

**THE MÄLKØ': ITS MAJOR FEATURES AND
SOURCE**

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TRANSLITERATION AND PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION
KEY

a	as	in	qal	ቃል
ä	as	in	männu	መኅ
e	as	in	bet	ቤት
'	as	in	sä'at	ሰዓት
ð	as	in	bð'ðr	ብዕር
p	as	in	pawlos	ጳውሎስ
ş	as	in	şahay	ሐሳይ
ṭ	as	in	ṭäb	ጠብ
ĉ'	as	in	aĉ'ĉ'ðr	አጭር

Abstract

The *Mälkə* is a Complimentary Gə'əz poetry on various religious Subjects. These Subjects could be Divine beings, Angels, Saints, Ecclesiastic objects and abstract ideas. It is almost anonymous and its time of beginning and cessation is unknown for certainty. It has five-line stanzas with identical end rhyme. The structure of each stanza is categorized into three: description, call and supplication. Mostly the first two lines are description of the different parts of the body; the third line is a call and the last two lines are supplication of the suppliant. Some of the *Mälkə'a mälkə* also have stanzas of invocation. The imagery in the *Mälkə* is frequently biblical and rarely non-biblical that is used for didactic purpose and ornamenting.

Regarding its origin, the Holy Bible, particularly the *Song of songs*, has influenced it. Thematically and structurally, its imagery is highly similar to the *Song of songs* in terms of its nature of praise and supplication. The *Mälkə* uses identical descriptors for identical parts of the body, similar descriptors and allusions for the *Song of songs* in particular and the Holy Bible in general. Since the *Song of songs* is earlier in its appearance, it can safely be said that the *Mälkə* must have been influenced by the *Song of songs*.

Based on comparative textual study between the *Mälkə'a mälkə* and the *Song of songs* in particular and the Holy Bible in general, the possible origin of the *Mälkə* must be the Holy Bible. The *Mälkə* and the *Song of songs* are similar in their basic form: description of the different parts of the body, praise and supplication. The organization, phrasing and imagery of the *Mälkə'a mälkə* are similar to that of the *Song of songs*. The use of explicit-implicit reference to the *Song of songs*, identical descriptors for identical parts of the body with the *Song of songs*, similar descriptors with the *Song of songs*, and allusions from the Old and the New Testaments indicate that the possible origin is the Holy Bible, particularly the *Song of songs*.

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INTRODUCTION

The *Mätkä* is one of the poetic genres of G'äz literature. This research is an attempt made to study the *Mätkä* as a poetic genre in its own right. The major goals of the thesis are: (i) identifying the predominant features, (ii) looking for the characteristics of the imagery and (iii) determining the possible source of the *Mätkä*. Achieving these goals may expose the nature of this religious poetry, namely the *Mätkä*.

To conduct such a research successfully, it is important to know the source language of the *Mätkä* texts - G'äz. However, my knowledge of G'äz is not satisfactory. With breathtaking reading, consultation of G'äz- Amharic dictionaries and G'äz masters, I sincerely believe that I have overcome the difficulties. My limited knowledge of G'äz was acquired from different sources. First, two G'äz courses given by the Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature in the undergraduate program; second, traditional *Qone* school I attended in Wallo - Kobbo as a part time student for two years; and third, as a follower of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) I have been acquainted with many G'äz prayer books including the *Mätkä a mätkä*.

This thesis is a research that indirectly tries to motivate other researchers in the field who want to study different genres of G'äz writings from the perspective of their literariness. It might also be used as a springboard for further studies in the field of the *Mätkä*. I also hope that this study will contribute a little by filling a small gap in human knowledge about the *Mätkä*. Since this is a preliminary study, researchers with better knowledge, enough time and better proficiency of G'äz are expected to pursue studying the *Mätkä* extensively.

The thesis has four chapters. The first discusses the problem, the objectives, methodology, limitations and significance of the study. The second chapter is concerned with the related literature. It reviews the related literature and forwards its difference from the

reviewed ones. Only those studies that directly mentioned the *Mälkə'* and commented on it are reviewed.

Because the research is descriptive, the third chapter tries to give comprehensive definitions of the *Mälkə'*, its general features, and analyze its prosody and imagery. The fourth chapter consists of a comparative analysis of the selected *Mälkə'a mälkə'* and the *Song of songs* and identifies the major relationship the *Mälkə'* has with the latter. This comparative analysis and identification of the relationship between the two are used in the argument that suggests the possible source of the *Mälkə'*. The conclusion is a summary of the preceding chapters of the thesis. The last part of the thesis includes bibliography and appendix.

The English translation of different stanzas from different *Mälkə'a mälkə'* is given in the last two chapters to support my arguments with concrete evidence. Transliterated stanzas are also given when there is a need to do so. The citations are given in their source language - Gə'əz - before the English translation of the stanzas or verses of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* and the *Song of songs*. This is because the English translation may sometimes fail to convey the message and artistic quality of the poems and the verses in their entirety. While translating I have not attempted to preserve the rhyme and rhythm of the original.

If some words, sentences, concepts, and the like demand explanation or extra information, they are asterisked and footnoted accordingly. All the dates in this thesis are given in Gregorian Calendar, if not followed by *E.C.* that stands for Ethiopian Calendar.

All citations from Gə'əz and Amharic works (including stanzas and lines) and interview are my translations except where the translator's name is given in parenthesis immediately after them. The sources of the citations of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* are given in

parenthesis with the name of the *Mälkō'*, the stanza and line numbers. The *stanza* is represented by *S* and the *line* by *L*. The numbers of the stanzas are of the stanzas in a single

Mälkō' and the numbers of the lines are numbers in a single stanza, which has five lines.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

1.1 Statement of the problem

Ethiopian written literature up to mid-19th century was predominantly Gǝʿǝz Christian literature. This pious literature can be classified into three categories based on the question of originality. The writings translated from Greek, Syriac, Arabic and other languages fall in the first category. The second one constitutes those which are neither translations nor original (indigenous) writings. They are adaptations enriched by national flavor. For example the book entitled *Sǝnǝksar* has such qualities by constituting additional biography of Ethiopian Saints and a five-line stanza after the story of each day is finished. The third category embodies those works that are entirely indigenous.

Researchers like Job Ludolf started to study this literature at the end of 17th century (Amsalu, 1976 E.C.: 86). However, the number of researches conducted during the past three centuries was not as such considerable. This literature was studied by different scholars from different perspectives. If comparison is to be made between the researches done and the total works produced, the researches are far too few to conclude that the literature has been studied.

Expatriate scholars who studied Gǝʿǝz literature for example, belittled it by commenting as if it lacks originality and literary merits (Harden, 1926: 20; Hyatt, 1928: 246). They suggested that Gǝʿǝz literature is defective because it is merely translational and lacks originality. Even some of them dared to say that Ethiopia is a country without great poets and writers (Ullendorff, 1945: 41). Thus, the country, according to the above scholars, does not have indigenous literature.

Therefore, any one who wants to read about Gǝǝz literature can not find quantitatively enough and qualitatively substantial materials. Similarly, as we are going to see in the review part, even those available materials on the *Mǝlkǝ* are scanty and heavily generalized. Despite these studies, Gǝǝz literature has considerable wealth both in the contexts of Ethiopian and world literature. Those writings that are lost from the rest of the world such as the complete texts of Book of *Enoch*, *Jubilees*, *Ezra Sutu'el* and *Ascension of Isaiah* are found only in Gǝǝz manuscripts of the EOC.

What are the possible reasons for the inadequacy of research outputs on Gǝǝz literature? One of the reasons, probably the most significant one, could be language barrier. Because of researchers' lack, inadequacy or, in some cases, ignorance of the Gǝǝz language, its literature remained unknown to them. This paucity of knowledge is shared by many scholars whose major concern is literary studies. Thus, the study of Gǝǝz literature is waiting for researchers to dig out facts and figures about it.

Some of those scanty materials are usually found in academic journals, seminar papers and conferences' proceedings and theses of university students that are inaccessible to the general public. Some foreign scholars also tried to study the literature, but most of their statements, I think, are victims of hasty generalizations.

Another reason for the deficiency might be inadequate attention given to the subject in the universities and colleges, exclusively on Gǝǝz literature, both in the undergraduate and postgraduate programs by the concerned departments. Because of these reasons, it seems to me, even those researchers who are interested in literary study do not seem to be inclined to do research in the areas of Gǝǝz literature. Even if there are some Gǝǝz writings that are translated into Amharic, though the translation might not be authentic, I believe. According to

Ayalew Tamiru^{*}, most of the translated writings have many insertions that are not in the original Gǝʿǝz writings because of the publishers' business purposes and the translators are not also well educated. Thus, according to him, translated writings are not authentic (1992 E.C).

One of the indigenous writings in Gǝʿǝz literature is Gǝʿǝz poetry that is predominately *Qǝne*, *Dǝggua* and the *Mǎlkǝʾ*. It is hard to find, at least to my knowledge, genuine translation of *Mǎlkǝʾa mǎlkǝʾ* available in Amharic. Therefore, their language deficiency could not permit scholars to study it. Thus, research work in the area of Gǝʿǝz poetry demands a thorough knowledge of the source language.

As mentioned above, *Mǎlkǝʾa mǎlkǝʾ* are one of the genres of Gǝʿǝz poetry. The *Mǎlkǝʾa mǎlkǝʾ* are complimentary descriptive poems that describe different parts of the body and other attributes of their subjects.

The subjects could be Divine beings, animate, inanimate and abstract ideas including God, angels, saints, martyrs, prayer books, ecclesiastic materials, love, etc. The poems are meditative in nature and written only for their religious purposes.

The *Mǎlkǝʾ*, as far as my survey is concerned, is not dealt with exclusively as a subject by any researcher in any study. Even those studies that touched slightly upon it, in my opinion, are not satisfactory; because they are glossing over it or it is a peripheral issue for them. This type of treatment, as will be seen in the review part, created a confusing image of the genre. Thus, there appeared a gap of knowledge concerning this genre of Gǝʿǝz poetry. This is one of the major reasons that prompted this study.

The other reason for the selection of this genre as the subject of this thesis is its origin, its exotic nature and its being indigenous to Ethiopia, as I shall try to explore it in the fourth

^{*} Ayalew Tamiru (Alāqa) is one of the reputed scholars of the Church, the former chairman of the committee of the scholars (*YǎLiqawǝnt Guba'e*) in the Holy Synod of the EOC and the author of three books on theology and Church history.

chapter. Most of the expatriate scholars hastily generalized and forwarded such ideas like Ethiopia was a country that did not have great poets and authors; and also considered the country having no indigenous literature of national origin (Ullendorf, 1945: 41). Even those who accepted the *Mälkə* as indigenous asserted that it is "not a very elevating type of Christian poem" (Harden, 1926: 59).

Contrary to the above statements however there are abundant indigenous poetry and prose that dealt with the lives of Ethiopian and foreign Christian Saints, there are also philosophical and theological writings. The *Mälkə* is one of the genres of indigenous Gə'əz poetry with its own literary merit. This is also another incitement that has initiated this research.

The third reason is that Gə'əz literature is studied mostly from the point of view of its theological merit, but it is not studied for its literary values (Ephrem, 1999: 5). Since the *Mälkə* is one of the genres of Gə'əz poetry, it needs to be studied in its own right as a literary genre.

As mentioned recurrently, the subject matter of this thesis is the *Mälkə*. I will try to identify and reveal the major features of the *Mälkə*, analyze its imagery and establish its possible source by examining its relation with the *Song of songs*. Along with these, I will endeavor to show whether the *Mälkə'a mälkə* have rigid formula or they are different.

Generally, this research tries to answer the following questions.

1. What are the major features of the *Mälkə'a mälkə*?
2. Do the *Mälkə'a mälkə* have similar features?
3. Are there differences of features among the *Mälkə'a mälkə*? If there are, what are they?

4. What are the characteristics of its imagery?
5. What is the relationship between the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* and the *Song of songs* in particular and the holy Bible in general?
6. What is the possible source of the *Mälkə'*?

1.2 Objectives

The general objectives of this research are to identify the major features of the *Mälkə'*, to analyze its imagery and to suggest its possible source by deciphering its relation with the *Song of songs*. It is a preliminary descriptive study.

The *Mälkə'a mälkə'* are Gə'əz poems produced only for religious purposes. The contents are its theological aspect that is mainly the concern of the theologian. But for the person related with literary study, the main concern is the form rather than the content and the examination of the form in conveying its content properly. The major concern of this thesis is not to examine the relation of the form and the content of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*. Rather it is a research aimed at bringing out the major features and arriving at its possible source. Considering the aforementioned general objectives, this research tries to achieve the following specific objectives.

- (i) Identifying the major features of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*;
- (ii) Showing whether or not the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* have identical formula in their structure;
- (iii) Analyzing the imagery; and
- (iv) Finding out the possible source of the *Mälkə'* by deciphering its relation with the Holy Bible, particularly with the *Song of songs*.

1.3 Methodology

This research is a study on religious literary writings and evidently grounded on a library undertaking. The number of the *Mätkð'a mätkð'* is one of the obscure aspects of the genre. There are about 50 *Mätkð'a mätkð'*, according to my survey, in print. This does not mean that there are not any more; far from that. I have not been able to find one who could tell me the exact number of the *Mätkð'a mätkð'*. Therefore, it has become significant to search for other *Mätkð'a mätkð'* than hitherto found in print.

With this objective in mind, I went to one of the monasteries founded in north Wallo named *Däbrä Zämäda* and came across a manuscript called "*Mätkð'a Guba'e*". The monastery is 28 kms West of Wajja town and takes half a day on foot. The manuscript has 88 *Mätkð'a mätkð'* and other pieces of writings compiled in 208 parchment leaves. I read them for about three weeks. I also found manuscripts of 9 *Mätkð'a mätkð'* in IES library that I did not find in print or the manuscript I referred to. Including the printed ones, I read 144 *Mätkð'a mätkð'*.

Among these 144 *Mätkð'a mätkð'* 59 of them are mentioned in this thesis and citations are taken to use them as examples. The selection is made for their accessibility. Most of them are available in print. The *Mätkð'a mätkð'* that I selected and copied from the manuscript display extra and distinctive features as compared with the other published *Mätkð'a mätkð'* (see the appendix for the published and unpublished *Mätkð'a mätkð'* for which I get the opportunity to see them.)

Some of the published *Mätkð'a mätkð'* are translated into Amharic and their Amharic versions are not used in this thesis because I doubt their authenticity and believe that they somewhat have lost their meaning and poetic qualities that they show in the source language.

In the same way as the Gǝʿǝz version, the translators of the Amharic versions are anonymous. Generally, the publisher, Tesfa Gebresillasié, is considered as the translator of the *Mälikǝʿa mälikǝʿ* by the public. However, he confessed to the "Reporter" a weekly Amharic local newspaper that he was ignorant of Gǝʿǝz language (1989 E.C.). Therefore, for convenience I chose to scrutinize the Gǝʿǝz version of the *Mälikǝʿa mälikǝʿ* and similarly the Gǝʿǝz version of the *Song of songs* is used.

Generally the research is based on library and monastery materials; but sometimes I have consulted clerics of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church who have been thought to have sufficient knowledge of Gǝʿǝz language and its literature. I do not use any theoretical framework to analyze the *Mälikǝʿa mälikǝʿ*. The method of analysis used in this thesis is descriptive and comparative. Therefore, the methodology applied is eclectic operating as the need arises.

1.4 Limitations

As it has been cited in different studies written in Amharic and English such as in Amsalu Aklilu's and Kristen Pedersen's works, Italians conducted different researches in the Italian language (Though I did not know the language, I came across the titles of the researches with the name of some *Mälikǝʿa mälikǝʿ*). There are also researches in German and other languages. I am ignorant of the European languages but English; therefore, the review part does not include those studies written in languages other than English.

I am not good at pronouncing Gǝʿǝz. This shadowed its effect on one of the sub-topics of chapter three, entitled rhythm and delimited the analysis. I am also obliged to depend on the materials of Alemayyehu Moges that I have consulted.

Another limitation is the absence of dictionaries of the Bible to refer to whether the *Mälikǝʿa mälikǝʿ* allude from the Holy Bible or not. I used only a small Bible dictionary written

in Amharic (which is not sufficient for this study) and my knowledge of the Holy Bible and consultation with the Church scholars to explore the allusions used in the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*.

1.5 Significance

For this thesis is mainly a descriptive and comparative study of Gə'əz poetry, namely the *Mälkə'*, any one interested in such literature may benefit from it and learn about most of the features and aesthetic qualities of the genre. Gə'əz literature might be the storehouse of many literary devices which probably be applicable to Amharic literature. Thus, this research is expected to give some clues of the device used in the *Mälkə'* and it might enrich its readers with the knowledge of the *Mälkə'*. Besides, it could initiate other concerned researchers to turn their attention to Gə'əz literature in general and Gə'əz poetry in particular. To see how much Gə'əz literature has influenced Amharic literature, literary qualities of Gə'əz literature must be studied in their own right. Thus, studying the literary qualities of Gə'əz literature will enable researchers to study their influence over Amharic literature. Therefore, this thesis might contribute to the understanding of the *Mälkə'* for those who want to pursue studying in this area.

CHAPTER TWO

Review Of Related Literature

Gǝǝz literature has been studied by different researchers from different perspectives. When the studies done are compared with the literature produced, they are far too few to speak with a sense of satisfaction that the literature has been studied. Poetry is one of the major genres of Gǝǝz literature and one of the genres of Gǝǝz poetry that is almost untouched by researchers is the *Mälkä*. It is not studied as a subject by itself; however, there are few researches that have touched upon *Mälkä* as a peripheral issue while discussing general issues on Gǝǝz and other literature. These studies are pedantically reviewed in the sections that follow.

2.1 Pedersen's Conference Paper (1989)

The most significant work on the *Mälkä* is Kirsten Pedersen's paper presented at the 8th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, entitled "The *Mälkä*: An Ethiopian prayer form with Latin origin?" It is not an exclusive study dealing only with the *Mälkä*; rather it is a comparative analysis between two *Mälkä'a mälkä'* and the Swedish saint Birgitta's two prayers written in Latin: *Mälkä'a Iyäsus* and *Mälkä'a Maryam*, and *Oratio Quarta* and *Oratio Tertia* respectively. The researcher deserves an appreciation for her interest in finding the source of the genre and for the information she has given us by defining and explaining the two *Mälkä'a mälkä'*.

Prior to scrutinizing Pedersen's analysis of the two prayer forms, I will raise some drawbacks, in my opinion, of her paper. First, the paper does not satisfactorily tell readers about the two prayers written by saint Birgitta, namely the *Oratio Tertia*, which is written in honor of Jesus Christ and *Oratio Quarta*, which is written in honor of the Virgin Mary. The paper does not even explicitly mention whether the *Orations* are poems or not, whether they are divided into stanzas and how many lines each stanza has. Readers are not also informed about the number of similar *Orations* written by saint Birgitta. The second drawback of Pedersen's paper is regarding the two *Mälkə'a mälkə'* compared with the *Orations*. They are only two; but at least, according to my discovery, there are 144 *Mälkə'a mälkə'*. Therefore, analyzing two *Mälkə'a mälkə'* to establish the source of the genre as a whole is, I think, inadequate.

The objective of Pedersen's paper is exploring the possible source of the Ethiopian prayer form- the *Mälkə'*. To do so the researcher compares the two sets of prayer forms. After juxtaposing the pairs of prayers, she identifies 8 similarities and 8 differences. Among the similarities and differences, 7 from each are applicable to both *Mälkə'a mälkə'*, whereas, one similarity and one difference, are applicable only to *Mälkə'a Iyäsus*.

Even with regard to the similarities, there are some questions to be raised. Three of the similarities are not typical only of the two sets of prayer forms: the *Orations* and the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*. They could be applied also to other forms of prayers. Similarity 2, for example, states that both were mainly prayers of praise. Other prayer forms such as *Wudase Maryam*, *Arganonä Maryam*, *Anqäṣä Bərhan*, etc. are also prayers of praise like the *Mälkə'*.

In the case of the differences, like the similarities, there are some questions that require comment. Difference 1, for example, states that the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* are longer than the

Orations, because they describe more parts of the body than the *Orations*. According to Pedersen, *Oratio Quarta* has 18 parts while *Mälkð'a Maryam* has 58 stanzas. But there are some *Mälkð'a mälkð'* that are shorter than the two *Orations* discussed. For example, *Mälkð'a Mät lðli*, written in honor of the Virgin Mary, has 12 stanzas and *Mälkð'a Mälð'akü Uqabe* has 16 stanzas that are shorter than *Oratio Tertia* and *Oratio Quarta* that have 20 and 18 parts respectively.

