

Literary Features of Ethiopian Hagiographies: Figurative Languages and Literary Techniques in *Gädlä Krestos Sämra*

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Abstract: The general objective of this study is to investigate literary features in medieval Ethiopian hagiographies, *Gädlä Krestos Sämra* in focus. It intended to endorse whether these text qualifies literariness. Accordingly, the literary elements/style and techniques were examined in the hagiography. Since the study is done on a text, qualitative research method is applied. This research developed key findings. The results show that *Gädlä Krestos Sämra* has contained literary features. Stylistically, the narrative is constructed in well-arranged figures of speech, simile, metaphor, symbolism, and others. Techniques of a novel, foreshadowing, dialogue and description are on the other hand revealed in the text through the study. The principal conclusion drawn from this research was that irrespective of the reality of the stories for followers, it qualifies the prominent literary features. Based on the finding of the research, it can be argued that the text is a religious fiction.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Ethiopian written literature up to mid 19th c was predominantly Ge'ez Christian literature. Based on the question of originality this literature can be classified in to three categories. The first are translations from other languages, Second, neither translation nor original i.e. adaptations, and third, entirely indigenous. In the 3rd and 4th century a variety of hand writing materials like stone, metal, clay and wood were used (Sergew 1981). According to Bender (1976), Ge'ez has a number of ancient inscriptions written on stone by Aksum kings in the 4th century A.D, and manuscripts that are part of ancient and medieval literature. Introduction of soft writing material were related to the coming of the nine saints to Ethiopia in the second half of the 6th century. It is believed that in order to translate the holy Bible into Ethiopic, the saints required a reliable and abundant writing material, and they started manufacturing of parchment/vellum (Sergew 1981). During that time manuscripts are written which are "*the oldest Ethiopian manuscripts ever found are the Gospels I, II and III (Gospel of Gärima) from Enda Abba Gärima monastery*" (Uhlig and Bausi, 2007).

The language of the literary works was Geez till it was replaced by Amharic as written language in the 19th c. from the 5th century to the end of the Ethiopian Medieval Age, Geez was a literary medium. Ge'ez is still the language of the liturgy, long after it ceased to be a vernacular language. It was only during the second half of the 19th century that was replaced as the main medium for writing and documentation outside the church (Appleyard 1998). For Getachew (2005), When in the first half of the fourth century Christianity reached¹ the country, the latter was ready to receive its teaching in writing which marked the beginning and subsequent fortunes of Ge'ez literature. As to him again this situation is one of the most peculiar features of Ethiopian civilization.

Translation of the Holy Scriptures is among the major literary achievement of Ge'ez literature. For Adamu and Belaynesh (1970), this great undertaking, in the earliest period of Geez literature, was the work of a group of learned Syrian monks known as the Nine Saints who came to Ethiopia in the 5th century. The reign of the Emperor Zara Yaqob (1434-1468) was notable for the development of literary activity. Kings Zara Yaqob and Na'od were particularly noted for their considerable scholarship, and they were the authors of a number of important original compositions in the Ethiopic language. Many translations from Arabic, and numerous original Ge'ez works dated from that period (Taddese Tamerat, 1970).

¹ Christianity arrived in Ethiopia not in the 4th c but in the 1st c (34 A.D). In the 4th c, in the reign of Ezana, it became state religion.

In Geez language, many classical works were recorded even writings that are lost from the rest of the world, the complete texts of book of Enoch, Jubilees, *Ezra Sutu'el* and ascension of Isaiah are found only in Ge'ez manuscripts of the Ethiopian Church (Gezahegn, 2000). Geez literature also attempts to incorporate secular writings: "In Ge'ez, quite a good number of indigenous original manuscripts have been written. These include many historical, theological, philosophical and political works. In addition to this, some other non-Christian works were written, the writings of Zara Yaqob are examples" (Harden 1926:19). Most Ge'ez literature is religious but some texts also cover a range of secular subjects among which are astrology, philosophy, medicine, history, law, mathematics, and royal chronicles (Bender, 1976). The period when the great author and king Zara Yaqob, the renowned writer Abba Giorgis of Gasecca, and many others live is commonly termed as the 'golden age' of Ethiopian literature. Accounts of the Acts (*gädl*) of Ethiopian Saints also commenced to flourish from the 14th century, and continued until the 15th and 16th century. The period is also distinguished by a large body of hagiographical writings and a long tradition of secular history writing in the form of numerous royal chronicles, which are together such a valuable source of mediaeval history. Amsalu Aklilu (1976 E.C), in his unpublished work states, in the 14th century, books started to be written—mostly religious in translation. The texts were translated by the initiation of the monk *Abunä Selama*. As to other indications, numbers of indigenous works were produced, in addition to the translated and adapted ones. Bausi (2007), for that matter says, "Literary productions of this period are not translations but in much amount indigenous works written by Ethiopians much amount indigenous works written by Ethiopians". The 'golden age' and classical period of Ethiopic literature extends from the beginning of the 14th century to the 16th and 17th centuries. From the end of the 13th century a new expansion is found in literature.

