

**Addis Ababa University College of Language Studies, Humanities,
Journalism and Communication
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature**

**1Enoch Among the Ethiopians: A Search for the Book's Influence in the Light
of selected Geez Texts**

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**1Enoch Among the Ethiopians: A Search for the Book's Influence in the Light
of selected Geez Texts**

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Yewubdar Demissie, entitled: *IEnoch Among the Ethiopians: A Search for the Book's Influence in the Light of Selected Geez Texts* and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English Literature complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by Examining Committee:

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Abstract

This thesis explores the influence of IEnoch among the Ethiopians in the light of three selected Geez texts and in terms of Archetypal literary theory, particularly as discussed by N. Frye. The main objectives of the study are investigating the influence of Enochic myths in shaping the thought pattern of Ethiopian writers and to explain the role of these myths in the selected texts.

In order to accomplish the aforementioned objectives the writer of this study tries to review relevant literature in relation to IEnoch, its history in Ethiopia and previous studies undertaken in the area. Moreover, archetypal literary theory, focusing on the insights of Frye, who argues that myths/archetypes are the underling narrative structures of literary works, is discussed. Then an attempt is made to go through the selected Geez texts in accordance with the reviewed literature and theoretical framework by focusing on the thematic aspects of the texts and their narrative structure in relation to the mythical narrative patterns of IEnoch.

In the analysis it is pointed out that the mythical narrative patterns of Enochic myths are the underling narrative structures of the three selected Geez texts. The writers' special affinity towards these myths was mainly due to their convenience to structure the narratives of the subject texts, which are primarily concerned with praising prominent figures of Ethiopia and the country itself. On the other hand, the subject texts have a common agenda of creating an exalted identity for the Ethiopian nation, thus this issue has become the main point the writers of the three texts tried to promote.

From the analysis of the three Geez texts it is concluded that IEnoch with its central figure Enoch and his extraordinary wisdom, achievements and greatness has become a catch to the Ethiopian writers. In addition to this, the writers of the subject texts have struggled, in their works, to make the Ethiopian people the greatest of all nations of the world.

CHAPTER ONE: - INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

On May 27, 2011 Addis Ababa University had the honor of hosting a workshop on the Ethiopic Book of Enoch. I had the opportunity to participate in this seminar, where many fruitful papers concerned with this book were presented both by local and foreign scholars. My reason for writing this paper can be best explained in relation to one of these papers, “The Book of Enoch and the Ethiopian Manuscript Tradition: New Data”¹ by L.T. Stuckenbruck. This paper puts its major focus on identifying the number of the Geez copies of this manuscript and its spatial position among other Ethiopian sacred Scriptures. As an Ethiopian and also a student of literature I was most interested in the remark that the writer made at the end of his paper. “Despite over one and a half centuries of critical studies of *I Enoch* in Geez, research on this book’s text and status within the Ethiopian tradition remains in its infancy.”²

The Ethiopians preserved a book that had been lost from the eyes of the entire world for over a thousand years and yet, little or no effort has been made to find out what position this book possesses among them. So I asked myself, “What does this book mean to the society that preserved it and how does it influence them?” I was particularly intrigued by the ancient mythical narrations contained in this book. Moreover, the fact that I have always been astonished by the mysteries of ancient Ethiopian manuscripts intensified my interest of exploring this subject. Therefore, I went through a few Geez texts to collect some basic information, and I became fascinated by the similarities I perceived among some indigenous Geez writings in their dependence on Enochic myths to deal with issues that mattered to them most. Consequently, I began to wonder if this book could have any deeper influence on the Ethiopians. Eventually, I decided to conduct a research on the influence of the Book of Enoch among the Ethiopians using some selected Geez texts as a subject for analysis.

Ethiopian literature in Geez can be broadly divided into indigenous (original) and translated works. Though there are few people, mostly Ethiopians, who argue that it was originally written

¹ It is a paper distributed to the participants of the workshop.

² L.T. Stuckenbruck, “The Book of Enoch and the Ethiopian Manuscript Tradition: New Data”, 2011, p, 8 (Paper presented at a workshop on Ethiopic Book of Enoch, held on 27 May 2011 at Addis Ababa University).

in Geez, hence, is an original work of Ethiopian writers,³ critical studies, especially in relation to the Dead Sea Scrolls⁴, indicate that the *Ethiopic Book of Enoch* or, *Metsihafe Henok* as it is known in the country, can be categorized among the translated works of the country's literature.⁵ In addition to this, the oldest available copy of the book in Geez was copied not earlier than the 15th century, while fragments of the book from the Dead Sea Scrolls are said to date between the 2nd century B.C. and 1st century A.D. Accordingly, in this thesis, it is generally assumed that the book is a translation and not an original work of Ethiopian writers.⁶

The *Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, since its first translation into Ethiopic (Geez) with the other sacred scriptures, which is believed to be during the early ages of Christianity in the country, has been accepted equally with or even better than the other biblical books. Through the many centuries it has survived in the country, the book has been copied and revised several times.⁷ Even when the whole world was in darkness about the existence of the book for about a millennium, it not only was safely preserved, but also continued to be read, interpreted and its content exploited by Ethiopian writers. Since its discovery in the monasteries of Ethiopia in the second half of the 18th century by the Scottish traveler James Bruce, who took three copies of the book to Europe, and consequently its first translation into English in the 1800s by Richard Lawrence, the book has made quite an entrance into the academic circles.

More than two centuries after Bruce's adventurous travel, fragments of this particular book and even other traditions developed around the seventh antediluvian patriarch, Enoch, were discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran in the first half of the 20th century. In order to avoid the confusion that can arise from mixing up the different books found at Qumran ascribed to Enoch, the one that is preserved in Geez and other scriptures that bear similar content to this one (e.g. the Aramaic and Greek fragments) are identified as *1Enoch* or *The Ethiopic Book of*

³ Wossene Yifru, for instance, argues that it is impossible to decide that Geez is not the original language of this book unless a full text compatible with the Geez version of the book is found. (Wossene Yifru, ed. "An Inquiry into the Ethiopic Book of Enoch" *Henok: Journal of Historical and Philosophical Thought*, Vol.1, 1990, pp, 57-72).

⁴ These are ancient writings, which were discovered in the caves near the ruins known as Khirbet Qumran.

⁵ See, for example, M.A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: - A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments*, Vol. 2, 1978.

⁶ See section 2.1 for further information on this point.

⁷ See, M.A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: - A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments*, Vol. 2, 1978.

Enoch.⁸ This book is also the oldest of all Enochic traditions found at Qumran. Portions of *1 Enoch* were also reported to be found in their Greek and Latin translations. According to Knibb, “there are numerous cases where minor differences exist between the Aramaic, the Greek, and the Ethiopic, but for the most part these are not substantial, and it would appear that the Greek and Ethiopic texts provide a not too unreliable guide to the Book of Enoch as it was known at Qumran.”⁹

1 Enoch is regarded as a product of multiple authorship consequently, the book is a composite of various writings that can be distinctly identified. Among these parts the one known as *Similitudes*, or *The Book of Parables*, which is mainly concerned with the figure “Son of man”, is nowhere to be found except in the Ethiopic Versions of the book. Therefore, renowned scholars in the area like M.A. Knibb have temporarily concluded that based on the current available information the entire content of *1 Enoch* has survived only in its Geez version.

Some today claim that most major themes of the New Testament like the final judgment, the resurrection and the coming of a Messiah, were in fact borrowed from *1 Enoch*. Supporting this idea translator R.H. Charles states that “the influence of *1 Enoch* on the New Testament has been greater than all of the other apocryphal and pseudepigraphical books put together.”¹⁰ Even in comparison with the canonical Old Testament books, *1 Enoch* seems to have greater influence on the New Testament. For instance, the uses of the phrase “Son of man” in the Old Testament, with an exception of Daniel’s heavenly visions, in which the phrase is used once to refer to divinity,¹¹ it refers almost always to ordinary men. In contrast to this, *1 Enoch* records several revelations using the title “Son of man” unceasingly referring to a divine figure.¹²

The *Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, because of its distinct features that makes it identifiable with the group of literature recognized as apocalypses, is generally regarded to be apocalyptic.¹³ And as many other apocalyptic writings this book also never made it to the biblical canon of the Christian as well as Jewish religions. In fact, the only apocalyptic writings that get the chance to

⁸ These two names will be used interchangeably here after in this study.

⁹ M.A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: - A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments*, Vol. 2, 1978, pp, 12-13.

¹⁰ Quoted by Oesterley in his introduction to Charles’ translation of *1 Enoch*. (R.H. Charles (trans.), *The Book of Enoch*, ed. By W.Oesterley, 1917).

¹¹ Dan 7:13.

¹² *1 Enoch* Chapters 37-71.

¹³ See section 2.2. for further information on this point.

be recognized as canonical are the *Book of Daniel* in the Old and *Revelation* in the New Testament.

1 Enoch, though it came to be regarded as unreliable source by some influential theologians, there was a time that it was accepted as an inspired scripture, especially by early church fathers. Accordingly,

*Many Church Fathers, including Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen, and Clement of Alexandria, either knew 1 Enoch or were inspired by it. Among those who were familiar with 1 Enoch, Tertullian had an exceptionally high regard for it. But, beginning in the fourth century, the book came to be regarded with disfavor and received negative reviews from Augustine, Hilary, and Jerome. Thereafter, with the exception of a few extracts made by Georgius Syncellus, a learned monk of the eighth century, and the Greek fragments found in a Christian grave in Egypt (c. A.D.800), 1 Enoch ceased to be appreciated except in Ethiopia.*¹⁴

Several varying texts from the contents of canonical books contained in it, particularly the ones that are related to the deeds of the fallen angels, and uncertain authorship are among the main reasons cited for *1 Enoch*, not being included in the canon. Consequently, books that show close similarity to this book like *Revelation* or even the ones that used it as a source were seen suspiciously. For instance, the canonical book *Epistle of Jude* (14-15) directly quotes from *1 Enoch* (1:9), and according to Prophet “when Enoch’s book was later questioned, Jude himself also became suspect, his letter barely remaining among the canonical books of the bible.”¹⁵

Despite its rejection by the entire Christian world, the *Ethiopic Book of Enoch* remains to be an inspired scripture, hence, canonical to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Moreover, many indigenous writers have extensively adopted the religious and occult¹⁶ characteristics of this book in their works.¹⁷ Therefore, it is possible to find direct quotations, paraphrases and allusions of this book in many parts of these writings.

It is, therefore, with this background that the influence of *1 Enoch* among the Ethiopians is explored in order to fill the gap that exists in this particular area, or at least contribute to the subject and initiate others for more extended and elaborated research. But most of all this

¹⁴ J.Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature & Testaments*, vol.1, 1983, 8.

¹⁵ E.C. Prophet, *Fallen Angels and the Origin of Evil: Why Church Fathers Suppress the Book of Enoch*. 2000, p,36.

¹⁶ The term occult is used here to refer to both the secretness and extraordinary contents of *1 Enoch*.

¹⁷ *Awda Nagast, Kibre Nagast and Mistire Semay Wemidir* can be mentioned as examples.

research is conducted to explore the Ethiopian nation that has preserved, honored and exploited this intriguing mythical tradition for such a long time, while it was totally abandoned and forgotten by the rest of the world.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Starting from the beginning of human history, belief, be it in myth, religion, legend or other forms of it, has been one major component of human life. Whether we consciously recognize or subconsciously internalize it to indirectly affect our conscious activities, it is there with in us, guiding and influencing each and every move we make. In the case of Ethiopia, monotheism or the belief in one omniscient God, who created all the visible and invisible, material and spiritual world and has absolute power over everything that was, is and will be, has been the dominant feature of belief for the past, at least, two thousand years. This belief existed in the form of Judeo-Christianity,¹⁸ which was the state's religion till recent times, hence the people's religion too, whether it was forced up on them or they accepted it willingly. Consequently, the myths, symbols, morality, commitments and perceptions carried in this mixed tradition have played an important role in shaping the theology, philosophy and general thought pattern of the society.

The Ethiopic Book of Enoch, is one of the ancient books, and may be the most significant one, that preserved Jewish apocalyptic myths. During the extended period it has survived among the Ethiopians, at least a millennium and half, its content has influenced the religious perspectives and general world outlook of the society that preserved and cherished it. Concerning this fact, and of course after a general look at the religious practices, magical traditions and literary expressions of the Ethiopians, scholars have accepted that the book has profoundly influenced the thought pattern of the society among whom it has circulated. For instance, Cush thinks “it is hardly possible to understand any aspect of the religious tradition and thought of Ethiopia, the country in which it survived, without an understanding of it”¹⁹ while, Wossene asserts that the

¹⁸ Ethiopia is believed to have welcomed Judaism before Christianity, which explains the many Judaic traditions found in the country's Orthodox Christian Church.

¹⁹ I.K.. Cush, *Enoch the Ethiopian: The Lost Prophet of the Bible Greater than Abrham Holier than Moses*, 2000, p, 151.

book is the fundamental base for the Ethiopians “eschatological thought and mystical tradition”.²⁰

However, there hasn’t been much research done to explain this phenomenon with objective evidences drawn from the society’s literature, which is the major area where the influence is said to manifest. Therefore, this research, in general, is intended to make an opening, yet grounding, effort of revealing the influence of the mythical narration of *IEnoch* among the Ethiopians, in the light of selected Geez texts. It should be emphasized, however, that the primary concern of the study is not to scrutinize the book itself or its mythical contents; rather the focus of the investigation is on some cautiously selected indigenous writings that implicitly or explicitly reflect its influence on the society’s thought pattern. So the larger intention of the research rests on understanding the Enochic myths influence via prominent works of Ethiopian writers.

I do not intend to argue that the book’s influence on Ethiopian people can be fully understood by analyzing few texts from the general corpus literature of Ethiopia. Nonetheless, I believe that some of the indigenous texts of Ethiopia have been more influential than others; hence, are capable of revealing the thought pattern of the society among whom they circulated and can provide significant information that could lead to generalizations. For instance, Ethiopians had, and still have to some extent, high regard for the famous 13th century composition *Fikare Eyesus*, which, among other things, prophesizes the fate of Ethiopia. Accordingly, the Ethiopians have in their history a celebrated king by the name Tewodros, who claimed to be the coming prosperous king of Ethiopia by this name, mentioned in this book and actually gain the support of the people, who also were acquainted with this knowledge.²¹ The ideas reflected by the subject texts of this study are also popular and have acceptance of the people on the one hand, and depend on Enochic myths from *IEnoch* for the development and manner of presentation of these ideas on the other, which makes them best representatives. Moreover, the fact that they are religious writings of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which had been the dominant as well as state’s religion until recently, hence the issues presented in them can easily be propagated and immersed in to the majority of the population. Based on this the study is determined to answer the following research questions.

²⁰ Wossene Yifru, ed. “An Inquiry in to the Ethiopic Book of Enoch”, *Henok: Journal of Historical and Philosophical Thought*, Vol.1, 1990, p, 65.

²¹ Tekiletsadik Mekuria, *yeithiopia tarik: keatse Libinedingil eske Atse Tewodros*, 1951E.C.

1. What is the reason behind the particular affinity of Ethiopian writers towards Enochic myths?
2. How did the indigenous writers manipulate the Enochic myths so as to make them expedient for their own agenda?
3. What purpose do the Enochic myths serve with regard to explaining various Ethiopic phenomena?
4. What is the cumulative effect of the Enochic myths towards the general meaning of the subject texts of this study?

Generally, this thesis, through answering these questions, will reveal the book's importance and influence among Ethiopian people.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The Ethiopic Book of Enoch continues to fascinate scholars of apocalyptic literature and the general reader alike. Despite the entire Christian world's negligence towards this book, *1Enoch* never ceased from being copied and used among the people of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. But, what value does the book have to them so they can make all these efforts to preserve it and reproduce its mythical narrations in their literature, when it is abandoned and rejected by the rest of the Christian world? This question brings us to the following two general objectives of the study.

1. To investigate the influence of Enochic myths in shaping the thought pattern of Ethiopian writers in the light of selected Geez texts, which will be analyzed from the perspectives of Frye's archetypal literary theory.
2. To explain the role of Enochic myths in the selected texts towards creating a righteous, God chosen and exalted Ethiopia; an issue that has always been an obsession of the Ethiopians.

The above general objectives in turn lead to the subsequent three specific objectives. The first one is basically concerned with examining the major displacements that the original myths have undergone in the selected texts so they can meet the purpose they are intended to serve. The second one is primarily analytic and is set to discuss the various ideas that are communicated through the selected texts, which are presented in the narrative framework of Enochic myths. The

last one, which follows on from the first two, is to show the general effect of the Enochic myths in creating a special image of Ethiopia in the eyes of the indigenous as well as the outside world.

1.4. Significance of the study

Over the past two millennia or more Ethiopia has been under the influence of Jewish and Christian traditions and the country's literature, mostly the Geez one, has appropriately recorded this phenomenon. However, not much research has been undertaken to understand how much these writings or the general world outlook of the society that produced them were influenced by the mentioned religious traditions. Hence, such an investigation as the current one is indispensable.

The present research offers a preliminary investigation on the influence of one of the books that have played a great role in shaping the religious and secular perspectives of the Ethiopians, i.e. the *Ethiopic Book of Enoch*. Accordingly, the study may have the following main significances. First, it can provide a basic understanding regarding the status that the *Ethiopic Book of Enoch* had and continues to have among the Ethiopians and its undeniable influence on their thought pattern. Secondly, it offers a new approach of investigating and understanding Ethiopian Geez literature with recourse to myths from *IEnoch* hence; draws researchers' attention to this mysterious book. Thirdly, the researcher has found out that there is no study that directly puts its primary focus on the inquiry of *IEnoch* in relation to its influence on the literary production and, by implication, thought pattern of Ethiopian people. Thus, the study can fill this gap and also serve as a ground to further carry out investigations in this particular area. Finally, in relation to the current movement of Ethiopian Renaissance that the country is promoting, this study can serve as one way of looking back at as well as bringing forward the great mind of ancient Ethiopia that keeps entralling the native as well as foreign people alike.

1.5. Scope of the Study

The area that this research is trying to explore is almost untouched or only a few related studies have been undertaken. Though various issues can be investigated around this specific subject matter, the research is bound to the following three areas. First, none of the texts taken as a subject for the analysis date any earlier from the 14th century, which is the period that the oldest

book available to this study and contains traces of *IEnoch*, was produced. And on the other end, though it is possible to find many related texts in the period from the 14th century to the present, for the sake of giving the study a manageable stature the production date of any of the selected texts does not exceed the 16th century. Thus, the focus texts are all from the period between the 14th-16th centuries A.D. and yet, the ideas carried in them transcend the time of their production and flow both to the past and future of this specific period.

Second, in dealing with the inquiry of *IEnoch*'s influence among Ethiopian people, not every feature of the selected texts that can possibly point to the issue are discussed, rather the study will only focus on two intentionally chosen aspects of these texts, which can shade more light on the subject under investigation and also meet the theory that the study heavily relied on. Accordingly, the underlying narrative structure of the subject texts and their thematic aspect are the focal points of the analysis.²²

Third, the influence of *IEnoch* among the Ethiopians can be explained in many respects and from different angles. However, to attempt an exhaustive study of every aspect of the book's influence would be both impractical and beyond the intended purpose of this endeavor. In view of that, the study will investigate the influence of the book with respect to its mythic contents. Even then, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch* accommodates many wide ranging ideas. The history of the world from creation to its eschatological conclusion, the substances of the universe from a simple tree to the highly complex celestial bodies, the governing intelligences of the cosmos from ordinary human to supernatural beings and the divine itself, are some of the issues that the book deals with. Thus, instead of trying to go through all these ideas, which is impossible in this limited research, I found considering the mythical narrations of the book, in which almost its entire content is constituted, to be all encompassing and manageable.

Accordingly, it is possible to say that the entire content of *IEnoch* is constituted in two major myths, which I have identified as "the fallen angels myth", a narrative about the deeds of the fallen angels and the consequent destruction of life on earth, and "the journey myth" in which the story of the heavenly journeys of the seventh antediluvian patriarch, Enoch through which he received knowledge regarding the mysteries of heaven and earth is narrated. These two major

²² For further discussion on this point see section 3.3.

myths are the focuses of the study and they are chosen due to the distinctiveness of their detailed narrations to *IEnoch* when seen against the background of other apocalyptic as well as prophetic books known to the country, which reduces the risk of confusing possible influences from other traditions with this one.

1.6. Methodology of the Study

The methods that are adopted in this study are the ones that are found to be most appropriate to the task at hand, i.e. investigating the influence of Enochic myths among the Ethiopians. The book's influence is examined with respect to three selected texts, which are the primary data of the study and date as far back as the 14th and 15th centuries, namely *Kibre Negest* (Glory of Kings), *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir* (The Book of the Mystery of Heaven and Earth) and *Gedle Lalibela* (Hagiography of Lalibela). In dealing with the inquiry of *IEnoch*'s influence among the Ethiopians, there is an enormous corpus literature that could be used as possible guide and source of information. However, as it is impossible, both spatially and temporally, to take in to account all available sources, the study will only use the above few purposely selected texts, which are strongly related to the questions that the research tries to address, while the probability of using other materials as supportive data sources is very extreme.

These texts are chosen using purposeful sampling, mostly for the reason that they exhibit evidences that patently designate and sometimes allude to *IEnoch*'s influence. In addition to this, as has been already said, Christianity has been the dominant feature of faith in the country and it was also the state's religion until the end of imperial Ethiopia, which resulted in making the state and religion really hard to be seen separately in this period.²³ From this it can easily be deduced that whatever ideas comes from this joint power, a ruling party and most celebrated religion, can easily be accepted and spread throughout the country. Moreover, as can be discerned from textual evidences, the selected texts were written under the authority of the state as well as the clergy of Ethiopia, which makes them the most relevant subjects for such an analysis as the one carried out by this study.²⁴

²³ See Tadesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia (1270-1527)*, 1972.

²⁴ In all the cases of the three texts the writers are clergymen. Moreover, the writer of *Kibre Nagest* had additional authority, Nibure id of Axum, and he claims that he wrote the book under the patronage of the Duke of Axum. (See the prefaces of *Kibre Negest*)

In order to analyze the selected texts the study heavily relies on the insights of Frye's theory of archetypes. He is an influential critic, who regards texts as complex narrative structures that are capable of being reduced to their fundamental mythic form.²⁵ Accordingly, the selected indigenous texts are treated in the study as discourses, influenced by and can be reduced to the narrative structures of Enochic myths from *IEnoch*.

Frye's theory is chosen as a framework for the analysis due to the fact that while his theory is text oriented, it also gives room for the accommodation of ideas from history and philosophy in the process of unraveling the complexities of texts. The current study can greatly benefit from this, since its major focus is investigating *IEnoch*'s influence in the light of the selected indigenous writings, which demands consideration of some historical facts related to the matter and their critical analysis from different angles. Apart from this, Frye's theory applies, not only to fictional texts but also to non fictional or "thematic" texts like the religious writings that this study is dealing with. In fact, most of his conceptions of myths and archetypes are highly related to ancient Christian and Jewish traditions. Moreover, Frye is remarkable for the consistency of his ideas in his Article "The Archetypes of Literature" (1951) and *Anatomy of Criticism*, which was published several years later in 1973.²⁶ As a result there are no radical changes in his critical views, which is a fact that adheres to the method's reliability.

The study treats each selected Geez text separately. The analysis begins with a general description of the text in focus followed by its critical analysis, which is mainly devoted to finding out how the particular text's narrative structure is influenced by the myths from *IEnoch*. In the process of analyzing the texts all extracts taken from the subject texts are translated in to English from the source language Geez. Finally, an attempt is made to relate the overall thought pattern of the Ethiopian writers conceived in these texts and the role played by the Enochic myths in shaping them.

In general, the research applies the above methods to answer the research questions mentioned earlier. The fact that the greater corpus of Ethiopian literature, mostly prior to the second half of

²⁵ See section 3.2.2 for more elaborated discussion of Frye's archetypal theory.

²⁶ See N. Frye, "Archetypes of Literature." *Criticism: The Major Statements*, Charles Kaplan and William Anderson. (Eds.), 1991, and N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, 1990.

the 20th century, is highly influenced by narratives from religious texts,²⁷ which corresponds to Frye's archetypal theory, validates both the method used and the argument that *IEnoch* has influenced the ideas reflected in the selected texts.

²⁷ See Amsalu Aklilu, *achir yeithiopia sinetsihuf tarik*, 1976. (unpublished).

CHAPTER TWO: - REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. A Brief History of *IEnoch* in Ethiopia

The Ethiopic Book of Enoch or *Metsehafe Henock*, as the Ethiopians would call it, was first introduced to them at least one thousand five hundred years ago with the advent of Christianity and the consequent translation of the Holy Bible. Many believe that the book was translated in to Geez with the Old and New Testament scriptures. Conti Rossini argues that the translation never happened until a century after the introduction of Christianity in the 4th century as the new religion was not that much proliferated to assure the translation of the Bible in to Geez, “by the middle of the 5th century, however, Ethiopia had become a decidedly Christian state.”²⁸ Similarly, Guidi marked the date of translation of the Bible in the 5th century with the arrival of the Syrian Monophysite monks at Ethiopia.²⁹ Charles R.H. also assigns the date for the Ethiopic Bible translation between the 4th and 6th century.³⁰ All the above scholars converge on the date 4th-6th century for the translation of the Bible into Geez. Therefore, with the absence of any other evidence to provide new alternatives, the date of translation for *IEnoch* cannot precede the implied period.

After the first translation, the Geez Bible was subjected to revisions on various occasions, especially, in the 14th century by the Ethiopian monk Abba Selama. Hence, it is possible that the Geez copies of *IEnoch*, currently available, were made from this recension as none of them date any earlier than the 15th century.³¹ This in turn shows at least a thousand years separation between the presumed period of translation and the oldest copy available now. After the 15th century, copies of the Geez version and even a slightly altered Amharic translation, which represents the current canonized book of *IEnoch* in Ethiopia, were made.

