



## Textual Analysis of the Chronicle of King Bäkaffa (1721 –1730)



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### Abstract

The aim of this paper is to make textual analysis upon the chronicle of Bäkaffa. Especially, on this chronicle, the philological analysis was not done, and there is no much work in the study area. The study, thus, attempts to fill in the gaps in order to facilitate further work in the field. From the royal chronicles, written during the late medieval period of Ethiopia, King Bäkaffa's chronicle has been edited and published by I. Guidi, an Italian philologist, both in French and Gə'əz in 1903 together with the chronicle of Emperor Yohannes I (1667-1682) and Iyasu I (1682-1706). James Bruce summarized Bäkaffa's chronicle in English in 1813. Sir E.A Wallis Budge published the chronicle of Bäkaffa in English in 1928. R. Pankhurst has also worked a summary of this chronicle in English in 1967. Alämu Hāile translated and published the chronicle of Bäkaffa from Gə'əz into Amharic, in 2007E.C. Täklä şadik Mäkuria also summarized and translated from the chronicle of Bäkaffa into Amharic.

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### 1. Introduction

Gə'əz literature played a great role in the development of Ethiopian literature in many respects. Particularly after the 4<sup>th</sup> century, several Gə'əz texts had been produced. Out of these Gə'əz literary works, Ethiopian royal chronicles are noteworthy. These chronicles have a significant role to learn the history of the country from medieval to modern periods (Shiferaw, 2008:49-50).

From the royal chronicles, written during the late medieval period of Ethiopia, King Bäkaffa's chronicle has been edited and published by I. Guidi, an Italian philologist, both in French and Gə'əz in 1903 together with the chronicle of Emperor Yohannes I (1667-1682) and Iyasu I (1682-1706). James Bruce summarized Bäkaffa's chronicle in English in 1813. Sir E.A Wallis Budge published the chronicle of Bäkaffa in English in 1928. R. Pankhurst has also worked a summary of this chronicle in English in 1967. Alämu Hāile translated and published the chronicle of Bäkaffa from Gə'əz into Amharic, in 2007E.C. Täklä şadik Mäkuria also summarized and translated from the chronicle of Bäkaffa into Amharic.

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The aim of this paper is to make textual analysis upon the chronicle of Bäkaffa. Especially, on this chronicle, the philological analysis was not done, and there is no much work in the study area. The study, thus, attempts to fill in the gaps in order to facilitate further work in the field.

## 2. Research Methods

The present study applied qualitative methods. All data is analyzed descriptively. It is used a paraphrase to explain, elaborate, and explore regarding the phenomenon belonging. The conclusion is the last remarked based on the previous described.

## 3. Results and Analysis

### 3.1 Description of the Chronicle

The text (*ANNALES REGIS BAKĀFĀ*) is published by Ignatius Guidi (1903) in Gə'əz with French translation. It has one column with 51 pages in modern print (53 folios) and covered by modern binding.

The original Gə'əz text of king Bäkaffa's chronicle was produced while Bäkaffa (1721–1730) was still alive. It is divided into three parts. The first part has 26 chapters. It covers 20 folios (ff.). The second part has 28 chapters with 25 folios. The third part has 14 chapters and eight folios. The writer of the first and the second part of the text was *Azaž Sinoda*. The third or the last part of the chronicle was written by his son, Kənfä Mika'el (Guidi, f.23a). The story of the chronicle of this chronicle ends suddenly on 17 January 1727. The chronicle of Bäkaffa generally has 53 folios. The chronicle has Amharic word influence and linguistic difference, and orthographical problems. Many biblical allusions are also found in the text.