Hagiographies, that provide historical, social, political, and other information as well as inspirational stories and legends, and which are the concerned areas of this study, were the notable literary products of medieval time. Hagiographies, among the various genres of Ge'ez literature, are one of the most prominent works, in the history of Ethiopian literature. Taddese (1970) states, "the large collection of hagiographical traditions was those about medieval Ethiopian saints who actually lived between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. These three centuries saw the revival... and led to an intensive literary development". Hence, most of the indigenous hagiographies were begun to write in the medieval period by indigenous hagiographers. Most Ge'ez literature is religious but some texts also cover a range of secular subjects among which are astrology, philosophy, medicine, history, law, mathematics, and royal chronicles of some emperors (Bender, 1976). In addition to this, some other non-Christian works were written; the writings of Zara Ya'iqob are examples (Harden 1926).

Hagiographies are highly pronounced in the medieval Ethiopia, "especially after the 13th century such kind of writings (hagiographic) had been expanded" (Bausi, 2007). The thriving of hagiographic works are the known features in medieval Ethiopia. Hagiographies which are writings that narrate and celebrate the lives of men and women saints encompass one of the major literary genres in Ethiopic literature of the Middle Ages. Hundreds of hagiographical texts both local and translated ones survive from this long period, a vast body of potential source material for the history and culture of the Medieval Ethiopian Orthodox church in particular and the country's as a whole. The period's literature is chiefly "rich in hagiographies", and hagiographical traditions and royal chronicles were flourished in this Medieval Ages" (Adamu and Belaynesh, 1970).

Taddese (1970) states, "the large collection of hagiographical traditions was those about medieval Ethiopian saints who actually lived between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. These three centuries saw the revival... and led to an intensive literary development". Hence, most of the indigenous hagiographies were begun to write in the medieval period by indigenous hagiographers. Taddesse Tamrat (1970) continues, "hagiographies consisted of the acts of the martyrs (*Gädlä sämäetat*), acts of the saints (*Gädlä sadqan*) and the deeds of the Holy Angels (*Därsanä Mälaäkt*); all of these constituted similar compositions of hagiographical tradition". Hagiographies are works that celebrate the lives and acts of saints. The Ge'ez counterpart for such writings is 'Gädl' which, according to its root meaning, has the signification of 'conflict or struggle'. Ferec (1985), defines hagiography from its root as "the Latin word 'acta' is synonymous both with the Ge'ez 'Gädl' and the Greek 'Hagios'. 'Hagios' in Greek means 'holy' while 'graphein' means 'to write'. When they are put together they mean book which deals with "saints, their lives and the honor shown to them."

The church of Ethiopia, in its churches and monasteries is the storehouse of Ethiopic literature, and contributes a lot to the development of the national literary tradition and art. Ethiopian men of letters, in almost all cases, also were men of the Church, and the vast collections of manuscripts are still preserved in the Ethiopian monasteries and churches (Bender, 1976, Adamu and Belaynesh, 1970). From classical times till the late 19th century, most of Ethiopian literatures were composed of Ethiopian Christian literature. These Christian literatures which belonged to the Ethiopian church are *Gädlat* (hagiographies), *Tä'ammärat* (miracle books), *Därsanat* (homilies), *Mälkä'* (a type of poetry), and others, that are mostly written to honor and respect the saints of the church. The writers of such books were scholars of the Ethiopian church. Likewise, *Zena Mewael* (chronicle) of royal kings was another dimension of the earliest writing tradition. There are spiritual books

found in the church which are written in a fictional way whose aim is to enhance believer's devotion towards the Christian world. When we take the *Gädlat*, *Därsanat*, and *Tä'ammərat* they are prepared in the form of short and long fictions.

In the history of European literature, spiritual literatures, especially the Bible, is believed to be “the true foundation of the modern novel” (Hammond 1983, as cited in Anteneh, 1993). Although it is not supported by deliberate and adequate research, this same literature is also believed to be the foundation of Amharic literature (Anteneh, 1993). Many scholars, foreign and Ethiopian, assume that religious literature which is predominantly in Gə'əz is the source of modern Amharic literature. Talbot says: “apart from its religious significance, the ‘authorial version’ of the Amharic Bible may well have a literary influence analogous to that felt in England ever since 1611” (1955, as cited in Anteneh, 1993). Molvaer (1980) claims that “Many authors have attended church schools, and much of Amharic literature has benefited from this influence”. Yohannes (1966), Debebe (1974), Kane (1975), Molvaer (1996), Amsalu (1976) and others seem to have similar views regarding the influences.

Hagiographies are the richest sources of study in various fields. They are highly essential in the study of Ethiopian history, politics, and philosophy, especially of the medieval age. In the field of literature hagiographies are also huge sources of study. Even though hagiographies are rich enough for literary studies, and “researchers like Job Ludolff started to study Gə'əz literature at the end of the 17th century” (Amsalu, 1976 E.C), and it “has considerable wealth both in the contexts of Ethiopian and world literature” (Gezahegn, 2000); there are no as such adequate attempts to do literary research on the area.

