

Scribes of East Tigray (North Ethiopia)

COMSt, Workshop Team 1
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State of the Art

- Studies on Ethiopian scribal practices:

Assefa Liben, "Preparation of Parchment Manuscripts," *Bulletin of the Ethnological Society*, University College of Addis Ababa, 8 (1958), 5-21.

Sergew Hable Sellasie, *Bookmaking in Ethiopia*, Leiden 1981.

Alessandro Bausi "La tradizione scrittoria etiopica," *Segno e Testo* (Cassino), 6 (2008), pp. 507-557.

Fäqadä Šəllase Täfärra, *The Ancient Art of Manuscript Making*, Addis Ababa, 2002 Eth.Calendar (2010 G.C.), in Amharic.

- Catalogues of Ethiopic manuscripts: descriptions and indices
- Siegbert Uhlig, *Äthiopische Paläographie*, Stuttgart, 1988.

Objectives

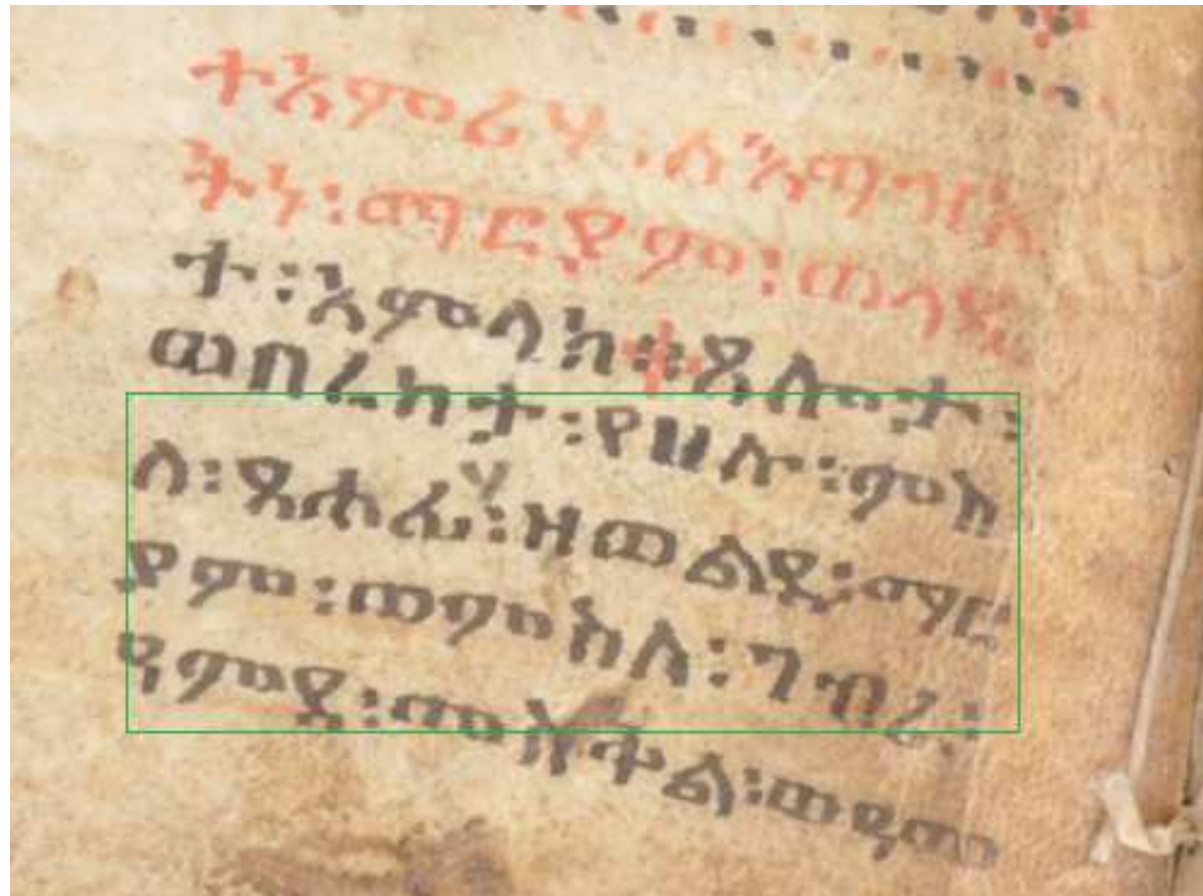
- Present the data on the scribes retrieved from the Ethio-SPaRE mss.
- Draft a profile of a scribe Wäldä Muse (second half of the 19th cent., Gulo Mäkäda, East Tigray)

