production of Ge'ez parchments becomes an interesting artistic and cultural

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# Eid Al-Adha: Feast of Sacrifice

Natnael Yebio W.

Yesterday, Muslim families across Eritrea came together to pray, feast, and celebrate Eid Al-Adha with loved ones. The first Eid, Eid al-Fitr, which occurred in June, is a celebration after Ramadan, the month of fasting. Eid Al-Adha, also known as the "Feast of Sacrifice", is the second of two holidays celebrated by Muslims each year. The second holiday is considered holier of the two, hence, its nickname "Big Eid".

When I was a kid, I used to love Ramadan of all other similar fasting seasons that belong to other religions, for during the month of Ramadan our daily supply of dates, pastry and other sweet meats was assured.

"Saleh, please don't forget to bring sambusa (roll filled with ground meat or lentils) and mekhilil (fried sugared dough) tomorrow."

Saleh is a classmate and we Christian friends thought it was our inalienable right that he fed us with sambusa every day. This resulted in creating strong bonds of unity between the followers of the two religions. For a while, we forgot our backgrounds and prejudices altogether.

Like Eid al-Fitr, the date of Eid al-Adha depends on the Islamic lunar calendar and the sighting of the crescent moon, signaling the

changing month. This means that in comparison to the Gregorian equivalent, the dates vary from year to year, drifting approximately 11 days earlier annually. Eid al-Adha falls on the 10th day of Dhu al-Hijjah, the 12th and most sacred month of the Islamic year. It is also when Hajj, a pilgrimage which all able-bodied Muslims are required to complete once in their lives, takes place. It is one of the five pillars of Islam, along with Shahadah (belief in the oneness of God and acceptance of Muhammad as prophet), Salat (prayer), Zakat (charity) and Sawm (fasting). Hajj is intended to be an empowering event in a Muslim's life, with spiritual merit and the opportunity of self-renewal.

When Eid begins, the faithful celebrate with the slaughtering of an animal in honour of prophet Ibrahim.

In Islamic scripture, Ibrahim obeyed God's order to sacrifice his own son. But before he could do so, God provided a male goat to sacrifice instead, sparing his son. It is in celebration of Ibrahim's love for God and his ultimate act of devotion, that Muslim around the world honour this by sacrificing an animal on Eid Al-Adha.

Although traditions tend to differ from culture to culture across different countries, in Eritrea Eid is celebrated in a similar fashion. In the morning, Muslims read "Salat



al-Eid" gathered in congregation outside the Mosque, a special prayer offered to honour the festival. This is then followed by the sacrifice.

During the day the air is filled with all kinds of sweet fragrances coming from Oriental pastries displayed in the streets. Frankly speaking for us Christians, Eid is a feast par excellence. A season of joy and fellowship of the followers of all religions surpassing many holidays, for during the day, Moslems, Christians, Hindus, and Jews in Eritrea eat and drink together in a spirit of unity untainted by religious or racial bias.

Growing up, every Eid al-Adha I had friends who invited me to their houses. And I always anticipated the joy and fellowship that the feast provided for one and all.

It is the day of joy when people get together. It is a day of family gatherings, visiting relatives and old friends.

But all this time I never learned to use the correct words meeting with my hosts. I went there to eat and thought more with my stomach than with my brain. Finally did I learn the words. They went like this: Kulu Amm Wo Antum Bikheir or even Eid Mebruk. These were the magic words that opened the cornucopia of fruits, dates, peanuts, biscuits, pantone, aba'ke, coffee with ginger, caramels, sweetmeats, popcorn, you name it you have it.

Three years ago...I was invited for the feast of Eid al-Adha by Ahmed. On my way to his house I met people going to mosques wearing their brand new Jelebias and some carrying praying mats.

I saw a proud father with his sons who had already learned to perform their salat preceded by ablution. His sons were probably rewarded with ice-cream on their way back home.

Ahmed was waiting outside his house; he was in his best Eid attire and greeted me with a beaming face. He led me to his house. His mother at the door who seemed busy preparing a banquet, I was made to sit and was given aba'ke. The room was filled with a strong aroma from the burning Ud (sandalwood). Gradually, brothers, sisters, relatives and friends arrived one by one. When the father finally arrived, the banquet started which comprised chicken stew, mutton, rice, followed by all things pastry.

