

TRADITION ON SAINT MARK THE EVANGELIST IN THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to describe the tradition of Saint Mark the Evangelist. Mark is regarded as one of the Four Evangelists, and the Seventy or Seventy-Two Disciples of Jesus Christ in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church tradition. Regarding the administrative hierarchy, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's ecclesiastical tradition was strongly connected to the See of St Mark the Evangelist for a long time. St Mark, whose sir name is John, is the author to whom the second Gospel is traditionally ascribed, and several Churches are dedicated to him in the country. In the iconographic tradition of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, he is painted as an author seated before a desk and engaged in composing his book, accompanied by a winged lion.

KEYWORDS

Tradition, Mark the Evangelist, Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Portrait, Gospel and Iconography

1. INTRODUCTION

Saint Mark the Evangelist was born in Cyrene, one of the Five Western Cities (Pentapolis) to his parents belonged to the tribe of Levites of Jews, around the beginning of the 1st century CE. ውእቱኩ፡ቅዱስ፡ማርቆስ፡ቀደሙ፡ወበጽሖም፡ቀሬኔ፡ሀገረ፡ጳጌጥጥላስ፡እስሙ፡ውእቱ፡ብሔረ፡ፍጥረቱ፡Now *St Mark came first to and reached Cyrene, a city in Pentapolis, for it was his native land ...* [8]; [3] and [6]. He is regarded as one of the Four Evangelists and of the Seventy Two Disciples of Jesus Christ in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church tradition as stated in the prefatory text (መቅደሙ፡ ወግጌል፡, Mäqdmä Wängel) of the Commentary of the Gospel of Mark. It is clearly mentioned in the Bible that St Mark is the son of Mary, one of the faithful women who used to follow Jesus Christ (Acts 12, 12). He is also the cousin of Barnabas, for his mother Mary, who opened her house to the faithful to gather and pray there (Acts 12, 12-17), is the sister of Barnabas (Col. 4, 10-11). As for his father Aristopolus, however, there is no Biblical reference that deals with him, and he is mentioned in only some apocryphal texts [9]; [10]; [1] and [4]). This article deals with the tradition of St Mark in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

This study, as introduced above, aims at describing the tradition of Saint Mark the Evangelist in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. For that reason, only and qualitative method, word expression, is employed in the study.

2.2. Data Source

The data sources of this article are mainly the extant manuscripts that all deal with the story, combat, and martyrdom of St Mark the Evangelist along with the New Testament. The new codes arbitrarily given (by the researcher) to the manuscripts and their locations have been displayed with their preservation codes in the following table.

2.3. Techniques of Data Analysis

All the data used for the study are collected from the respective witnesses to organize and analyze qualitatively, using word expressions. In several expressions, the Gə'əz text, along with its English translation, could be directly quoted from the manuscripts for data analysis.

3. THE NAME MARK AND ITS INTERPRETATION

According to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church tradition, particularly the prefatory text of the Commentary of the Gospel of Mark and some other apocryphal texts, the name 'Mark' is interpreted as follows:

1. **Bee:** the name 'Mark', which formerly was 'John' (Acts 12, 12, 25; 15, 37), is to mean 'bee'. As the bee collects nectars from different flowers, Mark also learned the Holy Gospel, first from the Lord Jesus Christ and later from the Apostles.
2. **Hammer:** 'Mark' also means hammer, for He broke the idols of Egypt [10].
3. **Lion:** 'Mark' is again to mean a 'Lion': as a lion is a master to the cow and could break it down, Mark too destroyed the idol made in the image of a cow from Egypt roaring as a lion. It could be the reason why his icon is often seen painted with a winged lion nearby his seat.
4. **Messenger:** Besides, it (the name Mark) also refers to a 'Messenger' or a 'Priest'.