Ethio-SPaRE data on scribes

- **350** mss. described
- **112** mss. originally signed by **85** scribes
- Among them, **10** scribes wrote more than one ms.
 - Wäldä Muse: 10 mss.
 - Zä-Wäldä Maryam: 7 mss., 4 mss. provisionally attributed to him
 - 2 scribes: 3 mss.
 - 6 scribes: 2 mss.

Places of self-identification

- **Colophons**
- **Donation/ownership notes**
- **Supplications**
„May Her prayer and Her blessing be with Her scribe
Zä-Wäldä
Maryam...”



Ethio-SPaRE mss. containing scribes' names

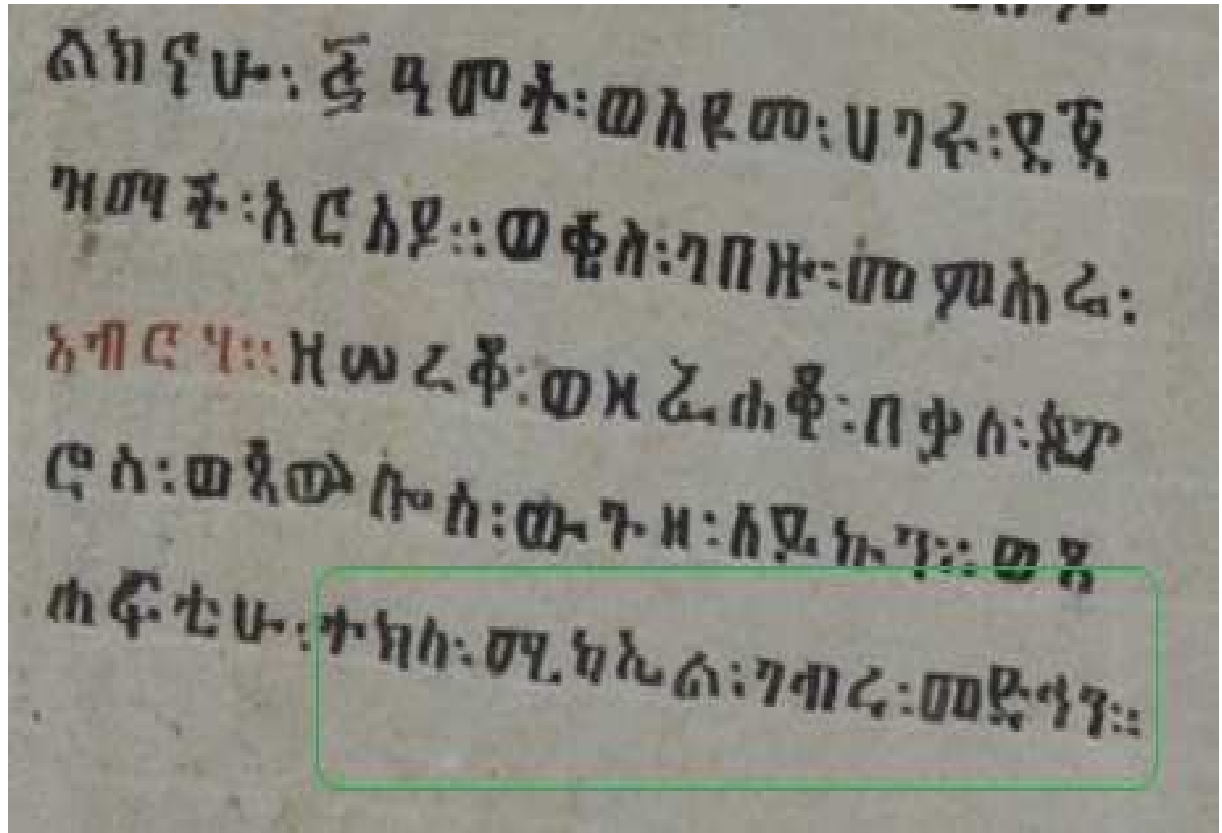
	Number of mentioned scribes' names	Number of erased scribes' names	Estimated datings				
			20th c.	19th c.	18th c.	17th c.	16th c.
Colophon	31	1	15	6	5	4	1
Donation/ ownership note	21	1		13	5	2	1
Supplication	60	4	6	32	13	7	2
Total number of scribes	112	6	21	51	23	13	4