There are also contradictions between some of the similarities and differences. To look at some of them, similarity 3, that asserts the elevated poetic nature of both prayer forms, opposes difference 7 that states the Latin prayer form which is less colorful and less metaphorical and says the *Orations*, by giving example, have "...no describing adjectives." To add another example, similarity 5 and differences 2 and 5 are contradictory. Similarity 5 confirms that both prayer forms begin praising with the head and end with the feet; but difference 2 says that *Mälkð'a Iyäsus* begins by praising the name of Jesus while *Oratio Tertia* begins by praising the head of Jesus. Similarity 5 diametrically contradicts difference 5 in that it points out that unlike the *Orations*, the *Mälkð'a Mälkð'* does not end with the feet.

Pedersen tries to discuss the possible reasons for the similarities. She identifies six reasons. All reasons given in her paper are possibilities not facts. The six modal verbs used in the six sentences of the reasons she gives are "may be", "may have been", "may have had", "may have been", "may have been" and "may have," in that order on the list of reasons. Therefore, I contend that the explanations given on the bases of such probabilities cannot be sufficient evidence for the conclusion that the origin of the *Mälkð'* is Latin.

The other problem with Pedersen's paper concerns the time of appearance of the *Mälkð'*. She says "... the *mälkð'* do not begin to appear until the 17th century." I do not agree with this; because, as I try to discuss in the 2nd section of chapter three, the *Mälkð'* began to

appear before the 14th century. Many scholars also agree with the statement that the *Mälkə* began to appear before the 17th century. For example, according to Alemayyehu Moges (1952 E.C), the *Mälkə* appeared before the 14th century; according to Alexander Ferenc (1985: 283), it flourished (not appeared) in the 17th century, and according to Harden (1926: 28) and Hyatt (1928: 249), the author of *Mälkə'a Maryam* was King Naod of the 16th century. If this is so, one can say that *Mälkə* existed before the 16th century. With all the above testimonies, her argument cannot be valid.

One last point I want to discuss is the explanation given for reason 6. Reason 6 suggests that the *Orations* of St. Birgitta may have reached Ethiopia. To show that, Pedersen uses the footnote of M.R. James' book entitled *The Apocryphal New Testament*. In the footnote about *Dərsanä Mahyäwi*, James discovered in the story that the book was written by the Evangelists and by three virgins: Berzeda, Mathilda and Elisabeth, to whom the Lord revealed his passion. According to Pedersen, the name Berzeda was the mispronounced name of St. Birgitta of Sweden of the 14th century. In my opinion, this assumption, which is based on the phonetic similarity of the two names, is doubtful because Berzeda was mentioned as one of the 36 women saints of the 1st century who followed Jesus Christ, according to some of the books of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. One such book is the commentary on the liturgy book entitled *Mäṣṣafä Qadasse: Nəbabunna Tərgu'amew* (Book of liturgy: its reading and commentary). It (1988) clearly asserts that Berzeda was one of those 36 women saints. Besides, according to James' book, the three women were virgins; but according to Pedersen's paper, Saint Birgitta was not, since she was married to a man named Ulf Gudmarsson and gave birth to two children. Even *Dərsanä Mahyäwi* itself states that these saints wrote that book with the Evangelists. As it is widely known the Evangelists lived, or are thought to have lived in the 1st century.

With all these weak (at least for me) arguments, there cannot be any evidence to conclude that the *Mälkäḍ'* is not indigenous to Ethiopia. However, Pedersen's effort to tackle the problem of the source of the *Mälkäḍ'* is highly appreciable, although the finding is not worth the try.

In the fourth chapter, I shall try to show the possible source of the *Mälkäḍ'*. That is why I have reviewed Pedersen's paper at length. This thesis differs from Pedersen's paper in two ways. First, the statements with respect to the origin of the *Mälkäḍ'* are not similar to those of mine; secondly, the scope of this thesis is wider than hers, in that it treats the genre from different perspectives. Her paper addresses the *Mälkäḍ'* only from the perspective of its origin.

2.2 Alexander Ferenc's paper (1985)

"Writing and literature in classical Ethiopic (Giiz)" is a paper written by the above mentioned polish scholar. Ferenc discussed Gḍ'ḍz literature by dividing it into different periods of its production. When he discussed the 17th century Gḍ'ḍz literature, Ferenc touches upon the *Mälkäḍ'* as a genre of Gḍ'ḍz poetry.

Ferenc defined the *Mälkäḍ'* a *mälkäḍ'* as complimentary poems that describe the different parts of body of their subject and address the problem of the time of appearance as the genre flourished in the 17th century. I do not agree with his definition, because the *Mälkäḍ'* also describes attributes of the subject other than the different parts of the body. I shall comment on the issue of definition in the first section of chapter three. Ferenc also suggests that the *Mälkäḍ'* is probably found in Ethiopia and particularly in Gḍ'ḍz literature. There is only a single *Mälkäḍ'* written in Amharic, as far as my discovery shows. This *Mälkäḍ'* is *Mälkäḍ'a Haile Sillassie*.

As examples for the statements he wrote about the *Mälkə'*, Ferenc cited three stanzas that are translated into English. In my opinion there are some problems with translation. The translated stanzas in the paper are from *Mälkə'a Kidanäməhrät*, but he wrote that he took them from *Mälkə'a Maryam*. One can easily detect that the stanzas are from *Mälkə'a Kidanäməhrät* simply by looking at the third line of the first cited stanza ትእምርተ ኪዳን ማርያም ወቀስተ ደመና ብሩህ "təmmrtä kidan Maryam wa gäṣä dämmänna bəru". The clause *təmmrtä kidan Maryam* denotes that Maryam is the sign of the covenant between her and her Son, Jesus. The Virgin Mary was given the name *Kidanäməhrät* for she received a covenant from her son Jesus Christ to show mercy to sinners. The word *Kidanäməhrät* literally means covenant of mercy. It is also certain that the name *Kidanäməhrät* is another name given to the Virgin Mary. However, *Mälkə'a Kidanäməhrät* and *Mälkə'a Maryam* are two different poems and each of them have its own signification. The cause of such misnaming might be the absence of equivalent word for the word *Kidanäməhrät* in English. Moreover, the knowledge that both names designate one person, the Virgin Mary, might have perpetuated the same error.

Another problem, again in my opinion, I encountered in Ferenc's paper is the translation of the word *həṣn* to mean *womb*. *Həṣn* is a word given for the part of the body between the arm and the chest, which is used as cradle. If one reads some *Mälkə'a mälkə'* critically such problem might not occur, since the word is used in many of them for subjects of both sexes. On the contrary, *womb* is a word that refers only to the female organ whose Gə'əz equivalent is *mahəṣän*. One can get the word *həṣn* in the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* used for male and female subjects; but *mahəṣän* is found only in the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* for female subjects.

The possible cause for such translation error might be that both come from the same root. Both words are derived from a single word *haṣānā* meaning "reared or adopted a child /children."

There is also another problem in transliterating the word in the line cited below that show the *Mälkō'* is *Mälkō'a Kidanämōhrät*. In the line *Tōmmrtä kidan Maryam wä gäṣä dämmänna bōruh* the word **ገፀ gäṣä** is not the right transliteration. This mistransliteration can create difference in meaning. The right transliteration is **ቀስተ qästä**. In his footnote, Ferenc referred it to the story of Noah asserting indirectly that it is *qästä*, since it is the bow in the cloud (commonly known as rainbow) which is the sign of the covenant given to Noah. The equivalent word in English for *qästä* is *bow*.

The last problem of translation appeared in translating the last three lines of the second stanza. Let me quote it verbatim.

አምሕላክ. ማርያም በነጻፍጻፊ ደም ዘጎልጎታ
ለነፍስየ ምስለ ነፍስኪ ታስተዳልዊ መክፈልታ
አመ መሬታዊት ሥጋየ ትትከደን መሬታ።

**Amō ḥla-ki Maryam ba naṣaf ṣāfa dam za-Gologota
la-nafsō ya mō slanafski tāstadālwi makfaltā
ama-marē tā wit sō gāyē tō tkadan marētā**

**Oh Mary, I promise you on the drop of bloodshed at
Golgotha
That when your soul joins my soul,
My mortal body will give itself to the ashes of the
earth.**

(Ferenc, 1985: 284)

These lines do not clearly show what the request of the implied poet (the speaker) is. In the source language, the implied poet implored the Virgin Mary to promise him by the drops of

blood of her Son shed at Golgotha to prepare his reward as it were her own, when he dies and buried. There is no clue or even implication of the "joining of soul" in the source language. *Mōslä* is a preposition that commonly means "with", but here, from the context, it is equivalent to the conjunctions "as" or "like". This misrepresentation made the translated lines contort the intended meaning, which is a request directed to the Virgin Mary. Further more the phrase ታስተዳልዊ መክፈልታ "tāstadālwi makfaltā" is not translated. The request in the source language is directed towards the Virgin Mary to prepare his reward by considering his soul her own.

Another suggestion in Ferenc's paper, with which I partly agree, is that the *Mälkə'* has similarity with *sālam*. I say partly because Ferenc considers *sālam* as a four-line stanza; but alike the stanzas of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*, it has five lines and since it has only five lines, it cannot be divided into stanzas. However, he identified the similarities in end rhyme and in the number of the lines of a *sālam* and a stanza in the *Mälkə'*.

2.3 Harden's book (1926)

Harden mentioned the *Mälkə'* in his book entitled *An Introduction to Ethiopian Christian Literature*. He tried to define the term *Mälkə'*. His hasty statement, with which I disagree, is the conclusion he makes without any textual analysis. For him the *Mälkə'* is "not a very elevating type of Christian poem" (59). To make such a statement requires an in-depth analysis of the sample texts; but Harden failed to do so. He also gave the authorship of *Mälkə'a Maryam* to King Naod, just like Hyatt as we will see in the following section. Similarly, no evidence or argument is given for this statement.

2.4 Hyatt's book (1928)

The other expatriate scholar who wrote about the Ethiopian Church is H.M. Hyatt. His subject is not the *Mälkə'*, but he made a passing remark and forwarded a few statements about it. Hyatt categorized the *Mälkə'*, in my opinion, wrongly, as a kind of *Qəne* (this is also wrong), *Sälam*, *Mə'mānan and Ṭäbib* (I could not find a poem with this title). However, the *Mälkə'* is a genre of *Gə'əz* poetry as *Qəne* and *Dəggua* are. It is not a branch of *Qəne*. As mentioned in the preceding section, Hyatt wrote, like Harden, about *Mälkə'a Maryam* that it was a poem written by King Naod, without giving us any sound evidence or argument.

The above four scholars are expatriates. In the coming three sections I will try to see the works of Ethiopian scholars.

2.5 Alemayehu Moges' Paper (1966 E.C)

Studying Ethiopian literature without Qəne is meaningless is an article written by Alemeyyehu Moges. He explained the versification of *Gə'əz* poetry such as *Dəggua* and *Mälkə'*. He suggested that the rhythm of the *Mälkə'* is not symmetrical and uniform, by giving the metrical feet of the lines of some stanzas from different *Mälkə'a mälkə'*. He does not give us any information other than describing the rhythmic pattern of the *Mälkə'*.

2.6 Amsalu Aklilu's book (1976 E.C.)

Another Ethiopian scholar who had worked on the history of Ethiopian literature is Amsalu Aklilu. *AĊĊər yä Ityopia Sənäṣḏhuf Tarik* is the title of his unpublished work written in Amharic. He tried to define the *Mälkə'* and commented on the poem without any analysis. He said that in the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* "the great artistic skill, depth of thinking, and creative skill

of the poets are reflected"(55). He made this comment without any attempt to analyze even a single stanza of *Mälkə'*. He also hastily generalized that the poets of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* have limited knowledge. "For the poet who had not related to other kinds of literature, it is appreciable to see the literary qualities exhibited despite his limited horizon of thinking." (55) Such statements should have been made after exhaustive analysis of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*, based on thorough research conducted on the *Mälkə'* and the lives of the poets (most of them are not known). Otherwise one cannot find answers to questions like "What are the literary qualities exhibited in the *Mälkə'*? " and "How can one know the horizon of thinking of past and unknown poets?" Generally Amsalu's statements on the *Mälkə'* are not analytical and are not based on any evidence.

2.6 Berhanu Gebeyehu's MA Thesis (1998)

The subject of Berhanu's MA thesis entitled *Islamic Oral Poetry in Wallo: A Preliminary descriptive analysis* is not the *Mälkə'*. Berhanu mentions the *Mälkə'* when he compares it with the Islamic oral poetry. In explaining the resemblance between the two forms, he considers the *Mälkə'* narrative. The *Mälkə'a mälkə'* are not narrative poems; they are descriptive. He also considers it prose in style just by looking at the translated Amharic versions of some of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*. But the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* are poems with their own distinctive features, as we are going to see in the third chapter.

He also counts the words of the translated Amharic versions of *Mälkə'a Giyorgis* and *Mälkə'a Maryam* (which he should not have) to compare the length of the two genres. The number of words in the Gə'əz versions of the poems and in the Amharic versions that is in prose form are different. Therefore, the number of words of the Amharic versions are not the number of words in the Gə'əz version.

Generally, the comparison made concerning the significance of the two genres is commendable, though it requires detailed analysis of many *Mälkd'a mälkd'* to reach such conclusions.

Except the paper I reviewed in the first section of this chapter, that deals with the *Mälkd'*, all the others have their own subject-matters; the *Mälkd'* is not their subject. All of them touched upon it tangentially because it is either part of the G'd'oz literature or because it has some similarities with their subject. But Pedersen's paper is a comparative study conducted to explore the origin of the *Mälkd'*.

This thesis is different from all the reviewed papers by its major concern. Its topic is the *Mälkd'*. Its objective is discovering the major features of the *Mälkd'*, analyzing its imagery and finding out its possible source as a genre. It is different from Pedersen's paper in that first, it tries to analyze different features of the *Mälkd'* and, second, it suggests another source for the *Mälkd'*.

CHAPTER THREE

ESSENTIALS OF THE *MÄLKƏ'*

3.1 General Features

3.1.1 What is *MÄLKƏ'* ?

What, exactly, is the meaning of the word *Mälkə'*? It is a Gə'əz word derived from the verb *Läkə'a*, according to Kidanewold Kifle (1948E.C:565), means "he* wrote, he printed, he drew or he sculpted an appearance". Thus the derived noun *Mälkə'* means "likeness, form, painting or picture" (Kidanewold, 1984 E.C : 566). *Mälkə'* from its literal meaning is to be said only of the physical body of men or animals. Its plural form is *Mälkə'at*.

The other and most important meaning of the word, at least for the subject of this thesis, is its meaning, which designates it as a term. It is a term given to one of the genres of Gə'əz poetry. The definitions of the term given by many traditional and modern scholars, I think, have some shortcomings. Let me quote two definitions from each school.

Kidanewold (1948 E.C: 566) defined the term as follows: " *Mälkə'* is a name of a composition of praise that describes in the form of song the body from the locks of the hair to the nails of the toe." This definition is shared by many scholars, traditional as well as modern. "These poems are praises in verse of the likenesses of the subjects, starting with the name and continuing sequentially from the locks of the hair of the head to the toe nails." (Ayalew, 1992). Like the former, this definition mentions some of the major features of the form like

* Amharic verbs are given in the third person, singular, masculine and past tense form.

description, parts of the body, praise and verse. The only difference exhibited between these two definitions is their point on the commencement of the description.

The Polish scholar, Alexander Ferenc (1985:283), defined the *Mälkə'* as "complimentary descriptions of the individual parts of the body of the subject of the poem, descriptions starting usually with the head and ending with the feet." Ferenc's definition is also similar to the above definitions of church scholars, except for minor differences regarding the starting point of the description. Ferenc wrote that the *Mälkə'* began describing from the head of its subject, not mentioning the hair and the name of the subject, as Kidanewold did.

"'Likenesses' are hymns in honor of saints in which the various parts of the saint's body are recounted one by one, each in a separate stanza"(Harden, 1926: 29). This definition does not suggest anything regarding the sequence in describing the parts of the body. It tells us that the *Mälkə'* has various stanzas though Harden, wrongly in my opinion, suggests that each stanza describes a single part of the body. Harden considers (again I disagree with him) the subjects of the poems as only saints; however, they have different subjects other than saints, such as divine and inanimate subjects.

All the aforementioned definitions directly or indirectly consider the subjects of such poems as living things with physical bodies consisting of different organs. They do not consider those poems whose subjects are not physically living things. There are subjects without physical body such as ecclesiastical materials, prayer books and abstract concepts.

There are also poems with divine subjects that describe the exploits of the subjects. †
äbibä †äbiban is a *Mälkə'* with God as its subject, and it describes His exploits. *Mälkə'a Mäsqäl* and *Mälkə'a Sänbät* describe different parts of the body as if the subjects, *Mäsqäl* (Cross) and *Sänbät* (Sabbath) are living things with physical bodies. *Mälkə'a Anqäšä Bərhan* is a poem using the first words or phrase of the paragraph of the prayer book

Anqäṣä Bḍrhan as head words for each stanza. (I will discuss the issue of the subjects of the *Mälkḍ'a mälkḍ'* in section 3.1.5 in some detail.)

Based on the above discussions the definition of the term, in my understanding, that fits with the general characteristics of the genre is the following. The *Mälkḍ'* is a laud that describes different organs of the body and/ or other attributes of its subject and supplicates for mercy in various stanzas. The subjects could be divine, animate, inanimate or abstract concepts. The Divine subjects are the three persons of God. The animate subjects are saints. The inanimate ones are prayer books, ecclesiastical materials, holidays and the like. Subjects categorized under abstract concepts are love, essence and character. The suppliant of the *Mälkḍ'* is in the first person, earnestly appeal to mercy and other religious rewards from the subjects, which are in the second person. According to the tradition of the Church, the *Mälkḍ'* is called *Dḍrsät* (composition) and its poet is *Därsi** (writer). Besides, the poets themselves give the genre different names. Some of these are *Sälamä Mälkḍ'*, *Dḍrsät*, *Zḍmmare*, *Mahletä sḍm*, *Wudase* and *Mäzmur* in *Mälkḍ'a ʒstifanos* (S-1), *Mälkḍ'a, Sänbät* (S-16), *Mälkḍ'a Sänbät* (S-10), *Mälkḍ'a Yohannḍs Mätmqḍ* (S-27), *Mälkḍ'a Ura'el Qädamit* (S-1) and *Iyaqem wä Hanna* (S-11) respectively. The plural form of the term *Mälkḍ'* is *Mälkḍ'a mälkḍ'*. The plural *Mälkḍ'at*, which I tried to discuss earlier, is different from *Mälkḍ'a mälkḍ'* in that the former used to designate the different parts of the body, while the latter used to denote the *Gḍ'ḍz* poems that compliment the different parts of the body.

The *Mälkḍ'a mälkḍ'* have been thought to be used as prayers to communicate with the subjects of the poems and God (whether He is a subject or not) by the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. The modes of thought in the *Mälkḍ'a mälkḍ'* can be classified, according to the

* See the Ge'ez Amharic dictionary by Kidanewold Kifle. It refers to the poet of the *Mälkḍ'a Mälkḍ'* as *därsi*.

EOC, into faith, thanksgiving, repentance and supplication (The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Faith, Order of Worship and Ecumenical Relations, 1996: 64). They are prayers which exalt the suppliants. Their major themes are praise of the subject of the *Mälkə*' and supplication for mercy by the suppliant. In the description, the *Mälkə*' used biographical facts of the subject, stories and events and figures from the Bible mainly from the Old Testament and the *Awaləd**.

ሰላም መልክኩ ለቂርቆስ ወ ለኢየሱጥ አባሉ
 ናሁ ጸሐፍኩ እንዘ አስተዋጽኦ እምነ ገድሉ
 ባርኪ ሊተ ማርያም እግዝእተ ኩሉ
 ዘባረከ በዲበ ምድር ቡሩክ ውእቱ በሳዕሉ
 ወዘቀደስከ ለዓለም ይሄሉ።
 (መልክክ ቂርቆስ፤ ኦርኬ 47)

Salutation of the likeness of *Qirqos* and his part
Iyälujä

Now I write by selecting from the book of his struggle [gädl]
 Mary, Lady of all, bless me
 That thou blessed on earth is also blessed in heaven
 And he, whom thou sanctified, lives forever.