As it is mentioned above the chronicle of Bäkaffa was written by *Azaž Sinoda* who wrote the chronicle of Iyasu I (1682-1706) together with *Hawaria Krəstos* and *Azaž Zäwäld*. The Chronicle claims that እስከዛ በጸሐፊ ጽሑፈ ዜናው ለገጥሥ በካፋ ... በከመ ጸሐፊኩ ዜናው ለገጥሥ ኢየሱስ አቡሁ *up to this I have reached by writing the history of king Bäkaffa ... as I had written the chronicle of Iyasu, his father* (Guidi, f.7a). According to the text, Sinoda was a great priest, a teacher of king's children and the writer of history and the author of the book of grammar and psalm of *Aše Iyasu* the martyr. Kənfä Mika'el also contributed for of the chronicle of Bäkaffa after the death of *Azaž Sinoda*. The text also noted that ወእምዝ ጸሐፊ ወልዱ ክንፈ ሚካኤል *and then his son Kənfä Mika'el wrote* (Guidi, f.23a). The content of the chronicle is described as follow (f=folio, a=verso-the right side of the text, b=recto the left side of the text):

- a) ff.1a-ff.3b: the chronicler of the text starts his writing by asking God giving knowledge like Samuel, Nathan, and Gad who wrote the chronicles of kings in the Bible. He also states about the father (Iyasu) and mother (Mariamawit) of the king, the early life of Bäkaffa, the death of King Dawit and the coming of Bäkaffa to the throne.
- b) ff.3b-ff.8a: In the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Bäkaffa's reign, the Ḃawi Oromos who lived on the border of river 'Abawi rebelled and the king made a military expedition against Ḃawi to Wanda.
- c) ff.8a-ff.9a: It narrates the death of Mariamawit the mother of king Bäkaffa and the marriage of Bäkaffa with AwaləḂä ngəst.
- d) ff.9a-ff.11a: Bäkaffa appointed Sinoda as head of st. Michael church, ፀረ'ሮ'ጎጎ Yohans, Aməhayesus as *ras* of Bägəmdər, Täsfaiyesus as his warlord and he also deposed ፀረ'ሮ'ጎጎ Täklä Yamanote and *Bitwädäd* Eraqlitə. Həzqəias who calls himself the son of *aše* Yaəqob captured and cut off his hand and he died.
- e) ff.11a- ff.14b: Bäkaffa summoned the officials and appointed Sinoda and Dəmetros as chroniclers, Həzqəyas as left *Azaž* and Wäldä Hiwät Likä Mäkus.
- f) ff.14b-ff.23.b: The king sent his soldiers to attack Aməhayesus, *ras* of Bägəmdər and they killed him. Then Bäkaffa marched to Last to carry out a military expedition and his army burned the house of the rebelled and looted their treasure.
- g) ff.23b-ff.27a: In 1726 Bäkaffa went with his nobles to Lake Ṭana to see a new kind of boat constructed on Lake Ṭana by two foreigners from Egypt, Demetrios, and Giyorgis.

### 3.2 Biography of king Bäkaffa

Bäkaffa (throne name Mäsih Sägäd ‘to whom the anointed bows’) was king of Ethiopia from 1721 to 1730. He was the son of Emperor Iyasu I (1682-1707) and Mariamawit, daughter of Abeto Mika’el. Bäkaffa spent his childhood confined on *Wähni Amba*, Gondarian royal prison. ወእምዝ እስከ ይበጽሕ ጊዜ መንግሥቱ አዕረግዎ ለዝንቱ ሕፃን በካፋ ውስተ ደብረ ወሀኒ “and then as far as he reached the time of his throne they ascended this boy Bäkaffa on mount Wähni”. While he studied the scriptures and learned by heart the Psalm, he ate once a day and he emulated the life of the anchorites (Guidi, f.2a). During the reign of king Yosṡos (1711-1716) he escaped to live with the Oromo; when he was recaptured, part of his nose was cut off as punishment, with the intent of disqualifying him for the throne (Bruce, 1805: 76). After the death of his brother Dawit III (1716-1721), he was selected to succeed against the wishes of a sizeable group backing Wäldä Giyorgis, the son of Nägäla Mammit. Bäkaffa came down from *Wähni* and went to Gondar, where the clergies, *Abunä* Krsätodoulos, and *ፎሮሮሳጎ* Täcklähaymanot and the officials enthroned him (Dese, 2006 E.C: 485). ወእንበሩ አክሊለ ጁበ ርእሱ “And they put on the crown on his head” (Guidi, f.3a).