By the time *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch* was translated into Geez, it was already falling in to disfavor in the eyes of some influential church fathers and regarded as heretic.³² Despite this fact, the Ethiopians accepted the book as a sacred scripture and continued to do so till the

²⁸ E. Ullendroff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 1988, p, 41.

²⁹ Ibid, p, 40.

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ M.A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: - A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments*, Vol. 2, 1978, p. 27.

³² J.Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature & Testaments*, vol.1, 1983, 8.

present. In the 15th century, however, Ethiopians were introduced to a canonical law, which stands against the inclusion of *IEnoch* among the Biblical books. This canonical law came through the book of *Fitiha Negest*, a thirteenth-century work of the Coptic church in Egypt, and according to Ullendroff was “translated in to Ethiopic, probably two centuries later”,³³ i.e., in the 15th century. This book clearly forbids the inclusion of *IEnoch*, since the book is missing from the group of canonical scriptures listed in its 2nd article. Dibekulu Zewde, a noted Ethiopian scholar in the field, after his rigorous study of the canonization traditions of Ethiopian Orthodox church, such as *Fitiha Negest* and the Sinodoses, has expressed his astonishment towards the inclusion of *IEnoch* in the Ethiopian Biblical tradition for he could not find this book being implied as an inspired one in any of the canons he studied.³⁴ However, unlike its preceding also succeeding editions, the *Fitiha Negest* from 1958 presents a shrewdly designed explanation for the exclusion of *IEnoch* from the canon, but, paradoxically, seems to suggest its inclusion. There is no question that this additional passage is a later time insertion as it is not to be found in any of the preceding editions.³⁵

According to this edition, had the apostles included *IEnoch* in the canon, the contemporary philosophers were likely to claim that the Christians are not against their philosophies because Enoch’s cosmological visions are recorded in the book, for this reason they exclude it.³⁶ But this argument does not seem to hold water. If the philosophers were, ever, to have such a conception, the Christians would rather be happy about it, because this would prove that the philosophers, if not relying on him, are not bringing anything new to them other than what their holy sage, Enoch, who lived thousands of years before, had not already brought. On the other hand, *Fitiha Negest* is not also of a view to reject the book as it rejected the philosophers teachings since it emphasizes that *IEnoch* is a favorable book, because it is quoted by Jude.³⁷ Here also there are counter arguments, directed towards critical reading of Jude and affirm that Jude never said

³³ E. Ullendroff, *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 1988, p, 80.

³⁴ Dibekulu Zewde, *The 81 Holy Bibles and the Sources-Canons in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*, 1995, p, 244.

³⁵ See *Fitha Negest* 1888 and 1828 editions.

³⁶ *Fitha Negest*, 1958, p, 43.

³⁷ *Ibid*

“Enoch wrote”, rather he said “Enoch prophesized”; therefore, this part of the Bible cannot be quoted to attest that *IEnoch* is an inspired writing.³⁸

If the arguments against the claims of *Fitiha Negest* regarding *IEnoch* are put aside for a moment, the astute implication of its statement becomes vivid. First, *IEnoch* never made it to the canon for the sole reason that it echoes the philosophers; it should be noted that this reason has nothing to do with the criteria demanded from a scripture to be canonical.³⁹ Second, *Fitiha Negest* implicitly affirms that *IEnoch* fulfills one of the major criteria for a scripture to be regarded as inspired, i.e. it is quoted by one of the New Testament writers.⁴⁰ Therefore, there is not much reason left for not including it in the canon and this seems why the Ethiopians have found it appropriate to continue keeping *IEnoch* in its pedestal of being canonical.

After *Fitiha Negest*, though, there seems to be a time that the canonicity of *IEnoch* was compromised. One of the writings of the 15th century Ethiopian King, Zer’a Ya’qob, who is also noted for his deep wisdom in Christian teachings, provides the best clue for this. This King firmly argues against the canonical laws of *Fitiha Negest* regarding *IEnoch*. In his famous work *Metsihafe Birhan* (the Book of Light),⁴¹ King Zer’a Ya’qob strongly emphasizes that if there is anyone, who says the *Book of Enoch* cannot be counted among the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, he should look at Jude 14 and Matthew 19 and understand that it is an inspired scripture.⁴² The King’s statement indicates that the idea of *IEnoch* being an inspired book was questioned by some members of the church and probably for the very reason that it is not found among the canonical scriptures listed in *Fitiha Negest*, a book descended from the authoritative Coptic church and most probably translated in to Geez in this period. But the King seems to be more influential than the Copts because the book continued to be canonical to the Ethiopians and appears in their manuscripts right beside the Old and New Testament books including the current Bible published by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. This is evident in many manuscripts that constitute *IEnoch* together with other Biblical writings, Tana 9 (15th c.), Abb 55

³⁸ Zemenfeskidus Abrha, *Hateta Menafist: Philosophia Wetewologia Amete Alem Webahire Hasab Fikare Kewakibit We’awide Nagast*, 1947E.C., pp, 66-67.

³⁹ See Dibekulu Zewde, *The 81 Holy Bibles and the Sources-Canons in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*, 1995.

⁴⁰ See Collin Mansel, *timihirte egziabher*, 1995, p, 105.

⁴¹ It should be noted that this is a microfilm of a manuscript identified with call number 7322 and a different book from Conti Rossini’s critical edition of similar book by this name.

⁴² See *Metsihafe Birhan* (a microfilm with a call number 7322).

(16th c.), Paris 114 (17th c.), Bodl 5 (18th c.) and Abb 197 (19th c.),⁴³ where in most of them *1Enoch* comes at the beginning.⁴⁴

All Geez copies of *1Enoch*, including the most recent ones, basically present similar narratives, except some minor grammatical changes due to several revisions. However, this consistency fades away when it comes to the Amharic translation of the book. Especially the first two books, *The Book of Watchers* and the *Similitudes*, have received great alteration. In the case of the *Similitudes* the figure “Son of Man” is equated with the pre-incarnate Christ. There are so many occasions where the expressions “Son of Man” and “Elect One” in the Geez version of the book are found replaced by the name “Christ” in the Amharic one. 1Enoch 9:9, 10:6, 12:21, 12:23, 13:4, 13:19 and 16:12 can be taken as examples, to mention some.⁴⁵ It seems more like an attempt of Christianizing the book.

Such an attempt as this one may not be surprising since the Enochic “Son of Man” and the Christians’ “Christ”, who is also called “Son of Man”, share many attributes and far more than just the title “Son of Man”. In both cases this human figure is also considered, at the same time, to be divine, and nowhere in the Bible can be found a book that presents such an elaborate description of another human-divine character. Therefore, it is only understandable if the Ethiopian translators consider the Enochic “Son of Man” and “Christ” to be one and the same figure. Perhaps, this book is the major reason that led the Ethiopians in to full acceptance of Christianity; it served as a link between Judaism and Christianity to produce the current Judeo-Christian fusion religious practices.

With regard to the *Book of Watchers* the case is far more than an attempt of Christianizing the book. It was basically aimed at changing the angelic nature of the fallen ones in to humanity. These fallen men are, therefore, claimed to be the sons of Seth, a righteous son of Adam, while the women they sinned with are the daughters of the other son of Adam, Cain, who has sinned and because of him all his descendents become sinners.

⁴³See M.A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: - A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments*, Vol. 2, 1978.

⁴⁴ See L.T. Stuckenbruck, “The book of Enoch and the Ethiopian Manuscript Tradition: New Data”, 2011. (Paper presented at a workshop on Ethiopic book of Enoch held on 27 May 2011 at Addis Ababa University).

⁴⁵See *Metsihaf Kidus: Yebiluyina Yehadis Kidan Mtsahift*, 1980E.C.

The sons of Seth story, which replaced the fallen angels' narrative, was not the invention of the Ethiopians, rather its origin can be traced among the early church fathers. As *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch* became questioned because of its bizarre narration regarding angels who have sex with human beings, it was considered to be a source of criticism to Christianity, hence doomed to destruction. But a passage that bears similar narration to that of *IEnoch* presents itself in the first book of the Bible.⁴⁶ Obviously, an attempt to destroy this book or the specific chapter containing the narrative is not as easy as destroying *IEnoch*. Genesis is where the whole story of Jewish as well as Christian traditions begins and is canonical to both religions. So the best solution would be to explain this part of the bible with some agreeable interpretation, and this was exactly the function the "sons of Seth" story served.

The Sethite view started with the teachings of Julius Africanus, who claims that Genesis 6:2 referred to "the righteous sons of Seth who 'fell' (in the moral sense) by taking wives of the inferior daughters of Cain."⁴⁷ This story is narrated in detail in the book of *Giorgis Welde Amid* (George Son of Amid), which was translated from Arabic into Geez in the 16th century by a Yemeni man who became Christian after his long stay in Ethiopia.⁴⁸ According to this book descendents of Seth were living on some Holy mountain and the children of Cain underneath, so there can be some boundary between them as the formers are righteous and the latter sinners. But the Sethites look down up on the children of Cain and desired to be with them. Eventually, they descended from the mountain and their seed become mixed with the children of Cain to produce the Giants of Genesis 6.⁴⁹ This new story was gradually propagated among all Christians and the original narrative of the fallen angels was forgotten by all, except few bible scholars. However, the Ethiopians were always with the original narrative as *IEnoch* was preserved in their own language the whole time. This is evident, apart from the many copies of *IEnoch* from different centuries, in *Kibre Negest* and *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir*, books that reproduce the original narrative of the fallen angels.

The Amharic translation of *The Book of Watchers* is highly dependent on the narration from *Giorgis Welde Amid*. Accordingly, the fallen ones are not angels but pure human beings, which

⁴⁶ See Genesis 6.

⁴⁷ E.C. Prophet, *Fallen Angels and the Origin of Evil: Why Church Fathers Suppress the Book of Enoch*. 2000, p, 58.

⁴⁸ Amsalu Aklilu, "Achir yeithiopia sinetsihuf tarik", 1976, p, 59. (Unpublished).

⁴⁹ See Giorgis Welde Amid. (A manuscript found at National Library, Birana division, Call No. 331).

is a claim that contradicts with both the Geez translation and the Aramaic-Greek fragments, as they present the same narration regarding the fallen angels. The fall itself is not from heaven down to earth, but one that is related to a moral one. However, the following passage taken from the Ge'ez version of *1Enoch* clearly shows that the fallen ones are angels and their fall is a literal one.

ወኮነ እምዝ በዝጉ ውሉደ ሰብእ በእማነቱ መዋእል ተወልዳ ሎሙ አዋልድ ሰናያት ወላህያት ወርእዩ ኪያሆን መላእክት ውሉደ ሰማያት ወፈተውዎን ወይቤሉ በበይናቲሆሙ ንዑ ንፃረይ ለነ አንስተ እምውሉደ ሰብእ ወንልድ ለነ ውሉደ ... ወኮነ ኩሎሙ ፪፻ ወወረዱ ውስተ አርዲስ ዘውእቱ ጽማሁ ለደብረ ኤርሞ ወጸውዕዎ ለደብረ አርሞን እስመ መሃሉ ቦቱ ወአውዝቡ በበይናቲሆሙ ... ወነሥኡ ሎሙ አንስትያ ወጎረዖ ኩሉ ለለርእሱ አሐተ አሐተ ወወጠኑ ይባኡ ንቤሆን ወተደመሩ ምስሌሆን መሐርዎን ሥራያተ ወስብኢታተ ወዕፀው አመርዎን⁵⁰

And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of the heaven saw and lusted after them and said to one another: 'come let us choose us wives from among the children of men and beget us children.' ... And they were in all two hundred; who descended in the days of Jared on the summit of Mount Hermon, and they called it Mount Hermon because they had sworn and bound themselves by mutual imprecations up on it. ... And all the others together with them took unto themselves wives, and each chose for himself one, and they began to go in unto them and to defile themselves with them, and they taught them charms and enchantments, and the cutting of roots, and made them acquainted with plants.⁵¹

On the one hand, it is clear from the passage that the expression “the children of men” is not limited to a particular line like the Sethites rather refers to all mankind. Moreover, Missler argues that racial distinctions happen only after the intervention of God in Genesis 11. Therefore, “there is no intimation that the lines of Seth and Cain kept themselves separate nor were even instructed to.”⁵² On the other hand, there is no evidence that all the descendents of Seth were godly, if that was the case then the fact that they all perished in the flood, with the exception of eight people will be a highly questionable phenomenon. This by itself completely dismisses the claim that the fallen ones are not angels but sons of Seth. Plus, if the fallen ones were human beings why do they produce the horrible giants described in *1Enoch*?

⁵⁰ M.A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: - A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments*, Vol. 2, 1978, pp, 13-18.

⁵¹ R.H. Charles (trans), *The Book of Enoch*, Introduction by D. Oesterley, 1917, chapters 6&7.

⁵² C. Missler “Mischievous Angels or Sethites?” (Retrieved on 1March 2012 from [http://www.khouse.org/articles/1997/110/.](http://www.khouse.org/articles/1997/110/))

ወእማንቱ ፀንሳ ወወለዳ ረዓይተ ዓበይተ ወቆሞሙ በበጃጅ በዕመት እሉ በልዑ ኩሎ
ዓማ ሰብእ እስከ ስእንዎሙ ሴስዮተ ሰብእ ወተመየጡ ረአይት ላዕሌሆሙ
ይብልዕዎሙ ለሰብእ ወወጠኑ የአብሱ በአእዋፍ ወዲበ አራዊት ወበዘይትሐወስ
ወበአሳት ወሥጋሆሙ በበይናቲሆሙ ተባልዑ ወደመ ሰተዩ እምኔሃ አሜሃ ምድር
ሰከዮዮሙ ለእማዕያ⁵³

*And they became pregnant, and they bore great giants, whose height was three thousand ells: who consumed all the acquisitions of men. And when men could no longer sustain them, the giants turned against them and devoured mankind. And they began to sin against birds, and beasts, and reptiles, and fish and to devour one another's flesh and drink the blood. Then the earth laid accusation against the lawless ones.*⁵⁴

The extraordinary physical appearance and eccentric manners of the offsprings, directly points to a strange genetic mix up. In addition to all this, the Genesis 6 passage was understood by both ancient rabbinical sources and the Septuagint translators as referring to “fallen angels”.⁵⁵ It is not clear, though, why the recent Ethiopian writers preferred to rely on the Sethite story for their Amharic translation of the *Book of Watchers* in *1Enoch*, while their precursors embraced the original narrative for centuries even in times when the alternative Sethite story, which could bring them closer to the rest of the Christian world’s understanding of Genesis 6:2, was available to them. Perhaps the 5th century church fathers’ concern regarding the deeds of the fallen angels has become their headache now. Whatever hidden current agenda might there be behind this, the fact that the original narration regarding the fallen angels had always been accepted as a genuine story by the scholars of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is an undeniable fact. In addition to this, despite the controversies regarding the fallen angels narrative, it is true that, even today, *1Enoch* remains to be a unique treasure of Ethiopian people.

2.2. Some Typical Features of 1Enoch

The Ethiopic Book of Enoch is an ancient book containing a collection of narratives formed around the seventh antediluvian patriarch Enoch. This man is one of the two biblical figures, who escaped physical death and are believed to be still alive somewhere in the heavens. The

⁵³ M.A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: - A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments*, Vol. 2, 1978, p. 19.

⁵⁴ R.H. Charles (trans), *The Book of Enoch*, Introduction by D. Oesterley, 1917, chapter 7.

⁵⁵ C. Missler “Mischievous Angels or Sethites?” (Retrieved on 1March 2012 from [http://www.khouse.org/articles/1997/110/.](http://www.khouse.org/articles/1997/110/))

book is concerned, among other things, with cosmological knowledge, the history of the world from the beginning to the end, the eschatological conclusion of the world, the punishment of the “fallen angels” and human sinners at the great judgment day, and the triumph of God over everything. The various narratives included in this book are said to be composed by different scribes at different times, which is one of the distinguishing characteristics of *IEnoch*. As a result, it is a collection of stories, which can be distinctly identified and had been only loosely joined in to one book.

Stuckenbruck L. has recently identified seven distinct parts of the general book of *IEnoch*. Accordingly, the book constitutes the following sections, which are considered as small books. *The Book of Watchers*, *Similitudes*, *Astronomical Book*, *Book of Dreams* including the *Animal apocalypse*, *Epistle of Enoch* including the *Exhortation* and the *Apocalypse of Weeks*, *Birth of Noah* and *Another Book that Enoch Wrote*, a description of eschatological judgment and reward, respectively, on the wicked and the righteous.⁵⁶ However, all sections of this book with the exception of the *Birth of Noah* are embraced in the heavenly journeys, visions and dreams of the great seer Enoch. Even in *Birth of Noah*, this one is believed to be a fragment of the lost *Book of Noah*, Enoch is still involved.

In the general sense of the book, the story begins with the blessing of Enoch: “The words of the blessing of Enoch, wherewith he blessed the elect and righteous, who will be living in the day of tribulation, when all the wicked and godless are to be removed.”,⁵⁷ and soon it passes on to the “fallen angels” myth, a narrative, which is constituted in the first section of the book or the *Book of Watchers*. As the current study is only concerned with two main narratives from the general book, instead of discussing each section of the book this review rather focuses on the story related to the fallen angels and the heavenly journeys of Enoch myths.

The “fallen angels” from *IEnoch* are a group of angels referred to as “Watchers”, who rebelled against God and descended upon earth leaving their heavenly abode to take wives from the daughters of men. They were all together two hundred, where twenty of them are leaders over the rest. As a result of their meeting with human beings, giants were born, who destroyed, first

⁵⁶ L.T.Stuckenbruck, “The Early Enochic Traditions from the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Status Questions”, 2011, p. 1. (Paper presented at a workshop on Ethiopic book of Enoch held on 27 May 2011 at Addis Ababa University).

⁵⁷ R.H. Charles (trans.), *The Book of Enoch*, ed. By W.Oesterley, 1917, chapter 1:1.

every property of men and at the end their lives too. Not only this, but the fallen angels taught on earth all kinds of secret knowledge that they brought from heaven and were not allowed to be accessed by men. This is one of the great sins that the watchers are said to commit; “in the hardness of your hearts you have made known to the women, and through these mysteries women and men work much evil on earth”.⁵⁸ Eventually, the sin on earth multiplied to the level that men could not bear it anymore so they started crying out unto heaven.

The Lord, who had been told by his faithful angels about the great horror that was taking place on earth, ordered for the fallen angels to be imprisoned and cast into darkness until the day of the great judgment. And their giant offsprings, were doomed to destruction by way of slain one another. Henceforth, the Lord cleaned the earth from its sin with the great flood, which destroyed every life form in it with the exception of eight people and some animals saved to make sure that life perpetuates on earth.

Enoch, who lived on earth at the same time that the fallen angels did, was saved from the holocaust miraculously long before it happened. He ascended with his physical body to heaven as he had obeyed the Lord in all his life. But before his ascension, he had many visits through heaven and earth guided by angels and much of the content of the book is a result of visions from these visits. “And he took up his parable and said--Enoch a righteous man, whose eyes were opened by God, saw the vision of the Holy One in the heavens, which the angels showed me, and from them I heard everything, and from them I understood as I saw”⁵⁹. In his journey, Enoch visited the entire earth, heavens and even hell that he learned about angels, the celestial laws of the heavenly luminaries, winds, the earth’s plants and many more secrets of the universe, which he later shared with his sons. He had also the honor of being present before and speaking with the “Lord of Spirits”. Generally speaking, Enoch had accumulated traits that made him a righteous man both in the eyes of the Lord and of men.

The purpose of Enoch’s journey was primarily to see and share with men the secrets of heaven and earth that are not forbidden to human unlike the secret knowledge that the “fallen angels” thought them. This was important so that men shall be warned against the wickedness that will prevail on earth in the coming ages and the eternal death that results from it. This is why in all

⁵⁸ Ibid, chapter 16:2.

⁵⁹ Ibid Chapter 1:2

the visions of Enoch there is always an emphasis on the distinction between the wicked and the righteous ones. When the days of this world are consummated and at the day of the great judgment, the wicked will be sent to hell with the fallen angels to suffer from the eternal fire for eternity, while the righteous join Son of Man, the central figure of the *similitudes*, for eternal life in peace and joy. This motif is also one of the reasons that *1Enoch* is regarded as apocalyptic, which is the next point to be discussed under this section.

Another typical characteristic of *1Enoch* is its apocalyptic nature. In many respects, this book reflects characteristics of apocalyptic literature, hence is an apocalypse. The term ‘apocalyptic’ is derived from the Greek word ‘apokalypsis’ which is found in revelation 1:1 and means to uncover or reveal. In recent years, this term has come to carry a different meaning that does not correspond to the meaning of the root word. Accordingly,

*In modern English, the noun ‘apocalypse’ and the related adjective ‘apocalyptic’ have come to connote a catastrophe of cosmic proportions. So one speaks of the possibility of a nuclear apocalypse, or of the apocalyptic landscape of some futuristic films.... The catastrophic connotations of the word come from its use in the last book of the New Testament, the Apocalypse, or Revelation of St. John.*⁶⁰

However, when we come to the scholarly circle we find the term ‘apocalypse’ ascribed to a group of literary works that share some common features, which is far from the above uses of the term and its related adjective. Consequently, the word ‘apocalyptic’ and ‘apocalypse’ are accepted in current scholarship as descriptive terms for the literary form, while apocalyptic eschatology is understood as a specific religious perspective that looks forward to the end of history and the eternal judgment that follows it.⁶¹ Scholars in the field have been disputing about which works should be included in this group of literature. Nonetheless, there is somehow a general agreement on the features of the literary works that should be called apocalyptic. Collins after an expanded treatment of the case presents the definition from Semeia 14, which he regards as “constitutive of all apocalypses and indicates the common core of the genre.” Based on this an apocalypse is defined as: - “...a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a

⁶⁰ J.J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 1997, p, 1

⁶¹ P.D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 1979, pp, 11-12.

transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.”⁶²

Accordingly, literature bearing such form and content can be identified with this genre. Based on this definition *1 Enoch* is certainly an apocalypse as it presents a narrative that deals with the adventures of Enoch, to whom the secrets of nature were revealed while he traveled through the heavens escorted by angels. What is called apocalyptic can refer to, not only the genre but also ideas that are related to it. Concerning this, Morris notes that the term, other than the group of writings known as apocalypses, is also used to denote, “the ideas and concepts that are so characteristic of this kind of literature. There may, thus, be ‘apocalyptic’ sections in writings, which as a whole do not come under this category”.⁶³ Mark 13, 1Thes4, 1Cor15 are some examples from sections of the bible that present apocalyptic motifs. There are also some sections of *1 Enoch* that are not apocalyptic but communicate apocalyptic themes at some points. From the *Astronomical Book*, for instance, chapters 80-81 are the only sections that issue an eschatological apocalyptic theme. According to Vanderkam this book is merely labeled apocalyptic because of these chapters.⁶⁴

The term apocalypse also has another dualistic nature regarding features of the literature categorized under this genre. Collins notes that some apocalypses contain an elaborate review of history in the form of prophecy with an emphasis on eschatological conclusion while others are concerned with cosmic descriptions based on experiences from other worldly journeys.⁶⁵ In both cases *1 Enoch* fulfils the conditions to be identified as an apocalypse since some parts of it like the *Astronomical Book* and the *Book of Watchers* show interest in cosmological matters, while others like the *Epistle of Enoch* and *Book of Dreams* deals with the essential patterns of sacred history and of the eschatology.⁶⁶

Though it does not always hold true, apocalypses are generally thought to be pseudonymous. The apocalyptists ascribe their writings to some great seer of the past like Enoch or use him as their spokesman in order to get acceptance among their readers. The genre is believed to spring from

⁶² J.J. Collins, *Daniel with an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*, 1984, p, 5.

⁶³ L. Morris, *Apocalyptic*, 1973, p, 20.

⁶⁴ J.Vanderkam, *Enoch and the Growth of An Apocalyptic Tradition*, 1984, series 16, p, 109.

⁶⁵ J.J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Matrix of Christianity*, 1998, p, 6.

⁶⁶ J.Vanderkam, *Enoch and the Growth of An Apocalyptic Tradition*, 1984, series 16, p, 117.

Jewish literary traditions, but there are some studies indicating that it may have drawn ideas from different sources like the Mesopotamian Lore, Greek mythology or, more closely, the prophetic writings of the Jews themselves. However, it did not grow among the main strand of Jewish religion rather from a small disenfranchised group, which is alienated from the main group of Judaism and considers itself to be righteous while the majority of the group has gone astray to disobey God and live in wickedness. Morris argues that “apocalyptic never flourished when life was easy and straight forward. But it made life livable for men under intolerable conditions with its emphasis on God’s final and perfect solution.”⁶⁷ By providing explanations to existing difficulties and assuring the ultimate triumph of God over evil, the apocalyptists reassure the few righteous remnants.

Even though the current difficulties of life are surely to be replaced by the coming new world order for the righteous elects, a catastrophic destruction of this sinful world before the new age is finally ushered in and the subsequent judgment is inevitable. *IEnoch* for its consistency with the above mentioned wide ranging characteristics of apocalyptic literature can be taken as a Grand example of apocalypses. “With his unparalleled knowledge of the cosmos, history, and the eschaton, Enoch was the ideal preacher of hope, comfort, and warning to the last generations. While his words echo the language of ancient prophecy, Enoch appears preeminently as the supreme Jewish sage whose wisdom knows no bounds and whose message rest on unfailling divine revelation.”⁶⁸

2.3. A review of Previous Studies

There are a number of books written in the last century, which are devoted to *IEnoch*’s critical edition. Despite this fact, so far, no study has been undertaken to show the book’s influence among the Ethiopians. Of course, different scholars, on their way of addressing other issues, have mentioned that it is hard to understand the country’s religious thought without recourse to this book. However, no researcher has dealt with this matter in full-scale and putting direct focus on the point that the current research is trying to address now. On the other hand, there are some works that are indirectly related to the current subject, hence, deserve to be addressed in this review.

