



## Reception of Ethiopic Book of Enoch in Qəne (Ethiopic Poetry) transliteration and translation with explanation

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### Abstract

*The Book of Enoch is one of our treasures that are recorded in UNESCO. It is an ancient composition which exists centuries before the birth of Christ. Even though it has been lost for over 2,000 years, the Gə'əz version is entirely preserved and found in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church (EOTC) scholars had/still have a respect to look after it. Their understanding of Ethiopic Enoch is clearly reflected in the long and glorious tradition of Qəne which is a form of poetic expression and expressive of the Ethiopian literary genius.*

**Keywords:** Reception, Ethiopic Enoch, Qəne, Gə'əz Language, Gə'əz poetry, EOTC scholars.

### Introduction

Since 18<sup>th</sup> century, after James Bruce took the manuscripts of Enoch from Ethiopia to England in 1773, various scholars of philology, ancient history, and Second Temple Judaism and the Origins of Christianity are interested in studying the Ethiopic Book of Enoch. However, their primary objective is not to investigate the position of Enoch in Ethiopic literatures rather to enhance their knowledge of Jewish folklore and to seek information upon the religious ideas of Judaism, especially concerning the Messiah. Regarding this, Nickelsburg, (2001:162) stated as, "1 Enoch's influence has been discussed only in relation to early Jewish texts and the literature of Western Christianity"<sup>1</sup>. Nickelsburg attested that scholars of 1 Enoch have paid little systematic attention to the historical matrix of the Ethiopic version and to the book's ongoing role in the life and thought of Ethiopian Christianity. Similarly, Reed, Y.R. wrote as, "Other studies either have cited 1 Enoch as the Jewish "background" to Christian traditions or have limited their analyses to inner-Jewish developments"<sup>2</sup>.

Here one can understand that the study of the Book of 1 Enoch is very little as for the Ethiopian socio-religious context in which the text has been transmitted and used. Particularly its position in Qəne is overlooked or do not receive much attention in most of the studies. This hinders the possibility of appreciating the influence of the book of Enoch, and it indirectly limits our study of 1 Enoch.

Consequently, many questions can be raised concerning this issue. One can ask questions such as how can we interpret the lack of interest for Ethiopic poetic literature, particularly Qəne by scholars who study the book of Enoch? How the EOTC Qəne scholars received, studied, and understood the book of Enoch? Do the Ethiopian church scholars use their Qəne (poem) to

reflect their knowledge of the book of Enoch? This article reflects how the EOTC Qəne masters used the Ethiopic Enoch as source of knowledge in composing their Qəne.

### Methodology

Before collecting the data (Gə'əz Qəne / Poetry), it was mandatory to have general awareness about the contents of the Book of Ethiopic Enoch and various issues dealt in it. Therefore, I repeatedly read both the Amharic version and the Ethiopic commentary of the Book of Enoch to the extent at least I may be able to remember a notion directly or indirectly quoted from this Book. Then, the Qəne (poems) were collected from different Gə'əz Qəne collections and organized based on their structure. Next, the selected Qəne are edited in fidäl and carefully transliterated in Latin characters, a choice which proved to be appropriate, because in many cases the transliteration helps very much the reader in reconstructing the exact grammatical form and consequently in understanding the real sense of the poetic words.

After that, the homegrown technique of Qəne analysis known as Tərgum (literal translation), Məsəṭir (interpretation) and Tarik (narration of background)<sup>3</sup>, is utilized to analyze the data. In connection with the analysis and interpretations, attention was given to the expressive style to find out whether it is a quotation, allusion, and allegory, or kind of sāmna- wärq (gold and wax) in relation to Ethiopic Enoch. Furthermore, an attempt was made in order to give more background information and explicit justification for some Enochic Gə'əz poems and to look for different ways to discuss problems of interpretation of contents in Ethiopic Enoch (if any).

Moreover, in order to avoid unnecessary redundancy, the Enochic poems and their transliteration is presented in a

tabulated form followed by their literal translation placed at the center. Above all, even though it is not as sweet as the original verses, I attempted to maintain the rhyming nature of the poems while translating them without distracting the intended message.

## A Glimpse on Qəne

The word Qəne derives from a Gə'əz verb “ቀነየ” (Qänäyā) means “to intone, to compose, to sing a hymn”, and also to worship, to subject to God<sup>4a</sup>. Alemayehu Mōges considers Qəne as “an art form, having a language (Gə'əz) as its medium of expression, handed down from generation to generation by oral teaching; it is also the characteristic of the people who created it<sup>5</sup>. Prof. Luigi Fusella has explained Qəne as a kind of poetry which is considered the boast of Ethiopian literature; which is too difficult (and indeed, at times, impossible) to interpret even for Ethiopian scholars because of its deep and complex nature<sup>6</sup>. Quoting Alemayehu's work, which confirms the pride of place of the Qəne, Fusella puts the following description in his own literal translation:

*“It is impossible to find qəne other than in Ethiopia. It was begot and reared by Gə'əz and when it was old it has been made known to Amharic. After being beautified in the semnna worq, in the hæbr and in all other patterns, being food for the mind as tef is food for the body, it was given by the high God only to the Ethiopians in order to enrich the mind of the sons of Gə'əz; to add happiness; to be the joy of the mind, of the heart, and of intelligence; to be a remedy for tiredness and the oblivion of pain; to call anger; to increase genius; to re-enforce the soul and to accumulate knowledge... in our gitms (poems) the hidden meanings run incorporated like electric current in its wire, and the belief that they can be understood is like wanting to maintain the sky with the right hand and the stars with the left while sitting on the earth.”<sup>6</sup>*

Moreover, according to the tradition of EOTC, Qəne is considered as a key of knowledge and wisdom. Knowing Qəne is mandatory to have Comprehensive knowledge and complete understanding of Ethiopic texts.