Explicit elements of self-identification

- **Name**, typically baptismal, e.g.,
Wäldä Muse “Son of Moses”, Gäbrä Ǝgzi’abəher “Servant of God”
- **Titles**
 - Type of vocation: **qes/qäsis** Täklä Haymanot, for priestly ordination; **abba** Gäbrä Šəllase, for a monk
 - Ecclesiastic rank: **aläqa/haläqa** Gäbrä Mädhən, for the priest being a chief of a local church
 - Educational background: **märigeta/qäññ geta** Gäbrä Maryam, for a person with a training in the school of church music
 - **Abunä** (?)
- **Place of origin**
- **(Baptismal) names of family members**

Distribution of scribal work

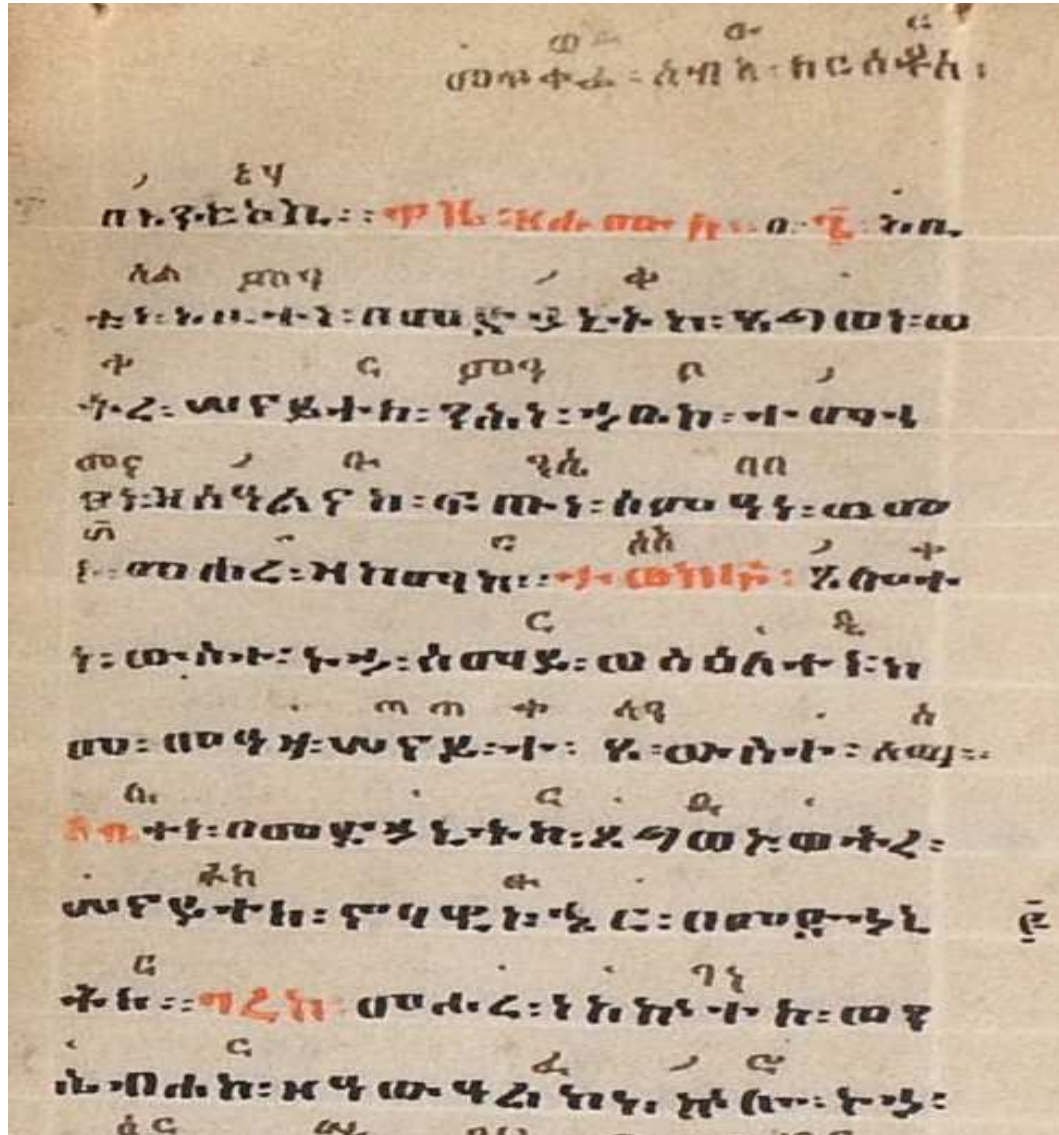
- Täklä Mika'el and Gäbrä Mädhən - scribes working in tandem