⁶⁷ L. Morris, *Apocalyptic*, 1973, p, 27.

⁶⁸ J.Vanderkam, *Enoch and the Growth of An Apocalyptic Tradition*, 1984, series 16, p, 117.

It is appropriate that M.A. Knibb's two volumes work, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A new Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments* published in 1978, should commence this review, since it is the first critical edition of *1Enoch* in the light of the Dead Sea fragments. Knibb puts his central focus on explaining the Geez translation of the book in comparison with the Aramaic fragments. Accordingly, against the old belief, which assumes that the Geez translation of *1Enoch* to be, generally made from the Greek one, he states that though the translators' use of a Greek text is certain their use of an Aramaic text is "extremely probable."⁶⁹

Moreover, the Aramaic fragments agree in general terms with the Ge'ez one as much as they agree with the Greek, with the exception of two different sections of the Geez text. The first one known as the *Parable of Enoch* or the *Similitudes*, which, including the Dead Sea fragments, is nowhere to be found except in Ethiopic manuscripts. The second one is the *Book of Astronomy* and Knibb summarizes the issue concerning this book as follows. "The situation with regard to the Book of astronomy is very different. In the first place the Ethiopic version is much shorter than the Aramaic. Not only is the table of the phases of the moon not present in the Ethiopic, but there is also other Aramaic evidence which cannot be brought in to relationship with anything in the Ethiopic. Secondly, even in the cases where a relationship does exist between the Aramaic and the Ethiopic versions, there are substantial differences between the two."⁷⁰

Apart from this, Knibb also gives due attention to Charles and Fleming's division of the Ethiopic manuscripts into two groups, where the first group constitutes an older text type, and the second one relatively recent. And based on some textual evidence that he was able to discern in these texts, he agrees with the above mentioned scholars' view that in many cases the original Ethiopic text has survived not in the first group, but in the manuscripts constituted in the second one.⁷¹

There is no doubt that Knibb's work has contributed a lot especially with regard to ascertaining the Ethiopic manuscripts authenticity and the tradition's existence among the Ethiopians in a very close manner as it was known to the Qumran society. But, since it wasn't its concern in the

⁶⁹ M.A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: - A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments*, Vol. 2, 1978, p, 22.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p, 13.

⁷¹ Ibid, p, 35.

first place, this work does not provide any information on the position of the tradition in Ethiopia, except mentioning that the book is accorded canonical status in their church.

What comes next is Wossene Yifru's work "An Inquiry in to the Ethiopic Book of Henoch" published in the year 1990. In general terms the paper's main subject seems to be legitimatizing the book to Ethiopians and the following quote from it attests this fact.

*But in the absence of canonical text either in Hebrew or in any other scripture of Eastern-Western Christendom, the rival genre hypothesis presented as the Aramaic-Greek fragments of Henock have proven unverifiable. And present or future scholars will face difficult task of proof-unless a full text compatible with Ge'ez is found-that Ethiopic was not the original language of the genre.*⁷²

Further, Wossene seems to accept not only the traditional Ethiopian view that the book was written by Enoch himself, but also it was initially an Ethiopian tradition written in Ge'ez. Consequently, in this study the beginning of Ethiopian literary tradition is marked by the book of Enoch at 4000 BCE. Though this literary tradition flourished in the Axumite period, "it has been destroyed beyond recovery" with the fall of the kingdom, and "the only historical clue ancient Ethiopia has is the Obelisk and the books of Henoch and Jubilee."⁷³ In addition to this, Wossene has recognized that the Book of Enoch is the fundamental base for the Ethiopian "eschatological thought and mystical tradition."⁷⁴

The merit of Wossene's study is the attempt to see the book within the Ethiopian context. Nonetheless, the concluding remarks seem to be a little overreaching to the evidence presented. It is problematic to claim that the book of Enoch existed in Geez in 4000 BC., When the Qumran fragments, which are believed to be the source of the book, date between 2nd century B.C. and 1st century A.D. not to mention the oldest Ethiopic manuscript available now can be traced back only to the 15th century A.D.

Woseene's scheme of legitimatizing *IEnoch* to Ethiopia is likewise found to be the concern of I.K. Cush, of course with slightly different hypothesis, in his book *Enoch The Ethiopian: The Lost Prophet of the Bible Greater than Abrham Holier than Moses*. Cush using the archeological finding that regards Ethiopia as the first place, where human race dwelt, builds the idea that the

⁷²Wossene Yifru, ed. "An Inquiry in to the Ethiopic Book of Enoch" *Henok: Journal of Historical and Philosophical Thought*, Vol.1, 1990, p. 60.

⁷³ Ibid, p, 71.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p, 65

seventh antediluvian patriarch Enoch was an Ethiopian, who wrote a book in his own language Geez. Not only this but Cush has also gone as far as making the whole of the Old and New Testaments a black tradition with special reference to Ethiopia, before it was stolen and became Jewish and later European tradition.⁷⁵

Interesting are the ideas Cush brought to the scholarly circle, but they need to be supported with more concrete and reliable evidence than what he has provided to explain the issue. However, one important point that Cush raised and is related to the subject matter of the present study is that the difficulty of understanding any aspect of the religious tradition and thought of Ethiopia without recourse to the book of Enoch.⁷⁶ But just like many other scholars he never attempted to discuss the issue in depth.

L.T. Stuckenbruck's paper "The Book of Enoch and the Ethiopian Manuscript Tradition" is the closest to the present study of all the works reviewed so far. This paper, which was presented at a workshop on *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch* held in Addis Ababa, puts its major focus on identifying the spatial position of *IEnoch* among other sacred manuscripts of Ethiopia. Accordingly, Stuckenbruck was able to find out that out of the 66 Ethiopic manuscripts he considered, in 46 of them *IEnoch* comes at the beginning. Not only this but in 10 of these manuscripts the book stands alone.⁷⁷ Based on this evidence, he concluded that "a very strong tendency exists to regard *IEnoch* as occupying a primal position in manuscripts in which it is included, a situation that would seem to imply a high degree of importance being placed upon the work."⁷⁸

It is true that this paper has raised a major point, i.e. the position of the book among the Ethiopians. However, it only looked at this point from the angle of spotting the physical location that the book possesses among other manuscripts bound together with it and using this he tries to understand its significance to the people. The present study tries to explore this point in a broader

⁷⁵ See I.K.. Cush, *Enoch the Ethiopian: The Lost Prophet of the Bible Greater than Abraham Holier than Moses*, 2000.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p, 156.

⁷⁷ See L.T. Stuckenbruck, "The book of Enoch and the Ethiopian Manuscript Tradition: New Data", 2011. (Paper presented at a workshop on Ethiopic book of Enoch held on 27 May 2011 at Addis Ababa University).

⁷⁸ Ibid, p, 7.

context putting in to account the content of the book in relation to its influence on indigenous writings.

By way of concluding this review, the point made at the beginning of it should be reaffirmed. Though important are all the above works in their own particular respect, they barely attempt to comprehensively assess the influence of *1Enoch* among the Ethiopians. There is then a need for a treatment of this subject and it is this task that the current research sets itself to accomplish.

CHAPTER THREE: - CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Introduction

It is only logical to start a discussion of archetypal literary theory, which is the subject this chapter of the thesis is devoted to, with a definition and explanation of “myth”, since it is on the basis of this concept that the theory is formulated. Any explanation dealing with myth will depend on what is taken as myth or the definition of the word myth. Accordingly, the definition of myth given in this study is intended to indicate the particular perspective from which the concept of myth is treated and the argument is made. Since this thesis focuses on discussing the role or influence of myth in human life, it would be necessary to provide an explanation of myth that must focus on its functional aspects.

Since the dawn of science mythology has been rejected as a product of superstitious and primitive mind. It was, mostly, considered to be some fictitious or fanciful story from ancient times, which is usually not taken seriously or dismissed as meaningless and absurd. But lately many have come to a better appreciation of the nature and role of myth in human history. Broadly defined, myth is a traditional story about heroes or supernatural beings, often attempting to explain the origins of natural phenomena or aspects of human behavior. Here, one major point can be underlined, i.e., whether myths really happened or were invented as a result of needs to explain things, they are stories.

Roland Barthes, who generally viewed myth as a “system of communication”, argues that everything can be myth as long as it is conveyed through discourse. Based on this he defines myths as “narrative complexes built around issues that were seen as essential to society”.⁷⁹ Myths, therefore, may be described as narratives, which reflect significant human experiences, whether they are taken as true stories or not, and it is in this sense that the present study primarily considers them. In other words, it should be emphasized that the study does not intend to label the Enochic myths as well as the narratives of the subject texts of the analysis as true stories or false, but see them as mere narratives dealing with very important human experiences.

As has been pointed out above, myth is discussed in this study in relation to its function. So, what functions do myths serve in human life? Myths play an enormous role in helping us make

⁷⁹R. Barthes *Mythologies*, 1992, p. 108.

sense of and deal with the universe we live in. This function of myths is not concealed from us, rather it is there to be detected in our daily life, civilization, history ... but most of all it is evident in literature and the other arts. As Bulfinch noticed, “without a knowledge of mythology much of the elegant literature of our own language cannot be understood and appreciated.”⁸⁰ It is, therefore, this much associated with human existence and the tendency of man for myth making is the result of extreme need to explain and communicate to later generations the mysteries of the world witnessed in his existence. But modern man seems to be separated from these mythic inheritances and cannot see their relevance anymore as his mind is mostly consumed by modern scientific thoughts. On the other hand, Campbell argues on the perpetuating significance of mythology in explaining what’s behind the mysteries of the world and of our own life.

When the story is in your mind, then you see its relevance to something happening in your own life. It gives you perspective on what’s happening to you. With the loss of that, we have really lost something because we don’t have a compatible literature to take its place. These bits of information from ancient times, which have to do with the themes that have supported human life built civilization, and informed religions over the millennia, have to do with deep inner problems, inner mysteries, inner thresholds of passage, and if you don’t know what the guide-signs are along the way, you have to work it out yourself.⁸¹

Therefore, myths guide us understand our surroundings as well as the community that we identify ourselves with, and our dependence on them is inevitable if we are to explain it better. In today’s life it is in literature that we mostly find these guides than any other place. It seems to be the reason why we find writers, who use mythical elements as the basis of their literary expressions, so as to present their subject in a more familiar and easily comprehensible fashion. In accordance with this Schorer argues that “great literature is impossible without a previous imaginative consent to a ruling mythology that makes intelligible and unitive the whole of that experience from which particular fables spring and from which they, in turn, take their meaning.”⁸² This is to say that in order to make a literary work great and appreciable the incorporation of mythical elements is inevitable.

⁸⁰ T. Bulfinch, *Mythology*, 1970, p. 3.

⁸¹ J. Campbell, *The Power of Myth*, 1991, p. 2.

⁸² M. Schorer, “The Necessity of Myth”, *Myth and Myth Making*, Murray H.A. (Ed), 1960, p. 357.

3.2. Archetypal/Mythological Literary Theory

For the reason that this thesis relies on theory developed by Frye that may be strange to someone who is not acquainted with concepts of archetypal literary theory in general and Frye's in particular, it is necessary to briefly discuss this criticism including its application in the analysis. Archetypal criticism is a type of literary theory that provides a method of interpreting texts putting its center of attention on recurring myths or archetypes in the narrative, symbols, and character types of literary works. Like structuralists, critics of this literary theory, start from the initial assumption that every work of literature can be categorized and fitted in to a large framework that encompasses all literature. So the key argument is that archetypes determine the form and function of literary works. Consequently, the main task of the critic is to search for archetypal patterns like character types, story lines, settings and symbols in literary works. This theory is rooted mainly in two other academic disciplines; namely social anthropology and psychoanalysis.⁸³

James Frazer, an anthropologist, is a pioneer and influential figure, who studied mythologies that he collected from different cultures and concluded that they are all related. This idea is elaborated in his discussion of the 'death-rebirth' myth, where death is symbolized by final harvest and re-birth by spring, which is said to be a mythical pattern present in almost all cultural mythologies. In his famous work *The Golden Bough* Frazer tried to reveal the significance of mythology to modern humanity. He took the vast body of mythical and anthropological material available to him and constructed an over-all picture of how primitive man, in general, thinks and acts, and how that primitive mentality is transformed into the modern age. His premises are mainly grounded on the relationship that he noticed among magic, which he identified as a barbaric and savage practice, religion and science. The main argument is that man moves progressively from barbarism and savagery to a civilized culture through the evolution of religion, which is basically the same everywhere in the world.⁸⁴

⁸³ See C. Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Eds), *Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism VOL. 9, 2008, pp,265-287.

⁸⁴ See J. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study of Magic and Religion*, 1922.

According to Frazer “magic is a spurious system of natural law as well as a fallacious guide of conduct; it is a false science as well as an abortive art.”⁸⁵ His argument is that magic is founded on the basis of two fallacious associations of ideas, which are the basis of science if they were to be applied logically. The two false associations are identified as homoeopathic and contiguous, where in the former case the magician believes “like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause” (the law of similarity) and in the latter, “things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed” (the law of contact).⁸⁶ For the magician these principles of nature are invariable and operate without the intervention of any spiritual agency, and he relies on them to influence nature. In this regard, the magician’s fundamental conception is the same as that of modern science, for “underlying the whole system is a faith, implicit but real and firm, in the order and uniformity of nature.”⁸⁷ These fundamental principles if “legitimately applied they yield science; illegitimately applied they yield magic, the bastard sister of science.”⁸⁸ Therefore, magic is considered to pave the way to science.

On the other hand Frazer believed that magic and religion succeed one another, that religion is a refinement of the primitive magical mentality. According to Frazer, it was only in the very earliest stage of human development that magic existed by itself as the simplest possible exercise of mental powers. As time passed, the functions of priest and sorcerer were combined so the priest used to perform “religious and magical rites simultaneously”.⁸⁹ When man gradually understands that he has no power over nature, the opposite is the central belief of the magician, he, eventually, made “the great transition from magic to religion.”⁹⁰

For Frazer, religion stands in opposition to magic and science, because the latter ones assume that nature operates through invariable processes. On the other hand, religion assumes that the course of nature is to some extent elastic or variable, since it involves a belief in mighty beings, who rule the world and can be persuaded to alter the course of nature for the benefit of the

⁸⁵ Ibid, p, 27.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p, 36.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p, 121.

⁸⁸ Ibid, p, 123.

⁸⁹ Ibid, p, 130.

⁹⁰ Ibid, p, 143.

believers.⁹¹ In general, Frazer's work was aimed at proving mythology as a creative cultural force, which has a persistent influence on the modern world and the momentum of his work carried over into literary studies by scholars like Carl Jung.

Psychoanalyst Carl Jung theorizes about myths and archetypes in relation to the collective unconscious or the inaccessible part of the mind. On the other hand, a widely recognized critic, Northrop Frye took insights of Frazer and Jung together with some ideas from disciplines like philosophy and history, and tried to institute a comprehensive literary theory. But it is apparent in Frye's works that his greater inspiration comes from the Jungian theory, like the concept of archetypes. Therefore, in this theoretical framework, though the major focus is on Frye's theory, I have also found it relevant to discuss some points from Jung's archetypal theory.

3.2.1. Jungian Archetypal Literary Theory

Being Freud's young colleague, Jung was highly influenced by the concept of the unconscious part of the human psyche. In addition to Freud's unconscious, a deeper level of this part of the mind was felt by Jung, which he labeled as the "collective unconscious". For Freud the unconscious "includes all the things that are not easily available to awareness, including many things that have their origins there, such as our drives or instincts, and things that are put there because we can't bear to look at them, such as the memories and emotions associated with trauma."⁹² In other words, the unconscious consists of instincts and suppressed desires as well as emotions that are unique to the individual and, though not easily, can also be accessed by the conscious mind. For Jung this is one of the three parts of the human psyche that he postulated. It is found in at a deeper level than the ego, which is identified with the conscious mind. In Jungian terms the unconscious, or as he distinctly refers it, the personal unconscious, more or less have similar contents with the Freudian one, except that it doesn't include instincts. The individual unconscious is as deep as Freudian psychoanalysis could go into the human mind, but Jung went a little further and discovered the collective unconscious, which is much deeper and a lot darker than the personal unconscious.

⁹¹ Ibid, p, 127.

⁹² J. Boeree "Freud and Psychoanalysis". 2000. (Retrieved on 7 June 2011 from <http://webpace.ship.edu/cgboer/psychoanalysis.html#1>).

The collective unconscious is a realm of the psyche, which is shared by all human beings, yet unknown, indefinable and can only be understood through its manifestations. The collective unconscious, as defined by Jung, is “a psychic system of the collective, universal and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, archetypes... which give definite form to certain psychic contents.”⁹³ These pre-existent forms, which are contents of the collective unconscious, are called archetypes. “An archetype is an unlearned tendency to experience things in a certain way ... it acts as an ‘organizing principle’ on the things we see or do.”⁹⁴ Since the collective unconscious consists of archetypes that are prior to existence and structure our conscious mind, Lock’s *Tabula Rasa* is, obviously, rejected by Jung. In addition to this, Jung emphasizes that the archetypes residing in the collective unconscious, manifest themselves in the archetypal images and ideas, but they can never be represented for the very basic reason that they belong to the inaccessible part of the mind.

Originally an archetype has no meaning of its own; but when it enters the conscious mind it is filled out with individual meaning. Hence an archetype is “determined as to its content only when it has become conscious experience. The archetype in itself is empty and purely formal.”⁹⁵ It seems that archetypes are possibilities of ideas, which later take some sort of image when they become accessible to the conscious mind. Here, it is important to note that there is an obvious difference between an archetype and an archetypal image “one is a sort of image or idea- making *capacity*; the other is an *actual created image or idea* in consciousness, visual art of a literary text.”⁹⁶ The parallels that exist among mythologies and literature from different cultures and ages are taken as typical examples of archetypes by Jung. His argument is that the subject matter of these creative arts comes from the collective unconscious, but the expressions that we perceive are shaped by the individual conscious mind.

There are very few basic archetypal patterns which exist at the unconscious level, but there are an infinite variety of specific images which trace their roots back to these few patterns. Among

⁹³ C. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Hull C. (trans.). Bollingen Series XX: The Collective Works of Carl Jung, Vol. 9 Part 1, 1959, p, 43.

⁹⁴G. Boeree “Personality Theories”. 2006. Web. (Retrieved on 1 March 2012 from <http://www.ship.edu/%7Ecgboree/perscontents.html>)

⁹⁵ C. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Hull C. (trans.). Bollingen Series XX: The Collective Works of Carl Jung, Vol. 9 Part 1, 1959, p, 79.

⁹⁶ M. Fike, *A Jungian Study of Shakespeare: A Visionary Mode*, 2009, p, 18.

the archetypes that Jung discusses are included, the anima (woman as desired by man) and animus (man as desired by woman), the self, the divine child, the hero, the wise old man and also the shadow, which refers to the dark side of human nature (lust, envy, greed...).⁹⁷ Dreams and myths are the most recognized areas where archetypal images are revealed. The parts of our mind to which we can gain access are filled with the myths of the human species and everything that we do has to do with these manifestations of the archetypes in the form of myth. Consider for example, the origin of scientific theories, which begins with “there was a big bang-a cosmic explosion”, one can clearly see that this is not a rational statement rather a mythical construct. Jung indicates that archetypes are concerned with mythological motifs hence they appear in myths. He defined myth as “psychic phenomena that reveal the nature of the soul”.⁹⁸ They are representations of the contents of the deepest recess of human mind, therefore, are necessarily the products of the unconscious. According to Jung, literature can be read as a form of myth and behind the literary myth lies a series of archetypes.

When we come to the application of this theory to literary interpretation, Jung’s argument is that these archetypes are the basic elements or underlying principles of literary works and all the details are added by each generation according to the culture inherent to the time and place. Therefore, the reappearance of archetypes in the work of an author, whether consciously or unconsciously, may be suggestive of specific motifs.

There are some problems facing the application of Jung’s theory to literary texts. To begin with it seems that the theory somehow indirectly calls back the author-oriented approach to literary criticism, and pay very little attention to the text, since its focus is on the collective unconscious and its manifestation through the individual psyche, which Jung recognizes as ‘individuation’.⁹⁹ So, when we talk about literary works, we are talking about them in terms of the influence they received from the collective unconscious in the form of archetypes. According to Jung, these archetypes are shaped by the individual conscious mind before they come into manifestation. This takes us directly back to exploring the author’s mind set up. By itself, this may not be wrong at all. However, it encourages the critic to put all his concentration on the author’s

⁹⁷ M. Bobgan and Deidre Bobgan, *The End of Christian Psychology*, 1997, p, 153.

⁹⁸ C. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Hull C. (trans.). Bollingen Series XX: The Collective Works of Carl Jung, Vol. 9 Part 1, 1959, p, 5.

⁹⁹ M. Bobgan and Deidre Bobgan, *The End of Christian Psychology*, 1997, p, 159.

conscious and unconscious mind and by implication on the collective unconscious and neglect the text. In this regard, the widely accepted fact of intertextuality, which Frye gives serious emphasis to, is removed from Jung's theory. As a result, whatever the text contains it is considered as a product of the author's conscious mind driven by the collective unconscious. Moreover, those features of literary works which reflect the creativity of the individual mind are reduced to pre-existent archetypes and their individuation.

On another level, the effects that are claimed to result from the collective unconscious can easily be explained in other ways without reference to it. This can be best illustrated with the striking example Jung used to prove his argument. Jung presents the similarity that he perceived between visions of one schizophrenia patient with that of Mithraic cult about the sun. Both visions describe the sun as an emitting tube. Therefore, Jung assuming that the man could not have been aware of the writings of the cult, believed that the cause for the striking similarity between the two events to be an archetype from the collective unconscious. However, the validity of his example was later questioned by the evidence Noll presents. Noll reveals that details of the myth had been published several years before the patient described the idea, which leaves a room for the idea that the patient may have gotten his ideas from this book.¹⁰⁰

The bizarreness of the collective unconscious itself is another problem. It is unknown and impossible to define; it can be neither perceived nor deduced on the basis of solid evidence. Thus, how can one be sure that it is a source of anything? The theory brings a similar argument with that of a religious one. God is the source of everything, but he can never be known, except through his creation, which is manifested in the whole universe and this statement is believed without being questioned because it is a religious statement that people accept because they wish to. However, the Jungian theory is not any religion to follow; it is a statement made in an academic discipline where ideas are required to be supported by drawing evidence.

In general terms, Jung seems to be wholly drowned in to theories of psychoanalysis that he almost neglects basic features of literary criticism. As a result, his theories are too difficult to be applied to literary studies and when they are applied the analysis is not likely to be founded on objective evidence. On the other hand, Frye is more inclined to the anthropological side of

¹⁰⁰ R. Noll, *The Jung Cult*, 1996, p, 181.

archetypal criticism. However, his theory incorporates some insights from Jungian psychoanalysis and ideas from disciplines like history and philosophy, which is also one of the reasons that qualified it as a relevant theory for this particular analysis. In the next section, therefore, Frye's archetypal theory is discussed, paying attention to aspects that are most pertinent to this study.

3.2.2. Frye's Archetypal Literary Theory

Archetypal literary theory moved one step ahead with the works of Northrop Frye, a highly influential critic, who attempted to establish an organized principle for criticism. To do this he relied heavily on the insights and methods of anthropology, indeed in his famous essay "The Archetypes of Literature", he calls the search for archetypes "a kind of literary anthropology"¹⁰¹ attests this fact. While he is also undoubtedly inspired by Jungian concepts such as archetypes, his approach of the concepts is significantly different as will be shown in the ensuing discussion.

Like the new critics, Frye contends that literary criticism must be founded on a systematic and scientific basis. Since, in literary studies textual evidence is examined scientifically, Frye believes that criticism has the characteristics of science, yet he feels that there is a missing link that can serve as a central point to the various fragmentary critical approaches. As a result, he discarded all criticisms as 'pseudo-criticism', which, he believed, show the tendency to divert our attention away from the literary work itself.¹⁰²

Frye's major premise rests on the assumption that literary criticism is not self sufficient, and because of this it has to draw ideas from other disciplines.

*In the study of literary scholarship the student becomes aware of an undertow carrying him away from literature. He finds that literature is the central division of the humanities, flanked on one side by history and on the other by philosophy. As literature is not itself an organized structure of knowledge the critic has to turn to the conceptual framework of the historian for events, and to that of the philosopher for ideas.*¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ See N. Frye, "Archetypes of Literature." *Criticism: The Major Statements*, Charles Kaplan and William Anderson. (Eds.), 1991.

¹⁰² Ibid, pp, 502-503.

¹⁰³ N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, 1990, p, 12.

Therefore, he attempted to make criticism inclusive of all the elements that make the discipline self sufficient. In this regard, Frye recognized that structural analysis is fundamental in critical appreciation of texts, however, “in itself it is simply a discreet series of analysis based on the mere existence of the literary structure, without developing any explanation of how the structure came to be what it was and what its nearest relatives are.”¹⁰⁴ This in turn leads him to the assumption that as long as the subject of the study remains at the center, it is possible to take as much history and philosophy as needed in the process of unraveling the complexities of literary texts.

Hence, Frye proposed a new organized principle of criticism taking archetypes as a unifying category of criticism so as to make the discipline autonomous and avert it from going to other disciplines looking for supporting ideas. The newly established central pattern incorporates all the needed elements for criticism. So Frye says:-

*But now that we have got our central pattern of criticism established all these interests are seen as converging on literary criticism instead of receding from it in to psychology and history and the rest. In particular, the literary anthropologist who chases the source of the Hamlet legend from the pre-Shakespeare play to Saxo, and from Saxo to nature-myths, is not running away from Shakespeare: he is drawing closer to the archetypal form which Shakespeare recreated.*¹⁰⁵

In contrast to Jung’s author-oriented approach, Frye advocates a text centered one, which he termed as a ‘literary anthropology’- a search for archetypes. This new organized principle of criticism is “concerned with the way that literature is informed by pre-literary categories such as ritual, myth and folktale.”¹⁰⁶ Here, Frye differs from the new critics in that, for him the literary work cannot be studied in isolation of other works. He rather reflects the view that all pre-literary and literary works are somehow related and form a whole. Thus, the individual work must be studied in relation to what it shares with other works.