Outside, by the patio, Ahmed's uncle took out a packet of cigarettes from his pocket and started to smoke with great relish.

Phone calls once in a while broke the lively conversations.

"Who was that?"

"That was Mohammed, a relative from Jeddah conveying his Eid al-Adha greetings."

Eid al-Adha has had other names outside the Muslim world. The name is often simply translated into the local language, such as English Feast of the Sacrifice, German Opferfest, and Dutch Offerfeest. In Spanish it is known as Fiesta del Cordero or Fiesta del Borrego (both meaning "festival of the lamb"). It is also known as Eid Al-Baqarah in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Middle East.

*Eid Mebruk everyone!*



# LOCAL NEWS

## PRESIDENT SALVA KIIR ...

**C**ontinued from page 1

joint efforts and cooperation programs between the two countries in various matters and sectors.

Noting that Asmara has unique history in the struggle for independence of the people of South Sudan, President Salva Kiir said that the bold initiative President Isaias Afwerki and Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed took for peace and friendship will have significant contribution in the stability of the region.

Meanwhile, President Salva Kiir Mayardit accompanied by President Isaias Afwerki visited various development sites in the Southern region. The development included Tekera and Misilam dams, agricultural projects, dairy farms, transportation

infrastructure, as well as solar energy system.

Mr. Mike Abeng, Minister at the South Sudan President's Office, said that the development sites they visited attest to tremendous efforts Eritrea is making based on self-reliance.

Foreign Minister Osman Saleh on his part said that the visit of President Salva Kiir to Eritrea will have important contribution in the effort being made to ensure peace and development in the region.

President Salva Kiir Mayardit concluded a two-day official visit in Eritrea and was seen off by President Isaias Afwerki and senior government official in the afternoon hours on August 19.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF PRESIDENT

**C**ontinued from page 1

to the role and contribution Eritrea had in the struggle of the people of South Sudan, the Foreign Minister of the Republic of South Sudan, Mr. Nyala Deng Nyala on his part expressed readiness of President Salva Kiir to take the existing relation between the two countries to a higher level.

Expressing that Eritrea and South Sudan have strategic location in the Horn of Africa, Minister Nyala said that the development of mutual cooperation between the two countries will make due contribution in the prevailing peace in the region.

Minister Nyala also said that the warm welcome accorded to them by the people and government of Eritrea attests to the historic relations between the two countries.

## "INCREASED UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIETY IN CONTROLLING NATURAL AND HUMAN MADE CALAMITIES"

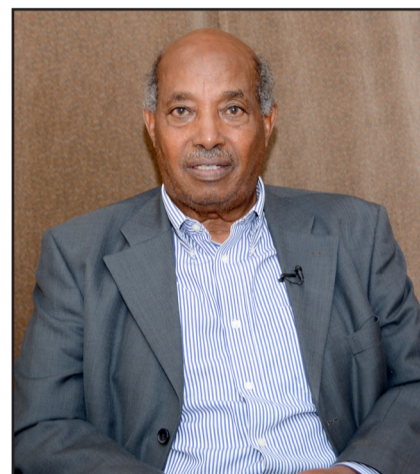
The head of Geophysics at the Eritrean Institute of Technology, Prof. Gebrebrhan Okbazghi, said that increased understanding of the society is vital in controlling the prevalence of natural and human made calamities.

Prof. Gebrebrhan made the statement in connection with the 4.8 magnitude earthquake that occurred 50 km away from Massawa on 13 August which ended without causing any causality.

Indicating that the Southern and Northern Red Sea regions are prone to earthquakes, Prof. Gebrebrhan called for due attention on the buildings and social service provision institutions that are put in place in those areas.

Prof. Gebrebrhan also called on the residents and professionals in the regions to practice the training they received and play due role in minimizing accidents that could occur from the calamities.

Documents indicate that in 1884 and 1921 earthquakes had inflicted heavy damage to the port city of Massawa. Similar occurrences of smaller scale also hit the city in July 2002 and September 2013.



## Reportage: Peaceful ...

## The Technological and . . .

**C**ontinued from page 2

reception was hosted at Asmara Municipality Hall in honor of President Salva Kiir and his delegation.