Distribution of scribal work

Liturgical books with musical notation:

Missal,
Mäwaśó't,
Zəmmare,
Dəggwa,
Some dəggwa



Places of scribal activities

- Working scriptoria
in
East Tigray?

Däbrä Dammo?

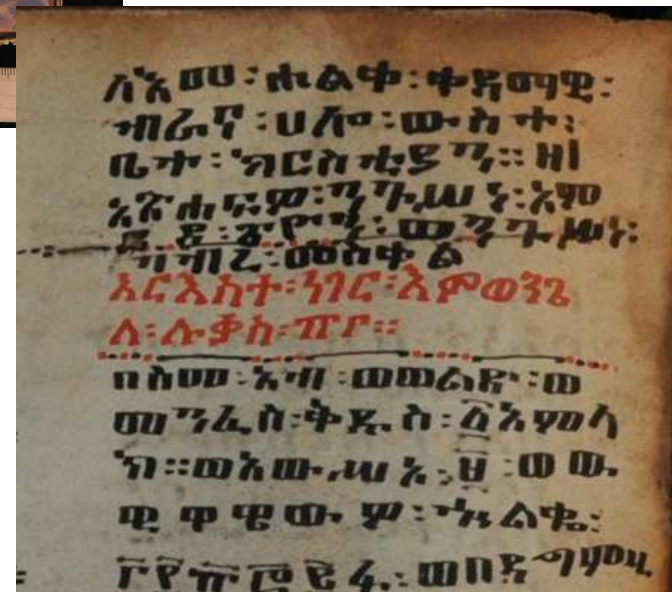
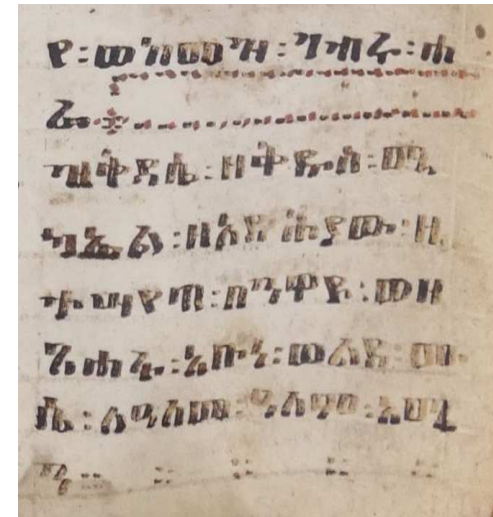
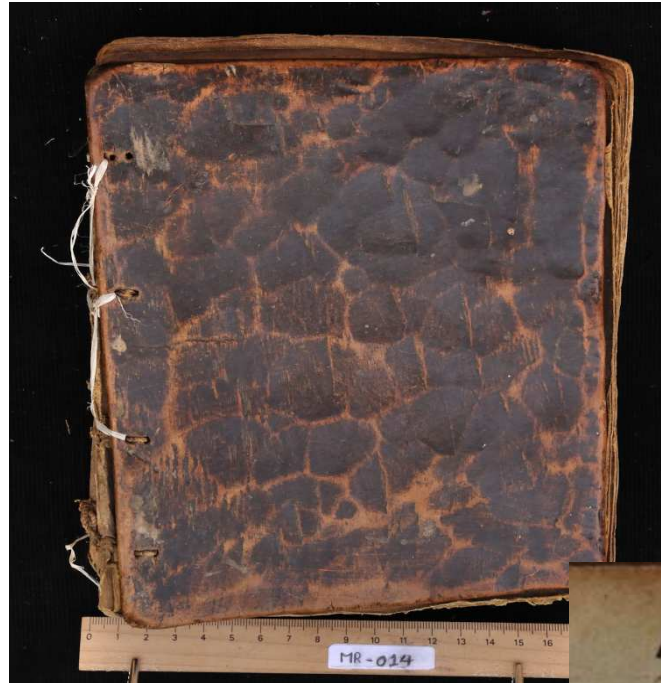
Gundä Gunde –
a centre of scribal
activity in the past



