



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**

***SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES***

***COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, LANGUAGE STUDIES, JOURNALISM AND  
COMMUNICATION***

***DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS***

***PHILOLOGY PROGRAM UNIT***

***A THESIS FOR MA STUDY***

***PHILOLOGICAL AND CONTENT ANALYSIS OF Gädlä'äbunä Täklä 'älfä***

***BY YORDANOS ABEBE***

***JUNE 2023***



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**By**

**YORDANOS ABEBE**

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***A study submitted to the School of Graduate Studies Addis Ababa University in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the Degree of Master of Arts in Philology***

***June, 2023***

***Addis Ababa, Ethiopia***



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# Abstract

*This paper deals with the Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, its philological and content analysis. The content analysis provides fundamental information concerning the historical, theological, governmental, socio-cultural events of the epoch. It also provides the philological and content value of the manuscript. The main objectives of the study are to conduct philological and content analysis on the manuscript of Gädlä'äbunä Täklä 'älfä and comment on the philological qualities and inconsistencies the encountered on the Gädl. In addition, the researcher tried to identify some of the effects of the attack of Ahmad Gragn on the Orthodox Church. The main concern of the research is the Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, which was found directly from the monastery. The processes included in analyzing the manuscript is identifying the biography of the Saint, giving philological and content analysis of the manuscript, briefing the theological values of the Gädl, and distinguishing the inconsistencies in the Gädl. The method used in the process is, in general, qualitative analysis. From this method, approximate years of birth and death of the saint from the personages in the Gädl, the inconsistencies in the Gädl and their corrections and the writer of the Gädl were identified. The study of the Gädl of this saint is essential in knowing the history of the monastery and the people of Gojjām. Beside this, it is essential in knowing the suffering the Orthodox Church faced at the time of Ahmad Gragn and the system of administration of monasteries.*



# Symbol Representation of Consonants and Vowels

## Transliteration (Consonant)

h - ᵃ	k - ᵏ
l - ᵇ	w - ᵛ
ḥ - ḥ	' - 0
m - ᵐ	z - ᶇ
ś - ᵛ	y - ᵚ
r - ᵇ	d - ᵇ
s - ḥ	g - ᵍ
q - ᶕ	ṭ - ṭ
b - ᵇ	ṗ - ṗ
t - ᵀ	ṣ - ṣ
x - ᵈ	ḍ - ḍ
n - ᵇ	f - ᶑ
' - ᵗ	p - ᵑ

## Transliteration (Vowels)

ä – first order

u – second order

i – third order

ā – fourth order

e – fifth order

ə – sixth order

o – seventh order



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Ethiopia is a nation with a long and prosperous history, succession of sovereign governmental system and complicated social structure. The ancient writing culture kept the history of Ethiopia, and supported it to pass from generation to generations. The literatures through which the culture and history of the Ethiopian society passed from generation to generation include hagiographies, history manuscripts, biographies of kings, and biographies of other personages. Of these literatures, hagiographies state the history of Ethiopia through their narration of the biography of the saints.

Hagiographies are literatures which contain the biographies of saints, miracles of the saints, and the covenant given to them in the Orthodox Church. Hagiographies are very common in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. They are either written originally or translated from other languages. Hagiographies of Ethiopian saints are mostly written by the Ethiopian language while the hagiographies of foreign saints are translated from other languages. In the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Hagiographies are essential for teaching people about the Orthodox Spiritual life. A one who reads hagiographies sees the teachings of the Gospel within the life of the saints, because the saints practiced the teachings of the Gospel and kept the order of God. He/She will also get blessing from the Saint.

Beyond their spiritual value, Hagiographies are essential sources of history of a country. They are used as a source to study the historical, social, political and governmental events at the time. These hagiographies also help to study the culture of the people at the time the saint lived. Ethiopian Christians and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church are related in their history. Thus, we get the interrelation of the Ethiopian Christian society with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Hagiographies also have a philological value because most of them are written in the Gə'əz language. Some literatures which are



found within these hagiographies have great literary value. These literatures are composed of 5 verses with poetic form, and contain much of the biography, miracle and praise of the saint.

But, most hagiographies are not well-known. The main reason is that the hagiographies are not easily found, and that many people do not give the proper attention to these precious properties of the Orthodox Church. One of the fathers that are not well known, while having a hagiography written by his name is 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä. 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä is also mentioned in the book *sənkəsār*.

'äbunä Täklä 'älfä is one of the fathers who kept and passed the system of monasteries found in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church today. In addition, he kept the ark of Saint George during the invasion of the Ahmed ibn Ibrahim Al-gazi (gragn). So, he has a history that can show the situation of the church at that time and the persecution of the priests.

The Dima Saint George Monastery is presently situated 10 kilometers east of the main road to Debre Work town, 124 kilometers far from Debre Markos, and 25 km far from Bichena. Dima is a village in the west-central Ethiopia. It is located in the East Gojjām Zone of the Amhara Region. It has a latitude and a longitude of 10°0'N 38°29'E and at an elevation of 2076 meters above the sea level. The history of the monastery is found in the book prepared by Dima monastery in 2009. The Dima monastery of Saint George was founded by Äbunä Tākästä Bərḥān in 1436. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/Dima, Gojjam>) Dima St. George Monastery is producing many church scholars like Melakebirhan today. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church should build monasteries apart from the services they provide to the faithful study and research centers. One of the few monasteries that can demonstrate this is the Dima Saint George Monastery.

'äbunä Täklä 'älfä has a great role in strengthening this model monastery. Studying his life story and the art of monastery leadership will be a step to give great experience to the fathers who lead monasteries in different parts of the country today.

One of the basic reasons behind my interest in analyzing the manuscript of Gädlä'äbunä Täklä 'älfä is that this manuscript gives some information about the effect of the attack



of Ahmad Gagn on the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and on the Ethiopian culture. The attack of Ahmad Gagn both directly and indirectly affected the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. There is a wrong perception that this attack only killed the Christians and has no much effect in the current Orthodox Church. The researcher made this analysis in order to show the culture of Ethiopian (specifically the Gojjām) society before and after the attack of Ahmad Gagn. Because 'ābunä Täklä 'ālfā administered the monastery of Dima at the time by which Ahmad Gagn attacked the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

'ābunä Täklä 'ālfā was born for his mother Orni and father Aaron. When he reached adulthood, his parents brought one of the children of the riches of the village to marry him against his consent. He left his home before three days of the marriage. He began his struggle with fasting and prayer in a cave south of the monastery from the day of his departure from his home.

He was appointed as an abbot of Dima St. George Monastery and served the monastery and its monks in order. After serving the monastery for 45 years, he left the world at the age of 75.

At the time of his death, a stick that he had been carrying with him all his life went to the association of the monks with a human tongue to tell them the passing away of 'ābunä Täklä 'ālfā.

Our God Jesus Christ appeared one day and said to him that as you have honored me in this world, I will honor you in the next world. I will give you a promise of truth that you have labored for my name. Our Lord gave him many covenants before his death and also honored his monastery Dima.

Although these Gə'əz manuscripts are believed to contain a lot of knowledge and history, there are very difficult conditions to find and study them. One of the difficulties is that most of the manuscripts are located in monasteries and the churches. Another difficulty is caused due to their remoteness. Due to their remoteness, they are not easily accessible for research.

One of the things the researcher learned in his philology studies is that monasteries are the major sources of Gə'əz manuscripts. Therefore, realizing that he can find



manuscripts that will help me to prepare my study from monasteries, the researcher has tried to see different sources in the field he can work. Among the reasons the researcher found, the one that caught my attention was the story of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, who served as abbot of Dima Saint George Monastery.

## 1.2. Statement of the Problem

The main aim of this research is to know what the philological and content value of Gädlä'äbunä täklä'älfä is. And also to recognize the overall message of the text and the message developed throughout the text. The features of the manuscript Gädlä Takla 'Alfä and its linguistic and theological values are also going to be discussed. The paper also aims to identify the effects of attack of Ahmad Gagn on the Ethiopian Orthodox Church that are mentioned in the hagiography in few numbers.

The manuscripts of Gädlä Takla 'Alfä is not yet studied. The philological and content analysis was not yet treated. Thus, this study will discuss the content and philological features of the manuscript. Furthermore, Gädlä Takla 'Alfä is an indigenous work which has to be studied and described. It is obvious that Gädlät are rich with historical, social, political and economical information in addition to their spiritual and theological contents.

### 1.2.1. Research questions

This study is basically made in order to answer the following questions:

- 1) Does Gädlä Täklä 'älfä has a philological value?
- 2) Was the manuscript of Gädlä Täklä 'älfä written in the 16<sup>th</sup> century or in the 17<sup>th</sup> century?
- 3) Does the Gädl of 'äbunä täklä 'älfä give description about the culture of people of Gojjām and relation of their culture with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church?
- 4) Does Gädlä Täklä 'älfä have philological and linguistic value?



- 5) Has the invasion of Ahmad Gragn affected the Gojjam society? Has it affected the Ethiopian Orthodox Church?

## 1.3. Objectives of the Study

### 1.3.1. General Objectives

The general objectives of this study is to give the philological and the content analysis of the manuscript of the hagiography of 'Abunä Täklä 'älfä.

### 1.3.2. Specific Objectives

- To introduce the manuscripts of Gädlä Takla 'Alfä
- Mention some of the culture of people of Gojjām mentioned in the Gädl.
- To examine the philological values of the manuscript
- To provide brief philological description of Gə'əz manuscript of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä
- To give Philological and content Analysis of Gə'əz manuscript of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä
- Identify the time by which Gädlä Täklä 'älfä was written and 'äbunä täklä 'älfä lived
- To identify some of the inconsistencies found in the manuscript regarding lettering and grammar.

## 1.4. Scope of the Study

There are 3 versions of the Gädl in Ethiopia that state about 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä. But, this study is concerned with the analysis of the manuscript from the Saint George Monastery of Dima where he lived. The study will be limited to the physical, content and philological interpretation of the Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä.



## 1.5. Significance of the Study

In general, this study provides some important information about the manuscript for those who study the historical, and theological issues of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä's life journey and church service, as well as the 16th century Debre Dima St. George Monastery. The detailed contributions of this study are:

- 1) Provide about the importance of Gädlät in historical background of Ethiopia
- 2) Revealing the philological and content value of Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä
- 3) Showing that Gädl could be a necessary source of history of the people at the time of the saint.
- 4) Mentioning the effects of attack of Ahmad Gagn on the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the culture of people of Gojjām.

## 1.6. Methodology

The researcher used a method of qualitative analysis to analyze the manuscript. The Gädlä 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä was collected from Dima Monastery and analyzed philologically.

This research was carried out by looking at the physical, content and language condition of the Gə'əz manuscript in Dima St. George monastery. In addition, it was by collecting traditional oral information from the monks who are knowledgeable about history living in the monastery.

### 1.6.1. Source of Data

The main source of the study was a manuscript called Gädlä'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, which belongs to monastery of Dima Monastery.

### 1.6.2. Data Gathering

The main data used for the research was the manuscript of Gädlä'äbunä Täklä 'älfä. The researcher conducted a field trip to the monastery of Dima once.



## 1.7. Organization of the Study

This study is organized into four parts. The first chapter includes the general presentation of the research including the background, scope, methodology of the study and review of related literature. The second part (chapter) contains the physical analysis (description) and the features of Gädlä'äbunä Täklä 'älfä. The third chapter is composed of the detailed content analysis of the manuscript of Gädlä'äbunä Täklä 'älfä. The fourth and last part contains the conclusion and the recommendation of this study.

## 1.8. Review of Related Literature

### 1.8.1. Literatures about 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä

Before doing this research, the researcher has tried to look at the hagiographies written about 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä. The first of these is the hagiography written by Aleka Kinfu and published by Enrico Cerulli. (2007: Volume III) This book divides the life story of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä into 7 chapters.

The second version of the hagiography was prepared by the Dima Monastery and this book also lists the works of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä extensively (2009). What makes this book different from the first one is that the monastery has put the life story of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä in the preface, and it has also included about the ministry of the monastery and its current status in the book.

The Encyclopedia Aethiopica also mentions some of the biography of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä. In Volume IV of the book, it mentions that the source of the biography that it used is the book published by Enrico Cerulli. (2010, p.825)



These three texts did not do any philological research about 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä other than directly presenting his detailed biography and services.

## 1.8.2. Monastery of Dima Saint George

'Äbunä 'Äragāwi, one of the nine saints, brought the system of monks, which is the system of angels into Ethiopia and taught 'Äbunä Kərəstos Bezānä. 'Äbunä Kərəstos Bezānä taught this system of angels to 'Äbā Mäsqäl Mo'ä; and 'Äbā Mäsqäl Mo'ä taught it 'Äbā Yoḥāni. 'Äbā Yoḥāni taught it to 'Äbā 'Iyäsus Mo'ä and 'Äbā Täklä Hāymānot. 'Äbā Täklä Hāymānot taught it to 'Äbā Filṗos and 'Äbā 'Änorewos. 'Äbā 'Änorewos taught it to 'Äbā Bäkimos, who was later named 'Äbunä Tākästä Bərḥān. 'Äbunä Bäkimos was sent by 'Äbā Filṗos to the province of Gojjām. While he was teaching and baptizing the people of Gojjām, he found a cave in an area called Dima.

He found the ark of Saint Mary by which Saint George was praying saying, "O mother of God, add me with your migration (Ascension)." He was always serving it in the cave. Saint George is a saint born from his father Zärontos ('Änəštāsyos) and his mother 'Äqlesiyā (Tewobəstä). He struggled with the seventy kings. They declared that every person should bow to an idol named 'Äṗlon and other idols. Saint George believed he was a Christian in the front of the seventy kings. He received all the pain in patience for seven years, died and rose 3 times. At last, he died and received martyrdom on Miyāzyā 23 (May 1). A fire from the sky ate all the seventy kings. While he was alive, Saint George was praying in front of the ark of Saint Mary saying, "O mother of God, add me with your migration (ascension)". After his death, his three servants took him and buried him in his place of birth, Ledā, on Nəḥāse 16 (August 22), the day on which Saint Mary migrated (ascended) to her creator and son.

'Äbā Bäkimos, in a day, taught and baptized 9999 people in the province of Gojjām, because of his diligence to spread the teachings of the Gospel. Then, a pillar of light came down from the sky for him. After this, he was named 'Äbunä Tākästä Bərḥān. Our Lord appeared and made a promise of mercy for 'Äbunä Tākästä Bərḥān. Our Lord gave



'Äbä Täkästä Bärhän that the praise of God will never stop in his monastery of Dima, and that his monastery will live till the day of advent. Again, Our Lord gave him a promise that no heretic will step on the monastery of Dima, and even if some heretic done it, that he/she cannot live there. Our Lord gave 'Äbunä Täkästä Bärhän all of these and more covenants and ascended to the sky. After this, 'Äbunä Täkästä Bärhän lived through many tribulations and died on Mäggäbit 10 (March 19). May his prayer and help be with us, forever Amen.