Speaking at the occasion in which senior Eritrean Government and PFDJ officials, members of the diplomatic corps and invited guests attended, President Isaias Afwerki said that the bond between the peoples of South Sudan and Eritrea is distinct from other normative or ordinary ties and that the special bond was nurtured through vigorous solidarity in a common struggle for justice and liberation. (See in box the full text of President Isaias's speech).

President Salva Kiir on his part indicated that Asmara has unique history in the struggle for independence of the people of South Sudan. The president also commended the bold initiative

President Isaias Afwerki and Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed took for peace and friendship which will have significant contribution in the stability of the region. (See in box the full text of President Salva Kiir's speech).

President Salva Kiir Mayardit concluded the two-day official visit in Eritrea and was seen off by President Isaias Afwerki and senior government official in the afternoon hours of August 19.

The leaders of the Horn of Africa are coming together to create a peaceful neighborhood where the people of the entire region will mutually get benefited of the new transformation. The recent visits of Ethiopia's and Somali's head of states and that of the visit of President Slava Kiir at the invitation of president Isaias is just part and parcel of the far sighted vision.

**C**ontinued from page 3

ensemble that evolved over centuries in this part of the Horn. In the words of Jacek Tomaszewski and Michael Gervers "not only did the diligence and accuracy of a scribe's handwriting serve as testimony to his artistry, but it also promoted the splendour of the decorative binding that he prepared for his book".

This rich cultural heritage, however, is particularly vulnerable to damage, loss and destruction, and requires a variety of approaches for its preservation. Physical examination of individual manuscripts and the direct assessment of the condition of an entire collection help to determine what lay behind their relative states of deterioration. Analysis of existing damage to the parchment and to the writing and painting layer, as well as to the construction of the book blocks and the bindings becomes