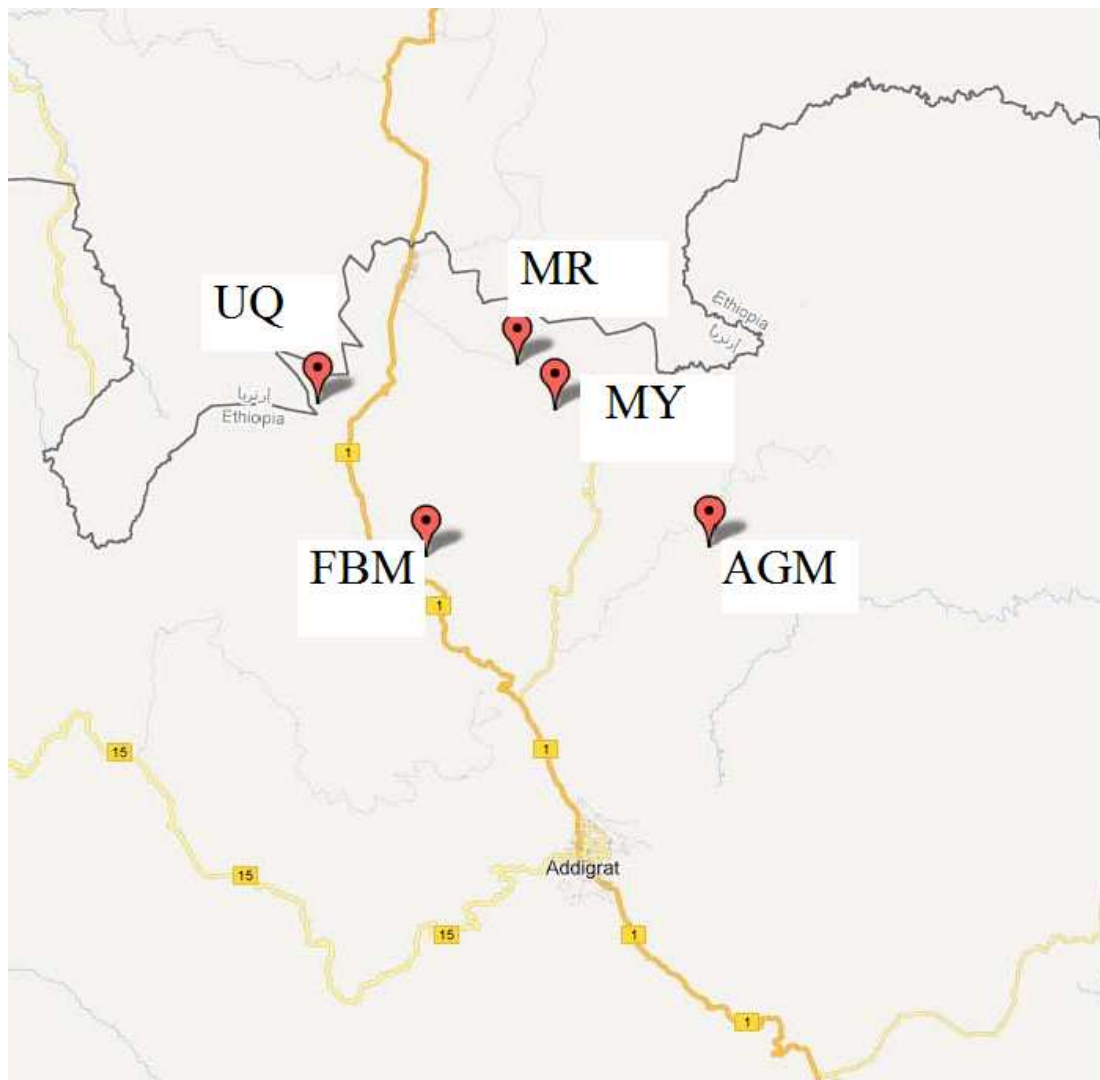
Mss. written by Wäldä Muse

- 10 mss.
 - 3 Missals
 - 1 Collection of miracles
 - 1 Hagiography
 - 5 Small size liturgical books

- 3 charters in an old Four Gospels ms.



