

**A.E. GebremMariam** Holy Trinity University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
e-mail: andexermi@gmail.com**THE TEXTUAL TRADITION OF THE ETHIOPIC VITA  
OF SAINT MARK THE EVANGELIST:  
THE MEDIUM RECENSION IN FOCUS**

The Ethiopic Vita of Saint Mark the Evangelist represents a rich textual tradition that indicates the complex processes of translation, transmission, and adaptation within the Ethiopian Christian literature. This study aims to describe the textual history of the Gəʿəz Acts of Saint Mark the Evangelist whose life traces back to the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. His Vita, on which this study is focused, is supposed to be composed in Greek and translated into Gəʿəz in the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE. The text written in Gəʿəz is preserved in seven extant manuscripts entitled, “Gädlä Marəqos”, which commonly deals with the combat and martyrdom of the Saint. Through analyzing key textual features and comparing different manuscript versions, the study explores how the Ethiopic tradition has shaped the historical narration of Saint Mark to reflect its textual tradition. Hence, collected from different Churches and Monasteries, the witnesses are said to be the main sources of the data used for this article. On the basis of the data collected from the manuscripts, the textual tradition of the text has been described in detail qualitatively. Besides, the sources of the text, the narrative structure and the text arrangement have been displayed in their respective order. Based on the text tradition, the hypothetical relations of the witnesses to their ancestor could be formulated as:  $\Omega = \alpha (A + \gamma (E_1 + E_2) + \beta (\delta (\epsilon (B + F) + C) + D))$ . This article may help to have a wide range of understanding towards the Ethiopian engagement in the early Christian traditions along with the role of translation in preserving and transforming hagiographical texts.

**Keywords:** textual transmission, Mark the Evangelist, conjunctive error, stemma codicum, manuscript tradition.

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Қасиетті Үштік университеті, Аддис-Абеба, Эфиопия  
e-mail: andexermi@gmail.com**Әулие Марк Евангелистің эфиопиялық  
«Вита» мәтіндік дәстүрі: орта нұсқаға назар**

Әулие Марк Евангелистің эфиопиялық Vita мәтіні эфиопиялық христиан әдебиетіндегі аударма, таралу және бейімделу үдерістерінің күрделілігін көрсететін бай мәтіндік дәстүрді білдіреді. Бұл зерттеу біздің заманымыздың I ғасырына жататын Әулие Марк Евангелистің Gəʿəz тіліндегі Істерінің мәтіндік тарихын сипаттауды мақсат етеді. Осы зерттеудің негізгі нысаны болып табылатын оның Vita мәтіні бастапқыда грек тілінде жазылып, біздің заманымыздың IV ғасырында Gəʿəz тіліне аударылған деп есептеледі. Gəʿəz тілінде жазылған мәтін «Gädlä Marəqos» деп аталатын жеті сақталған қолжазбада кездеседі және негізінен әулиенің күресі мен азап шегуін баяндайды. Негізгі мәтіндік ерекшеліктерді талдау және әртүрлі қолжазба нұсқаларын салыстыру арқылы зерттеу эфиопиялық дәстүрдің Әулие Марктың тарихи баянын өз мәтіндік дәстүріне сәйкес қалай қалыптастырғанын көрсетеді. Осылайша, әртүрлі шіркеулер мен монастырьлардан жиналған куәліктер осы мақаланың негізгі дереккөздері болып табылады. Қолжазбалардан жиналған деректер негізінде мәтіндік дәстүр сапалық тұрғыда егжей-тегжейлі сипатталады. Сонымен қатар мәтіннің дереккөздері, баяндау құрылымы және мәтіннің орналасуы өзара ретімен көрсетіледі. Мәтіндік дәстүрге сүйене отырып, куәліктердің түпнұсқамен гипотетикалық байланысы келесідей түрде ұсынылады:  $\Omega = \alpha (A + \gamma (E_1 + E_2) + \beta (\delta (\epsilon (B + F) + C) + D))$ . Бұл мақала эфиопиялықтардың ерте христиан дәстүрлеріне қатысуын, сондай-ақ агиографиялық мәтіндерді сақтау мен түрлендірудегі аударманың рөлін тереңірек түсінуге мүмкіндік береді.

**Түйін сөздер:** мәтіндік трансмиссия, Марк Евангелист, конъюнктивті қате, кодекстердің елтаңбасы, қолжазба дәстүрі.

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### Текстуальная традиция эфиопской «Вита» святого Марка Евангелиста: в фокусе средняя редакция

Эфиопская «Вита» святого Марка Евангелиста представляет собой богатую текстуальную традицию, отражающую сложные процессы перевода, передачи и адаптации в эфиопской христианской литературе. Настоящее исследование направлено на описание текстуальной истории Гә'әз-ского Деяния святого Марка Евангелиста, жизнь которого восходит к I веку н. э. Его Vita, являющаяся объектом данного исследования, предположительно была составлена на греческом языке и переведена на Гә'әз в IV веке н. э. Текст на языке Гә'әз сохранился в семи дошедших до нас рукописях под названием «Gädlä Marqos», которые в основном повествуют о борьбе и мученической смерти святого. Анализируя ключевые текстуальные особенности и сопоставляя различные рукописные версии, исследование показывает, каким образом эфиопская традиция сформировала историческое повествование о святом Марке в соответствии с собственной текстуальной традицией. Таким образом, рукописные свидетельства, собранные из различных церквей и монастырей, являются основными источниками данных для данной статьи. На основе материалов, извлечённых из рукописей, текстуальная традиция рассматриваемого текста подробно описывается с качественной точки зрения. Кроме того, представлены источники текста, его нарративная структура и композиционное расположение в соответствующем порядке. Исходя из текстуальной традиции, гипотетические отношения рукописных свидетелей с их архетипом могут быть сформулированы следующим образом:  $\Omega = \alpha (A + \gamma (E1 + E2) + \beta (\delta (\epsilon (B + F) + C) + D)$ . Данная статья способствует более глубокому пониманию участия Эфиопии в раннехристианских традициях, а также роли перевода в сохранении и трансформации агиографических текстов.