4. SAINT MARK IN NEW TESTAMENT

St Mark was the one whom the Lord Christ meant when He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, 'the Teacher says, 'My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples'" (Mt. 26, 17-20; Mk. 14, 13-16; Lk. 22, 11- 14). Moreover, it was St Mark's mother's house where several events took place, for it was opened for the faithful who congregated there for daily prayers (Acts 12, 12). Hence, since the house could be used as a center of mission and apostolic activities during the time of Jesus, St Mark is said to have presented in the occurrences of the following events recorded in the New Testament:

- ❖ Jesus Christ washed the feet of his Disciples (Jn. 13, 4-15);
 - ❖ The Lord's Supper on Maundy Thursday (Mt. 26, 17-20; Mk. 14, 13-16; Lk. 22, 11- 14);
 - ❖ The flight of Peter after the angel of God brought him out of prison (Acts 12, 12-17);
 - ❖ Jesus's appearance (after His Resurrection) to the Disciples when they were hidden there, (Jn. 20, 19); and
 - ❖ The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in the upper room (Acts 2, 1-4).
- Besides, the Church scholars assert that on the night that Christ was betrayed, the young man who followed after Him, wrapped only in a linen cloth, was St Mark. And at that moment, he was seized by soldiers, and fled away naked, leaving the cloth behind (cf. Mark 14, 51-52).

St Mark was also a very close companion of the Apostles Barnabas, Paul, and Peter. He used to accompany Paul and Barnabas during their ministry, i.e. preaching the Gospel in different cities (Acts 12, 25; Col. 4, 10). In one of their apostolic journeys, St Paul refused to take St Mark and

chose Silas in his place, for he had left them on the previous mission (Acts 13, 13), so Barnabas took with him to Cyprus departing from St Paul (Acts, 15, 36-41). Nevertheless, it does not mean that Paul abhors St Mark; he rather used him to accomplish his ministry (Col. 4, 10-11; 2Tim. 4, 11; Phlm. 1, 24). Peter also used to adore Mark like his son (1Pet. 5, 13). Besides, when the angel of God freed him from jail, Peter directly went to Mark's house (Acts 12, 12).

5. PORTRAITS OF ST MARK

The Apostle Mark is the author to whom the second Gospel is traditionally ascribed, and the place, period and language he composed his Gospel were different from the other Evangelists. From the symbolic point of view, on the other hand, he is portrayed by a lion, perhaps symbolizing the might and royal dignity of Christ (Rev. 5, 5). Based on the prefatory text (ጠቅድጠ፡ወገንጌል፡, Mäqdmä Wängel) of the Exegetic tradition of the Four Ethiopic Gospels, the different places, periods and languages that the Four Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) used to compose their Gospels as well as their portraits are displayed in the Table below.

Table 1: The Setting the Evangelists Composed Their Gospels

Evangelist	Place	Period	Language	Symbol
Matthew	Palestine and Hind	At the end of the 8 th or the beginning of the 9 th year after the Ascension of Jesus, in the 1 st year of the reign of Claudius Caesar	Hebrew	Man
Mark	Egypt and Rome	At the end of the 11 th or the beginning of the 12 th year after the Ascension of Jesus, in the 4 th year of the reign of Claudius Caesar	Latin	Lion
Luke	Macedonia	At the beginning of the 22 nd year after the Ascension of Jesus, in the 14 st year of the reign of Claudius Caesar	Antioch/ Javan	Ox
John	Ephesus	In between 30-35 th years after the Ascension of Jesus, at the end of the 7 th or at the beginning of the 8 th year of the reign of Nero Caesar	Javan (Greek)	Eagle

The portraits of the Four Evangelists are found in several illuminated Ethiopic books of the Gospel including the Gospels of Ǝnda Abba Gärima, which are the oldest and illuminated extant Mss. They are often portrayed in essential formats of a standing figure holding his codex, or an author seated before a desk and engaged in composing his book. The Gospel of Abba Gärima II, likely the earlier of the two Gärima Gospels dated 4th-6th century, contains four fine Evangelists' portraits preceding their respective Gospels. The portraits of Matthew, Luke and John are all presented frontally and scarcely differentiated; but that of St Mark presents him in profile on the episcopal throne of Alexandria.