(*Mälkə'a Qirqos*, S-47)

As explicitly indicated in the second line of this stanza, the *Mälkə*' is composed by the anonymous poet using the biography of the subject -*Qirqos* - from his *gädl*?

If the *Mälkə'a mälkə*' are read attentively, they may develop one's religious knowledge. They require the knowledge of the Holy Bible and the life of the subjects to understand them. They may help also to know some of the major tenets of the Church. Let me give an example from *Mälkə' Amanu'el*.

በሠሌዳ ዝንቱ ልብዩ አምጣነ ለመንክር ተጽሕፈ
 ፊደለ አሐዱ ፍቅርክ እንተ ኢኮነ ግዱፊ
 ዐማኑኤል ኩናነ ማዕከላተ ወጽንፈ

**Awaləd* are all sacred books of the EOC except the Holy Bible. They are not Apocrypha, because they are authenticated and accepted by the EOC. The Apocrypha is the collective name of the 14 books, not considered canonical, which are included in the Old Testament in the Vulgate and Septuagint (from which the Gə'əz version is translated) versions. The EOC called them *Deutrocanonical* (The Holy Bible, 1980 E.C.).

to the 14th century(1952 E.C). For some scholars like Pedersen (1989: 557) the *Mälkäḍ'* did not appear until the 17th century. The cause of such controversy is the absence of any hint of date* on the manuscripts of the *Mälkäḍ'a mälkäḍ'* themselves.

The issue of *Mälkäḍ'* (likeness) of God created controversy during the reign of Zer'a Yaqob (Rundgren, 1982: 59). A group of Christians called *Däqä 3stīfa* who questioned the intercession power of saints like the Virgin Mary, the angels, the saints and other figures venerated by the Church, appeared in this period. They also objected the prostration offered to saints and their icons to pay homage and give due honor. This iconoclastic movement was considered as heresy by the EOC and ended after the severe measure taken against them by the king.

Here my assumption is that this dispute might have led the clergy to the production of a new form of poetry that asserts the power of intercession and the significance of prostration offered to saints and their icons. This hypothesis seems true because there were many writings produced in that period in defense of the heterodoxy. The period is considered as the golden age in the history of Ethiopian literature. The following stanza clearly raises the question of the so called heresies.

ሰላም ሰላም ለመልክክ ሥዕልክ ከሉ
 እምነ ፀሐይ ወወርኅ ዘያበርህ ሥነ ፀዳሉ
 ወበእንተዝ ማርያም ሰብእ ቤትኪ ይብሉ
 ስብሐት ወክብር ወሰጊድ ለመንግሥትኪ ይደሉ
 ማርያም በረከትኪ ምስሌነ የሀሉ።።
 (መልክክ ሥዕል፣ አርኬ 23)

**Peace, peace to all the likenesses of thy icon,
 Its beauty shines more than the sun and the moon,
 Therefore, Mary, the people of thy house say,
 Praise and respect and prostration is appropriate for
 thy reign**

* The manuscripts usually indicate the Christian names of the copyist and the one who cover the cost of the copying project, no date and author.

Mary, let your blessing live with us.

(*Mälkə'a Sə'əl*, S-23)

The above stanza reflects the appropriateness of the prostration given to the Virgin Mary. The following stanza also reflects that the problem and the request appealed to the subject of the *Mälkə'* is a curse against the iconoclasts.

ሰላም ለማርያም ዐጽፈ ወልድ ዋሕድ
ወመንበረ ሕያው ነድ
ለድንግልናሃ ይደሉ ሰጊድ
ለማርያም ዘይቤ ኢይሰግድ
ሞጸፈ መብረቅ በሊኅ በርእሱ ለይረድ።
(መልክክ ሥዕል ዳግሚት፣ አርኬ 1)

Peace to Mary, the wrap of the only son
And the set of the living fire
Prostration is appropriate for her virginity
To the one who said I do not prostrate for Mary
Let the sharpened sling of lightning fall upon his head.

(*Mälkə' Sə'əl dagmit*, S-1)

These two stanzas indicate that prostration is a just action and the iconoclasts are heretics.

Another point that supports the above hypothesis is the tradition of the inclusion of a *Mälkə'* at the end of each *gädl** in praise of its subject. The *gädlat* started to be written during the reign of Zer'a Yaqob (Amsalu, 1976: 54). Thus, the *Mälkə'* might have started to be written at the same time.

The time of the termination of producing the *Mälkə'* is also unknown. In examining the time of the end of composing the *Mälkə'*, there are two important points that need consideration. These are the questions of when the subjects ceased to exist (when there is no more live saints who have not *Mälkə'a mälkə'* in their names) and when the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*

* *Gädl* is a form of Ge'ez narrative that depicts the life and suffering of the saints and martyrs venerated by the Church.

ceased to be composed for the earlier subjects. Unfortunately both questions are difficult to answer.

To be considered as saints in the EOC and to have *Mätkð'a mätkð'* composed in praise of them, the saints should perform miracles during and after their earthly life. According to Ayalew Tamiru (1992), "Now there are no saints who can perform miracles during and after their earthly life." This means that there are no more subjects for whom the *Mätkð'a mätkð'* are to be composed. Composing various *Mätkð'a mätkð'* for the already existing saints repeatedly is not as such encouraging, because the earlier *Mätkð'a mätkð'* have already been canonized by the Church for prayer. However, the last *Mätkð'a mätkð'* I came across were written for the last King and Queen, Hailesilassie and Welete Giyorgis (Menen), who were earthly personages. There may not be other *Mätkð'a mätkð'* composed during this time.

The issue pertaining to the time of appearance and cessation of composing *Mätkð'a mätkð'* can be a research topic that requires detailed historical study of the manuscripts and the life of the subjects. Besides this issue, the other issue that needs some treatment is the case of authorship.

3.1.3 Authorship

Nearly all the *Mätkð'a mätkð'* are anonymous. Since they do not consist of the finger prints of a poet, anonymity cannot be an obstacle in the analysis of these poems. Oral literature is anonymous. There are also writings in which the names of the writers are lost and no one is able to trace them; but the *Mätkð'* is a poetry written by self-effacing poets who did not use any idiosyncratic style. On account of this, the knowledge of authorship is not significant. Since the *Mätkð'a mätkð'* are willingly anonymous and they serve as a form of

prayer, they would have been valued, not for their authorship, nor for their poetic merit, but for the values the subjects (saints & others) represented.

The poets of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* are not thought as men with acute powers of observation and with greater imagination like poets of *Qəne* (Ayalew, 1992). They are considered only as learned and articulate. The worth of the *Mälkə'* is assured not by the dignity of the poet (since it is anonymous), but by the dignity of its subject. The emotions exhibited are not peculiar to one man, but common to all that is related with laudation, penitence and mercy.

The poets of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* are skilled craftsmen transmitting tradition. The poets have not only their subject-matter provided by theology, but also the techniques of display and the emotion appropriate to it. Once it has developed, the form of the *Mälkə'* is taken as tradition and every poet of a *Mälkə'* has to follow that tradition. Their individual feelings and emotions are therefore not revealed in the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*. Their primary concern is the subject-matter and the exact implementation of the tradition of writing. Generally, the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* have simple style with a high description of physique. The poems are conceived through and must be understood through intellectual attentiveness.

The *Mälkə'a mälkə'*, as mentioned above, are poems provided for others to use as prayer. The suppliant is not the poet, it is the reader. The suppliant will identify himself with the implied author. This identification requires and produces an immediate effect of distancing the poet from the reader. This helps the reader (the suppliant) to consider the words of the description and the supplication to the subject of the poem. The issue of identification is challenged by *Mälkə'a Qurban*. Let me cite a stanza that proves it.

ማኅበረ ምዕመናን ወ ምዕመናት እለከያክ ተአመኑ
ለነሢክ ሥጋክ ወትረ ኅበ ተዐየኑ
ወልደ አብ ክርስቶስ ዘ ኢትትፈለጥ እምሕፅኑ

እስብክ ሎሙ ሕማመክ ወ መስቀለክ እዜነ
 ጸጋ መንፈስ ቅዱስ ሊተ እምሰማይ ፈነ።
 (መልክስ ቁርባን፤ አርኬ 1)

**Congregation of believers, who believe in Thee
 When they always look at it to take Thy Flesh
 Christ, Son of the Father from whose bosom Thou
 have not isolated
 To teach them Thy passion and tell them about the
 Cross
 Send me the grace of the Holy Spirit from heaven.**
 (S-1)

This poem is recited by the priests and shows the position of the "I" in the 1st stanza that he is the preacher who teaches the believers to be ready to take the Blood and Flesh of Jesus Christ. In another *Mälkə'* called *Ləsanä Säbə'*, the poet used personal reference to his life, specifically by mentioning his age when he was composing the *Mälkə'*.

ሎቱ ለባሕተቱ እስመ ተቀነይኩ አነ
 50 ዓመተ ዘአልቦ ጸኒነ
 (ልሳነ ሰብእ፤ አርኬ 8፤ ስንኻ 4 እና 5)

**Since I served only for it [the tongue]
 50 years with out retirement**
 (S-8; L-4 and 5)

The self-effacement of the poet has limitations; but there is an advantage in the fact that the poets could have no access to control the emotion expressed. The emotion is provided by the theology. This gives the *Mälkə'* a humble view with a strong effect of sincerity. The sincerity resides, not in the poet's faithfulness to his own experience, but in his faithful transmission of the tradition.

In the *Mälkə'* there is no attempt at elevation. The use of rhetorical figures for ornamenting a subject is not normally followed by the poets of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*. When

ornamenting figures are used, it seems mostly because they are inescapable and not because they are rhetorical graces. The poetic ornament is not to beautify the subject, its purpose is not to adorn the unadornable or elevate the exalted, but to persuade the average Christian to think about and feel his life of sin and prepare him for penitence.

The authors of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* intended to show the "I" speaker's respect and love for the subjects and examining his conscience for the sin which he shares with every one, and for which there is plain and objective solution: penitence and supplication.

The poets of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* are not known by name (since they are anonymous), it is known what kind of men they were by profession. *Mälkə'* requires knowledge of Gə'əz and the lives of the subjects of the *Mälkə'*. It is certain that the poets were learned clerics.

Four poets were known for four *Mälkə'a mälkə'* such as Abba Sibhat Leab who was considered as the poet of *Mälkə'a Sillassie* (*Mälkə'a Sillassie*, 1972 E.C.); Gebre Nazrawi of Gonder who was considered the poet of *Mälkə'a Iyäsus* (Ayalew, 1992); Abba Giyorgis was considered the poet of *Mälkə'a Qurban* (Ayalew, 1992) and king Naod was also attributed with the authorship of *Mälkə'a Maryam* (Harden, 1926:59; Hyatt, 1928: 249). However, the majority remained anonymous. On account of the above points, the authorship of individual pieces seem irrelevant. Our ignorance of the authors of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* is not a serious loss. The tradition of absence of distinctive style for individual pieces demanded the poets' abstinence from idiosyncratic style. Invention is unacceptable in the tradition of writing the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*. Since the gradual development of the *Mälkə'* to its accepted form is not known and there is no *Mälkə'* I can find that shows the primordial style of the *Mälkə'* writing, I only took the present form as accepted. It is not also significant to rush to find the first poet, which might be like that of rushing to find the first poet of an oral poem.

3.1.4 The *Mälkə'* and the Liturgy

The liturgy is the form of the sacrifice, prayer and sacraments of the Church. The center of the liturgy is the mass, or the sacrament of the Eucharist. The mass is the perpetual re-enactment of the sacrifice of the New Testament in which the sacrifice of the cross is made present through Christ.

The central part, or canon, of the mass has three sections:

(i) From "O! My brothers, think of thy sin" up to "How awful this day" which is the preparatory Service.

(ii) From "How awful is this day" up to "Go forth, ye catechumen" which is the first part of the Eucharist.

(iii) Subsequent to this is the main part of the holy liturgy which comes after "Go forth, ye Catechumen" is said. Here the communion, the Flesh and Blood of Christ, are consumed (The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Faith, Order of worship and Ecumenical relations, 1996:84).

At the end of the third section, before and after the Flesh and Blood of Christ is given to the faithful, *Mälkə'a Qurban* is chanted by the clerics. *Mälkə'a Qurban* is written to pay reverence to the Flesh and Blood of Christ.

There are also prayers that are recited daily immediately after the mass. These prayers are *Wudase Maryam*, *Mälkə'a Maryam* and *Mälkə'a Iyäsus*. They are recited by the clerics. This recitation is performed by distributing each stanza to the clerics sequentially in rotation until it is finished. The distribution is done by one of the deacons or by other Church servants, who mention only the name of the part of body by which each stanza begins.

Besides, if the day is the day assigned for the commemoration of a religious figure, the *Mälkə'* of that specific figure is also recited in addition to the above mentioned three *Mälkə'a*

mälkäḏ': *Mälkäḏ'a Qurban*, *Mälkäḏ'a Maryam* and *Mälkäḏ'a Iyäsus*. If the church is named after a religious figure, the *Mälkäḏ'* dedicated to the figure is recited daily after those three *Mälkäḏ'a mälkäḏ'*. For example, *Mälkäḏ'a Lalibäla* and *Mälkäḏ'a Sänbät*, as I have seen in person, are recited daily in *Lalibäla* and *Sama Sänbät* respectively.

The *Mälkäḏ'a mälkäḏ'* are meant to be sung. They are songs to be sung with the voice, and to the sistra and drum occasionally; but in every day usage musical accompaniment is not considered essential to the form. Those designed for singing are always extracts of few stanzas from the given *Mälkäḏ'*. Whenever the day is the annual day dedicated for the commemoration of a religious figure, some selected stanzas of the *Mälkäḏ'* of that figure are sung by the clergy with prayer sticks, sistrums and drums. For example, at Christmas day two stanzas from *Mälkäḏ'a Iyäsus* are chanted. These are stanzas commencing by the lines «ሰላም ለዝክረ ስምክ ስመ መሐላ ዘ ኢይሔሱ» (መልክክ ኢየሱስ፤ አርኬ 1፣ ስንኻ1) "Peace be to the commemoration of Thy name; a name of oath that does not lie" and «ሰላም ለአጽፋረ እደክ ዘ ኅበሪሆን ጸዓዳ» (መልክክ ኢየሱስ፤ አርኬ 28፣ ስንኻ 1) "Peace be to Thy finger nails of your hand, all of them are white."

The *Mälkäḏ'a mälkäḏ'* as a whole are also used as personal prayer books for the followers of the Church. They pray to the *Mälkäḏ'* of their favorite saint either on the commemoration day of that saint or daily.

In addition to its purpose as a prayer, the *Mälkäḏ'* has didactic purpose. It tries to familiarize the reader with the life of the subject. To do this, it has based itself on biographical facts of the subject. Therefore, to understand the *Mälkäḏ'a mälkäḏ'* biographical and theological knowledge are requirements.

ሰላም ለዝክረ ስምክ ስመ መሐላ ዘ ኢይሔሱ
ዘ አንበረ ቅድመ እግዚአብሔር በአትሮንሱ
ኢየሱስ ክርስቶስ ለዳዊት ባሕርየ ከርሠ

አክሊላ ስምክ እንዘ ይትቁጸል በርእሱ
 አህጉረ ጸር ወረሰ ኢያሱ
 (መልክአ ኢየሱስ፣ አርኬ 1)

**Peace be to the commemoration of Thy name, a name
 of oath which does not lie,
 That, earlier God placed it in his throne
 Jesus Christ, (Thou) descendant of David
 When his head is crowned with the crown of Thy name,
 Joshua inherited the lands of his foe.**

(*Mälkə'a Iyäsus*, S-1)

(Kristen Pedersen)

To understand the first stanza of *Mälkə'a Iyäsus*, the knowledge of the biblical story of Joshua is essential in addition to theological knowledge of the genealogy of Jesus and His incarnation. One has to know the unity of the names of Jesus and Joshua. Both names literally mean redeemer (savior). The last two lines pointed that the power for Joshua's performance of such grand deed comes from the identity of the name of Joshua with Jesus. The knowledge of the story of Joshua's inheritance of the promised land and Jesus' genealogical relation with David is also very significant. According to the depth of knowledge, one can go further in the interpretation of this stanza.

Another example that directly indicates the didactic nature of the *Mälkə'* is the first stanza of *Mälkə'a Qurban*.

ማኅበረ ምዕመናን ወ ምዕመናት እለ ኢያክ ተአመኑ
 ለነሢአ ሥጋክ ወትረ ኅበ ተዐየኑ
 ወልደ አብ ክርስቶስ ዘ ኢትትፈለጥ እም ሕፅኑ
 እስብክ ሎሙ ሕማመክ ወ መስቀለክ እዜኑ
 ጸጋ መንፈስ ቅዱስ ሊተ እም ሰማይ ፈኑ።
 (መልክአ ቁርባን፣ አርኬ 1)

**Congregation of believers who believe in Thee
 When they always look at it to take Thy Flesh**

**Christ, Son of the Father from whose bosom Thou
have not isolated
To teach them Thy passion and tell them about the Cross
Send me the grace of the Holy spirit from heaven.
(S-1)**

The fourth line succinctly tells that the purpose of the poet is to teach the believers. It is the only *Mätkə'* I came across in which the reader is faced with a difficulty in identifying himself with the speaker; because it is a liturgical prayer recited by the priest.

3.1.5 The Subjects of the *Mätkə'* a *mätkə'*

An ad hoc meaning of the subject of the *Mätkə'* is a saint or another that is praised in the *Mätkə'*. The *Mätkə'* have various subjects which could be categorized into four groups. These are divine, animate, inanimate and abstract concepts.

(i) Divine Subjects

There are *Mätkə' a mätkə'* having divinity as their subjects. Some of the *Mätkə' a mätkə'* constituting divine beings as subjects are *Mätkə' a ʒgzi'abher Abb* (God the Father), *Ṭäbibä Ṭäbiban* (God), *Mätkə' Päraqlitos* (Paraclet or the Holy Spirit), and *Mätkə' a Silassie* (Trinity).

(ii) Angels

Angels are subjects of some *Mätkə' a mätkə'*. The subjects of these could be divided into two: common and proper subjects. Common subjects are not identified by proper names such as *Mätkə' a Mälə'akä Uqabe* (the guardian Angel), *Mätkə' a Mäla'əkt* (Angels) and *Mätkə' a Kahmatä Sämay* (The 24 Elders in heaven who are mentioned in the *Revelation*). The

proper subjects are those angels identified by their proper name such as *Mälkə'a Mika'el* (Micheal), *Mälkə'a Gäbr'el* (Gabriel), *Mälkə'a Rufa'el* (Raphael).

(iii) Animate Subjects

These are saints, martyrs and other religious figures of the Church. This could also be divided into common and proper subjects. Common subjects are those who are not identified and called by their common name such as *Mälkə'a Säma'ətat* (Martyrs), *Mälkə'a Näbiyat* (Prophets), *Mälkə'a Şadqan* (Righteous), *Mälkə'a Hawaryat* (Apostles), *Mälkə'a Sälästu Mə'ət* (The three hundred Fathers who attended the conference of Nicea and excommunicated Arius) and others. Proper subjects are those identified (singular and plural) subjects such as *Mälkə'a Maryam* (Mary), *Mälkə'a Giyorgis* (George), *Mälkə'a Peṭros wä Pawlos* (Peter and Paul) and *Mälkə'a Abraham wä Yəshak wä Ya'əqob* (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob). There are also earthly kings who are not considered as saintly such as the subjects of King Tewodros II, King Yohannes IV and King Menilik II.

(iv) Inanimate Subjects

The inanimate subjects are the non-living subjects. These are ecclesiastic materials, prayer books, holidays like the subjects of *Mälkə'a Mäsqäl* (Cross), *Mälkə'a Anqäşä Bərhən* (Gə'əz prayer book) and *Mälkə'a Sänbät* (Sabbath) in their respective order.

(v) Abstract Concepts

These are concepts such as love, essence and characters used as subjects of the *Mälkə'a Mälkə'*. The subjects of *Mälkə'a Fəqə'r* (Love), *Mälkə'a Bahrəy* (Essence) and *Mälkə'a Ṭəbay* (Character) are examples.

Though some *Mätkð'a mätkð'* are with subjects that are naturally without physical organic body that could be recounted, they describe different "parts of the body" like in *Mätkð'a Betätkðrstiyan* (Church), *Mätkð'a Fðqðr* and *Mätkð'a Sänbät*. The exploits of some subjects are described even if they are Divine and animate subjects such as in *Mätkð'a Mädhane'alem* (3sägðd) and *Mätkð'a Sðqayu Lä Giyorgis*.