*Regarding its historicity*, no one can give a definite answer for the question when our versification Qəne is started historically. The attempt of knowing the origin of Qəne is still left to be debatable due to lack of historical information. Various researchers put different scenarios on this matter. According to the position of the scholars in the field including some of the church scholars (Liqawənt), the Qəne goes back to St. Yared. Taking as evidence the systematic form of rhyme and rhythm used by St. Yared in the body of poetry known as Dəgg<sup>w</sup>a (which is the liturgical book of the Ethiopian church which contains the hymns and troparions for the divine office)<sup>4b</sup>, Alemayehu wrote that “we are certain only poetry had developed before the time of St. Yared”<sup>5</sup>. He explains that “had there not in earlier times been a well known, organized and nationally accepted rules of versification, St. Yared could not

have composed Dəgg<sup>w</sup>a”<sup>5</sup>. Then he concludes as “Yared is not the founder of poetry but the promoter”. Similarly, while Kefyalew<sup>7</sup> wrote the contribution of Yared to the development of Ethiopian culture, he acknowledged St. Yared as the author of Qəne (poet) referring to the “wax and Gold” type of Qəne which is established in the Dəgg<sup>w</sup>a. Supporting this, Sirgiw Gelaw also declared the ideas of some scholars who claim that “a few of Yared's hymns are considered as the first pieces of Gə'əz Qəne”<sup>2</sup>.

On the other hand there are also some scholars who hypothesize about the foundation of Qəne and its founders. Sirgiw summarized the argument between the scholars of Wadla and Gojjam as follow:

*Scholars at Wadla claim that a person by the name Yohannes Geblawi from Sayint (Gebla) went into a spiritual retreat in 1450 A.D., at a place called Sayint, near Debre Tabor, making a request unto God to reveal to him the ways of Qəne. God heard his prayers and the ways of Qəne were endowed to him. He then taught Qəne to wolde Gebriel, and Wolde Gebriel, in turn, taught to Sare'ab. This was during the time of Emperor Bā'ädä Maryam (r 1468-1478). However, Bā'ädä Maryam was not impressed by Sare'ab's claim and dismissed it as vain blabbering. But Sare'ab persisted in saying that Qəne was not vain blabbering but a divine art manifested to his teacher through the Holy Spirit and challenged him to go into confinement himself and prove the fact. The Emperor accepted the challenge and confined himself as was suggested by Sare'ab, and the art of Qəne was revealed to him.*

*On the other hand, Scholars from Gojjam claim that a person of their region, Tawanay by name, went to Greece and came back after acquiring seven kinds of wisdom. One of these was Qəne... but these scholars do not substantiate their claim by any kind of probable logic<sup>2</sup>.*

If someone raises a logical question for the scholars of Wadla why Yohannes Geblawi was initiated to know more about Qəne and requested God to reveal him its ways? In my understanding this question forces us to draw our contemplation to the first source of knowledge of Qəne of Yohannes. Had there not in earlier times been the concept of Qəne Yohannes could not have prayed to God to reveal him the ways of Qəne. Similarly, if we accept the second view by *Scholars from Gojjam*, we also forced to ask like: if the wisdom of Qəne had been acquired from Greece, why this wisdom is not found in the present day of Greece, at least its legacy? Therefore, St. Yared should be praised for he is the promoter and originator of Qəne although it is developed and given its present form by different Ethiopian Qəne scholars through time.

In general many researchers exerted their time and knowledge to investigate different aspects of Qəne such as its origin, historical development, types, nature (structure), forms and uses etc., but nothing has been documented about its power to reflect

biblical contents in general and Enoch as depicted in Gə‘əz poetry (Qəne) in particular. Hence, this article plays a vital role in documenting some examples of Qəne (Gə‘əz poems) which are composed based on the Holy Bible in general and the on the Ethiopic Book of Enoch in particular.

### Results and Discussion

As Qəne is replete and rich with allusions to history, the Holy Scriptures, the lives of the saints, historical events, classical texts, nature, and popular wisdom the book of Enoch is quoted and illustrated by Qəne composers. The following Qəneyat (Gə‘əz poems) demonstrate how Ethiopic Enoch is depicted in Gə‘əz poetry /Qəne. They are presented according to their level of complexity (from simple to complex); which means from the shortest Qəne that consists of two lines, known as ጉባኤ ቃና (Gubae Qana ) up to the longest one, called ዕግነ ሞገር (‘əṭanā Mogār) which has eleven lines. Hence, one should notice that for this study, the level of complexity of the poems (Qəneyat) depends on their structure, particularly, numbers of the lines in each stanza (Qəne).

ለመልአክ ገነት ሄኖክ ኢያፈርሆ መዊት  
ውስተ እደዊሁ አከናፍ አምጣነ ቦቱ አስማት

Lämäl’ākä gännät Henoch ’iyyafärrəho mäwit  
Wəstā ’ədäwihu ’äknaf ’ämṭanā bottu ’äsmat

Mäl’ākä gännät/ Henoch shall not fear death  
For he has ’äsmat in his hands/ wings.

As stated above, this couplet is the first order in the lists of Gə‘əz Qəne, and it is known as ጉባኤ ቃና (Gubae Qana). In its special character, it is also called ጎብር ቅኔ / ስጋር ቅኔ Qəne for the words ‘መልአክ ገነት’ and ‘አስማት’ have dual meanings. In a common sense, the word ‘መልአክ ገነት’ (Angel of paradise) is a title name given for some church leaders (bosses); and the word ‘አስማት’ (’äsmat), in its popular meaning, stands for a written amulets (magic scrolls). The literal message of this Qəne, therefore, refers an individual magical person called Henoch (whose title name is Mäl’ākä Gännät) that thinks as he will not be troubled in any case because of his ’äsmat/ magic.