Frye’s interest is therefore, in the formal cause of literature or the particular literary form utilized by a writer up on representing a particular subject matter. He asserts that any work of art is not solely a production of the artist, rather “the artist is only its efficient cause: it has form, and

¹⁰⁴ N. Frye, “Archetypes of Literature.” *Criticism: The Major Statements*, Charles Kaplan and William Anderson. (Eds.), 1991, pp, 503-504 .

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, pp, 507-508.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p, 507.

consequently a formal cause.”¹⁰⁷ In order to determine the formal cause of literary works it is important to consider the concept of genre. According to Frye all literary genres are derived from the ‘quest-myth’, implying that all myths are basically concerned with fulfilling some sort of goal. Thus, “the central myth of literature, in its narrative aspect is the quest-myth”, which has the significance of expressing “the vision of the end of social effort, the innocent world of fulfilled desires, the free human society.”¹⁰⁸

The narrative patterns or archetypes noticeable in literary works trace their root from myths which in turn are derived from rituals and oracles. Frye never conceived myth as something false, for him it signifies an important imaginative narrative. The attempt to express human life experience in relation to natural cycles produces rituals and oracles. Thus, myth is taken to be “the imitation of actions near or at the conceivable limits of desire.”¹⁰⁹ A society’s myth of concern is what holds that society together; it is a traditional belief of their identity and what their authority ought to be.

*All the important recurrences in nature, the day, the phases of the moon, the seasons and solstices of the year, the crises of existence from birth to death, get rituals attached to them, and most of the higher religions are equipped with a definitive total body of rituals suggestive, if we may put it so, of the entire range of potentially significant actions in human life. ... Patterns of imagery, on the other hand, or fragments of significance, are oracular in origin, and derive from the epiphanic moment, the flash of instantaneous comprehension with no direct reference to time, ... By the time we get them, in the form of proverbs, riddles, commandments and etiological folktales, there is already a considerable element of narrative in them.*¹¹⁰

These rituals and oracles at some point become ‘myths’ which are narratives constructed around a central human protagonist the pattern of whose actions reflect or correspond to the natural cycles. Myth, thus, serves as “a central informing power that gives archetypal significance to the ritual and archetypal narrative to the oracle.”¹¹¹ Therefore, myth and archetype become one, or as Frye contends, “the myth is the archetype, though it might be convenient to say myth only

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p, 505.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p, 512.

¹⁰⁹ N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, 1990, p, 136.

¹¹⁰ N. Frye, “Archetypes of Literature.” *Criticism: The Major Statements*, Charles Kaplan and William Anderson. (Eds.), 1991, p, 509 .

¹¹¹ Ibid

when referring to narrative and archetype when speaking of significance.”¹¹² Frye suggests sacred scriptures as the first places that should be looked at in order to get a “comprehensive view” of archetypes. Based on this Frye’s archetypes, different from that of the Jungian ones, are primarily referred to an observable pattern of pre-generic narrative forms or myths. Therefore, it is clear that the concept of the collective unconscious has no place in his archetypal theory.

There are only a few species of myth though we can find an infinite number of individual myths derived from them. These species, or archetypes, of myths include myths of creation, of fall, of the destruction of human race in the past (deluge myths) or the future (apocalyptic myths), and of redemption.¹¹³ Therefore, although the specifics may differ from one culture to another, Frye argues that any given story can ultimately be reduced to its archetypal form. However, he has emphasized that this is no simple task since there will be ‘a good deal of displacement’ of the original myth in order to make the story ‘morally acceptable’. Therefore, “it is only after a comparative study of the story type has been made that the metaphorical structure within it begins to emerge.”¹¹⁴ The tendency to displace the myth comes from the need to conventionalize the content of the story. Accordingly, “the central principle of displacement is that what can be metaphorically identified in a myth can only be linked in romance by some form of simile: analogy, significant association, incidental accompanying imagery, and the like.”¹¹⁵

According to Frye literary works are created in three different ways of organizing archetypal myths or “displacement” of the original myth. The first one is the undisplaced myth, which is concerned with gods or demons and the corresponding two contrasting worlds, one desirable and the other undesirable like heaven and hell. Second, we have the more realistic one, which gives emphasis to “content and representation” than the formal aspect of the story. In other words, the archetypal patterns are highly concealed or great displacement has taken place. In the last one, which is also intermediate between the above two, the mythical patterns are suggested implicitly.¹¹⁶ Frye called this particular pattern “romantic”, but, of course, in a completely different sense from that of the 18th century romantic literary movement. Romance can exist in two different forms, “a secular form dealing with chivalry and knight-errantry, and a religious

¹¹² Ibid

¹¹³ N. Frye, *Words with Power*, 1990, p, 23.

¹¹⁴ N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, 1990, p, 137.

¹¹⁵ Ibid

¹¹⁶ Ibid, pp, 139-140.

form devoted to legends of saints. Both lean heavily on miraculous violation of natural law for their interest as stories.”¹¹⁷

The subject texts of this study differ from one another regarding the level of displacement in their underlying mythical narrative pattern. However, *Gedla Lalibela* and *Mistire Semay Wemidir* narrating the miraculous deeds and visions of Ethiopian saints are religious. Whereas *Kibere Nagest* comprises a little bit of both religious and secular forms. On the one hand, it tells us the adventurous story of King Dawit, who snatched the Ark of the Covenant from the Israelites and on the other this story is supported by various fragments of religious stories, therefore, tends to be religious too.

Following this Frye, based on the hero's power classifies literary works into five categories.

*If superior in **kind** both to other men and to the environment of other men, the hero is a divine being, and the story about him will be a **myth** in the common sense of a story about a god. If superior in **degree** to other men and to his environment, the hero is the typical hero of **romance**, whose actions are marvelous but who is himself identified as a human being. ... If superior in degree to other men but not to his natural environment, the hero is a leader. ... If superior neither to other men nor to his environment, the hero is one of us: we respond to a sense of his common humanity, and demand from the poet the same canons of probability that we find in our own experience. ... If inferior in power or intelligence to ourselves, so that we have the sense of looking down on a scene of bondage, frustration, or absurdity, the hero belongs to the **ironic mode**.*¹¹⁸

From the three texts that will be analyzed in this study, the hero of *Gedle Lalibela*, who had an angel companion and also travelled through the seven heavens and learned the mysteries of God plus come back to life after being dead for three days can be taken as a good example of the hero of romance.

In *Anatomy of Criticism*, where most of his conceptions about archetypal criticism are reflected, Frye introduces two basic categories of literature, identified as fictional and thematic, which are inclusive of all kinds of literature. He draws this distinction on the basis of the communication between the story's hero and his society, and the writer and the writer's society or his audience, which he recognized as internal and external relations respectively. Accordingly, literary works like novels and plays are fictional, since the internal relation is more intense than the external

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p, 34.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p, 34.

one; hence fictional, while such texts as essays are thematic for their primary interest is in *dianoia* or theme.¹¹⁹

Nonetheless, it does not mean that the fictional element is missing from thematic writings and the thematic from that of the fictional ones, rather “every work of literature has both a fictional and a thematic aspect, and the question of which is more important is often simply a matter of opinion or emphasis in interpretation.”¹²⁰ The subject texts of this analysis incline more to their thematic aspect. The narratives seem to be more focused on conveying some important meaning to the readers than just telling mere stories or they are the kind of narratives that spark in one’s mind the question, to use Frye’s expression, “what is the point of this story?” rather than “How is this story going to turn out?”¹²¹

The meaning of a work of art must be viewed as the integrity of its total form. Frye elaborates this point, as he often does, by drawing analogy between music and literature. “We may call the rhythm of literature the narrative, and the pattern, the simultaneous mental grasp of the verbal structure, the meaning or significance. We hear or listen to a narrative, but when we grasp a writer’s total pattern we ‘see’ what he means.”¹²² *Kibre Negest* could be a good example of this, if we just hear the different narratives in this book we will only be listening to a group of distinct narratives. But the moment we start ‘seeing’ the pattern that strongly holds these distinct narratives together, the meaning of the total narrative slowly shines and we begin to understand what it is about.

In addition to this, Frye finds a strong relationship between mythology and ideology, where ideology refers to “structures of social authority”. He thinks that mythologies or archetypal patterns can be viewed through ideologies, hence “any work of literature will reflect ideological concerns of its time”.¹²³ Accordingly, an ideology starts by providing its own version of whatever in its traditional mythology it considers relevant, and uses this version to form and enforce a social contract.¹²⁴ Every society creates its own mythology or adapts one from others,

¹¹⁹ Frye thinks the best translation of *dianoia* is theme (Ibid, p, 52).

¹²⁰ Ibid, p, 108.

¹²¹ Ibid, p, 52.

¹²² N. Frye, “Archetypes of Literature.” *Criticism: The Major Statements*, Charles Kaplan and William Anderson. (Eds.), 1991, p, 508 .

¹²³ N. Frye, *Words with Power*, 1990, p, 43.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p, 23.

but not all are given equal emphasis. Some myths give special meaning to the society that cherished them, hence are more privileged than others. This is why Frye asserts that "... nearly every civilization has, in its stock of traditional myths, a particular group which is thought of as more serious, more authoritative, more educational and closer to fact and truth than the rest."¹²⁵ In the case of this study also the major argument is that Enochic myths have special place among the Ethiopians, thus the people are highly influenced by them.

In conclusion, it can be inferred that Frye is influenced by both Jung's and Frazer's conceptions, yet instead of fully immersing in any of these scholars' theories he managed to decide how much of their insights should be used in the process of establishing, what he called an "organized principle of criticism". In fact, he was cautious of this danger that he recognized the critic's concern being quite different from that of the psychologist's as well as the anthropologist's. The critic's business is to show "how all literary genres are derived from the quest-myth, but the derivation is a logical one within the science of criticism."¹²⁶ Ultimately, the goal of criticism is to discern the archetypal form which authors recreated in their individual works and the social function of recreating the particular myth.

"Standing back" from the subject texts of this study, as Frye urges us to do while examining literary works so as to see its archetypal organization, the following chapter is invested on scrutinizing these texts from a background stand point of Enochic myths. In the analysis two major points from Frye's theory discussed above, namely displacement and *dianoia*, are considered. Accordingly, the displacement or significant association made in the narratives of the subject texts with respect to the two Enochic myths and the possible reason for the writers' choice of these myths from the society's stack of myths is one area of focus, while the *dianoia* or the point that each writer is trying to make to their contemporary society and the generations to come, is the other. These two points are the bases of Frye's archetypal literary theory; hence the ensuing analysis heavily relies on them.

¹²⁵ N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, 1990, p, 54.

¹²⁶ Ibid

CHAPTER FOUR: - THE INFLUENCE OF 1ENOCH AS REFLECTED IN KIBRE NEGEST, METSIHAFA MISTIRE SEMAY WEMIDIR AND GEDLE LALIBELA

4.1. Introduction

As has been stated in the conceptual framework, where Frye's theory of archetypes is thoroughly discussed, myths are pre-literary and literary narrative structures or archetypes that underlie all literary works. So when we observe every literary work from its background we will be able to see the basic organizing principle or the archetypal myth, which has been displaced on the level of content but in structural level or in essence still exists underneath. Accordingly, this analysis is devoted to prove, that the underlying narrative structures of the three subject texts of this analysis are the two major myths derived from *1Enoch*; the journey myth and the fallen angels myth.

All myths in their essential nature are quests to fulfill some social desire; therefore, literary works are aimed at satisfying some human need. Every society has a unique group of myths that are seen as more reliable and more fitting to carry this task than the rest. Similar to that of Frye's conception, I would argue in this analysis that, just like every other society, the Ethiopians also have a group of myths, which have special place in their life and Enochic myths are the most prominent of all.

Frye is of a view that there is a strong relationship between these special myths and the life of the people among whom they are celebrated. They have the power to shape the thought pattern of people, thereby influence how life is perceived, evaluated and lived in their society. Scholars generally argue that the tradition, thought and literature of Ethiopian people can hardly be understood without recourse to *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*.¹²⁷ However, among the great corpus of Ethiopian literature, especially Geez, *Kibre Negest*, *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir* and *Gedle Lalibela* share unique characteristics in that the influence of Enochic myths can be deeply felt in them than the rest. The texts speak of, among other things, adventures of heroes,

¹²⁷ See I.K. Cush, *Enoch the Ethiopian: The Lost Prophet of the Bible Greater than Abraham Holier than Moses*, 2000, p, 151, W. Yifru, ed. "An Inquiry in to the Ethiopic Book of Enoch", *Henok: Journal of Historical and Philosophical Thought*, Vol.1, 1990, pp, 65.

legends of saints and greatness of Ethiopia both in the eyes of human beings and of God. In this chapter the influence of Enochic myths among the Ethiopian people is analyzed and discussed in the light of the above mentioned three texts, through which the actualization of this phenomenon can be clearly seen. By doing so the attempt is to explain the importance of these myths and the hold they have taken on the thought pattern of the society who cherished them for so long.

Apart from this, when archetypal myths are recreated in literary works they will be displaced at different levels, in other words associations will be made and analogies drawn. Since the major aim of the study is to prove the influence of Enochic myths in the selected texts, displacement is one of Frye's theoretical concepts applied in the following analysis. Again, literary works can take two different forms of communication based on writers' primary interest. Accordingly, some are interested in narrating stories focusing on their fictional world and movement of characters, while others strive to impart some important message to their readers through their works. It is only possible to know what a given literary work is about when the work is seen as a total integral whole of its individual parts. As has been discussed in the previous chapter the three subject texts of these analysis fall in the group of those writings that Frye recognized as thematic; hence *dianoia* or the thematic aspect of the three texts has become another concept of Frye's theory that is operational in this study. Therefore, in the following analysis, besides examining displacement in the stories of the subject texts, I have also given due attention to the discussion of the meaning that these texts are trying to communicate or the major reason that their writers ever bother to compose them.

4.2. *Kibre Negest* (Glory of Kings)

The book known as *Kibre Negest* is a vast history-like narrative developed around the legendary Ethiopian Queen Makida. In the story we read that Makida went to Jerusalem to visit Solomon, the well renowned king of the Israelites. When the queen gets back from her visit, she was pregnant with Solomon's child, who later became the first king of Ethiopia, under his coronation name Dawit but traditionally he is known as Menelik. When the child had grown he went to Jerusalem to see his father, who offered him his place. Since Menelik refused to sit on his father's throne and rule the Israelites, Solomon ordered the first born sons of the nobilities of Israel to move to Ethiopia with his son and assist him rule the country. Then, King Dawit, with

the help of the nobilities' sons, is said to steal and take the Israelite's Ark of the Covenant to Ethiopia and established the famous Solomonic dynasty in the country.

Until recently, this book had been highly influential in the Ethiopian government system; it strongly emphasizes that only kings descended from the Solomonic line are legitimate and if anyone else attempts to take the power from them it will be against God's will. This statement was highly regarded both by the ruling class and the public. The letter that the Solomonic king Yohannes wrote to Lord Granvis requesting for this book, because he believed that the people of Ethiopia will not recognize his authority without it, is a clear pointer of this fact.¹²⁸

Even though the precise date for this book has not been accurately identified, it is believed to be written in the last phase of the Axumite period (700A.D-1000A.D).¹²⁹ But the copy of this book known to us today, which was written by a clergy man called Nibure'id Yeshaq from Axsum, can only be traced back to the 14th century A.D. However, the narrative has been circulating among the people centuries before being composed in its current form. Accordingly, "its author, the Nibure'id Yeshaq of Aksum, was thus, mainly redactor and interpreter of material which had long been known but had not until then found a co-ordinating hand, an expository mind, and a great national need."¹³⁰

On the other hand, the author of the book claims that it was written in the time of King Solomon, which is around 900 B.C.

ይመስል እስከ ሞቱ ለሰሎሞን ዘተጽሕፈ.፡፡ ወእምድኅረ ሞቱሰ ለሰሎሞን እምባዕዳን ነቢያት ዘተጽሕፈ አምሳሊ.፡፡¹³¹

It seems to be written until the time of Solomon's death. The rest is written by other prophets after his death.¹³²

¹²⁸ Sergew Gelaw, ed. *Kibire Negest*, 1994E.C. (This is a Geez edition of the book with its Amharic translation and the above quote is taken from the editor's introduction).

¹²⁹ Wossene Yifru, ed. "An Inquiry in to the Ethiopic Book of Enoch" *Henok: Journal of Historical and Philosophical Thought*, Vol.2, 1990, p, 7.

¹³⁰ E. Ullendroff *Ethiopia and the Bible*, 1988, p, 75.

¹³¹ Sergew Gelaw, ed. *Kibire Negest*, 1994E.C, p, 106.

¹³² This and all the subsequent translations of citations from the three subject texts of the analysis are mine.

This also seems to be the belief of later time Ethiopians. Thus, concerning the matter a 17th century Ethiopian intellectual Abba Gorgorios has included the following statement in his letter sent to Job Ludolf, who asked him about the precise date of *Kibre Negest*.

**ባህቱ እሙር ውእቱ ከመ ተገብረ በዘመነ ኦሪት አመ አምነት ኢትዮጵያ
በእግዚአብሔር ወተመጠወት ሕገ በመንግስቱ ለእብነ እለሐኪም ንጉሠ ኢትዮጵያ
ዘውእቱ ወልዱ ለሰሎሞን ንጉሥ ቀዳሚሆሙ ለነገሥታቲነ፡፡¹³³**

It is only known that the book was written by the time Ethiopia believed in God and accepted the law in the reign of Ebine Elehakim,¹³⁴ king of Ethiopia, who is the son of Solomon and the first from our kings.

However, this is not likely to be true because it is obvious that the author is well familiar with the New Testament books from which he generously borrowed many stories and concepts, while he was trying to develop his narrative. Moreover, major historical events as late as the 6th century A.D., like the famous war the Ethiopian King Kaleb fought against the people of Nagran, are recorded in the book. But above all the famous church father Gorgorios and the 318 bishops of the council of Nicaea, whom Nibure'id Yishaq used to present his story in the form of question and answer, lived long after Christ. Based on the above mentioned evidence and many more, the editor of *Kibre Negest* in his introduction to the book's recent edition, asserts that the production period of the book is clearly after the 7th century A.D.¹³⁵

The above mentioned edition of *Kibre Negest* has enclosed the Geez version of the narrative together with its Amharic translation and the Arabic one, from which Nibure'id Yishaq claims he has translated the Geez. Both versions are the same in their central narrative, which is concerned with the journey of the Ethiopian Queen Makida and her succeeding son King Dawit to Jerusalem to visit King Solomon. However, the Arabic version we find in this publication in its Amharic translation and accommodated in 9 pages, is a much shorter narrative than the Geez one, which is expanded in to 117 chapters covering 150 pages. Therefore, the expanded narrative in the Geez version must be the work of Nibure'id Yishak and the five other men that he thanked at the end of his book for helping him compose this narrative. Since it is the one with extended

¹³³ Sergew Gelaw, ed. *Kibre Negest*, 1994E.C, p, 7 (editor's introduction).

¹³⁴ Ebine Elehakim is King Dawit's name before his coronation.

¹³⁵ Ibid, p, 8 of the introduction.

elaboration of the glory and legitimacy of kings of Ethiopia, the Geez version of the book must have been the one that played an important role in the Ethiopian government system, hence it is also the one considered in this analysis.

The content of *Kibre Negest* is obscure and at first reading seems to be no more than a bunch of borrowed stories from the Old Testament, New Testament and other oral narratives, muddled in to a single book. The only narrative that appears to have some pattern is the story related to the Ethiopian Queen Makida, which is the central narrative of the book. However, a form starts to emerge as its individual parts are scrutinized in relation to the point that the writer is trying to make.¹³⁶ But broadly speaking, the narrative identity of *Kibre Negest*, in its many aspects, resembles that of *I Enoch's*. The enumeration of every patriarch in the blood line of Christ starting from Adam to Jesse the father of King David in the form of revision of history (chapters 3-16) including the story of Noah (chapters 6-8), the Messianic office of Christ (chapters 106-113), the fallen angels narrative (chapter 100), and the ultimate triumph of Ethiopia and the final punishment of the Jews on the Day of Judgment (chapters 113-117) are all reflections of *I Enoch's* historiography, Christology, angelology and eschatology. The influence can further be felt at a deeper level when the book is seen against the background of the two Enochic myths reviewed in chapter two of this study.

4.2.1. The Two Enochic myths and *Kibre Negest*

The heroine of *Kibre Negest*, Queen Makida and her son King Dawit are ordinary people in the sense that they have no extraordinary experience as most heroes of romance do, except the one occasion, where Dawit and his followers are said to travel against the law of gravity; floating on air with high speed using the power emanating from the Ark they had carried.¹³⁷ Apart from this there is no unusual action or revelation related to the Queen Makida story. In this regard the narrative of *Kibre Negest* is of a “high mimetic mode”¹³⁸, i.e. the story is very close to real life experiences. Since Makida and Dawit are only superior in degree to other men, based on Frye’s classification of heroes and also as the story tells us, they are leaders. They have “authority,

¹³⁶ This point is discussed in the following pages of this section.

¹³⁷ See Sergew Gelaw, ed. *Kibre Negest*, 1994E.C, p, 50.

¹³⁸ See N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, 1990, p, 137.

passion, and powers of expression far greater than ours”.¹³⁹ Accordingly, the queen is portrayed as being highly passionate about wisdom and we read her in the book philosophizing on the subject.

ጥበብሰ ልዕልት ይእቲ ወብዕልት፡፡ ኣነ ኣፈቅራ ከመ እም፡፡ ወይእቲ ተሐቅፈኒ ከመሕጻና፡፡ ኣነ እተሉ ኣሰራ ለጥበብ ወይእቲ ትከውነኒ ለዝሉፋ፡፡¹⁴⁰

Wisdom is a princess. I love her like a mother and she embraces me as her baby. I follow her path and she will protect me forever.

In *IEnoch* we find a similar kind of personified description of wisdom, which points to the fact that what the writer of *Kibre Negest* borrowed from this book is more than a frame to his narrative. “Wisdom found no place where she might dwell; Then a dwelling-place was assigned her in the heavens. Wisdom went forth to make her dwelling among the children of men, And found no dwelling-place: Wisdom returned to her place, And took her seat among the angels.”¹⁴¹

The two Enochic myths can be clearly noticed as an underlying narrative structure that the story of *Kibre Negest* is framed, when the book’s overall narrative pattern is considered. In fact, this is the only way that the content of every chapter of this book can make any sense as part of a single narrative. The journey myth in *IEnoch* can be summarized as a man who went out on an extraordinary journey to the heavens and mysterious places of earth, and returned home endowed with terrestrial and extraterrestrial wisdom. Thus, we can say that Enoch’s quest was for this wisdom, which gives the book its significant value in the eyes of, even, today’s readers. Likewise, we see the major figures of *Kibre Negest* running after a similar kind of quest and it is at this point the significant association, which is the central principle of displacement, can be detected in relation to the journey myth.

The story of Makida, around which the entire narrative that we now read in *Kibre Negest*, is developed based on an initial point taken from the biblical story of the Queen of Sheba who heard the fame of King Solomon and went to Jerusalem to prove him with hard questions.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Ibid p, 34.

¹⁴⁰ Sergew Gelaw, ed. *Kibre Negest*, 1994E.C, p, 15.

¹⁴¹ R.H. Charles (trans.), *The Book of Enoch*, ed. By W.Oesterley, 1917, chapter 42:1-2.

¹⁴² The King James Version of the Holy Bible, 1Kings chapter 10:1-13.

When Queen Makida heard about Solomon’s extraordinary wisdom from her servant Tamrin the merchant, a great urge to see and hear everything that she had been told, arouse in her. Thus,

ወአጥብዐት ልባ ከመ ትሑር ኅቤሁ፡፡¹⁴³

She decided in her heart to go to him.

The one and only reason for Makida’s journey to Jerusalem is her thirst for wisdom. The following statement is taken from the long speech she made to her servants when she was about to leave.

አንሰ እፈቅድ ጥበብ፡፡ ወልብየኒ ተኅሥሣ ለአእምሮ፡፡ እስመ ተነደፍኩ በፍቅረ ጥበብ፡፡ ወተስሕብኩ በአሕባለ አእምሮ፡፡¹⁴⁴

I long for wisdom and my heart searches for wisdom. I am possessed by the love of wisdom and held by the cords of knowledge.

But she came back from her visit laden with more than wisdom; she happened to conceive the “so-called” first King of Ethiopia, Dawit from King Solomon. Dawit went on a quest, when he was 22, to a very same person and country that his mother did. Similar to his mother, wisdom was the only thing that mattered to him, so he refused all the offers, Solomon made to him, including his throne. Dawit explicitly proves this when he was asked by his father to stay in Israel and rule the prosperous country.

ወርቅሰ ወብሩር ወአልባስ ኢተሐጥኦ እምብሔርነ ወባሕቱ አነ መጻእኩ ከመ እስማዕ ጥበብከ ወእርእይ ገጸከ...¹⁴⁵

Gold, silver and garment are not rare in our country but I came here for the sole reason of hearing your wisdom and seeing your countenance...

Therefore, both the Ethiopian queen and king in their journeys to Jerusalem were clearly running after wisdom and regarding this quest they are identified with the seventh antediluvian patriarch Enoch. However, unlike Enoch, whose journey was concluded by bringing books that have

¹⁴³ Sergew Gelaw, ed. *Kibire Negest*, 1994E.C, p,14.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, p, 15.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, p, 31.

recorded the revealed wisdom to his sons, all that resulted from the royalties' journeys was the Ark of the Covenant, which many Ethiopians, even today, believe to be found in the country. But how does the royalties' quest end up in bringing the Ark when what they were after was wisdom? This question is related to the overall meaning of *Kibre Negest*, so it will be answered under the section where the major point that the author of the book tried to make is discussed.¹⁴⁶ Thus, I will directly pass on to discussing the book's narrative structure in relation to the second Enochic myth.