Another feature regarding the number of the *Mätkð'a mätkð'* for a subject is the following. Some subjects which are highly venerated by the Church have various *Mätkð'a mätkð'* with identical and different titles. Individual events in the lives of the subjects are occasionally commemorated. For example, Ginbot 1st E.C.(May 9) is the birth day of the Virgin Mary and Nahase 16th (August 22) is the day on which the feast for her Assumption is celebrated. Of the saints, the Virgin Mary is mostly venerated on each of most occasions of her life and has occasional *Mätkð'a mätkð'* dedicated to her. There are, for example, *Mätkð'a mätkð'* for Ginbot 1st and Nahase 16th called *Mätkð'a Fðlsäta lä Maryam* and *Mätkð'a Lðdäta lä Maryam*. Some of the *Mätkð'a mätkð'* have one subject with different names of a subject. Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary are examples of subjects having different *Mätkð'a mätkð'* with different names.

Jesus Christ

1. *Mätkð'a Iyäsus*
2. *Mätkð'a Amanu'el*
3. *Mätkð'a Mädhane Aläm*
4. *Mätkð'a Mädhane Aläm (3sägðd)*
5. *Mätkð'a Qurban*
6. *Mätkð'a Mäsqäl*
7. *Lðsanä Säbð'*

The Virgin Mary

1. *Mätkð'a Maryam*
2. *Mätkð'a Edom*
3. *Mätkð'a Fðlsäta lä Maryam*
4. *Mätkð'a Qusquam*
5. *Mätkð'a Sð'öl*
6. *Mätkð'a Kidanämhrät*
7. *Mätkð'a Lðdäta läMaryam*

8. *Mälkə'a Qənwat*

9. *Mälkə'a Mahyawī*

8. *Mälkə'a Ləddäta läMaryam (dagmit)*

9. *Mälkə'a Maryam Kalə'*

10. *Mälkə'a Maryam Saləsit*

11. *Mälkə'a Dəngəl*

12. *Mälkə'a Golgota*

There are also some *Mälkə'a mälkə'* with plural subjects such as *Mälkə'a Pəṭros Wä Pəwlos*, *Mälkə'a Yəmrəhannä kərdəstos Wä Lalibäla Wä Nä'akuto lä Abb*. There are up to three identified subjects for a *Mälkə'* and innumerable unidentified subjects such as *Mälkə'a mäla'əkt* and *Mälkə'a Həṣanat* (Children slaughtered by Herod in Judea). These plural identified *Mälkə'a mälkə'* are written for there is close attachment between the subjects, for example *Mälkə'a Pəṭros Wä Pəwlos* is written as a *Mälkə'* because Saint Peter and Saint Paul were martyred together in Rome.

3.2 Prosody

The outward and apparent features of a poem - rhyme, rhythm and stanza - make it different from prose as analyzed under prosody.

3.2.1 Rhyme

In the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* there are agreement in syllables between the last words of the lines. The *Mälkə'a mälkə'* are poems that are overwhelmingly rhyming.

ሰላም ለአዕይንቲክ ከመ ምሉእ ምዕቃለ ማይ
እለ ይተረክይ ወተረ በመንበረ መጽሔት ርሱይ
ኢየሱስ ክርስቶስ መስተሰርየ ኩሉ ጌጋይ
ንዝጋኒ እግዚአ በአዛብከ ሠናይ
ወ አጻዕድወኒ እምበረድ ጽሩይ።
(መልክአ ኢየሱስ፣ አርኬ 6)

Sälam lä a'ðyðntikä Kämä mð1u'ð mð'qlä may
 ð1ä Yðträ'ayu wäträ bämänbärä mäšet rðsuy
 Iyäsus kðrðstos mästäsärðyä kullu gegay
 Nðzhani ðgzi'o bä azabkä sänay
 wä a'sa'ðdwäni ðmbäräd şðruy
 (Mälkð'a Iyäsus, S-6)

In the lines of the above stanza, all the five lines have perfect rhyming scheme. The lines rhyme by the sound "-y".

The agreement must always be in consonant sounds. Vowels are not rhyming sounds unless they function as consonants or used as consonants. Let me give an example for this.

ሰላም ለእመትከ ዘይሜጥን ተራድኦ
 እኮ ሰንዱነ ወ አልባሰ ረፍኦ
 ሚካኤል ኅቤከ አወዩ በአስተብቁዖ
 ከመ ታድኅኒ ሥመር እግዚኦ
 እስመ ከሉ ይተግህ ከመያድኅን ሰብኦ።
 (መልክአ ሚካኤል፣ አርኬ 28)

Sälam lä 'ðmätkä zäyðmeṭðn täradð'o
 Ako sändunä wä alðbasä räfd'o
 Mika'el habekä awäyu bä'astäbðqu'o
 Kämä tadðhnäni sðmär ðgzi'o
 ðsmä kullu yðtägðh kämä säbð'o
 (Mälkð'a Mika'el, S-28)

The lines of this stanza rhyme by the sound "-o" which is commonly a vowel, but here it serve as a consonant.

Generally, the end rhymes of consecutive lines of a stanza must be identical. This pattern of end rhymes is a necessary form adhered by all the *Mälkð'a mälkð'*.

The *Mälkð'a mälkð'*, of course, are meant to be recited and sung. The rhyme then creates an effect which is referred to as musical or melodic quality. Musicality of the

Mälkə'a mälkə' is one effect of rhyme and that rhyme itself is only one element in the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*. The rhyme also helps to unify words and groups of lines that stand together. Therefore, perfect rhyming scheme is one of the major features of versification of the *Mälkə'*.

Sometimes the poets use their poetic license and make the lines rhyme by modifying the word in accordance with the rhyming syllable. For example the following stanza exhibits this fact.

ሰላም ለከፊያቲክ ውስተ ልቦ አምላክ ዘተዛዋጊ
 ወለኅሊናክ ሰላም እንዘ ኢይጌጊ
 ዮሐንስ ንጹሕ ፍትወተ ዓለም ኅዳጊ
 እም ግብረ ሕማም ጽፉቀ ያስተብቁዓክ ዮጊ
 መክብቦ ሰማዕታት ተርቢኖስ እኅክ ጊዮርጊ
 (መልክክ ዮሐንስ መጥምቅ፣ አርኬ 19)

Sälam läkulyatikä wustä löabbä amlak täzawagi
 Wä lähðlinakä sälam ðnzä iyðgegi
 Yohannðs nðshuh fðtwätä aläm hadagi
 ðmgðbrä hðmam şðfuqä yastäbqu'akä yogi
 Mäkbðbä säma'ðtat tärbinos ðhukä giyorgi
 (*Mälkə'a Yohannðs Mätamðq*, S-19)

In the last line, the last word must have been *Giyorgis*; but for the purpose of rhyming, using his license, the poet left the last syllable "-s" unwritten so that the line can rhyme with other lines by the syllable "-gi".

ሰላም ለእስትንፋስክ እስትንፋሰ ሕይወት ወጥዲና
 ወለጉርኤክ ዓዲ ጥኅተ ለሆሳስ ወዴዴ ጉሀና
 እግዚአብሔር አብ መድምመ ልዕልና
 ዘ ታብድር ጽፉቀ ወይዋሄ ወግብረ ከሉ ትሕትና
 ትዕቢትሰ አውደቆ ለሳጥና።
 (መልክክ እግዚአብሔር አብ፣ አርኬ 12)

Sälam läðstðnfaskä ðstðnfasä hðywot wä tð'inna
 Wä lägurð'ekä adi hohðtä lä hosas wädede guhonna
 ðgzi'abher Abb mädmðmä lö'ðlðnna

Zätabäd̄r şadqä wäȳdwahe wäḡdbrä kullu
t̄hat̄nna
T̄d'̄bitsä aw̄däqo läsaṭna
(Mälk̄'a ʒgi'abher Abb, S-12)

Saṭna'el is *Satan*. The word *saṭna* in the last line has been made to lose the last morpheme ኤል "-el" which is the name of God. The contraction is done only for the purpose rhyming.

3.2.2 Rhythm

As I have mentioned in the limitation part of chapter one, one of my short-comings is my failure in pronouncing the Ḡd'̄z words correctly. This failure in mastering the correct pronunciation has shadowed on this sub-topic. Though not satisfactory, by consulting scholars and related articles, I have dared to discuss the issue. It certainly is open to comments or corrections by those who have prowess in Ḡd'̄z poetry and better knowledge of Ḡd'̄z language.

Alemayyehu Moges (1966 E.C.) explained the versification of Ḡd'̄z poetry such as *D̄ggua* and *Mälk̄'* in an article mentioned in the second chapter, section 2.5. According to him the two main factors in Ḡd'̄z metrical feet that affect the rhythm are the number of syllables and accents (which are the rising and falling stresses, *tagmeme* of thoughts and construction of phrase and clauses). Therefore, prowess in Ḡd'̄z pronunciation is very important in the study of the rhythm in the versification of *Mälk̄'*.

The Ge'ez verse can have various rhythms of different lengths within one stanza. Provided the lines and *tagmemes* are placed in the correct positions and correspond to the metric feet in the music of the poetry, their rhythms may vary. In other words, if another line or *tagmeme* taken from an earlier poem may be substituted for it, or if the verse can be placed with in another stanza of the same length without disturbing the music of the poem, then the rhythms may vary. It is for this reason the lines of the stanza need not be uniform in rhythm.

(Alemayyehu, 1966 E.C.: 102)

To support his statement with examples, he gave the metric number of different stanzas and the types of their rhythms from different genres of Gǝǝz poetry including the *Mälkǝ*.

The rhythm of the following four stanzas indicate that the *Mälkǝ'a mälkǝ'* have non-uniform rhythm. Symmetry is not the principle of the *Mälkǝ'*. Each line in a stanza has not the same number of syllables as the corresponding line of the succeeding stanza. This non-uniform rhythm saved the *Mälkǝ'a mälkǝ'* from being monotonous. Metrical variations between lines appear frequently.

The numbers beside the lines show the metric feet and the lines show the type of the rhythm. I used the Gǝǝz alphabet to write the examples to show the syllables separately.

ሰላም ለመልክእክ. ዘተሠርገወ አሜረ	15	a
ዘያበርህ ወትረ	7	b
ፍቅርትየ አንተ፣ እንተ ታበድሪ ፍቅረ	14	b
አርእይኒ ገጸ ዚአከ. ማርያም ምዕረ	16	a
ዘኢይሰምየ ካልዕ እንግርክ. ነገረ	14	b
(መልክአ ማርያም፣ አርኬ 51)		

Sälam lä mälkǝ'ki zä täsärgäwä amerä
 Zäyabärǝh wäträ
 Fǝqrǝye Anti ǝntä tabäǝdri fǝqrä
 Arǝ'yäni gäፍä zi'aki Maryam mǝ'rä
 Zä iyǝsämd'o kalǝ' ǝngǝrǝki nägärä
 (*Mälkǝ'a Maryam*, S-51)

ሰላም ለገጽክ እምሥነ ኦርያሬስ ስቡህ	15	a
ወፍሠሕ ከመወርኅ ዘአሜ ገሃህ	12	b
ኢየሱስ ክርስቶስ ታቦተ ሕይወቱ ለኖኅ	12	b
ኅብአኒ እግዚኦ በውሳጤክ ስፋሕ	12	b
ማየ ከነኔ አመ ዘንመ አይኅ	12	b
(መልክአ ኢየሱስ፣ አርኬ 4)		

Sälam lä gäፍkä ǝm sǝnä oriares sǝbuh
 Wä fǝssuh kämä wärǝh zä ame gähah
 Iyäsus kǝrǝstos tabotä hǝywätu lä Noh
 Hǝbǝ'ani ǝgzi'o bäwǝsaፑekä sǝfuh
 mayä kunäne amä zänmä ayǝh
 (*Mälkǝ'a Iyäsus*, S-4)

ሰላም ለአእናፊክ እለ በሰማያት ያንበለብሉ	18	a
ከመሠርቀ ፀሐይ ወሥነ ጸዳሉ	11	b
ኦ መልአክ ጊዜ ተፈናከ ዘእምላዕሉ	14	c
ይትፌሥሑ በምጽአትከ ነፍሳተ ኃጥአን ከሉ	16	d
መጻእከኑ መጻእከኑ ሚካኤል ይብሉ	15	e

(መልአክ ሚካኤል፣ ኦርኬ 20)

Sälam lä a'ፊnafikä ፊlä bäsämayat yanbäläbፊlu
 Kämä särqä Şähay sፊnä şädalu
 O mäld'ak gize täfänokä ፊmla'ፊlu
 Yፊtfeshu bämşፊ'atkä näfsatä haፊፊ'an kullu
 Mäşa'ፊkänu mäşa'ፊkänu Mika'el yፊblu

(Mälkፊ'a Mika'el, S-20)

ሰላም ለእራኅከ ወሀቤ ጸጋ ቡሩክ	12	a
ወለአጸብኢከ የውጣ አጸብአ ክቡር መልአክ	16	b
አማኅፊነኒ ገብርኤል ኅበ አማናዊ አምላክ	16	b
በአለምሰ ኢይትረከብ ዐርክ	11	c
እስመ በጽባሕ ዘተናገረ ኢይደግም በሠርክ	16	b

(መልአክ ገብርኤል፣ ኦርኬ 16)

Sälam lä ፊrahፊkä wähabē şäga bፊruk
 Wä lä'aşabፊ'ikä yäwፊፊa aşab'a kፊbur mäld'ak
 Amahፊşnäni Gäbrፊ'el habä amanawi amlak
 Bä alämፊsä iyፊträkäb ark
 3smä bäyፊፊah zä tänaፊärä iyፊdägፊm bäsärk

(Mälkፊ'a Gäbrፊ'el, S-16)

To avoid monotony, the *Mälkፊ'a mälkፊ'* exploits non-uniformity of rhythm with their five-line stanzas. Generally the *Mälkፊ'* has no characteristic meters; because they have no uniform rhythm. However they are melodious.

3.2.3 Stanza

The *Mälkፊ'a mälkፊ'* are poems that are divided into various stanzas. Each stanza has five lines. Even if five-line stanzas are frequently used in *Gፊፊ'ፊz* poetry, they have not been given local terminology. Five-line stanza is used in *Gፊፊ'ፊz* poetry such as *Qፊፊne* (Wazema

Qōne), *Dōggua*, *Sä'atat*, *Mahōletä ṣōge* and *Säqoqawä Dōngōl*. *Säqoqawä Dōngōl* uses five and six-line stanzas alternately.

The following stanza is taken from *Mälkō'a Zena Marqos* and can be an instance of a stanza of the *Mälkō'a mälkō'*. All the afore-cited stanzas could also be instances.

ሰላም ለፍልሰተ ሥጋክ ለዘርዐ ያዕቆብ ዘተከሰተ (1)
 ወሊቀ ካህናት ገብርኤል ዘሐዘለክ መዓልተ (2)
 ዜና ማርቆስ ያዕቆብ ፈውሶተ ድውይ ሐውልተ (3)
 አቅሞ በቅድሚያ እንዘ ታስተበቁዕ አንተ (4)
 ንበ አምላክክ ሰማያዊ ለቤዛ ዘሞተ። (5)
 (መልክክ ዜና ማርቆስ፣ ኦርኬ 48)

Sälam läfōlsätä sōgakä lä Zärō'a Ya'ōqob Zätäkästä
Wä liqä Kahnat Gäbrō'el Zāhazäläkä mä'altä
Zena Marqos Ya'ōqob fäwōsotä dōwōy hawōltä
Aqōmo bäqōdmeye dōnzä tastäbäqu'ō antä
Habä amlakōkä sämayawi läbeza zämotä
 (*Mälkō'a Zenamarqos*, S-48)

All the stanzas of the *Mälkō'a mälkō'* have five lines, with very few exceptions.

The stanzas of the *Mälkō'a mälkō'* have also another feature. Each stanza has a head word. The first word of the first line of the stanzas of the *Mälkō'a mälkō'* here after referred to as head word. The head word of a *Mälkō'* is identical in all the stanzas of that particular *Mälkō'* except the last two or three stanzas which could have started by *Sōbhat*, *Sälam* or other words.

The common and frequently used head word is *sälam*. Among the 50 published *Mälkō'a mälkō'* 41 of them have ሰላም *Sälam* as their head word. ተማሕፀንኩ *Tämähōṣänku* is a head word for two *Mälkō'a mälkō'*. ኦ *O*, ንኢ *Nō'i*; and ነኢ *Nä'a* are head

words each in a single *Mälkə'*. There are three *Mälkə'a mälkə'* without head word. Generally, *Sälam* is the head word frequently used.

Tämähəšänku is a word denoting "I beseech or entreat thou...", እሰግድ *ʒsägədd* designates bowing; *O* denotes interjection, particularly calling some one with respect. *Nə'i* is a word used only for females that means "[thou] come..."; its masculine form is *nə'a*.

Sälam is a form of salutation used in praise of the subject. The word is used in the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament God addressed Gideon by saying "Peace be unto thee" (Judge. 6:23). In the New Testament it is used by Jesus Christ for His apostles. He saluted his apostles twice after his resurrection: "peace be unto you" (LK. 24:34; Jn. 20:26).

In the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*, subsequent to the word *sälam*, the part of body and/or attributes given to the subjects follow. Among the 50 published *Mälkə'a mälkə'* again 41 of them praised the different parts of the body of the subjects; 4 *Mälkə'a mälkə'* praised the exploits and other occasions of the subjects; 4 *Mälkə'a mälkə'* have nothing specific to describe and the last 2 are poems based on the two prayer books: *Wudase Maryam* and *Anqäṣä Bərdhan*. The head words of these two *Mälkə'a mälkə'* are the head words of each paragraph of the prayer books correspondingly. For example, the head words of the first three stanzas of *Mälkə'a Anqäṣä Bərdhan* and the first three paragraphs of *Anqäṣä Bərdhan* are the following. ቅድስት Qəddəst, ግሠርቱ Asärtu, and ቀዳሙ Qädimu.

The stanzas of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* which have been cited as examples for the various statements in this chapter have *sälam* as their head word. Below is an example for *ʒsägədd*.

እሰግድ ለአእዳዊክ በቀኖተ ጎጸን እለ ተሰቁራ
 ወለመዛርዒክ በሐብል እለ ድጎሪተ ተአስራ
 (መልክአ መድኃኔዓለም እሰግድ፣ ክርኬ 20፣ ስንኝ 1እና2)

**I request thee, my lady, since I offered the song
To give me the fruits of the gift of the Holy Spirit.
(*Mälkô'a sänbät*, S-10)**

The part of the body described in the above stanza is the lip; but a day has no lips unless it is personified. Therefore, personifying the inanimate and abstract subjects is one of its features.

The *Mälkô'* is poetry composed for a second person imbued with the conative function of the languages. It is supplicatory because the first person (the speaker) is spiritually subordinated to the second person (the subject) and directly addresses the subject.

One of the interesting effects of the constant use of the word "I" in the *Mälkô'a mälkô'* is the creation of spiritual proximity and intimacy of the speaker with the subject. The "I" helps the suppliant (reader) to identify himself with the speaker of the *Mälkô'*. It also creates personal and direct relationship between the suppliant and the subject of the *Mälkô'*, which enables the former to supplicate what he desires and also enables him/her to repent. As mentioned above (section 3.1.2) the use of "I" that helped for identification once challenged this purpose. In *Lôsanä Säbô'* the "I" said that he was ruled by his tongue for 50 years. This personal reference to one's age could create problem in the identification process.

The "I" in the stanzas of invocation refers to the poet and the self-identified prayer. By means of identification the suppliant gives himself in the petition and establishes his limits in order to secure the subject's sympathy and aid. The limitation represents all human beings who have access to pray. This limitation creates a sense of humility for the suppliant.

The stanzas have their own structure. Using the content as measuring parameter, each stanza could be divided into three sections.

(I) DESCRIPTION- This part mostly constitutes the first two lines and describes the parts of the body or other attributes of the subjects.

(II) CALL- in the third line, often, the suppliant calls the subjects of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* using their proper names and describes the subjects as an entity.

(III) SUPPLICATION- This part mostly constitutes the last two lines. The speaker makes humble petition to the subject for spiritual reward and intercession. Sometimes penitence is also included in this part. The supplication has two types: the first, as already discussed, is submission for one's sin and request to be forgiven and the second type is supplication of revenge on enemies. The request to the subject is forwarded to get power against one's enemy.