After the death of 'Äbunä Täkästä Bärhän, 'Äbunä Tomās was appointed abbot on the Dima Saint George monastery. 'Äbunä Tomās, while he was going to the city of 'Äbä Yəshäq, he heard that a tornado put a village where the ark in the name of Saint George is found in a lot of trouble. The king seen this, then collected the abbots of churches and monasteries. He begged them to take the ark of Saint George to their churches or monasteries, because the place where it is found is not a proper place for respecting the ark of Saint George. Many of the abbots of churches and monasteries competed to take the ark of Saint George to their church, but none of them was able to lift the ark, rather it was very heavy like a stone. At last, 'Äbä Tomās tried to lift the ark. The ark was lifted for him very simply. After seeing this, the king sent 'Äbunä Tomās with many gifts and awards to his monastery. Monastery of Dima was called Dima Saint George monastery, from the day entrance of 'Äbunä Tomās with the ark of Saint George. 'Äbunä Tomās served the monastery for 20 years and rested in peace. May his blessing be with us forever Amen.

After the death of 'Äbunä Tomās, the monastery was administrated by 'Abä Səbbuḥa 'Amlāk for 17 years. Then, by 'Äbä Śäräqä Bärhän for 30 years, and by 'Äbä Mätewos for 18 years. After the death of 'Äbä Mätewos, 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä was appointed abbot of the monastery. At the administration of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, the Adal forces were in war with the Ethiopian Government. When Ahmad Gragn took the rule in the Adal system, the Ottoman Turkish Empire was fighting in many wars to convert all world into Muslim with force. Ahmad Gragn asked for the help of the Ottoman Turkish Empire to exterminate the Christians in Ethiopia and add Ethiopia into one of the Muslim colonies of the Ottoman Turkish Empire. With the help of the Ottoman Turkish troops, Ahmad



Gragh defeated king Ləbnä Dəngəl and began killing Christians and burning churches. The ark of Saint George was taken by 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä to cave until this time of war was over.

After the 15 years of Ahmad Gragn's invasion, Ahmad Gragn was defeated by king Galāwdewos and peace came again in Ethiopia. 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä came back with the ark of Saint George. 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä served the monastery for 45 years, then rested in peace on Friday, Tāxsās 8 (December 17). May his blessing be with us forever Amen. After the death of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, the monastery was administrated by 'Äbā Zäwäldä M āryām, then by 'Äbā Mātəyās for 42 years. After the death of 'Äbā Mātəyās, 'Äbā Bə'əse 'Əgzi'äbḥer administered Dima for 2 years, then 'Äbā Mäswā'ətäŠälläse for a year, then 'Äbā Zäyonā for 14 years.

### 1.8.3. Theoretical Framework (Theory Model)

A study or a study contains a content analysis to answer the firstly stated statement problems. Every book, every manuscript, every speech has an objective to fulfill. Thus, the transfer of information is bounded with the objective and base of the idea. When analyzing the Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, it is sure that there is a larger context which the researcher will follow throughout the analysis. Regarding this concept, Jens Zimmermann says

"A text, for example, consists of sentences that make up the text as a whole, and the whole text defines the meaning of each part. A word only has meaning with in a sentence, a sentence only with in a passage, a passage only with in a chapter, a chapter only with in a book, a book only with in an author's work as a whole, and an author's work as a whole with in a certain historical or life context." (2015, p.26)

The researcher will follow Kloepfer's approach of translation:

"Translation is a creative writing, rewriting in a random fashion; it is the writership of the writer" (Göktürk, 2002, p.40). Kloepfer states that while the translator is reproducing a



linguistic work in the target language, he should do his best to make the original language text comprehensible in the target language text. The above Klopfer's definition of translation, Klopfer refers that the basic task of a translator is to reflect the language and the culture of the source text in the target language. But for symbolic expressions and meanings, the translator should not write it casually. Klopfer argues that, in order to enjoy the reader and transfer the proper message of the source text, two elements should be transferred. These two elements are content and form. He defends that the value of each indicator in the source text, their semantic fields, connotations, associative meanings, and affective meanings should be considered. For symbolic writings and expressions, Klopfer states that interpretation is essential.

After translation comes the theory of interpretation of Paul Ricoeur. Ricoeur's contributions were mainly related to the concept of hermeneutics. Ricoeur defines hermeneutics through saying "conflict interpretation and the problem of domination of interpretations." Ricoeur claims that interpretation is possible because of the necessary cleavage between the subjective intentions (authorial) and objective significance (what the statements mean). Interpretation fills that gap between what a speaker meant in saying something and what her statements mean outside of her intentions. Ricoeur considers the following as key concepts in the interpretation and analysis process;

**Text of Distance** : human's understanding is affected and influenced by history. Ricoeur states that text displays a fundamental characteristic of historicity of human experience, namely that it is communication in and through distance"

**Explanation (What the text says)** : Texts, through their foundation in language as discourse, stand on the boundary between the expressed and unexpressed. For understanding to occur, both the expressed and the unexpressed require interpretation. Interpretation begins in a naïve way when a student grasps the meaning of the text as a whole, after which the interpreter proceeds to a deeper understanding through recognition of the relationship of the parts to the whole. In general, explanation, interpretation and understanding in the research will follow the idea of Paul Ricoeur in order to interpret.



## CHAPTER TWO

### PHYSICAL ANALYSIS OF GÄDL OF 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä

#### 1.9. Physical Description of the Manuscript

##### Analysis of Gə'əz Manuscript of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä

**Language:** Gə'əz language

**Title:** Gädlä Täklä 'Alfä (Acts of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä)

**Topic:** Biography of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, and Miracles he done

**Status:** A hand written manuscript

**Physical Material:** the manuscript is covered with red covering prepared from hides of goats to keep it longer. There are eight attached circular metals on the edges of covering in each side. The four in the corners are larger than the ones in the other edges. Of these one is used for locking the book. The papers are also made of prepared hide which is named then 'Berānā'. The text is written in two columns in every folio except the first recto. Black and red inks are used in the text. The black ink is used to write most of the manuscript. The red ink was used when mentioning almighty God's and saints name. It is also used to indicate the beginning of a new section of the history or in general the script.

**Size:** 33.5 x 20.5 cm

**Pagination:** the manuscript has 54 folios, that is, 55 rectos and 54 versos including the blank ones. The rectos which contain written object are 49 rectos while 4 rectos are blank. The versos which contain written object are 46 versos while the 6 versos are blank. 10 rectos and 13 versos are half written, while about 8 rectos and 2 versos contain less than half blank spaces. 2 rectos and 2 versos contain drawings only, while 5 recto and 2 versos contain both drawings with the writings. Only the days written on top of specific rectos or versos are used as reference. Of these days, the visible are



Tuesday (Verso 10), Wednesday (Recto 15), Thursday (Recto 18), and Friday (Recto 23) for the biography part. The days which are visible in the miracles of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä are Tuesday (Verso 35), Wednesday (Verso 39), and Daily (Recto 50). Other days are not visible in the manuscript of Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä. The introduction begins at Verso 2, then the biography (act) of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä begins at Recto 3, Column 2 and ends at Verso 28, column 1, line 13. Next, the time by which the Hagiography is written is written on Verso 28 of the manuscript. The author had written the manuscript with a prayer for God to accept him what he written at the end of the biography at Verso 28 and Recto 29. The miracles done by 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä are found from Verso 29 to Verso 49.

**Condition:** The manuscript could be considered old, when mentioning the lettering which is different from the recent type of lettering used. But, the book is well preserved. The writings in black and red are seen well and also the details in the drawings also could be seen well. The sewing and the covering are not damaged.

**Writing Style:** the manuscript is written in two columns by which the reader begins reading the second column after finishing the first column. The first part and the second part are written in form of narration.

**Detailed Content:** The main objective of writing Acts of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä and similar writings is for two basic purposes. The first is for teaching the readers how these fathers and mothers overcame every challenge that came from the world and the devil. We can learn from many holy books, the definition of God's words and how to exercise them. These manuscripts are specifically which we can see how fathers practiced God's words. The second objective is to get blessing from testimony fathers and mothers received for their good work. God has given the testimony "Whoever writes, make to write, translates, and whoever reads it in faith, I will forgive him his sin". The manuscript as a whole is written to show what 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä done in his life how was his tribulation and also how was he rewarded for his work. The Gə'əz manuscript of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä has two parts. The first part is the life of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, which contain his biography from birth to death, his appointment to administer Dima Monastery, the



number of his good work and services before and after his appointment, the awards he received from almighty God for his faith and work, his migration with the ark of Saint George at reign of Ahmed Gragh, his resettlement in the monastery, his old age and death. The second part is more concerned with the miracles done by the supplication of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä. About 22 miracles are mentioned in the second part of the manuscript.

## **1.10. Features of Gädlä'äbunä Täklä 'älfä**

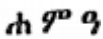
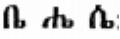

### **1.10.1. Paleographic analysis of the manuscript**

A part of philology which is essential to cleverly guess when the manuscript was written is paleography. It is a method of identifying the type of letters used in the manuscript and the way of writing in the manuscript. According to Siegbert Uhlig, there are about six types of writings that occurred through out the history of Ethiopian manuscripts writing (Introduction to Ethiopian Palaeography, 1990). These periods are Period I (Monumental Manuscripts), Period II (Square Script), Period III (Rounded Script), Period IV (Compressed Slender Script), Final Period (Gwelḥ script), and Final Period (Räqiq Script). Period One came until the second half of the fourteenth century, Period Two lasted from second half of the fourteenth century to the mid-fifteenth century, Period Three lasted from the mid-fifteenth century to the mid-sixteenth century, Period four lasted from mid-sixteenth century to the mid seventeenth century and the Final period of Gwelḥ script lasted from the mid-seventeenth to the second half of the eighteenth century, and Final period of Räqiq script lasted from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century.

The hagiography of of 'äbunä täklä 'älfä is most similar to the Räqiq script in the final period. From the book 'Introduction to Ethiopian Palaeography', we will see that the distinguishing features of the räqiq script match with the paleography in the manuscript. "General features of the Räqiq script stand out more clearly than the distinctive features of the letters because the letter forms are inconsistent. A great variety of forms for a single letter appears not only from one manuscript to the other, but also within a single



manuscript. We must conclude that features and traits of letters of the Rāqiq script should be regarded as tendencies rather than distinct categories.” (Introduction to Ethiopian Palaeography, 1990, p.108) The identifying letter forms of the rāqiq script are:

- **Relatively long corpus and/or long head:** The corpus tends to be close to the bottom line as scripts from the period of the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century. This is in contrast with the Gwelḥ script, in which the letters are proportionately taller and the bodies shorter, especially in such letters as 
  
- **Open xāməs loop:** The majority of scribes prefer forming certain letters with  an open xāməs loop; cf. e.g.:
  
- **ʌ has a curved right leg:** As in the contemporary Gwelḥ style, the letter  is frequently written with a curved right leg, even though this feature is not fully developed during the first decades of the Raqiq script:
  
- **The upper stroke of ʔ sādəs:** Many scribes form ʔ sādəs with a long, sloping or well-rounded upper stroke, which is consistent with the aesthetic preference for wide letter forms:

### 1.10.2. The physical analysis of the writings in the manuscript

While analyzing the physical part of the manuscript, then another analysis on the physical writing of the manuscript is essential. It includes the lettering, the spacing and other physical properties of the manuscript. This analysis is essential in order to know



whether the manuscript is the original manuscript of hagiography of 'äbunä talkä 'älfä or not.

Within the hagiography, the biography of 'äbunä talkä 'älfä is written in the proper flow physical writing. In some folios, a space is jumped and some part of the same sentence is begun on the next folio (Recto 14, and Recto 23). In other folios, like Verso 23, it jumps a significant space after finishing a full idea and begins another part of the history after the space.

On the miracles of 'äbunä talkä 'älfä, there is very significant number of blank spaces that are caused by jumping space. In some folios, the miracle begin from the half of the folio, leaving the half blank (Verso 29, Recto 31). Again some of the miracles begin from the second column leaving the first column blank (Verso 33). As in the biography part, some part of the miracle jumps and finishes the same sentence in the next page (Recto 46).

Again, there are many inconsistencies that indicate that this manuscript is not the original manuscript. For instance, the year on which the hagiography of 'äbunä talkä 'älfä was written was in 1567 E.C, but the manuscript writes that it was written in 227 E.C. This inconsistency may have happened at the time of copying the manuscript. The above information indicates that the manuscript is not the original manuscript of the Gädl of 'äbunä talkä 'älfä.

### 1.10.3. Writer of Gädlä'äbunä Täklä 'älfä

The writer of the manuscript of Gädlä Abune Tekle Alfa was *xāylaGeorge*. Maybe the two persons who made or supported *xāylaGeorge* in the writing the manuscript are *gabra heywat*, *walda māreyām* and *walatta māreyām*. The names of these people are mentioned in the miracles of Abune Tekle Alfa. They are found in the beginning or the ending of most of the miracles of Abune Tekle Alfa. The miracles in the manuscript mostly begin with the following sentences.



1) Recto 32, Column 1

ተአምሪሁ : ለአቡነ : ተክለ : አልፋ : ጸሎቱ : ወበረከቱ : የሃሉ : ምስለ : ገብሩ : ወልደ : ማርያም : ወምስለ :  
ዓመቱ : ወለተ : ማርያም : ለዓለመ : ዓለም : አሜን

*The miracle of Abune Tekle Alfa; may his prayer and blessing be with his servant walda māreyām and his servant walatta māreyām forever and forever Amen.*

2) Verso 30, Column 2

ተአምሪሁ : ለአቡነ : ተክለ : አልፋ : ጸሎቱ : ወበረከቱ : የሃለ : ገብሩ : ወልደ : ማርያም : ወምስለ : ጸሐፊሁ :  
ኃጥእ : ወጊጉይ : ኃይለ : ጊዮርጊስ : ለዓለመ : ዓለም : አሜን

*The miracle of Abune Tekle Alfa; may his prayer and blessing be with his servant walda māreyām and his writer sinner xāyla George forever and forever Amen.*

3) Recto 33, Column 2

ተአምሪሁ : ለአቡነ : ተክለ : አልፋ : ጸሎቱ : ወሀብተ : ረድኤቱ : ተሃሉ : ምስለ : ፍቁሩ : ገብረ : ሕይወት :  
ወምስለ : ጸሐፊሁ : ኃይለ : ጊዮርጊስ : ዓለመ : ዓለም : አሜን።

*The miracle of Abune Tekle Alfa; may his prayer and help be with his beloved gabra ḥeywat and his writer xāyla George forever and forever Amen.*

In some of the miracles there was a blank space where the name of the above people was written.

1) Verso 44, Column 1

ተአምሪሁ : ለአቡነ : ተክለ : አልፋ : ጸሎቱ : ወበረከቱ : ተሃሉ : ምስለ : ገብሩ : : ወምስለ : ዓመቱ : :  
ለዓለመ : ዓለም : አሜን።

*The miracle of Abune Tekle Alfa; may his prayer and blessing be with his servant*



and his servant

forever and forever Amen.