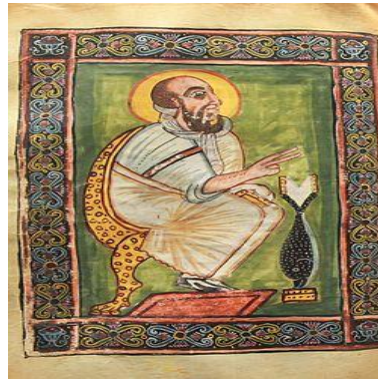


Fig 1: Portrait of the Evangelist Mark from Gärima II

St Mark is also depicted in other illuminated Ethiopic books of the Gospel produced during the medieval period, from the 13th century onwards. For instance, he is portrayed wearing a red monastic hood cape in the Gospels of IyyäsusMo‘a of DäbräHayqĪstifanos, dated 1280/1281 (EMML 1832), which could be the earliest surviving MSS next to the Gärima Gospels. The Portraits of three Evangelists in a mid-15th century MS of the Four Gospels from Ānda Abba Pāntälewon, however, depart from Gärima and IyyäsusMo‘a Gospels’ portraits described above. Each Evangelist is accompanied by his symbol: Mark is accompanied by a lion, Luke by an ox and John by an eagle). In the EOTC iconographic tradition, St Mark’s icon is often seen painted in an essential format of an author seated before a desk and engaged in composing his book, accompanied by a winged lion. The following icon is found in DäbräMarəqos St Mark Church, East Gojjam, Ethiopia.

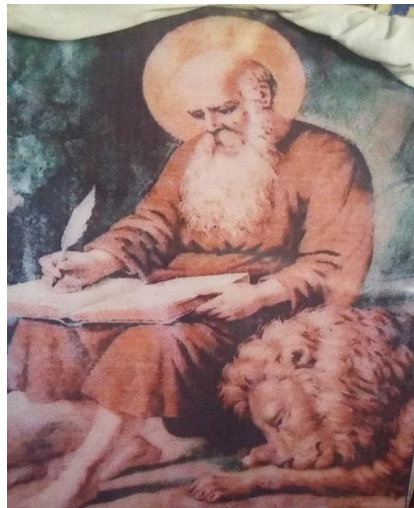


Fig. 2: Icon of St Mark from DäbräMarəqos Church, Gojjam

6. THE PORTRAIT OF THE FOUR EVANGELISTS

The portrait of the Four Evangelists through this symbolic scheme, using different creatures (man, lion, ox and eagle), which might be derived from the interpretation of Ezekiel’s vision of God (Ezek. 1, 5-10) and the vision of John in the Apocalypse (Rev. 4, 6-8), seems to be based upon the opening passage of their respective Gospels.

- ❖ **The man** stands for Matthew (cf. Rev. 4, 7), whose narrative begins with the human genealogy of Jesus (Mt. 1, 1-17). Matthew means a “chosen out of publicans”, and he is the symbol of man’s face, for he wrote the Incarnation of the Son of God saying, “ወልደ፡ ዳዊት፡ ወልደ፡ አብርሃም፡, *The Son of David, the Son of Abraham*” (Mt. 1, 1).
- ❖ **The lion** stands for Mark (cf. Rev. 4, 7), and the rationale might be that he begins his Gospel by describing John the Baptist as a lion roaring in the desert, saying, “በከመ፡ ጽሑፍ፡ ውስተ፡ ነቢያት፡ ናሁ፡ አነ፡ እፌኑ፡ መልአኪዮ፡ ቅድመ፡ ገጽከ፡ ዘይጸይሕ፡ ፍኖተከ፡፡ ቃለ፡ ዓዋዲ፡ ዘይሰብክ፡ በገዳም፡ ጸሎ፡ ፍኖተ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ወወርዶ፡ መጽያሕቶ፡፡ *As it is written in the prophets, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, which shall prepare your way before you. The voice of a messenger crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight”* (Mk. 1, 2-3).
- ❖ **The ox**, a sacrificial animal, stands for Luke, whose narrative begins in the Temple (Lk. 1, 5). Luke means “wise, witch doctor” (Col. 4, 14), and he is symbolized by the face of an ox (cf. Rev. 4, 7), for he wrote about the symbol of the Son of God, saying, “አምጽኡ፡ መግዝአ፡ ላህም፡ ወጥብሑ፡ ወንብልዎ፡ ወንት፡ ፈሣሕ፡ በቱ፡, *Bring the fatted calf and kill it; and let us eat and be merry by it*” (cf. Lk. 15, 23).
- ❖ **The eagle** stands for John (cf. Rev. 4, 7) whose narrative begins with the eternal Word, saying, “ቀዳሚሁ፡ ቃል፡ ውእቱ፡ ወውእቱ፡ ቃል፡ ነበ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ውእቱ፡ ወእግዚአብሔር፡ ውእቱ፡ ቃል፡፡ *In the beginning, was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*(Jn. 1, 1-2).