Those who take the scheme to carry out research on these texts are not mostly from the literary perspective but from their historical, philological, theological, philosophical or political contents. The literary value has not been given considerable attention. Very few studies are done on the department of English literature on Ethiopian hagiographies. Therefore, the study of Gə'əz literature is waiting for researchers to be explored by researchers; this one is intended to be one of that. On the other hand, some foreign and indigenous scholars such as Hayatt, Ullendorf, Harden and Amsalu have claimed that Ethiopian hagiographies are devoid of literary qualities. Some overseas scholars have also tried to study the literature, but most of their statements, are exposed to hasty generalizations. Expatriate scholars who studied Gə'əz literature have disparaged it by stating that it lacks literary qualities (Harden 1926); (Hayatt, 1928). Still worse, for Ullendorf (1945), the country lacks “great poets and writers”. Hence, for the above expatriate scholars, the country does not have literature with literary qualities. Thus, the researcher was initiated to explore the literary qualities of Ethiopian hagiographies.

The main objective of conducting the research is to analyze and verify whether the medieval Ethiopian hagiographies have literary features (generic elements of a novel). The following are some specific aims. The final result of this research can be beneficial in exposing classical Ethiopian literature. After the findings, one can speak out that Ethiopian had the tradition of literary (fictional) writings centuries ago. Here, the researcher attempts to see the literary beauty of *Gädlä Krestos Sämra*.

Data sources can be classified as primary and secondary sources of data. A primary source of data in this regard is the hagiography intended to be subject of the research. Accordingly, primary data are gathered from this primary text. The secondary sources on the other hand, are written books that are utilized as a source, particularly for review of previous researches and conceptual framework. The researcher, consequently, employs textual analysis through descriptive (qualitative) research method. The researcher carried out a textual analysis. In analyzing the data, generic features of a fiction, style (figurative languages) and literary techniques (Flashback, foreshadowing, description and dialogue) have been explored. Evaluating the aforementioned narrative through those fictional elements, the researcher appraises the text's literary qualities. In the entire thesis, the researcher demonstrates some literary features of Ethiopian hagiographies with special reference to *Gädlä Krestos Sämra*. Through the process of the study, the researcher explores whether the hagiography has literary quality.

II. ANALYSIS OF FIGURES OF SPEECH IN GÄDLÄ KRESTOS SÄMRA

1. SIMILE

This is a kind of figures of speech that presents things, ideas, behaviors, actions, etc, through comparison. In *Gädlä Krestos Sämra*, actions are presented using the connectors of simile those are “As”, “Like”, and “Than”. In the narrative, ample of comparisons are made in simile; a few of them are present in the extracts below.

ወአለቦ፡ ጎህዎ፡ እምግላሳ፡ እስከ፡ እገሪሃ፡ ወይተተ፡ መጎትላሃ፡ ከመ ቅርፍተ፡ ሮማ፡ ወአዕይንተሃ፡ ከመ ኮከብ፡ ጸባሕ፡ (ገ. ፴፩)

From her head to leg, she is absolutely beauty; her chicken is like a Roman fruit, and her eyes are bright as a night star. (P. 31)

In the excerpt above, we notice two words of simile “as” and “like” which compares the beauty of *Krestos Sämra* with a natural fruit and night star. The word “ከመ” of Gə'əz is stands for both “as” and “like” of English.

ወአለቦ፡ ፈለቀቶ፡ እምግላሳ፡ እስከ፡ እገሪህ፡ ወወሳዘ፡ ደመ ከመ ማጾ፡ ... (ገ. ፶፮)

When she out it (the magic) from his body, his blood flows as a water... (P. 56)

“As”, on the above extract, shows comparison, blood versus water.

ወዘንተ፡ ብሂሎ ሰጠ፡ ማዕሰ፡ ሥጋ፡ ወረሰ፡ ከመ ቶላኸ፡፡ (ገ. ፳፮)

Saying it, he voids the skin (of somebody) like Thomas. (P. 68)

ወእምዛ፡ ካዕበ፡ ርእየት፡ አህጉረ፡ ጽዕድዋነ፡ ወርኅባነ፡ ዘያበርሀ፡ ጽድህቶን፡ እምፀሐይ፡ ወወርኅ፡ ወከዋከብ፡ ምክብራተ፡፡ (ገ. ፫)

She saw largest, clean and bright countries which are brighter than sun, moon and stars. (P. 100)

ወከመ ፀሐየ፡ ሚሚ፡ ያበርሀ፡ ሥፃ፡ ጸዳልኪ፡ አስከሬነ፡ ማፈሰ፡ ኮንኪ፡፡ (ገ. ፫፩)

Your beauty is brighter than the sunlight of April because you are the home of the Holy Ghost. (P. 101)

The comparison is made from different perspectives: beauty vs. sunlight

ወሰበ፡ ከህተ፡ ዓይኖ፡ አሐዳ፡ እምጌሆጦ፡ አብርሃ፡ ከሐ፡ ዓለመ ከመ ፀሐይ (ገ. ፫፮)

When the one opened among her eyes, it lights all over the world as a sun light. (P. 106)

It is a comparison of the protagonist’s eye with sun.

When one read across the text, he/she easily finds it filled with words of simile such as “like”, “as” and “than”. These connectors add a value for the aesthetic quality of the text. They have their own part to make the narrative to be considered as “a religious novel” irrespective of its reality. In other words the text is capable to be viewed in the characteristics of modern novels.

2. METAPHOR

It is a kind of figures of speech, an implied comparison between two unlike things that actually have something in common. This kind of figure of speech is also applied in to the narrative.