2) Verso 43, Column 1

ተአምራሁ : ለአቡነ ፤ ተክለ : አልፋ : ጸሎቱ : ወበረከቱ : የሃሉ : ምስለ : ፍቁሩ : ገብረ : ሕይወት : ወምስለ :  
ዓመቱ : ፡ ለዓለመ : ዓለም : አሜን

*The miracle of Abune Tekle Alfa; may his prayer and blessing be with his beloved gabra heywat and his servant forever and forever Amen.*

In other cases, it does not mention the writer or other name, rather it could be written in the following sentences.

1) Verso 34, Column 2

ተአምራሁ : ለአቡነ : ተክለ : አልፋ : ጸሎቱ : ወበረከቱ : የሃሉ : ምስለ : ገብሩ : ለዓለመ : ዓለም : አሜን

*The miracle of Abune Tekle Alfa; may his prayer and blessing be with his servant forever and forever Amen.*

2) Verso 39, Column 1

ተአምራሁ : ለአቡነ : ተክለ : አልፋ : ጸሎቱ : ወበረከቱ : ተሃሉ : ምስለ : ኩልነ : ውሉደ : ጥምቀት : ለዓለመ :  
ዓለም : አሜን

*The miracle of Abune Tekle Alfa; may his prayer and blessing be with all of us born from baptism forever and forever Amen.*

3) Recto 47, Column 1

ተአምራሁ : ለአቡነ : ተክለ : አልፋ : ጸሎቱ : ወበረከቱ : ተሃሉ : ምስሌነ : አሜን

*The miracle of Abune Tekle Alfa; may his prayer and blessing be with us forever and*



*forever Amen.*

#### **1.10.4. Methods of Correction used in the Gädl**

Two types of corrections were made in the script. Simply we could name them as adding and cancelling.

- a) Adding was made by simply writing the word above the colon between the two words or in any sufficient space.
  
- b) The method used in erasing of words is drawing two lines or points below and above the letters that are not needed in the text.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **CONTENT ANALYSIS OF Gädlä 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä**

#### **1.11. Biography of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä**

The first theoretical perspective the researcher used is the historical context. Historical perspective is essential for understanding the context of the manuscript, as it provides a framework for analyzing the historical events that lead to the writing of the manuscript and the socio political circumstances that surrounded its creation. It helps in providing a comprehensive understanding of the manuscript's background of the role of Ethiopian orthodox Tewahdo church and its impacts on the society at that time. (Gädlä Tälkä 'älfä, Verso 7)

##### **1.11.1. Family and Birth**

'äbunä Täklä 'älfä was born from his father 'Äron and his mother 'Orni in G<sup>w</sup>äfçemma, a district in Gojjām. He was born on the day of death of Saint Mariam on Ṭerre ☩ (January



13). His father is from the family of priest and the district of birth of his family is in Shewa province. 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä's mother is from a region called Maya. The mother and father of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä migrated to the village known as Gofchima, at WosenAmba. His mother have seen a revelation that her son 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä will be a great Saint. 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä was born in Gofchima because his parents migrated there at the reign of King Yishak. (Gädlä Tälkä 'älfä, Recto 3)

### **1.11.2. Growth and Education**

'äbunä Täklä 'älfä has grown with wisdom and with the support of almighty God. When he reached the proper age, his parents sent him to a teacher to learn holy books, the Old Testament, books of prophets, gospel, letters of apostles and their commentaries. 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä was always thinking of living as virgin. When 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä became adult, his parents brought a daughter from the wealthy people of the village for him to marry without his desire. (Gädlä Tälkä 'älfä, Recto 4)

### **1.11.3. Beginning of his tribulation**

While his parents were preparing what is needed for a bridegroom, he left his home and gone far before three days of his marriage. From that day, he began his tribulation with prayer. He reached the monastery of Dima and asked for being monk there. He was tested for three months and then has been a monk in the monastery. He was always kind and hardworking. He never fear of anyone and gives the just judgment. He was always praying and bowing the whole night and working at day without rest. In order to remember the suffering of Our Lord Jesus Christ, 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä was spiking his legs with thorns. People around Dima who secretly know his doings, when they see a sign of blood on the road, then they say that 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä has passed through this road. (Gädlä Tälkä 'älfä, Recto 6)

### **1.11.4. Appointment on Dima monastery**

In many Gädlät of saints who were appointed as abbots, bishops, or priests, we read that the fathers were trying their best to escape from being appointed. The same is true for 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä. The manuscript mentioned that after the death of the former



abbot of Dima monastery, the monks met together to choose another father to administer them. Without the knowledge of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, they nominated him to administer them because they saw his good doings. After their meeting, they told him that they are going to appoint him on the monastery of Dima. But, 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä didn't accept what they said and refused to go with them. Word by word, the manuscript says that they didn't let him, rather they tied him and brought him the Church.

They condemned him not to refuse his appointment on the monastery of Dima, and run away. At that time, 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä cried a lot. Then they taken him to the King Ləbnə Dəngəl, to approve 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä's appointment on the monastery. King Ləbnə Dəngəl saw that he was deserved to be the abbot of monastery of Dima. Then, Äbunä Mārḳos condemned him not to leave his appointment and run away from the monastery. Thus, 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä returned to the monastery with the appointment and the all the monks received him with a great celebration, joy and happiness, because he was chosen by God to administer the monastery with fairness. (Gädlä Tälkä 'älfä, Recto 8)

#### **1.11.5. 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä as the abbot of monastery of Dima**

After the appointment of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, he began keeping and teaching his children as the apostles do. He teaches people who have gone in the wrong way and returns them to the right one. He always helps people in trouble and poor people, even by sacrificing the churches materials and himself. He gives a restroom for mothers who have been pregnant with the law or without. He give clothes for people who are stripped, even if until he become stripped. He fasts for very long time that he began to fall from the persistence of his hunger. He always teaches his children to give for the poor and troubled. He also, in secret, gives the money and material his children gave him to the poor and the troubled. (Gädlä Tälkä 'älfä, Verso 5)

#### **1.11.6. Era of migration of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church**

When Ahmad Gragn defeated the army of King Lebna Dengel and began burning Churches and monasteries and also killing Christians, 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä migrated with



some monks and the ark of Saint George to a cave. 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, while going on a mule one of his children gave him, found three children on his way. He putted the two children on the mule and he carried the last child on his back the whole way until his leg got swollen. He was in the cave with some of the monks, until the time of trouble was over, by the defeat and death of Ahmad Gagn. He returned to the monastery after the time of trouble. (Gädlä Täklä 'älfä, 2009)

### **1.11.7. Old Age and Death**

His children always force 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä to tell them the visions and the miracles that he have seen or done. After administering the monastery of Dima for 45 years with peace and fairness, 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä knew that the day of his death is coming near. On Ṭeqemt 13 (October 23), he visited the house of Mikä'el, temple of Märyām, house of Saint George, house of Masqal, and to all the places of the town. He collected the people and taught them. On Tuesday, he collected all the people until there was stress of the number of people and taught them as he does always. On the night of Wednesday, he was reading the Gädl of Saint 'Arsemā and defining the secrets in the Gädl to strengthen the monks. On the dawn, 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä got into his room and became ill very severely, that he was coughing from his illness. The monks were all worried about 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä and they spent all the night with him. He recovered from his pain on the dawn of Thursday, and then he ordered them to bring what left from the money and he gave it to the poor. Then, on 3 o'clock of the night of Friday, 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä rested in peace. May his blessing and help be with us forever and ever Amen. (Gädlä Täklä 'älfä, Verso 24 and Recto 25)

### **1.11.8. Time of Birth and Death of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä**

The writer of the manuscript mentions the time of writing at the end of the biography of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, before beginning the miracles of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä. The writer used the Ethiopian system of calendar in representing the date of writing, and also indicated the date in the Hebrew calendar system. The Ethiopian system of calendar uses the Bāḥra Ḥässāb in order to specifically identify the date. Bāḥra Ḥässāb is method that Saint Diyoşqoros received from God to measure date with both the rotation of the Sun



and the moon. The basic aim of this operation was to properly order the holidays of God; specifically the 40 day fasting, Easter, etc... in the days that they originally occurred. Now, it is also used to identify the day of beginning of the year, the day that any holiday is made, etc... It enables us to count with both the sun and the moon's rotation and know their movement in any specific time. (Bāhira Ḥassāb, 2000, p.24)

In this part there are new terms and concepts related to the Ethiopian calendar and Bāhira Ḥassāb. The researcher will try to define the terms mentioned in the Gädl;

- a) **'äbäqte**: A year when counted using the sun is equal to  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days, while a year when measured using the moon is  $354\frac{11}{30}$  days. In one rotation, the moon precedes the sun with approximately 11 days. This difference is called 'äbäqte. It increases with 11 every year, thus when it becomes greater than 30, subtract 30 from it. Using this method, you can find the 'äbäqte of this year. (Bāhira Ḥassāb, 2000, p.40)
- b) **'äwdä qāmār**: There are seven cycles in the operation of Bāhira Ḥassāb. They are namely **'äwdä 'älät (Cycle of Day (7 days))**, **'äwdä wärx (Cycle of Month(30 days))**, **'äwdä 'āmāt (Cycle of Year ( $365\frac{1}{4}$  days with sun, and  $354\frac{11}{30}$  with the moon))**, **'äwdä 'äbäqte (Cycle of 'äbäqte (19 years, by which the sun and moon begin their year together))**, **'äwdä dāhāy (Cycle of the Sun, (28 years))**, **'äwdä māxtām (Cycle of Seal, (76 years))**, **'äwdä qāmār (Cycle of Formula, (532 years))**. This is the largest cycle by which all the formulas came equal by the difference of 532 years. To find the **'äwdäqāmār** of the year you could divide the sum of the present year and 5500 by 532; then if the remainder is greater than 76, divide the remainder by 76; then if the remainder is greater than 19, divide the remainder by 19; the remainder you obtain after this division is the **'äwdä qāmār** of this year. (Bāhira Ḥassāb, 2000, p.45)
- c) **Windows of the Sun**: The sun has 3 windows to rise from and 3 windows to set to. The sun rotates through a specific window in a specific month. When the sun



took the windows of the shortest path, then the day is shorter than the night.

d) **Wängelāwi (Gospel Writer):** The Gospel is written by four saints, namely Mātewos (Matthew), Mārḳqos (Mark), Luqās (Luke), and Yoḥānnəs (John). In the Ethiopian calendar, the year is divided between these four saints. To simply identify the Gospel writer of the year, divide the year by four then, if the remainder is one, the year is of Mātewos (Matthew). If the remainder is 2, the year is of Mārḳqos (Mark), and if the remainder is 3, the year is of Luqās (Luke). If there is no remainder then, the year is of Yoḥānnəs (John).

The Gädl on Verso 28 uses this operation to tell the reader the time of writing of the book. But, the written date in the Gädl does not meet with the mentioned people in the Gädl. Maybe, the writer used other way of writing the date. I didn't identify the date correctly from the written one because as mentioned before, it doesnot meet with the history. Let us mention these inconsistencies in the Gädl;

- In Verso 28, the Gädl mentions that this manuscript is written on 227 E.C., but the Saint 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä and King Ləbnə Dəngəl which were mentioned in the Gädl lived at the 16<sup>th</sup> century. King Ləbnə Dəngəl was king of Ethiopia from 1500 – 1527 E.C., thus the manuscript could certainly be written after this time.

Other way, which is very common in Ethiopian manuscripts, of indicating the time of events is through indicating the year the occurred after the appointment of a king or a father (especially in monasteries). The Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä also mentioned the king and the father that administered the monastery at the time of writing the Gädl.

The Gädl mentions that the King at the time of writing the Gädl was called **Śärdä Dəngəl**. It also mentions that the manuscript was written in the twelfth year of reign of King **Śärdä Dəngəl**. The abbot of the monastery of Dima at the time of writing the manuscript was Saint Māteyās. The manuscript was written in the eighteenth year of appointment of Saint Māteyās.

ተፈጸመ ፡ ዝንቱ ፡ መጽሐፍ ፡ በአኩቴተ ፡ አብ ፡ ወወልድ ፡ ወመንፈስ ፡ ቅዱስ ፡ አመ ፡ ፳፬፯ ለሳምን ፡ ወርህ ፡ በዕብራውያን፡ወበሃልስ ፡ ወርህ ፡ በግብጽ ፡ ወኢትዮጵያ፡ዘውእቱ ፡ ወርህ ፡ ኅዳር፡በመዋዕለ ፡ ሉቃስ ፡



ወንጌላዊ፡፡በ፪፻፡፳፬፻ ዓመተ፡ ምሕረት፡ በ፲፬፻ ዓውደ፡ ቀመር፡ በ፯ ዓበቅቴ፡ ወርህ፡ እንዘ፡ ሀሎ፡ ፀሐይ፡  
በካልዕ፡ ፍላጎት፡ በ፲፬፻ ዓመተ፡ መንግሥቱ፡ ለንጉሥነ፡ ሠርፀ፡ ድንግል፡ በ፲፬፻ ዓመተ፡ ሢመቱ፡ ለእቡነ፡  
ማትያስ፡ መምሕር፡ሰብሐት፡ ለእግዚአብሔር፡ ዘአልቦቱ፡ ጽንፍ፡ወውእቱ፡ ይሁብ፡ ተፍጻሜተ፡ ለዓለመ፡ ዓለም  
፡ አሜን፡፡

Täfäṣämä zəntu mäṣḥäf bä'äk<sup>w</sup>ätetä 'äb wäwäld wämānfäs qəddus 'ämä 'əsrāhu  
wäsäbu'u läsamən wärx bä'əbrāwəyān wäbäsäləs wärx bägəbṣ wä'ityopəyā zāwə'ətu  
wärxä xədär bāmāwā'älä luqās wāngelāwi bākəl'ettu mə'ət 'əsrāhu wäsäbu'u 'āmätä  
məḥrät bä'äsärtu wäsäb'ättu 'āwdä qämär bäsäb'ättu 'äbäqte wärx 'ənzä hällö ḍähäy  
bäkälə' xoxət bä'äsärtu

wäkəl'əttu 'āmätä mängəstu länəguṣənäŚārḍä Dəngəl bä'äsärtu wäsämäntu  
'āmätäsīmātu lä'äbunä Mätəyās mämḥər səbhät lä'əgzi'äbḥər zä'älbottu ṣənf wäwə'ətu  
yəhub täfṣāmetä lä'älämä 'äläm 'āmen.

“This book is completed with praise of the father, the son and the Holy Spirit, on the  
twenty seventh day of the eight month in the Hebrew calendar, and the third month in  
the Egyptian and Ethiopian calendar, namely the Xedar month. On the year of Gospel  
writer Saint Luqās (Luke), in the year of 227 E.C. The 'awda qamar is 17 and the 'äbäqte  
is 7. On the month, by which the sun is found on the second window. The manuscript is  
written on the twelfth year of reign of our King Śārḍä Dəngəl and in the eighteenth year  
of the appointment of our teacher 'Äbunä Mateyās. Praise to God, which does not have  
limit, forever and ever Amen.” (Gädlä Tälkä 'älfā, Verso 28)

Directly after this writing there is a prayer by which the writer begs 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā.