**Ключевые слова:** текстуальная трансмиссия, Марк Евангелист, конъюнктивная ошибка, герб кодексов, рукописная традиция.

## 1. Introduction

The life of Saint Mark the Evangelist traces back to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, but it is unlikely to find out an author who narrates his life before the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Saint Mark was born in Cyrene, one of the Five Western Cities (Pentapolis) from his parents belonged to the tribe of Levites of Jews, around the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE<sup>1</sup>. 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. Accordingly, he is regarded as one of the Four Evangelists and of the Seventy-Two Disciples in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. His Acts which is supposed to have been composed a few hundred years after his death is the focus of this

study, considering the textual history of the Гә'әз manuscript text.

The Ethiopic (Гә'әз) literature can be classified into three parts: (1) direct translation, (2) adaptive works and (3) 'original' writings. The direct translation includes texts of which original sources are other Christian literature, like Greece, Syria and Egypt.<sup>2</sup> The short Acts of St Mark the Evangelist, along with the Bible, the Monastic Rule<sup>3</sup> of Pachomius, the Book of Enoch and Jubilees etc. are estimated to have been translated from Greek into Гә'әз after the Axumite Christianization. The adaptive works incorporate the foreign sources as that of the direct translation but adapted into Ethiopic milieu.<sup>4</sup> For instance, the following text is included in

<sup>2</sup> From the point of view of literary history, the Axumite period may be referred to as the Greek one, whereas the period from 1270-1770 might be of Arabic (Getatchew Haile 2014, 736b; Amsalu Tefera 2011, 1).

<sup>3</sup> It is a treatise composed by Abba Pachomius, an Egyptian monk, and is used as a main governing rule of most monasteries in Ethiopia; cf. Sergew Hable Sellasie 1972, 120 and Tadesse Tamrat 1972, 108.

<sup>4</sup> The Miracles of Mary (*Tä'ammärä Maryam*), which were translated from Arabic into Гә'әз during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, might be taken as an example, for it contains several Miracles the settings of which are in Ethiopia.

<sup>1</sup> ... (ወ)በመዋዕሊሆሙ፡ ለሐዋርያት፡ አመ፡ ተካፈልዋ፡ ለኩሉ(ለ)፡ ምድር፡ ከፈሎ፡ ለቅዱስ፡ ማርቆስ፡ ለብሔረ፡ ግብጽ፡ ... ውእቱኬ፡ ቅዱስ፡ ማርቆስ፡ ቀደመ፡ ወበጽሐም፡ ቀሬኔ፡ ሀገረ፡ ጳጌጠጳሊስ፡ እስመ፡ ውእቱ፡ ብሔረ፡ ፍጥረቱ፡ ... *when the Apostles, in their days, divided all (parts of) the Earth, St Mark received the land of Egypt ... Now St Mark came first to and reached Cyrene, a city in Pentapolis, for it was his native land ...* (Lusini 2009, 31/37); cf. Budge 1899, 257; 1901, 309; 1928, 845; Evetts 1904, part I, P. 136; Getatchew Haile 1981, 124/129.

the single-text MSs of the Acts of St Mark: “ወበጽሖ፡ ዕፃሁ፡ ለቅዱስ፡ ማርቆስ፡ ወንጌላዊ፡ ለዕለ፡ ግብጽ፡ ወኖባ፡ ወኢትዮጵያ፡ ወ፳፡ አህጉር፡ ዘምዕራብ፡...And the lot of St Mark the Evangelist fell upon Egypt, Noba, Ethiopia, and the Five Western Cities ...” (Andualem 2023, 29; 2025, 87a). Here the name Ethiopia is likely to be added by the Ethiopian scribes when rewriting and adapting the vorlage. The ‘original’ texts incorporate hagiographies homilies, miracles, effigies<sup>5</sup> etc. composed or compiled by the Ethiopian clergy (Tadesse Tamrat 1972, 2 and Kaplan 2012, 642a-642b).

## 2. The Gəʿəz Acts of St Mark the Evangelist

The Gəʿəz Acts of Saint Mark the Evangelist are preserved in three principal textual groups, conventionally designated as the Short, Medium, and Long recensions. The Short recension is transmitted primarily within multiple-text manuscripts, where it appears alongside other hagiographical or apocryphal works, whereas the Medium and Long recensions are preserved in single-text manuscripts devoted exclusively to the Acts of Saint Mark (Andualem 2021, 32).

Despite the substantial differences in length, narrative expansion, and textual arrangement among these recensions, they are not independent compositions. Rather, they share a number of common narrative motifs, thematic elements, and structural features, which indicate a clear genealogical relationship and a shared underlying tradition. These recurring leitmotifs, such as the apostolic mission of Mark, his preaching in Egypt and the Pentapolis, his conflict with pagan authorities, and the account of his martyrdom, function as connective threads linking the three recensions. The presence of these shared elements suggests that the Medium and Long recensions developed through processes of expansion, adaptation, and recompilation based on earlier textual forms, rather than through entirely separate lines of transmission.

When a text is found larger than the other dealing with the same issue in its volume, there can be

<sup>5</sup> Also known as, ‘Image, Mälkä’ is one of the genres of Gəʿəz literature, which is a kind of short poem consisting of rhythmical prayers attributed to Saints, Angels etc. It is typically composed of five rhymed verses raising each body parts of the religious figure. However, it may also personify other ecclesiastical elements like *Mälkäʿa Mäsqäl* that is composed personifying the body of the subject Mäsqäl (the Holy Cross). It often starts with the words “Sälam lä..., Salutation to...” (Merasha Alehegne 2017, 122).

high probability that it may include more stories. This has been observed in the case of the Acts of SME, for the texts have been categorized under short, medium and long recensions. There is a big difference among the short, medium and long recensions in both volume and content wise; even the miracles they contain are quite different. Nevertheless, there are stories or events that all the recensions share regardless of the way they are described. Some important issues shared by all recensions have been exemplified in the table under.