Location of Wäldä Muse's mss.



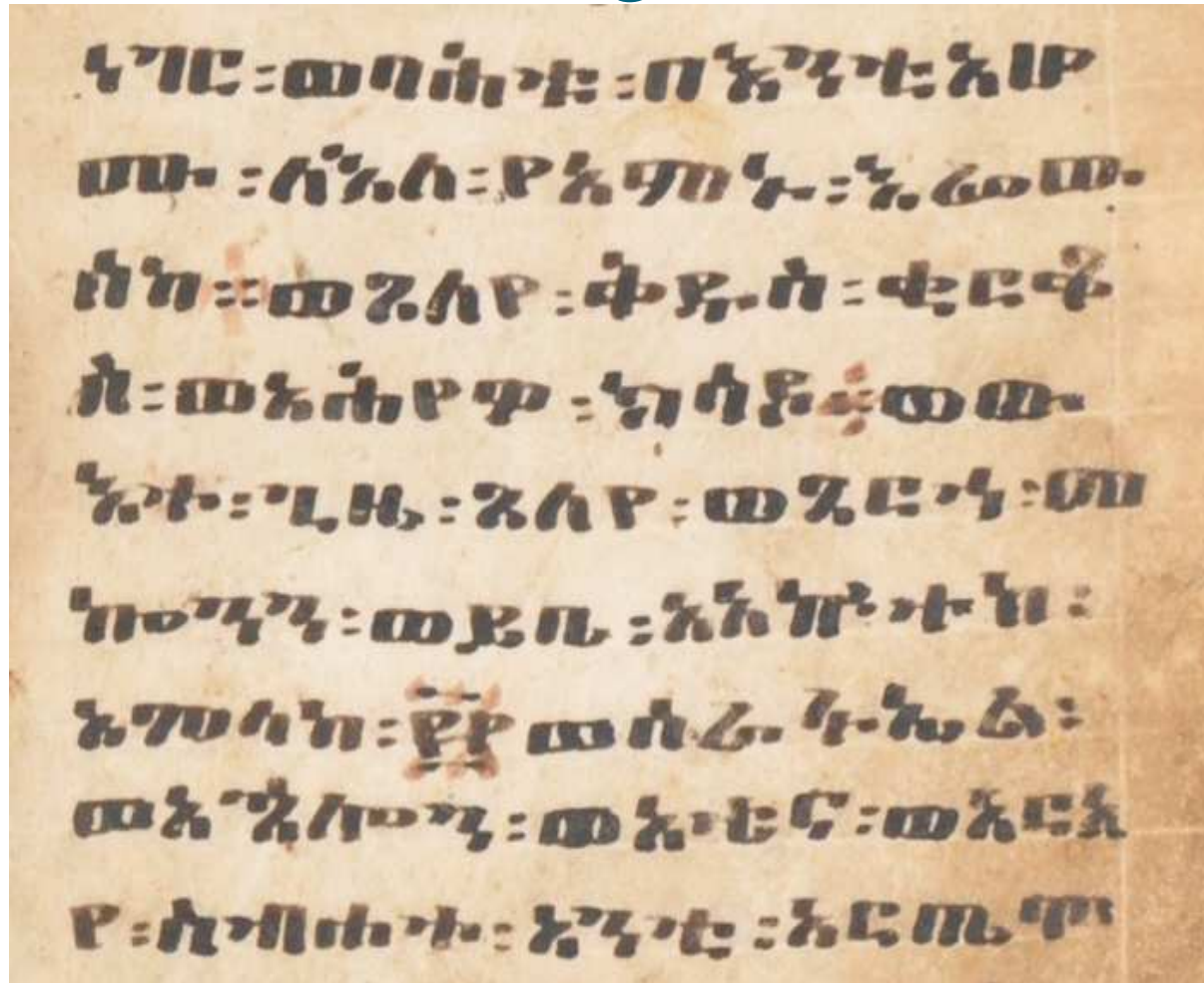
- MR=Mədrä Ruba, 7 mss.
- UQ=Ura Qirqos, 1 ms.
- FBM=Maryam Fäqada, 1 ms.
- AGM=Agamyo Qəddus Mika'el , 1 ms.
- MY=Däbrä Ma'šo, 3 charters