ወአረት፡ ወበጽሐት፡ ሀገረ፡ ሮሐ፡ ወአምንት፡ ማቅባሪሀ፡ ለላለበላ፡ ወአቱኒ፡ ይበላ፡ ሰላም ለኪ፡ ከርስቶስ፡ ሆም፡ ሐዋሳ፡ ለምጽአትኪ፡ ጽጌ፡ ደንጎላ፡ ዘቆላ፡ ዘመእኪ፡ እምጊታቅ፡ ፍኖት፡፡ (ገ. ፳፭)

She goes to the place Roha and visits the tomb of Lalibela. He said, “Oh! Krestos Sämra, how are you? A sunflower which grows up beside a river, you must possess appreciation since you are come from a distant area.” (P. 65)

This is a typical example of metaphor. The word “sunflower” is applied to Krestos Sämra. Referring to something through reference to another thing to which it is remotely related, the underlined word is used to designate the conducts of the character. The word is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable in order to suggest a resemblance.

3. HYPERBOLE

It is figure of speech in which the writer uses to exaggeration or overstatement for emphasis.

ወሰበ፡ ከህተ፡ ዓይኖ፡ አሐዳ፡ እምጌሆጦ፡ አብርሃ፡ ከሐ፡ ዓለመ ከመ ፀሐይ (ገ. ፫፮)

When one of her eyes opened, it lights all over the world as a sun light. (P. 106)

ወከመ ፀሐየ፡ ሚሚ፡ ያበርሀ፡ ሥፃ፡ ጸዳልኪ፡ አስከሬነ፡ ማፈሰ፡ ኮንኪ፡፡ (ገ. ፫፩)

Your beauty is lighter than the sunlight of April, because you are the home of the Holy Spirit. (P. 101)

Overstated expressions are seen above to grasp one’s emphasis. These kinds of gross exaggeration are common in most of Ethiopic hagiographic literatures to promote the respect of the Saint. By any means, this exaggeration is, when we consider the text as a literary work, another quality for the narrative’s literariness under hyperbole of the figures of speech.

4. SYMBOLISM

Some inanimate and non-human things exist as a symbol to represent the fate of characters of the narrative. Let’s see some of them.

Wheat

Wheat symbolizes the soul of human being that would be saved in the mediation and prayer of Saint Krestos Sämra. On the other hand, it signifies the huge numbers of her followers.

ወአይደዓ፡ ከሐ፡ ዘለአኮ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ወይበላ፡ ንጉሥ፡ ዘንተ፡ ሥርናየ፡ ምክዳ፡ ቤተ፡ ክርስቲያን፡፡ ወትበሎ እም፡ ክርስቶስ፡ ሆም፡ ምንተኑ፡ እሬሰ፡ ለዝከሐ፡ ሥርናይ፡ እስመ አይፈቅድ፡ ነህቶ፡ ወአልብዩ፡ ማገባብ፡ ለአመክ፡፡ ወአተሀበኒ፡ ብዕለ፡ ዘበምድር፡ እግዚእየ፡ ወሰቤሃ፡ ተም፡ ላዕሌሃ፡ ወይበላ፡ አይምክልኪ፡ ክርስቶስ፡ ሆም፡ ዝንተ፡ ሥርናይ፡ ዘተዘርዓ፡ ወሳተ፡ ገሪህት፡ ወበቆለ፡ ለሰሳየነ፡ አዳም አላ፡ ነፍሳተ፡ ሰብአ፡ እመቲ፡፡ በከመ ይቤ፡ እግዚእነ፡ በወንጌል፡ እመ፡ እመ፡ እብላክመ እመ አወድቀት፡ ኅጠተ፡ ሥርናይ፡ ወሳተ፡ ምድር፡ ሰናይ፡ ወአምተ፡ ባሕቲታ፡ ትነብር፡፡ ወአመሳ፡ ሞተ፡ ብዙኃ፡ ፍሬ፡ ትፈረ፡፡ (ገ. ፶፬-፶፮)

Then when finished telling the message which sent from God, orders her to take a wheat that is full of a church. Then she immediately answers: "It is nothing for me, I won't the joy and respect of this world, and even I don't have a store to keep it. Oh my Lord, please don't give me the prestige of this world." He reacts back and says: "this is not wheat that grows up from earth to be human consumption, rather symbolizes the soul of human being. As the Lord in the Gospel says 'I assuredly say you that if a single seed of wheat is not laid in to a land, will lives lonely ingrown, but after agricultural process, fruits many double'" (P. 94-95)

As vividly written in the excerpt above, the wheat signifies human soul. As a person could get raised in the time of mass resurrection, after death, a piece of wheat also got risen after death through agricultural process. On the other hand, the wheat which the saint sees in revelation is very much i.e. full of a church. This implies her disciples, and those who believe in the prayer and intercession of *Krestos Sämra* that would be countless in number. In the beginning, I said wheat signifies a soul. Therefore, it also represents the souls who will be headed to heaven by *Krestos Sämra* from suffering under a satanic rule in hell.

Web

A web that uses to capture fishes symbolizes the major character *Krestos Sämra*. As a web captures fish in a sea, the saint captures the souls of sinner people in the hell and miraculously leads them into paradise.