**Table 1** – Leitmotifs among the Different Recensions

Leitmotifs	The Short Recension <sup>6</sup>	The Medium Recension <sup>7</sup>	The Long Recension <sup>8</sup>
Preaching in different cities	PP. 124/129	[96] <sup>9</sup>	Ch. 195
Showing Miracles	PP. 124/129	[97]	Ch. 197
Entrance to Alexandria	PP. 124/130	[98]	Ch. 194
Ordaining Clergies	PP. 126/131	[109]	Ch. 196
Church Establishment	PP. 126/132	[117]	Ch. 200
Combat	PP. 127/132	[122]	Ch. 198
Covenant	PP. 128/133	[124]	Ch. 198
Martyrdom	PP. 128/134	[128]	Ch. 199

### 2.1.1 The Text in Multiple-text MSs

As to Getatchew Haile (1981, 118), the text of the short recension of the Gəʿəz Acts of St Mark the Evangelist is found in three recensions in different multiple-text MSs: (1) in the Gəʿəz Synaxarium entry for St Mark in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church on the Month of Miyaziya 30<sup>th</sup>, (2) in Gädlä Ḥawarəyat (the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles), for instance, in CI<sup>10</sup>, ff.116a-119b, which is found in British library, and is edited and translated by Budge (1899, 257-264 and 1901, 309-318 respectively), and (3) in Gädlä Qəddusan (the Acts of the Saints), such as

<sup>6</sup> The text is found in multiple text Ms, Gädlä Qəddusan, and it is edited and translated by Getatchew Haile (1981)

<sup>7</sup> Edited (reconstructed) and translated by Andualem Ermas (2021)

<sup>8</sup> This text is not edited and translated yet; no any scholarly study is undertaken on it.

<sup>9</sup> The numbers indicate the paragraph where the referred text is located.

<sup>10</sup> It is the code given to the MS by the cataloguer Wright 1887, 50.

in EMLL 1763, ff. 224r-227r, which is edited and translated by Getatchew Haile (1981, 124-134). Besides, it is available in a MS located in an Italian library, Pistoia, Bibl. ioteca Forteguerriana (Martini etiop. n. 5, ff. 82–89). This is what Lusini (2009, 31-42) uses for edition and translation comparing with two Greek texts, i.e. *Patrologia Graeca*, CXV, coll. 164-169 (Vat. Gr. 881) and *Acta Sanctorum*, Aprilis, III, pp. XLVI-XLVIII (Vat. Gr. 866).

## 2.2 The Texts in Separate Mss

The texts of the Acts of St. Mark the Evangelist, situated in separate manuscripts, are of two

types in size and content. In content, the texts narrate the combat and martyrdom of the Saint in different ways, and in size, they can be classified as medium and long. Even the miracles included in each group are totally different. The text of the medium group is preserved in seven separate Mss, and the long one in nine extant witnesses. In addition, unlike the medium group, the reading in the long one is divided by 202 parts (kəfl), so the text of each group is likely to be of different antecedents (Andualem 2021, 32-33). The Metadata of the Mss in both recensions are summarized in the table under:

**Table 2** – The Metadata of the Mss

Sig.	Location	Size in cm.	Shelf Mark/ Code	Quire/ Folio	Year	Material
I	The Medium Recension					
A	Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) AAU	14x12	IES -2160	9/85	19 <sup>th</sup>	Parchment
B	Mänbärä Ləʿul St Mark Church, nearby AAU	14x12	EMML 87	8/75	20 <sup>th</sup>	Parchment
C	Mänbärä Šäbaʿot Holy Trinity Cathedral (AA)	14x12	EMML 1208	4/66	19 <sup>th</sup>	Paper
D	Däbrä Šähay St Mark Church (East Goğğam)	14x12	UNESCO 6/38	7/53	19 <sup>th</sup>	Parchment
E1	ʿAddiʿAbun Täklä Haymanot (Təgray, ʿAdwa)	14x12	AATH- 072	11/72	19 <sup>th</sup>	Parchment
E2	ʿAddiʿAbun Täklä Haymanot (Təgray, ʿAdwa)	14x12	AATH- 071	15/136	20 <sup>th</sup>	Parchment
F	Sälla Dəngay StMark Church (Tägulät, N. Šäwa)	14x12	08	6/63	20 <sup>th</sup>	Paper
II	The Long Recension					
G	Mänbärä Ləʿul St Mark Church, nearby AAU	32x27	EMIP 1317	17/125	19 <sup>th</sup>	Parchment
H	Däbrä Šähay St Mark Church (East Goğğam)	32x27	UNESCO 6/7	21/185	20 <sup>th</sup>	Parchment
I	Däbrä Šähay St Mark Church (East Goğğam)	32x27	189	29/465	19 <sup>th</sup>	Paper
J	Däbrä Šähay St Mar Church (East Goğğam)	32x27	431	20/182	19 <sup>th</sup>	Parchment
K	Däbrä Šähay St Mark Church (East Goğğam)	32x27	430	20/182	20 <sup>th</sup>	Parchment
L	Däbrä Šähay St Mark Church (East Goğğam)	32x27	UNESCO 6/6	23/165	20 <sup>th</sup>	Parchment
M	National Archives and Library Agency (NALA)	32x27	UNESCO 2/56	*/278	20 <sup>th</sup>	Paper
N	National Archives and Library Agency (NALA)	32x27	612	32/299	20 <sup>th</sup>	Parchment
O	Däbrä Šəge St Maryam Church (Šäwa, Sälale)	32x27	EMML 7338	*/300	20 <sup>th</sup>	Paper
	Mänbärä Mängəšt St Mark Church (Männagäša)	32x27	EMML 6350	28/262	20 <sup>th</sup>	Parchment

As displayed in the above table, the text has been transmitted in different forms across separate Mss, with evidence showing its preservation in both the medium and the long recensions. Each version reflects a particular stage in the process of textual

transmission, where scribes and communities either expanded, or reshaped the material to suit their historical and theological contexts. While the long recension incorporates additional elaborations and interpretive layers, the medium version offers a more

concise yet still comprehensive form of the text. For the purpose of this scholarly article, I have chosen to focus specifically on the medium recension, since it provides a stable and representative version of the tradition without the later interpolations that characterize the long version.