7. ST MARK AS A CHURCH FOUNDER

As the Church tradition relates, St Mark preached the Gospel in the inner regions of Africa, particularly in Alexandria and the Five Western Cities (Pentapolis). Then after, he went to Alexandria on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the seventh reign of Nero. ማርቆስ፡ ወንጌላዊ፡ ቦኦ፡ አልክስንድርያ፡ በሰብዓምቱ፡ ለኔሮንስ፡ ... *Mark the Evangelist entered Alexandria on the seventh year of Nero...* [2]). There he preached the Gospel and made the faithful establish a Church, baptizing the shoemaker Ananias and many of the inhabitants of that part of the city. ወሐነጹ፡ ቤተ፡ ክርስቲያን፡ ውስተ፡ መካን፡ ዘይሰመይ፡ ዐፀይ፡ ላህም፡ ... *And they built a Church in the spot called the ‘Field of the Bull’...* ([3]). As to the tradition, the commemoration of the consecration of the Church takes place on the 30th of Təqəmt, 10 November. Accordingly, St Mark is regarded as the founder of Christianity in Africa in general and of the Church of Alexandria, which is one of the most important Episcopal Sees of Early Christianity, in particular.

Making the faithful firm in the right faith and establishing the Church for them, St Mark set a Rule of Ordination by appointing a bishop, presbyters and deacons to provide the Church with leadership after his death... ወሢመ፡ (አንያኖስ፡ ኤጲስቆጶስ)፡ (ወ)፲፪፡ ቀሳውስተ፡ ወ፯፡ ዝ(ዲ)ያቆናተ፡ ወወሀበሙ፡ ዘንተ፡ ሥርዓተ፡ እምከመ፡ ሞተ፡ ኤጲስቆጶስ፡ ዘአለክስንድርያ፡ ይትጋብኡ፡ ቀሳውስት፡ ወለዘ፡ ኅረይዎ፡ ኩሎሙ፡ እምውስቱቶሙ፡ ያነብሩ፡ እደዊሆሙ፡ ለዕሌሁ፡ በሃይማኖቱ፡ ለእግዚአብሔር፡ ወከመዝ፡ ይሠይሙ፡ ሎሙ፡ ኤጲስቆጶስ፡ እንዘ፡ በድኑ፡ ሀሎ፡ ለዘ፡ ሞተ፡ ኤጲስቆጶስ፡ ... *and he appointed (Ananias a bishop and) 12 presbyters and seven deacons, and he gave them the following rule: after the bishop of Alexandria has died, the presbyters will gather and they will lay their hands in the faith of God upon the one, among them, that they all will have selected, and thus they will appoint him as their bishop, at the presence of the corpse of the dead bishop* [2].

On the occasion of the death of the patriarch of Alexandria, the twelve presbyters could appoint one of them in the place of the dead patriarch, while the other eleven placed their hands on his head, blessing him and consecrating him patriarch. Performing this rite of ordination, they need to choose another man of proven virtue to order him priest with them instead of the one that had been made patriarch, so that they were always twelve in number. This rule continued until the time of Alexander, the nineteenth Patriarch of Alexandria, who was one of the Three Hundred and Eighteen Episcopates. ወኮነ፡እንከ፡ዝትምህርት፡በትልወቶሙ፡ለእለ፡ተሠይሙ፡ኤዲስቆጶሳት፡ እምቀሳውስት፡እምአኒያኖስ፡እስከ፡ብፁዕ፡ጴጥሮስ፡ሊቀ፡ጳጳሳት፡ዘውእቱ፡ዓሥር፡ወሳድስ፡ኤዲስ፡ቆጶስ፡ ዘእለከስንድርያ። *This doctrine has remained for the bishops whom they elect among the presbyters, from Ananias until the blessed Peter, who is the sixteenth bishop of Alexandria*[2].

However, apart from the Patriarch of Alexandria, no other bishop was appointed for any other regions from Bishop Ananias until Patriarch Demetrius, the second and twelfth Patriarch of Alexandria respectively. Hence, the Patriarch himself used to go out of Alexandria, visit the cities (where the Christians could live) and appoint presbyters and deacons for them. Demetrius started ordaining Bishops for other regions out of Alexandria, appointing ten Bishops for the first time [2]. A similar tradition was there in the EOTC history: there was only one Metropolitan assigned to the country, but he was not allowed to ordain other clergies as bishops(except priests and deacons), for he was not an Archbishop despite his place at the head of the local hierarchy. Hence, Ethiopia was not divided into ecclesiastical provinces or dioceses until the end of the 19th century [1].