The second stanza of *Mälkə'a Maryam* could be a good example to see the structure of the stanza.

DESCRIPTION	ሰላም ለስእርተ ርእስኪ ዘተንእደ ጽፍሮሁ ለአቡኪ በከፍፍሪሁ
CALL	ማርያም ድንግል ለእግዚአብሔር ጽርሐ
SUPPLICATION	ለገብርኪ እግዝእትዮ አትጎድግኒ እላሁ ከመ አይበሉኒ ፀር አይቴኑመ ምክሐ (መልክእ ማርያም፤ አርኬ 2)

DESCRIPTION	Peace be to thy locks, their plaiting is celebrated By the lips of thy father
CALL	The Virgin Mary, receptacle of God
SUPPLICATION	Do not forsake thy servant, my lady When the enemies say to me "when then is that of which he vaunt?"

In the first two lines of this stanza, the locks of the Virgin Mary and its plaiting is described using allusion to the *Song of songs*. The third line, the mediator between the description and supplication, describes the Virgin Mary, the Subject of the *Mälkə'* as receptacle of God, since she had an immaculate conception and birth of the Son of God. The last two lines are supplication forwarded to the Virgin Mary to defend the speaker from his enemies. He presented himself as the servant of the Virgin Mary. There are two poems that show different characteristics regarding the third line. The first is *Mälkə'a Maryam Kalə'* that have identical third lines of each stanza through out the *Mälkə'*. Its identity is observed mostly in meaning and rarely in form. They has the meaning that Mary has entered into the temple. The second is *Mälkə'a Mätloli* in which the third line always refers to one of the twelve apostles. It has 12 stanzas that have mentioned the 12 apostles as metaphors to describe the Virgin Mary.

This structure of the stanzas is applicable to all or most of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*. However, there are exceptions that changed the function of line three to line two or totally replace the SUPPLICATION part by DESCRIPTION. Both exceptions are frequently seen in *Mälkə'a Sillasie* . In other *Mälkə'a mälkə'* there are hardly exceptions. *Mälkə'a Sillasie* has 47 stanzas from which in 38 stanzas the CALL is in the second line and there is also SUPPLICATION and CALL simultaneously in the second line.

ሰላም እብል ለዘዚአክሙ ከናፍር
 ተሣህሉኒ ሥላሴ በሣህለ ቤትክሙ ፍቅር
 እስመ ሃይማኖትየ ሞተት እምነ ሕይወታ ምግባር
 እንዘ ብየ ተስፋ ጽሙእ ጽዋዐ ማይ ቁሪር
 ወሐዋጼ ብእሲ ድውይ እንዘ ብየ እግር።
 (መልከአ ሥላሴ፣ ኦርኬ11)

I said peace to Thy lips
Forgive me, Trinity, by Thy house forgiveness, which
is love
Since my faith is dead from its life of good deeds
Because I do not give a cup of cold water for the thirsty
And do not also visit the sick person for I have legs.
(Mälkə' Sillassies, S-11)

The first line is the salutation given to the lips of the subject, Holy Trinity, without any description of features. The 2nd line is the SUPPLICATION and CALL of the subject by the proper name, whereas the last three lines are reasons for the supplication as well as penitence. These lines answer the question why the speaker supplicates.

The over all form of the *Mälkə'* is not as such structured; however, mostly one of the first few stanzas of the *Mälkə'* is invocation. The poets directly address the subjects and request their assistance in the composition of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*. Like the invocation, there are also thanksgiving for the assistance given by and the praise given to the subjects. Below are examples of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* with invocation.

Mälkə'a päraqritos

Mälkə'a Kidanämhörät

Mälkə'a Qurban

Mälkə'a 3st ifanos

Mälkə'a Amanu'el

Mälkə'a Sänbät

Mälkə'a Iyaqem Wä hanna

Mälkə'a Arägawi

The invocations are of two types: directly supplicating the subjects to assist in composing the *Mälkə'* either by the subjects power or through their intercession and supplicating God as first person or requesting the Virgin Mary by referring to her as third person while addressing the subject as first person.

The first stanza of *Mälkə'a 3st ifanos* is a good Example.

በስመ ሥሉስ ቅዱስ እግዚአብሔር አሐዱ
 ናሁ ወጠንኩ ወእቤ ሰላመ መልክእከ ዘበበ ፍቅዱ
 ለፈጽሞቱ ርድኣኒ እስጢፋኖስ ጽጌ ናርዱ
 ከመዘይረድኦ አብ ለወልዱ
 ወ መምህርኒ ለጽኑዕ ተልማዱ።
 (መልክእ እስጢፋኖስ፣ ኣርኬ 1)

By the name of the three Holies, one God
 Now I started and said praise of thy likeness in its
 sequential order
 Stephen, flower of Nard, help me for its completion
 Like the father helped the son
 And the instructor his clever student

In this stanza the poet directly invokes the assistance of the subject of the *Mälkə'*.

ሰላመ ገብርኤል መልክክ በላዕለ ማርያም ዘክዕረፈ
 ከመ እኩኑ ኅዳጠ ወኣኮ ትሩፈ
 እግዚአብሔር ሀበኒ ሲሳዩ ልቡና መጽሐፈ
 ወአፉዩ ሙሴ ለእመ ኮነ ጸያፈ

ጸራቅሊጦስ አሮን ይኩነኒ አፈ።
 (መልክእ ገብርኤል፣ ኣርኬ 1)

Peace of Gabriel the angle that rested upon Mary
 To speak little not much
 God, give me the book which is food of the heart
 When my mouth Moses be lispng
 Let peraclet Aaron be my mouth
 (*Mälkə'a Gäbrə'el, S-1*)

In this stanza the poet invokes not the subject of the *Mälkə'*, but it directly invokes God.

ሰላም ለዝክረ ስምከ ዘጥንተ ፊደሉ መስቀል
 ስም ክቡር ወ ስም ልዑል
 ተክለሃይማኖት ማቴዎስ በዓለቀዳማይ ወንጌል
 ከመ እወድሰከ መጠነ አውሥኦተ እክል

ማእሠረ ልሳንዩ ትፍታሕ ማርያም ድንግል።
(መልክስ ተክለሃይማኖት፣ ክርኬ 1)

Peace be to the commemoration of thy name, the
origin of its letter is cross
Thy name is respected and noble
Täklähaymanot Matthew, the author of the first Gospel
To praise thou as much as my speech potential
Let the Virgin Mary untie the tie of my tongue.
(*Mälkə'a Täklähaymanot, S-1*)

In this stanza the request is forwarded to the virgin Mary, not directly but as third person.

Regarding the number of parts of the body described within a stanza, the limitation is determined by the length of the *Mälkə'*. If a *Mälkə'* is long enough to describe most of the parts of the body of the subject, a stanza describes a single part of the body. If the *Mälkə'* is too short to describe at least most parts of the body, then a stanza might describe as far as 5 different parts of the body of the subject.

ሰላም ለቃልክ ወለእስትንፋስክ ርጢን
ለጉርዔክ ወለክሳድክ ወ ለመትከፍትክ ዑጽፍተ ብርሃን
መልክስ ዑቃቤ ዘ ሌሊተ ከመ ስምክ አማን
አሰስል እምላዕሌዩ ምክረ ንዋማዊ ሰይጣን
ዘበኃይለ መንፈስ ብክ ውብክ ሥልጣን።
(መልክስ መልክስ ዑቃቤ ፣ ክርኬ 5)

Peace be to thy words and thy incense breath
To thy throat and thy neck and thy shoulder
wrapped by light
The guardian angel of the night, like thy name is reliable
Avoid from me the provocation of the deadly Satan
Since there is the power of Spirit and authority over
thee.
(*Mälkə'a Mälə'akä Uqabe, S-5*)

This stanza praises 5 parts of the body, because the *Mälkə'* has only 14 stanzas. Whenever the number of the described items within a stanza increased, there is certainly a decrease in the descriptive power of the poem.

Concerning the length of the *Mälkə'*, the longest among the printed ones is *Ṭäbibä Ṭäbiban* with 102 stanzas and the shortest is *Mälkə'a Mälə'akä Uqabe* with 14 stanzas, and sometimes, the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* have mentioned the number of the stanzas in one of the lines of their last stanza. For example *Mälkə'a yohannəs Mätəmāq*, *Mälkə'a Sillassie* and *Mälkə'a Mälə'akä Uqabe*.

አምኃ ስብሐት አቅራብኩ ለመልክእከ በጽዋጫ
 እንዘ አስተዋድድ ቃለ መጠነ ራብዕ ሰባኤ
 ተወከፈኒ ዮሐንስ ምስለ በርተሎ ሜዎስ ቀርነ ገባኤ
 ከመ ተወክፈ. እግዚእከ ቅድመ ወንጌላዊት ትንሣኤ
 እምነ አሐቲ ብእሲት ጸራይቀ ክልኤ።
 (መልክእ ዮሐንስ መጥምቅ፣ አርኬ 28)

I presented the gift of praise of thy likeness by
 recounting
 And composing words about four times seven
 Receive me, John, with Bartholomew horn of the
 congregation
 As thy lord receive in front of the Evangelist
 resurrection
 Two pennies from a single woman
 (*Mälkə'a Yohannəs Mätəmāq*, S-28)

The second line explicitly indicate the number of stanzas in the *Mälkə'*.

There are also lines written only to fill the structure, only for mechanical convenience.

ሰላም ለአጸብዒከ እንተ በዲቤሆን አጽፋር
 ዘጉላቋሆን ዐሥር
 ዐማኑኤል አንተ ንገሠ ሰማያት ወ ምድር
 ተራወጹ በኃይልከ ሐንካሳነ እግር
 ወ ብርሃነ አዕይንት አድምዐ ዕውር።
 (መልክእ ዐማኑኤል፣ አርኬ 28)

Peace be to Thy fingers with finger nails at their tips
 Their number is ten
 Amanu'el, thou are the king of heavens and earth
 By thy power the lames run
 And the blind got immediately the light of his eyes.
 (*Mälkə'a Amanuel*, S-25)

The following is another example.

ሰላም፣ ሰላም ወ ሰላም እብሎን
 ለአጻብዒክ ዐሥር ምስለ አጽፋሪሆን
 ኅድፈኒ ቂርቆስ ኖትያ መንገለ መርሰ ወዛኅን
 ናሁ አስጠሙ ኅሊናየ በዝ ዘመን
 ሰቆቃው ጤግሮስ ወግዮን ኅዘን።
 (መልክአ ቂርቆስ፣ አርኬ 26)

**Peace, peace and peace, I said to them
 For thy fingers with their nails
 Captain Qirqos rowed for me to the peaceful port
 Since in this age my thought is drowned
 By lamentation Tigris and mourning Ghion.
 (*Mälkə'a Qirqos, S-26*)**

The second line of the above two stanzas have nothing to contribute either for the theme or for the beauty of the expression. The only significance these lines have is structural. The lines tell us the number of fingers in the subjects hands. There are some *Mälkə'a Mälkə'* which have similar lines aimed to keep the structure of the stanzas identical. All these lines are produced only for mechanical convenience.

3.3 Imagery

Imagery is one of the essentials of poetry. It is a major clue to poetic meaning, structure and effect. The word is used here as a term that covers figurative speech used in the *Mälkə'a Mälkə'*.

The *Mälkə'* has simple style with a great deal of description of the physical appearance of its subject. The imagery of the *Mälkə'* could be seen divided into two main categories. These are biblical and non-biblical images. It would be wearisome (and space does not permit) to go into the individual images in each category at length, but I will cite and discuss

few examples for each category. One of the categories, biblical images, will be discussed in depth in chapter four.

3.3.1 Biblical images

"Allusion in a work of literature is a reference, explicit or indirect, to a person, or event, or to another literary work or passage" (Abrams, 1981: 8). The objective is to achieve special effect of expounding the subject of the text. The biblical allusions explicitly allude to a person, an action or an event in the Holy Bible. It is not a direct reference for its own sake.

These allusions, as mentioned above, explicitly mention biblical personages. The personages' attributes could signify the subject of the *Mälkə'* or their essence. The quantity of the biblical images in the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* are more in number than other types of images. They use both the Old and New Testaments alike including even those less known incidents to the common reader of the Bible.

The following is an example of biblical allusions.

ማርያም ጎትምት መጽሐፈ ዮሐንስ ነቢያ ፍጥም
ልክዒ በላዕሌየ ለፊደልኪ ማጎተጥም
ከመ ኢይርአየኒ ዓይነጥምት ዘስሙ መጽሕጥም
(መልክስ ማርያም መጥለሊ፣ ኦርኬ 3፣ ስንኻ 3-5)

**Mary, (thou) the sealed book of John the prophet of
Pat'mos (3)
Write thy seal of letter unto me (4)
For not to be seen by the eye of death named
Mäṣə'amo (5)
(*Mälkə'a Maryam Mätäl əli, S-3; L-3-5*)**

The third line in the stanza describes the subject of the *Mälkə'*, the Virgin Mary, by alluding to an event from the book of *Revelation*: one of the books of the New Testament believed to be written by John the apostle. As stated in this book, saint John saw a book sealed by seven seals. It cannot be opened by any one except the lamb that signifies Jesus Christ (Rev. 5:1). Here in the above stanza the sealed book signifies Saint Mary (Mäṣahəftä Haddisat Sälästu, 1989 E.C.: 382) and the seal signifies her virginity as the virginity of Mary is described by sealed fountain in the *Song of songs* (4:12). The Lamb in the *Revelation* designates Jesus Christ as John the Baptist testified earlier " behold the Lamb of God " (Jn.1:29) by referring to the *Revelation* that mentioned Jesus Christ as the only one who opened the sealed book, the seal is the allusion that signifies the virginity of Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ.

Another example of biblical images used in *Mälkə'a Gäbrə'el* is the following.

እግዚአብሔር ሀብኒ ሲሳየ ልቡና መጽሐፈ
 ወ አፋየ ሙሴ ለእመ ኮነ ጸያፈ
 ጸራቅሊጦስ አሮን ይከነኒ አፈ።።
 (መልክአ ገብርኤል፣ ኦርኬ 1፣ ስንኻ 3-5)

God give me the book -food of consciousness (3)
When my mouth Moses being lisping (4)
Let Parclet Aaron be my tongue. (5)
 (S-1; L-3-5)

In line 4 and 5, the attributes of the two biblical personages- Moses and Aaron- are used to invoke eloquence. According to the biblical story in the book of *Exodus*, Moses was " slow of speech and of a slow tongue" (Ex. 4:10). But God made Aaron the spokesman of Moses (Ex. 4:14-15). By alluding to this story, the implied author implored God to give him the Holy Spirit (Parclet) as his/her spokesperson. *Moses* and *Aaron* are descriptors of the inarticulate (slow tongued) nature of the implied author to praise the subject of the *Mälkə'* and the

eloquence of the Holy Spirit. The imagery is symmetrical, since *Moses* and *Aaron* are parallel descriptors for slow tongue and Paraclet.

Considering another example would, I hope, explicate the matter better.

ልብስ ሰማዕትና ይኩነኒ ምሕረትክሙ ክዳን
 ላዕሌዖ እስመ ኢሀሎ ልብስ እስጢፋኖስ እብን
 ወስርጋዌሁ እሳት ለቂርቆስ ሕፃን።
 (መልክስ ስላሴ፣ ኦርኬ 37፣ ስንኻ 3-5)

Thy clothe mercy be my clothee of martyrdom (3)
Since there is no stone- clothe of Stephen on me (4)
And the ornament- fire of the child Qirqos (5)
 (*Mälkə'a Sillassie, S-37; L-3-5*)

In line 4 and 5 " the stone clothe of Stephen " and " the ornament- fire of the child *Qirqos* are used as allusions. These allusions are taken from *The Acts of the Apostles* and *Dōrsanä Mika'el*. The first martyr of the Christian world, Stephen, was stoned and martyred (Acts 7:54-60). The poet used the *stone* as a metaphor for martyrdom (3). These two lines are densely metaphorical. The *clothe* that the implied author referred to is not real clothe; but to the mercy of the Trinity. This means the word *clothe* itself is an image to describe *mercy* and in turn described by the *stones* by which Stephen is stoned and by *fire* which by itself is also described by *ornament* and metaphor over another metaphor is used. The stones by which saint Stephen is stoned and the fire by which *Qirqos* was burnt are metaphors themselves are described by *clothe* and *ornament*, respectively, which are descriptors of martyrdom. Being densely figurative is also one of the features of the imagery used in the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*.

The use of the allusions of the biblical personages and their attributes is one of the major features of the imagery of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*. For example, there are 20 allusions to the Holy Bible only in the third line of *Mälkə'a Maryam* and 12 in *Mälkə'a Iyäsus*. In general there are more than 50 biblical allusions in *Mälkə'a Maryam*. Similarly *Mälkə'a Mätlōli* ' has

12 stanzas that have 12 biblical allusions only in the third line of each stanza. The alluded biblical personages are the 12 apostles. By using the acts and successes of the 12 apostles, the Virgin Mary is described as seen in the first example of this section.

Mälkə'a Täklähaymanot employed the same method of using allusions like that of *Mälkə'a Mätlōli'*. They describe subjects using various biblical and other Church personages and their attributes. Out of the 57 stanzas, the third lines of the 28 stanzas used 24 biblical personages and 4 Church (after the time of the New Testament) personages as metaphors to describe the subject of the *Mälkə'*. In *Mälkə'a Mätlōli'* the four stanzas next to the first one used the four Evangelists in the order of their Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John as metaphors to describe the Virgin Mary. Let us see one example from this *Mälkə'*.

ተክለሃይማኖት ለቃስ ዐቃቤ ሥራይ
(መልክክ ተክለሃይማኖት፣ አርኬ 4 ስንኝ 3)

Täklähaymanot, (thou) Luke the Physician.
(S-3, L-3)

This line used the attribute of the Evangelist Luke, his being a physician. This metaphor describes *Täklähaymanot* by his ability of intercession in curing the sick. It was taken from the epistle of Paul (Col. 4: 14) that referred to Saint Luke as "the beloved physician".

This type of metaphor is the most frequently used metaphor in the *Mälkə'a Mälkə'*. It is also used by the exegetes of the EOC and other prayer books such as the Anaphora of Mary (See chapters 3 and 4 of this Anaphora).

The use of similar descriptors for identical parts of the body of the subjects of different *Mälkə'a mälkə'* is another feature of the imagery. For example, the image of celestial bodies is used to describe the face of the subjects. The celestial bodies used as

images are the Stars, the Moon and the Sun. Let us look at some examples. *Mälkə'a*

Maryam describes the face of the Virgin Mary:

ሰላም ለገጽኪ ዘጥቀ ይልሂ
እምስነ ከዋክብት ወወርኅ ወ እምስነ ፀሐይ መብርሂ።
(መልክአ ማርያም፣ አርኬ 4፣ ስንኝ 1እና2)

Peace be to thy face which is fairer
Than the Stars and the Moon, and aglow than the shining Sun
(S- 4; L- 1 and 2).

The imagery is most probably taken from the description of the bride as *ሠናይት ከመ ወርኅ ወ ብርሃት ከመ ፀሐይ (መጋ.6:10)::fair as the Moon, [and as] clear as the Sun... (6: 10)*. Similarly as *Mälkə'a Maryam*, the face of *Täklähaymanot* is described in the *Mälkə'a Täklähaymanot* as *ዘይኤድም ሥነ እም ፀሐይ ወ ወርኅ (መልክአ ተክለሃይማኖት፣ አርኬ 5፣ ስንኝ 2) more beautiful than the beauty of the Sun and the Moon (S- 5; L- 1and2);* in *Mälkə'a Sänbät* the "face" is described as:

ሰላም ለገጽኪ ዕዳል በራዕይ
እምሳለ ፀሐይ
(መልክአ ሰንበት፣ አርኬ 4፣ ስንኝ 1እና 2)

Peace be to thy face aglowing in the vision
like the Sun
(S- 4; L-1and2);

the face of *Kidanämöhrät* is described in the *Mälkə'* dedicated to the Virgin Mary as *ዘይኤድም ሥነ እምጸዳለ ፀሐይ ወወርኅ (መልክአ ኪዳን ምሕረት፣ አርኬ5፣ ስንኝ2) it is more beautiful than the light of the Sun and the Moon (S- 5; L-2);* the face of the Virgin Mary in *Mälkə'a Qusquam* is described as *ሰላም ለርእስኪ ወለገጽኪ ሥነ ኮከብ (መልክአ ቁስቋም፣ አርኬ 2፣ ስንኝ1) peace be to thy head and to thy face, beautiful as the beauty of the Stars (S- 2; L-1);* in *Mälkə'a Iyäsus* the face is described as :

ሰላም ለገጽክ እምሥነ ኦርያሬስ ስቡሕ
ወፍሠሕ ከመ ወርኅ ዘአሜ ገሃሀ
(መልክአ ኢየሱስ፣ አርኬ 4፣ ስንኝ 1እና2)

**Peace be to Thy face brighter than the beauty of the Sun
And bright red as the full Moon
(S- 4; L-1and2);**

in *Mälkə'a Gäbrämänfäsqədus* the face is described as:

ሰላም ለገጽክ ዘያበርህ ምስብዒተ
እምብርሃነ ፀሐይ ዘይካንን ወዘይመስል መዓልተ
(መልክክ ገብረ መንፈስ ቅዱስ ቀዳሚ፤ አርኬ 5፣ ስንኝ 1እና2)

**Peace be to thy face shines seven times
More than the Sun that rules and looks like day
(S-5;L-2)**

Therefore, some of the images in the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* specifically the biblical ones appeared recurrently. Now let us jump to the second category in the imagery of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*.