### Period of Life of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā

The Gädl does not specifically give the year of the birth or the death of 'äbunä  
Täklä 'älfā, rather it written the date and the month 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā was born and died.  
The indication of the date and the month is essential in the Orthodox Church because



the Saint is praised at the day of his birth and death, especially in a church named by his name. Thus, the Orthodox Church finds the date of birth and death of holy fathers and mothers right after giving them the name 'Saint'. So, they specific year is not mostly emphasized in the writing of Gädl.

The Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā indicates major events and characters that were present at the time. Using this information and with the support of Ethiopian historical books, we could nearly give a clever guess of the year of birth and death of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā. In the Acts of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā, it is mentioned that 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā was appointed in the reign of King Lebna Dengel, which is from 1500 – 1527 E.C. On Recto 25, Column 2, the Gädl mentions that 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā lived 30 years before his appointment and 45 years after his appointment. In Verso 24, Column 2, the Gädl also mentions that 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā died in the night before the dawn of Friday. In the Ethiopian calendar, a day is counted by bringing the night first and then the daylight. It is taken from the holy bible, which says "... and there was evening and morning, one day" /Genesis 1:5/ bringing the night before the day. In Recto 50, column 1, the manuscript mentions that 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā rested in peace on eighth day of Tāxəśās (December 17). Using the above given informations we could give more near conclusion about the year of life of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā and when the Gädl was written.

I will begin with the death of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā, because it will help me to also give a clever guess on the year of birth of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā.

- a) 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā died after 45 years of his appointment. Thus, we could give the first conclusion that 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā could have died between the years 1545 and 1572 E.C. For the second conclusion, we found from the Gädl that 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā died on Friday, Tāxəśās 8 (December 16). So, we just should find the years that Tāxəśās 8 (December 16) and Friday meet. Using the Ethiopian Bāhra Ḥässāb operation, we could get the day that Tāxəśās 8 met on each year from 1545 – 1572 E.C.

The formula is as follows:

Firstly,  $1545 / 28 = 55$  with remainder 5 (This remainder is called **Məryā** )



Then,  $5 / 4$  (number of gospel writers) = 1 with remainder 1 (The quotient is called **Śagr**)

Then,  $\text{Ṭəntā yon} = \text{Məryā} + \text{Śagr} = 5 + 1 = 6$  (this number is the **Ṭəntā yon** of this year)

A month is approximately 4 weeks, but 4 weeks (28 days) is less than a month (30 days). Thus there is two left in each month. The total number of these days until the specific month is called **'äşfä wärx**. Now, we can find the day by which **Täxəsās 8** met on 1545 E.C.

Day =  $\text{Ṭəntā yon} + \text{'äşfä wärx} + \text{number of that day}$

Day =  $6 + 8$  (Täxəsās is the fourth month, thus  $2 \times 4 = 8$ ) + 8 (Täxəsās 8)

Day =  $22 / 7$  days = 3 with remainder 1

If remainder is 1, Sunday; if 2, Monday; if 3, Tuesday; ...; if no remainder, Saturday.

Täxəsās 8 met on Saturday, in 1545 E.C.

Year from 1545 – 1572	Gospel Writer	Day Täxəsās 9 met
1545	Mätewos	Sunday
1546	Māreqos	Monday
1547	Luqās	Tuesday
1548	Yoḥännəs	Thursday
<b>1549</b>	<b>Mätewos</b>	<b>Friday</b>
1550	Māreqos	Saturday
1551	Luqās	Sunday
1552	Yoḥännəs	Tuesday
1553	Mätewos	Wednesday
1554	Māreqos	Thursday
<b>1555</b>	<b>Luqās</b>	<b>Friday</b>



1556	Yoḥännəs	Sunday
1557	Mätewos	Monday
1558	Māreqos	Tuesday
1559	Luqās	Wednesday
<b>1560</b>	<b>Yoḥännəs</b>	<b>Friday</b>
1561	Mätewos	Saturday
1562	Māreqos	Sunday
1563	Luqās	Monday
1564	Yoḥännəs	Wednesday
1565	Mätewos	Thursday
<b>1566</b>	<b>Māreqos</b>	<b>Friday</b>
1567	Luqās	Saturday
1568	Yoḥännəs	Monday
1569	Mätewos	Tuesday
1570	Māreqos	Wednesday
1571	Luqās	Thursday
1572	Yoḥännəs	Saturday

Table 3.1. Years by which Tāxəsās 8 meet between 1554 and 1572

Then, the highlighted four years (1549, 1555, 1560, and 1566 E.C.) , are the years by which Tāxəsās 8 and Friday met. One of these years is the year by which 'ābunā Täklä 'ālfārested in peace. From these years, 1549 E.C. is the most relevant year for the death of 'ābunā talkä 'ālfā. We will see why in the time of writing of the hagiography. Next, we are going to then write the years of the birth of 'ābunā Täklä 'ālfā.



- b) On Recto 25 of the manuscript of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, we find that 'äbunä Täklä 'älfälived 75 years in the world. If the years by which 'äbunä Täklä 'älfärested are 1549, 1555, 1560, and 1566 E.C. Then, the year by which 'äbunä Täklä 'älfāwas born is one of the years 1474, 1480, 1485, and 1491 E.C. The most appropriate year for the birth of 'äbunä talkä 'älfä is 1474 E.C. We will see why in the next subtopic. Next let us move on to the year by which the manuscript of Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfāwas written.

### 1.11.9. Time by which the Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä was written

We have seen in above sections that the manuscript of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfāwas written in the eighteenth year of appointment of Äbunä Māteyās. In the section of history of Dima monastery, after the death of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, Äbunä Zawalda Māryām was appointed, thenÄbunä Māteyās was appointed for 42 years. The year 'äbā Zāwäldä Māryām was on administration of Dima is not known, but we could be sure that the Gädl is written after 1567 E.C. (1549 + 18 E.C.)

Another assumption is that the writer used a reference year when he written 227 years in the Gädl. If we count from the founding of Monastery of Dima,which is in 1436, then maybe the Gädl was written in 1663 G.C. But, if we proposed that this is the year, then the period by which 'äbā Zāwäldä Māryām was abbot of the monastery will become 79 years, which is unlikely.

The best method in order to exactly find when the manuscript was written is by identifying the king that was found at the time. The manscript tells us that the manuscript was written on the twelfth year of the reign of King Śärḍä dängəl. Śärḍä dängəl is the regnal name of King Mäläk Säḡäd whose reign was from 1563 to 4 October 1597 G.C. (1555 to 27 Mäskäräm 1590 E.C.). He was the successor of King Minās. (Encyclopedia Aethiopica, 2007, p.544) Thus we could find that the manuscript was written on 1574 G.C. (1567 E.C.).



Here comes the answer for the aforementioned information about birth and death of 'äbunä talkä 'älfä. If the hagiography of 'äbunä talkä 'älfä was written in 1567 E.C., then the most probable date of 'äbunä talkä 'älfä's death is in 1549 E.C. and his birth is most probably on 1474 E.C., because there is at least 18 years gap between the death of 'äbunä talkä 'älfä and the writing of the hagiography. Thus the hagiography of 'äbunä talkä 'älfä was written on 27 xädär 1567 E.C. This is more relevant date because it suits with many of the surrounding informations. In 1567, the 'äbäqte is 7 as written in the hagiography, and it also indicates that 'äbä Zäwäldä Märyām was the abbot of the monastery of Dima for less than a year, which may be the reason that his years of administration was not mentioned within the Gädl which was written in 2009 in the monastery of Dima. The hagiography mentions that the 'äwdä qämär was 17, and the wənbər in 1567 was 17.

## **1.12. Cultural Content of the Gädl**

This point of view will emphasize the importance of culture in shaping the beliefs, customs and value of the society. Understanding the cultural background of Debre Dima's community helps in contextualizing the manuscript and its significance in the wider Ethiopian Orthodox Church tradition. These theories also emphasize on the importance of understanding the challenges faced by the Ethiopian orthodox Tewahdo church.

### **1.12.1. Education System**

In the recent times, the lessons given in Orthodox Church are being thought to be useless. Some people even think it was the root for the retarded development of Ethiopia. But, we do not see this when we read the Ethiopian History. Every person agrees with the prosperity of Ethiopia in the ancient history of the world. No prosperity without wisdom and there is no wisdom without an education system. The tradition, culture and knowledge cannot be transferred through generation without an education system. Country with a long history, like that of Ethiopia, cannot keep its culture for that



long time without an organized education system. This education system is named *'ābnnāt* education. Thus, the education system was the base for the prosperous history of Ancient Ethiopia.

In the time of 'ābunä Täklä 'ālfā, the society and the education in the Orthodox Church were closely related. Every person sends his children to Orthodox Church for Education. This is the same for 'ābunä Täklä 'ālfā. He was sent to learn in the Orthodox Church.

He learned reading books of Old Testament, gospel, letters of apostles and their commentary. We could even see the step by step teachings in the *'ābnnāt* education system of the time in *Gojjām*. Any student first learns reading the books, and then learns the definition of each line of the books.

### **1.12.2. Government System**

As mentioned in the Gə'əz manuscript of Acts of 'ābunä Täklä 'ālfā, the king of kings at the time of 'ābunä Täklä 'ālfā was King LibneDingel (*'āḍe ləbnədəngəl*). While 'ābunä Täklä 'ālfā was the abbot of the monastery of Dima, the joint forces of Adal and the Turkish Ottoman Empire, with the leadership of Ahmed Gagn invaded Ethiopian Government in 1527 E.C. and began burning and destroying the Ethiopian Orthodox Churches. This invasion was lasted for 15 years, until King Gelawdewos defeated and killed Ahmed Gagn with the support of the Portuguese forces. (Ya'ityoḥyā ya'ammest 'āmat tārik, 2005, p.289)

'ābunä Täklä 'ālfā lived in the monastery of Dima and was appointed in it at the reign of King LibneDingel. When Ahmed Gagn's attack dominated in Ethiopia, 'ābunä Täklä 'ālfā migrated with the ark of Saint George and with some monks into caves. 'ābunä Täklä 'ālfā returned to his monastery after the attack of Ahmed Gagn was over.

### **1.12.3. Relation between the Orthodox Church and the government**

At the time of King LinbeDingel, there was peaceful relation between the Orthodox Church and the Government. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was the origin of the administration skills and the laws of the country. King LibneDingel was Orthodox



Christian who contributed a lot to the Church by building Churches and supporting fathers in their mission to teach and return more people to the Orthodox Faith. We get from the Gə'əz manuscript of Acts of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä that the abbots of monasteries and churches get blessing from the bishop and the king. 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä was appointed last by the blessing of King LibneDingel. (Verso 7)

In the government following King LibneDingel, time of suffering came over the Orthodox Church, because the government of Ahmed Gagn launched a missionary of exterminating Orthodox Christians. There was a rough relation between the Church and the Government at this time. Many of churches, holy books, traditions, and cultures of the Orthodox were destroyed at this time. Relation between Christians and Priests, the number of Christian which was found at Church on Sabbaths decreased after this time. Many new bad traditions came into attachment with the society after the attack of Ahmed Gagn. Simply, we could see that Gə'əz even lost many of its grammar and phonetics after this time. (läsänätä sem, 2009, p.13)

Peace revived again between the Orthodox Church and the Government after the death of Ahmed Gagn. King Gelawdewos brought peace in the country.

#### **1.12.4. Some other cultures in the society mentioned in the manuscript**

Mother and Father were the ones who choose a person and marry him/her with their son/daughter. Mother and father of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä chosen a wife for him without his wish. He was thinking of living his whole life with his virginity. So he left his home and gone far when 3 days left for his marriage.

At the time, a person who kills a person was also killed. In one of the miracles done by 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, a person who killed was caught. It was decided to kill him from the law of the time. (Verso 39)

Another culture of the Gojjām people clearly mentioned in the book was the system when a person loved in the village dies. 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, although was exceptionally loved by all the people, from the mothers to priests and bishops, was buried with burial



ceremony system of the people of Gojjām

### 1.13. Philological Analysis of Gädlä'äbunä Täklä 'älfä

This point of view focuses on the structural and linguistic components of a text. It also helps in analyzing the manuscripts stay, languages and literary devises used by 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä. The literary point of view is particularly important in understanding its theological teaching's.

#### Analysis of the Linguistic features of the Manuscript

The manuscript is written by the Gə'əz language. I will be concerned with analyzing the linguistic features of this manuscript. The linguistic features of the manuscript could be listed as:

- a) Sound Representation
- b) Alphabet (Lettering) Style
- c) Number System
- d) Punctuation in the script
- e) Lettering and Writing
- f) Word and Sound Assimilation

#### 1.13.1. Sound Representation

I used the transliterature in order to show the sound representation of the Gə'əz manuscript. See the table below to see the sound representation used in the manuscript, which is the sound representation of the Gə'əz language.

	Cä	Cu	Ci	Cā	Ce	C, Cə	Co
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H	ሀ	ሁ	ሂ	ሃ	ሄ	ህ	ሆ
L	ለ	ሉ	ሊ	ላ	ሌ	ል	ሎ
h	ሐ	ሑ	ሒ	ሓ	ሔ	ሕ	ሖ
M	መ	ሙ	ሚ	ማ	ሜ	ም	ሞ
ፊ	ሠ	ሡ	ሢ	ሣ	ሤ	ሥ	ሦ
R	ረ	ሩ	ሪ	ራ	ሬ	ር	ሮ
S	ሰ	ሱ	ሲ	ሳ	ሴ	ስ	ሶ
Q	ቀ	ቁ	ቂ	ቃ	ቄ	ቅ	ቆ
B	በ	ቡ	ቢ	ባ	ቤ	ብ	ቦ
T	ተ	ቱ	ቲ	ታ	ቴ	ት	ቶ
X	ኀ	ኁ	ኂ	ኃ	ኄ	ኅ	ኆ
N	ነ	ኑ	ኒ	ና	ኔ	ን	ኖ
'	አ	አ	አ	አ	አ	አ	አ
K	ከ	ከ	ከ	ከ	ከ	ከ	ከ
W	ወ	ወ	ወ	ወ	ወ	ወ	ወ
'	ዐ	ዐ	ዐ	ዐ	ዐ	ዐ	ዐ
Z	ዘ	ዘ	ዘ	ዘ	ዘ	ዘ	ዘ
Y	የ	የ	የ	የ	የ	የ	የ
D	ደ	ደ	ደ	ደ	ደ	ደ	ደ
G	ገ	ገ	ገ	ገ	ገ	ገ	ገ
ፎ	ጠ	ጠ	ጠ	ጠ	ጠ	ጠ	ጠ
ፑ	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ
ፍ	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ
ፈ	ፀ	ፀ	ፀ	ፀ	ፀ	ፀ	ፀ



F	ፈ	ፉ	ፊ	ፋ	ፌ	ፍ	ፎ
P	ፐ	ፑ	ፒ	ፓ	ፔ	ፕ	ፖ
	Cä	Ci	Cā	Ce	C, Cə		
q <sup>w</sup>	ቄ	ቅ	ቆ	ቇ	ቈ	቉	
x <sup>w</sup>	ኀ	ኁ	ኂ	ኃ	ኄ	ኅ	
k <sup>w</sup>	ነ	ኑ	ኒ	ና	ኔ	ን	
g <sup>w</sup>	ኖ	ኗ	ኘ	ኙ	ኚ	ኛ	

Table 3.2. Alphabet System of the Gə'əz language

### 1.13.2. Alphabet (Lettering) Style

The Gə'əz language lettering style had shown significant change in the shape of the letters within time. We can also range the date of a Gə'əz writing from the letter style used in it. I have just seen some manuscripts which are known in date, such as Acts of Abune Selama. The script used in this writing is similar to that of Acts of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä. Thus, this writing style was used at the time of Abune Selama and came until time of author of Acts of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä kept well. This writing is significantly different from the present lettering style. You could see carefully the lettering and the punctuation style in the following scripts.