The narrative identity of *Kibre Negest* is also drawn from the fallen angels myth, but rather in a more abstract way than the journey myth. Thus, as Frye mentions will be the case in most instances, identifying this mythical pattern as a structuring frame for the narrative of *Kibre Negest* is not an easy task. It is true that on chapter 100 the writer has inserted the fallen angels myth in its originality, except here the myth has included a slightly different reason for the fall of the angels from that of *IEnoch*. Yet, the fact that the myth appears in one of the chapters does not assure that its narrative pattern has influenced that of *Kibre Negest*'s. Just like many chapters of the book, this one also seems to be there with no relevance to the central narrative. However, the mythical pattern begins to emerge when the general form of the story is seen in relation to this myth.

According to *Kibre Negest* the angels came down to earth to be tempted in human flesh and mind so as to prove their perfection to God, who over heard them gossiping about Adam's weakness for corrupting his body and soul by eating from the forbidden fruit. God told these angels that it is not appropriate to be conceited over Adam, and attempted to defend him by explaining that his human mind and body was the reason for his act of sinning. But the angels never found this to be enough reason for behaving as Adam did; therefore, on their request, God allowed them to have human mind and body, live among men and prove their excellence.

**ወአንተሙኒ በከመ ፈቀድክሙ ይኩን ላዕሌክሙ ኅሊና ሰብእ ወስጋ ሰብእ፡፡ ...
ወሰቤሃ ተውሀቦሙ ምስለ ቃሉ ሥጋ ወደም ወልቦ እንለ እመሕያው ወተወርወ**

¹⁴⁶ See section 4.1.2.

እመልዕልተ ሰማይ ወወረዳ ምድረ ... ወኢተዐገሱ አሐተ ሰዑተ፡፡ አላ ነሥኡ ሎሙ ለርእሶሙ እምኔሆን ዘነረዩ አንስተያ፡፡ ወአበሱ ምስሌሆን፡፡¹⁴⁷

‘Let you have human mind and human flesh as you wish.’ ... At that moment with His word were given unto them flesh, blood and mind of human beings, then they got thrown from the highest heaven and descended up on earth. ... They endure not even for an hour but took wives for each of them from the women they saw and sinned with them.

This was the 14th century Ethiopian writer’s highly imaginative explanation for the weird story of *I Enoch* regarding the spiritual beings, who become caught up in bodily activities. This explanation, surprisingly, meets Origen’s fascinating angelology on the transitional nature of angelic bodies.

*When intended for the more imperfect spirits, it [the material substance] becomes solidified, thickens, then forms the bodies of this visible world. If it is serving higher intelligences, it shines with the brightness of the celestial bodies and serves as a grab for the angels of God, and the children of the Resurrection. ... If any rational, incorporeal, invisible creature is negligent, it will gradually fall to lower levels and there assume a body. The sort of body it assumes will depend on the place it falls in to. Thus, it will first take on an ethereal body, then an aerial one; as it draws near the earth it will put on a coarser one still, and in the end it will be harnessed to human flesh.*¹⁴⁸

Kibire Negest tells us the angels, who were so proud of their perfection [this is something that can be related to Origen’s notion of “negligence” in the above quotation], now have human body and mind, and thus could not sustain their previous purity even for an hour. Consequently, human nature is considered as basically sinful. Further, we read in the story that the women who sinned together with the angels became pregnant and died from it because they were unable to give a natural birth to the giants, who came out of them slitting their belly. Whereas, the proud angels, who made God angry, were despised and sentenced to be imprisoned in darkness until they receive their final punishment on the Day of Judgment. The angels caused all this destruction because of their proudness. Enoch’s dispensation, perhaps, can be seen as God taking

¹⁴⁷ Sergew Gelaw, ed. *Kibire Negest*, 1994E.C, p, 119.

¹⁴⁸ E. C. Prophet, *Fallen Angels and the Origin of Evil: Why Church Fathers Suppress the Book of Enoch*. 2000. (ed), pp, 367-368.

his revenge on these proud angels, as He ascended him to heaven, thus privilege man in their place for they have left their heavenly abode to prove that they are better than Adam. Therefore, the writer of *Kibre Negest* strongly advises to keep out of such proudness directed towards demeaning others.

It is with respect to the above point that I argue that the fallen angels myth has influenced the narrative structure of *Kibre Negest*. “In a myth we can have a sun-god or a tree-god; in a romance we may have a person who is significantly associated with the sun or trees. In more realistic modes the association becomes less significant and more a matter of incidental, even coincidental or accidental, imagery.”¹⁴⁹ The Jews, who are described in *Kibre Negest* as being very proud of their identity as the chosen people of God, are identified with the proud angels. The association created here is significant and far from being accidental as the textual evidences prove it to be. The following statement is taken from the speech recorded in *Kibre Negest* as being made by Azariah, son of the Jewish priest Zadok.

**ንሕነሰ ወአበዊን ቀደምት ንቤ አልቦ ዘኅረየ እግዚአብሔር ዘእንበለ ቤተ ያዕቆብ፡፡
ኪያነ ኅረየ ወኪያነ አብዝነ፡፡ ወኪያነ ሠምረ፡፡ ወአንገሠነ ወረሰየነ ሰብአ ቤቱ
ወመማክርቲሁ ለሰብሐቲሁ ወለታቦተ ኪዳነ፡፡**¹⁵⁰

We and our forefathers say there is none that God chose except the house of Jacob. He chose us and made us many. He loved us. He crowned us, made us His family and council for His worship and Ark of the Covenant.

The tone of the above statement clearly indicates that the Jews consider themselves as being superior to every other nation of the world for they are the chosen people of God. *Kibire Negest* also tells us that the Jews soon turned their back on their God and start worshipping idols. Not only this but they are frequently denounced for gossiping after their leaders¹⁵¹ therefore, God despised them and they were deprived of their privileged position. After this the Israelites were

¹⁴⁹ N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, 1990, p, 37.

¹⁵⁰ Sergew Gelaw, ed. *Kibire Negest*, 1994E.C, p, 100.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, p, 42, 112...

soon replaced by the humble Ethiopians, whom once the proud Jewish leader Solomon belittled as pagans,¹⁵² but later chose the God of Israel over their idols.

**ወእግዚአብሔር አፍቀሮ ሙ ለሕዝቡ ኢትዮጵያ እስመ ዘእንበለ ያእምሩ ሕጎ ሠረው
ጣዖቶሙ።። ወእለሰ ተውሀቦሙ ሕገ እግዚአብሔር ገብሩ ጣዖተ።። ወሰገዱ
ለአማልክት ዘይጸልእ እግዚአብሔር።።¹⁵³**

God loves the people of Ethiopia for they have destroyed their idols when they were not aware of His law. But those who were given God's law made idols and kneeled down for deities that God hates.

Clearly, the author has structured the narrative of *Kibre Negest* according to the mythical patterns of the fallen angels myth, which he has slightly modified.

Making some sort of modification in the original myth was important for two reasons. First, if the narrative is supposed to contribute to the intensification of the Jews' wickedness, the reason for the angels fall must be something close to the sin that *Kibre Negest* condemn them with, which is proudness, gossip and idolatry. Thus, the basic reason for the angels' fall is said to be gossip and proudness, which is different from *IEnoch's* explanation of the case as sexual obsession towards the daughters of men. According to *Kibre Negest* the sexual obsession and the consequent violence on earth were due to the human mind and body they possess as a result of their initial sin, i.e. gossip and proudness.

Second, the angels are said to possess human body, which is something we cannot find in *IEnoch* except rare verses that imply the case. But it was necessary to add this point to the original myth if the story should make any sense at all. It is almost inconceivable to the human mind how a spiritual being could possibly have sexual intercourse with flesh. As has been discussed in chapter two of this paper, this point had also created a major controversy among early church fathers and led to the suppression of *IEnoch*. Thus, the writer displaces the myth in to human direction so as to bring it close to the experiences of this world. This way the myth can be used to its maximum effect. The fact that the fallen angels myth, in its almost original form, is inserted in the narrative of *Kibre Negest*, preceded by the many chapters that emphasize the

¹⁵² Ibid, p, 32.

¹⁵³ Ibid, p, 107.

Jews' wickedness with their consequent fall and succeeded by chapter 115, which deals with their punishment on the Day of Judgment, is a clear indication of the writer's conscious move towards framing his work after the narrative pattern of this myth. Therefore, the writer not only adopted the narrative structure of the fallen angels myth but further intensified his point by drawing a sharp analogy between the angels and the Jews, and planting the original myth, which he slightly modified, at a very strategic position in his book.

In general, the narrative framework of *Kibre Negest* shows great affinity to Enochic myths. The journeys of Queen Makida and her son King Dawit to Jerusalem in search of wisdom is a more natural analogy of the extraordinary journey of Enoch through heavens and earth to learn the mysteries of nature, while the disgrace and fall of the chosen people of God, the Jews, and the privilege of the former pagan Ethiopians, is a pure imitation of the angelic descent and human ascent incident of *IEnoch*. As Frye emphasizes, the meaning of a work of art is a product of the general form. In the following section, I will discuss how the different narratives of *Kibre Negest*, which are structured according to the mythical patterns of *IEnoch*, converge to make the overall meaning of the work or, in Frye's terms the *dianoia* that can be discerned from the total form.

4.2.2. *Dianoia/ Thematic Implications of Kibre Negest*

**ሀቡኬ ንግባእ ወነሐሱብ ወንድግን ዘናዐሲ ወናሐዕዕ እምነገሱተ ምድር በሕግ
ወሥርዓት በክብር ወበዕባይ እምቀዳሚ እስከ ደጎሪ።¹⁵⁴**

Allow us to begin comparing from the beginning to the end; the law, regulation and glory that makes us superior and inferior to the kings of the world.

This is the statement that the author of *Kibre Negest* opens up his book after the usual praise of the God Head, which is typical of Ethiopian religious writings. If one keeps in mind this statement while reading the rest of the text or use it as a looking glass to see the picture the writer is trying to give his readers throughout the book, then, understanding the main point of this work should not be so hard. Whereas, if the reader jumps here and there, as many thinks the story of *Kibre Negest* does, without referring back or relating the subject to this statement, perhaps, the

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, p, 2.

central narrative or the journey of Makida and the subsequent happenings will be the only sensible things that he/she could find in this book. Unfortunately, this is proved to be the experience of many readers.¹⁵⁵ Therefore, in this analysis the above quoted opening statement of *Kibre Negest* is used as a point of reference from which every other idea included in the book is examined. Apparently, the writer himself has said this is what he basically wants to talk about, and as he surely will not demean his own country; assuring the greatness of Ethiopia is his ultimate target. Thus, the real question to be answered in the following discussion is, how does the writer make his people superior to other nations of the world.

Nibure'id Yishaq begins his scheme with the description of the then current image of Ethiopian people, i.e. around 900 B.C, which is considered as being inferior to the Israelites. The inferiority is said to be due to the fact that the Ethiopians used to practice idolatry.

ወንሕነሰ ንሰግድ ለፀሐይ በከመ መሀሩነ አበዊነ እስመ ንብል ውእቱ ፀሐይ ንጉሃሙ ለአማልክት፡፡ ወባዕዳንሂ እለ እምታሕቴነ ቦ እለ ይሰግዱ ለአእባን ወቦ እለ ይሰግዱ ለአዐዋዎ ወቦ እለ ይሰግዱ ለግልፈዋት ወቦ እለ ይሰግዱ ለአምሳለ ወርቅ ወብሩር፡፡¹⁵⁶

But we kneel down for the sun as our forefathers taught us, and we say the sun is the king of all deities. There are also others, under our authority, who kneel down to stones, some to trees, some to idols and some to gold and silver images.

The above statement is a confirmation of the existence of idolatry among the people of Ethiopia by their queen Makida. This is the writer's clever move towards solving the problem by first admitting and accepting its reality, because we soon read the queen explaining the case as lack of awareness of the one real God in their country. Then he slowly continues to construct the great image of Ethiopia that he said he wanted to tell us about at the beginning of his work. Accordingly, after having some chat with King Solomon, Queen Makida automatically believes in the God of Israel, and declares that every people of Ethiopia shall accept the Ark of the Covenant.

¹⁵⁵ See D.N. Levine, *Greater Ethiopia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society*, 2000, pp, 93-95.

¹⁵⁶ Sergew Gelaw, ed. *Kibre Negest*, 1994E.C, p, 19.

ወትቤ ንግሥት እምይእቤሰ ኢይሰግድ ለፀሐይ ኣላ እሰግድ ለፈጣሬ ፀሐይ ኣምላክ እስራኤል። ወይእቲ ታቦተ ኣምላክ እስራኤል ትኩነኒ እግዝእትየ ሊተ ወለዘርእየ እምድነሬየ ወለኩሉ መንግሥትየ እለ እምታሕቴየ።¹⁵⁷

And the queen said, hereafter I shall not keel down for the sun but for the creator of the sun, the God of Israel. Let this Ark of the God of Israel also be a queen to me and my descendants after me, and also to the entire province under my authority.

Queen Makida was not only interested in the God of Israel but also His Ark of Covenant. In fact, her focus seems to be more drawn to the Ark than the general belief in the God of Israel. This is the right place to discuss the question raised in section 4.1.1., i.e. the quest of Makida and her son Dawit to Jerusalem in search of wisdom and its surprising conclusion in bringing the Ark to their country Ethiopia. In order to unravel this mystery, considering things spoken in relation to the Ark and wisdom is very important.

When Makida first consulted with her councilmen and households concerning her journey to Jerusalem in search of wisdom, her people advised her that there is no need to do so because she already have what she was looking for.

... እግዝእትነ ጥበብሰ ኢተነጥኣ እምኔኪ። ወበጥበብኪ ዘታፈቅሪ ጥበብ።¹⁵⁸

Our lady! You are not deprived of wisdom but because of your acumen you love wisdom.

However, the queen never held back from taking the journey because what she was looking for was something different from what she already had. Makida was well aware that Solomon’s wisdom, unlike hers which she is said to naturally awaken from her heart,¹⁵⁹ was an extraordinary one given by God. Later when she was in Jerusalem Solomon himself has told her that there was not a single thing he could do by himself without the divine power and that he was also a mere servant before the Ark of the Covenant from up on which the God of Israel speaks to him. Thus, it was this kind of wisdom that Queen Makida was after; the God of Israel and His Ark of covenant.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid
¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p, 16.
¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p, 17.

According to *Kibre Negest* the Ark of the Covenant is the first creature of God and later was given to the Israelites as a symbol of His power.

**እምቅድመ ኩሉ ፍጥረት እመኒ መላእክት ወእምቅድመ ሰማያት ወምድር
ወእምቅድመ ምድንግታተ ወልጎታተ ባሕር ዘፈጠራ ለታቦተ ኪዳን።¹⁶⁰**

He created the Ark of the Covenant before the angels, heavens and earth, before the deeps of the sea and all creatures.

This creature is further described as a very powerful object that shines like rare precious stones of the earth and serves as a dwelling place for God’s spirit and a cure for human beings.¹⁶¹ For the Israelites, the Ark is of great value; it was with the power that emanated from it they were able to defeat their enemies, reverse nature, and experience many other miracles. Queen Makida, long before she visited Jerusalem, had collected all the information about the Jews’ religion including the nature of the Ark from her servant Tamrin the merchant, and when she decided to move to the place, her heart was ready to embrace the God of Israel and His miraculous Ark. The way she described wisdom, which she declares to be her quest, is also very similar to the above description of the Ark.

**ጥበብሰ ትኔይስ እምነ ኩሉ ዘተፈጥረ ዲበ ምድር። በምንትኬ ያስተማስልዋ
ለጥበብ። በታሕተ ሰማይ ትጥዕም እምነ መዓር። ወታስተፌሥሕ እምነ ወይን።
ወታበርህ እምነ ፀሐይ ወትትፈቀር እምነ ዕንቁ ክቡር።...¹⁶²**

Wisdom is superior to everything created on earth. What thing below heaven can possibly symbolize wisdom? She is sweeter than honey. She feels with happiness more than wine does. She is brighter than the sun and more valued than precious stone.

The brightness, preciousness and superiority above all creatures attributed to wisdom here are the major qualities previously employed to describe the Ark of the Covenant. Consequently, it seems like what the queen identified as wisdom was not wisdom per se, but the Ark of the Covenant. This was her quest and she was determined to get it. So, next I shall discuss further textual

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p, 6.
¹⁶¹ Ibid, p, 10.
¹⁶² Ibid, p, 15.

evidences that adhere to this proposition. Queen Makida made the following speech right before she starts her journey to Jerusalem.

**አነ ነገሥተ ለጥበብ፡፡ ወይእቲ ትከውነኒ ለዝሉፋ፡፡ እተሉ አሠራ፡፡ ወኢይትገደፍ
እምኔሃ፡፡ ... እጸወን ባቲ፡፡ ወትከውነኒ ኅይለ ወጽን፡፡ እትፌሃሕ ባቲ፡፡
ወትከውነኒ ሞገሰ ብዙኅ፡፡ እስመ ርቱዕ ንትሉ አሠራ ለጥበብ ወይልካእ ሰኮናን ውስተ
መድረክ ኖኅቲሃ ለጥበብ ነገሥተ ወንረከባ፡፡ ናፍቅራ ወኢትርኅቅ እምኔነ፡፡ ንዴግና
ወንረከባ፡፡ ንሥአላ ወንነሥአ፡፡ ... ወበኅበ አብዳንሰ ኢትዜክር ጥበብ፡፡ እስመ
ኢያኩብርዋ ወኢታፈቅሮሙ፡፡¹⁶³**

I will search for wisdom and she shall keep me safe forever. I will follow her path and not turn away from her. ... I will lean on her and she shall empower and strengthen me. I will rejoice in her and she will be a huge grace for me. We deserve to follow the path of wisdom and fix our feet at the stair of her gates. We will search for her and we shall find her, we love her and she shall not go away from us. Let us always long for her, we shall find her. Let us plead for her, we shall receive her. ... Wisdom is not recognized by the indolent; for they do not respect her she does not like them.

There are even more verifications here to back up the above proposition. Power, strength and grace are what the Israelites gained after they received the Ark as well as what Makida plans to get as a result of her journey. The queen was so ambitious about her quest and she was sure that the outcome will nourish not just her, but the entire people of her kingdom. Thus, she also instigated her people to participate in her quest emotionally. “Let us always long for her; we shall find her. Let us plead for her, we shall receive her.” The tone of passion and determination that can be sensed in her speech shows that she expected something grand from her journey than ordinary wisdom, which she had already possessed. Moreover, the last statement is more like a prediction to the Ark’s later voluntary move to Ethiopia as a result of the Jews’ negligence.¹⁶⁴ Now, the writer’s acute design of creating a great image of Ethiopia begins to come to the surface. The Ark was the gate way to power wisdom and grace, hence greatness.

¹⁶³ Ibid,
¹⁶⁴ Ibid, p, 46.

Indeed, the importance of blood connection with the Israelites, whom God made a covenant with, has also received due emphasis in *Kibre Negest*, thus the writer traces the Ethiopian royalties' genealogy from the Jewish king Solomon. This was done mainly to make the Ethiopian royalties Semites for it was on Sem's shoulder that Noah bestowed the role of ruling. There are also many great kings of the world that the writer recognized as Semites, so as to reaffirm the legitimacy of this race. However, none of these kingdoms attracted the writer's attention as the Israelite's does, because it takes more than legitimacy to be renowned as the world's greatest power. The Israelites were recognized as a powerful nation of God not because of their race but the Ark.

**እስመ ታቦተ ሕጉ ለእግዚአብሔር እምከመ ወረደት ተሰመዩ ሰብእ ቤቱ
ለእግዚአብሔር።¹⁶⁵**

Once the Ark of God's Commandments descended, they were named God's family.

Clearly, with the ownership of the Ark comes the recognition as the people of God. Therefore, it was only to pave the way for the Ark that the Ethiopian royalties had to be related, specifically, to the Israelite ones when their race could simply be traced from any nearby Semite group. If Dawit was not born from Solomon the Israelites' first born sons would never face the painful fact of moving away from the Ark, which they loved dearly, hence obliged to steal and bring it to Ethiopia with them. Moreover, Azariah, while he was celebrating the Ethiopians and their country in every aspect except one, has made it clear that if it is God's will, race should not come on the way of greatness.

**ወባሕቱ እምእንተ ንኔጽር አሁኑ ሀለወት። ኮንክሙ ጸሊማነ በገጽ። ወዘንተ ዘእቤ
በዘርኢኩ። ወባሕቱ ለእመ አብርሀ እግዚአብሔር አልባቢክሙ አልቦ
ዘይነክየክሙ።¹⁶⁶**

But there is one thing that we see; you are black in color. I speak this from what I observed. But if God enlightens you from within this shall not be a problem.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, p, 11.
¹⁶⁶ Ibid, p,100.

Obviously, Azariah was referring to the Hamite origin of the Ethiopians when he was talking about their black skin. The fact that the king's blood is mixed with Semites is not even close to promise a racial change for the entire nation, but through wisdom the problem can easily be overcome. Thus, we read in *Kibre Negest* that this had happened when the Ark of the Covenant was shifted from Israel to Ethiopia.

ወበርሃ አልባበ ሰብእ በርእየተ ጽዮን ታቦተ ሕጉ ለእግዚአብሔር፡፡¹⁶⁷

People were enlightened with the sight of Zion,¹⁶⁸ the ark of God's commandments.

Therefore, the quest of Queen Makida comes to its successful conclusion. She searched for extraordinary wisdom, or more accurately the Ark of the Covenant, with great ambition and determination, and eventually, she received exactly what she wanted. But, on the other hand, the Ethiopians' success was a frailer to the Israelites for it was the Ark that shines behind their power and glory. The following quote is taken from Solomon's sorrowful speech that he made when the Ethiopians where about to leave his country with the Ark.

ወእም ይእዜሰ ኅለፈት ክብርኝ ወተሀይደት መንግስትኝ ውስተ ሀዝብ ነኪር እለ ኢየአምርዎ ለእግዚአብሔር፡፡ ... እም ይእዜሰ ይትወሀቦሙ ሕግ ወጥብብ ወአእምሮ፡፡¹⁶⁹

From now on our glory has passed and our kingdom is transferred to people who do not know God. ... Here after law, wisdom and knowledge will be given to them.

It is exactly what Solomon prophesied that we read in *Kibre Negest* happening, ever since the Ark was said to be transported to Ethiopia. The minute King Dawit had the Ark on his chariot, all the power and glory of the Israelites' become the Ethiopians'. It was so obvious that everyone in the country could sense it.

ወሶበኒ ኢያእመሩ ገሃደ ከመ ተንሥአት ጽዮን እምኔሆሙ በልቦሙሰ ኢስሕቱ ወይበክዩ መሪረ ... ወሰሎሞንሂ ተሀውከ ወርዕደ ሶበ ርእየ ግርማሆሙ ለእለ ሐሩ፡፡¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, p, 95.

¹⁶⁸ The author uses "Zion" and "Ark of the Covenant" interchangeably throughout the book.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, p, 48.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid

Even though they never know that Zion was taken from them, they could feel it subconsciously thus, cried a lot ... and when Solomon saw the majesty of those who left, he become shocked and trembled.

By the time king Dawit and his people were flying back to their country, they had already begun accessing the power of the Ark so the others could recognize the newly emerged world's greatest power-the kingdom of Ethiopia. Hence,

ወእለ ርእይዎሙ ይቤልዎሙ እሉሰ እነዘ መሬታውያን ኮኑ ሰማያውያን፡፡ መኑኬ ይጠብብ እም ሰለሞን ንጉሠ ይሁዳ፡፡ ወውእቱኒ ኢሐረ በሰረገላ ነፋስ ከመዝ፡፡¹⁷¹

Those who saw them said ‘these people, while they are from earth, have become heavenly. Who is wiser than the Jewish king Solomon? Even he never traveled, as this, with chariots of wind.’

After this critical point, where the remarkable shift in power and glory had taken place, the writer begins to exalt the former pagan Ethiopians as the new chosen people of God and shamelessly degrade the Jews, whom he celebrated most at the beginning of his book.

ተኅረዩ ሕዝቦ ኢትዮጵያ ወተመነኑ ሕዝቦ እስራኤል፡፡ ... ኅሥሩ አእሩገ እስራኤል፡፡ ወከብሩ አእሩገ ኢትዮጵያ፡፡ እስመ እግዚአብሔር ተወከረሙ ለግዱፋን ሕዝብ፡፡ ወመነኖሙ ለእስራኤል በእንተ ዘተንሥአት ጽዮን እምኔሆሙ ወወጽአት ውስተ ብሔረ ኢትዮጵያ፡፡ እስመ ኅብ ሠምረ እግዚአብሔር ተኅድር ጽዮን፡፡ ወኅበሰ ኢይሠምር ኢተኅድር፡፡¹⁷²

The people of Ethiopia were chosen and the people of Israel despised. ... The elders of Israel were embarrassed and the elders of Ethiopia glorified. God accepted the abandoned people and He despised the Israelites for Zion has risen from among them and went to Ethiopia. Zion dwells where God wills and where He do not, she will not.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p, 57.

¹⁷² Ibid, p, 95.

God's preference inclines towards the Ethiopians mainly because they chose Him over their idols but His very own people, the Israelites, went in the opposite direction.¹⁷³ Thus, ever since the shift had occurred, the Ethiopians are said to become enlightened, empowered and appreciated by God, while the Jews become blind, dark inside and enemies of God.¹⁷⁴ If the glory of the Ethiopians should be as great as the writer of *Kibre Negest* determined to make it, so should the fall of the Israelites. Some kind of huge privilege as Enoch experienced in his journey, and tremendous quality degradation as the angels from *I Enoch* went through, would do it. Therefore, the writer concludes his scheme telling us, in the eschatological section of his book, that the Ethiopians will remain firmly established in their godliness and greatness until the end of the world, while the Jews look towards the great Day of Judgment to receive their final punishment together with Satan and his hosts.¹⁷⁵

Finally, Nibure'id Yisshaq reminding us his initial point and pointing towards the successful completion of his task tells us:-

እስመ ብዙኅ ጻመውኩ በእንተ ክብሩ ለሀገረ ኢትዮጵያ በእንተ ፀኢታ ለጸዮን ሰማያዊት ወበእንተ ክብረ ንጉሥ ኢትዮጵያ፡፡¹⁷⁶

I worked so hard for the sake of the glory of Ethiopia, the rising of Zion and the glory of the king of Ethiopia.