Establishing the first Church in Alexandria and setting the Rule of Ordination of the ecclesiastical hierarchy for it, St Mark finished his combat and fulfilled his testimony on the 30th of Miyaziya. ወኮነ፡እረፍቱ፡ለቅዱስ፡ማርቆስ፡ወንጌላዊ፡ቀዳሜ፡ሰማዕት፡ዘከዐወ፡ደሞ፡በብሔረ፡ግብጽ፡በስሙ፡ለእግዚእነ፡ ኢየሱስ፡ክርስቶስ፡በእስክንድርያ፡ሀገር፡ዐቢይ፡በተፍጻሜተ፡ወረገ፡ሚያዝያ፡በሙንግሥቱ፡ለጢባርዮስ፡ንጉሥ። *And the rest of St Mark the Evangelist, who is the first of the martyrs and shed his blood in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the land of Egypt, in the great city of Alexandria, was on the last (day) of the Month Miyazya during the reign of King Tiberius*[3]. The tradition also attributes that his Holy Head appeared on the 40th day after his death, on the 9th of Säne. Hence, his commemorations take place on three days: on the 30th of Miyazya (his rest), on the 9th of Säne (the appearance of his Holy Head), and on the 30th of Təqəmt (the consecration of his Church).

8. THE GOSPEL OF ST MARK

The Gospel of Mark is one of the four canonical Gospels, and it tells the ministry of Jesus from his baptism by John the Baptist to his death and the discovery of the empty tomb. However, it is the shortest of the other three Gospels because he did not: include the genealogy or birth narrative of Jesus Christ, mention much more from the Old Testament, record many of the preaching of Jesus with their parables, and write about the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. The core points that St Mark gives more emphasis to his Gospel are that Jesus:

- Is the Son of God: 1, 1, 11; 3, 11; 5, 7; 9, 7; 12, 1-11; 13, 32; 15, 39;
- Is the Son of Man, He called himself: 1, 41-43; 3, 5; 7, 34; 8, 12, 33; 10, 14, 16, 21;
- Came to give His life a ransom for many, narrating the Passion Week in detail: 8, 31; 9, 30-32; 10, 33-34, 38, 45; Ch.11-15;
- Became sacrifice and a byword for his disciples: 8, 34-38; 9, 33-35; 10, 29-31, 42-45; and
- Keeps his identity secret (messianic secret) until His time came: 1, 34, 44; 3, 12; 5, 43; 7, 36-37; 8, 26, 30; 9, 9.

If we see the thematic structure of the text categorized in its Chapters, it could be generalized in the following way:

- The preaching of Jesus in Galilee: Ch. 1-6,
- The coming of the adversaries/antichrists: 7-9,
- The travel of Jesus to Jerusalem: Ch. 10,
- The preaching of Jesus in Jerusalem: Ch. 11-13, and
- The Passion and Resurrection of Jesus: Ch. 14-16.

9. AUTHORSHIP OF ST MARK'S GOSPEL

St Mark is traditionally attributed to have written his Gospel for Gentile Christians, emphasizing the words and deeds of Jesus Christ revealing His divine power. One of the central theological themes in the Gospel of St Mark is the power of God to achieve what is humanly impossible. However, several scholars argue over his authorship, i.e. as if an anonymous author could write the Gospel reasoning that it does not claim to be written by direct witnesses to the reported events. On the other hand, many aspects of his account can be explained by his closeness to St Peter, so the ancient writers are likely to say that the Gospel of St Mark could be a concise record of the preaching of St Peter.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church claims that Mark's authorship is wrongly credited to St Peter reasoning out that St Mark's house was the place where several events took place, and Jesus Christ, His mother Mary and the Apostles used to assemble therein, so St Mark himself could compose his Gospel. On the other hand, Peter could not need any help since he was given an utterance by the Holy Spirit, like the other Apostles, to speak in all tongues of the nation (Mt. 26, 17-20; Mk. 14, 13-16; Lk. 22, 11-14; Jn. 13, 4-5; 20, 19; Acts 2, 14; 12, 12; 15:31b).