### 1.13.3. Number System

Numbers are used directly in many parts of the script. The number system is the same as the number system of Gə'əz language.

Name in Transliteration	Gə'əz Number	Equivalent Arabic Number
'äḥädu	⌘	1



Kəl'ettu	𐌔𐌚	2
Śälästu	𐌔𐌚𐌰	3
'ärbā'ettu	𐌔𐌚𐌰	4
Xämməstu	𐌔𐌚𐌰	5
Səddəstu	𐌔𐌚𐌰	6
Säb'attu	𐌔𐌚𐌰	7
Sämäntu	𐌔𐌚𐌰	8
Täsä'attu	𐌔𐌚𐌰	9
'Ässärtu	𐌔𐌚𐌰	10
'Ässärtu wä'ähädu	𐌔𐌚𐌰𐌚	11
'Ässärtu wəkəl'ettu	𐌔𐌚𐌰𐌚	12 ...
'əsrā	𐌔𐌚𐌰	20
'əsrā wä'ähädu	𐌔𐌚𐌰𐌚	21 ...
Śälāsā	𐌔𐌚𐌰	30
'Ärbā	𐌔𐌚𐌰	40
'Hāmsā	𐌔𐌚𐌰	50
Sədsä	𐌔𐌚𐌰	60
Säb'ā	𐌔𐌚𐌰	70
Sämānyā	𐌔𐌚𐌰	80
Täs'ā	𐌔𐌚𐌰	90
Mə'ət	𐌔𐌚𐌰	100
Mə'ət wä'ässärtu	𐌔𐌚𐌰𐌚	110
Mə'ət 'ässärtu wä'ähädu	𐌔𐌚𐌰𐌚𐌚	111 ...



Kəl'ettu mə'ət	፪፻	200 ...
'Ässärtu mə'ət	፲፻	1000
'Īsrā mə'ət	፳፻	2000 ...
'Īlf	፻፲	10000

Table 3.3. Number System of the Gə'əz language

#### 1.13.4. Punctuation in the script

##### i. Use of Colon (፡)

In the Gə'əz manuscript, the colon is used to separate a word from another in a sentence. It is the most dominant punctuation in the script. It was used in any Gə'əz or Amharic writing till recent times. In the present times, using space is replacing the use of colon to separate between words.

The colon is used between every word unless other punctuation is used or a number is present. The colon is used before the number but it is not used after the number in the Gə'əz manuscript of Acts of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä.

The colon is found between every word except where other punctuation is found or after the number '፩' (Gə'əz number one). (Verso 2)

##### ii. (፡፡), (፡።), (፡፣), (፡፤), (፡፥), and (፡፦)

The researcher cannot identify the boundary between the usage of these punctuations and symbols. We can get symbols between phrases when writing a series of words or

phrases describing similar thing (as comma do in English Literature). They are also sometimes found at the last of a sentence and act as the closing of the sentence (as full stop does I English Literature). They could be found to separate what someone said from the rest of the text (as quotations do in English Literature). Sometimes, they could be found replacing colon without any significant use. To show the location of the punctuation in the text, that are not found in the present symbols or writing. The researcher will represent it with (p)

### Verso 3, Column 2

‘ወተበሀሉ : በበይናቲሆሙ (p) ምንት : ውእቱ : ዝራዕይ : ዘዕፀብ : በኅቤነ (p)’ (Figure 1, Line 3-6)

Wätäbähälu bäbäynātihomu (p) mǝnt wə’tu zərā’əy zä ‘əḍub bāxābenä

‘They said to one another (p) what is this revelation that is wonder for us (p)’

- Here the punctuations are used to separate what father and mother of ‘äbunä Täklä ‘älfä from the rest of the script.

### Verso 2, Column 1

‘በስመ : እግዚአብሔር : ሥሉስ : በአካላት : ወ፩ : በመለኮት (p) ብሔተ : ህላዊ : ዘእንበለ : ጥንት:: ወደጋራዊ : ዘእንበለ : ተፍጻሜት:: ንጉሠ : ነገሥት : ወእግዚአ : አጋዕዝት (p) ዘሥወር : ውእቱ : እምኩሉ : ወቅድሜሁ : ኩሉ : ክሡት (p) ሎቱ : ይደሉ : ስብሐት : ወእኩቴት : ለዓለመ : ዓለም : አሜን (p)’ (Figure 2, Line 1-14)

- Here, the punctuations are used to separate the elements in the list which praise almighty God.

### Recto 4, Column 1

‘ወእምዝ : ሶበ : ርእይዎ (p) አቡሁ : ወእሙ : ከመ : ወርዘወ : ወኮነ : ብፁሐ : አምጣን’ (Figure 3, Line 1-4)

‘When his father and mother saw (p) that he grown, and become adult now’

- The punctuation used here just taken the place of the colon, but other use cannot be



identified.

Recto 4, Column 1

‘ፈሐሩ ፡ ሎቱ ፡ ብእሲተ ፡ እምእብዕልተ ፡ ሀገር ፡ ዘእንበለ ፡ ፈቃዱ (p) ወእምድኅረ ፡ ዝኅዳጥ ፡ መዋዕል ፡ እንዘ ፡ ያስተዳሉ ፡ ሎቱ ፡ ዘይትፈቀድ ፡ ለመርዓ ...’

‘They chosen a wife for him from the rich people of the country (p) After this short time, while they were preparing what is needed for a bridegroom ...’

- The punctuation here was used as a separator between two sentences. It was used to close the first and begin the second sentence.

### 1.13.5. Writing and Lettering

Here we will mention the strengths in using some letters inconsistencies that encountered in the Gə’əz manuscript concerning the writing and the lettering. The basic inconsistencies that appeared in the Gə’əz Manuscript of Acts of ‘äbunä Täklä ‘älfäare listed as followed:

#### 1.13.5.1. The use of Labialized consonants

In most of the recent writings, labialized consonants are being out of use. The Gə’əz script of Act of ‘äbunä Täklä ‘älfä has preserved the use of these labialized consonants.

Example:

1) Verso 30, Column 2

ጸሐፍ - ወሀሎ ፡ አሐዱ ፡ መጻጉዕ ፡ ዘየሐውር ፡ በመነኩራኩር

Writing: wähällo ‘ähädu mäḍāg<sup>w</sup>ə zäyähäwər bämänk<sup>w</sup>äräk<sup>w</sup>ər



2) Verso 39, Column 1

ጽሑፍ - ወአብጽሐኒ : ቅድመ : መንበሩ : ለአጋዜ : ኩሉ

Writing: wä'äbṣəḥänni qədmä mänbäru lä'äxāze k<sup>w</sup>əllu

### 1.13.5.2. Missing of Letters and words

Example:

1) Recto 8, Column 2, Line 17

ጽሑፍ - ወተመይጦ : አቡነ : ተክለ : አልፋ : ኅበ : ደብር : ወተቀ : መነኮሳት : በፍሥሐ : ወበጋሤት

Written: Wätämäyəto 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā xäbä däbr wätäqä mänäkosät bäfśśhā wäbäxāsset

ማስተካከያ - ወተመይጦ : አቡነ : ተክለ : አልፋ : ኅበ : ደብር : ወተቀበልዎ : መነኮሳት : በፍሥሐ : ወበጋሤት

Corrected: Wätämäyəto 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā xäbä däbr wätäqäbälwwo mänäk<sup>w</sup>äsät bäfśśhā wäbäxāsset

Translation: "When 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā returned to the monastery, monks received he with joy and happiness."

1)

Verso 6, Column 2, Line 16

ጽሑፍ - ኦ : አበውየ : አይ : ይእቲ : ፍኖተ : ሕይወት : እስመ : ጽሩዕ : አነ : ወኢፈጥኩ : ፍኖተ : የማን : ወፀጋዎ

Written: 'O 'äbäwyä 'äy yə'əti fənotä ḥəywät 'əsmä ṣəru' 'änä wä'ifätəku fənotä yämān wädägām



ማስተካከያ - ኦ : አበውየ : አይ : ይእቲ : ፍኖተ : ሕይወት : እስመ : ጽሩዕ : አነ : ወኢፈለጥኩ :  
ፍኖተ : የማን : ወፀጋም

**Corrected:** 'O 'ābāwyä 'äy yə'əti fənotä ḥəywät 'əsmä şəru' 'änä wä'ifälätku  
fənotä yāmān wädägām

**Translation:** “Oh my fathers, where is the way of life? Because I am idle and I  
didn't identify the way of the right and left.”

2) Verso 30, Column 1, Line 3

ጽሑፍ - ተአምራሁ : ለአቡነ : ተክለ : አልፋ : ጸሎቱ : ወበረከቱ : የሃለ : ገብሩ : ወልደ : ማርያም

**Written:** Tā'āmərihu lä'ābunä Täklä 'älfā şälotu wäbäräkātu yähälä gäbru wäldä  
märyäm

ማስተካከያ - ተአምራሁ : ለአቡነ : ተክለ : አልፋ : ጸሎቱ : ወበረከቱ : የሃሉ : ምስለ : ገብሩ : ወልደ :  
ማርያም

**Corrected:** Tā'āmərihu lä'ābunä Täklä 'älfā şälotu wäbäräkātu yähällu məslä  
gäbru wäldä märyäm

**Translation:** This is the miracle of 'ābunä Täklä 'älfā. Let his blessing and  
prayer be with his servant Wolde Mariam

1.13.5.3. Adding of Letters and Words

Example:

1) Verso 8, Column 1, Line 14

ጽሑፍ - ወእምአሜሃ : ዕለት : አጋዘ : ይሥራዕ : ሕዝበ : ዘድልው : ለእግዚአብሔር : ሎቱ : ስብሐት :  
ወሳይምሕር : ትምሕርተ : ሕይወት

**Written:** Wä'am'amehā 'älät 'äxāzä yəsrä'ə ḥəzəbä zädəlləw lä'əgzi'ābhər lottu



səbhät wäxəyəməhr təmhrtä həywät

ማስተካከያ - ወእምእማሃ : ዕለት : እኃዘ : ይሥራዕ : ሕዝበ : ዘድልው : ለእግዚአብሔር : ሎቱ : ስብሐት : ወይምሕር : ትምሕርተ : ሕይወት

**Corrected:** Wä'am'amehā 'älät 'äxāzä yəsrä'ə həzəbä zädəlləw lä'əgzi'äbhər lottu səbhät wäyəməhr təmhrtä həywät

**Translation:** From that day, he begin making people which are ready for almighty God and teaches lesson of life.

2) Recto 4, Column 1

ጽሑፍ - ወእምድኅረ : ዝኅዳጥ : መዋዕል : እንዘ : ያስተዳሉ : ሎቱ : ዘይትፈቀድ : ለመርዓ

**Written:** Wä'əmdəxrä zə xədāṭ mäwā'əl 'ənzä yästädällu lottu zäyətəfäqqäd lämär'ā

ማስተካከያ - ወእምድኅረ : ኅዳጥ : መዋዕል : እንዘ : ያስተዳሉ : ሎቱ : ዘይትፈቀድ : ለመርዓ

**Corrected:** Wä'əmdəxrä xədāṭ mäwā'əl 'ənzä yästädällu lottu zäyətəfäqqäd lämär'ā

**Translation:** After short time while they were preparing for him what is needed for a bridegroom.

In addition to adding of some letters, sometimes words are added or repeated mistakenly. In Gə'əz scripts, we could get words of similar meanings written together. This is not mistake, rather it is used to emphasize on the idea shared. Another culture in the literature of Gə'əz language is the use of repeated words for giving another meaning. For instance, xaba (ኅበ) has a meaning 'to (for location)'; but if we get the phrase xaba xaba (ኅበ ኅበ) in some writing, then the meaning is 'while doing (something)'. I will just mention the repetition that encountered in the Gə'əz manuscript of Acts of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, which have no meaning or use.

**Example:**



1) Verso 3, Column 1, Line 5 and 6

ጽሑፍ - ወእምዝ : አስተፃመሮሙ : እግዚአብሔር : ሎቱ : ስብሐት : በሰብሳብ : ንጹሕ : ለአቡሁ : ለአቡሁ : ወለእሙ : ለአቡነ

Written: Wä’əmzə ’ästäḍāmäromu ’əgzī’äbhər lottu səbhät bäsäbsäb nəṣuḥ lä’äbuhu lä’äbuhu wälä’əmmu läzəntu ’äbunä

ማስተካከያ - ወእምዝ : አስተፃመሮሙ : እግዚአብሔር : ሎቱ : ስብሐት : በሰብሳብ : ንጹሕ : ለአቡሁ : ወለእሙ : ለአቡነ

Corrected: Wä’əmzə ’ästäḍāmäromu ’əgzī’äbhər lottu səbhät bäsäbsäb nəṣuḥ lä’äbuhu wälä’əmmu läzəntu ’äbunä

Translation: From this, God made them together in clean kinship for father and mother of our father.

2) Verso 6, Column 2, Line 21

ጽሑፍ - እምክመ : ፈጸምክሙ : ኩሎ : ኩሎ : ገቢረ : በሉ : አግብርት : ጽሩዓን : ንሕነ

Written: ’əmkämä fäṣämkəmu k<sup>w</sup>allo k<sup>w</sup>allo gäbirä bälu ’ägbərt ṣəru’ān nəhnä

ማስተካከያ - እምክመ : ፈጸምክሙ : ኩሎ : ገቢረ : በሉ : አግብርት : ጽሩዓን : ንሕነ

Corrected: ’əmkämä fäṣämkəmu k<sup>w</sup>allo gäbirä bälu ’ägbərt ṣəru’ān nəhnä

Translation: After you have done all work, then say we are lazy servants

1.13.5.4. Using different letters for the same word

In the Gə’əz language at the present time, some letters are thought to have the same sound and use in writing. Some history books mention that this inconsistency was caused in the 16<sup>th</sup> century after the reign of Ahmad Gragn. I am going to mention the



inconsistency of these letters with a brief description after the correction. The bold words in the examples below are the area of concentration.