The secret and the most important concept of this Qəne is that it helps us to think about the life of the angels and Enoch the prophet. In this context the above words, ‘መልአክ ገነት’ and ‘አስማት’ have different meanings; the first is translated as ‘angel of the paradise’, and the second as ‘names’. According to the above Qəne this angel has ‘names’ in his wings. The concept is taken from Ethiopic Enoch. The book (1Enoch) reads us that God placed His secret names such as አካ (’äka), ክስብኤል (kəsbə’el) and ቤቃ (Beqa) in the hands of St. Michael (cf. En69:3-6). In other words, we know that the angels are not mortal or liable to death naturally. Having this fact the composer of the above Qəne states that Enoch the prophet who is symbolized by the angel of paradise (because he lives there) never frighten death.

ለወልደ አዳም ሞት ዘእምነ አዳም ተወልደ  
ማርያም ትቢሎ ዘመደ ዘመደ  
እዝራ ወሄኖክ እስመ ረሰይዎ ባዕደ።:

Läwäldä Adam mot zä’əmənä Adam täwäldä  
Marəyam təbelo zämädä zämädä  
Ezra wähenok ’əsämä räsäywo ba’ädä

For the son of Adam/death, that is born of him (Adam),  
Mary made him (the death) kinsman,  
Because, Ezra and Enoch made him outsider.

This Gə‘əz poem (Qəne) is known as ዘአምላኪያ (zä’ämlakiyā) and found at the second rank having three lines. In order to develop this Triplet Qəne, the composer took its theme from Ethiopic Enoch. Hence, the life of Marry is compared with the life of Enoch and Ezra considering death as a comparison criterion. In the poem it is said that St. Mary made the death, the so called son of Adam, kinsman while Ezra and Enoch made him outsider.

Here we can understand that death is considered as the “son of Adam” due to the fact that it (death) was born, for the first time, from Adam’s transgression; there was no death upon men before his transgression (cf. Rom 5:12). Starting from the time of Adam, all human being, except Enoch, Ezra and some others, died and are stile dying. About Enoch, it is written in the book of Enoch as: “እምቅድመ ኩሉ ነገር ተከብተ ሄኖክ ወአልቦ ዘየአምር እምውሉደ ሰብእ ቡንብ ተከብተ ወንብ ሀሎ ወምንተ ኮነ.../ and before everything Enoch had been hidden, and none of the sons of men knew where he was hidden, or where he was, or what had happened...” (En 12:1). St. Paul also testifies in the bible saying, “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him...” (Heb 11:5). The same is true about Ezra (cf. The Book of Ezara Sutura ch.13: 49 in the Ethiopic Bible). Taking this idea from the bible, the composer of the Qəne/poem said that while Ezra and Enoch made the son of Adam (death) outsider, Mary made him (the death) kinsman. Shortly, it implies that while Mary died, Enoch and Ezra remained alive.

ፈረህያኒሁ ለሄኖክ መቃብር ወሞት ለእመ ፈቀዱ ተጽእኖተ  
በዘባነ ፈረስ ዮሐንስ እንተ አንፈርዐጸ ሰማያተ  
ዘመደ ኪሩቤል ክንፍ አንዝ ሎሙ አአዛኒሁ ካልኤተ።<sup>8</sup>

Färahyanihu läHenok mäqabr wämot Lā’əmmä fäqädu täşə’ətä  
Bäzäbanä färäs Yoḥännəs ’ənttä ’anfär’äşä sämayatä  
Zämädä kirubel kənf ’äḥzä lomu ’ä’əzanihu kəl’että

While the grave and death, which are afraid of Enoch,  
Wanted to mount on the back of the horse/John- that leaped to  
heaven,  
The wing/relative of Cherubim holds them his (John’s) ears.

እመ በገሊላ ተፅዕረ እምኃይላ ተመትሮ ሕማም ቃለ ዐዋዲ መምህር  
በርእስ ሄኖክ ወዘካርያስ በእግር  
አንዝዎ ደርገ እስመ ዘመደሙ ኮነ ውስተ ቤተ ሄሮድስ ነኪር።<sup>8</sup>

'Ämä bägälila täšə'ərə 'əmhäylä tämätro həmam qalä'awadi  
mämhər  
Bär'əskä Henok wäzäkaryas bä'əgr  
'Ähəzwo dārgä 'əsmä zämädömu konä wəstä betä Herods näkir

While the teacher/Qale Awadi (John the baptizer), was in affliction  
From the power of sickness of hewing,  
There were Enoch around his head and Zacharias in his leg.  
And they took him together for he is their kinsman  
In the house of Herod the alien.

The above two poems / Qəneyat are known as ማሳባት /Mibāzhu. Even though they are Triplets in their structure and the same as the former type, they are more advanced in terms of the lengths of each line within theme. Both poems discussed John the baptizer, as their subject matter. In poem 3, the poet symbolizes: grave and death as people who are afraid of Enoch; and also as people who wanted to mount on the back of a horse. The poet also symbolizes John by a horse that leaped to heaven. Another figure of speech depicted in the last line of the poem is the wing of Cherubim which is symbolized by a kinsman. Then, the poet said that while these people (grave and death) wanted to mount on the back of the horse (John), this kinsman, Cherubim's wing, holds them the two ears of the horse (John's ears). All these are allegorical expressions; the golden messages of this Qəne (poem) are two; these are:

First, the anxiety of the so called people, grave and death, is used to indicate that death and grave are not able to control Enoch the prophet. In other words, since Enoch neither died nor buried yet, death and grave are powerless upon him. In short, the composer accurately explains as Enoch being concealed from the face of death.