In contrast, many scholars state that the objections raised to this identification are unconvincing. They argue that it can be because the researchers had not found the identification explicitly made by earlier writers. For instance, scholars like [5] argue that it is now very widely agreed that St Mark was the first Gospel to be written presenting the following eight arguments:

- The substance over 90 percent of Mark's verses is contained in Matthew, of over 50 percent in Luke.
- Where the same matter is found in all three Synoptic gospels, usually more than 50 percent of Mark's actual words will be found either in both Matthew and Luke or in one of them.
- Usually, all three Synopses agree as to the order in which they arrange their common material: where either Matthew or Luke differs from Mark, the other usually agrees with him.
- Often, where the language of Matthew and/or Luke differs from that of Mark, it could be seen that it represents a grammatical or stylistic improvement.
- Things in Mark that could offend or perplex are sometimes either omitted or presented in a less provocative form in Matthew and/or Luke (e.g. 15, 34 omitted by Luke 4, 38 b, contrast Matthew 8, 25; Luke 8, 24; 10, 2).
- The disciples' pre-Resurrection way of addressing Jesus as Rabbi or Teacher is faithfully reflected in Mark, whereas Matthew and Luke represent Jesus as being addressed by the title 'Lord', thus reflecting the usage of the post-Resurrection Church.
- That Matthew, whose style is much more succinct than Mark's, should have omitted superfluous words and phrases that he found in Mark to make room for additional matter is understandable.
- On several occasions when Matthew's order differs from Mark's, it appears to be secondary [5].

10. THE SEE OF ST MARK IN THE EOTC TRADITION

The history of the EOTC ecclesiastical tradition is strongly related to the See of St Mark the Evangelist, for the Church was headed by the Metropolitans who had been sent from the Alexandrian Coptic Church (Winslow 2015, 48). This was started in the first half of the 4th century, the time when the Greek man Frumentius, also known as ‘Sälama’ was ordained the first bishop to Ethiopia by Athanasius I, the twentieth patriarch in the See of St Mark, in Alexandria. Being appointed a bishop, Frumentius arrived in Ethiopia during the reign of ‘Ezana, and he expanded Christianity legitimately in all the regions thereof. Accordingly, he is called ‘KäsateBərhan, Revealer of Light’ and is regarded as the Father of Christianity to the country. Several Ethiopian scholars, however, argue that Christianity was introduced to Ethiopia much earlier witnessing the eunuch of Candace mentioned in Acts 8, 27-39.

From the ordination of Frumentius onwards, receiving bishop from Alexandria continued until the mid of 20th century for more than one and half millennia. Moreover, in the ecclesiastical tradition of the EOTC, the Ethiopian Christians used to declare that St Mark was their father and Alexandria their mother (“ግርቆስአባታችን እስከ ንድረ ደ እናታችን, Marəqos Abbataččən Ēskəndərəya Ēnnataččən”) for lots of centuries.

The EOTC became independent from the Alexandrian Coptic Church in the mid of 20th century by consecrating its own Patriarch from among her Church Fathers. Basləyos I became the first legitimate Ethiopian Archbishop (LiqäPappasat) with the power to ordain bishops in September 1951 and the first Ethiopian Patriarch (Rə’əsä LiqanäPappasat) on 28 June 1959. Since then, the clergies have been ordained bishops with the title of Archbishop (LiqäPappasat) to all diocesan bishops.

There was an essential tradition of mentioning the name of the Patriarch (ርእሱ: ሊቃነ: ጳጳሳት: አባ: ... Rə’əsä LiqanäPappasat Abba ... the Archbishop Abba ...) with the See of St Mark (ዘገር: ዐባይ: እለ እስከ ንድረ ደ: Zä-hagär ‘abbay Ēläskəndərīa, of Great City of Alexandria) in the liturgical services. This tradition has been changed from the See of St Mark to the See of Täklä Haymanot and the diocese from Alexandria to Ethiopia (ርእሱ: ሊቃነ: ጳጳሳት: አባ: ... ዘገር: ዐባይ: ኢትዮጵያ: Rə’əsä LiqanäPappasat Abba ... Zä-hagär ‘abbay Itäyoppəya, the Archbishop Abba ... of the Great Country Ethiopia).