**Example:**

1) Verso 8, Column 1, Line 14

ወይምከር : ትምከርተ : ከይወት

**wäyäməhr tēməhrtä** həywät

And he **teaches** lesson of life

2) Verso 8, Column 2, Line 7 and 12

'ällä lälihuni yä'ämmər **wäyämehər**

አለ : ለሊሁኒ : የአምር : ወይምከር

But he also knows and **teaches** ...

The author used 'ḥ' in the first part and used 'h' in the second one for the same word. In the present time, the difference between these sounds is forgotten in speech, but fathers of the church are still teaching the difference between them in their writing. Some fathers say that the sound of these letters was forgotten in speech after Ahmed Gragn attack. These sounds are:

h is an ordinary [h], as in hope

ḥ is the voiceless pharyngeal continuant [H], an h-sound accompanied by a tense narrowing between the base of tongue and the back of the throat (Arabic ح)

x is the voiceless velar fricative [x], as in German *Bach* (Arabic خ)

**1.13.5.5. Unwanted repeating of words**



### 1.13.5.6. Some letters which are written wrong

I will give one example for letters which written in a very close way to each other. And again I will mention a letter written mostly with wrong vowel. The emphasized words will be written in bold.

Example:

1) Verso 2, Column 1, Line 4

ጽሑፍ - ወእሐዱ : በመለኮት : ብሑተ : ህላዌ

Written: Wä'ähädu bämäläkot bəḥutä **həlläwi**

ማስተካከያ - ወእሐዱ : በመለኮት : ብሑተ : ህላዌ

Corrected: Wä'ähädu bämäläkot bəḥutä **həlläwe**

2) Verso 11, Column 2, Line 8 and Line 13

ጽሑፍ - በከመ : ኮነ : ስምዐ : ለሊሁ : ወፈድፋድሰ : ኮነ : ዝንቱ : አቡነ : ተክለ : አልፋ : ያስተሐምም : በእንተ : ቁርባን : ወአመ : ወድቀ : ኢይጥዕም : እክለ : ወኢያቁርር : ማየ : ወይጸውም : በበሠሉስ

Written: bākämä konä səm'ā lälihu **wäfädfädässä** konä zəntu 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä yästähämməm bä'əntä qurbän wä'amä wädqä 'iyəṭ'əm 'əklä wä'iyäq<sup>w</sup>ärrər mäyä **wäyəsäwwəm** bäbbäsälus

In this text the letter [da] in line 8 and [ša] in line 13

3) Verso 17, Column 2, Line 8 and Line 10

ጽሑፍ - ሎቱ : ስብሐት : ወአብጽሐኒ : ቅድመ : መንበሩ : ለእጋዜ : ኩሉ

Written: lottu **səbhät** wä'äbşəḥänni qədmä mänbäru **lä'äxāze** k<sup>w</sup>əllu

- In this text the letter [se] and letter [la] are so similar and need careful view to



identify from the context.

#### 1.13.5.7. Grammar

The inconsistencies considering grammar could be included within the above part but I emphasized on it because it caused grammatical problem.

Example:

Recto 9, Column 1

ጽሑፍ - ወሰሚያ : ይበኪ : ወየኃዝን : ጥቀ : እስመ : ርኅሩኃ : ልብ : ውእቱ : ወይሁቦነ : ሠናየ : ማኅደረ :  
ወይሠርዕ : ሲሳዮን : ወእራዞን : ወመንጸድን : ወቅብዐ : ዘይበልእ

**Written:** wäsämi’o yəbäkki wäyāxāzzən ṭəqqä ’əsmä rəxruxā ləbb wə’ətu wäyəhubon  
śänāyā māxdärä wäyəsärə’ sisäyon wä’ärāzon wämänşäfon wäqəb’ā zäyəbällə’ä ...

- The basic grammatical problem is that *yeballe’a* have no definition, rather the correct form of writing is *yebelle’ā* which means ‘they will eat (women)’.

### 1.14. Anthropological Content of the Gädl

This point of view helps in analyzing the relationship between cultural practice and religious beliefs. It provides insight in to the cultural practice and beliefs system at the time of manuscript’s creation, as well as how they influenced and were influenced by the Ethiopian orthodox Tewahdo church. (Gädlä Täklä ’ älfā, 2009)

#### 1.14.1. Relation between the Orthodox Church and the society

This part generally covers the relation between the society of *Gojjām* and the monastery



of Dima at the time of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, the influence and the contribution of the Orthodox Church to the society.

The traditions and the cultures of the Ethiopian Christian society and the Orthodox Church are so interrelated that it was difficult to differentiate the acts of the society as culture or as faith. The basic reason behind this is that the society accepted the teachings of the Ethiopian Orthodox church and attached it to their day to day life. The cultures of the Ethiopian society, especially the citizens at the Northern Part of Ethiopia, when examined carefully show a teaching of the Orthodox Church.

The Orthodox Church was the origin of government, education, spirituality, wisdom, tradition for the society. The relation between the Orthodox Church and the government is mentioned briefly above. The education is also well defined above. The teachings of the Orthodox Church were also the basis for the tradition and culture of the society. The basic reason why Ethiopians are mentioned with great respect is the teaching the society learned from the Orthodox Church and the good ethics they have seen from the fathers and the mothers of the Church. In time of problems, the Orthodox Church served as a place where citizens hide from the trouble. (Recto 9)

The society also supported the church in anyway they could. The first and the basic one is accepting the teachings of the Orthodox Church. Next, every citizen supports the servants of the Church in their needs. In the Gə'əz manuscript of Acts of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, we get that their children were always providing them with what they need for the work in the monastery. The monastery of Dima possessed a vast land of agriculture. The society around the monastery was the one who divides the lands, cultivate the lands and provide the products to the monastery.

#### **1.14.2. The contributions of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä**

As a holy father, 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä's life is a teacher which leads the reader through the correct road of Orthodox Church teachings. Some other contributions of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä in the culture and history of the Gojjām and Ethiopia will be listed as follows:

- 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä was the abbot of monastery of Dima at the time by which



Ahmad Gagn brought fire on Orthodox Church. He contributed to the history of Ethiopia by keeping the system of monastery in the monastery of Dima and also kept the history of monastery of Dima by keeping the ark of Saint George and some monks.

- 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä was supporting the society with his good doings. He helped the society keep the culture of doing well for every one.

### **1.14.3. The effects of the attack of Ahmed Gagn on the culture of the society**

The Orthodox teachings were the root for the culture of the society of Gojjām. By affecting the Orthodox Church, Ahmad Gagn indirectly affected the culture of Ethiopia, specifically the people of Gojjām.

### **1.14.4. The effect of the attack of Ahmed Gagn on the Orthodox Church**

As aforementioned, the reign of Ahmad Gagn was one of the worst times by which the manuscripts, books, and children of the Orthodox Church were destroyed. It is obvious that Ahmad Gagn directly affected the Ethiopian Orthodox Church through burning churches and monasteries, burning books and manuscripts, killing priests and bishops, etc...

## **1.15. Theological Content of Gädlä'äbunä Täklä 'älfä**

This point of view helps in analyzing the major aim of the Gädl. It encompasses the spiritual life of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, his services, the miracles done by him and also the covenant God made with him. It relates the Orthodox Church teachings with the doings of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä and shows why fathers and mothers write these types of



manuscripts, and the significance of these manuscripts in the Orthodox Church.

### 1.15.1. The Servings of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä

#### 1.15.1.1. Keeping holy the Sabbath Day

“Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: neither you, nor your son, your daughter, your male servant, your female servant, your cattle, nor your stranger who sojourns with you. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath Day and hallowed it.” /Exodus 20:8-11/

ወእንዘ ፡ የሐውር ፡ በፍኖት፡ሶበ ፡ መስየ ፡ ቦቱ ፡ ብሔር ፡ እንተ ፡ ይእቲ ፡ ዓርብ ፡ ኃደረ ፡ ማዕከለ ፡ በድው፡ወሰንበተ  
፡ ወነበረ ፡ ህየ ፡ እስከ ፡ ዕለተ ፡ ሰኑይ፡ወከመዝ ፡ ልማዱ ፡ ኩሎ ፡ አሚረ ፡ የኃድር፡ኅበ ፡ ረከበ ፡ እመሂ ፡ በፍኖት ፡  
ወስተ ፡ አህጉር፡ወዝንቱ ፡ ኩሎ ፡ ኮነ ፡ በእንተ ፡ አክብሮ ፡ ሰንበታት

Wä'enzä yäḥāwwər bäfənot sobä mäsəyā bottu bəḥer 'əntä yə'əti 'ārb xādärä mā'əkälä  
bädw wäsänbätä wänäbärä həyyä 'əskä 'əlätä sänuy wäkämäzə ləmādu k<sup>w</sup>əlo 'ämirä  
yäxāddər xäbä räkäbä 'əmmähi bäfənot wəstä 'ähəgur wäzəntu k<sup>w</sup>əlu konä bä'əntä  
'äkbəro sänbätät

*While he was going on his way, when it gets night on Friday, he spent the two days in the wilderness. He sat there until Monday. It is his habit every time to spend anywhere he found on the road or in villages, and this is for sake of respecting Sabbaths.*

#### 1.15.1.2. Teaching Children in Church

“And You gave me the shield of Your salvation;

And Your right hand supported me;

And Your instruction restored me to the end;



And Your instruction will teach me.” /Psalms 17(18):35/

Abune TelkeAlfa, in his childhood, was taken to a teacher to learn holy books, and Church’s teachings. This was the root for the growth of Christianity in Ethiopia. The teaching institutions in Ethiopian Orthodox Church is responsible for the passing of the Dogma, and Canon of Orthodox Church to many generations.

Recto 4, Column 1

ወሐፀንዎ ፡ ሠናዩ ፡ ሕፅነተ ፡ ወልሕቀ ፡ ሕፃን ፡ ወጸንዓ ፡ በመንፈስ ፡ ቅዱስ።በኃይል ፡ ወበጥበብ።ወወሀብዎ ፡  
ለመምሕር ፡ ወተምረ ፡ አንብቦ ፡ መጻሕፍት ፡ ዘኦሪት ፡ ወዘነቢያት።ወመጽሐፈ ፡ ወንጌል ፡ ወመልእክታተ ፡  
ሐዋርያት።ወፍካሬሆሙ

Wähäḍänəwwo sännāyā ḥəḍnätä wäləḥqä ḥəḍān wəṣān’ā bāmānfäs qəddus bāxāyl  
wäbätəbāb wāwähābəwwo lāmāmḥər wätāmḥərə ’ānbəbo māṣāḥəft zä’orit  
wāzānābiyät wāmāṣḥäfä wāngel wāmäl’əktātä ḥāwārəyät wäfəkkārehomu

### 1.15.1.3. Tribulation of ‘ābunä Täklä ‘ālfā

“Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.” /Luke 17:33/ Every person should live with fasting, praying, bowing and doing alms, in order to live with God. Saints are the mirrors by which we have seen the teachings of Lord Jesus Christ.

‘ābunä Täklä ‘ālfā lived in tribulation after he left his home and parents. He lived in hunger while he can eat, he lived in exhaustion while he can rest, and also he lived in wakefulness while he can sleep, considering God’s word saying “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” /1 John 2:15/

Remembering Lord Jesus Christ’s words which say, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” /Mark 8:34/ ‘ābunä Täklä ‘ālfā always stands the whole night praying, whips his back many times,



and has entered a thorn in his leg to remember the suffering of Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. There is time when he stands in a sea. He ties himself with chains of heated thorns.

Recto 5, Column 1

ያጠውቃ ፡ ለነፍሱ ፡ ወያገርሮ ፡ ለሥጋሁ ፡ በጸሎት ፡ ወኢያጸርዕ ፡ እምሰዓታት ፡ ዘመዓልት ፡ ወዘሌሊት። ወየጋድር ፡  
ቀዊሞ ፡ ኩላ ፡ ኑጋ ፡ ሌሊት ፡ ወያነብብ ፡ መዝሙረ ፡ ዳዊት ፡ 3 ፡ ጊዜ ፡ ወማኅሌተ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ ነግሠ። ፡  
ወካልዓ ፡ ጸሎታተ ፡ በበመትልው። ወለኑልቄ ፡ ሰግደታቲሁ ፡ አልቦ ፡ ኑልቀ

Yāṭaweqa lanafsu wayāgarero laśegahu baṣalot wa'iyyaṣare' 'emsa'ātāt zama'ālt  
wazalelit wayaxādder qawimo k<sup>w</sup>ella nuxā lelit wayānabbēb mazmura dāwit śalasta gize  
wamāxleta 'egzi'abḥer nagśa wakāle'ā ṣalotāta babbamatlew walax<sup>w</sup>elq<sup>w</sup>a segdatātiḥu  
'albo x<sup>w</sup>elq<sup>w</sup>e

Verso 5, Column 1

ወበመዋዕለ ፡ ተዓፅዎቱኒ ፡ እንተ ፡ ይእቲ ፡ ጸመ ፡ 40 ፡ ቅድስት ፡ ኢይጥዕም ፡ ምንተኒ ፡ ሐሙስ ፡ መዋዕለ ፡  
ወበሰናብትኒ ፡ ኮነ ፡ ሲሳዩ ፡ በበ3 ፡ አተር ፡ ወስቴሁኒ ፡ ኮነ ፡ በጽዋዕ ፡ መስፈርተ ፡ አፃብዕ ፡ ነዓስ። ወበሰሙነ ፡  
ሕማሜትሂ ፡ የጋድር ፡ ወይውዕል ፡ ቀዊሞ ፡ እንዘ ፡ ኢያሰምክ ፡ በአረፍት ፡ ወኢይኅዝ ፡ በትረ ፡ በእዴሁ

wābāmāwā'älä tä'ādḥwotuni 'äntä yə'əti ṣomä 'ärbā qədəst 'iyəṭ'əm məntāni ḥāmusä  
mäwā'älä tä'āṣwotuni 'äntä yə'əti ṣomä 'ärbā qəddəst 'iyyəṭ'əm məntāni ḥāmusä  
mäwā'älä wābäsānābətəni konä sisäyu bābäsälästu 'ätär wästehuni konä bäsəwā'ə  
mäsfärtä 'ädābə'ə nä'ās wābäsāmunä ḥəmāmātəhi yäxāddər wäyəwə'əl qāwimo 'ənzä  
'iyyāsämmək bā'äräft wä'iyyəxz bātrā bā'ədehu

Verso 5, Column 2

ተጋድሎቱስ ፡ ዘዘልፍ። ኮነ ፡ ቦ ፡ ጊዜ ፡ የአሥር ፡ ውዕተ ፡ ሐቋሁ ፡ ወመዛርዒሁ ፡ ወአቀያጸሁ ፡ ጋጋተ ፡  
ሐዲን። እስከ ፡ ይትበጸል ፡ ማሰሰ ፡ ሥጋሁ ፡ ወይለብስ ፡ ሠቀ። ወቦ ፡ ጊዜ ፡ ይቀውም ፡ ውስተ ፡ ባሕር ፡