### 3. The Textual History of the Acts

The hypothesis about the Acts of St Mark the Evangelist composition might be related to the episcopate George of Cappadocia who used to persecute and mock the non-Arian Christians and the pagans in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (around 357-361 AD). George was one of the leaders of Arianism<sup>11</sup>, so that he was appointed a bishop of Alexandria after the exile of Athanasius I<sup>12</sup> (326-373). The episode about him reveals a striking similarity to the narrative structure of St Mark's Acts, which is devoted to the last hours of the martyr. George was assaulted by a pagan mob and was put in jail for one night. The following day, he was bound to a camel and dragged around the town until he died, and finally, his body was cremated and his remains were thrown into the sea by the pagans whom he persecuted (Atiya 1991, 300; Lusini 2003, 5-7; Coptic 1995, 332. We could see texts with similar contents from the Acts of St Mark below:

ወሶበ፡ ሙስዮ፡ ወደይዎ፡ ውስተ፡ ቤተ፡ ሞቅሕ፡ ... And when it was night, they cast him into prison ... (A (f. 49v<sub>a</sub>), B (f. 41r<sub>b</sub>), C (f. 39v<sub>b</sub>), D (f. 22v<sub>c</sub>), E<sub>1</sub> (f. E42v<sub>b</sub>), E<sub>2</sub> (f. 59r<sub>b</sub>), F (f. 33r<sub>b</sub>)). ወበሳኒታ፡ አውጽኦ፡ እምቤተ፡ ሞቅሕ ... ወአምጽኡ፡ አልሀምተ፡ ጽሙዳነ፡ ወአሠሩ፡ ሐብለ፡ በቀልት፡ ዘውስተ፡ ክሃዱ፡ ኀበ፡ አርባት፡ ወአስሐብዎ፡ ውስተ፡ ኩላ፡ ሀገር። And on the next day, they brought him out of the prison ... and they brought two tied cows and bound a cord of mule in his neck to the yoke and dragged him throughout the city (A (f. 50v<sub>b</sub>), B (f. 42v<sub>a</sub>), C (f. 41r<sub>a</sub>), D (f. 24r<sub>c</sub>), E<sub>1</sub> (f. 43v<sub>b</sub>), E<sub>2</sub> (f. 61r<sub>b</sub>), F (f. 34r<sub>b</sub>))<sup>13</sup>. ወሶበ፡ ነጸሩ፡ አረማውያን፡ ከሙ፡ አዕረፈ፡ ማርቆስ፡ ወንጌላዊ፡ አንደዱ፡ እሳተ፡ ዐቢዮ ... ከሙ፡ ያውዕዩ፡ ሥጋሁ። And when the heathens saw that Mark the Evangelist had rested ... they kindled a great fire to cremate his flesh (A (f. 51r<sub>b</sub>), B (f. 43r<sub>a</sub>), C (f. 41v<sub>a</sub>), D (f. 24v<sub>a</sub>), E<sub>1</sub> (f. 44r<sub>b</sub>), E<sub>2</sub> (f. 61v<sub>b</sub>), F (f. 34v<sub>b</sub>)). Accordingly, the Acts of St Mark the Evangelist might be composed after the

death of George, who has a similar tragic end, in the Greek language around 360 CE.

In this view, Lusini (209, 47) speculates that the apocryphal Acts of St Mark could be translated from Greek into Gəʿəz in the last years of the reign of ʿEzana<sup>14</sup>, between 360 and 370.<sup>15</sup> The text is likely to play a great role in the affirmation of the Alexandrian territorial sovereignty over the whole North of Africa. The Acts asserts this view as follows: እስሙ፡ ውእቱ፡ ቀደሙ፡ ውስተ፡ ኩላ፡ ብሔረ፡ ግብጽ፡ ወሊብያ፡ ወመርማርቄ፡ ወአሞንያቄ፡ ወጳንጠጳሊስ፡ ... for he, first of all came to all cities of Egypt, Libya, Marmarica, Ammoniac and Pentapolis ... (Getatchew Haile 1981, 124/129).<sup>16</sup> Hence, the apocryphal document could be sent to Aksum to consolidate the pro-Alexandrian choice of King ʿEzana. The translation of the Acts into Gəʿəz may also indicate the growing influence of the Alexandrian political and religious lobby at the Aksumite court in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Lusini 2003, 5-7; 2009, 35/41-42; Taddeesse Tamrat, 1972, 22-23).<sup>17</sup>

Getatchew Haile (1981, 117-118) indicates that the text containing the brief life of St Mark is likely to be transmitted through different multiple-text manuscripts, such as the Acts of Saints (ገድላ፡ ቅዱሳን, Gädlä Qəddusan), directly translated from Greek, the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles (ገድላ፡ ሐዋርያት, Gädlä Hawaryat) and the Book of the Saints of the Ethiopian Church (ስንክሳር, Sənkəsar), both could be translated from Arabic into Gəʿəz. As for the text in the separate manuscripts, particularly the medium group on which this study focuses seems to be recompiled based on the short Acts in the medieval period. Some indications have been examined here:

(1) There are sections dealing with issues related to the medieval time stories:

- ... አባ፡ ሚካኤል፡ ወአባ፡ ገብርኤል፡ ጸሐፊ፡ ከሙ፡ ይእቲ፡ እኅተ፡ በርናባስ፡ እሙ፡ ለማርቆስ። ... Abba Mikaʿel and Abba Gäbrəʿel have written that the

<sup>11</sup> It was a heretical doctrine derived originally from a priest of the church of Alexandria named 'Arius' around AD 270-336.