The writer was consistently dealing with a single point throughout the entire body of *Kibre Negest*. His aim was to show us how the glory of Ethiopia has risen above all nations of the world, and based on the above analysis he has clearly met his goal through his most astutely constructed discussion of the case. Accordingly, Ethiopia is the greatest and most glorified nation of the world because the people are owners of the glorious and extraordinarily powerful sacred emblem-the Ark of the Covenant. The traditional viewing of the book as the base to prove the legitimacy of Solomonic kings could also make sense since the notion have been implied in it, but this is not the writer's foremost concern and certainly not the reason why the king of Ethiopia is the greatest. If this was the case, the Israelites would not be deprived of their power

¹⁷³ Ibid, p, 19, 21, 60, 107.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, p, 69,125.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, p, 146, 147.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, p, 150.

and glory even when King Solomon himself was alive and well. Moreover, *Kibre Negest* tells us that the king of Rome is also the son of Solomon and godly, he even deserves to include half of the world under his territory while the other half belongs to the king of Ethiopia.¹⁷⁷ Nonetheless, he was never exalted as the king of Ethiopia for the obvious reason that he does not own the Ark. Therefore, only with the Ark come power glory and greatness. Nibure'id Yisshaq has truly struggled to create a deeply rooted great sense of self and firmly established glorious national identity in his people's mind.

4.3. *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir* (The Book of the Mystery of Heaven and Earth)

Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir is a religious work of unknown Ethiopian writer from unidentified period. The book is basically concerned with secret knowledge revealed to a monk named Abba Behaile Michael or sometimes addressed as Abba Zosimas, but there are also two other writings associated with a person called Abba Betselote Michael and his student Yisshaq. The content and manner of writing of this book is so close to that of *IEnoch*. The history of the universe from creation to the end in the form of summary, the eschatological end of the world, the angelic rebellion in heaven and the animal apocalypses are some of the points that indicate this book's affinity to *IEnoch*. Symbolism, similar to that of *IEnoch*, plays a considerable role in the different narratives of the book; it is almost entirely, engaged with interpretation of symbols mainly from the Old Testament books and the Revelation of John. Besides this, *IEnoch* is cited in this book several times and much more than any other source is. The book is so much related to *IEnoch* that once Job Ludolf thought that he had found the Book of Enoch, but later on he was very disappointed to discover that what he had was only a copy of *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir*.¹⁷⁸

S. Grebaut, in his introduction to his critical edition of one of the copies of this work, has mentioned that the book is most likely an indigenous composition, for the work exhibits a high level clarity of ideas and language, which is something that is not typical of translated works.¹⁷⁹ Concerning the date of composition for this book, I was not able to get much information, however, since the writer mentions Gelawdios, a 16th century king of Ethiopia, the book might

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, p, 12.

¹⁷⁸ J.Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature & Testaments*, vol.1, 1983, 8

¹⁷⁹ S. Grebaut. *Le Livre Des Mysteres Du Ciel Et De La Terre*. 1980.

have been written around or after this time.¹⁸⁰ Though it is not known for sure as to the number of copies of this book, so far I have gained access to two slightly different copies. The first one's critical edition was published in 1903 by J. Perruchon with its French translation and a similar edition of the second copy was made available in 1980 by the above mentioned editor S. Grebaut.

The first copy, under Behaile Michael's revelation, begins its narration with an explanation of the mystery of the God head then soon passes on to a thorough discussion of the seven days creation. According to this book man is the most privileged of all creatures and angels have participated in the process of his creation by bringing the necessary materials that he is composed of.

... ይቤሎሙ ለመላእክቲሁ አምጽኡ መሬተ፣ ወለመላእክተ እሳትኒ ይቤሎሙ አምጽኡ መሬብ ዘውእቲ እሳት በነገረ ሱርስት ወአምጽኡ፣ ወለመላእክተ ማያት ወይቤሎሙ አምጽኡ ንስቲተ ማየ ወአምጽኡ፣ ወለመላእክተ ነፋሳትኒ ይቤሎሙ አምጽኡ ንስቲተ ነፋስ ወአምጽኡ፣ ወቶስሐ ለዝንቲ፣ ጠባይፅ ፩ ወገበሮሙ ሰብእ ፍጹመ ወመንፈስ ሕይወተ እንተ ውስተ አፉሁ ነፍሳ ላዕለ ገጹ ለአዳም ... ወለመላእክቲሁኒ ይቤሎሙ፣ ዝንቲ አምሳልየ ወወሀብክዎ ኩሎ ዘመትሕትየ...¹⁸¹

He [God] said to his angels, 'bring soil', and to the angels of fire He said 'bring mereb' which means fire in Syrian language and they brought, and to the angels of water He said 'bring some water' and they brought, and to the angels of wind He said 'bring some wind' and they brought, afterwards He mixed the four characteristics and created a perfect man then from within His mouth He blow the breath of life on the face of Adam ... and He said to His angels, 'this is my image and I have given him all that is beneath me.' ...

After this the devil's deception of Adam and Eve, the deeds of the fallen angels and the consequent destruction of human race is narrated followed by a long discussion and interpretation of different sections of the Old Testament scriptures. In this discussion a great

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, p, 90.

¹⁸¹ Perruchon J. *Le Livre Des Mysteres Du Ciel Et De La Terre*. 1903, p, 16.

emphasis is given to explain how the Old Testament is a shadow of the New Testament. The last point that the book deals with is the revelation made to Abba Betselote Michael by one human, Peter the apostle, and another angel mediators. This person is different from the first one, Abba Behaile Michael, whose revelation covers most part of the book. This last part puts its main focus on the explanation of the New Testament (the story of Jesus and the apostles) and some prophecies regarding things to happen in the future.

The revelation of Abba Behaile Michael takes up most part of the second copy too. It mainly deals with the interpretation of the different apocalyptic symbols found in the apocalypse (revelation) of John, based on what John himself together with an angel companion explained to Abba Behaile Michael.

ነገር ወይና ሕይወት ትርጓሜ ራእይ ለዮሐንስ ... ወዝውእቱ ቃል እምድገረ እቤ መጽአ ዮሐንስ ድንግል ወአርአየኒ መጽሐፈ አእምሮ ወአጎዘ ይነግረኒ ትርጓሜሁ ለመጽሐፈ ራእይ ...¹⁸²

The story and interpretation of the revelation of John ... This word I shall speak henceforth, John the virgin came and showed to me the book of knowledge and he began to tell me the interpretation of the book of his revelation.

Then the interpretation of the revelation continues using the leading phrase “**ቃል ምሥጢር ዘዮሐንስ ...**” (the word of the mystery of John...), every now and then. The seven churches, the different animals as symbols of prophets and great patriarchs, the various signs pointing towards the end of the world are some of the areas of interest for the interpretation. The revelation is mainly presented in question and answer form, where Behaile Michael asks the question and John answers. Sometimes the angel, who accompanied, John encourages Behaile Michael to ask more questions by reminding him some of the things from John’s revelation.

ወዘንተ ኩሎ ሶበ ነገረኒ መልአክ እቤሎ ለአቡነ ዮሐንስ ንግረኒ ፍካሬ ቃልከ ወይቤለኒ በእንተ ምንት ትሴአል ...¹⁸³

¹⁸²S. Grebaut. *Le Livre Des Mysteres Du Ciel Et De La Terre*. 1980, pp, 126-127.

¹⁸³ Ibid, p, 147.

When the angel told me all this, I would say to John, our father, ‘tell me the interpretation of your word’ and he would say to me ‘what would you like to know?’

After revealing the secret that Behaile Michael wished to know both John and the angel ascended to heaven warning him not to say a word about his revelation. Following this there is a similar kind of analysis with that of the first copy on the mystery of the God head then soon the narration takes us back to another revelation of Behaile Michael.

ወእምድጎረ ዝንቱ ነገር አውስአ ብርሃናዊ ወይቤሎ ለአቡዬ በጎይለ ሚካኤል ስማእ እንግርክ በምሥጢር ፍካሬ ፍጥረተ ሰማይ ወምድር::¹⁸⁴

After this the angel replied and said to Father Behaile Michael ‘Listen! I will tell you in secret the interpretation of the nature of heaven and earth.’

The above statement is one of the many evidences that points to the fact that this book is not written by Behaile Michael himself but some other person close to him or who knows his story. This part of the book is concerned with the interpretation of the symbols that the different creations represent. Similar to that of the first copy this one also tells us that the Old Testament is a shadow of the New Testament.¹⁸⁵ The last part of this copy is ascribed to a man named Yishaq son of Abba Betselote Michael. This section of the book is mostly concerned with computation of the date of birth and death of the prominent biblical patriarchs and interpretation of the symbols in the Pentateuch of Moses.

In general, the two copies of the book show quite a similarity in many respects. In both cases the central figure, whose secret revelations cover the bigger part of each copy, is Behaile Michael and, as has been explained above, the content is more or less, similar. Therefore, it is possible to say that they both belong to the same piece of writing found under the title *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir*. Whereas, since the persons that are mentioned in the two copies besides the central figure Behaile Michael, Betselote Michael in the first and Yishaq in the second one, are different, it may be assumed that the copies were written by different writers and each writer included his own favorite person in the book. Since they present a very closely related narration, in the following analysis both copies are considered.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, p, 158.
¹⁸⁵ Ibid, pp, 159-160.

4.3.1. The Two Enochic Myths and Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir

Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir in its entirety is a book of revelation. All the three individuals we meet in it are said to have some kind of revelation concerning secrets of heaven and earth. Consequently, the journey myth can be traced in the book through some significant associations made in relation to secret revelation. The major figure of the book Abba Behaile Michael is a man with ordinary human attributes, what makes him special is that he has been exposed to a special knowledge hidden from others.

Behaile Michael was always accompanied by angels or famous religious figures from the past. Everything revealed to him came down through the mouth of these entities in the form of interpretation of the Old and New Testament scriptures and sometimes new revelations. They were his guides in every step of every revealed secret that Behaile Michael learned. Nonetheless, instead of taking a journey through heavens and earth, Behaile Michael learned everything from these agents, who came down to him. Since there are no visual revelations it is understandable that the journey was not that much necessary.

Abba Behaile Michael had to pray to God so He would reveal to him the secrets of the scriptures.

**አባ ዞሲማስ ዘውእቲ በኃይለ ሚካኤል ይቤ ቆምኩ ኃጵ መዓልተ ወኃጵ ሌሊተ ውስተ ቀላየ
ማይ በከመ ጸመ ሙሴ፡፡¹⁸⁶**

Abba Zosimas who is Behaile Michael, said ‘I stand in deep water for 40 days and 40 nights in the same way Moses fast’

This is the statement that the second copy of *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir* begins its narration after the introductory statement which tells us what the book is about. Thus, all that is revealed to Behaile Michael was a reward to his lengthy and adventurous prayer.

Abba Behaile Michael has had a great privilege to know by revelation the mysteries of heaven and earth that the prophets and apostles were out ignored. For instance, the fact that Abraham is circumcised by angels is not known to any of the prophets and apostles but is revealed to Behaile Michael.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, p, 127.

ወተገዝረ አብርሃም በእደ ገብርኤል ወሚካኤል ዘተሐበዮ፡፡ ... ወይቤለኒ መልእክ ወዝኒ ኢነገሮ ለሙሴ ከመ ተገዝረ አብርሃም በእደ መላእክት ወዝኒ ኢነገሮሙ ለነቢያቲሁ ወለሐዋርያቲሁ፡፡¹⁸⁷

Abraham is circumcised in the hands of Gabriel and Michael ... and the angel said to me ‘He [God] never told to Moses that Abraham was circumcised in the hands of angels He [God] also never told to His prophets or apostles.’

Apparently, his righteousness is the reason for him to be privileged with such special revelation. The fact that he was allowed to know something that was hidden from the great prophet of the Jews, Moses, shows that this person is special to God so, in the book the writer addresses him as “**ብፁዓዊ**” (blessed one). Therefore, the narrative identity of *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir* seems to be a close relative of the journey myth, in which we find a righteous man who went out on an extraordinary journey, escorted by angels, to learn the secrets of heaven and earth.

We find the fallen angels myth in *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir* in its original form and only as one of the individual components that converge to make up the general form of the book. Thus, to consider the narrative pattern of this myth as an underlying structure of this book will be a mistake. But on the other hand, the myth has highly influenced the writer’s understanding regarding the nature of angels. The angelology developed in this book is very fascinating and far more bizarre than the one we find in *IEnoch*.

According to *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir*, angels are created from flame and not all at once but it took God ten hours to bring the entire host of heaven in to existence. In each hour He created a different kind of angelic order, accordingly, the order led by Satnael is said to be the tenth and last one to be created, while the other nine are witnessing the event.

ወቅድመ ኩሉ መላእክት መምልክ አስር ፈጠረ ዘመደ ሳጥናኤል¹⁸⁸

Before the eyes of all angels He created the crew of Satnael as the tenth fulfilling order.

¹⁸⁷ Perruchon J. *Le Livre Des Mysteres Du Ciel Et De La Terre*. 1903, p, 27.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, p, 7.

This seems to be a very smart scheme planned to prove with eye witnesses that God has created Satan and his claim of being a creator has no place whatsoever.

Even though the writer recognizes the angels' spirituality in his discussion of their creation, he frequently describes them as having different humanly characteristics. For instance, the manner of communication among angels is said to be similar to that of human beings.

ወልሳናቲሆሙ ዘዘዚአሆሙ ወበከመ ብዙኅ ልሳኖሙ ለውሉደ አዳም ወብሔሮሙ ለመላእክትኒ ዘዘዚአሆሙ በከመ ብዙኅ ብሔረ እንላ እመሕያው ወያቤይኖ ፩ መልአክ ለካልኡ ወይቤሎ እምአይቴ መጻእከ ወይቤሎ እምእገሌ፡፡¹⁸⁹

Their languages are as many as that of the children of Adam, their countries are also as many as the son of man, an angel would ask the other and say 'where are you from' and he [the other one] would reply 'from this place'.

The angels are also said to experience different humanly emotions; such as empathy and anger, so in the book we see them portrayed as furious entities who want to destroy the whole world because human beings suffered Jesus Christ.

ወሶበ ርእዩ መላእክተ ሰማይ ዕርቃነ እግዚእ በከዩ ወአውየው ወወረዱ ነሢአሙ አሲፍተ ወፈቀዱ ይቅትልዎ ለኩሉ ዓለም፡፡¹⁹⁰

When the angels of heaven saw the naked body of their Lord they cried and squealed then descended holding sword and wished to slay the entire world.

Further the writer has portrayed the angels with more humanly attributes that it seems he has completely forgotten their spirituality.

ወከመሰ ቦሙ ክሰበተ ለመላእክተ ገጽ ወለመላዕክተ ቅዳሴ¹⁹¹

Angels of countenance and angels of Mass are subjected to circumcision.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid

¹⁹⁰ S. Grebaut. *Le Livre Des Mysteres Du Ciel Et De La Terre*. 1980, p, 181.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, p, 170.

Thus, the writer considers some of the angels as possessing penis. There is no doubt that all these bizarre traits of angels sprung from the image that the fallen angels myth left in the writer's mind, and if the case in the above quotation is considered, the deeds of the fallen angels can make a lot of sense or become pretty much conceivable. However, *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir* has another fascinating explanation for that part of *1Enoch*.

The story of the fallen angels that we find in *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir* is exactly the same with the original one except the manner that the angels appear in this world and did what they did is explained in such a way that it can be conceived in human mind.

ወበው-እቲ፣ መዋዕል ወረዱ ትጉሃን እምሰማይ ወእምድኅረ ለብሱ ሥጋ ሰብእ አኅዞሙ እበደ ኅጢያት ወእሙንቲሰ ምኑናነ ምስጢር ዘርእዩ በሰማይ፡፡¹⁹²

In those days the angels descended from heaven and after possessing human flesh they become seized by wickedness, these are the despised ones who saw the secret in heaven.¹⁹³

It seems like the angels possess human flesh after they descended on earth but not while they were still in heaven. In this regard, *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir* stands more close to Origen's angelology mentioned previously under the section where *Kibre Negest* is discussed. Even though the book does not mention the exact number of angels who came down to earth as *1Enoch* does, it tells us that each one of them have taught a special kind of secret knowledge to human beings.¹⁹⁴ Perhaps, they are addressed as the "despised ones" because of the heavenly secret knowledge they have revealed to men when it was not meant to be.

We do not find any evidence in the first copy of *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir*, from which the above quotation is taken, as to the reason why the angels came down to earth, but the second one holds a statement that shades light on the matter.

¹⁹² Perruchon J. *Le Livre Des Mysteres Du Ciel Et De La Terre*. 1903, p, 21.

¹⁹³ "ትጉሃን" and "መላእክት" are used interchangeably and both to refer to angels.

¹⁹⁴ Perruchon J. *Le Livre Des Mysteres Du Ciel Et De La Terre*. 1903, pp, 21-22.

ወላዕለ አዳምሂ እለ ተመክሑ ዘውእቶሙ መላእክት ለቢሶሙ ሥጋ ተምህሩ ዓቢይ ኃጢያተ።¹⁹⁵

Those angels, who conceited over Adam, possess human flesh and learned great sin.

As can be understood from the above statement the modifications made in the fallen angels' story is quite similar to that of *Kibre Negest*, which indicates that the writer might have been familiar with this book and thus its angelology. Moreover, a flow or continuity of contents between the two copies of the book can be felt, which points to the possibility that both copies might have been written by the same person or different persons, who are familiar with the same tradition.

It is so predictable why the writer chose to organize his content according to the narrative patterns of Enochic myths. *IEnoch* with its righteous central figure, mystical revelation and bizarre angelology grants his work with the high quality that he frequently claims his book has. Thus, *IEnoch* as a holder of celestial mysteries and divine secrets provided a framework to the book's eschatological fantasies and notion of the occult, which are the concerns of the next section.

4.3.2. *Dianoia/ Thematic Implications of Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir*

Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir, though it touches many areas on the way, its major concern seems to be the eschatological conclusion of this world with Ethiopia being triumphant. In addition to this, the privilege of the Ethiopian monk Abba Behaile Michael, to have been chosen from the entire servants of God for this secret revelation is also the writer's point of focus. Every story narrated and every scripture interpreted leads to the above two points. According to this book, the world will end in the seventh millennium (በሳብዕ ሺህ).¹⁹⁶ When this time comes Ethiopia will be an active participant in the process of restoring the kingdom of heaven, which the saints will fight for against the impostor.

ወበእንተ ሐሳዊኒ ከመዝ ግብሩ ይወፅእ ሠጢጦ ከርሠ እሙ ወይቀትል አቡሁ ወይነብር ዲበ መንበር ወይነግሥ። ወሶበ ተፈጸመ መዋዕለ ንግሡ ይፀብኦ እግዚእነ

¹⁹⁵ S. Grebaut. *Le Livre Des Mysteres Du Ciel Et De La Terre*. 1980, p, 173.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, p, 151.

ምስለ ሐራሁ። ወቅድመ ኩሉ ይወግኑ ኤልያስ ትስብያዊ ውስተ እንግድግሁ።
ወኢያሱ ወልደ ነዌ ውስተ ፍጽሙ። ወዳዊት ሰንቃዊ ይረገዙ ውስተ ኩልያቱ።
ወጴጥሮስኒ ይረገዙ ፈረሶ። ወቴዎድሮስ ወገላውድዮስ ይቀነጥቡ ድርዎ መቲሮሙ
ርእሶ። ወዮሐንስኒ ይደግም ወጊኣ ፈረሶ።... ወእሳተ መዓት ትቀትሎ ወግኣ እም
አፈ እግዚእ። ወሰራዊቱኒ ይመውቱ ምስሌሆ። ወቀጸላ ወርቅ ይትዐነቅ ኤልያስ።
ወኢያሱ በሐመልሚል ልብስ ዘወርቅ ይትረሰይ። ወጴጥሮስኒ ሸፍሸፍት ዘወርቅ።
ወለዮሐንስ ገማ ጸዐዳ። ወለቴዎድሮስ ወገላውዴዎስ አክሊል ቀያላን።...
እምድገረዝ ይከውን ትንሳኤ ወቅሥት።¹⁹⁷

The impostor's deed is as this; he will come out slitting his mother's belly and kill his father then he will sit on a throne and become king. When his reign comes to an end the Lord with his soldiers will fight him. Prior to everyone Elijah, the Tisbian, will stab him on his chest, Joshua on his forehead, David on his kidneys, Peter will stab his hoarse, Tewodros and Gelawdios will cut off his head and hack his war outfit, and John will also stab his hoarse ... Then fire that kills him will come out of the Lord's mouth and his soldiers will die with him. ... Elijah will wear a Golden necklace; Joshua will be decked in a shining golden cloth, Peter in golden cloth, John in white cloth, red crowns to Tewodros and Gelawdios ... After this will be resurrection and tribulation.

The Ethiopian kings Tewodros and Gelawdios are the most adventurous fighters of all saints, that we see them cutting off the enemy's head or giving the big blow to assure his death, while the others participate in deteriorating his power. Accordingly, their reward has become higher than the others; they took the crown, the symbol of superiority and power. Therefore, at the Day of Judgment, the Ethiopians are the ones who will get the greatest reward and be exalted above all. However, the Jew's fate goes in the opposite direction. This people whom the writer has been attacking throughout his book are said to be destined in hell.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, p, 90.

ወዕዝራኒ ይቤ በእንተ ዕለተ ደይን ... ለመስልማን ወአይሁድ ወኢጋንንት ይትወሐጡ በገሃነም፡፡¹⁹⁸

Ezra said, on the Day of Judgment ... non believers, Jews and demons will be consumed in hell.

Thus, on the last day the absolute triumph of the Ethiopian kings and the Jews' eternal punishment in hell is certain. The writer's special affinity towards Ethiopians may not be questioned since he belongs to the nation; however, the specific choice of the Jews, among other nations, for such a dreadful fate shows his deep distaste towards them. This seems the reason why the writer, through his symbolism, frequently degrades them to the list as was the case in *Kibre Negest*.

ወጽልመት መልዕልተ ቀላይ ዘይቤሂ ጽልመት አርአያሆሙ ለማኅበረ አይሁድ፡፡¹⁹⁹

The darkness up on the deep that he mentioned is the symbol of the Jews.

ወካም ዘሰሐቀ ሳዕለ እርቃኑ ለኖኅ አምሳለ ማሕበረ አይሁድ እለ ሰሐቁ ሳዕለ አያሱስ፡፡²⁰⁰

Ham, who laughed at Noah's naked body, is the symbol of the Jews who laughed at Jesus.

As a result of its unusual and frequently diverting content (from the scriptures of the bible), the writer recommends very often that his book, *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir*, should be kept secret from the vulgar.

The knowledge that Behaile Michael got through revelation is unique and hidden even from the closest servants of God, the prophets and apostles. Thus, it is only natural if he was ordered to keep it secret since no one is likely to accept or believe something that is missing from the scriptures. The writer also seems to be clearly aware of the fact that his book will be problematic, so he tells us that the angel has warned Behaile Michael about it.

¹⁹⁸ Perruchon J. *Le Livre Des Mysteres Du Ciel Et De La Terre*. 1903, p, 48.

¹⁹⁹ S. Grebaut. *Le Livre Des Mysteres Du Ciel Et De La Terre*. 1980, p 158.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, p, 176.

...ዝነገረ ሶበ ነገርክዎሙ ለውሉደ ሰብእ ይትካህዱኩ እንዘ ይብሉ አልቦ ዘተሐብኣ እመጸሕፍት። ወምስለ እሉ ከመዝ ኢትትካህድ ወእመ አኮሰ ሕማመ ተኅሥሥ ለርእስከ።²⁰¹

When you tell this thing to sons of man they will reject you saying ‘there is none hidden from the scriptures’. Do not argue with these men so to bring pain on yourself.

The writer said this only to raise the value of his book by adding the title secret or mysterious scripture to it, because we soon read him blatantly attracting readers to his work.

ወይከውን ብፁዓ ዘአንበበ ዘንተ መጽሐፈ ወዘ ይቤሉ ዘንተ መጽሐፈ ወይድኅን እመንሱት ወኢይትሀጎል ወበሰማያትኒ ይነሥእ ዕሤቶ።²⁰²

He, who reads this book shall become blessed, saved from temptation and receives his wage in the heavens.

Hence, everybody is encouraged and advised to read the book and grab its special mysterious theme, which, among other things, advocates the triumph of Ethiopia and the privilege of the Ethiopian monk Abba Behaile Michael to have been chosen for this revelation.

4.4. *Gedle Lalibela* (Hagiography of Lalibela)

Gedle Lalibela is a hagiographic writing which narrates the life and incredible miracles of the 12th century legendary king of Ethiopia, Lalibela, who is said to build the magnificent rock-hewn churches at Roha with the help of angels and also recognized as saint by the Ethiopian Orthodox church. The book, as many hagiographies, is mainly concerned with the spiritual life of the king rather than his achievement in the secular world. However, the *Gedle* has also recorded some important historical facts in relation to the spiritual life of the king. For instance, Lalibela’s conflict with his brother and predecessor king Harbe, who chased him for a long time as rival of his kingdom, is narrated in order to emphasize the saint’s patience and light heartedness. The major focus of the narrative is thus, the king-saint’s marvelous spiritual life and everything else, considered important, is communicated from this point of reference.

²⁰¹ Ibid, p, 136.

²⁰² Ibid, p, 154.