Second, the subject matter of the poem, John is discussed as a horse driven by death and grave to notify as he died and buried. Interestingly, the poet explains that while John died, he was given two wings, like Cherubim, instead of his two ears. As we read in the Bible, John was beheaded by the order of Herod and his body was buried by his disciples (cf. Mt 14:1-13). Whereas, his head, according to the teaching of EOTC, brought two wings and flight for fifteen years teaching the word of God (Mt 14:5)<sup>9</sup>.

Likewise the above Qəne, the composer of the 4<sup>th</sup> Qəne also used cultural and Biblical references in order to articulate his message. From cultural point of view, especially in Ethiopian, it is understood that when a person is very sick and comes at the door of the death, his relatives may approach him and hold the person's legs and head. Based on this, in the first line of this Qəne, Qale Awadi (another name of John the baptizer) is referred as a teacher (person) who is in affliction from the power of sickness which leads to death. Then, in the last two lines, Enoch and Zacharias are considered as his relatives who gathered around him and hold his head and legs respectively.

The main point of this Qəne is also depicted in these lines. When John was beheaded, he did not die completely; rather his head was alive while his other body died. To signify this, the poet says, "Enoch holds John's head" which is to mean that as Enoch the prophet concealed from death; John's head was also remained alive while he was beheaded by the order of Herod. Whereas, the poet says, "Zacharias holds John in his leg (i.e. John's leg)" to notify that as Zacharias whose blood was perished between the altar and the temple and died (Luke 11:51), John, the son of Zacharias, was also died. Therefore, the poet made an allusion from the book of Enoch to use the life of Enoch as a source of his Qəne together with the subject matter (John).

ኢየሱስ ሆኖ ሆኖ ሆኖ ነጻዮን  
ሙሴ ወኖህ ለዘመደ ሥጋ ልደት  
ጽውመ እስመ አኅደርዎ በብረሃን ቤት  
ባዕለ ጸጋሰ ወልድ አክባሬ ልደት ብሉት  
እስመ ምስለ መኖር አቅረቦ ሀሊብ ሕይወት  
ወኅብስተ ዘአልቦ መስፈርት።<sup>8</sup>

Eiayastäfšhwo nädayan  
Muse wäNoḥ läzämädä səga lədat  
Şəwwämä 'smä 'ahdärwo bäbrhan bet  
Ba'älä şägassä wäld 'akbare lədat bəhut  
Esmä məslä mä'ar 'aqrābä halibä ḥəywät  
Wähəbəst zä'albo məsfärt

The poor Moses and Noah,  
Could not please to the birth/kinsman of the flesh;  
For they made him to pass the night fasting.  
But, the rich Son (God the Son) honors the respected birth;  
For He brought living milk with honey,  
And bread without number.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Qəne/ poem in the above in known as ዋዜማ ቅኔ/ Wazema Qəne; structurally, it is a Cinquen or a five line stanza. This Qəne discusses the miracles that happened during the time of the birth of Christ comparing with the birth date of the two prophets (Moses and Noah). In Ethiopic Enoch/En 106:1, it is explained and reported that when Noah, the son of Lamech, was born, "his body was white like snow and red like the flower of a rose; the hair of his head (was) white like wool; ... and his eyes (were) beautiful. And when he opened his eyes, he made the whole house bright like the sun so that the whole house was exceptionally bright..." The Orthodox Tewahido Church also believes that the same episode was happened during the birth of Mosses (cf. exodus 2:2)<sup>10</sup>. Regarding to the miracles that happened during the birth of the rich son (God the Son) the church teaches as "በእንተ ልደቱ ለክርስቶስ አድባር ኮነ ኅብስተ ሕይወት፡ ወዕፀወ ገዳምኒ ፈረዩ አስካለ በረከት፤ ማየ ባሕርኒ ኮነት ሐሊብ ወመኖረ... (Lit. During the birth of Christ, mountains became bread of life; and the trees of the wood yielded fruits of blessing; and the river's water became milk and honey....)<sup>11</sup>. Here, the reader should note that if the symbolic expressions like 'mountains', 'trees of the wood' and 'river's water' are analyzed thoroughly, they yield us

numerous theological fruits that could be sweeter than milk and honey! In the Qəne, the birth is symbolically represented by kinsman /guest who came to the houses of the poor Moses and Noah and of the rich Son (God the Son). In our culture, even in the others, it is clear that a guest cannot be treated equally if he went to the house of the poor and the rich. The poor gives him nothing; whereas, the rich brings to the guest whatever in the house. Considering these cultural facts and the biblical narrations and holy Tradition of the Church about the birth of Noah, Moses, and Jesus, the poet stated that the time in which Jesus Christ was born is highly glorified than the two prophets. Therefore, the poet sues the book of Enoch as reference to compose his Qəne. In general, the theological implication of the poem is that the world becomes full of happiness by the birth of Jesus Christ.

ኅድግዎ ወመንገድ  
ለአጼ ምኒልክ ዓለመ ሥጋ  
ደዌ ወሞት ውሉደ ቀዳማይ ኣዳም  
ወኢትበልዎ ለመሬት ጌሠም  
አምጣነ ምኒልክ ንጉሥ በዊዐ ገነት ዳግም  
በደሮ ለሄኖክ ዘይቀድም  
አመ ወሰደ መንገዱ መንገሉ ገዳም  
ወአንበሮ በሐዲስ ዓለም<sup>12</sup>::

Hədgwwo wämännənnəwwo  
Lä’əşe Mənyəlk ‘alāmā śəga  
Däwe wəmot wəludā qädamay Adam  
Wä’itbälwwo lämäret geśäm  
Amṯanā Mənyəlk nəguś bäwi ‘ä gänät dagəm  
Bädäro läHenok zäyqäddəm  
‘Ämäwäsädo mänfäs mängälä gädam  
Wä’ənbäro bähaddis ‘alām

The plague and death, the sons of the first Adam,  
Let leave and esteemed least Emperor Minilk, the world of the  
flesh;  
And do not make him dust by tomorrow.  
(For) the king Minilik went before Enoch into the second  
paradise,  
When the spirit caught him to the wilderness  
And set him in “Haddis Alem” /the new world).