11. CHURCHES DEDICATED TO ST MARK

There are many Churches and Monasteries dedicated to St Mark the Evangelist appearing in many countries of the world. The first and the most ancient in history is the Monastery of St Mark, which was the house of his mother Mary, found in Jerusalem under the control of the Syrian Orthodox Church [11]). As to [10], this Monastery contains four indispensable holy things in it, viz.

- ❖ the door on which Peter knocked after the angel freed him from the prison and went to this house (Acts 12, 12);
- ❖ the Seat of St James the Apostle, the first bishop of Jerusalem [11];
- ❖ the first baptismal place in Christianity [11] and
- ❖ an icon for the Virgin Mary, which is said to be painted by St Luke the Evangelist.

St Mark the Apostle is said to have established the first Coptic Orthodox Church in Africa, Alexandria. In 1975, there were thirty-one Coptic Orthodox Churches dedicated to him in Egypt. Most of them were recently built because there were only five Churches of St Mark at the beginning of the 20th century. The rationale behind this could be that the ancient parishes could

have disappeared because of different conditions. For instance, the Coptic historians, Abu al-Makärim (1208 AD) and al-Maqrizī (1441 AD) mention that seven Churches have been disappeared [9].

The Ethiopian Orthodox Churches dedicated to St Mark the Apostle could be situated in different parts of the world where the Christian Ethiopian diaspora lives, for instance, in Würzburg, Germany. In Ethiopia, there are seven Churches named after the Saint, and they have been listed with a respective profile for each here under:

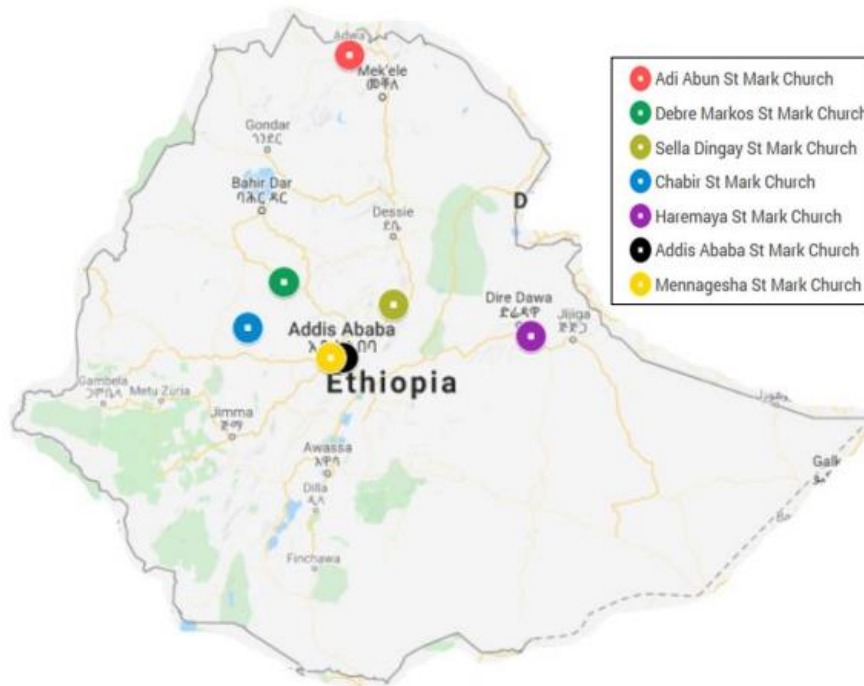


Fig. 3: The Distribution of Churches Dedicated to St Mark the Evangelist in Ethiopia