ወካዕብ፡ ሰሚ፡ እንግርኪ፡ መከገርትሰ፡ ዘይቤ፡ አንቲ፡ ወአቱ፡ ፡ ግሳት፡ ዘይቤ፡ ደቂቅኪ፡ እሚ፡ ወእመሬሰ፡ ቅዱስ፡ በሰሜ፡ ገደልኪ፡ ወበተአም፡ ጸሎትኪ፡ ፡ (ገ. ፯፻፳)

Again listen to me, I tell you that the web which uses to capture fishes signifies you. Those who represented in fishes are your children who will born in water and the Holy Spirit and will trusted in your intercession and prayer, listening to the acts you was spent at earth. (P. 98)

The extract exposes that the web signifies the protagonist and the fishes stand for her followers.

Lamb

These white lambs symbolize joyful children. The lambs are observed enjoying at a field.

ወእምነ፡ ርእየት፡ አምላጊ፡ ጭዋ፡ ላህም ፀዓዳ፡ ጸጉባነ፡ ሐሊቤ፡ ወፍሀዳን፡ ጥቀ፡ መሬሰ፡ ዘእሃሰ፡ አፍቀረቶሙ ለከላሙ ፈደፋደ፡ ፡ ... ወይቤላ፡ ወአቱ፡ መክላክ፡ አሉ፡ እለ፡ ይመሰሉ፡ ጭዋ፡ ላህም ፀዓዳ፡ አኮኑ፡ ጭዋ፡ ላህም አላ፡ ሕፃናት፡ እሚቱ፡ ወይትፈራዝ፡ ከሉ፡ አሚ፡ ምሰላ፡ ቂርቆስ፡ ሕፃን፡ ፡ (ገ. ፯፻፶)

Then after, she saw white lambs that enjoy in the field feeding their mother's breast milk, and she became very wonder of what she saw; she loves them because they are very beautiful. (P. 99)

In actual world, white represents joy, a fantastic and bright future fate. Lamb on the other hand, reflects hope, since a lamb is little, it waits for a coming hopeful future. Hopeful futurity and joy is therefore symbolized by the lambs. The little lambs, as to the excerpt, reveal the little children that were sacrificed at earth and enjoying at heaven with *Qirqos* the little. The symbol is not donned here, but it also indicates the protagonist's future joy at the kingdom of heaven; for the reason the protagonist fights more and more seeking a hopeful future reward.

III. ANALYSIS OF LITERARY TECHNIQUES IN GÄDLÄ KRESTOS SÄMRA

1. DIALOGUE

The story is narrated in third person point view. Although the narrator presents the story in third person pronouns, the characters are make a dialogue; these dialogues give the narrative fictional quality.

ወሶቤሃ፡ ቦአት፡ ወካቱ፡ ቤተ፡ ክርስቲያን፡ ወበከየት፡ ተከየ፡ ማረ፡ በእንተ፡ ወአቱ፡ ተክሰ፡ ፡ ወአቱ፡ ጊዜ፡ ማእ፡ ጎቤሃ፡ እግዚእ፡ ኢየሱስ፡ ክርስቶስ፡ ወይቤላ፡

“ምንት፡ ያበከየኪ፡ ክርስቶስ፡ ሆሜ፡ ፍቅርትየ፡ ፡”

ወትቤላ፡

“እባኪ፡ አነ፡ አመቅኪ፡ በእንተ፡ ማቀብ፡ እግዚእ፡ ጎጥእ፡ ከመ ትምህር፡ ሊተ፡ ፡” አውሎ፡ ወይቤላ፡

“ኢይደልዎ፡ ምንረት፡ እስመ ተአደወ ትእዛዝየ፡ ወክህደ፡ ፈጣሪህ፡ ወተአመፍ፡ ለዕፅ፡ በምክረ፡ ሰይጣን፡ እንዘ፡ አነ፡ እቀትል፡ ወአላቱ፡ እቀስፍሂ፡ ወእሣሃል፡ አነዱ፡ ወአብዕል፡ ፡”

ወሶቤ፡ ይቤላ፡ ዘንተ፡ ደንገጸት፡ ወወደቀት፡ ታትተ፡ እገሪህ፡ ለእግዚእነ፡ ወአወሰአቶ፡ በደፍረት፡ ወትቤላ፡

“ዘፈጠርካ፡ ለዕፅ፡ ሕይወት፡ አንተ፡ ወአቱ፡ በይነ፡ ምንት፡ ትከፃፍ፡ እስመ አንተ፡ ታሞክሮ፡ ለዕፅ፡ ወታላይዎ፡ ለዝንቱ፡ ኃጥእ፡ ወከላ፡ ይትከሃል፡ በጎቤኪ፡ ወአልር፡ ዘይሰዓነኪ፡ ርጎቶ፡ ማንት፡ ወበዙኃ፡ ምንረት፡ ፡ ...” (ገ. ፯፻፶-፯፻፷)

At that time she quickly goes` to the church and prays to God in a deepest sorrow and mourn for this guy. By the time, the Lord Jesus Christ come and says:

“My dear *Krestos Sämra*, what makes you sorrow?”

“I’m here with grand sorrow and tear to beg you a mercy for a sinner *Ma’equebe Egzi*” says *Krestos Sämra*.

The Lord says then:

“He is the one who never earns a mercy, because listening to the advice of Satan, he denounces me and trusted in a magic.”