This Qəne is called ሥላሴ ቅኔ/ söllase Qəne that has six rhyming lines with various lengths. Its subject matter is Emperor Minilik II who was king of kings of Ethiopia. According to the Tradition of Orthodox Tewahido Church, some people, especially monks, leave this world of flesh or the material world and they esteemed it least. Taking this notion into account and symbolizing the plague and death by the sons of Adam, the poet requests them to go away from Emperor Minilik-who is also signified by the world of flesh. In a straight line, the poet is wishing or praying for the Emperor, neither to be sick nor today. He also compares the king with Enoch; as Enoch was lifted up into heaven (the new world), the poet also says, the spirit caught Minilik II to the wilderness and set him in “Haddis Alem” (new world). The phrase “Haddis Alem” is a name of a particular

place (small town) which was established by the Emperor from 1900 to 1903, and a place wherein he constructed his palace.

ኢያሱ ንጉሥ ንጉሠ ሐራ  
ዕድሜክ ይሕጽር ከመ ዕድሜሁ ለዕዝራ  
ወገነተ ይኩን መቃብሪክ፤  
ከመ ትስማዕ ድምጺ ለሄኖክ ዕንዚራ<sup>12</sup>::

Eyyasu nəguś nəguśä hära  
‘Ədəmekä yəhəşşər kāmä ‘ədəmehu läEzra  
Wägännätä yəkun məqabrikä  
kāmä təsmä ‘ə dəmşo läHenok ‘ənzira.

King Eyasu, the king of soldiers,  
Let your age be shorten like the age of Ezra;  
And let your grave be in paradise  
For you shall hear the voice of Enoch/ the psaltery.

In its special name, this Qəne is known as ሣህልክ ቅኔ / śahələk Qəne and it has three rhyming lines, which are completely different from the previous ones. King Eyasu is the subject matter of the poem; using ironical expression the poet consecrates the king saying, “Let your age be short like the age of Ezra”. Paradoxically, Ezra’s age is not short; rather the holy angels took him to paradise and he lives there until the end of this world (cf. Ezra13:49). The second paradox is “Tomb in paradise”; here the poet communicates his subject matter and says, “Let your grave be in paradise, to hear the voice of Enoch the psaltery”. One can understand that there is no grave in paradise. As a result, the author is conveying his enthusiastic message to the subject matter wishing him a long life to live together with Ezra and Enoch in paradise.

እግዚአብሔር ጠቢብ ኢያስተአረየ  
ልሕኩተ አዴሁ ፍጥረተ በጾታ ምሳሌ ጥዩቅ  
አምጣነ ለገነት አዕበያ እምነ ዐራራት ምጡቅ  
ወላዕለ ዐረፍት አርሞንዔም፤ ተድባብ ገብሮ ለታቦር ምርፋቅ  
ዘንተኒ ከመ ያጽድቅ፤ ዕዝራ ልብዩ ይቤ በወርኅ ዕርቅ  
እምአድባር ድኅታን ዕፀወ ሱራሬ ወንድቅ  
ለዛቲ ዐፀደ ወይን አዕበያ አምላክ ጽድቅ::  
ወይቤ ልብዩ ሄኖክ ነጻሬ ምሥጢር ረቂቅ  
አድባረ ብሩር ዘታሕቴሃ ርኢኩ ደብረ ወርቅ<sup>12</sup>::

‘Ägzi’abher řäbib ‘iyyastä’äräyā  
Ləhək<sup>wätä</sup> ‘ədəhu řəřrätä bāşota məssale řəyyuq  
‘Amṯanä lägänät ‘ä ‘əbäyā ‘əmənänä ‘ärarat məřuq  
Wäla ‘ələ ‘äräft ‘ärmn ‘em (Hermon) tädbabä gäbro läTabor  
məřfaq  
Zänttäni kāmä yaşdaq Ezra löbbəyā yəbe bāwārřä ‘əřq  
‘Əm’ädbar dəřuřan ‘əşäwä surare wänədq  
Läzatti ‘äşädä wäwäyn ‘ä ‘əbäyā ‘ämlakä řədq  
Wäyəbe löbbəyā Hnok nəşşare məşřir räqıq  
‘Ädbarä bəřur zätäřəteha rə’iku däbrä wärq

The wise God never made equal the creation,  
The work of His hand; in every group it is clearly known;

Because He elevated the paradise more than the lofty Ararat;  
And, He made Tabor as roof of a house  
Upon the basement of the Mount Hermon;  
To assure this, Ezra/ my heart says:  
“In the time of peace, the righteous God elevated  
This vineyard (temple of God) more than  
The mountains (houses) made of trees”;  
Again my heart/ Enoch that saw hidden mystery say:  
“I saw the mount of gold where the mountains of silver are  
under it”.

Structurally, the above Qəne has eight rhyming lines of various lengths; and such types of poems are known as መወደስ ቅኔ / Mäwäddəs Qəne. The theme of this Qəne discusses the wisdom of God in creating the universe. The author explains that God did not make equal the creation and the work of His hand. In order to verify his argument, the poet mentions some geographical evidences; for instance, he says that the paradise is created being elevated more than the lofty Ararat. He also argues that God made Tabor as roof of a house upon the basement of Mount Hermon. Moreover, the poet cites Biblical references to make the issue more logical and persuasive. Citing from (2Ezra 6:25), he elaborates as the righteous God elevated the vineyard (temple of God) more than the mountains (houses) made of trees. More interestingly and signifying his own heart by Enoch the prophet, the poet says, “My heart, Enoch that saw hidden mystery says, ‘I saw the mount of gold, where the mountains of silver are under her’”. When the poet compares his heart with Enoch who saw hidden mysteries, I understand that he is amazingly referring his knowledge of Qəne that brightens his intelligence and helps him to think dynamically.