<sup>12</sup> He was the 20<sup>th</sup> Archbishop of Alexandria, and he was sent into exile repeatedly for fighting against Arianism.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Budge 1928, 487; 1899, 262 and 1901, 316); Getatchew Haile 1981, 128/133 and Lusini 2009, 35/46).

<sup>14</sup> He was an Aksumite ruler (325/30?-365/70?) and famous for his conversion to Christianity. He is attested by ancient sources of three categories, i.e. literary, epigraphic, and numismatic evidence; cf. Hahn, 2014, 478b-480b.

<sup>15</sup> This was the time when the King of Aksum established a closer religious connection with the ECOC, thus the Acts could be used as a milestone in the process of establishing Alexandrian religious institutions on Ethiopian soil (Lusini 2003, 5-7).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Lusini 2009, 31/37; Budge 1928, 486; 1899, 257 and 1901, 309; Evetts 1904, Part I, P. 142

<sup>17</sup> Aksum reached the height of its glory as the main military partner of the Byzantine Empire in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century, when South Arabia had also been under the Aksumite control for some decades; cf. Bausi 2014, 39; Sergew Hable Selassie 1972, 92-95.

mother of Mark is Barnabas’s sister ((A (f. 24r<sub>a</sub>), B (f. 18r<sub>a</sub>), C (f. 18r<sub>a</sub>), D (f. 10r<sub>c</sub>), E<sub>1</sub> (f. 10r<sub>b</sub>), E<sub>2</sub> (f. 27v<sub>b</sub>), F (f. 14v<sub>a</sub>)). These two fathers (Abba Mikael and Abba Gäbrä’el) could be the Egyptian Metropolitans who were sent together into Ethiopia in medieval time, specifically during the days of ase Zär’a Ya’əqob (1434-1468), for they are well known in the Ethiopian medieval literature.

- ወለማርቆስ፡ በልሳነ፡ ሮማይስጥ፡ ዘአፍርንጊ፡ ... And Mark’s (writing) was in the language of the Romans, of the Afrāngi ... ((A (f. 29r<sub>b</sub>), B (f. 23r<sub>a</sub>), C (f. 22r<sub>a</sub>), D (f. 13r<sub>b</sub>), E<sub>1</sub> (f. 25r<sub>a</sub>), E<sub>2</sub> (f. 34v<sub>a</sub>), F (f. 18r<sub>b</sub>)). ወበጊዜሃ፡ ወጠነ፡ ጽሑፈ፡ ወንጌሉ፡ ቅዱስ፡ ... በልሳነ፡ ሮማይስጥ፡ ዘአፍርንጊ፡ ... And at that time, he started writing his Holy Gospel... in the tongue of the Romans of the Afrāngi ... ((A (f. 45v<sub>a</sub>), B (f. 37v<sub>a</sub>), C (f. 36r<sub>a</sub>), D (f. 20r<sub>c</sub>), E<sub>1</sub> (f. 39v<sub>a</sub>), E<sub>2</sub> (f. 54r<sub>a</sub>), F (f. 30r<sub>a</sub>)). The term ‘Afrāngi’, the plural form of ‘Fārānge’, is the Ethiopic designation for foreigners, and it was originally the name of Franks (men of the Roman religion) borrowed from Arabic into Ethiopic in medieval times (Pankhurst 2014, 492a-493b).

(2) The name ‘Ethiopia’ is mentioned in several parts of the text of the medium group, but absent in the short one. Some examples have been given as follows:

- ወሶበ፡ ርእዮ፡ ለብጹዕ፡ ማርቆስ፡ ከሙ፡ ፈጸሙ፡ ዘንተ፡ ሥርዓተ፡ ሤሞ፡ ህዮንቴሁ፡ ላዕለ፡ ግብጽ፡ ወኖባ፡ ወኢትዮጵያ፡ ... And when he saw the blessed Mark as he fulfilled these criteria, he ordained him in his place, upon Egypt, Noba, Ethiopia ... ((A (f. 25v<sub>b</sub>), B (f. 20r<sub>a</sub>), C (f. 19v<sub>a</sub>), D (f. 11v<sub>b</sub>), E<sub>1</sub> (f. 31v<sub>b</sub>), E<sub>2</sub> (f. 30r<sub>a</sub>), F (f. 16r<sub>a</sub>))

- ወሃይማኖቶሙኒ፡ ለሰብአ፡ ግብጽ፡ ወኢትዮጵያ፡ ከሙ፡ ሃይማኖተ፡ ሙላእክት፡ ... And the faith of the people of Egypt and Ethiopia is like the faith of Angels ... ((A (f. 32v<sub>b</sub>), B (f. 25v<sub>a</sub>), C (f. 24v<sub>a</sub>), D (f. 14v<sub>b</sub>), E<sub>1</sub> (f. 38r<sub>a</sub>), E<sub>2</sub> (f. 39r<sub>a</sub>), F (f. 0v<sub>a</sub>)).

