Ethiopian scribes and re-creation of ancient documents: Ṭanṭawədəm’s land charter revisited
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From Aksum to Lalibäla: The myth of the dark age of Eritrean and Ethiopian history (7th-13th cent.). A multidisciplinary approach
The Charter of Ṭanṭawǝdǝm

MS ʿUrā Qirqos, UM-035/C3-IV-83, 120 x 95 x 10 mm, 11 folia in 2 quires
Research questions:

1) Who was the scribe of “The Charter” in MS UM-035?

2) What was the affiliation of the scribe?

3) When was the scribe active?

4) When exactly was MS UM-035 produced?
The material of the study

18 ecclesiastic libraries; 223 manuscripts taken into account; ca. 30 manuscripts closely studied.
The local 18\textsuperscript{th}-century “broad style” of Gulo Makadā

- vertical or slightly slanted downstrokes
- horizontal tops
- well spaced script
- mostly rounded shapes
- broad shapes of ወ, ዉ, ዋ, ዌ, ዎ; ቷ and ዸ “squeezed”
- some vowel markers exaggerated
- ዋ has a flat top
- ኍ has the right leg leant upon the left leg
- the numeral ዐ is closed the other way around
Scribe Zawalda Māryām 1 (around 1716-45): at least 12 witnesses

MS Laqāy Kidāna Mәḥrat, MKL-016, Vita of Kiros and other texts, fols. 97v

MS Samāz Māryām, SMM-003, Lectionary, fol. 72r

MS Mәdra Ruba Śәllәse, MR-022, Four Gospels, fol. 36va
MS ʿUrā Qirqos UM-042: varieties of the local “broad style”?

Fols. 37v-37r, hands of Mḥḍǝnta Māryām vs Zawalda Māryām 2 (unit I), second half of the 18th century (?)
MS UM-035, The Charter of Ṭanṭawədəm
MS ʿUrā Qirqos UM-042, unit I

Fols. 37v-37r, hands of Mḥḍǝnta Māryām vs Zawalda Māryām 2 (unit I), second half of the 18th century (?)
MS ʿUrā Qirqos UM-042, unit II: a clue to the identity of the scribe of the Charter

Fols. 125v-126r, end of unit I, beginning of unit 2.

Hands of Zawalda Māryām 2 (left), and Walda Tānšāʾe, (right).
MS ˁUrā Qirqos UM-042 (unit II): a clue to the identity of the scribe of the Charter
MS Manabayti Māryām, MSM-001, Miracles of Jesus, 18th century

Fols. 160v-161r, explicit, additional notes
The writer of the Charter: Walda Tǝnsāʾe of Manabayti Māryām?

- MS UM-035, fol. 1r
- MS UM-042, fol. 126r (unit II)
- MS Manabayti Māryām, MSM-001, Miracles of Jesus, fol. 106v, a note referring to 1779-1800
Walda Tǝnśāʾe: a summary

- Wrote “The Charter of Ṭanṭawǝdǝm”, UM-35
- Active in the second half of the 18th/early 19th century
- (at least 1779-1800)
- Senior local ecclesiastic or church scholar, “half-professional” scribe
- Affiliated to the church of Manabayti Dabra Ṣǝyon Māryām
- Associated with the senior priest Kǝfla Māryām of ʿUrā Qirqos
- “The Charter of Ṭanṭawǝdǝm” in UM-35 written at ʿUrā Qirqos or Manabayti Māryām
Many thanks!

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