The king had married Awalädä Ngäst in the church and crowned her in the palace, and she had proceeded to the banqueting hall to preside over her coronation banquet. After taking part in the meal, she suddenly took ill and died in the midnight. His second wife was called Mäntəwab (1722-1769). She was granted the title Etege by her husband Bäkaffa and held her status after his death, as co-ruler and recrowned empress during the reign of her son Iyasu II (1730-1755) and his son Iyoas (1755-1769) (Prouty, 1994: 227-228). The reign of Bäkaffa was disturbed by few wars, and he spent his time by breaking the power of the feudal lords and strengthening the hand of the monarchy. He was pious Christian, particularly devoted to St. Mary. Bäkaffa died on the 11<sup>th</sup> Meskerm 1730 at the age of 37 and he was buried in the church of St. Täcklä Haymanot (Adäbabay - Täcklä Haymanot). His eight-year-old son Iyasu II (1730-1755) ascended the throne under the regency of his mother Mäntəwab (Basset, 1882:94). Currently, his fossil is found St. Giyorgis church at Lake Ṫana in the island.

#### a) Social and Religious Contribution

Bäkaffa built new buildings to the capital city Gondar. He is credited with the construction of a vast banqueting hall on the north side of the Royal Enclosure, which might be the structure where he held a plentiful feast for all in 1725; next to it stands Mäntəwab's Castle, which might have been built by Bakaffa's son and heir Iyasu II (Muro-Hay, 2003:90). The castle was one of the greatest works done by Bäkaffa. Even though some parts of the castle were destroyed during the Italia occupation of the country (Philip, 2012:225), it is still attractive and visited by many tourists who come from different parts of the world.



Picture 1. The castle of Bäkaffa (photo by author, 13/11/2015)

Bäkaffa also has contribution in the construction of a new kind of boat on Lake Ṫana in 1726 by two foreigners from Egypt, Demetros and Giyorgis who were helped in the manual work by Esat Wəllaḡ and And'ač Mammo, unlike the traditional ones built from reeds (Guidi, f.23a, Fiseha, 2005 E.C:355, Pankhurst, 1967:119-120). Farther more, Bäkaffa acted firmly to shore up the Alexandrian (Orthodox Tewahido) party and he was an active founder of churches and endowed the *gult* for churches. He built the following churches inside and outside of Gondar (Crummey, 2000: 100):

Name of churches	Location
Däfäca Kidana Məhrat	Around Gondar
Qalamuḡ Kidana Məhrat	Ṭana Island
St Mary church	Wäybla Bäläsa
The chapel of st. Mary ((Rebuilt church)	Gondar
Tahətay Mikae'al (Rebuilt church) church	Gondar
Abäzaz Giyorgis	Outside Gondar
Monastery of Bərgida Mariam	North Shore of Lake Ṭana
St. Rufael	Gondar

The church of St. Rufael was the great work of Bäkaffa (Guidi, f.19b). He was also more attached to the monastery of Bərgida Mariam on the north shore of Lake Ṭana and visited it many times. Bäkaffa's reign was also a time when literature and the arts revived, and many beautifully illustrated manuscripts were produced by newly established scriptoria in or around the city (Pankhurst, 1998:119-120).

#### b) Military expeditions

Bäkaffa faced several revolts and he devoted much of his rule travelling in disguise around his realm to seek out inequities to correct. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Bäkaffa's reign the Ġawi Oromos who came from Gibe during the time of Iyasu I and lived on the boarder of Abay rebelled and refused the payment of tribute to the king. Bäkaffa made a military expedition against Ġawi by traveling to *Wand*. He ordered his commander Däḡazemač Tesfa Iyesus to attack the Ġawi, they submitted and a great number of cattle were seized as spoils (Guidi. f.3b-f.7b).

In 1718, another rebellion rose from Lasta Bäkaffa, with Kuwər'atärəsü 'picture of Christ' marched through Aringo and crossed Täkäze River against Lasta. Some of the king's followers burned the house and looted the properties of the people. Following this, Gubala, the lord of Lasta begged the king and finally surrendered (Ibid, f.13b-f.18b). Besides of this, Həzqəyas, who calls himself the son of king Ya'əkob (r.1597-1603, 1604-1607) rose rebellion to control the throne and over through king Bäkaffa. However, Bäkaffa captured him and cut off his hand and he died (Tekletsadik, 1949 E.C:349).