- (1) DäbräMarqosBetäKrəstiyan (ደብረ፡ማርቆስ፡ቤተ፡ክርስቲያን፡; Lt. *'Mount of Mark' Church*) is located 300 km north-west of Addis Ababa in DäbräMarqos town. The town that was originally named 'Mänq^wärär' was founded in 1853 by DäjjazmachTädlaG^walu, but KingTäkläHaymanot, who became the ruler of Gojjam in 1881, founded the Church of St Mark and changed the name of the town into DäbräMarqos. The official name of the Church is, “መልዕልተ፡አድባር፡ደብረ፡ፀሐይ፡ቅዱስ፡ማርቆስ፡ቤተ፡ክርስቲያን፡ Mälə‘əltäAdbarDäbräTähayQəddusMarqosBetäKrəstiyan, *The Head of Churches, Mount of Sun, Saint Mark Church*”. St Mark is the only Martyr by whose name a town is named in Ethiopia.
- (2) MänbäräLə‘ulQəddusMarqosBetäKrəstiyan (መንበረ፡ልዑል፡ቅዱስ፡ማርቆስ፡ቤተ፡ክርስቲያን፡; Lt. *'The Seat of the Most High', Saint Mark Church*). This Church, which is located in Addis Ababa city, adjacent to Addis Ababa University, was established by King of Kings HailäSəllase I at 1916 AM.
- (3) MännagäšaMänbäräMängəstQəddusMarqosBetäKrəstiyan (መናገሻ፡መንበረ፡መንግሥት፡ቅዱስ፡ማርቆስ፡ቤተ፡ክርስቲያን፡; Lt. *'Coronation Site, the Seat of the State', Saint Mark Church*). The church is found in a town called, 'Männagäša' situated 30 km west of Addis Ababa, between Männagäša and Sululta Mounts, in the Wälmära district of west Šäwa Zone. It is established by bishop Mawos at 1878 AM.

- (4) SälladəngayDäbräHəruyanQəddusMarqosBetäKrəstiyān (ሰላ፡ድንጋይ፡ደብረ፡ጎሩ፡ቅዱስ፡ ማርቆስ፡ቤተ፡ክርስቲያን፡, Lt. *The stone sharpened, Mount of the Chosen Ones*’, *Saint Mark Church*). Located 165 km northeast of Addis Ababa, the Church was established by bishop Matewos in the goodwill of Mənilək II at 1975 AM in Sälladəngay town, North Šäwa. The oral history attests that it bore its name ‘The Jumping Stone’, for a rock rolled over the edge of the southern rim of the gorge of the River Mofär and killed a group of people on it for their miscarriage justice.
- (5) HarāmayaDäbräMänkəratQəddusMarqosBetäKrəstiyān (ሐረማያ፡ቅዱስ፡ማርቆስ፡ቤተ፡ ክርስቲያን፡, *Haremaya Saint Mark Church*). It was founded by King of Kings HailäŠəllase I in 1944 EC in Harāmaya town, East Hararge. The inscription found on the wall of the Church attests that the King founded the Church for he was saved from sinking in Harāmaya Lake while he was on a boat trip on 30 Gənbət in 1907 EC.
- (6) ‘Addi’ AbunDäbräMarqosBetäKrəstiyān (ዓዲ፡አቡን፡ደብረ፡ማርቆስ፡ቤተ፡ክርስቲያን፡, Lt. *The Village of the Bishop, Mount Mark Church*’) is situated in North of ‘Adwa (at the foot of AmbaSoloda) in Təgray regional state. It is traditionally believed that DäbräMarqos was called ‘‘Addi’ Abun’ because the area was chosen as the residence of the first bishop AbbaSälama, consecrated from the See of St Mark the Evangelist, in the 4th century. Once, in an uncertain time, a *Tabot* dedicated to TäkläHaymanot was added to the Church; consequently, since then, it has been recalled, ‘‘Addi’ AbunTäkläHaymanot Church’.
- (7) CabərQəddusMarqosBetäKrəstiyān (ጭብር፡ቅዱስ፡ማርቆስ፡ቤተ፡ክርስቲያን፡, *Chabir Saint Mark Church*) is situated in Šambu district, HorroGuduruWällägga Zone, about 311 km in the westward direction of Addis Ababa.

12. CONCLUSION

Saint Mark the Evangelist is regarded as one of the Four Evangelists and of the Seventy Two Disciples of Jesus Christ in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church tradition. He is also one of the most venerated Saints in the Church’s tradition, particularly concerning the administrative hierarchy. The history of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church ecclesiastical tradition is strongly related to the See of St Mark the Evangelist, for the Church was headed by the Metropolitans who had been sent from the Alexandrian Coptic Church starting from the 4th century up to the half of the 19th century. The Apostle Mark is the author to whom the second Gospel is traditionally ascribed, and he is often seen painted in an essential format of an author seated before a desk and engaged in composing his book, accompanied by a winged lion in the iconographic tradition of the Church. Besides, several Churches are dedicated to him in different parts of the country.

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