ወይቀሥፍ ፡ ሥጋሁ ፡ በሰናሰለ ፡ ሐዲን ፡ ዘርሱን ፡ በእሳት።እስከ ፡ ይወድቅ ፡ ቅራፈ ፡ ሥጋሁ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ምድር።ወይቀብርዎ ፡ ወምሰለ ፡ ዝንቱ ፡ ኩሉ ፡ ኢያጥረዮ ፡ መንጻፈ።ለገቦሁ ፡ አለ ፡ ኮነ ፡ ይሰክብ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ምድር

Tägādlotussä zäzälf konä bo gize yä'äsär wə'ətä häq<sup>w</sup>ehu wämäzārə'ihu wä'äq<sup>w</sup>əyāšihu gägātä həḍin 'əskä yətbäšäl mäsäsä šəgāhu wäyäläbbs säqqä wäbo gize yəqāwəm wəstā bāhr wäyəqäsəf šəgāhu bäsānāsälä həḍin zārəsun bā'əsāt yəwāddəq qərrāfä šəgāhu wəstā mədr wäyəqäbbərəwwo wäməslä zəntu k<sup>w</sup>əllu 'iyyāṭrāyā mänšāfä lägäbohu 'ällä konä yəsəkəb wəstā mədr

Recto 6, Column 1

ወዳዲ ፡ ተከለ ፡ ወሰክዓ ፡ ውስተ ፡ አሣዕሲሁ።እለ ፡ ደጉዓ ፡ ሰኳንወ ፡ እገረሁ።ሶበ ፡ የሐውር ፡ ውስተ ፡ ቤተ ፡ ክርስቲያን

Wä'adi tākälä wäläk'ā wəstā 'äsā'ənihu 'äswākä həḍin 'əllä däg<sup>w</sup>ḍā sāk<sup>w</sup>ānəwä 'əgərihu sobä yähäwwər wəstā bətä kərəstiyān

**1.15.1.4. Doing alms**

“I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” /Acts 20:35/

'äbunä Täklä 'älfä always gives for people who were in hunger or trouble. Before he was appointed the chief of Dima's Saint George monastery, he always keep a daily food and yearly cloth for himself and give the left for poor people. After he was appointed the chief of Dima's Saint George Monastery, women who where pregnant by or without keeping God's law come to him and tell him their problem. He cries for them and give them a place to rest and their daily food. He was always there to help troubled people. If he do not have anything to give them, he take from the materials of the church



and give it to the troubled.

Verso 5,

ወእምኔሁ ፡ ያስተዋጽእ ፡ ለነዳያን።ወለአልሮሙ ፡ ተፅናስ ፡ ከመ ፡ ይርዳእ ፡ ድካሞሙ።በከመ ፡ ተብህለ ፡ አንትሙኒ ፡ ጽኑዓን ፡ ፀርዖሙ ፡ ለስዑናን ፡ ድካሞሙ

Wä'əmənnēhu yästāwāṣə' länädāyān wälä'əllä bomu täḍnäs kāmā yəmṣā' dəkāmomu bākāmā tābhələ 'äntəmuni ṣənu'an ḍurəwomu läsä'unān dəkāmomu

Recto 9 and Verso 9

ወዝንቱስ ፡ አቡነ ፡ ተክለ ፡ አልፋ ፡ አልቦ ፡ ዕለተ ፡ ዘአድለወ ፡ ለርእሱ ፡ በከመ ፡ ክርስቶስ ፡ ሎቱ ፡ ስብሐተር ፡ ኢየሁዳ ፡ ለርእሱ።ዘእነበለ ፡ ዳዕሙ ፡ ይሄሊ ፡ ለርኑብ። ወያስተሐምም ፡ ለፅኑሳን ፡ በእንተ ፡ ፈቃድሙ ፡ ወሶበሂ ይመጽእ ፡ አንስት ፡ ኅቤሁ።እለ ፡ ይፀንሳ ፡ በሕጉሂ ፡ ወዘእንበለ ፡ ሕጉሂ ፡ ወይነግራሁ ፡ ትካዞን ፡ ወኃዘኖን።ወሰሚያ ፡ ይበኪ ፡ ወየኃዝን ፡ ልብ ፡ ውእቱ ፡ ወይሁቦን ፡ ሠናየ ፡ ማኅደረ ፡ ወይሠርዕ ፡ ሲሳዮን ፡ ወዓራዞን ፡ ወመንጸፎን ፡ ወቅብዓ ፡ ዘይበልእ ፡ ለርእሱን ፡ ወበዘየኃፅና ፡ ደቂቆን።ወኩሎ ፡ ዘይትፈቀድ ፡ በመዋዕለ ፡ ሐሪስ ፡ ወለመወልደትሂ ፡ ይሁቦን ፡ ከመዝ።ወእመ ፡ ተፈጸመ ፡ መዋዕለ ፡ ንጽሑን ፡ ቦ ፡ እለ ፡ የአትዋ ፡ አብያቲሆን።ወቦ ፡ እለ ፡ ይነብራ ፡ ኅቤሁ ፡ ኩሎ ፡ መዋዕለ ፡ ሕይወቶን ፡ ወቦ ፡ ዘይገድፋ ፡ ሕፃናቲሆን።ወስተ ፡ ዳዳሁ ፡ ወየሐውራ።ወአቡነስ ፡ ተክለ ፡ አልፋ ፡ ያነብሮሙ ፡ ለሐፃንያን ፡ ምስለ ፡ ሲሳይ ፡ ወአራዝ።ወሐሊብ ፡ ዘይትወግዑ ፡ ሕፃናት ፡ ወከመዝ ፡ ልማዱ ፡ ለዘልፍ።ለዕሩቃንሂ ፡ ያለብሶሙ ፡ እንዘ ፡ ይትዓረቅ ፡ እምልብሱ።ወለርኑባን ፡ ይሁቦሙ ፡ እምኅብስቱ ፡ እንዘ ፡ ኢየተርፍ ፡ ለርእሱ ፡ ወየኃድር ፡ ጽውም።ወኢይጥዕም ፡ ምንተኒ ፡ ዘእንበለ ፡ ንስቲት ፡ ማየ ፡ ጸሎት።እስከ ፡ አሠር ፡ መዋዕል።ወእምጽንዓ ፡ ረኃብ ፡ ኮነ ፡ ይወድቅ ፡ ወስተ ፡ ምድር ፡ በእማንቱ ፡ መዋዕል።ወወግዓ ፡ ሥጋሁ ፡ ዲበ ፡ አዕፅምቲሁ።ወለድውያንሂ ፡ ወለመፃጉዓን ፡ ዘዘኪአሁ ፡ ሕማሞሙ ፡ እለ ፡ ኢየወጽኡ ፡ እምቤት ፡ መጠነ ፡ ፲ወ፳ ዓመት።አው ፡ ዘይበዝሳ ፡ ይፌጽም ፡ ሎሙ ፡ መፍቅድሙ።ወይፀውር ፡ ኩሎ ፡ ዘአክበዱ ፡ ላዕሌሁ ፡ በከመ ፡ ይቤ ፡ ጳውሎስ።መዓዛ ፡ ክርስቶስ።ወፀሩ ፡ ለቢጽክሙ ፡ ኩሎ ፡ ዘአክበዱ ፡ ላዕሌክሙ።ወሶበሂ ፡ የኃጥእ ፡ ዘይሁቦሙ ፡ ለእሙንቱ ፡ ነዳያን።ይሠይጥ ፡ ንዋየ ፡ ቤተክርስቲያን።እምልብስ ፡ ወመዋጥሕ ፡ ወእምኩሎ ፡ መባእ ፡ ዘይትቈረብ።በከመ ፡ ይቤ ፡ ነቢይ ፡ ምጽዋተ ፡ አበድር ፡ እምነ ፡ መሥዋዕት።ወአልቦ ፡ ዘያተርፍ ፡ ምንተኒ ፡ እምዘረከበ።ወሶበሂ ፡ ይፈቅዱ ፡ ሥጋ ፡ ይጠብሕ ፡ ሎሙ ፡ በበ፳ ወበ፳ አልህምት ፡ እምዘአምጽኡ ፡ ሎቱ ፡ ለመፍቅድ ፡ ቤተክርስቲያን።ወያምሕሎሙ ፡ ለደቂቁ ፡ ከመ ፡ ኢየሃቡ ፡ ለባዕዳን።ወኢየትርፉ ፡ ለርእሶሙ።ዘንእበለ ፡ ለነዳያን ፡ ባሕቲቶሙ።

Wäzəntussä 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä 'älbo 'älätä zä'ädläwä läre'əsu bākämä kərəstos lottu səbhāt 'iyyādläwä läre'əsu zä'ənbälä dā'əmu yəhelli läre'əxub wäyāstāhəmməm lädənusān bā'əntä fāqādomu wəsobāhi yəmāşşə'ä 'ənəst xəbehu 'əllä yəđānnəsā bāhəgguhi wäzä'ənbälä həgguhi wäyənəggərāhu təkāzon wäxāzānon wäsāmi'o yəbākki wäyāxāzən təqqä 'əsmä rəxruxā ləbb wə'ətu wäyəhubon sänāyā māxdārā wäyəsārə' sisāyon wā'ārāzon wāmānşāfon wāqəb'ā zäyəbällə'ä läre'əson wäbāzäyāxāđənnā dāqiqon wāk<sup>w</sup>əllə zäyətəfəqqəd bāmāwā'ələ hāris wälämmä wälädäthi yəhubon kāmāzə wā'əmmä täfāşämä māwā'ələ nəşhon bo 'əllä yä'ättəwā 'äbēyātihon wābo 'əllä yənābbərā xəbehu k<sup>w</sup>əllə māwā'ələ həywəton wābo zäyägāddəfā həđānātihon wəsətä dedehu wäyāhāwərā wā'äbunässä täklä 'älfä yānābbəromu lähəđānəyān məslä sisāy wā'ārāz wāhālib zäyəqwəggə'u həđānāt wākāmāzə ləmādu läzālf lä'əruqānəhi yālābəsomu 'ənzä yət'ārrāq 'əmləbsu wälärəxubān yəhubomu 'əmxəbəstu 'ənzä 'iyyātərrəf läre'əsu wäyāxāddər şəwwəmo wā'iyyətə'əm mənətāni zä'ənbälä nəstit māyā şālot 'əskä 'əsür māwā'əl wā'əməşən'ā rāxāb konä yəwāddəq wəstā mədr bā'əmmāntu māwā'əl wāwäg'ā səgāhu dibā 'ä'əđəmtihu wälədəwwəyānəhi wälämāđəg<sup>w</sup>ə'ān zāzāzi'āhu həməməmu 'əllä 'iyyəwəşə'u 'əmbetä mätānā 'āsşärtu wäxāmməstu 'āmāt 'āw zäyəbāzəx yəfəşəm lomu mäfəqədomu wäyəđāwər k<sup>w</sup>əllə zä'ākəbādu lä'ələhu bākämä yəbe pāwəlos mā'āzā kərəstos wāđuru läbişəkəmu k<sup>w</sup>əllə zä'ākəbādu lä'ələkəmu wəsobāni yāxāţ'ä zäyəhubomu lä'əmmuntu nādāyān yəsāyyəţ nəwāyā betəkərəstiyān 'əmləbs wāmāwātəh wā'əmk<sup>w</sup>əllu mābā' zäyətqerāb bākämä yəbe nābiyy məşwātä 'äbāddər 'əmənnā məşwā'ət wā'älbo zäyātərrəf mənətāni 'ənzārəkābā wəsobāhi yəfāqqədu səgā yəţəbbəh lomu bābbāxāmməstu wäbāsāb'āttu 'älhəmt 'ənzä'əmşə'u lottu lāmāfəqədə bətä kərəstiyān wäyāmhəlomu lädāqiqu kāmā 'iyyāhābu läbā'ədān wā'iyyātərfu läre'əsomu zä'ənbälä länādāyān bāhətitomu

#### 1.15.1.5. Working

As Saint Paul taught saying "For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.", every Christian is obliged to work. Saint Paul didn't just taught it, he also lived it. While he can get what to eat from the



Christians of the city he teaches, he sews and sells tents at night. Anyone who sits idle will be a workshop of devil. Being idle is letting devil to make you think with evil doings.

'äbunä Täklä 'älfā, as we mentioned before, spends the night by prayer, fasting and bowing. With all this, he doesn't sit idle in the day, rather he sews a clothing from hide and skin of cattle and goats. He finishes a dress within a day.

Recto 5, Column 1

ወምስለ ፡ ዝንቱ ፡ ብዝኃ ፡ ጸሎት ፡ ኢይውዕል ፡ በሐኬት፡ኣለ ፡ ኮነ ፡ ይትጌበር ፡ በእደዊሁ ፡ ወይሰፊ ፡ አነዳ ፡ ለህም፡ወዘብድወ ፡ ጠሊ ፡ ወይፊጽም ፡ ፩ ፡ ቀሚሰ ፡ በአሐቲ ፡ ዕለት

Wäməslä zəntu k<sup>w</sup>əllu bəzxā şälot 'iyəwə'əl bähäket 'ällā konä yətgebbär bə'ədäwihu wäyəsäffi 'änädä lähm wäzäbədäwä tälli wäyəfesəm 'ähädä qämisä bə'ähätti 'älät

#### 1.15.1.6. Lowliness

“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering.” /Colossians 3:12/

'äbunä Täklä 'älfā was mentioned in the Gə'əz manuscript as 'Mamhera textena'; 'Teacher of Humility'. He, with all of his works, always says that he have done nothing. When people chosen him as abbot of Dima monastery, he didn't accept the appointment and also tried to escape many times until Abune Markos \_\_\_\_\_ him to stay in the appointment and protect his herd.