In his book Enoch reported what he observed and speaks, “there my eyes saw the secrets of heaven, everything that will occur on earth: a mountain of iron, and a mountain of copper, and a mountain of silver, and a mountain of gold, and a mountain of soft metal, and a mountain of lead...” (En 52:2). According to the lists of the various mountains in the quoted text, we understand that the mountain of gold is found next to of silver. Therefore, the poet considers the first as a base or a mountain with lower status, and the second mountain as a superior one. In my understanding, the main message of this Qəne is depicted at the concluding line. Although the poet is anonymous, I speculate that he is from ደብረ ወርቅ/ Däbrä wärq, ancient historical church located in eastern Gojjam Province. Consequently, using mountains of gold and silver as a symbolic representation of the church and other non-Christian worshiping places respectively, he exalts the church in general, and his church-ደብረ ወርቅ/ Däbrä wärq (mountain of gold) in particular; and concludes that the righteous God elevated the church more than the palaces and houses of pagans.

In terms of its structure, this poem is the same as the preceding one. Here, the poet explained his ideology of time as the central idea. He discussed that one action can be good or bad depending on the time it happens. In order to substantiate his philosophy, the author cited two Biblical evidences i.e. killing, and

fornication. In the opening phrase and the last two lines of the poem, he mentioned David and Samuel as the murderers of Uriah and Agag respectively. According to the Bible, the death of Uriah was organized and ordered by King David (2Sam 11:15); hence David was reproached by God (2Sam 12:1-12). On the contrary, even though Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal (1Sam 15:33), the Lord speaks him nothing. Based on this, the poet confirmed that while David is guilty in his action of killing, Samuel was not accused by his action; because, he says, “everything is good in its time and not good in its wrong time”.

ቀቲሉ ሥርዮ ግፉዕ ጽዕለተ ዳዊት  
ወዘምዎ ሕዝቡ ለሴት በአዋልደ ቃየል ነውር  
እስመ ከመ ይምሐሉ ሠምሩ በጸውዖ ዔርሞን ደብር  
ነባቢሰ ቃል ሰባ ነበበ፤ እግረ ልብ ብእሲ ኢያዕቅፍ ነገር  
አመ ሆሴዕ በጎሜር፤ ህየ ዘመወ መንገለ ዘመወት ምድር  
ኢጎደገት ምትናሁ ብእሲተ ጻድቃን ምግባር  
አምጣነ ኩሉ ይትፈቀር በጊዜሁ ወበኢጊዜሁ ኢይትፈቀር  
በረምሕኒ ስሐል ቀቲሉ አጋግ ነኪር።  
ኢያስተዋድዮ ለሳሙኤል መንገለ እግዚአ-እግዚአብሔር<sup>12</sup>።

Qätilä ‘Oryo (Uriah) gəfu‘ə sə‘älätä Dawit  
Wäzämməwo həzbu läset (Seth) bā‘äwaldä Qayäl (Cain) näwr  
‘Əsmä kämä yəmħälu šämru bäšawə‘o ‘ermon däbr  
Näbabissä qal sobä näbäbä ‘əgrä löbbä bə‘əsi ‘iyya‘əqəf nägär  
‘Ämä Hose‘ə (Hosea) bägomer  
Həyyä zämäwwä mängälä zämäwwät mädər  
‘Iḥädägät mtənnahu bə‘əsitä šadqan məgbar  
‘Ämṯanä kullu yətfäqqär bägizehu wäbä‘igizehu ‘iyətfäqqär  
Bäramḥəni səḥul qätilä ‘əggag (Agag) näkir  
‘Iyyastäwaddəyo läSamuel mängälä ‘əgzi‘u ‘əgzi‘əbḥer

Killing of Uriah the oppressed is David’s guiltiness;  
And fornication of the people of Seth with the sons of Cain is humiliation;  
Because, they agreed to swear calling the name of Mount Hermon;  
But, when the speaker Word speaks, never hinder the foot of man’s heart.  
While Hosea took Gomer, like the land has committed whoredom  
The woman/ work of the righteous never ceased to be his wife;  
For everything is good in its time and not good in its wrong time,  
Hewing of Agag the stranger by the edge of the sword  
(It) has not rebuked Samuel with his Lord, God.

Fornication is the second argument raised in the poem. The composer presented two scenarios of fornications, of which one is immoral and the other is not. In one side, citing from the book of Enoch (En6:1-6), he discussed that the sexual behavior of the sons of Seth with the sons of Cain was humiliating. On the other hand, the poet mentioned the fornication of prophet Hosea who took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim; then, he argued that although Hosea married an adulterous woman like the other people, his righteousness was not taken away from him

((Hos.1:3). It is to mean that his fornication not perceived as immoral as the sons of Seth was. In general, the poem asserts that there is time/ situation in which a certain action can be good or bad.