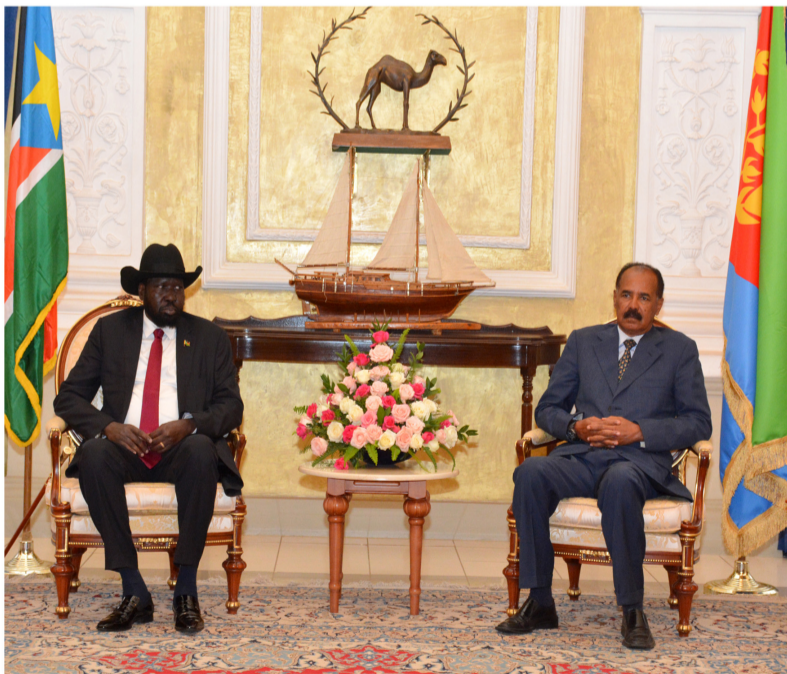
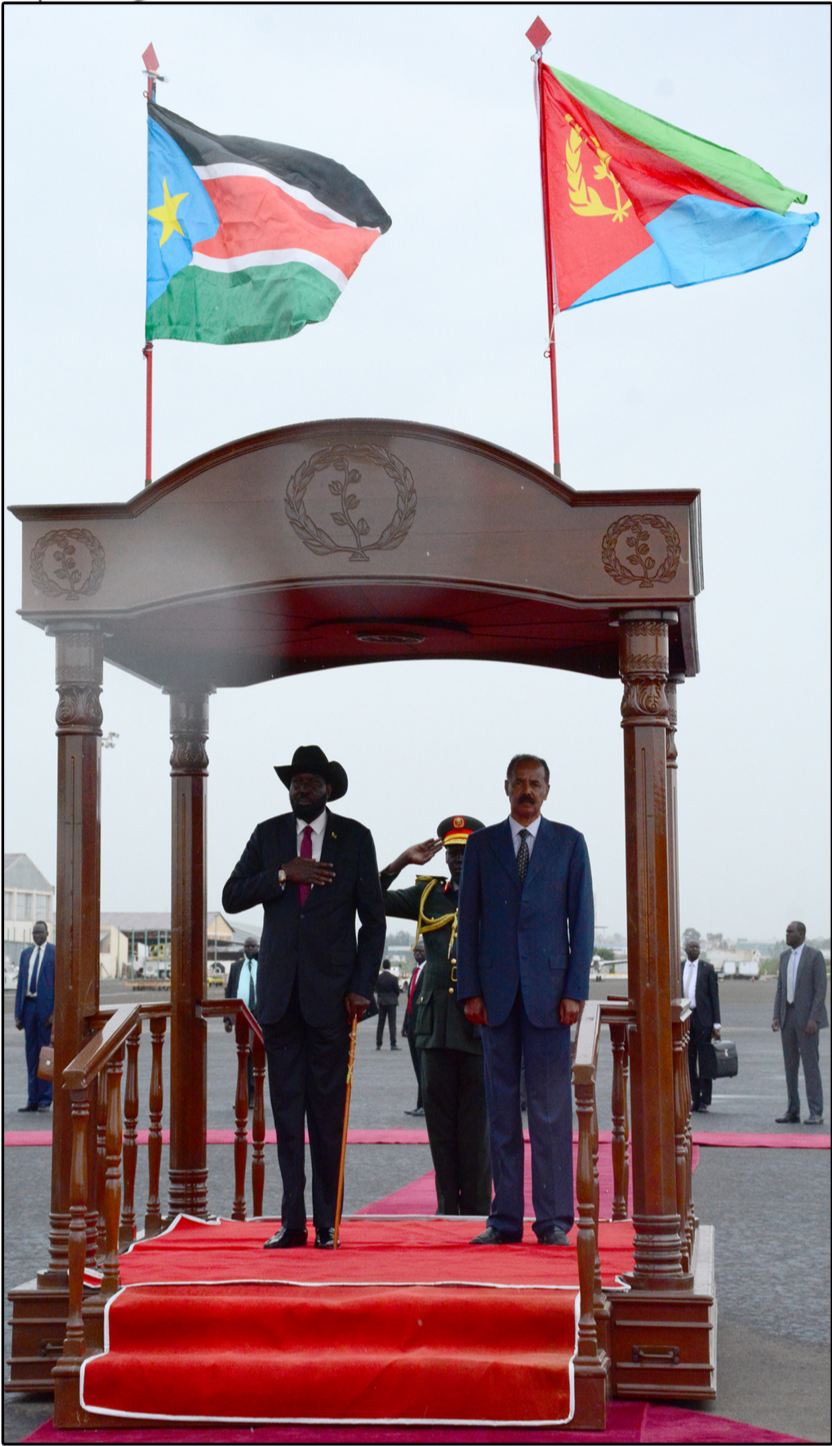
crucial to understanding the deterioration of Ge'ez parchments. Visual assessment of the condition of inventoried manuscripts in Eritrea indicates that, as a consequence of the progressive gelatinization of the parchment, further deterioration appeared in the form of a glass-like layer on the surface of most of the folios, and inadequate storage as well as insufficient repair further make preservation of these manuscripts challenging.

The examination and recording of manuscripts by the Research and Documentation Center have provided the opportunity to develop a more general conservation strategy for manuscripts found in Eritrea. The compromising storage conditions and the state of preservation of the collection are common throughout the country. Many of these manuscripts are vulnerable

to loss and destruction. Embarking from these needs, a digitization project has been launched by the Research and Documentation Center as an immediate preventive measure. Digitization is an extremely important and effective tool for the protection and preservation of this heritage. While digitization becomes a crucial tool, the nature of deterioration of the extant manuscripts also requires a broader cooperation among a wide range of stakeholders involved in the field. The study, preservation and conservation of these valuable literary works and manuscripts, therefore, should be sustained through training in modern conservation methods, involvement of cultural heritage experts and, wherever possible, by supporting surviving scribal practice and local management schemes of monastic complexes in Eritrea.