- ወሰብአ፡ ግብጽ፡ ወኢትዮጵያ፡ ውሉዳ፡ ለማርቆስ፡ ዮአምንዎ፡ ለኢየሱስ፡ በዋሕድና፡ ... ወእምድሃረዝ፡ ይቤሉ፡ ሰብአ፡ ግብጽ፡ ወኢትዮጵያ፡ ወሰብአ፡ ሮምያ፡ ለምንት፡ ንጻባእ፡ እንዝ፡ አኃው፡ ንሕነ፡ በክርስቶስ፡፡ And the people of Egypt and Ethiopia, the children of Mark, believe Jesus in harmony... And then, the people of Egypt and Ethiopia, and the people of Rome say, “Why do we quarrel since we are friends in Christ? ((A (f. 37r<sub>b</sub>), B (f. 30r<sub>a</sub>), C (f. 28v<sub>a</sub>), D (om), E<sub>1</sub> (f. 31v<sub>b</sub>), E<sub>2</sub> (f. 45r<sub>a</sub>), F (f. 23v<sub>b</sub>))

(3) Unlike the Actse of other foreign Martyrs and Saints venerated in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the Ethiopic Acts of Saint Mark the Evangelist is found in three recensions: short, medium and long. This is rarely common to find such textual versions in the Ethiopic hagiographic tradition. In addition, the text in the long group asserts that St Mark was the Archbishop of both Egypt and Ethiopia: “ማሪ፡ ማርቆስ፡ ወንጌላዊ፡ ርእሰ፡ ሊቃነ፡ ጳጳሳት፡ ዘግብጽ፡ ወዘኢትዮጵያ ... Mari Mark the Evangelist, the Archbishop of Egypt and Ethiopia ... (G (f. 61v<sub>a</sub>), H (f. 25r<sub>b</sub>), I (f. 53v<sub>a</sub>), J (f. 55r<sub>a</sub>), K (f. 19v<sub>a</sub>), L (f. 40r<sub>b</sub>), M (f. 48v<sub>b</sub>), N (f. 45v<sub>a</sub>), O (f. 39r<sub>a</sub>))”. We cannot find such expression in the first vorlage, which is supposed to be composed in Greek, and this indicates the broader Christian tradition of the text through which it was developed and adapted.

**4. Textual Arrangement**

According to the seven witnesses dealing with the combat and martyrdom of St Mark the Evangelist, the text can be divided into 12 major themes based on each event it narrates. As it is displayed in the following table, the main content that each section covers is indicated by the folio references of each manuscript.

**Table 3** – Textual Arrangement of the Mss  
The Manuscript with Its Folio, Referring the Section

No.	Theme	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Introductory Prayer	Ff.1r–2rb	Ff.1r–2ra	Ff.1r–2ra	Ff.1r–1va	Ff.1r–1vb	Ff.1r–2va	Ff.1r–1vb
2	The Story of Salvation: From the Annunciation to the Ascension	Ff. 2rb–20rb	Ff. 2ra–14vb	Ff. 2ra–15ra	Ff. 1va–8vb	Ff. 1vb–16vb	Ff. 2va–23va	Ff. 1vb–11vb
3	The Apostles Divided the World and Preached Accordingly	Ff. 20rb–27rb	Ff. 14vb–21ra	Ff. 15ra–20va	Ff. 8vb–12rb	Ff. 16vb–23ra	Ff. 23va–31vb	Ff. 11vb–16vb
4	The Names of the Four Evangelists and Their Symbols	Ff. 27rb–31va	Ff. 21ra–24va	Ff. 20va–23va	Ff. 12rb–14ra	Ff. 23ra–27ra	Ff. 31vb–37va	Ff. 16vb–19va

*Continuation of the table*

No.	Theme	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
5	The Greatness of Egypt and Its Ecclesiastical Relation With Ethiopia	Ff. 31va–39ra	Ff. 24va–31ra	Ff. 23va–29vb	Ff. 14ra–16rb	Ff. 27ra–33rb	Ff. 37va–46vb	Ff. 19va–24va
6	The Preaching of Saint Mark in Egypt and the Five Western Cities	Ff. 39ra–45rb	Ff. 31ra–37rb	Ff. 29vb–35vb	Ff. 16rb–20rb	Ff. 33rb–39rb	Ff. 47ra–53vb	Ff. 24va–29vb
7	Saint Mark the Evangelist Composed His Gospel in Bärqa and Rome	Ff. 45rb–47rb	Ff. 37rb–39ra	Ff. 35vb–37vb	Ff. 20rb–21rb	Ff. 39rb–41ra	Ff. 53vb–56rb	Ff. 29vb–31rb
8	The Return of Saint Mark to Alexandria and His Combat Against the Heathens	Ff. 47rb–50va	Ff. 39ra–42rb	Ff. 37vb–40vb	Ff. 21rb–24ra	Ff. 41ra–43vb	Ff. 56rb–60vb	Ff. 31rb–34ra
9	The Martyrdom of Saint Mark the Evangelist in Alexandria at the Hands of Pagans	Ff. 50va–53ra	Ff. 42rb–45ra	Ff. 40vb–43va	Ff. 24ra–26rc	Ff. 43vb–45va	Ff. 60vb–64ra	Ff. 34ra–36rb
10	Rules Set by Saint Mark the Apostle Regarding the Feast of the Resurrection	Ff. 53ra–61vb	Ff. 45ra–53vb	Ff. 43va–51va	om.	Ff. 45va–52va	Ff. 64va–76rb	Ff. 36rb–43va
11	Rules Laid by the Holy Apostles Regarding the Feast of the Nativity	Ff. 61vb–66rb	Ff. 53vb–59ra	Ff. 51va–55rb	om.	Ff. 52va–55va	Ff. 76va–83rb	Ff. 43va–48ra
12	The Miracles of Saint Mark (Tä'ammärä Marāqos)	Ff. 67vb–81rb	Ff. 59ra–73va	Ff. 55rb–63va	Ff. 27rb–38rc	Ff. 55va–72va	Ff. 83va–105ra	Ff. 48ra–60ra

## 5. Conjectures

The text under study, the Gəʿəz Acts of SME, is supposed to be edited with the Neo-Lachmannian method. To construct the stemma codicum, the conjunctures/monogenetic errors attested in the seven MSs of Gädlä Marāqos have been notified from the text and classified under two main categories: Archetype and Sub-archetype errors. This is done by showing the section where the archetype and sub-archetype errors are located. The archetype text has been represented by a Greek capital letter omega (Ω), whereas the sub-archetype texts have been indicated by small Greek letters (α, β, γ, δ and ε). The stemma codicum, which shows the genealogical relation of the witnesses, has been built based on the archetype and sub-archetype errors found in the witnesses.