Immediate after he has finished the speech, she bowed down into his leg and strictly begs him as:

“Oh my creator! This magic plant is created by you, and you have a power to demolish it and save him, nothing is impossible to you, and your mercy is grateful than that of your devastation....” (P. 54-56)

This is a long dialogue made between *Krestos Sämra* and Jesus Christ and then Ma’eqebe Egzi’e. In the dialogue made between these three characters, Ma’eqebe Egzi speaks to the protagonist to negotiate him with God. Then a dialogue is processed between *Krestos Sämra* and Jesus concerning *Ma’eqebe Egzi*; the dialogue ends with the speech of the protagonist and *Ma’eqebe Egzi* that she announces him the mercy.

The dialogue, extracted above, adds a fantastic aesthetic grace for the narrative. Again such kind of dialogues, in a story, gives a literary beauty. We gain an opportunity to notice about the characters’ feeling, aim, problems and psychological beings.

Participant characters internal and external relations, issues of discussion, the level and kinds of their thinking, and one character’s view towards others, are observed through this dialogue. This technique, dialogue, is tied with characters personal truths and experiences, that it enables the reader to have a clear understanding about the events of the narrative, and to develop and proceed the incidents within it.

From pages 82 to 84 of the text founds another exemplary dialogue that the protagonist makes with St. Michael on the one side, and Satan on the other. *Krestos Sämra* once a time sees a group of men standing on their sides. One among them who stands apart makes a laugh, at this moment *Krestos Sämra* asks St. Michael to make the secret apparent that why the one laughs apart from others. The Angel responds back as she can ask himself who laughs alone. But, that man who stop apart make the protagonist frustrate while she attempts to question him. This is a typical dialogue. It adds a certain beauty; readers consider themselves that they were there through imagination while following the event in a third person narrator.

This is a special occasion for the audience that the characters gain an opportunity to react face to face. Such kinds of occasions can develop the story; pay a contribution for the future progress of the story. The dialogue makes the reader to have a friendly reaction with characters. Additionally, it draws a picture on one’s mind about the actions and becomes plausible. The dialogue is not happened for the sake of dialogue only, rather it closely organizes with the plot and story, and has part for the overall interaction of the good flow of the narratives story and characterization. It also has a role to show the personality of characters. Furthermore, the dialogue which is a conversation in a literary work, in this interaction uses to reveal characters and to advance the plot.

It moves the action along in the narrative and it also helps to characterize the personality of the characters. It also gives the story a more natural, conversational in flow, which makes it more readable and literarily enjoyable. These dialogues prevent the narrative from being nothing more than a list of descriptions and actions by showcasing human interaction.

2. DESCRIPTION

Using this literary technique, the narrator describes the dressing, physical appearance, feeling, and facial view of the characters of the story. Moreover, the figurative presentation of the weather, atmosphere, and the physical environment that the characters move on assures the credibility of the story.

ወእምነ፡ ካዕበ፡ ርእየት፡ አህጉረ፡ ጽዕድዋነ፡ ወርኒባነ፡ ዘያበርሀ፡ ጽድብቶን፡ እምቅላይ፡ ወወርኅ፡ ወከዋከብት፡ ምክብራተ፡ ፡
ወወሰተ፡ ወእቶን፡ አህጉር፡ ምላኅን፡ ዕፀው፡ ኤልያስ፡ ወእስካሉኝሂ፡ ፍትዋን፡ ለእዕይንት፡ ፡... ወወሰተ፡ ወእቶን፡ አህጉር፡
ሀለው፡ ዕፀው፡ ከርካዕ፡ ወእስካሉኝሂ፡ ያዘነግዕ ልበ፡ ፡ ወወሰተ፡ ወእቶን፡ አህጉር፡ ይወነዝ፡ ፈለገ፡ ሐሊብ፡ ፀዓዓ፡ ፡...
ወወሰተ፡ ወእቶን፡ አህጉር፡ ይወነዝ፡ ሙር፡ ጥዕም፡ (ገ. ፫- ፫፩)

Again she saw very huge planets which are exceedingly clean and brightest; they are lighter than that of the sun, and of the moon and of the stars. Inside them, there are fruits and flowers which named ‘plant of Elijah’ that are very pleasant to see. ... Inside these planets, there are lemon and other plants in which their fruits make one sensational. Inside these planets, there flow white spring of milk. ... Inside these planet, there flow tasty spring of honey. (P. 100-101)

It is an amazing description about a certain realm which differs from this Universe. The description has a power to draw a picture into our mind. It makes us to easily imagine that fantasy realm. We find splendid description about the planets, flowers, fruits, atmosphere and general physical environment of the country which the protagonist sees in revelation. There also scrutinize a repetition for emphasis which adds more beauty for the literary quality of the text.

Capturing an event through descriptive presentation involves paying close attention to the details by using all of the five senses. Such kind of “showing writing” is a writing that describes the protagonist character, the place and event in great detail, with sensational presentation.

Below is also another excerpt which indicates an imaginative power of the narrator/author, being presented in a marvelous description.