3.3.2 Non-biblical images

There are images which are not taken from the Holy Bible. These images are taken from the environment by the creativity of the poets' imagination.

The image of flower is one of the non-biblical images used in the *Mälkə'a Mälkə'*. The following example from *Mälkə'a Iyäsus* can illustrate the point.

አስተጋብእ ውስተ ልብዩ አቅማሃተ ከሉ ጥበብ
ከመጽጌያተ ዘገዳም ያስተጋብእ ንሕብ
(መልክክ ኢየሱስ፤ አርኬ 5፣ ስንኝ 4 እና 5)

**Attract the fruits of all wisdom in my heart
Like flowers of the forest attract bees.
(S-5; L- 4 and)**

The simile is used to explain the supplication to have all the fruits of wisdom attracted and collected in his heart which is like the potential of the flowers of the mountain to collect bees. Here the descriptor is not the flower, it is rather the potential of the flowers to attract bees.

One can get many images of flower in the *Mälikd'a Mälikd'*. Some of them are:

ሰላም ለከናፍሪክ ሙሐዛተ ከርቤ ሐዋዝ
 እምጽጌ ገዳማት ከሎን ዘጼናሆን ምዑዝ
 (መልክአ ኢየሱስ፤ አርኬ 10፣ ስንኝ 1 እና 2)

Peace to Thy lips that drop myrrh
 sweeter than the good smell of the flowers of the mountains
 (*Mälikd'a Iyäsus*, S-10; L-1and 2)

ማርያም ምዕዝት እምነጽጌያት (መልክአ ፍልሰታ ለማርያም፤ አርኬ 8፣ ስንኝ 3) (Mary) has the best smell of all flowers (*Mälikd'a Fölsäta*, S-8; L-3), ማርያም ጽጌ ዘዘመንኪ መጸው (መልክአ ኪዳነ ምሕረት፤ አርኬ 25፣ ስንኝ 3) Mary(thou), flower in the season of autumn (*Mälikd'a Kidanämöhrät*, S-25; L-3), ማርያም ድንግል ምዕዝት ዘእምጽጌረዳ (መልክአ ማርያም፤ አርኬ 58፣ ስንኝ 3) Mary (thou) smell more than the rose flower (*Mälikd'a Maryam*, S-58;L-3), and ወለመላትሕኪ ልሑያት አምሳለተ ጽጌ ዘበድው (መልክአ ገብርኤል፤ አርኬ 7፣ ስንኝ 2) [peace be to...] and to thy temple, fairer than the flower of the desert (*Mälikd'a Gäbrä'el*, S-7;L-2).

The other more frequently used non-biblical images are the images of *door* and *window*. Parts of the body described by these images are nostrils, ears and lips. The nostrils are described by both *windows* and *doors* in *Mälikd'a Iyäsus* (S-9;L-1) as follows: "Peace be to Thy nostrils, Windows and doors of smell", again it is described only by *windows* in *Mälikd'a Kidanämöhrät* (S-10), in *Mälikd'a Maryam* (S-9) and *Mälikd'a Yohannös Föqurä*

ጌጊዮ (S-9). For example, in *Mätkð'a Yohannðs Fðqurä ጌጊዮ* the first two lines of stanza nine reads as follows:

ሰላም ለአእናፍኪ ለሥጋክ መሳክዋ
እጣነ አርዖም ምዑዝ እለ አዪነዋ

**Peace be to thy nostrils, windows for thy flesh
For the one who smelt the breath that emits has pleasant
fragrance of incense of heaven**

They are also described only by doors in *Mätkð'a Gäbrð'el* (S-8) and *Mätkð'a Fanu'el* (S-7). The latter *Mätkð'* described it:

ወለአእናፊክ ሰላም አናቅጸ ስኒን ወከርቤ
(ስገኝ 2)

**And peace be to thy nostrils, doors of incense and myrrh.
(L-2)**

The ears are described by doors in *Mätkð'a Amanu'el* (S-14) and *Mätkð'a Sillassie* (S-8). In the former *Mätkð'* the description is as follows:

ለአእዛኒክ ሰላም አናቅጸ ከሉ ጸሎት
(ስገኝ 2)

**Peace be to Thy ears, doors of all prayers
(L-2)**

The lips are described by doors in *Mätkð'a ጌጊ'abher Abb* (S-9).

ሰላም ለአዕናፊክ መሣክወ ጼና ርኅው
ወለከናፍሪክ ዓዲ አናቅጸ ንባብ ፍትው
(ስገኝ 1 እና 2)

**Peace be to Thy nostrils, open windows of smell
Again to Thy lips, the beautiful doors of speech
(L-1 and 2)**

These are a few examples; there may be many more in the unpublished *Mätkð'a mätkð'*.

The other image that needs to be discussed is the image of pearl (*ḍnqu*). Pearl describe the teeth of the subjects of the *Mälikḍ'a mälikḍ'*. For example, in *Mälikḍ'a Iyäsus* (S-12), in *Mälikḍ'a Qusqu'am* (S-4) and *Mälikḍ'a Gäbrḍ'el* (S-9) pearl describes the teeth of the subjects of these *Mälikḍ'a mälikḍ'*: Jesus, the Virgin Mary and Saint Gabriel respectively. The following is an example:

ወለ አስናኒክ አዕናቁ ንዋያተ ሐሣቲ ወአንፈርዕዖ
(መልክአ ገብርኤል፤ አርኬ 9፣ ስንኻ 2)

[Peace be to] thy teeth, pearl that are objects of joy and
excitement
(*Mälikḍ'a Gäbrḍ'el*, S-9; L-2)

There are also images of sea, celestial bodies and other miscellaneous images used in the *Mälikḍ'a mälikḍ'*. Regarding celestial bodies : the Stars, the Moon and the Sun used as metaphors to describe the eyes of the subjects of some *Mälikḍ'a mälikḍ'*. *Mälikḍ'a Gäbrḍ'el* (S-6), *Mälikḍ'a Täklä haymanot* (S-7), *Mälikḍ'a Gäbrä Kḍrḍstos* (S-2), *Mälikḍ'a Arägawi* (S-5) and *Mälikḍ'a Maryam* (S-6) are some examples that used the star as descriptor for the eyes, except *Mälikḍ'a Arägawi* which used the Sun and the Moon. Let me cite an example from *Mälikḍ'a Maryam* (S-6;L-1).

ሰላም ለአዕይንትኪ ዘተመሰላ አብያዘ
(አርኬ 1)

Peace be to thy eyes, that are like stars

3.3.3 Functions of the Imagery

The main functions of the imagery in the *Mälikḍ'a mälikḍ'* are two: conveying religious truth and ornaments for the subjects. The function of the imagery is the conveyance of

religious truths, not to the heart or imagination but to the intellect as commonly seen. They are not designed to touch the emotion of the suppliants. The most appropriate examples are the images taken from the actions, personages and events of the Old and the New Testaments. These images are mostly typological. In *Mälkə'a maryam*, the Virgin Mary is described as follows:

ማርያም ድንግል ዘ ገዳመ ሲና ጳጦስ
(መልክክ ማርያም፣ ኦርኬ 37፣ ስንኻ 3)

**The Virgin Mary, (thou) the bush of the Sinai
desert.
(S-37, L-3)**

"The bush of Sinai" (Ex.1:1-4) is taken as the symbol of the Virgin Mary and her conception of the Son of God by the exegetes of the EOC (Wəddase Maryam and Qəddase Maryam: Nəbabunna Tərdəguamew, 1983 E.C.:51). The *bush* represents the Virgin Mary and the *fire* represents the Divine nature of Jesus Christ. The bush is not consumed by the fire as the Virgin Mary gave birth to the Son of God (Jesus Christ) with out any problem. It also symbolizes the unity (*Təwəhədo*) of Divinity and Humanity which is the mystery of incarnation. The image and the subject are logically interrelated.

In the second function the image is used as an ornament for the tenor and has little to do with the religious content. It is mostly the function of the non- biblical images. It describes the subject and its attributes. Exemplifying it may perhaps help to illustrate the point:

ትበክየክሙ እስከ ይእዜ ቤተክርስቲያን ደብተራ
ከመ ብእሲት ኅዝንት ዘቀበረት በከራ
(መልክክ ጴጥሮስ ወ ጳውሎስ፣ ኦርኬ 3፣ ስንኻ 3 እና 4)

**Until now the tent Church cry for you
Like a mourning woman who buried her first born.
(*Mälkə'a petros wä pawlos*, S-3; L-3&4)**

Here the mourning woman who buried her first born is used to describe the mourning of the Church when the subjects were martyred. Its function thus is to ornament the expression, to make it good by associating them together.

Generally, the imagery is traditional (taken from biblical interpretation and common images) and its functions are didactic and ornamenting the subject or the described idea. The biblical images have obviously been used for their logical appropriateness, while the non-biblical images are invented for their imaginative appropriateness. The biblical allusions are predominantly taken from the Old Testament. Both types of images (biblical and non-biblical) poetically and deliberately suggest physical as well as spiritual beauty.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ORIGIN OF THE *Mälkə'*

The question of origin is one of the most difficult questions in many fields of study. It is also difficult in the field of literary genres without written tradition. As a student of literature, I will try to tackle this question through textual analysis of the literature and comparing the texts with other related writings. The goal of this chapter is to explore the possible origin or source of the *Mälkə'* through deciphering its relation with the Holy Bible in general and the *Song of songs* in particular that, I think, has essential similarity.

As a preliminary study of the *Mälkə'*, it is helpful to compare it with the *Song of songs* of Solomon. There are sufficient and basic similarities between the two to make this comparison relevant and fruitful, at least initially fruitful.

In this chapter, I try to argue that the holy Bible is the source of the *Mälkə'*. The organization, the phrasing, the images, in short, the rhetorical fabric of the *Mälkə'* seems to have been developed from the Holy Bible, but particularly from the *Song of songs*. It may be enlightening to consider and show how this may be the case by looking at each one separately.

4.1 The *Mälkə'* and the Holy Bible

The Holy Bible is a compilation of the Holy books of the Christian religion consisting of the New and the Old Testaments. While most of the Churches accepted 66 canonized books as the words of God, the EOC canonized 81 sacred books.

The Holy Bible was translated into Gə'əz in the 4th and 5th Centuries, making it one of the oldest versions of the Holy Bible besides Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Syriac, Aramaic and Coptic (Yä Maṣṣhaf Qəḏdus Mäzɡäbä Qalat, 1992 E.C: 82-84).

As going to be discussed in the last section of this chapter, the *Mälkə'* is *Awaləḏ* (sacred books other than the Holy Bible) which developed from the Holy Bible. Some of the subjects are biblical personages. Some of the biblical personages that have *Mälkə'a mälkə'* in honor of them are Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Elijah, John the Apostle, Mark, etc. The lives of these subjects are taken from the Holy Bible. This is one of the ways in which the *Mälkə'* is related to the Holy Bible.

The other relation of the *Mälkə'* with the Holy Bible is that most of the images are taken from it too. These images are in the form of enumerating the Old and the New Testaments figures which foreshadow the subjects. For example, the Virgin Mary is foreshadowed by the bush seen by Moses taken from the book of *Exodus* (*Mälkə'a Maryam*, S-37:L-3), The ladder of Luz taken from the book of *Genesis* (*Mälkə'a Maryam*, S-9:L-3), dew of fleece taken from the book of *Judges* (*Mälkə'a Maryam*, S-35:L-3), etc. which are typologies that foreshadow the subject. In *Mälkə'a Täklähaymanot* 28 typologies are used, where 14 are from the Old Testament and the other 14 from the New Testament.

There are also other *Mälkə'a mälkə'* that used biblical personages as allusions to describe the subjects, though no frequent use is observed. Let me mention some of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* that exhibit such method of using allusion. In *Mälkə'a Maryam* and in *Mälkə'a Iyäsus* there are nine in each, in *Mälkə'a Mika'el* one, in *Mälkə'a Qirqos* two, in *Mälkə'a Fəlstä lä Maryam* one, in *Mälkə'a Kidanäməhrät* two and in *Mälkə'a Edom* two explicit allusions that enumerated the name of the biblical personages used to describe the subjects. Let me give an example:

ተክለሃይማኖት ዳዊት ለእግዚአብሔር ዘትባርኮ
(መልክእ ተክለሃይማኖት፣ ኦርኬ 32፣ ስንኝ 3)

Täklähaymanot, (thou) David who blessed God.
(*Mälkə'a Täklähymanot, S-32;L-3*)

This line alludes to the story that tells us about King David who blessed God by bringing the ark of God to Jerusalem and put it in a tent (II Sam.6; I Chr.15: 16). This person is used as a typology for Saint *Täklähymanot* in his quality of blessing God.

The second type is implicit allusion. Such allusions are implicit in that they simply mention the event and the setting of the story. They are implicit because they only use the biblical word, phrase or clause without any direct reference given, such as name of the biblical personages, name of biblical places where the citation: the word, phrase or clause is taken, etc.

Let me discuss an example from *Mälkə'a Maryam* to illustrate the point.

ማርያም ድንግል ጥላተ ጽባሕ
(መልክእ ማርያም፣ ኦርኬ 10፣ ስንኝ 3)

The Virgin Mary, (thou) gate of the east.
(5-10; L-3)

This line metaphorically describes the subject of the *Mälkə'*. The description is the phrase "gate of the east" which is taken from the Bible. In the Old Testament, the main Gate of the temple is the eastern gate (Num.3: 38) and in EOC the main gate of a church used by the priests and deacons is the eastern gate (The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Faith , order of worship and Ecumenical Relations, 1996: 64). In addition to this, the main reference of the allusion is the revelation of God to Ezekiel in vision in the gate of the east of the Lord's house (Ezek.10: 19;11:1) and in the east side of the city (Ezek.11: 2) This gate is a gate through which no one can enter.

Then said the Lord unto me: this gate Shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore, it shall be shut.

(Ezek.44:2)

By referring to this verse the exegetes of the EOC, interpret this gate of the east typologically as the Virginité of Mary. They interpreted the house as a metaphor for the Virgin Mary, the Lock is a metaphor for her virginité and the Prince is for Jesus Christ. Therefore, the poet alludes to the *gate* to describe Mary's virginité (and her being chosen by God) (*Wuddase Maryam dnna Qddase maryam*, 1983: 106).

In *Mätkð'a Mätli* (Maryam) there are references to the 12 apostles to describe her and her attributes. *Mätkð'a Täklähaymanot* also used 23 biblical personages and three later day Church personages as a metaphor to describe Saint *Täklähaymanot*. Most of the biblical references of the *Mätkð'a mätkð'* are used to describe the subject or its deeds. It used metaphorically or in the form of simile.

Let me discuss only two examples to see the method of description:

ማርያም ድንግል ለሕይወትዮ ምርጉዛ
ሰዋሰው ዘምድረ ሰዓዛ እንተ ርእየከ ወራዛ
(መልክክ ማርያም፣ ኦርኬ 9፣ ስንኝ 3 እና 4)

The Virgin Mary, (thou) crutch of my life (3)

The ladder of Luz seen by Young man (4)

(*Mätkð'a Maryam*, S-9:L-3and 4)

The fourth line alludes to the Bible, particularly to the first book of Moses called Genesis. It is an episode about Jacob's dream in his journey to find him a spouse from Haran as ordered by his father. Through his journey he slept in a place called Luz at night and then he dreamed.

His dream is the following:

And he [Jacob] dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it

(Gen. 28:12-13)

The poet took the *ladder* as a metaphor for Saint Mary, since it is believed that she is a mediator between earth and heaven and an intercessor of human beings to God. Saint Mary is symbolized by this *ladder* also in the *Wudase Maryam* and *Anaphora of Mary* (*Wudase Maryam 'anna Qōdase Maryam*, 1983 E.C.: 48-49 and 90-91).

The second example is from *Mälkə'a Fəlsäta Lä Maryam*.

ሐመረ ተርሴስ ዘ ሰሎሞን አንተ
አንተ አክተው ጠቢባን ወርቀ ያፌዝ ባተ
(መልክክ ፍልሰታ ለማርያም፣ አርኬ 1፣ ስንኝ 4 እና 5)

**Thou are ship of Thar'shish of Solomon
For the wisemen brought by her the precious gold.
(S-1: L-4 & 5).**

"Ship of Thar'shish" is an allusion. The allusion is the following. "For the king [Solomon] had at sea a navy of Thar'shish with the navy of Hiram; once in three years came the navy of Thar'shish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks"(I Kings 10:22). As the ships of Solomon brought these precious metals, the Virgin Mary also brought to the world - the Savior Jesus Christ. The metaphor used to describe the Virgin Mary. Such type of reference is used frequently in most of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*.

4.2 The *Mälkə'* and the *Song of songs*

The *Song of songs* (also known as the *Canticle of canticles*) is one of the poetic books of the Holy Bible. It is a collection of poems ascribed to Solomon and his beloved (the 'Shulamite') and their friends. The Gə'əz version of the *Song of songs* is textually different

from the Amharic and English versions. For example, in the second and fourth verses of chapter one, the word *love* is found in the Amharic and English versions of the *Song of songs*. In the Gǝʿǝz version it is *breasts* not *love*- አዳም አጥባትከ. እም ወይን (መጌ.1÷2) "Thy breasts are more attractive than wine" and ናፍቅር አጥባትከ. እም ወይን (መጌ.1÷4)"We love thy breast more than wine." Therefore, for the purpose of this study, I used the Gǝʿǝz version of the *Song of songs*.

The exegetes of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church protested strongly against literal interpretation of the *Song of songs*. These exegetes interpreted it as an allegory of God's dealing with the congregation of Israel (*Mäṣḥäftä Solomon Wä Sirak*, 1988: 197), Christ's relation with the Church or the individual soul (1988: 198), and sometimes it allegorically presents Christ's relation with the Virgin Mary (1988: 222). But modern western scholars, by reading it literally, considered it as erotic writing "The two lovers express their feelings for one another in extra ordinary vivid, erotic, and exotic imagery..." (Cross and Livingstone, 1997: 1519).

In *Mäṣḥäftä Solomon Wä Sirak - Nḍbabunna Tōrguamew* (The books of Solomon and Sirach: its reading and commentary) the exegetes of the Church advises the reader when they interpret the phrase the *Song of songs*: "It [the song of songs] could also be Holy of Holies; where no one but the high priests can enter into. Similarly the one who is unable to repress his lust must not recite this book." (1988:197).

As was mentioned above, the interpretation of the Church found in the *Song of songs* another level of meaning: the love between God and the people, that is the LORD and Israel, Christ and the Church or the individual Soul. In the book of interpretation of the EOC, individual details are interpreted in allegorical or symbolic way.

The poems of the *Song of songs* are presented in the form of conversation between two lovers. The poems are of several kinds: songs of yearnings, admiration, self-description, description of the beloved, etc.

There are similarities between the *Mälkô'* and the *Song of songs*. As it was discussed in the previous chapter, the *Mälkô'* mainly describes the parts of the body of the subject. Similarly the *Song of songs* describes the parts of the body too. To clarify it, let me enumerate the parts of the body commonly described in the *Mälkô'* and in the *Song of songs*.

Parts of the body commonly described in the *Mälkô'a mälkô'* *

name **		reins
locks	shoulders	heart
head	back	mind
countenance	chest	eyelashes
bosom	eyes	hands
navel	ears	arms
womb	temples	elbow
virginity	nostrils	forearm
loins	lips	palms
thighs	mouth	fingers
knees	teeth	fingernails
heels	tongue	breasts

* Besides the enumerated ones, there are others that are not parts of the body such as likeness, departure of soul, commemoration of name, dead body, shrouding of the body, etc. In this list there are organs that are used only for females such as breasts and womb.