#### c) Philological analysis

From the philological and linguistic point of view, the Chronicle has some errors, which was created in a different way in most probably by copyists. Some of these are discussed.

##### 1) The influence of Amharic word

It is known that the Amharic language had begun to be spoken since the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Particularly, in the Gondarian period, some Gə'əz literature were influenced by Amharic words. We have seen this problem in the chronicle of Bäkaffa.

- f.27a: አዘዘ ንጉሥ በአዋጅ: the king ordered by decree. The underlined word በአዋጅ is clearly Amharic. The equivalent word in Gə'əz could be በዐውድ or አብሪል 'by decree'.
- f.25a: አሁብከ ጥቁር ቀሚሰ: I will give you the black dress. The phrase ጥቁር ቀሚሰ is Amharic phrase. The equivalent phrase in Gə'əz is ጸሊም መልበስ 'black dress'
- f.24b: ከመ ይኩኖሙ ዳኛ: as designate a judge for them. The underlined word ዳኛ is Amharic. The Gə'əz word is ፈታሐ. 'judge'
- f.24a: ከመ ጭድ: like the chaff of *Teff*. The word ጭድ is Amharic. The equivalent word in Gə'əz could be ኅበረ መናሐ..
- f.24a: ጉልቁስ ለብረቱ ፪፻ ማረሻ: on the other hand, the number of its cast iron is equal to 200 plow plow. The under phrase ለብረቱ፪፻ ማረሻ: is Amharic phrase. The equivalent phrase in Gə'əz could be ለብረቱ ፪፻ ማሕረስ or ሞሰርት.
- f.24a: ወጀልባ እስመ ቀላል ይአቲ: and indeed the boat is pare/ simple. The words ጀልባ and ቀላል are Amharic. The equivalent words in Gə'əz are አርማስ Boat and ቀላል simple.
- f.24a: ዘይሰቀል ቦቱ መጋረጃ: it has the crossed curtain(sail). መጋረጃ is Amharic word. The word in Gə'əz is መንጠላዕት curtain, ceiling.
- f.23b: አርአያሰ ለመርከብ እትናገር: I will speak to the type of the ship. The word “መርከብ” is Amharic ለ (for, too) is a preposition and use for both in Gə'əz an Amharic. The equivalent word in Gə'əz is ለሐመር or ታቦት.

- i) f.23a: ቦአ ንጉሥ ውስተ ኦዳራሽ: the king entered into the hall. ኦዳራሽ is Amharic word. This word in Gə'əz is ጽርሕ or መርጡል.
- j) f.17b: አሐቲ ሰቀላ ደንኳን: a certain dwelling renter. The phrase ሰቀላ ደንኳን is Amharic and the equivalent phrase in Gə'əz ማኅደር ደብተራ.
- k) f.17a: መጽአት ቀላል ነፋስ አንጻረ ገጹ: the slight wind came in front of his face. ቀላል is Amharic word. In Gə'əz is ቀሊል.
- l) f.12b: ወበላእሌሁ ታላላቅ ብላቴኖች ጌታ: and on him greets counselors. The underlined phrase ታላላቅ ብላቴኖች ጌታ is Amharic phrase. The equivalent phrase in Gə'əz could be ዐበይት መምከራን.
- m) f.12b: ለጸሐፊኒ ወለነጂ: scribe and with driver. The word ነጂ is Amharic. The equivalent word in Gə'əz is ገፋዒ. And ወለ is conjunction for Gə'əz
- n) f.12b: ወይትርፍ እፍኝ : and it will be left over handful. The under lined word እፍኝ is Amharic. The equivalent word in Gə'əz is ሕፍን.
- o) f.8b: ገልበባ ንጉሥ በሻሻ: the king sheathed her by gauze. The word በሻሻ is Amharic word. In Gə'əz is ቀጸለ.