ወሰቢሃ፡ ነጸረት፡ ታሕተ፡ ወርእየት፡ ዐሀርተ፡ ወክልኤተ፡ ነፍሳተ፡ ፡ ወእምኔሆ፡ ዐርባዕቱ፡ ነፍሳት፡ ዘምክረት፡ ወሰመቱ፡
ነፍሳት፡ ዘመነት፡ ዲበ፡ ዓሀርቱ፡ ወክልኤቱ፡ ነፍሳት፡ ሰብኡቱ፡ አብኸርት፡ ፡ ወዲበ፡ ሰበኡቱ፡ አብኸርት፡ ሰብኡቱ፡ አምዳር፡ ፡
ወዲበ፡ ሰበኡቱ፡ አምዳር፡ ሰበኡቱ፡ ሰጭት፡ ፡... ወይጸወርዎ፡ አርባዕቱ፡ እንሰሳ፡ ፡ ወዲበ፡ አርባዕቱ፡ መዝገን፡ ለወእቱ፡

ማበር፡ ይቀወሙ እስራ፡ ወአርባዕቱ፡ ካህናተ፡ ሰማይ፡፡ ወርእየቶሙ እንዘ፡ ይቀወሙ ስደስቱ፡ በምሥቅ፡ ወስደስቱ፡ በምሥቅ፡ ወስደስቱ፡ በሰማይ፡ ወስደስቱ፡ በደቡብ፡ ፡... (ገ. ፻፪-፻፫)

By that time, when she looks down, she saw twelve planets of winds. Among them the four are winds for mercy and the rest eight winds for devastation. Above the twelve planets of wind, founds seven planets of water; above the seven planets of water, founds seven planets of earth; above the seven planets of earth, founds the seven planets of heaven;... the cherub seen carried the throne. Surrounding the throne stands the twenty four clergies of heaven being in the four directions. Our mother Krestos Sämra sees those clergies of heaven standing, six in the North, six in the South, six in the West, six in the East. ... (P. 102-104)

In addition to describing the physical environment, this imaginary description gives some know how about the general context of the narrative. Through this description one goes from one spot to the other in imagination; visits the fantasy realm sitting at a given place. Such kinds of imagination add a literary value for a piece of literature. The extract draws an image for an audience about twelve planets which are out of this planet.

The writer uses a lot of flowery adjectives and adverbs to describe what is going on or how something appears. He again indulges us in a different world by using descriptive writing that paints a vivid picture in our mind. Every author has a different way to accomplish that, but the main purpose is to draw the reader into the desired place and time of the narrative.

3. FORESHADOWING

Many hints are there in the text that foreshadows the events to come. These hints are presented in various ways; it might be through long expressions in words or figurative indications.

ወስቢሃ፡ ጊዜ፡ ማረቅ፡ ለሊት፡ እንዘ፡ ትጸሎ፡ ቀዋማ እም፡ ከርስቶስ፡ ሆሜ፡ ማጽአ፡ እግዚእ፡ አያሰሰ፡ ከርስቶስ፡ እሂዞ፡ በእዲህ፡ ሆሎዮ፡ ወሃዕል፡ ዲቤህ፡ ብሉዮ፡ ማዕዕል፡ ወአዕነቅ፡ ላቲ፡ ወስተ፡ ከሆደ፡ ፡ (ገ. ፵፯)

Once in a day, Jesus Christ appears while Krestos Sämra was at prayer in the mid night, and gave her an old illustrated board (P. 47).

The extract explains that Jesus Christ Gives Krestos Sämra an illustrated board. On this illustrated board, commandments of old and new Testaments are typed. This hint therefore, foreshadows the future spiritual struggle and challenges of the protagonist. The whole narrative is about the religious contending. The protagonist has several times been tasted by Satan. She makes a prayer for human race throughout her lifetime. Saint Krestos Sämra has also Experiences various kinds of spiritual fights in Lake Tana. Astonishingly, this spiritual combats are foretold through the above excerpt.

ወእምዛ፡ እምጽኅረ፡ ኅዳጥ፡ በአሐቲ፡ ዕለት፡ እማዕዕል፡ እንዘ፡ ትነብር፡ ምስለ፡ ብሉሲሃ፡ ወስተ፡ ጽርሐ፡ ርሆይ፡ ወሥርግወ፡ በወርቅ፡ ወበብጽር፡ አስተርእያ፡ ሊቀ፡ ማእከት፡ ቅዳስ፡ ማክሌል፡ እንዘ፡ ይቀወም፡ ቅድመሃ፡ እሂዞ፡ በእዲህ፡ ሆላሳ፡ ኅብስተ፡ ፡ (ገ. ፵፱)

A few days ago, when she sat with her husband in the house which is decorated in gold and silver, the Arch Angel Michael, while his face reflects as a sun, appears to her holding a heavenly food. (P. 34)

This is St. Michael’s apparition for Krestos Sämra holding a heavenly blessed food. This is a kind of gift that signifies the final award. So, the message in the extract conveys her last award after a successful completion of her spiritual fighting. It is a foretold prophecy which foreshadows the protagonist’s final joy at the kingdom of heaven. There are also occasions that foreshadow the future events of the narrative.

ወእምዛ፡ ተዘከረት፡ ቃላ፡ ዘወፅአ፡ እምጽኅሩሐ፡ ወአስተዳለወት፡ አልባሰ፡ ምንክሳ፡ ቀሜኝ፡ ወቅንግተ፡ አጽፈ፡ ወቆብዮ፡ ፡ (ገ. ፵፩)

Then after, remembering the promise that she already made, she starts to prepare monastic attires, such as dresses, monastic cape, a belt and scarf. (P. 41)

A monk’s cape is the symbol of grief and challenge. When a man plans to be monastic, he/she is preparing for spiritual struggles and sorrow. In the excerpt Krestos Sämra has been preparing monastic attire. This foreshadows the coming challenges that wait for the protagonist which she will receive in the name of Christ. Accordingly, the fights that we notice across the narrative are foretold by this excerpt.