Verso 6, Column 2

ወአስተርአየ ፡ በቅድሜሆሙ ፡ እንዘ ፡ ይብል ፡ መሐሩኒ ፡ ኦ ፡ አበውየ ፡ አይ ፡ ይእቲ ፡ ፍየተ ፡ ሕይወት፡እስወ ፡ ጸሩዕ ፡ አነ ፡ ወኢፈጥኩ ፡ ፍየተ ፡ የማን



wä'ästär'äyā bäqədmehomu 'ənzä yəbl mähäruni 'o 'äbäwəyā 'äy yə'əti fənotä həywät 'əsmä şəru' 'änä wä'ifälätku fənotä yämān

### 1.15.1.7. Hating Praise or Conceit

“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.” /Philippines 2:3/

As mentioned above, in the biography of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, the reader could see how he struggled to be far from conceit and praise, because he is the father of lowliness. In every of the miracles he done for the people, he always tell them strictly not to tell for anyone. All of this is because he always remember God's words which say “But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed maybe in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will himself reward you openly.”/Matthew 6:3-4/; “But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”/Matthew 6:6/; “But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” /Matthew 6:17/

Recto 31, Column 1

ወትቤሎ ፡ ለአቡነ ፡ አንገረኒ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ በጸሎትክ ፡ እምአፈ ፡ አርጭ ፡ በላዒ ፡ ወኃደርኩ ፡ ማዕከለ ፡ ፬አዝዕት ፡ ወኢክህሉ ፡ ለኪፎትዮ ፡ ወሰሚዖ ፡ አቡነ ፡ ተክለ ፡ አልፋ ፡ አማሐላ ፡ ወገሠዓ ፡ ከመ ፡ ኢትንግር ፡ ለሰብእ

wätəbelo lä'äbunä 'ängäfänni 'əgzi'äbhər bəşälotəkä 'əm'äfä 'ärwe bälā'i wäxädärku mä'əkälä 'rbä'əttu 'äzə't wä'ikəhlu läkifotyä wäsämi'io 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä 'ämḥälä wägäsäḍä kāmā 'itəngər läsäb

Verso 5, Column 1



ወየኃድር : ቀዊሞ : ኩላ : ኑኃ : ሌሊት : ወያነብብ : መዝሙረ : ዳዊት : 3 : ጊዜ : ወማኅሌተ : እግዚአብሔር :  
ነግሠ:: : ወካልዓ : ጸሎታተ : በበመትልው።ወለኑልቁ : ስግደታቲሁ : አልቦ : ኑልቀ

wäyāxāddər qāwimo k<sup>w</sup>əllā nuxā lelit wäyānābbəb mǎzmurā dāwit śälästā gize  
wāmāxletä 'əgzī'ābhər nägsä wākālə'ä şəlotātä bābāmātləw wäläx<sup>w</sup>əlq<sup>w</sup>ä səgdätātihu  
'älbo x<sup>w</sup>əlq<sup>w</sup>

Verso 8, Column 2

ዝ : ወእቱ : ልማዱ : ለዘልፍ : እኮ : ጎብስተ : ባሕቲቶ : ዘይሜሕር : ወይመጸውት።እላ : ይሁብ : ኩሎ : ዘረከበ :  
እምንዋየ : ዝንቱ : ዓለም።እስከ : ቆብዕ : ወእስኬማ : ወመጽሐፍ

zə wə'ətu ləmādu lǎzālf 'äkkə xəbəstā bāḥətito zäyəmeḥr wäyämäşəwət 'ällä yəhub  
k<sup>w</sup>əllo zārəkäbä 'əmnəwāyāt wä'iyyāṭrāyā məntāni lārə'su 'əmnəwāyā zəntu 'älām 'əskä  
qob'ə wä'āskemā wämäşḥäf

### 1.15.2. Covenant given to 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä

In every Gädl, the last part of the biography of the saint is the covenant our Lord gave them before their passing away. In some Gädlät, such as Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, some covenants are given to them before their death. I will get through the covenant that is found in the manuscript:

#### Covenant One (Verso 15)

Our Lord gave this covenant to 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä while he was alive. This covenant is found written within one of the visions that 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä saw.

ወአሰፈውኒ : ኪዳነ : ጽድቅ : እንዘ : ይብል : በከመ : አክባርኪ : ወፃመውከ : በእንቲእየ : በውስተ : ዝንቱ :  
ዓለም : እነሂ : አክብረከ : በዘይመጽእ : ዓለም።ወአፈደፍድ : እስበከ : በመንግሥተ : ሰማያት : ወለኩሉ : ዘጸውዓ  
: ሰመከ : በጥቡዕ : ልብ : ወተአመነ : በጸሎትከ : ወዘገብረ : ተዝካረከ : እምሕሮ : እነ : እስከ : ጎብዕ : ትውልድ  
: ወእዓሥዮ : ዕሄተ : ሠናየ



wä'äsäffäwänni kidānā şədq 'ənzä yəbl bākämä 'äkbärkänni wäḍāmāwkä bā'ənti'äyā bāwəstā zəntu 'ālām 'änāhi 'käbbəräkkä bāzäyämäşə' 'ālām wä'äfädäffəd 'äsbäkä bāmängəstā sāmāyāt wäläk<sup>w</sup>əllu zäşāwwə'ā səmākä bätəbu'ə ləbb wätä'ämmänä bāşəlotəkä wäzägäbrä täzkārākä 'əmhərro 'änä 'əskä sābə'ə təwlədd wä'a'āssəyo 'əsetä sännāyā

*He gave me true covenant saying, "As you honored me and struggled for me in this world, I will honor you on the coming world and make your award much in the heavens. Anyone who call you name with faith and any one who believed in your prayer and anyone who remember your name, I will give him the better award"*

### 1.15.3. Miracles of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā

Miracles are one of the important parts of Gädlät. They are extraordinary works of God on the hands of a saint. 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā has done many miracles through out his life and also after his death. The manuscript from the monastery of Dima contains about 22 miracles done by 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā. The miracles are essential in the Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā to teach the reader that tribulations and sufferings in the earth will make a person become near to God. It is used to teach that anyone who struggles for name of God will get honor from our Lord, both before and after death. Some of the miracles that are found in the manuscript are:

Miracle One is about the water that get out under the foot of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā while he was praying and fasting.

Miracle Two is about a person suffering from an evil spirit who relieved when 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā's shadow touched him.

Miracle Three is about a monk who was rescued from a hyena by the prayer of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā.

Miracle Four is about a monk who was raped and get pregnant. The sign of pregnancy was not seen on her after she had drunk the water with which 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā washed his legs.



Miracle Five is about a ruler, who has seen a vision about 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä. He has seen a sun rising from the west and being seen till 30 days. The ruler knew that 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä was coming to him and accepted him with honor. It also includes the miracle of a messenger who stolen 3 fishes from what 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä was going to give for the poor people. The three fishes were changed into three snakes. Then the messenger told 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä about his sin, but 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä let him to take the fishes. Then the snakes were returned to fishes.

Miracle Six is about a man whose wife was unable to deliver a child. He took water that 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä prayed on and gave it to his wife. She was able give a daughter, which was named Ta'ammrāwit (Miracle doer), after she drunk that water.

Miracle Seven is about thieves who took all the property of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä and his children and hurt two of his children with javelin. These thieves became ill for days after what they have done.

Miracle Eight is about the children of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä who lost all their property and the village whose people died from disease that lasted for a month. 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä told his children not to follow him to the town he is going to go. But, they refused to leave him because they thought their property will be kept if they will be with him. At last, within the terror, all of their property was lost. Then, they went to a village to get shelter, but people of that village refused to accept 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä and his children, because the village was under control of the Islam forces. 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä and his children got shelter in another village, but the people of that village died of a disease that lasted for a month.

Miracle Nine is about the waves that stopped from disturbing by the prayer of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä.

Miracle Ten is about a murderer who was saved from death by 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä. The murderer was judged to be killed for his crime. The murderer begged with the name of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä for the person not to kill him. The sword melted when the killer hit the head of the murderer.



#### 1.15.4. Revelation

In the Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, many part of the biography contains the visions 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä saw. Visions could be defined as revelations that people chosen by God see about themselves or others. The visions that 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä saw are mentioned from Recto 15 to Verso 23 in the manuscript. In general, the visions within the Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä are categorized as the visions that 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä saw and the visions other people saw about 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 1.16. CONCLUSION

There is much more left to investigate on this Gädl, but I just mentioned the philological, and historical aspect of the Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä. Firstly, it is proper to mention the use of Gädls as general because many of these Gädlät are not given that much attention nowadays. Gädlät can be used as a basic secondary source of the history of different times in the History of Ethiopia. For instance, Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä is one of the sources, besides of the Gädl of other fathers at the time, that is used to understand the medieval history of Ethiopia and the history of the Orthodox Church. Similarly, many Gädlät contain great philological and historical values within them.

This investigation just focused on precisely mentioning the biography of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, the linguistic, and other features of the Gädl, and also the theological, linguistic, philological, cultural, anthropological values of the Gädl. Much of investigation could be made on Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä from many aspects. For instance, the specific acts of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä are not analysed with respect to the norms and the values of the Gojjām society and the teachings of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The biography of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä during the reign of Ahmad Gragn needs more deep interpretation. There are some parts of the life of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä at the time of reign



of Ahmad Gragn which are mentioned in the miracles of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä.

The study, in general, contains the following founding:

- 1) The Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä mentions personages which were found at the time 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä
- 2) The history of the monastery of Dima in general, and its progress at the time of appointment of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä is investigated
- 3) The features of the Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä are mentioned
- 4) The system of monastery of Dima at the time of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä is discussed
- 5) The culture of citizens of Ethiopia, specifically Gojjām and its relation with the teachings of Orthodox Church is discussed
- 6) Some inconsistencies regarding the time of writing of Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä and in the linguistic part and grammar.

In general, 'äbunä täklä 'älfä was afather who lived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. As mentioned in the Chapter 3, the time by which 'äbunä täklä 'älfä lived is from one of the following years;1474-1549 E.C., 1480-1555 E.C., 1485-1560 E.C., 1491-1566 E.C.

## 1.17. RECOMMENDATION

I have tried to show that Gädlät are very precious manuscripts which need to be kept, by showing how Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä is crucial in understanding the governmental, political, and social system in the country, specifically in the town of Gojjām. Thus,

- 1) The Gə'əz language is essential in order to understand the Gädlät. Thus, Gə'əz language should be studied. All Gädlät are written in the ancient language of Ethiopia which is Gə'əz, thus it is crucial to study this language to understand these precious manuscripts.



- 2) The Ethiopian Orthodox Church should collect these Gädlāt with the support of universities and the government.
- 3) These Gädlāt are currently being damaged from aging due to the lack of care and protection. Thus, the original manuscripts should be collected and protected in a secure place. At least, they should be putted in copies.
- 4) The Gädlāt should be copied, translated and kept well. These manuscripts should be carefully translated because they are not just a history, rather contain many secrets.
- 5) The Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfā should be carefully analyzed, with manuscripts of similar time to reveal the detailed history of medieval Ethiopia.
- 6) The damage that occurred in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church due to Ahmad Gragn is still significantly seen until today. The Gädlāt should be studied well to identify and solve these problems.
- 7) Many foreign philologists studied these Gädlāt. We can get many of the Gädlāt in foreign countries, so, we should collect these Gädlāt and study them.



## APPENDIX I

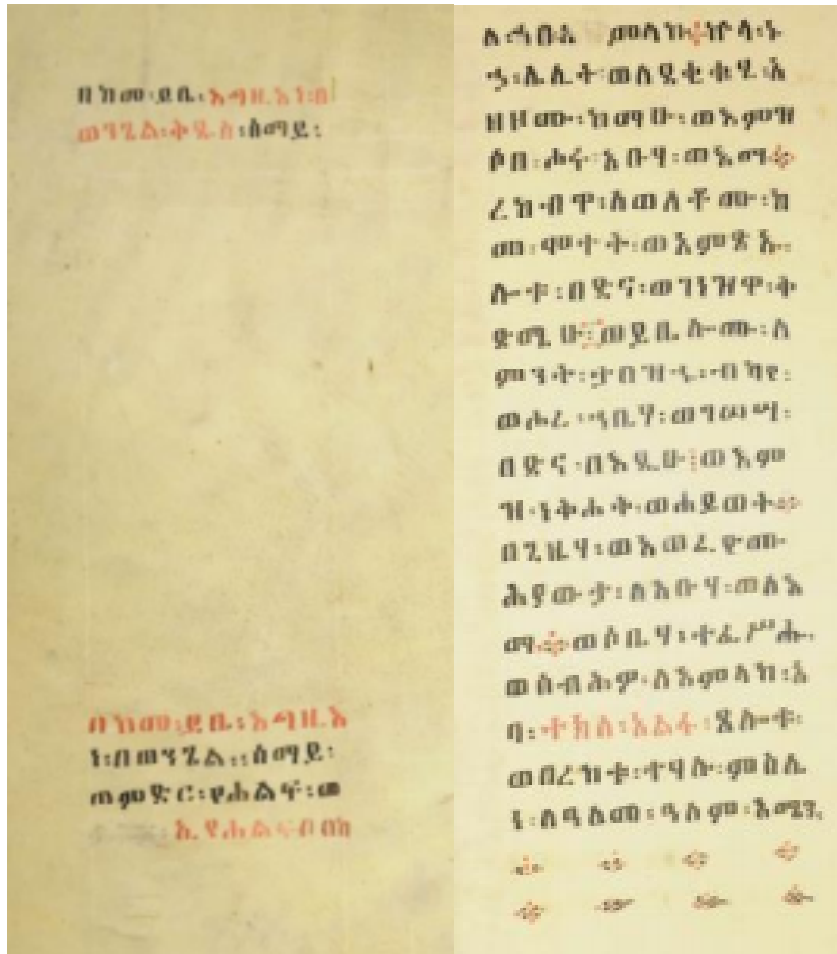


Physical

View and Sewing

## APPENDIX II





## Paleography and Punctuation in the Gadl

### APPENDIX III - Drawings within the Manuscript

Holy drawings are commonly used in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Church uses holy drawings in order to teach people about holy fathers and mothers.



Many secrets of the Orthodox Church can be represented with holy drawings. The holy drawings are also used when praying, and to get blessing from the saint drawn on the holy drawing.

The drawings within the Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä contain the tribulations that 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä struggled in his life, main events within 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä's life, and his death. Some other holy drawings contain Holy Trinity, and Saint Märyām. The Gädl of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä contains 11 drawings within it. Within the hagiography of 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä, the drawings are found in two forms. 4 of the drawings are found covering a full folio. 7 of the drawings take half of the folio. The drawings which are present within the Gädl are:

A) The Holy Trinity (Recto 2)



Figure 2.13

b) Vision about the birth of 'äbunä Täklä



'älfä Figure 2.14

c) 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä while  
Appointment of

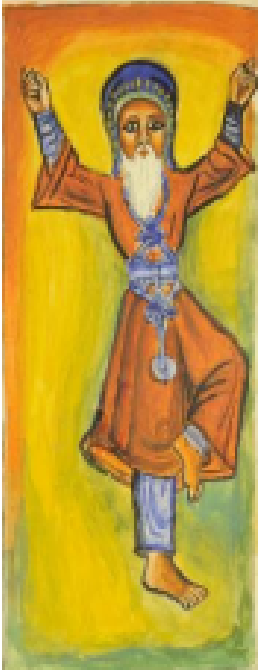


Figure 2.15

d) Tribulation of



(recto 6)  
by  
king läbnä dängäl

Figure 2.16

e)

praying at night (recto5)



'äbunä Täklä 'älfä  
'äbunä Täklä 'älfä  
(recto 8)

Figure 2.17

f) 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä

at



time of migration (verso 12)

g) Dima monastery (Recto 16)



Figure 2.18

Figure 2.19

h) That 'äbunä Täklä 'älfä was i) That angles protect 'äbunä Täklä



Figure 2.20



awarded with spiritual horse (verso 19)  
'älfā from rain (Recto 20)

Figure 2.21

j) When Saint Māryām appeared for  
25)



k) Death of 'ābunä Täklä 'ālfā (Recto



'ābunä Täklä 'ālfā (Verso 22)

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