** *Name* is not a part of the body, but both texts describe the name of the subject. It is listed here only to show the similarity between the two texts.

soles	voice	side
breath	toenails	throat
neck	stomach	stature etc.

Parts of the body described in the *Song of songs*

name	lips	hands
locks	teeth	thighs
head	tongue	navel
eyes	words	legs
nose	voice	feet
temple	neck	stature
mouth	throat	

The basic similarity between the two forms is the description of the parts of the body. The difference, on the other hand, is that the *Mälkd'* described more parts of the body of the subject than the *Song of songs*, probably because the only and apparent objective of the *Mälkd'* as the name itself denotes, is describing the parts of the body of the subject. The other is the fact that the *Mälkd'* describes many detailed parts of the body. For example, the *Song of songs* describes the *hand* in general while the *Mälkd'* goes into details and describes the fingernails, fingers, palms, elbow, hand, forearm and arms.

The second similarity is that both forms have petition after the description, the petition is to get something from the addressee. There could have been many examples; but an example is enough for elaboration.

አርእሱን ገጸክ
ወ አስመዓኒ ቃልክ
እስመ ቃልክ አዳም
ወገጸክ ላሕይ።
(መጋ. 2፥ 14)

**Show me thy face;
Speak thy word to me;
for thy word is sweet
and thy face is comely.
(2:14)**

The bride praised and requested the bridegroom to let her see his countenance and hear his voice. In the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*, as we have seen in the third chapter there is supplication.

The basic similarities are description of the different parts of the body, request addressing the subjects as second persons and praise of the subjects.

Both forms are poems: the *Mälkə'* is a poetry in its proper sense while the *song of songs* in Gə'əz is poetic prose. They have at least two persons in the poems; the praiser and the praised. In the *Song of songs*, the two lovers praise each other's beauty. In the *Mälkə'* the praiser is the one who prays at a moment and the praised is its subject. There is physical proximity of the persons in the *Songs of songs* and the spiritual proximity in the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*.

In both forms the praiser considers the praised as spotless (Song. 4:1) and absolutely pure (*Mälkə'a Maryam*, S-3; L-3) . The perfection of the praised in the *Song of songs* is in terms of physical beauty. But the perfection of the praised in the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* is spiritual. Regarding the petition, the addresser supplicates for earthly love in the *Song of songs* (only when I follow its literal interpretation) and for mercy and purity in the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*. In the *Song of songs*, the requested character responds immediately, while the response of the addressee in the case of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* is expected and received in faith.

The *Song of songs* describes the physical beauty of the addressee; but the *Mälkô'a mälkô'* describe the physical as well as the spiritual beauty. The *Song of songs* describe those parts of the body that have physical appeal, while the *Mälkô'* describes every detail of the parts of the body.

The *Song of songs* has the power to arouse our emotion. The *Song of songs* has two way communication like dialogue. The *Mälkô'*, even if it has one way communication, the response of the addressee (the subject of the *Mälkô'*) is believed to be received or heard by the saints in hope and faith. The addresser spiritually believes that the subject (addressee) is with him/her and ready to help him/her in time of prayer or otherwise.

In the above discussion we have seen the similarities between the *Mälkô'* and the *Song of songs*. The other question that needs to be answered is the question of influence. It is about how the latter influenced the former.

The *Song of songs*, an anthology of love poems, might have similarity to the literature of the middle east. It might have been influenced by or might have influenced that literature. Scholars tried to show the similarities. For example, the descriptions of the beloveds are similar to the Arabic love poem called a *wasf* (Achteimeir, 1989: 1051). This is an issue of study by itself. For this study, it is not important whether the *Song of songs* influenced the mentioned Arab literature or itself influenced, has no effect on the influence of the *Song of songs* on the *Mälkô'*.

According to the EOC, the pious books other than the Holy Bible are called *Awalôd*. Literally it means daughters. The form and/or content of the *Awalôd* are taken from the two Testaments. Their sources, in general terms, are the Holy Bible. Therefore, the first assumption is that the *Mälkô'* might have its source in the Holy Bible.

Even though the date of the beginning of the *Mälkə'* is not reliable, it is certain that it emerged after the introduction of Christianity and the emergence of indigenous literature in Ethiopia after the 5th century. The *Song of songs* was believed to be written by King Solomon who reigned in Israel from 971-931 BC. (*Yä Mäṣahaf Qəddus Mäzgäbä Qalat*, 1972: 103). Others disagree with this and suggest that it might date from as late as the 3rd century before the birth of Christ, though some of the individual poems may be earlier (Cross and Livingstone, 1997:1519).

Therefore, since the *Mälkə'* appeared hundreds of years after the *Song of songs* (see section 4.3 of this chapter), the similarity might be the result of the influence of the former over the latter. Thus, the poets of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* who were masters of the Holy Bible and Church literature were perhaps influenced by, and took the form of, the *Song of songs* to praise saints of the EOC and implore them what one needs in its religious life.

Apart from all the above, the *Mälkə'* text has a great deal of similarity to the *Song of songs* in terms of its composition. The imagery of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* which describe their subjects has different features when examined in relation to the Holy Bible. Most of the images used in the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* are taken from the Holy Bible in four ways: explicit reference to the *Song of songs*, the use of identical descriptors for identical parts of body with the *Song of songs*, the use of similar descriptors with the *Song of songs* and the use of allusions from the Old and the New Testaments.

4.2.1 Explicit and implicit references to the *Song of songs*

Mälkə'a Maryam implicitly mentions the *Song of songs* when describing a part of the body. This is only found in the *Mälkə'* dedicated to the Virgin Mary. There are only two references observed in this *Mälkə'*.

ሰላም ለስእርተ ርእስኪ ዘተንእደ ጸፍሮሁ
ለአቡኪ በከናፍሪሁ
(መልክእ ማርያም፣ አርኬ 2፣ ስንኻ 1 እና 2)

**Peace be to thy locks, their plaiting is admired
By the lips of thy father
(S-2; L-1 and 2)**

These two lines describe the locks of the Virgin Mary not by using any imagery, rather by alluding to another person. It simply says that the plaiting of her locks were celebrated by her father: King Solomon. The Virgin Mary is considered the daughter of king David. Similarly one can say that she was also considered as the daughter of Solomon. She was not directly begotten from David. She was the descendant of his descendants. One can also find the following verse in one of the books of Solomon, the *Song of songs*.

ሥዕርትኪ ከመ መርዔተ አጣሊ እለ ተከሥታ እም አድባረ ገለጻድ
(መኃ. 4፡1)

**Thy locks are as a flock of goats
That appeared from mount Gilead
(4:1)**

The *Mälikä'* used the description of the *Song of songs* and alludes to King Solomon by the phrase "thy father" and his words are certainly those found in the *Song of songs*, as though spoken about the locks of the Virgin Mary. The lips of Solomon (as the text itself asserted that the *Song of songs* is composed by King Solomon)-the bride- addressed and admired the plaiting of the locks of the bridegroom as "flock of goats" which appeared from mount Gilead.

The second explicit reference to the *Song of songs* is also found in *Mälikä'a Maryam*. It compliments the throat of the Virgin Mary as follows:

ሰላም ለጉርዒክ. ሠናይ እም ወይን
በከመ ይቤ ሰሎሞን
(መልክአ ማርያም፣ ኦርኬ 16፣ ስንኝ 1 እና 2)

**Peace be to thy throat sweeter than wine
As said by solomon;
(S-16; L-1 and 2)**

Unlike the second stanza, here the descriptor is explicitly mentioned. It directly mentions the source- the writer. In one of the writings of Solomon- the *Song of songs*- we find the following verse:

ወጉርዒክ.ኒ ከመ ወይን ሠናይ
(መጋ. 7:10)

**...thy throat is like the best wine.
(7:10)**

Here the *Song of songs* describe the throat as sweet as the best wine. Wine is probably the metaphor for the words of the poetic persona in the *Song of songs*.

The *Mätkä'* used the description from the *Song of songs* and acknowledged that it was said by Solomon. This certainly showed the interest of the poet of *Mätkä'a Maryam* towards the *Song of songs*.

The above two implicit and explicit references to the *Song of songs* are taken from *Mätkä'a Maryam*. The reason might be the tradition of the commentary that sometimes took the bride in the *Song of songs* as the Virgin Mary (1988: 222). As far as the *Mätkä'a mätkä'* I read are concerned, there is no *Mätkä'* that directly mention name *Song of songs*.

4.2.2 The use of identical descriptors for identical parts of the body

There are numerous stanzas of different *Mälkə'a mälkə'* that used identical descriptors for identical parts of the body. Some examples are sufficient to support my argument that the poets of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* have consciously taken from the *Song of songs* as the source of their imagery. The examples hereafter are taken from some of the published *Mälkə'a mälkə'*.

The eyes are described as doves' eyes by the side of river or lake, or simply as the eyes of doves in many *Mälkə'a mälkə'*. The following are the examples that describe the eyes by comparing them with the eyes of doves.

ወለቀራንብተክ ሰላም ወለ አዕይንተክ ዘርግብ
(መልክክ ቁስቋም፣ አርኬ 2፣ ስንኻ2)

Peace be to thy eyelashes and thy eyes of dove
(*Mälkə'a Qusquam*, S-2; L-2)

እሰግድ ለቀራንብተክ ወለአዕይንተክ ዘርግብ
(መልክክ ጳራቅሊጦስ፣ አርኬ 6፣ ስንኻ 1)

I bow to thy eyelashes and thy eyes of dove
(*Mälkə'a Päraqlitos*, S-6; L-1)

The following are also examples of descriptions of the eyes as a lake full of water.

ሰላም ለአዕይንተክ ከመ ምሉእ ምዕቃለ ማይ
(መልክክ ኢየሱስ፣ አርኬ 6፣ ስንኻ 1)

Peace be to thy eyes, like a lake full of water.
(*Mälkə'a Iyäsus*, S-6; L-1)

The descriptors of eyes in the *Song of songs* are dove's eyes and water.

አዕይንተክ ዘርግብ
(መጌ. 4:15)

Thy eyes are dove's eyes.
(1:15)

አዕይንትኪ ዘርግብ
(መኃ 4÷1)
Thy eyes are dove's eyes.
(4:1)

አዕይንትኪ ከመ ምሉእ ምዕቃለ ማያት
(መኃ. 7÷5)
Thy eyes are like a lake full of waters.
(7:5)

All the three descriptions in the above verses of the *Song of songs* are identical with *Mälkð'a Qusquam* and *Mälkð'a Päraqlitōs*. The third example from the *Song of songs* is also identical with the description of the eyes in the *Mälkð'a Iyäsus*. The other description of the eyes in the *Song of songs* is:

አዕይንቲሁ ከመ ርግብ ምሉዕ ውስተ ምዕቃለ ማያት
(መኃ 5÷12)

His eyes are like dove in a lake full of water.
(5:12)

This verse describes the eyes like dove's eyes which is in a lake full of water.

Lips are described as thread of scarlet in both forms: the *Mälkð'* and the *Song of songs*.

ሰላም ለከናፍርኪ ከመ ፍሕሶ ቀይሕ
(መልክክ ማርያም፣ አርኬ 10፣ ስንኝ 1)

Peace be to thy lips, red like thread of scarlet.
(*Mälkð'a Maryam*, S-10; L-1)

ሰላም ለአእናፊክ ወለከናፍሪክ ፍሕሶ
(መልክክ ፅንሱቱ ለጊዮርጊስ፣ አርኬ 4፣ ስንኝ 1)

Peace be to thy nostrils and scarlet lips.
(*Mälkð'a Şönsätu lä Giyorgis*, S-4; L-1)

In the *Song of songs* the descriptor used for lips is identical with the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*.

ከመፍሕሦ ቀይሕ ከናፍርኪ.
(መኃ 4:3)

Thy lips are like thread of scarlet.
(4:3)

ከመፍሕሦ ቀይሕ ከናፍርኪ.
(መኃ. 6:7)

Thy lips are like thread of scarlet.
(6:7)

In the *Gə'əz* versions, not only the descriptor, but also the words are identical in both texts (*Mälkə'a Maryam* and the *Songs of songs*) except the presence of the introductory phrase (the head word) in *Mälkə'a Maryam*.

Känaፊፕፕኪ Kämä ፊከፊሶሶ ባሳይሰከ.
(*Mälkə'a Maryam*)

Kämä ፊከፊሶሶ ባሳይሰከ Känaፊፕፕኪ.
(*The Song of songs*)

The order of words is also identical except the positions of the subject of the sentence - *Känaፊፕፕኪ* - at the beginning and at the end of the sentences.

The teeth are described by the flock shorn and coming up from washing..

ሰላም ለአስናንኪ. ሐሊቤ ዕጉልት ዘተዛወጋ
ወመራዕዩ ቅሩዓተ እለ እምሕዓብ ዐርጋ
(መልክአ ማርያም፣ አርኬ 12፣ ስንኝ 1 እና 2)

Peace be to thy teeth comparable with Milk of heifer
And also with Shorn flock come up from washing.
(*Mälkə'a Maryam*, S-12; L-1 and 2)

ሰላም ለአስናንኪ. ከመ መራዕይ እስተቀርፃ
 ወእለ ወፅኦ እምሕፃብ እንዘ ይትባዩጸ
 (መልክኦ ኪዳነምሕረት፣ ኦርኬ 13፣ ስንኻ 1 እና 2)

**Peace be to thy teeth like shorn flock
 That come up whitened from washing.
 (Mälkä'd'a Kidanämöhrät,S-13; L-1 and 2)**

As seen in the examples, both *Mälkä'd'a Mälkä'd'* used the "Shorn and washed flock" to describe the teeth of their subject. The teeth are described twice in the *Song of songs*.

ስነንኪ. ከመመራዕይ እስተቀርፃ ወእለወፅኦ እምሕፃብ
 (መኃ 4÷2)
**Thy teeth are like flock shorn and coming up from
 the washing.
 (4:2)**

ስነንኪ. ከመመራዕይ እለ ዓርጋ እምሕፃብ
 (መኃ 6÷6)
**Thy teeth are like flock coming up from the
 washing.
 (6:6)**

The only difference between these two verses of the *Songs of songs* is that the first descriptor has additional attribute. In the first verse the flock were shorn and washed while in the second it is only washed. In the first cited verse the flock "bears twins and bears seventy seven^{*} and none is barren among them". In the second verse the only quality described is whiteness.

Both texts used identical descriptors. Since the *Song of songs* is older than the *Mälkä'd'a mälkä'd'* in terms of its appearance, it is logical to include that the latter used the descriptor of the former.

The temples of the subjects of the *Mälkä'd'a mälkä'd'* are also described by the image of pomegranate.

ሰላም ለመላትሕኪ. ጽጌያተ ሮማን እለ ይመስላ

*This is not found in the Amharic and English versions of the *Song of songs*.

(መልክኦ ከዳነምሕረት፣ ኦርኬ 9፣ ስንኝ 1)

Peace be to thy temples which is like the flower of pomegranate.

(Mälkə'a Kidanämöhrät, S-9; L-1)

ወለመላትሒክሙ ቀይሓት እምሰባረ ሮማን ዘቁሓ
(መልክኦ ጴጥሮስ ወጳውሎስ፣ ኦርኬ 4፣ ስንኝ 1)

[Peace be to thy] temples red like a piece of ripe pomegranate

(Mälkə'a Petros Wä Pawlos, S-4; L-2)

ሰላም እብል ለመላትሕኪ ቀይሓት
እለ ይመስላ ሮማን
(መልክኦ ዑራኤል፣ ኦርኬ 8፣ ስንኝ 1 እና 2)

I will say peace to thy red temples
Which are like pomegranate

(Mälkə'a Ura'el, S-8; L-1 and 2)

ሰላም ለአዕዛኒክ ወለመላትሒክ ዘተዛውጋ
ፍሬያተ ሮማን አዕናፊ እንበለ ይኅድጋ
(መልክኦ ማርቆስ፣ ኦርኬ 7፣ ስንኝ 1 እና 2)

Peace be to thy ears and thy temples that are similar to the
Upper top fruits of pomegranate which are not left off.

(Mälkə'a Marqos, S-7; L-1 and 2)

ወለመላትሕኪ ቀይሃት ከመቅርፍተ ሮማን ዘኮና
(መልክኦ ኦርሴማ፣ ኦርኬ 5፣ ስንኝ 2)

[Peace be to thy] - red temples being like a piece of pomegranate.

(Mälkə'a Arsema, S-5; L-2)

In all the above *Mälkə'a mälkə'* the temples of the subject are described by pomegranate.

There is also identical descriptor used in the *Song of songs*.

ቅርፍተ ሮማን መላትሕኪ
(መኃ 4÷3)

Thy temples are a piece of pomegranate.
(4:3)

ከመ ቅርፍተ ሮማን መላትሕኪ
(መጋ 6÷7)

Thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate.
(6:7)

As was discussed in chapter three, section 3.3.1, the eyes are described by *stars* in some *Mälkə'a mälkə'*.

ወለአዕይንቲክ አብያዝ እለ ይሜግባ ዓለመ
(መልክአ ገብርኤል፤ አርኬ 6፣ ስንኝ 2)

[Peace be to thy]...eyes like stars that lit the world.
(*Mälkə'a Gäbr'el*, S-5; L-2)

ሰላም ለአዕይንቲክ ዘአርአያሆን ሐዋዝ
እለ ጽዱላት እማንቱ ከመሠርቀ ቤዝ
(መልክአ ተክለሃይማኖት፣ አርኬ 7፣ ስንኝ 1 እና2)

**Peace be to thy temples whose likeness is beautiful
Which are bright like the risen star.**
(*Mälkə'a Täklähaymanot*, S-7; L-1 and 2)

This descriptor of the eye is identical with the descriptor in the *Song of songs*.

አዕይንቲሁ ከመ ኮከበ ጽባሕ እለ ይጼድላ
(መጋ 5÷13)

His eyes lit like the morning star*
(5:13)

The locks are described for its blackness by the colour of raven.

ወለርእስኪ ጸሊም ከመኅብረ ቋዕ
(መልክአ ቁስቋም፤ አርኬ 1፣ ስንኝ2)

* This is not found in the Amharic and English versions of the *Song of songs*.

[Peace be to thy] Locks black as a complexion of raven.
(*Mälkə'a Qusquam*, S-1; L-2)

ድምድማሁ ድለል ወጸሊም ከመ ቋዕ
(መኃ 5:11)

**His locks are bushy, and black as a raven.
(5:11)**

The descriptors used by both texts are identical.

The neck of the subjects of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* are described by the tower of David.

Let us look at the description.

ወከመ ማኅፈደ ዳዊት ክሣድኪ እለተሐንጸ ዲበ ተልፍዮስ
ዐሠርቱ ምዕት ንዋየ ሐቅል ስቁል ውስቴቱ
ኅበ ኢይሬእዮ ሰብእ ወኢይበጽሐ ፀሐይ
ወከሉ መዋጽፍተ ቤቱ ኃያላን ወጽኑዓን እለ የዓቅብዎ ሠለስቱ
እደው
(መኃ 4:4)

**Thy neck is like the tower of David built for an armoury
where on there hang a thousand bucklers, in the place where
no one sees and the rays of the sun do not reach it, all shields of
mighty men of the house protected by three men * .
(4:4)**

The descriptor in *Mälkə'a Kidanämöhrät* is identical and taken verbatim from the *Song of songs* .

ሰላም ለክሣድኪ ዘማኅፈደ ዳዊት ተርእዮታ
ዲበተልፍዮስ ጠቢባን ዘእስተናደፉ መሠረታ
(መልአክ ኪዳነምሀረት፣ አርኬ 18፣ ስንኻ 1 እና 2)

**Peace be to thy neck, its appearance is like the tower of David
Built for armour and founded by wise men.
(*Mälkə'a Kidanämöhrät*, S-18; L-1 and 2)**

* Some of the phrases and clauses in this verse such as "three men" and "in the place where no one sees" are not found in the Amharic and English versions of the *Song of songs*.

The navel of the subjects of some of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* and the bride in the *Song of songs* described by the plane goblet that does not fail short of its liquor.