ሐመልማላዊት ገነት ደብረ ቀራንዮ  
ታዘነግእ ልበ በመዓዛሃ ሥርዓት  
እመ ኢብቆለ ባቲ ሰከ አልዓዛር ንዴት  
ወተከስተ በውስቴታ  
ለአብረሃም እንተ ኢመነኖ መልከጼዴቅ ሀብት  
እመ ነሐትታ ሰብእ ትፍሥሕት  
ዘአሠረነ ኢንሐር ፍቅረ ዚአሃ ሥሥገርት  
አእመርነሂ ከመ ሀሎ በቀራንዮ ገነት  
ያሬድ ዘወለዶ ሄኖክ ማኅሊት  
እስመ ለጥበብ አድለው እምነ ኃላፊ ንብረት  
እለ በአዕናቀሩ ተመሰሉ መዘምራኒሃ ሐዋርያት<sup>12</sup>።

Hämälmalawit gänät däbrä qäranयो  
Tazänäg’ə löbbä bämä’azaha šör’at  
’Əmmä ’ibäqolä dati sokä Al’azar ndet  
Wätäkästä bäwəsteta  
LäAbrham ’əntä ’imännäno Melkechzedek häbt.  
’Əmmä nähättəta säb’a təfsəhət  
Zä’äsärännä ’inḥur fəqrä zi’aha mäsgärt.  
A’əmärnähi kämä hälo bäqäranयो gännät  
Yared zäwälädo Henok maḥəlet.  
Esmä läṭəbäb ’ädläwu emännä ḥalafi nəbrät  
Ellä bä’ä’ənaq’ə tämässälu Mäzämraniha ḥäwaryat

The Herby paradise, “Däbrä Qäranəyo” (Mount of Calvary),  
(She) flatters the heart in her fragrant order;  
If a thorn/affliction of Lazarus shall not come up there;  
And if the wealth/Melchizedek, Which despises not Abraham,  
Was abundant there;  
When we, men of joy that her love bound us not move, searched  
her,  
We understood that the spiritual song/Enoch the son of Jared  
Exists in the Calvary/paradise;  
Because her singers/the apostles who are signified by fine gold  
(They) favored wisdom than a corruptible wealth.

The church named ደብረ ቀራንዮ / Däbrä Qäranəyo (Mount of Calvary) is the subject matter of the above መወደስ ቅኔ / Mäwäddəs Qəne. In this poem, quoting signifier form the book of Enoch (En 32:3-5), the author signified the church by the Herby paradise and the order of the church by the fragrance of trees in paradise. Then, he declared that the church flatters the heart (of believers) in her fragrant order as the sweet smell of trees in paradise spreads and penetrates afar. In the contrary, the poet pointed out the financial crisis in the church and the low salary that servants/ priests earn there; and he compared it with the thorny affliction of Lazarus (Luke 16:20-22). What so ever the problem, he regarded the love of the church as a snare that bounds them (servants) not to move anywhere leaving her.

Once more, the poet compared the church with paradise wherein Enoch, the son of Jared, lives. Extending the comparison, he

associated the notion ማኅሊት/ maḥəlet (lit. hymnological service) with Enoch, and its ‘inventor’, St. Yared with Jared, Enoch’s father. Then, he deduced that as Enoch the son of Jared lives in paradise, ማኅሊት/ maḥəlet, the son/ work of St Yared, also exists in Qäranəyo-the church. Lastly, the poet clinched his Qəne exalting the singers/priests of the church for they are serving the church with a low salary favoring the wisdom of the church than a corruptible wealth. He also referred them apostles and signified them by pearls realizing that the twelve pearls denote the twelve apostles (cf. Rev 21:21 of Ethiopic commentary and translation).

እፎ አይሁድ አዝማደ እምክ  
ደብተራ መስቀል ተከሉ በዐጸደ ርዕሰከ ሴሎ  
እንዘ ቦ በርባን ዘይደልዎ ተሰቅሎ  
ወዓመተ ጽዮን በጽዮን፤ ነዊን ተሰምዮ በኩረ ጽዮን ሀሎ  
አ ዘታሌዕሎ፤ በከንፈ ደመና ለማይ ወለደመና ከነፈ አውሎ  
ባሕቱ እስመ ሰማዕነ ወእመ ርኢነ ኩሎ  
እንበለ ዘመድ ለዘመዱ አልቦ ዘይቀትሎ  
አኮኑ ለቃየል አቤል እንዘ ወልደ እምየ ይብሎ  
ቃየል ወልደ እሙ ለአቤል ተብቀሎ<sup>12</sup>።

Effo’äyhud’äzəmadä ’əmməkä  
Däbtära mäsqäl täkälu bä’äsädä r’əsəkä selo  
Enzä bo bärban (Barabbas) zäydälləwo täsäqlo  
Wä’amätä šəyon bäšəyon, näwihä täsämyo bäkurä šəyon hallo  
O zätale’əlo bäkənfä dämana lämay Wälädämäna kənfä’ä’awulo  
Baḥəttu ’əsəmə sämä’ənä wä’əmə r’inä kullo  
Enbälä zämäd läzämädu albo zäyəqättəlo  
Akonu läqayäl (Cain) Abel enzä wälddä ’əmməy yəblo  
Qayäl wälddä ’əmmu läAbel täbäqqälo

How Jewish/the families of your mother,  
Made tent of the Crosse on your head/Silo  
While Barabbas is there who deserve crucifixion?  
And the time of Zion in Zion,  
Is considered as long lives as the chief of Zion;  
O you, who made the water to be lifted up by the wing of the  
cloud,  
And the cloud by the wing of storm of wind;  
But, if we hear and listen everything,  
There is no one that kills a person except his relative;  
Because Cain killed Abel, the son of his mother;  
Although Abel was saying, “Cain (is) my mother’s son”.