President Salva kir official  
work vist to Eritrea in pictures

photo: Taezaz Abraha  
Aklilu Zerezghi



**AZEL PHARMACEUTICAL SH.CO****VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

Azel Pharmaceutical Sh. Co. is inviting interested applicants for the following position

1. **Sales and Receivables Accountant (1)**2. **Qualification**

➤ EDUCATION: Diploma in Accounting

➤ EXPERIENCE: Two years of work experience in an industrial context

3. **Job Duties Summary**

Prepares all invoices related to sales and ascertains that all receivables including Goods in Transit (GIT) are thoroughly checked for prompt collection and prepare monthly report

4. **Skills:**

- Mastery of computer use including MS Office applications
- Mastery of accounting software including Peachtree
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Team work and interpersonal skills
- Business judgment and decision making skills

1. **Cashier (1)**2. **Qualification**

➤ EDUCATION: Certificate in Accounting

➤ EXPERIENCE: Four years of work experience in an industrial setting;

3. **Job Duties Summary**

- Makes cheques, transfers and petty cash payments, collects Company receivables on time and deposits in bank, keeps financial records up to date and collects financial documents from banks on time.

4. **Skills:**

- Mastery of computer use including MS Office applications
- Mastery of accounting software including Peachtree
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Team work and interpersonal skills

PLACE OF WORK: Asmara

SALARY: As per Company salary scale

**Note to Applicants:**

All applicants must have proof of demobilization or exemption from the National Service.

Interested applicants should submit their applications and CV within seven days from the date of publication in the newspaper through the following address.

Azel Pharmaceutical Sh. Co. Asmara: P.O. Box 6799  
120028/120029

T e l :

Azel Pharmaceutical Sh. Co. Keren: P.O. Box 89  
400234/401994

T e l :

**GEMINI TRAVEL AGENCY****JOB VACANCIES**

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2.Tour Guides (2 persons): 2 years experience, and minimum 2 languages required

3.Ticketing & Tour organizers: 2 years experience in relevant field required

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Please send your CVs to PO Box 12107 or by email:travgem@gmail.com or call 0753-2486.

Applications close 28 August 2018.

National Service must be completed.



# *"Eritrea's Authentic Stories of People Will Have Appeal In International Cinema" Sara Tracy Meretab*

Billion Temesghen

*Meet Sara Tracy Meretab. She is a twenty-four years old Eritrean American film maker and creative. She found the love of film outside the field she enthusiastically studied, economics. Sara was here, in Eritrea, this summer to take part in the annual workshop of filmmaking organized by the PFDJ Cultural Affairs. Sara alongside Assistant Professor and independent film maker Ambes Jir Berhe from Howard University and Issayas Tesfamariam of Stanford University taught and shared ideas at the workshop, for a month, attended by Eritrean artists-students. Sara's fresh ideas and concepts on creative film making marked and inspired several young artists who attended the workshop. And as workshop continues, Sara has become a memorable tutor that local artists are fondly looking forward to seeing and working with in the future. For today's Q&A Sara speaks to us all the way from America!*

**Let us start with an introduction. And I am also very curious to know what it is like to grow up in an Eritrean family outside of Eritrea?**

Hello Eritrea Profile. My name's Sara Meretab. I grew up in New Jersey, U.S, with my parents and older brother. My hometown did not have a lot of Eritreans in it, so I was really thankful to have a large extended family. My father has 10 siblings; therefore, the holidays we spend with my aunts, uncles and cousins really helped me feel close to my Eritrean heritage.

**When did you know you wanted to do film? Can you pin point a specific moment that made you think you would be able to do films as a passion and business outside of the field of economics which you studied?**

The first time that I actually realized I wanted to do film was on my very first trip to Eritrea. I had bought my first small camera to take with me on the trip. After that, I started filming everything – time spent with friends, family gatherings, anything where I could get behind the camera and record people. I think more than anything I was simply afraid of forgetting these moments. It was only much later that I started thinking about pursuing it professionally at the suggestion of a friend. I think that really helped me gain the confidence to value the quality of my work and seek out opportunities to build my video business.