ሰላም ለጎንብርትኪ ከመ ማዕከክ ርእዮቱ
ዘ ኢየሐርቅ እምቱስሕቱ
(መልክእ ማርያም፣ አርኬ 38፣ ስንኝ 1 እና 2)

Peace be to thy navel which is like goblet;
That does not fall short of its liquor.
(*Mälkə'a Maryam*, S-38; L-1 and 2)

ሰላም እብል ለሕንብርተ ዚአከ ዝከ
ዘግብረ ቱስሕቱ ፍሑቅ ለሰሎሞን ከመ ማዕከክ
(መልክእ እስጢፋኖስ፣ አርኬ 37፣ ስንኝ 1 እና 2)

I said peace to thy navel
Which is plane like the goblet of Solomon.
(*Mälkə'a zstifanos*, S-37; L-1 and 2)

ሰላም ለጎንብርትኪ ምሳሌ ፍሑቅ ማእከክ
(መልክእ ኪዳነምሕረት፣ አርኬ 29፣ ስንኝ 1)

Peace be to thy navel which is an example of plane
goblet
(*Mälkə'a Kidanämōhrät*, S-29; L-1)

ሰላም ለጎንብርትኪ ማዕከለ ጠባይዕ ዘተመልከከ
በኩሉ ቱስሕቱ እንዘ ይትሜስል ማእከክ
(መልክእ ኢየሱስ፣ አርኬ 33፣ ስንኝ 1 እና 2)

Peace be to Thy navel which govern at the Center of
essence
With all its combinations, it is like goblet.
(*Mälkə'a Iyäsus*, S-33; L-1 and 2)

In the above four citations, the navel is described by goblet full of liquor. This descriptor is identical with that of the descriptor of the *Song of songs*.

ሕንብርትኪ ከመ ማዕከክ ፍሑቅ ዘኢየዓርቅ እምቱስሕቱ
(መኃ 7፣ 3)

**Thy navel is like plane goblet which will not fall
short of its liquor.**

(7:3)

All the above descriptors and others unmentioned ones are identical. The identity of descriptors suggests that the poets of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* are attracted by the *Song of songs* and deliberately used the descriptors of the *Song of songs*. This shows that the *Mälkə'* as a genre is influenced by or even founded on the *Song of songs*.

4.2.3 The use of similar descriptors with the *Song of Songs*

Unlike the identical descriptors we have discussed in the previous section, here the descriptors are not identical; there are some attributes that discriminate descriptors from the other descriptors. Hereafter, I will try to give some examples from the *Song of songs* and the different *Mälkə'a mälkə'*.

The image of smell is used in both forms to describe the smell emitted from the nostrils. The smell is of different things such as perfume and stick of incense.

ሰላም ለእስተንፋስክ ዘመግዛሁ አስጸዳጦ
ከመቅብዓ ዕፍረት ቅድው እግዚእነ እንተ አጸከጦ
(መልክአ እስጢፋኖስ፣ ኦርኬ 16፣ ስንኝ 1 እና 2)

**Peace be to thy breath, its smell is that of the stick of incense
Like ointment with pleasant odour spiced by our Lord,
(*Mälkə'a zstifanos*, S-16; L-1 and 2)**

ሰላም ለአእናፍኪ መሳክወ ሠናይ መግዛ
ይኔይስ ፈድፋድ እምጼና ስኒን ዘጠረጴዛ
(መልክአ ማርያም፣ ኦርኬ 9፣ ስንኝ 1 እና 2)

**Peace be to thy nostrils which are windows of pleasant odour
Better than the good smell of incense of table.**

(Mälkə'a Maryam, S-9; L-1 and 2)

ሰላም ለአእናሬክ መዓዛ አርያም እለ ተመልሰ
(መልክአ ሚካኤል፣ አርኬ 9፣ ስንኝ 1)

Peace be to thy nostrils filled by the odour of heaven.

(Mälkə'a Mika'el, S-9; L-1)

ሰላም ለአእናፍኪ መዓዛ መዓዛ ሠናይ
(መልክአ አርሴማ፣ አርኬ 6፣ ስንኝ 1)

Peace be to thy nostrils, box of pleasant odour.

(Mälkə'a Arsema, S-6; L-1)

In the *Song of songs* the smell emitted through the nostrils is described by the smell of apples. The attribute of the descriptor is pleasant odour. Similarly the four *Mälkə'a mälkə'* cited above have not used apples as descriptor; but other descriptors like stick of incense (*Aspädato*) and oil of pleasant perfume.

ወዴና አንፍኪ ከመ ኮል
(መኃ. 7፡9)

The smell emitted through thy nostrils is like apples.

(7:9)

The image of tree is used for describing the stature of the subject in many *Mälkə'a mälkə'*.

ሰላም ለቆምከ ከመ ዘግባ ዘሊባኖስ
ዘአከመልመለ ወልከቀ ንብ ማየ ኅድፀት ወመርስ
(መልክአ እስጢፋኖስ፣ አርኬ 46፣ ስንኝ 1 እና 2)

Peace be to thy stature which is like the cedar of Lebanon
That become green and grows from the water of calm and quiet
port.

(*Mäilkə'a zstifanos*, S-46; L-1 and 2)

ሰላም ለቆምከ ከመስርዘ ፈለግ ዘኮነ
ጸላሎትከነ ከነነ

(መልክአ ዮሐንስ ፍቁረ እግዚእ፤ አርኬ 45፣ ስንኝ 1 እና 2)

Peace be to thy stature which is like the tree of river
Be our Shadow.

(*Mäilkə'a Yohannəs Fəገurä zgzī'ə*, S-45; L-1 and 2)

ሰላም ለቆምከ አምሳለ በቀልት ሥና

(መልክአ ፅንሰቱ ለጊዮርጊስ፤ አርኬ 13፣ ስንኝ 1)

Peace be to thy stature like beautiful tree.

(*Mäilkə'a Şənsätu lä Giyorgis*, S-13; L-1)

ሰላም ለቆምከ ዘመሰልዎ በአርዝ

(መልክአ ዜና ማርቆስ፤ አርኬ 42፣ ስንኝ 1)

Peace be to thy stature that is compared with tree.

(*Mäilkə'a Zena Marqos*, S-42; L-1)

ሰላም ለቆምከ. ለአርዘ ሊባኖስ አምሳለ ቆማ

(መልክአ አርሴማ፤ አርኬ 25፣ ስንኝ 1)

Peace be to thy stature which is like the stature of
the Cedar of Lebanon.

(*Mäilkə'a Arsema*, S-25; L-1)

አርዘ ሊባኖስ ይመስል መልክዐ ገፁ ወፍጽሙ

(መልክአ ማርቆስ፤ አርኬ 2፣ ስንኝ 2)

The likeness of his face and brow is like the tree of
Lebanon.

(*Mäilkə'a Marqos*, S-2; L-2)

In the *Song of songs* the tree of Lebanon and the Cedar (Cedar of Lebanon) tree are used as descriptors of the bride as an entity.

ኅሩይ ከመ ቁድሮስ
(መኃ. 5÷15)

And [He is] chosen as cedar*
(5:15)

ዘቆምኪ ይመስል በቀልተ
(መኃ. 7÷8)

Thy stature is like a palm tree
(7:8)

Tongues and throats of the subjects of the *Mälkə'a Maryam* and *Mälkə'a Yohannōs Fəḍqurä əgzi'ə* are described by honey, sugar and milk.

ሰላም ለጉርዳክ ለነቅዕ ትንቢት አሥራቡ
እመዓር ወሃከር እንተ ይጥዕም ንባቡ
(መልክአ ዮሐንስ ፍቁረ እግዚእ፤ አርኬ 16፣ ስንኝ 1 እና 2)

Peace be to thy throat, it is spring of the falls of prophesy
Its speech is sweeter than honey and sugar.
(*Mälkə'a Yohannōs Fəḍqurä əgzi'ə*, S-16; L-1 and2)

ሰላም ለልሳንኪ መሐዘ ሐሊብ ወመዓር
(መልክአ ማርያም፤ አርኬ 13፣ ስንኝ1)

Peace be to thy tongue, sweet as milk and honey.
(*Mälkə'a Maryam*, S-13; L-1)

A similar descriptor is used in the *Song of songs*. It describes the tongue as the spring of honey and milk.

ሐሊብ ወመዓር እምታሕተ ልሳንኪ
(መኃ. 4÷11)

* In the Amharic and English versions of the *Song of songs* there is tree of *Labanon* in addition to *Cedar* (though Cedar is a tree found in Labanon) to describe the countenance of the bride.

Honey and milk are under thy tongue.
(4:11)

ከናፍረሁ ጽጌ እለ ያውገዛ ከርቤ ፍፁመ
(መኃ. 5:13)

His lips are like lilies, dropping myrrh.*
(5:13)

4.3 The Mälkə' and Awaləḍ

There are 81 books that are canonized and included in the Holy Bible. These books of the Old and the New Testaments are roots for other apocryphal books that are born out of the Holy Bible. The Gə'əz term for these books is *Awaləḍ*. *Awaləḍ* literally means *daughters*. They are named so because they are considered as religious writings based on the teachings of the Old and the New Testaments. According to Kidanewold Kifle, *Awaləḍ* are: "Books of the fathers, homilies, reproofs, . . . whose readings and signification are developed from the Old and the New Testaments as branches" (1948: 391).

Similarly Ayalew Tamiru (1992) defined it by using metaphor.

The root books, which are the Old and the New Testaments are like the constitution of a country and the other books are like individual laws and regulations born out of the constitution. Similarly in the Church, there are books written based on the stories and teachings of the Old and the New Testaments: such as *Gädl*, *Tä'aməḥr*, *Dərsan*, *Mälkə'*, etc.

The metaphor of *constitution* and *root* explain the origin of the *Awaləḍ* books. the definition also mentioned *Mälkə'* as *Awaləḍ* explicitly.

*There are adjectives for the noun *Mirrəh* in the Amharic and English versions of the *Song of songs*. These adjectives are *sweet* and *smelling*.

The *Mälkə'a mälkə'* are prayers written in verse and they are *Awaləd*. Since *Awaləd* are pious writings developed from the Holy Bible, the *Mälkə'* therefore might have been developed from the Holy Bible. Bearing this hypothesis in mind, my search for the source indicates that, in terms of form, the source of the *Mälkə'* is the *Song of songs*. In terms of contents all the books of the Holy Bible and other non-biblical religious books, which are *Awaləd*, are its sources.

Generally, from the arguments of this chapter, my conclusion is that the *Song of songs* is the possible source of the *Mälkə'*. I have not yet come across any study that associates the *Mälkə'* with the *Song of songs*.

As seen in the earlier section of this chapter, the *Song of songs* describes by complimenting different parts of the bodies of the bride and bridegroom like the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*. It has also a form of request to get something from one another. Besides this basic similarity, there is another similarity observed in the use of imagery. The *Mälkə'a mälkə'* used imagery by directly addressing the *Song of songs*, by using identical descriptors for identical parts of the body and similar descriptors for different parts of the body with the *Song of songs*. This clearly indicates that the poets of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* are consciously aware of the imagery of the *Song of songs*.

The other attachment the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* created with the *Song of songs* is using tremendous amount of biblical allusions. The allusions are in the form of using the biblical personages, events, stories and other things as metaphors and similes to describe the subjects and their attributes of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*.

CONCLUSION

This research has analyzed about 59 *Mälkə'a mälkə'* to describe their essentials and origin. The results of this descriptive study indicate that the genre has its own distinctive features of authorship, prosody and imagery. The result of the analysis indicates that the possible origin could be the Holy Bible, particularly the *Song of songs*.

There are very few studies which commented on the *Mälkə'* only in passing. Even these studies have different shortcomings which could create misunderstanding about the genre. The first major research on *Mälkə'* is Pedersen's (1989) study which attempted to explore the source of the *Mälkə'*. According to her, its origin is the Latin prayer of St. Birgitta. As reviewed in chapter two, however she does not present sound arguments that support the claim that the origin of the *Mälkə'* is Latin. The other research works have their own subject-matter and the *Mälkə'* is touched upon only tangentially. An attempt has been made to correct some of the oversights in these studies.

The *Mälkə'* is a complimentary Gə'əz descriptive poem with distinct subjects. The time of beginning and cessation of composing this genre has been difficult to establish. It is assumed that it might have started during the reign of Zar'a Yaqob because of the prevalence of religious dispute on iconoclasm. Its flourishing time is, according to some researches, the 17th century. There are *Mälkə'a mälkə'* composed in the early and mid-20th century for Emperor Haileselassie and Empress Menen.

Almost all the authors of the *Mälkə'a mälkə'* are anonymous. One tradition of the literature of the EOC is anonymity. Writers are humble (or through time it became a tradition) that they efface their names from their works. Since the tradition of the genre does not allow idiosyncratic style. Anonymity does not create any problem in understanding the *Mälkə'a mälkə'*. The earlier willingness of self-effacement might be the result of their humility. This

humility could have been developed from the principles of Christianity. The other reason for the anonymity probably be the proudness or the poets' confidence in being able to produce even more elevated poems. The saying "Yä Qðne quanta Yäläwðm" (Today's poem has nothing to do with tomorrow) shows that the poets were unimaginably prolific. The objective of the poet is to transmit the tradition composing *Mälkð'a mälkð'* properly to his/her successors as he/she received it from his/her predecessors. The theology of the Church provided the poet with a new poetic form and theme.

The subjects of the *Mälkð'a mälkð'* are many. They can be categorized as: (i) Divine, (ii) Angelic, (iii) Animate, (iv) Inanimate, and (v) Abstract concepts. The Divine subjects are the three persons of Trinity. Angels are subjects venerated by the EOC. Animate subjects are saints, martyrs and righteous figures who are venerated again by the EOC. The inanimate subjects are, on the other hand, like ecclesiastic materials, holidays, etc. The last category of subjects are abstract concepts such as love and character. There are also *Mälkð'a mälkð'* that describe the exploits of the subjects.

The *Mälkð'* has five-line stanzas with perfect end-rhyme. Each stanza has five lines that rhyme with the last syllable of each line. This can not be overruled in the tradition of the *Mälkð'*. Sometimes the rhyming scheme is carefully observed from failing to rhyme by poetic license. The rhythm of the *Mälkð'* is non-uniform. It has no regular rhythmic pattern.

The *Mälkð'* stanza structure is divided into three: description, call and supplication. The description part describes a part/parts of the body or the exploits of the subject of the *Mälkð'*. The second part, call, addresses the subject directly by calling its name to praise. In the third part, that is, the suppliant implores the subject for some heavenly favor.

The Stanzas have their own head words. The most frequent head word is "Sälam" (peace). There are others such as *Tämahôşänku* and *şägôd* which appeared only in one or two *Mälkô'a mälkô'*.

The *Mälkô'* is distinguished by its use of elaborate imagery. It has two major parts: biblical and non-biblical. The biblical imagery uses personages, events, stories, etc. from the Holy Bible to describe what is intended to be described. The most dominant form of biblical imagery is the metaphorical use of biblical personages to describe the subjects of the *Mälkô'a mälkô'*. The second type is non-biblical imagery. The *Mälkô'a mälkô'* use different images from the natural surrounding to describe the subject. The functions of the *Mälkô'a mälkô'* are didactic in the sense that they use biblical images to moralize the laity and also to ornament the description.

The origin of the *Mälkô'a mälkô'* has been difficult to establish like the time of its appearance and cessation. Using comparative textual study between the *Mälkô'a mälkô'*, the *Song of songs* and the Holy Bible in general, claim is made that the above mentioned book of the Holy Bible is its possible textual origin. They are similar in their basic form, that is, in describing the different parts of the body, praising and supplication. The organization, phrasing and imagery of the *Mälkô'a mälkô'* is similar with that of the *Song of songs*. The use of: explicit- implicit references, identical descriptors for identical parts of the body, similar descriptors, and allusions from the Old and the New Testaments indicate that the possible origin may have been the Holy Bible, particularly the *Song of songs*.

The other argument for suggesting the possible origin of the *Mälkô'* is the concept of *Awalôd*. The EOC has two major types of pious books. These are the main (root) book- the Holy Bible and the other numerous pious books- *Awalôd*. *Awalôd* are books developed from the Holy Bible in terms of theme and form. The *Mälkô'a mälkô'*, as one category of books of

Awalôd, are developed from the Holy Bible. This premise also leads to the conclusion that the origin of the *Mälkô'* is the Holy Bible, particularly the *Song of songs* as observed from the comparative analysis of the *Mälkô'* texts.

The study of different genres of Gêz literature might exhibit various literary devices employed in the texts that help for their understanding and looking further to see the influence of this literature over the Amharic one. There are many indigenous and non-indigenous genres of Gêz literature such as *Dôggua*, *Qône*, different hymn, commentary (*'andômta*), books of Christian teachings translated in to Gêz earlier in the history of the EOC, the Gêz versions of the Holy Bible, etc. that need detailed studies in their own right. This area of study is almost untouched and therefore waiting for interested and knowledgeable researchers about Gêz language and literature.

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** DFLL stands for the Departement of Foreign Languages and Literature.

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Society.

APPENDIX

MÄLKÐ'A MÄLKÐ'

PUBLISHED

1. Ṭäbibä Ṭäbiban
2. Mälkð'a ʒgzi'abher Abb
3. Mälkð'a Päraqliṭos
4. Mälkð'a Sillassie
5. Mälkð'a Amanu'el
6. Mälkð'a Mädhane Aläm
7. Mälkð'a Mädhane Alem ʒsägðd
8. Mälkð'a Qurban
9. Lðssanä Säbð'
10. Mälkð'a Mika'el
11. Mälkð'a Gäbrð'el
12. Mälkð'a Rufa'el
13. Mälkð'a Ura'el
14. Mälkð'a Ragu'el
15. Mälkð'a Fanu'el
16. Mälkð'a Yohannðs Mätmqð
17. Mälkð'a Peṭros Wä Päwlos
18. Mälkð'a Yohannðs Fðqurä ʒgzi'ð
19. Mälkð'a Marqos

20. Mätkð'a 3stifanos
21. Mätkð'a Giyorgis Zäsaleda Mogesu
22. Mätkð'a řðnsätu lä Giyorgis
23. Mätkð'a Sðqayu lä Giyorgis
24. Mätkð'a Gäbrämänfäsquðdus
25. Mätkð'a Gäbrämänfäsquðdus Kalð'
26. Mätkð'a Täklähaymanot
27. Mätkð'a Gäbräkðrðstos
28. Mätkð'a Arägawi
29. Mätkð'a Zena Marqos
30. Mätkð'a Sänbät
31. Mätkð'a Lalibäla wä yðmrðhanä Kðrðstos wä Nä'akuto Lä'ab
32. Mätkð'a Edom
33. Mätkð'a Hanna
34. Mätkð'a Fðlsäta lä Maryam
35. Mätkð'a Qusqu'am
36. Mätkð'a Kidanämðhrät
37. Mätkð'a Wuddase zä säbatu ð'lätat
38. Mätkð'a Maryam
39. Mätkð'a Iyäsus
40. Mätkð'a Arba'ðtu ðnsðsa
41. Mätkð'a Qirqos
42. Mätkð'a Iyaqem wä Hanna
43. Mätkð'a Märqorewos

44. Mälkə'a Sə'əl
45. Mälkə'a Mälə'akä Uqabe
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48. Mälkə'a Arsema
49. Mälkə'a Lə'däta lä Maryam
50. Mälkə'a Mahə'yawi

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The Mälkə'a mälkə' without manuscript numbers are in the manuscript found in Debre Zemedä monastry, the others are found in the library of Institute of Ethiopian Studies.

49. Mälkə'a Qənnəwat
50. Mälkə'a Fasilädäs
51. Mälkə'a Hawaryat
52. Mälkə'a Ewošätewos
53. Mälkə'a Libanos
54. Mälkə'a Mika'el Kalə'
55. Mälkə'a Mätləlī (Maryam)
56. Mälkə'a šə'həma
57. Mälkə'a Məddəhaninä əgzi'ə
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59. Mälkə'a Gärīma
60. Mälkə'a Sälama

61. Mätkð'a Liqanos
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65. Mätkð'a Diyosqoros
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68. Mätkð'a Täklähaymanot Kalð'
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72. Mätkð'a Mäla'ðkt
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139. Mätkð'a Dðngðl zä wäldä Mäläkot-MS 2381
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142. Mätkð'a Lalibäla, wä Yðmrðhanä Kðrstos wä Nä'akuto Lä'ab Kalð'-MS 1016
143. Mätkð'a Täklähaymanot Salðs-MS 2261
144. Mätkð'a Sänbät Kalð'-MS 394

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work, has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been dully acknowledged.

Name Gezahegn Getachew

Signature 

Place Addis Ababa

Date of Submission June 20, 2000