Wäldä Muse's profile

- Resided somewhere around the church Mədrä Ruba Šəllase (Gulo Mäkäda, East Tigray)
- Was a priest „qes” ; in 5 mss. he called himself „abune”
- Worked around the years 1865-1890
- Wrote 3 mss. for the same family of Wäldä Tənśa'e, donated to the church in Mədrä Ruba

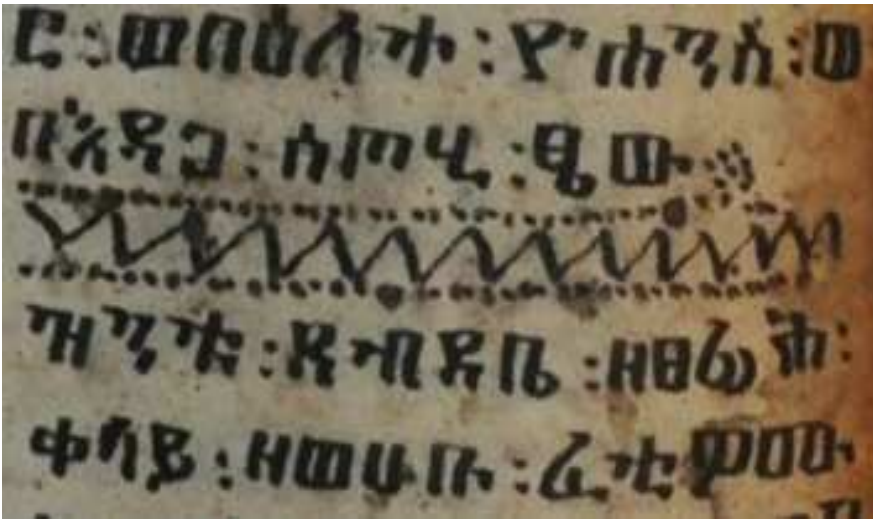
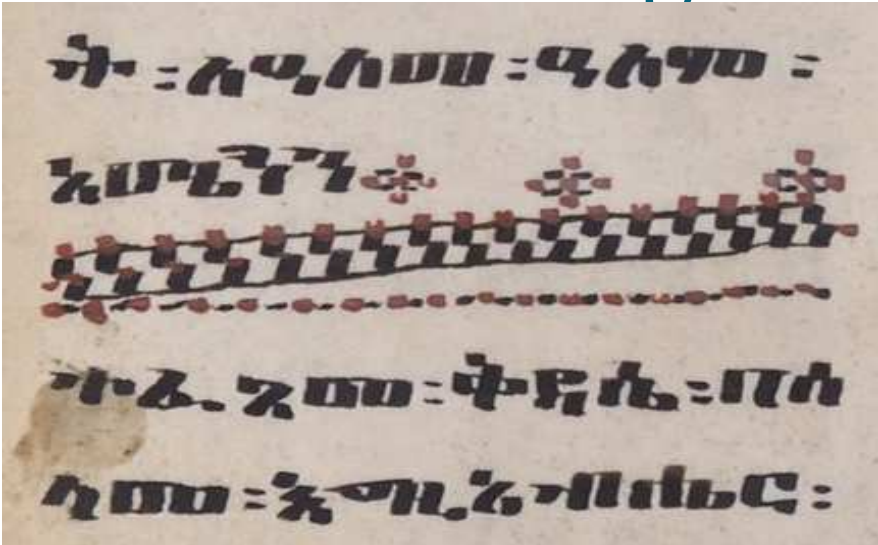
Features of Wäldä Muse's handwriting