**What are some of your professional activities as a video maker?**

Currently, I am working on

short promotional video content. These tend to be videos that are one to three minutes in length. They can be a highlight reel, narrative videos, educational videos, client testimonials, or product and service advertisements for larger companies. I love short videos because there's actually so much that you can fit into a really short time period. All you need is a minute to get people to feel something.

Most recently, with a team of camera and light technicians, I directed and produced the set of campaign videos for a candidate running for Governor of California. These were really fun to work on because the videos were talking about important and challenging issues facing the state – so I also learned a lot while working on this project!

**Was it easy to step out of the field you studied, economics, to follow your passion? How did people around you react? Did you ever feel discouraged?**

Actually, I haven't entirely left my field of economics. I currently work for Visa – a large payments tech company—while simultaneously running my video production business. I've actually really enjoyed doing both because they challenge different parts of my brain. One is very quantitative, while the other is very creative. Together, I feel entirely fulfilled, and I don't think that I would want to give up either one to solely focus on the other. In building my video business, though, I've had tremendous support from both my family and friends. Maybe that's just because the output of this field is so tangible. You can

literally see what was created, which didn't exist before.

**What led you to teach in Eritrea and be part of the annual workshop on filmmaking?**

I really fell into this teaching opportunity. Issayas Tesfamariam was my professor of Tigrinya at Stanford University. After I graduated, we stayed in touch by jointly working on a project to interview Eritreans in the U.S. as a way to document people's lives and stories—so we were constantly meeting up and working together. Then, he brought up this opportunity that he was organizing and invited me to join as a teacher, and I was thrilled to be able to participate. In general, I was always hungry to find a way to connect more with Eritrea. Although I grew up in the U.S., I've always felt so close to this country through my family. So, when I got the opportunity to teach here, I was extremely excited because it connected my work passion with the passion I have for my culture and heritage.

**What was your experience of teaching like? What did you teach exactly? And how was your teaching received by the workshop partakers?**

I loved teaching here. In fact, it wasn't long enough and I only wish that I had been able to stay longer. I think that's mainly because the workshop participants were so incredibly engaged and enthusiastic. They would come up afterwards with insightful questions and comments that's really the best feeling for a teacher. I focused on teaching how to create powerful emotions and stories in

really short videos. So, that involved talking through both technical and non-technical topics from building a strong storyline to actually being able to capture cinematic shots and edit them in post-production.

**According to your experience working at the workshop what are the common mistakes that should be avoided by Eritrean filmmakers?**

I think the most common mistake is being overly explicit in videos. As directors and producers, we shouldn't just tell the audience what to think or feel. Powerful videos show you, they don't tell you. So, I think by building symbols and subtle messaging into our stories, we'll be able to produce higher quality content that make the audience feel with greater depth.

**What improvements do you think should be made on the local 'industry' for better outcomes and for it to be accepted regionally and hopefully, also, internationally?**

I think one of the simplest ways that we could help enhance Eritrea's film and video content is by documenting some of the stories that exist all around us. The country has such a rich oral history, and deep sense of community—even when you just drive 20 minutes out of Asmara into some of the neighboring towns. Eritrean film doesn't need to copy global styles. Instead, I just hope to see more Eritrean filmmakers taking advantage of all the rich content that the country has. There are



Sara Meretab  
Creative Director, Founder

stories everywhere, and, I believe, that authentic stories of people will have appeal even in international cinema.

**Do you plan on coming back to Eritrea and work here?**

After teaching this class, it's something that I've definitely thought a lot more about. In the near term, I hope to participate again in the filmmaking workshop but in the future, I would also like to explore creating other types of educational programs.

**What are your plans for the future?**

That's a big question! Honestly, I don't know. I'm still trying to find balance in my life. But, the best part of participating in this workshop is that it helped me discover a passion for teaching that I never knew I had, and that's helped shape how I think about my future. I'm really starting to explore how I can incorporate teaching into the work that I do. And in the future, I would love for that impact to take place in Eritrea.

**Well, thank you and best of luck!**