The Gedl was not written in the king's life time rather it is an account of a writer who lived more than two hundred years after the events recorded in it are said to have occurred.²⁰³ It is more like that the writer collected the fragments of oral and, probably, written narratives circulated in the country around this saint, and brought the best out of them to give us what we now know as *Gedle Lalibela*. The first eight chapters of the book are introductory, which present a summary of the saint's miraculous deeds in comparison to other saints and with reference to the Gospel. They seem to be written in order to prepare the reader for the incredible story that follows them; to pave the ground for belief in the reader's mind by imbuing Lalibela with all kinds of sacred qualities, so to speak.

In these opening eight chapters Lalibela is exalted above all human beings. Accordingly, he is said to have never committed any kind of sin in his entire life.

ወአልቦ ዘገብረ ምንትኒ እምግባራት በዘያቴክዞ ለመንፈስ ቅዱስ ዘየጎድር ውስቴቱ።²⁰⁴

There is none that he did from the things that could disappoint the Holy Spirit dwelling in him.

Moreover, the saint is acclaimed of being the most glorious of all saints.

ኮከብ እምኮከብ ይኔይስ ክብሩ። ከማሁኬ ልብስቶሙ ለቅዱሳን። ከመኮከብኒ ወከመ ወርኅኒ ቦሙ ልብሰት። ወበአምሳለ ፀሐይኒ ቦሙ ፀዳፌ። ወለዝንቱሰ ... ልብሰተ ክብሩ ኢኮነ ከመ ካልአን ኢከመ ፀሐይ። ወኢካዕበተ እም ፀሐይ ይበርህ ሥነ አልባሲሁ...።²⁰⁵

The glory of one star is greater than the other and the same applies to the saints' cloth. They have clothes that shine as a star, the moon and also the sun. But this man's [Lalibela] cloth is not like the others' or like the sun. His cloth shines twice as much as the sun.

²⁰³ See Tadesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia (1270-1527)*, 1972, pp, 3-4. and Amsalu Aklilu, *achir Yeithiopia sinetsihuf tarik*, 1976, p, 55.

²⁰⁴ *Gadle Kidus Lalibela*, 2000, p, 21.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p, 16.

For this reasons and more Lalibela is said to have lived on earth like angels of heaven, thus he becomes neighbor to the Seraphs and brethren to the Cherubs.²⁰⁶ Now, a figure, who is imbued with such glory and raised to the level that puts him above all saints and equal to angels, is pretty much capable of any superhuman, miraculous deeds that can easily be accepted by the reader as truth.

From chapter nine onwards, the main story proceeds beginning at a very critical point in Lalibela's life, where his sister attempted to poison him so he can no longer be a rival of their brother, the king. The story is somewhat presented in its chronological sequence with the exception of chapters 26 and 27 which are concerned with the birth of Lalibela. These two chapters, probably, are later insertions since they appear in the middle of the story where they are not expected to. This applies more to chapter 27 than 26, which not only narrates the unique birth of Lalibela but also summarizes the whole story of the saint from birth to death. In this chapter the birth of the saint, his service to the Lord, the pact he received from Jesus, and the date of his death and the place where he is buried are all included. Moreover, the account regarding the birth of Lalibela recorded in this chapter is much different from that of chapter 26. Generally, when seen from the overall characteristics of the indigenous hagiographical tradition the fact that the birth of the saint, contained in the two chapters, appears at the middle of the story and after much of the saint's adventures are narrated, does not make much sense.

In terms of content the Gedl shares the common features of most Ethiopic hagiographies, i.e. it accommodates the narrative sections, where the saint's birth, his separation from family and friends to start his "monastic pursuit in an isolated hermitage", his adventurous and miraculous deeds, the pact that he received from God in return to his endeavors and his Malk, "a short hymn composed in praise of his holy life" are all narrated.²⁰⁷ Accordingly, Lalibela was born in Ethiopia from righteous parents in the year 1201. His birth was foretold by an angel to his mother, who was living in misery for she was not able to have child. The day he was born swarm of bees came and surrounded the room that the baby was laying with his mother that it was very difficult for people to go in and out of the room. His mother, who observed this phenomenon, realized that the bee situation is similar to that of soldiers guarding their king, and then, being

²⁰⁶ Ibid, p, 34.

²⁰⁷ See Tadesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia (1270-1527)*, 1972, pp, 2-3.

filled with the Holy Spirit, she prophesized that the child will become great; hence she named him Lalibela meaning “bee recognized its gift”.²⁰⁸ The bee situation is also said to be a sign indicating Lalibela’s future life as a king, therefore, the people around the baby also prophesized that “he will grow up to become a king.”²⁰⁹

When Lalibela become a young man his brother Harbe, the contemporary king of Ethiopia, starts to hate him as an enemy and rival of his kingdom for he knows the prophecy regarding him becoming a king. This incident becomes Lalibela’s point of departure to begin his spiritual journey away from his family, in the wilds. He decided that he would be better off in the wilds living with animals than having conflict with his brother and his followers. His adventure as a spiritual person started in this wilderness having no decent meal to eat and place to rest, let alone people to associate with. After this he is said to never cease from obeying God’s commandments, even after he took the throne from his brother and become a king over the whole of Ethiopia.

In all the years Lalibela had stayed on earth, he is said to have done so many incredible deeds, but his journeys to the earthly Jerusalem and to the seven heavens, in both cases escorted by Archangel Gabriel, are the most stunning ones. Even more amazing is that Lalibela took the latter journey outside his body, that is to say, his soul went to heaven and did the visit, while his body remained on earth motionless, warm and unaffected by decay until his soul came back to it three days later.²¹⁰ This is said to happen at one occasion where Lalibela took a poison and died not from its effect but because God wants to reveal to him a secret, which he will use later to build the churches. Both the heavenly and earthly journeys were primarily aimed at the third and currently existing adventure of Lalibela, the rock-hewn churches that he build at Roha, since both journeys acquainted him with the kind of knowledge he needed to hew them out of a single rock.

In addition to his miraculous deeds, Lalibela had also received pact, which is the most important thing that creates a strong bond between saints and Ethiopian orthodox Christians. God has promised Lalibela many things²¹¹ among which is found the one that assures everyone, who comes to his church or prays in his name (Lalibela), forgiveness of his sins as well as his

²⁰⁸ *Gedle Kidus Lalibela*, 2000, p, 115.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p, 117.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, p, 95.

²¹¹ *Ibid*, p, 120,89, 132.

descendants' up to the 14th generation. Members of Ethiopian Orthodox Church believe in this pact until this very day that they frequently visit the church or pray in the name of the saint from wherever they are. Lalibela ruled the country for forty years until he left this world for the second and last time in death in the year 1197.

4.4.1. The Two Enochic Myths and *Gedle Lalibela*

In *Gedle Lalibela* the narrative patterns of the journey myth can be noticed rather vividly. The journey, which Lalibela is said to have through the seven heavens, highly corresponds to that of Enoch's from *1Enoch* that the original myth is left hardly displaced, i.e. the story is still concerned with extraordinary events. Nonetheless, the story has its own peculiar characteristics; hence, there are significant associations, which create the relation to the original myth. The central figure of *Gedle Lalibela*, Saint Lalibela, in Frye's terms, is a hero of romance. He experiences things that made him superior to other men and sometimes even nature. In the *Gedl* we read the angels of the seventh heaven praising him for he has risen above all human beings ever lived on earth.

ወኮንከ ልዑሉ ምግባር እም አብያጊከ ደቂቀ አዳም፡፡²¹²

You become superior in deeds from your fellowmen, the children of Adam.

Lalibela lived in a world, where “the ordinary laws of nature are slightly suspended”,²¹³ so, in the *Gedl*, we see him receiving his daily meal from heaven, fly from place to place carried by an angel, have invisible protection around his body and most of all defeat death as he has come back to life three days after he, literally, died. This, of course, should not be strange neither implausible since the story is not secular rather a religious one, where any kind of supernatural or extraordinary actions can be included under their common name “miracle” without being questioned.

In many respects the general story of Lalibela is a romantic analogy of the journey myth from *1Enoch*. Lalibela took journeys through the seven heavens and earth, where in both cases he was

²¹² Ibid, p, 80.

²¹³ N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, 1990, p, 33.

escorted by Archangel Gabriel. Accordingly, Lalibela is identified with the seventh antediluvian patriarch Enoch, hence shares much of his attributes.

Enoch is a great biblical figure, who is said to “walk with God”²¹⁴ and was never found on earth for God has took him. The opening statement of *IEnoch* “Enoch a righteous man, whose eyes were opened by God saw the vision of the Holly One in the heavens ...”²¹⁵ is a clear reference to his purity and holiness. Moreover, it indicates that his righteousness is the reason why he was chosen by God to see all the secrets revealed to him. In the Gadl we find Lalibela with similar attributes, which are also recognized by God.

**እስመ እምአመ ሣረርኩ ምድረ አእመርኩከ እምቅድመ እፍጥርከ እምክርሰ እምከ
አእመርኩ ከያክ ከመ በእደዌክ ይትከሰታ እሎን አብያተ ክርስቲያናት ዐሰርቱ።፡²¹⁶**

From the time I created the earth I know you, even before I created thee from within your mother’s womb I know thyself and that in your hands will be revealed these ten churches.

Enoch took a journey to learn the secrets of heaven and earth, which he made a book out of and shared among his fellow man so they can be saved from the evil that has to come on earth. Lalibela experienced a similar journey in a slightly different manner; he was practically dead when the excursion through the seven heavens happened. According to different religious beliefs, it is very unusual and less probable for human beings to see heaven while their soul is still in their body. The Bible mentions only two people (Enoch and Elijah) to have been given such an honor. No question, Lalibela, with all his glory and righteousness, has what it takes to become a third person to see heaven in his physicality, but he can become even better. Therefore, the writer draws a different kind of analogy to exalt Lalibela even more and this time with Jesus Christ, who spent three days and three nights inside a grave and then resurrected. Since the Gedl is written for Christian consumption, in this way the story will be more miraculous in the sense that it is Christianized.

²¹⁴ See Genesis chapter 5.

²¹⁵ R.H. Charles (trans.), *The Book of Enoch*, ed. By W.Oesterley, 1917, chapter 1:2.

²¹⁶ *Gedle Kidus Lalibela*, 2000, p, 139.

When Lalibela's soul finally returned to earth to be reunited with his body, he was endowed with extraordinary knowledge that would enable him build the rock-hewn churches, but unlike Enoch what he saw was not intended to be shared with other human beings. Therefore,

ወራእያተሰ ዘርእየ ኢነገሮሙ ወኢ ምንተኒ²¹⁷

But he relates to them none of the visions that he saw.

However, in what seems a paradoxical matter, out of the thirty three chapters that the Gedl constitutes, ten of them (chapters 11-20) are invested on meticulous description of Lalibela's vision of the seven heavens and their hosts without giving any clue on how the writer gets a hold on the information. Perhaps, it was an attempt to further emphasize the preciousness of Lalibela, for one must be righteous plus a special favorite of God to have seen visions that others are denied.²¹⁸

The journey myth plays an important role in creating the perfect image of Lalibela that we find in the Gedl. It provides just the right attributes that fit a figure like Lalibela with superhuman achievements that are, even today, the wonders of the world. One of the central claims of the Gedl is that the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela are results of divine revelation; hence there is a direct interference of God in the hewing.²¹⁹ Consequently, the human agent chosen to carry this extraordinary task on earth must be one with great spiritual qualities and the knowledge that he used to do so a unique one. Enoch, the righteous, is a man with such attributes.

The two major traits of Enoch, righteousness and acquaintance with extraordinary knowledge, would be perfect much and necessary attributes to any figure with high reputation of building such marvelous churches. No ordinary man with ordinary human knowledge can hew those churches; neither can he be endowed with extraordinary knowledge and power to do so without being found righteous in the eyes of the divine. This must be the point where, from his society's stock of myths, the journey myth from *1Enoch* clicked in the mind of the author of *Gedle Lalibela*, who, as a clergy man, must be well acquainted with the book. In fact, the book is mentioned in the Gedl while Lalibela was on his heavenly journey and his escort Archangel

²¹⁷ Ibid, p, 96.

²¹⁸ This point is further discussed in the coming pages.

²¹⁹ Ibid, p,86.

Gabriel asked him if he ever had such an experience. Lalibela confidently replied that he had read about it from the books of Elijah, Ezra and Enoch.²²⁰ But, since the first two men are never said to take a similar journey to that of Enoch, the source for Lalibela's, or rather the writer's, knowledge is certainly *IEnoch*.

As the rock hewn churches are believed to be a result of divine revelations and built by Lalibela, the king must have also been believed to be a man with splendid spiritual qualities. Therefore, by drawing a strong analogy between the major traits and spiritual achievements of Enoch and Lalibela, the writer was able to exalt the latter above all human beings and made him fitting to the miracles that are believed to be performed by him.

The fallen angels myth can be noticed in the *Gedl*, concealed underneath the positive impression that the writer created towards angels; hence the mythical pattern can easily be missed unless examined carefully. The fallen angels myth that we know from *IEnoch* takes a completely different direction in *Gedle Lalibela* but its essence still exists, i.e. the association is less significant. Therefore, to see the influence of the fallen angels myth on *Gedle Lalibela* it would be necessary, as Frye suggests, making a comparison between the two.

To begin with the reason that the angels came to this world is different in the two stories. The angels from *IEnoch* rebelled against God, left their heavenly abode on their will, descended up on earth to sleep with the daughters of men and were never able to ascend back to heaven for their sin would not allow them. If seen from a religious perspective, the deeds of the fallen angels is unconceivable to Christian believers who emphasize the disembodied spiritual nature of angels, hence change was inevitable. Therefore, the writer of *Gedle Lalibela* portrayed his angels in a way that can be morally acceptable, accordingly, the angels are spiritual beings, who came down to earth ordered by God to provide help to men and ascended back to heaven when their duty was over.²²¹ However, it does not mean that the writer has completely dropped this aspect of the myth because traces of its influence are still apparent in the *Gedl*.

²²⁰ Ibid, p, 59.

²²¹ Ibid, p, 87.

The fallen angels from *IEnoch*, at some level, must have assumed corporeal body otherwise the sexual intercourse with the daughters of men will be very questionable. Moreover, Enoch has mentioned some implicit evidences that make this argument more valid.

**ወነቂህየ መጻእኩ ኅቤሆሙ ወኩሎሙ ጉቡአን ይነብሩ እንዘ ይላህው በኡብልስያኤል
ዘሀለወት ማእከል ሊባኖስ ወሴኔሴር እንዘ ግልቡባን ገጸሙ፡፡²²²**

... And when I awaked, I came unto them, and they were all sitting gathered together, weeping in Abelsjail, which is between Lebanon and Seneser, with their faces covered.²²³

Now, if they were incorporeal and invisible the covering of the face would be pointless and the crying impossible. Such kinds of human attributes are also common to the angels in *Gedle Lalibela*. However, unlike the fallen angels who fully joined human beings in earthly life, they assumed some kind of corporal body, which they would soon abandon, only for brief moments so as to make communication possible with few chosen individuals and, except occasionally, the human subjects do not identify them as angels. The following quote could best elaborate this point.

**ወለመስቀል ክብራኒ ወሰዳ ሚካኤል ተመሲሎ ከመጅዳ እምነ ወራዙት ወአብጽሓ
ኅበ አንስተ አክሱም ንጌራተ ብሔር ወአማሕፀና ኅቤሆን እንዘ ይብል ዕቀባ ሊተ ኦ
አጋትየ ፍቁራተ አምላክ ዛተ ወለት በእንተ ፍቅረ እግዚአብሔር እስከ አመ
እትመየጥ በጸሐየ ኅበ ዘፈነወኒ እግዚአብሔር አምላክክን፡፡ ወእማንቱሂ አንስት
አውስአሁ እንዘ ይብላ አይቴኑ ተሐውር ኦ እግዚእነ ሠናየ ራእይ ወጥዑመ ልሳን፡፡
እስመ እምጊዜ ርኢናክ ተሠውጠ ፍቅርክ ውስተ ልብነ፡፡ ወእም አመ ኮነ ኢርኢነ
ዘከማክ ዘይኤድም ራዕዩ ወይጥዕም ቃሉ፡፡ ... ወእምዝ ተሰወሮን፡፡²²⁴**

Michael appearing as one from adult men brought Meskel kibira to the women of Axum, who are very generous and left her in their custody saying ‘Oh! My sisters, God’s beloved ones, for the love of God watch this girl for me till I come back from

²²² M.A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: - A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments*, Vol. 2, 1978, p, 46.
²²³ R.H. Charles (trans.), *The Book of Enoch*, ed. By W.Oesterley, 1917, chapter 13:8.
²²⁴ *Gadle Kidus Lalibela*, 2000, p, 123.

where your God send me to.’ And those women replied saying ‘Oh! Our lord, charming and sweet voice, where to are you going? Your love has found place in our heart from the time we behold you. We have never seen anyone like you with beautiful looks and melodious voice in our entire existence.’ ... After this he disappeared from their sight.

As can be understood from the text, Archangel Michael is said to assume a male human body, which is far more attractive than ordinary men that the women who saw him immediately fall for him. They have never seen any man as handsome that it was impossible for them to behold his irresistible sight and stay unaffected. It is very possible that the fallen angels also appeared with this kind of dazzling look because *IEnoch* did not recorded any sign of resistance from the women’s side when they were taken as wives. In fact, it took them very short time to become close to the angels and learn all their secret knowledge.

But Michael, unlike the fallen angels who stayed among the daughters of men for an extended period and enjoyed their body, made his contact hour very brief and left immediately after. Of course, the writer would not want to upset his Christian readers by including such a bizarre narration in his story. Thus, he carefully directed his story to flow in a way that can make sense and be accepted. However, this does not mean he has deemed the fallen angels myth from *IEnoch* as false, rather he was dealing with what his work demands. In fact, as a clergy, man the writer of *Gedle Lalibela* must have gotten most of his ideas regarding angels’ corporeality from his church’s most cherished book *IEnoch*, because the Bible does not provide a direct reference concerning this point. But he must use it carefully if the story included in the *Gedl*, about angels helping Lalibela in hewing the churches, should ever get any acceptance as a miracle from God and not the work of evil spirits as the civilization of the people, who learned secret knowledge from the fallen angels, is regarded to be. Therefore, he emphasizes the angels’ spiritual nature every now and then, even though his knowledge from *IEnoch* keeps pulling him to the other direction.

The manner Michael left from those women “ተሰወሮን” (he disappeared from their sight) suggests that he never walked out rather disappeared right before their eyes, which could only mean that he abandoned the corporeal body he had assumed for a short period of time, in order to be visible as well as audible, and resume his existence as an incorporeal, invisible spirit. On

another instance, we encounter angel Gabriel whom the writer attributed with more humanly characteristics than we see in Michael but still never forgets to remind us his spiritual nature.

ወገብርኤልስ ሊቀ ኃይላት ዘመርሖ ለላሊበላ ወወሰዶ ውስተ ኢየሩሳሌም ከዊኖ ከመጅዱ እምነ ወራዙት ሠናየ ራእይ ወምሉኦ ሞገስ ወጽሑድ በቅብኦ መለኮት ኢተፈልጠ እምኔሁ ኢ መዓልተ ወኢሌሊተ ወኢተሰወሮሂ ፍፁመ ወኢኦሐተ ዕለተ በውስተ ፍኖት ኦላ ገሃደ ያንሶሱ ኅቡረ ምስሌሁ ... ወሶበሂ ይነብር ይነብር ምስሌሁ:: ወሶበሂ ይበልዕ ይበልዕ ምስሌሁ:: ወሶበሂ ይሰቲ ይመስል ከመዘይሰቲ ...²²⁵

But Gabriel, arch of powers, who guided Lalibela and took him to Jerusalem being as one from the adult men, is good looking, graceful and calm by the divine anointment, never departed from him day or night. He also never disappeared from his sight even for a single day throughout the journey but walked with him being visible. ... When he sits he sits with him. When he eats he eats with him. When he drinks he seems as if he drinks too.

The corporeality of the angel has become a lot more obvious in this passage. In the previous quote, we read that Michael revealed himself to the women ‘ተመሲሎ ከመጅዱ እምነ ወራዙት’. But there is no clue regarding the body he assumed being exactly the same as that of men. This is to say that there is a good chance for it to be a kind that vibrates at a level of frequency where it can be perceived by the senses but not fully corporeal. Here it would be helpful to consider Luck 24:36-39.

*And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace [be] unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*²²⁶

The disciples were able to see Jesus and yet thought He was a spirit, which implies that at some level spirits can be perceptible to the senses. On the other hand, Jesus’ remark “a spirit hath not flesh and bones” proves that spirits have no corporeal body. But with angel Gabriel the situation

²²⁵ Ibid, p, 124.

²²⁶ The King James Version of the Holy Bible. (Retrieved on 10March 2012 from <http://www.davince.com/bible>)

is slightly different. The fact that Gabriel is said to eat and drink what Lalibela, was eating and drinking is an affirmation of his physicality. The writer also seems to be very certain towards this point that, in his expression, he gave emphasis for each humanly act performed by the angel. “When he sits he sits with him. When he eats he eats with him. When he drinks he seems to drink too.”. In the first two sentences Gabriel is said to do exactly what Lalibela was doing but on the third one we are told that he is pretending but not actually doing the thing. But if this is the case, then where does the material food and drink that he is consuming go? A similar question can also be raised in relation to the body when the time comes for it to be abandoned. Perhaps, the writer is trying so hard to emphasize the current existence of the angel as both spiritual and corporeal entity that he stuck in between the two. The expression used with Michael ‘ተመሰሎ’ (looking like) changes to be ‘ከዋኖ’ (being) with Gabriel a little later, further shows the writer’s dilemma.

However, as the story proceeds, we find the writer’s affinity being more inclined towards the spiritual nature of angels. Hence, in the Gedl, he tells us that the angels, who came in group to work on the hewing, were invisible the whole time they did the job and had no contact with human beings except Lalibela, even though they were on the same track with men regarding the mission.

**እስመ ኢየሁዳ. እሙንቱ ሰብእ ከመ መላእክት ይገብሩ እስመ ኢይሬአይዎሙ::
ወገብረ መስቀልሰ የአምር ዘንተ ኩሎ²²⁷**

These men never knew that angels were working for they have not seen them, but Gebre Meskel knew all this.²²⁸

Therefore, the people were not aware of the angels’ existence among them, plus the angels were doing most of their part of the job in the night shift when the people fell asleep, whereas, in the day time they work with similar effort with that of men, hence being unnoticed. At the end all the people could do was be astonished by the miraculous progress that the rock would show every morning they go back to it for hewing.

²²⁷ *Gadle Kidus Lalibela*, 2000, p, 156.

²²⁸ Gebre Meskel is the coronation name of Lalibela.

መዓልተሰ ይትገባሉ መላእክት ምስሉ ሰብእ ውስተ ሕንጻ ኣብያተ ክርስቲያናት፡፡
ወሌሊተሰ ይትገባሉ መዓልተ ሰብ ይገብሩ ኣሐተ እመት፡፡ ወበሳኒታ ይትረከብ ከዊኖ
፬ተ እመተ፡፡ እስመ መላእክት ይገብሩ በኩሉ ለያልይ፡፡ ወእለ ርእዩ ይቤሉ ምንትኑ
ዝ መንክር፡፡²²⁹

In the day time the angels would work on the churches with men, but they also work in the night shift that the following morning it would be found four times progressed than what was done in the day time. Those who saw this would say ‘what a miracle!’

Perhaps, this is done so as to avert the possibility of the secret knowledge, applied on the hewing, being picked up by men. This in turn will prevent the madness, which once took over the human race and led it to its destruction as a result of a similar kind of forbidden knowledge revealed to children of men by the fallen angels, from being repeated. If the angels were doing a significant work in the day time, even though they cannot be seen because of the high frequency that they are vibrating at, which makes them imperceptible to the senses, the men could certainly see the change in the objective, visible rock they are hewing. So the nightshift, where no man can interfere, is found to be the best time for the angels to work. Moreover, it is the angels with this kind of knowledge that are said to take wives from the daughters of men in *IEnoch*, therefore, the absolute absence of contact between human and angels in *Gedle Lalibela*, perhaps, is a cautious move to avoid such kind of doubt from arising in the readers’ mind. In this way the story will also be plausible, since religious writings that narrate about hosts of heaven being mixed, in any manner, with human beings are as rare as *IEnoch*.

Based on what has been discussed so far, the only clear significant association that the writer draws from the archetypal myth of the fallen angels, is their nature and the heavenly secret knowledge that they are acquainted with. Despite the limitedness of the association the myth is still visible as an underlying narrative structure of *Gedle Lalibela*. The next discussion is an attempt to show how this is so.

As has been emphasized repeatedly in the above many instances the churches of Lalibela are extra ordinary; hence the mechanism applied to build them must also be extraordinary, i.e.

²²⁹ *Gadle Kidus Lalibela*, 2000, p,155.

beyond human knowledge and capacity. It is also mentioned in the *Gedl* that the churches are not going to be built by the limited human effort, but a divine power.

**ገቢረሰ አኮ አንተ ዘትገብር ሊተ በጎይለ ዕንላ እመሕያው፡፡ አላ አነ ውእቱ ገባሪሆን
... ወባሕቱ በምክንያተ ተልእኮትከ በእንቲአሆን ትሰመይ አንተ ገባሪሆን፡፡**²³⁰

But you shall not do the work for me with the power of man rather I am their builder.
... You shall be recognized as their builder for the sole reason that the mission comes through you.

But the formless divine power needs some means to flow in to the world of forms, and the writer chose it to be through angels. *IEnoch* introduces us with angels who are experts on secret knowledge such as astronomy, astrology and metallurgy, which they shared among the children of men and cause dangerous civilization on earth that made God furious to the extent of vanishing it in the deluge that nearly destroyed the human race. According to *IEnoch*, men had no access to such kinds of secret knowledge before the fallen angels' appearance among them. So, angels who share this feature of the fallen angels can best explain the existence of the extraordinary rock-hewn churches of Lalibela on earth and among powerless men. This is the place where the influence of *IEnoch* on *Gedle Lalibela* can be clearly seen. Consequently, the angels who helped Lalibela with the hewing of the churches were experts on architecture.