### 5.1 Monogenetic Errors

(1)

- ወኢያብዐለ፡ ቦቱ፡ ሐዋርያ፡ ማርቆስ፡ ትንሣኤ፡ ቅድስተ፡ እስመ፡ ከማሁ፡ ኮነ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ በይጵቲ፡ ዕለት፡ ውስተ፡ መቃብር። And St Mark the Apostle did not celebrate the Holy Easter on it, for his Lord was in grave like him: A (f. 58v<sub>b</sub>), B (f. 50v<sub>a</sub>), C (f. 48v<sub>a</sub>), E<sub>1</sub> (f. 50r<sub>a</sub>), E<sub>2</sub> (f. 72r<sub>b</sub>), F (f. 40v<sub>b</sub>) and om. D.

- This sentence attests that St Mark did not feast the Holy Resurrection on some other days (but he

did on Sunday, the 23<sup>rd</sup> of Nesan, before the day of the end of his testimony). Nevertheless, the word ‘ከማሁ’ makes the sentence irrational because of the following reasons.

If it is to say he did not feast before that, on Saturday, the word ‘ከማሁ’ makes it false because Mark was alive on that day; he was not in a grave on that day.

If it is to say he did not feast after that, on Monday, again the word ‘ከማሁ’ makes it false because Jesus was already resurrected on Sunday; he was not in a grave on that day.

Here, as one can understand the case, the obscure reading shared by all testimonies shows that the witnesses were derived from a common archetypal text.

### 5.2 Sub-archetypes

#### 5.2.1 Sub-archetype [α] and [β]

This sub-archetype is established based on the following variant shared by AE<sub>1</sub>E<sub>2</sub> in one hand and BCDF on the other. Different variants that could affect the coherence and meaning of the sentences might be occurred in the process of copying the MSs. A few variants have been examined as follows to classify the witnesses into two groups.

- ወበሰኒታ፡ ወርኅ፡ እምዘኮነ፡ ዝንቱ፡ And in the next month after it took place: A (f. 3r<sub>b</sub>).

- ወበሰድስ፡ ወበርጎ፡ (sic) እምዘኮነ፡ ዝንቱ፡ And in the sixth month after it took place: E<sub>1</sub> (f. 4r<sub>a</sub>).

- ወበ... (er.) ወርጎ፡ እምዘኮነ፡ ዝንቱ፡ And in ... month after it took place: E<sub>2</sub> (f. 3v<sub>b</sub>).

- ወበታሥእ፡ ወርጎ፡ እምዘኮነ፡ ዝንቱ፡ And in the ninth month after it took place: B (f. 3r<sub>a</sub>), C (f. 3r<sub>a</sub>), D (f. 2r<sub>c</sub>), F (f. 2v<sub>a</sub>).

Based upon the statement given, we can assume that the hypothetical sub-archetype [α], from which the MSs AE<sub>1</sub>E<sub>2</sub> depended, had a difficult reading, for the MSs preserve the text differently unlike the witnesses BCDF, which seem preserve the text similarly.

5.2.2 Sub-Archetype [α] = A+ [γ]

As stated under, different variants shared by MSs E<sub>1</sub> and E<sub>2</sub> but differently in other witness A, have been remarked. This situation implies that the MSs E<sub>1</sub> and E<sub>2</sub> were copied from a common ancestor that is different from that of the MS A is derived. Accordingly, the sub-archetype [γ] is established based on the following variant.

- ወጸርሑ፡ ኩሎሙ፡ ሠራዊተ፡ መላእክቲሁ፡ ... እንዘ፡ ይብሉ፡ ድልው፡ ዮሐንስ፡ ወልደ፡ መቃርዮስ፡ ተክል፡ ሐዲስ፡ ዘማርቆስ፡ ወንጌላዊ፡ ንጉሥ፡ ወኩሉ፡ ሕዝብ፡ ይሰምዑ፡ ዘንተ፡ ቃላተ፡ ... And all His troops of Angels cried... saying John the son of Macarius, the new converted of Mark the Evangelist; the King and all people were listening that word: E<sub>1</sub> (f. 62v<sub>a</sub>) E<sub>2</sub> (f. 97r<sub>a</sub>).

- ወጸርሑ፡ ኩሎሙ፡ ሠራዊተ፡ መላእክቲሁ፡ ... እንዘ፡ ይብሉ፡ ድልው፡ ዮሐንስ፡ ወልደ፡ መቃርዮስ፡ ተክል፡ ሐዲስ፡ ዘማርቆስ፡ ወንጌላዊ፡ ወሀለዉ፡ ንጉሥ፡ ወኩሉ፡ ሕዝብ፡ ይሰምዑ፡ ዘንተ፡ ቃላተ፡ ... And all His troops of Angels cried... saying John the son of Macarius, the new converted of Mark the Evangelist, and the King and all people were listening that word: A (f. 76r<sub>a</sub>).

The former expression seems likely to lose an important word that is included and underlined in the second expression. Due to this variant, we can deduce that the MSs E<sub>1</sub> and E<sub>2</sub> are copied from one common ancestor that is different from that of A.

5.2.3 Sub-Archetype [β] = [δ] + D

In the following readings, a variant shared by BCF and differ in other MS D has been found, and this sub-archetype is established based on the variant displayed below.

- ወእመሰ፡ ተንጉሉ፡ በጌንድዮቶሙ፡ ይቤ፡ እግዚእ፡ ኢየሱስ፡ And if they vanished due to their delaying, said the Lord Jesus: B (f. 11r<sub>a</sub>), C (f. 11r<sub>b</sub>), F (f. 8v<sub>b</sub>).

- ወእመሰ፡ ተንጉሉ፡ በጌይዮቶሙ፡ ይቤ፡ እግዚእ፡ ኢየሱስ፡ And if they vanished due to their fleeing, said the Lord Jesus: D (f. 6r<sub>a</sub>).