- mediocre quality of handwriting
- angular shapes of letters
- tendency to broad letters, with thick vertical strokes



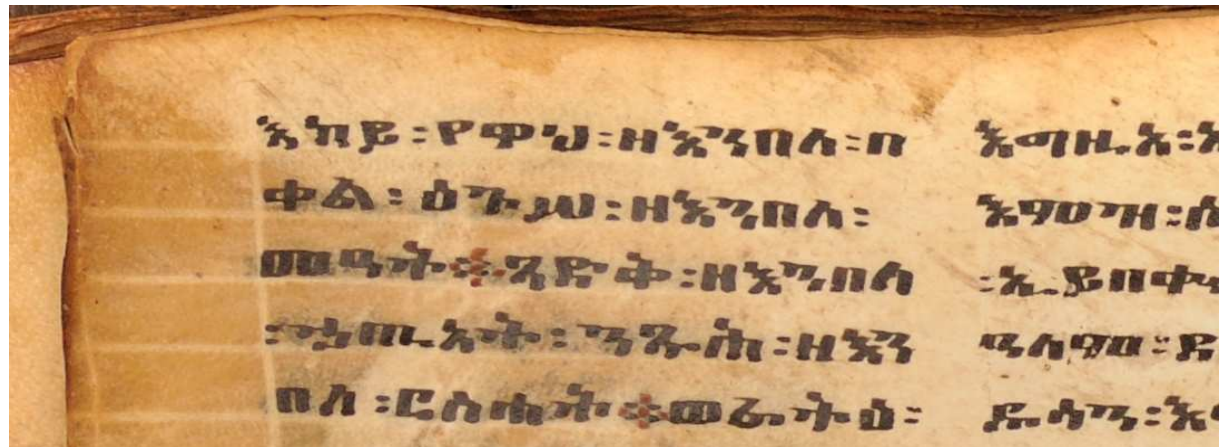
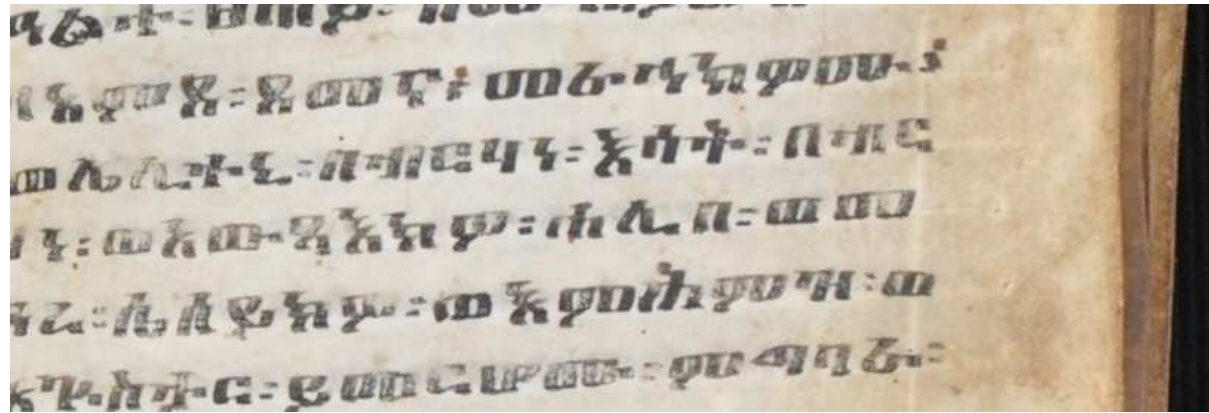
Features of Wäldä Muse's handwriting

- crude text dividers



Ruling in Wäldä Muse's mss.

- untypical length of ruling lines: type B reaching ruling pricks (instead of more common type C)



THE

END