2) *Phonological change*

Phonology is the study of how sound is organized and used in natural language. There are some words which have a phonological change in the chronicle of Bākaffa.

Folios	Error words	Correction	Gloss
f.1b:	ሠርዓት	ሥርዐት	śər'at Formality ,order, system Rule ,
f.6b:	ፅብዓ	ጸብአ	ṣäba' Fought
f9a:	ቤገምድር	በገምድር	bägemädr Bägemädr (place name)
f.22a:	መጸአ	መጽአ	mṣə'a He came
f.17b:	ንብተራቲሁ	ንብረታቲሁ	nəbrätatihu His properties/ treasures
Folios	Words in the text	The current time	Gloss
f.23a:	ማየ ገና	ማየ ገና	Ṭana Water of Ṭana ( 'Lake Ṭana')
f.3b:	ዓባዊ	ዓባይ	'Abbay Abbay (River name-Nile )

3) *Orthography*

Orthography is the art of writing words with the proper letters, according to accepted usage; correct spelling. The writers of the Chronicle didn't use the correct letters in their place. We can see some examples from the text:

Folios	Words in the text	Correction	Gloss
F.1a:	ሐፀበ	ሐጸበ	Ḥaṣäbä Washed
F.2b:	ወዓሠርዖም	ወአሰርዖም	wäsärwomu And he imprisoned them
f.10a:	ስዩማን	ሥዩማን	śəuman Officials
f.10a:	ዳዕም	ዳአም	da'əmu But, indeed
f.10b:	ወሠዐሮም	ወሰዐሮም	wäsäaromu And he deposed them
f.11b:	ስማእ	ስማዕ	səma' You Hear!
f.14a:	ለአድ	ለዕድ	lə'd For man
f.16a:	ስማእከም	ስማዕከም	säma'əku You heard (pl. form)
f.17a:	ፀብሐ	ጸብሐ	ṣäbha Taxed
f.18a:	ፅልዕ	ጸልእ	d'älə' Fighting
f.19b:	ሕንፃ	ሕንጻ	hənṣa Building

4) *Biblical allusion*

A biblical allusion is a literary device that makes an indirect reference to the Bible in a written work. The text has a lot of Biblical allusions and reference. Some of these are described hereunder.

Folios	Bible's quotation	Folios	Bible's quotation
f.1b	Luk ,1:48	f.4b	Matt,16:21
	ሉቃ፣1:48	f.6a	ሜቴ፣16:21
	Luk ,2:40		መዝ፣85:15
	ሉቃ፣2:40		

f.2a	Psm ,41:1	መዝ:41:1	f.9b	Psm, 117:8-13	መዝ:117:8-13
f.2b	Luk ,2:13	ሉቃ:2:13	f.23b	Ex,ch.36	ዘፀአ. ምዕ:36
	Matt,24:9	ማቴ:24:9		1king,ch.6	1ኛ ነገ.ምዕ:6
	Matt,24:9	ማቴ:24:9	f.24a	Act , ch.21	የሐዋ.ሥ .ምዕ:21
f.3a	Psm,79:2-3	መዝ:79:2-3	f.26b	Matt,25:19-24	ማቴ:25:19-24

#### 4. Conclusion

From the royal chronicles, written during the late medieval period of Ethiopia, King Bäkaffa's chronicle has been edited and published by I. Guidi, an Italian philologist, both in French and Gə'əz in 1903 together with the chronicle of Emperor Yohannes I (1667-1682) and Iyasu I (1682-1706). James Bruce summarized Bäkaffa's chronicle in English in 1813. Sir E.A Wallis Budge published the chronicle of Bäkaffa in English in 1928. R. Pankhurst has also worked a summary of this chronicle in English in 1967. Alämu Håile translated and published the chronicle of Bäkaffa from Gə'əz into Amharic, in 2007E.C. Täklä şadik Mäkuria also summarized and translated from the chronicle of Bäkaffa into Amharic.

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#### *Statement of authorship*

The author(s) have a responsibility for the conception and design of the study. The author(s) have approved the final article.

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