**ወመላእክትኒ ያንሶሰዉ ምስሌሁ እንዘ ይሜጥኑ ሎቱ ምድረ በበአምጣኖን ለኩሎን
በበጸታሁ ለንኡሰኒ ወለዐቢይኒ፡፡**²³¹

The angels worked with him in measuring the needed size of earth for all the small and big ones according to their kind.

The angels with this extraordinary knowledge were leading the construction, while Lalibela and his fellow men simply did what human intelligence allows them to do. It is very understandable why the writer wished to explain the churches with the involvement of extraterrestrial intelligence because they persist to be, even today, incomprehensible in terms of human

²³⁰ Ibid, pp, 86-87.
²³¹ Ibid, p, 154.

intelligence. Therefore, the fallen angels myth is found to be a holder of a perfect explanation to how the wondrous churches of Lalibela came to be.

4.4.2. *Dianoia/ Thematic Implications of Gedle Lalibela*

But why did the author of *Gedle Lalibela* ever bothered to create such a fascinating story of the king and his churches? This question can simply be answered in terms of the long lived Ethiopian tradition of praising saints and martyrs. But further it leads to the exploration of the *dianoia* or thematic implication of the Gedl, i.e. the point that the writer is trying to make. Throughout the story we see the writer struggling so hard to single out Ethiopia and its inhabitants as the chosen country and people of God, via the high spiritual achievements of Lalibela. This is done, mainly, on the basis of the claim that both Lalibela and the churches, revealed in his hands, are fulfillments of a unique divine purpose conceived from the beginning, which they certainly are according to *Gedle Lalibela*.

**አመ በጽሐ ጊዜሁ ለሕንጻ እሎን አብያተ ክርስቲያናት፡፡ ወአመ ወርዘወ ሐናጺሆን
በስጋኒ ወበመንፈስኒ ፈቀደ እግዚአብሔር ከመ ይክስት መድፍኖ ኅቡአ ዘነበረ
እምቀዳሚ ተከቢቶ አመ ሣረረ ምድር፡፡²³²**

When the time comes for the construction of these churches and their builder become matured physically as well as spiritually, God wills to reveal his hidden building, which exists from the beginning and from the time he created the earth.

Using this statement as a standing point the writer is persistent throughout the Gedl in his strong emphasis on the uniqueness of Ethiopia and the people, especially, in comparison with the Israelites. There are several passages in the Gedl that show affinity to this point and in the following few pages some of them are examined as they are found to be the core points of the Gedl or the place where its *dianoia* rests on.

Beginning from the early stage of the story, Lalibela and his rock-hewn churches have been frequently compared to great figures of the Israelites and their tabernacle or temple. When Lalibela saw God in his Glory on the seventh heaven, the first thing that he heard from the Lord was:

²³² Ibid, p,152.

አነ ውእቱ እግዚአብሔር ... ዘእትናገረከ እመልዕልተ ኪሩቤል ሕያዋን፡፡ እስመ አኮ በከመ ተናገርክዎ ለሙሴ እም አምሳለ ኪሩቤል እለ ይትሐወሱ ዘተገብረ አምሳሊሆሙ መልዕልተ ምሥላል በውስተ ደብተራ መርጡል ቀዳሚት፡፡ ናሁ እትናገረከ በከመ ትሬኢ እም ዲበ ኪሩቤል ሕያዋን እለ ያንሶስው በውስተ አርያም ወበውስተ ኩሉ ጎበ እፈቅድ፡፡²³³

I am the Lord ..., who speaks unto you from up on the living Cherubim. It is not as I spoke unto Moses in the first tabernacle from the image of Cherubim which was made in their likeness. Behold, as you see me now, I speak unto you from up on the living Cherubim who move through heavens and through all places where my will is.

This passage is not concerned at all with describing the difference in the manner of speaking, i.e. from the images or the living Cherubim, rather God, or it is better to say the writer, is accentuating on the great distance that exists between the holiness of Moses and that of Lalibela. As it is found recorded throughout the bible, especially the Old Testament, proximity to the divine is determined by one's purity and holiness, the more pure and holy one is the closer the person becomes to God. Lalibela is much glorified than Moses that he was privileged to see and hear God from his real pedestal. The expression "It is not as I spoke unto Mosses..." is astutely used and plays an important role here. Moses is the most privileged seer of the Israelites, who is believed to have spoken to God "word for word" on Mount Sinai and later on in the tabernacle. This big incident and the message Moses received through it lay the base to the Israelites claim of being the only chosen people of God. But now that God has revealed His true glory to Lalibela, and not Moses, which also points to the fact that ultimately the Ethiopians are the true chosen people of God, this claim is shaken from its foundation. So the above quoted statement is sharply drawn to devalue Moses' spiritual quality and boost that of Lalibela's thereby avow the greatness of Ethiopian people among whom a holy man as Lalibela is born.

This trend further proceeds and on page 84 of the Gadl we find another comparison, made by God, between Moses and Lalibela while He was showing him the techniques to be applied on the construction of the churches.

²³³ Ibid, p, 83.

ወዘኣርእየከሰ አኮ በከመ አርአይክዎ ለሙሴ ወአኮ በከመ ገብረ ሙሴ ዘትገብር ሊተ መቅደስየ። ሙሴሰ ገብረ ደብተራ ዘዕዕ ወበዐግያት። ... ወአንተሰ አኮ ዘተጎሥሥ ዕፀ ለዐምዱ ወለምዕማዱ ወለሠርዌሁ። ወዘንተ ብሂሎ አርአየ አበይተ ዐቢያተ ዘእምአሐቲ እብን።²³⁴

What I am showing you now is not as I showed to Moses and it is not in the same manner as Moses that you will build for me my temple. Moses built the tabernacle from wood and twined linen. ... But you do not need wood for its pillars or bars. After saying this He revealed to him great houses made from a single rock.

The tabernacle was a result of an accomplishment of a great mission that Moses took from God. It was so grand an enterprise that every single move was done carefully according to the direction God gave to Moses. It was also intended to serve a higher purpose, as a sit for the Ark of Covenant from up on which God speaks to Moses. However, the tabernacle, when seen against the background of Lalibela's rock-hewn churches, is far from being impressive. Both the tabernacle and the rock-hewn churches are from God, but the latter reveals the divine's most astounding art. And this is the tone of the statement in the above quotation, which is said to be made by God Himself. Consequently, what was given to the Israelites, by God, becomes ordinary when compared to that of the Ethiopians. In the following text this idea becomes a lot more apparent; each sentence so blatantly points towards it that one can hardly miss the idea.

ወኢከሠትኩ እስከ ይእዜ በእደ ካልኣን ዘከማዎን። እስመ እም አመ ሣረርኩ ምድረ አእመርኩከ እምቅድመ እፍጥርከ እምከርሠ እምከ አእመርኩ ኪያከ ከመ በእደዊከ ይትከሰታ እሎን አብያተ ክርስቲያናት ዐሠርቱ። እስመ ብዑድ ውእቱ ግብረቶን እምኩሎን ደባትርየ ዘገበርኩ በእደ ኩሎሙ ጎሩያንየ። ... ወደብተራከሰ ኢኮነ ከመ ደብተራ ሙሴ። ወኢሂ ከመ ደብተራ ሰሎሞን።²³⁵

I have never revealed until now anything like them [the churches] in the hands of others because from the time I created the earth I know you [Lalibela], before I created you within your mother's womb I know you and that with your hands shall be revealed the ten churches for the way they will be built is unique from all other

²³⁴ Ibid, p, 84.
²³⁵ Ibid, p, 139.

houses of mine that I built in the hands of all my elect ones. ... But your house is not like the tabernacle of Moses, neither is it like Solomon's temple.

This passage affirms the absolute superiority of Lalibela as well as his churches. God has made it clear that He has never ever revealed anything like those churches before, and this is so because they were meant to be done by Lalibela, whom He recognized from the time of creation to be the builder of the churches. God is said to know Lalibela long before he was born then, as far as His omniscience is concerned; it might as well be accurate to say that He also knew Lalibela will be born as an Ethiopian when the time comes. Consequently, it can be deduced from this that the Ethiopians are not only the other chosen people of God but actually the very first ones. Moreover, the fact that the churches were reserved in all those years, including the time that the Israelites were active worshipers, is a clear indication of the Ethiopians being God's favorite.

What is more intriguing is that God wants the churches to be built in Lalibela's hands because "the way they will be built is unique from all other houses" of His that were built in the hands of His "elect ones". Obviously, God saved the finest to be revealed by Lalibela among his people, the Ethiopians. The houses of God brought here for comparison are the tabernacle of Moses and the temple of Solomon. These two are the only houses of God ever mentioned in the bible to be built on the basis of the divine will. The high regard that could be given for anything that can be brought closer to these two, let alone found to be far better than them, would be unimaginable. This is why the comparison was necessary. The writer knew where the soft spots are and how to handle them.

In addition to this, the churches are revealed among the Ethiopians not for the sole reason that Lalibela is an Ethiopian and they were meant to be built by him, rather the people deserved to see this miracle. The Gadl confirms that God chose Ethiopia to be the holy place where His unique churches rest up on because the people are worthy of such miraculous revelation.

**ወኅላዩ ከመ ያርአ. ምስጢሮ ለሕዝብ እለ ይደልዎሙ ከሲቶ እምልበ ምድር በጥበብ
መንክር ወበምስጢር ኅቡእ፡፡²³⁶**

²³⁶ Ibid, p, 152.

He [God] intended to reveal His secret, to the deserving people, unveiling it from the core of the earth with magnificent art and hidden secret.

The churches are divine revelations disclosed to chosen people and Ethiopia is the place that God chose for his divine will to unfold.

By now, it should be obvious that the writer did not go through the trouble of writing such a prudently designed Gedl just for the sake of praising Lalibela, rather his book was intended to perform some practical work of conditioning the minds of those who read or hear the story so that they would have a perfect image of Ethiopia. So far the writer has strived to create an exalted image of Ethiopia, but if the greatness of the nation is to get any acceptance, then at least some of the schemes that he developed to do so should be recognized as truth, at least by few. In this way the Gedl will hit its intended target. Therefore, in the following quotation, in which the archbishop of Alexandria converses with Archangel Gabriel, the writer implicitly enforces this idea to make his scheme complete.

ወይቤሎ ሊቀ ጳጳሳት ለውእቱ መልእክ እምአይቱ ውእቱ ኦ እግዚእየ ዘከመዝ ብእሲ ዘኮነ ዘውገ መላእክት እስከ ትዌድሶ አንተ ኦ እግዚእየ፡፡ ወተሰጥዎ መላእክ ለሊቀ ጳጳሳት ወይቤሎ ኢትዮጵያዊ ውእቱ ወትሩፍ ብእሲሁ ፈድፋደ ... ወዘከመ ተቀበሀ ቅብዐ መንግስት እምገበ እግዚአብሔር ወዘከመሂ ሀለዎ ይሕንጽ አብያተ ክርስቲያናት እንበለ ዕፅ ወመሬት ዘበእንቲአሆን ተቀብዐ ለነግሰ፡፡ ... ወሶበ ርእዮ ቅዱስ ላሊበላ ወድቀ ውስተ ምድር እንዘ ይሰግድ ሎቱ ለሊቀ ጳጳሳት ወሰፍሐ እዴሁ ሊቀ ጳጳሳት፣ ወአንስኦ ...እንዘ ይብሎ ወይዌድሶ ‘ለምንት ትሰግድ ሊተ ርቱዕሰ ንሰግድ ለከ ንሕነ’ ...²³⁷

The archbishop said to that angel, ‘Oh! my lord, from where is he such a man who is related to angels that even you, my lord, praised him?’ The angel replied and said to the archbishop, ‘He is an Ethiopian and his adventures are many ... He is anointed the anointment of kingdom from God, he is also destined to build churches without wood and mire, and for their sake he is anointed in kingship. ...’ When saint Lalibela saw the archbishop he fell on the ground so he would kneel to him. The archbishop

²³⁷ Ibid, pp, 127-128.

stretches his hands and lifts him up ... commending him and saying ‘Why do you kneel down for me, when it is us who should kneel down for you ...’

There is a good reason for why the archbishop asked about where Lalibela is from and the angel answered “He is an Ethiopian”. When seen from the background of the point that the writer is trying to make, this question and answer seems to be deliberately planted here to emphasize the nation as a holy birth place of the most celebrated saint. The angel also gives more information than he was asked which helped to stress the point, such as Lalibela being anointed in the hands of God. Moreover, this passage has carried one big connotation concealed in the archbishop’s speech. The archbishop represents all Christians who answer to the Alexandrian church and he has the power command them. It is helpful and also can serve as a good example to remember here, the case of the Ethiopians themselves, who were under the full control of the Alexandrian church (this applies only to religious issues) that they were not even allowed to anoint their own bishop until recently. We read the archbishop chose to bow down for the Ethiopian saint Lalibela, who represents his people as a saint like the great seers of Israel did. It is important here to notice that what the archbishop embraces as a spiritual truth will not remain in him rather flows down to the followers. The archbishop in his all might is well able to give order that will, surely, be done without much questioning, and this is exactly what we witness in the immediate succeeding line of the above quotation.

...ወዘንተ ብሂሎ ሊቀ ጳጳስ አዘዙው ለእለ ሀለው ምስሌሁ ከመ ይስገዱ ወይቤሎሙ ስገዱ ታሕተ እግሪሁ ለዘንቱ ብእሲ ቅዱስ ወኅሩይ ... ወሶበ ይቤ ከመዝ ሊቀ ጳጳሳት አትሐቱ አርእስቲሆሙ ታሕተ መከየዱ እንዘ የኅሥሠ ደበለ እገሪሁ ...²³⁸

... After saying this, the archbishop ordered those who were with him to kneel down and said un to them ‘kneel down below this holy and chosen man’s feet.’ ...When the archbishop said this they kneel down their heads below his shoes needing the dust of his feet.

If the leader is controlled so are his followers. The writer’s greatest effort was made in his attempt to get hold of the archbishop’s mind using his fiery angel Gabriel, the rest seems to take care of itself. It is a very cautious move and one that proves to be effective, at least on the level

²³⁸ Ibid, p, 128.

of writing. The writer seems to be widely aware of what he was dealing with as well as how to deal with it, thus he achieved his goal of creating great Ethiopia in the eyes of the indigenous as well as outsiders and anyone who reads the Gedl from the stand point of this analysis can understand that.

As should be clear by now, the major point of the Gedl is creating a great Ethiopian nation by exalting Lalibela and his churches above all celebrated individuals of the Israelites and their achievements. As a result, the writer consistently draws our attention to the uniqueness of Lalibela and his churches.

**ርእዩኬ ኦ ፍቁራንዩ ዘከመዝ ብእሴ ዘበእዴሁ ተከሥታ እሎን ሕንጻ ማገፈድ
ዘኢተገብረ ዘከማሆን ቡጎብ ካልኣን በኃውርት፡፡²³⁹**

Behold friends such a man in whose hands are revealed these churches that none like them is done in other countries.

So every Ethiopian is expected to live with the recognition of the idea that he/she belongs to a great nation chosen and privileged by God to build these rock-hewn churches on their holy land. This way, the new exalted identity that the writer intends for his people can be firmly established in the mind of the indigenous. It also seems to be the reason why the writer strongly urges, or even warns, everyone to hear the story of the churches.

**ኩሉኬ ሰብኣ አለም ዘኢበጽሐ ውስተ ሀገረ ሮሃ ቅድስት እንዘ ይስምዕ ዜናሆን
ለእግንቱ አብያተ ክርስቲያናት እለ ተገብራ ዘእምአሐቲ እብን፡፡ ይትሚሰል ከመ
ብእሴ ዘኢያፈቅር ከመ ይርአይ ገጾ ለኢየሱስ ክርሰቶስ፡፡²⁴⁰**

Any person of this world, who does not come to the holy land of Roha so to hear about those churches that are made out of a single rock, is like a man who does not wish to behold the countenance of Jesus Christ.

It is very important that the churches of the legendary king Lalibela are visited by everyone, because it is almost certain that whoever sees them, to his astonishment, will ask how and by whom they were built and this is the place where the Gedl plays its most important and intended

²³⁹ Ibid, pp, 156-157.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, p, 29.

role. Here, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that the writer never demanded people to come to the churches just for the sake of visiting, rather “come to the holy land of Roha so to hear” about them. And the story that one will hear about this churches is, inevitably, what the writer proposed in his Gedl. The Gedl on an extrinsic level explains how the churches came to be, but intrinsically it is more concerned with advocating how great the Ethiopians are to have been chosen by God for such a privilege and the glory that comes with it. If anyone, by any chance, happens to accept the story as truth, then the Gedl has met its intended purpose. It assures that the Ethiopians are feared and respected by outsiders, while it strengthens the unique sense of self in the indigenous’ minds.

Therefore, the writer desperately needed his story to reach as much people as possible that, to our amazement, he draws analogy between people who do not come to the churches to hear about them with those who do not wish to “behold the countenance of Jesus Christ”. If the incredible beauty of the churches does not bring them, surely the panic of being the person who turns his back on Jesus will. So now the writer has assured, one way or another, people, especially Christians will visit the churches hence exposed to the story. This trend applies for the contemporary and all generations to come as the rock-hewn churches are said to last till the end of the world and by implication so is the glory of Ethiopia. Now, the great identity of the Ethiopian nation is firmly established.

In conclusion, the writer has heavily relied on Enochic myths while composing his Gedl. The journey myth played an important role in providing the major attributes to shape the central figure, Lalibela, whereas, the fallen angels myth served to explain the incredible structures of the rock-hewn churches and the writer used these two, Lalibela and his churches, as a ground to establish and develop his scheme. Therefore, both myths have watered the essential motif that the writer is dealing with, i.e. creating a great image of Ethiopia as a God chosen and most exalted nation.

CHAPTER FIVE: - CONCLUSION

In the introduction to this thesis, I said that my reason for writing it was an attempt to understand the influence of the mythical narratives of *IEnoch* on the thought pattern and general world outlook of Ethiopian people, which is a fact that different scholars already pointed out but never done a thorough discussion on the subject, via three selected Geez texts. More clearly, I wanted to understand why Ethiopians, especially the authors of the three subject texts of the study, are so attracted to this book, how does the book relate to the different issues treated in these texts and what purpose does its mythical narration serve in constructing the general meaning of these texts. I stated that I would do this by relating the three texts; *Kibre Negest*, *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir* and *Gedle Lalibela*, to the two major Enochic myths I have discerned from *IEnoch*; the journey myth and the fallen angels myth, using two basic concepts of Frye's archetypal theory, displacement and *dianoia*.

The three indigenous texts analyzed in the study are popular among the people, especially Christians, of Ethiopia. Hence, they can show the influence of *IEnoch*, which I argued its mythical narratives have influenced their narrative structure, that goes beyond literature and express its effects in real life situation. The two mythical stories of *IEnoch*, on the other hand, are the major narratives in which the bulk of the book's various wide ranging contents are constituted.

As has been discussed in chapter two of this thesis, *IEnoch* has a special place among the Ethiopians. The country has preserved the book in its entirety for over a thousand years while the rest of the world lived in darkness as to its existence. Not only this, but the book is also canonized in the country's Orthodox Christian Church and considered as an inspired scripture. Moreover, based on its revelatory and eschatological nature, the book is generally recognized as an apocalypse.

Regarding the theory applied in the analysis, we have seen that Frye is of a view that myths, which he believes are archetypes, are the underling narrative structures of all literary works. Thus, stories are recreations of myths and while the content changes, "the constructive principles of story-telling remain constant through them". Though there are a few species of myth, the individual myths derived from them are infinite. However, in every society, there are special

myths that are considered to be more authoritative and educational than the rest, hence are frequently recreated. We have also seen that Frye regards literary works, which are recreations of myths, as fictional and thematic based on the intensity of the internal and external communication of the text. Accordingly, texts with strong internal communication are fictional; while those with external one are thematic hence, put their primary interest in *dianoia*.

On the basis of my analysis of the three texts according to Frye's archetypal theory, I was able to observe that the narrative structures of the two Enochic myths are discernible from the stories. In the analysis I treated each subject text separately and tried to scrutinize it from the stand point of the narrative patterns of each Enochic myths. Moreover, I have tried to see the cumulative effect of these myths in creating the general meaning of the texts. As a result of my analysis, it has become clear that, in different respects, the three subject texts exhibit various significant influences of *IEnoch* on their authors' thought pattern and I have accommodated these findings in the following five points.

1. *IEnoch*, with its righteous central figure and his astonishing story of successful spiritual journey, has provided a framework to the stories of most celebrated Ethiopian figures, such as Queen Makida, King Dawit, King Lalibela and Abba Behaile Michael, through whose incredible achievements the authors promote the greatness of Ethiopia. As a result we find the mythical narrations of *IEnoch* recurring in three subject texts of the study.
2. The bizarre narration of the fallen angels myth has significantly influenced the Ethiopians' perception regarding the nature of angels. Accordingly, *Gedle Lalibela* is very indicative of the possibility of angels' occasional corporeality, whereas *Kibre Negest* and *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir*, evidently, affirm its factuality. Hence, it has become common, in these texts, to find angels with typical human attributes such as corporeality, emotionality, wickedness and others.
3. Regarding the thematic implications of the three texts, especially *Kibre Negest* and *Gedle Lalibela*, the bulk of their stories is invested on creating great image of Ethiopia as the most privileged and blessed nation of God.
4. In all the three texts there is always a special emphasis on the Israelites and their spiritual achievements in comparison with that of the Ethiopians. Especially in *Kibre Negest* and *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir*, the Jews are described as sinners and enemies of God.

This may not be so strange since the writers' endeavor is focused on exalting Ethiopia above all nations and the Jews are the only competitors that they could find in the bible as a chosen people of God.

5. When the narrative pattern of the three texts is considered, a gradual shift from reality to mythology can be sensed as we move from *Kibre Negest* to *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir* and then *Gedle Lalibela*. *Kibre Negest*, narrating a story that is relatively close to the experiences of this world, is a more realistic analogy of Enochic myths, while *Metsihafe Mistire Semay Wemidir* with its revelatory concerns, angel mediator and human receptor stands very close to the mythical narrations of *1Enoch*. When it comes to *Gedle Lalibela* the situation becomes even more intensified and we find a story, which narrates about Lalibela's extraordinary journey through the seven heavens in exactly the same manner to that of *1Enoch*. This trend can be taken as an indication of the Ethiopians' growing affinity towards *1Enoch*.

Therefore, I conclude that the mythical narratives of *1Enoch* seem to suggest themselves whenever the Ethiopian writers intended to write something of great significance. The book with its righteous central figure Enoch and his extraordinary achievements is generally related to greatness, wisdom and success. Enoch is distinguished for being the first man to reverse the general failure of humanity. In the genealogical chapter of the book of Genesis, we read that the first man Adam has died and after him all his descendants up to the 6th generation. They were all victims of the great fall of human race. But the 7th one, Enoch is said to "walked with god and he was not for God took him". This is a success and in fact, a miraculous one. Enoch's ascension was only the beginning of his successful spiritual journey to be followed by his various extraordinary achievements recorded in *1Enoch*. Thus, for the Ethiopians, the cherishers of the book, success is experiencing the miraculous.

Consequently, the Ethiopians believe that they have experienced the miraculous, when they incredibly snatch the sacred-emblem, the Ark of the Covenant, from the Israelites in the cleverly designed operation of the Makida/Dawit quest, when God revealed to them His special secrets, which he hides, even, from his loyal servants-the prophets and apostles, and when they hew the magnificent churches of Lalibela, which are even today scientifically inexplicable, out of a single rock with the help of angelic crew from heaven.

The Ethiopian writers were very interested in mind games and I must say they have played them quite well. Seven hundred years ago an Ethiopian intellectual, together with his five other colleagues, wrote a book about the Ark of the Covenant being transported to Ethiopia and today we have explorers coming to the country in search of the iconic relic. Another, Ethiopian clergy man, six hundred years ago, wrote a *Gedl* about a king who build rock-hewn churches with the help of angels, and today we have scientists, who believe that the first alien contact might have been made in Ethiopia with the legendary king Lalibela and his later compatriot composed a book concerning secrets of heaven and earth and had 17th century European scholars nearly believe that it was the lost Book of Enoch. It should be emphasized that since the texts are religious, historical and mythical traditions, their authors are not the immediate producers of the ideas constituted in them. Rather they are developers and redactors of beliefs and thoughts circulated among their society, specifically around the religious circle of Christianity; hence the ideas that these texts promote also represent the society.

Enoch left records of his extraordinary achievements so his sons can walk in his footsteps. Similarly, the medieval period Ethiopian writers worked so hard in these books not simply to fascinate us with their fabulous stories, but to inject in to their descendents blood the strong sense of greatness and uniqueness that runs through theirs. Their method may be a little bit unorthodox and the ideas too old for our time, but all the three writers have truly invested their religious and secular knowledge to create a special identity of Ethiopian people. This is an obvious fact regarding the three texts but scholars like Wossene affirm that it also applies to other great works of Ethiopian writers. “If we now consider the great narrative compositions of ancient Ethiopian literary tradition, we will find various traditions with their heterogeneous durations, but submitted to a single order to express and form the national identity.”²⁴¹

Today, we hear Ethiopian people celebrating the greatness of their ancient forefathers in relation to the current movement of Ethiopian Renaissance that the country is promoting. While the idea of instigating the people with past achievements is good in itself, if the current Ethiopian people could embrace the zeal of their ancestors in their everyday life and sprinkle their passion in the various professions, perhaps, they, too, may experience the miraculous.

²⁴¹ Wossene Yifru, ed. “An Inquiry in to the Ethiopic Book of Enoch”, *Henok: Journal of Historical and Philosophical Thought*, Vol.2, 1990, p. 17.

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Declaration

I, the under signed, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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Date:- June 2012