On the basis of this variant, we can deduce that the witnesses BCF were copied from a lost MS. This implies that there was a conjectural MS [δ] from which MSs BCF were copied, which MS D was not belonged to. In other words, MS D was derived from a different source that MS [δ] was not belonged to.

5.2.4 Sub-Archetype [δ] = [ε] + C

Some variants shared by BF, but different in witness C, have been found in different sections, so this sub-archetype is established based on the following variant:

- ለቡኬ፡ ኦ፡ ፍቁር፡ ከሙ፡ ዘበቱ፡ ንዋይ፡ ክቡር፡ ያነብሮ፡ ውስተ፡ መዝገብ፡ ዕሙቅ፡ ውኅበ፡ ፀወን፡ ምጡቅ፡ ከሙ፡ ጸላዒ፡ ወይሰይም፡ ቦቱ፡ ኣቃቤ፡ ምእመነ፡። O the beloved ones, behold that someone who owns overvalued treasure puts it in a secret storehouse and into a high fortress, for an enemy [...] and appointed a loyal guard upon it: B (f. 27r<sub>a</sub>), F (f. 21v<sub>a</sub>).

- ለቡኬ፡ ኦ፡ ፍቁር፡ ከሙ፡ ዘበቱ፡ ንዋይ፡ ክቡር፡ ያነብሮ፡ ውስተ፡ መዝገብ፡ ዕሙቅ፡ ውኅበ፡ ፀወን፡ ምጡቅ፡ ከሙ፡ ኢይርከቦ፡ ጸላዒ፡ ወይሰይም፡ ቦቱ፡ ኣቃቤ፡ ምእመነ፡። O the beloved ones, behold that someone who owns overvalued treasure puts it in a secret storehouse and into a high fortress not to be found by an enemy and appointed a loyal guard upon it: C (f. 25v<sub>b</sub>).

The first expression seems that it lacks something in the underlined part that is likely correct in the witness C, in the second expression. This phenomenon implies that there was a hypothetical MS [ε] from which the descendants B and F could be copied. Accordingly, we can draw that the witnesses BF could be derived from a common ancestor.

6. The Family and Its Stemma Codicum

In the process of editing texts based on several witnesses, the editor may not consider the MSs that are obviously copies of extant manuscripts (eliminatio codicum descriptorum) (Macé, et al. 2015, 342). However, according to the archetype and sub-archetype errors (innovations) mentioned above, there is no way to do that. Hence, all the witnesses will be considered, and their hypothetical relationship might be proposed in two ways: The hypothetical family and the Stemma Codicum. The former shows the chronological relationship of the witnesses with the archetype texts in a mathematical formula, whereas the latter indicates the genealogical relationship of the family in the figure (Macé, et al. 2015, 337). Accordingly, the family and the bipartite Stemma Codicum can be formulated as follows:

### 6.1 The Family Relationship

- $\Omega = \alpha + \beta$
- $\alpha = A + \gamma$
- $\gamma = E_1 + E_2$
- $\beta = \delta + D$
- $\delta = \varepsilon + C$
- $\varepsilon = B + F$

$$(\Omega = \alpha (A + \gamma (E_1 + E_2) + \beta (\delta (\varepsilon (B + F) + C) + D))$$

### 6.2 The Stemma Codicum

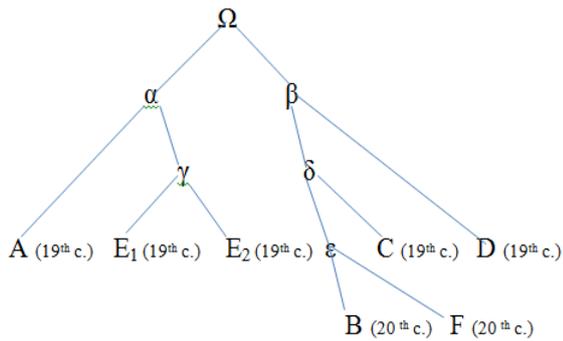


Figure 1 – The Stemma Codicum

As shown above, the hypothetical family tree, constructed based on shared innovations, indicates a closed tradition and vertical transmission of the text since it is free of contamination. Besides, there is no MS to be eliminated (elimination codicum descriptorum) since there is no extant witness (antigraph) from which one or more exemplars (apographes) are derived.

### Conclusion

The textual transmission of the Gəʿəz *Acts* of Saint Mark the Evangelist reflects the relationship

between textual translation, transmission and adaptation within the Ethiopian Christian literature. According to the textual transmission of the text, the *Acts* of Saint Mark the Evangelist preserved in multiple text manuscripts, is supposed to be originally composed in Greek language and translated into Gəʿəz in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. However, the text preserved in separate manuscripts, considered in this study, is likely to be recompiled later on the bases of the Greek vorlage in the latter time, so that Arabic could be the language in which the text is compiled. The textual analysis and textual variations in the manuscript traditions, such as linguistic features, and localized interpretations point to an active scribal culture that preserved and reformed the textual narration over time. Besides, the Ethiopic *Acts* of St Mark the Evangelist can be considered as a witness to reflect the textual transmission and translation of the Ethiopian Christian literature, for a broader understanding of the religious and literary history of the country. Moreover, the names Abba Mikaʿel and Abba Gäbräʿel mentioned in the text were the Egyptian Metropolitans who had been nominated to Ethiopia during the time of Emperor Zärʿa Yaʿəqob. This implies that the text was under adaptation through various times. Accordingly, this study may show the complicated transformation and translation of the hagiographical texts in the early Christian traditions.

### Actsabbreviations

- EMML = Ethiopian Manuscript and Microfilm Library
- F = folio
- CE = Common Era
- IES = Institute of Ethiopian studies
- Ms/s = Manuscript/s
- UNESCO = United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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*Received April 30, 2025  
Accepted February 18, 2026*