ወሳብ፡ ቀርቦት፡ ጥቃ፡ ደብረ፡ ሊባኖስ፡ አወጽአት፡ ማዳጼ፡ እምንፅዕና፡ ማረት፡ ወገሜት፡ ስእርተ፡ ርእሳ፡ ሆነነት፡ አልባሰሃ፡ ወክፈለት፡ ወወሀበት፡ ለነዳያን፡ ዘረከበት፡ በፍኖት፡ ፡ (ገ. ፵፯)

When she closes to Dabra Libanos, cuts her hair in a blade, put off her clothes and distributes to poor, and gives alms the entire many she possess. (P. 44)

Hair, particularly for women, in a religious sense, is a symbol of prettiness or beauty. Female’s beauty and gorgeousness are tied with her hair. In the extract the protagonist cuts her hair down. This indicates how she left back the pleasures of this world and makes herself ready for those countless spiritual contending which come future. She replaces her casual and tailored dressings by monastic attires. This foreshadows how the protagonist becomes ready for future challenges and religious commitments. The extracts presented above are foretold events that foreshadow the whole incidents happen throughout the narrative; hinting at events to occur later.

IV. CONCLUSION

The Ethiopian Church must deserve an appraisal for it preserves the physical and mental flow of the country's literature. The church has been the store house of literature and the centre of intellectuality for ages. The hagiographers, scribes, men of letters almost as a whole have been sourced under its roof. Even mostly renowned and influential modern writers have made their origin in the 'Ethiopic' schools of the church. Hayatt (1928) astonishingly appraises the church for this quality confirming that "no one country is there under the sun, like Abyssinia, that literature became under the control and authority of the church". Amare Mammo (1968:17) declares about the nature of creative writings that they are constructed in two different ways. "The first one is a kind of writing that makes its base on a true story. The rest, on the other side, is solely fictional, ideal, commonly considered as work of creativity." This general definition of Amare provokes me to lay Ethiopic hagiographies, particularly *Gädla Krestos Sämra* into the first side; a fictional writing made its base on a true story. Consequently, based on the findings made in the entire body of the study, *Gädla Krestos Sämra* is written in a fictional quality. It fits the first definition that the *gädl* is written in a fictional manner having religious essentials and the saint's experience and facts as a base. The rational that enables to conclude that 'it is fictional' is the literary standards that the *gädl* got hold of.

It is not without literary aesthetic and artistic beauty that the researcher considers the *gädl* as fictional. The hagiographies are well composed and arranged in a range of literary features, and are rich in literariness. As a literary work should contain story, the narrative *Gädla Krestos Sämra* has a sense controller story. It is not only a raw story, but sensational through the various aspects of a plot. The plot of *Gädla Krestos Sämra* is inspirational. It is constructed keeping the Gustav Freytag's triangular model for plot structure. A reader with a literary insight finds all components of the plot, obviously together with well-to-do characterization, setting, point of view and theme. Figures of speech, one component in story's style, shine across the text. The author uses different forms of expressions through figures of speech like simile, metaphor, hyperbole, and symbols that are departed from normal language in order to create fantastic literary effect and beauty. Through simile two things are compared using words of comparison 'like' and 'as'. Through metaphor, the author transfers an idea associated with one word to another word. Through hyperbole, extravagant statements are there for the sake of literary emphasis. Using Symbol, the author uses something that means more than what it is. Techniques of a novel are appropriately employed in the text of *Gädla Krestos Sämra*. The author gives hints or clues to indicate the outcome of the story, through the technique foreshadowing. Through description, the author also show the elevation of the imagination power employed in the narrative. Using sentimental language, the events, situations, characters, the environment, and the atmosphere are described well. There also is a dialogue between characters, which adds a value for the literary beauty of the narrative.

Based on the above presentation of findings, the hagiography acquires the literary standard, and it can be said Ethiopian hagiographies have exerted substantial impacts on the country's literary thinking. Most of the early Amharic didactic fictions are influenced by classical Ethiopic hagiographic texts. In the history of European literature, spiritual literatures, especially the Bible, is believed to be the base of their modern novel. As to several Ethiopian and expatriate scholars, this same literature is also believed to be the base of Amharic literature. These scholars assume that religious literature which is predominantly in Gə'əz is the source of modern Amharic literature. The study of different genres of Gə'əz literature might exhibit various literary devices employed in the texts that help to see the influence of this literature over the Amharic one. Therefore, it is in one way or another believed that Amharic fiction writers have introduced some techniques of the traditional literature. Consequently, based on the literary aesthetic and beauty that these *gädlat* own, when evaluated according to the literary elements and techniques, the researcher could reach at conclusion that Ethiopians had been the habit of literary thinking and skill centuries ago. When we thought that Ethiopian hagiographers have had hagiographies in the 13th century onwards, their value became weighty. In a brief sum, *Gädla Krestos Sämra*, though it is a compilation of facts, especially for followers, it is a literary work and could be treated as a "religious novel" since qualifies the literary elements and techniques.

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