Crucifixion of Jesus Christ is the main idea discussed in the above መወደስ ቅኔ / Mäwäddəs Qəne. In the first two lines of the stanza, the poet articulated in an exclamatory tone blaming Jewish for they made the Crosse and crucified Jesus while they are His families and of His mother. Moreover, the poet contested their action of crucifying Jesus while there is Barabbas the robber who deserves crucifixion (John 18:40). Then, quoting indirectly from Ethiopic Enoch the phrase, “.../...ደመናተ ዘይጸውሩ ነፋሳተ ምድር ዘዲበ ወርኢኩ ...And I saw the winds on the earth which support the clouds...” (En 18:5) and rephrasing it as ‘አ ዘታሌዕሎ፤ በከንፈ ደመና ለማይ ወለደመና ከነፈ አውሎ’,

the poet wondered and attested that the crucified Jesus Christ is the one who lifts up the water by the wing of the cloud, and the cloud by the wing of storm of wind. In short, he affirmed the divinity of the crucified Christ.

In the last four lines of the stanza, the author provided supplementary evidence to confirm the uncommonness of death of a person by his relatives, as happened in Christ. Taking the case of Cain and Abel, he stated that Cain killed Abel, his mother's son, while Abele was saying and thinking of him "the son of my mother". In general, the poet took this notion from Ethiopic Enoch, particularly from the section of parables wherein Enoch discussed Cain and Abel symbolizing them by black and red bullocks respectively; and reported that the black bullock struck the red one and pursued it over the earth (En 85:3-4).

ደብረ ማርያም ተቀብሎት ደመ ሰማርያ  
ወካህናቲሃ ተሰጥሎ በማእበለ ደም ኤርትራ  
ባሕቱ ሐነጹ መምህራኑ ጥበብ እሥራ  
ቤተ ሄኖክ ዕድሜ ዘአሳት ቅጽራ  
አርዘ አቤሜሌክ ሊቀ ሐራ  
እስከ ሰማንያ ፈረየት በምድረ ሄኖክ ወዕዘራ...<sup>13</sup>

Däbrä Marəyam täqäb'at dämä sämarəya  
Wäkahənatiha täsäṭemu bäma'əbälä däm Ertra  
baḥəttu ḥanäṣu mämhəranä ṭəbäb eśra  
betä Henok 'ədme Žä'ə sat qəṣra  
ArZä Abimelech liqä ḥara  
eskä sämanəya färäyät bämdrä Henok wä Ezra....

Däbrä Marəyam, (the Mount of Mary) anointed blood of Samaria;  
And her priests sunk in to blood/flood of Red sea;  
But, twenty instructors of wisdom build  
The house of Enoch's life, fenced of fire;  
Until the cedars of Abimelech, the chief of soldiers,  
Yielded eighty fruits in the land of Enoch and Ezra.

The above Qəne is half of a Mäwäddəs, and it mainly discusses destruction of the church and the death of her priests. The poet says that only twenty teachers of the church were saved while other priests were sunk by the blood which is compared as the flood of Red sea. In order to indicate the survival of the twenties, the poet declares as they build the house which is symbolized by Enoch's age and by the house fenced of fire that was revealed to Enoch (En 14:9). In short, the poem states that these twenty teachers were saved miraculously.

This Qəne is half of the longest type of Qəne called ዕዘል ዕጣካ ሞገር ቅኔ ('ə ṭanä Mogär Qəne) that has twelve rhyming lines. Most of the time, Qəne Masters designate the second part of their 'əṭanä Mogär Qəne, like the 13<sup>th</sup> Qəne here, to discuss matters related with kings, rulers, bishops and so on; hence in its particular name, this section is called አሰረ-ጉጉሥ /ካጋሢ ('äsärä nəgus /nägaši), lit. 'Honor of king'.

Emperor Minilk II is the central idea of the poem above. The master of Qəne made a prayer and requested the Trinity to give the Emperor long life like Elijah, Ezra, and Enoch. The poet signified Elijah and Ezra by the river and their age by the water that never abates. He also symbolized the Trinity by people who fetch water from the river repeatedly. Then, he beseeched the Triune God to fetch the age of Minilik and tripled it every day as they (Trinity) previously did to Enoch. Here one should note the poet's knowledge on the life history of Enoch, Ezra, and Elijah. In short, the poet is directly praying prolonged existence to the Emperor for the Emperor, as asserted in the poem, is an everlasting treasure of the excellent priests. It is simply to indicate that the goodness of the Emperor mainly to the priests in this world.

...እምአፍላገ ዕድሜ ኤልያስ ወዕዘራ  
ዘሕፀፀ ሞት አልበሎ  
ቀዳሕተ ዕድሜሁ ለሄኖክ ሥላሴ  
ዕድሜ ምኒልክ ድግሙ  
ወሠልሱ ካዕበ ለለጌሠሙ  
እስመ ለካህናት ሄራን በከመ ስሙ  
ለዓለም ውእቱ ርስቶሙ<sup>12</sup>::

'Əm'äflagä 'ədəme Elyas wäEzra  
zä ḥəṣäṣä mot 'älbomu  
Qädaḥətä 'ədmehu läHenok śəlase  
'ədme Mənyələk dəgəmu  
Wäsälləsu ka'əbä lällä geśämu  
'Əsmä läkahnat heran bākämä sömu  
Lä'aläm wə'ətu rəstomu

The Trinity, who fetched the age of Enoch  
From the rivers, age of Elijah and Ezra,  
Wherein abatement of death is out,  
Please, fetch again the age of Minilik.  
And (you) tripled it every day.  
According to his name,  
He is an everlasting treasure of the good priests.

### Conclusion

To sum up, the samples of Enochic poems presented in this chapter evidently verify the earnest understanding of their composers in general and the influence of the book of Enoch in each poem in particular. The poems vary in terms of their structure, messages, and styles of writing and so on. Therefore, I attempted to classify them based on their structure followed by subject matter as presented above. Moreover, I tried to put background information and explanations of each poem, based on the source books (i.e. Ethiopic Enoch and others) to help the readers have a straightforward understanding on each poem. Furthermore, each poem consists of several implied lessons that can be seen from different perspectives such as theological, historical, and cultural beyond the aesthetic quality of each poem.



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