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WHY DID KING FASILÄDÄS KILL HIS BROTHER ? SHARING POWER IN THE ROYAL FAMILY IN MID-SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ETHIOPIA

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The transition between the two long reigns of King Susneyos (1607-32) and King Fasilädäs (1632-67) is not well known, and a striking historical fact hides some subtle religious and political events of the time: Susneyos is associated with Catholicism, while Fasilädäs is the King who restored the "national" faith. This study focuses on a specific place to throw light on some of the mechanisms at play during this transition. This place is a monastery founded by queen Wäld Sä'ala, wife of Susneyos and mother of Fasilädäs. A familial drama, whose roots and branches are deeply linked with the national background, not to mention with international developments, took place here.

Wäld Sä'ala was originally from a noble family of Wäläqa and Märaḥbété, regions located in south Amḥara and north Šäwa [see Map 1]. She married Susneyos around 1595. Her regnal name was Śelṭan Mogasa, following the regnal name of her husband, Śelṭan Sägäd[1]. They had numerous children, amongst whom was the future King Fasilädäs (r. 1632-1667) and his younger brother, Gälawdéwos. Wäld Sä'ala founded her own monastery, named Qoma Fasilädäs, in south Bägémder. Its construction began in 1618 and was completed in 1640, as internal documents show. She lived at Qoma until her death in 1661 and was buried there[2].

The accompanying article by H. Pennec and D. Toubkis touches on the political

[1] Francisco Maria Esteves Pereira, *Chronica de Susneyos, rei de Etiopia*, *segundo o manuscripto da Bibliotheca Bodleiana de Oxford,* (Lisboa, 2 vols., 1892, 1900), 2, 34 ; P. Pedro Paez S.J., *Historia Aethiopiae, Liber I et II*, in Camillo Beccari, *Rerum Aethiopicarum Scriptores Occidentales Inediti a Saeculo XVI ad XIX*, 2 (Roma, 1905) 164 ; Jules Perruchon, "Notes pour l'histoire de l'Ethiopie. Règne de Susneyos ou Seltan-Sagad (1607-1632)", *Revue sémitique* 5 (1897), 77. References to the published chronicles, such as the *Chronica de Susneyos*, are to the translations, which provide full reference to the original Ge'ez texts.

[2] This study is based on a Ph.D. dissertation, defended in January, 2003, University of Paris-1 Sorbonne, laboratory Centre de Recherches Africaines . The title is ""Aux Confins le Feu, Au Centre

and religious context of Susneyos' reign. Wäld Sä'ala had been fiercely opposed to Catholicism, as reported by the Jesuit sources[3]. According to a text written for Qoma Fasilädäs' monastery, she left the royal court in 1618, a few years before the official conversion of the King[4]. But even though she was opposed to the Catholic policy of her husband, which may be seen as the reason why she chose to separate herself from it, the choice of her son, Fasilädäs, to re-establish Orthodoxy did not bring her back in a less independent state of mind.

Religious choices are inextricably linked with contextual and political challenges. This study presents, therefore, the games of alliances spun by some members of the royal family—the Queen, the King and his younger brother, and the Coptic metropolitans, titular leaders of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church—during the period from 1640 to ca. 1650. The biggest challenge crystallizes around the relationship between the Queen Mother, Wäld Sä'ala, and her son, King Fasilädäs.

Tales of a fratricide

Oral tradition[5] in Qoma designates Gälawdéwos, younger brother of Fasilädäs, as the genuine heir of Susneyos. Even today Qoma's memory denies the legitimacy of Fasilädäs's rule:

> When the work [for Qoma's church] was finished, *Aṣé* Susneyos had already died owing to his muteness[6]. He designated his son Gälawdéwos as his heir. Before, one would have said *zäwd eč̣oña* ("betrothed of the crown") but now one says *älga wäraš* ("inheritor of the throne")[7]. He had been designated by the government to succeed to his father. But Fasil was jealous and wanted the throne. He killed his brother and took his father's power. This hurt his mother, who decided not to see him anymore. Their father died for accepting a foreign religion and he brought dishonor on the country, and now her son killed her son! Then Wäld Sä'ala accomplished her work in this church. [8]

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le Paradis". Qoma Fasilädäs, un Monastère Royal dans l'Éthiopie du XVIIe siècle."

3 *Letter of Manoel Barradas* in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 4, 71 ; *Patriarchae A. Mendez S.J., Expeditionis Aethiopicae, liber III et IV* , in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 9, 242 ; *Patriarchae A. Mendez S.J., Expeditionis Aethiopicae, liber I et II,* in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 8, 333-34

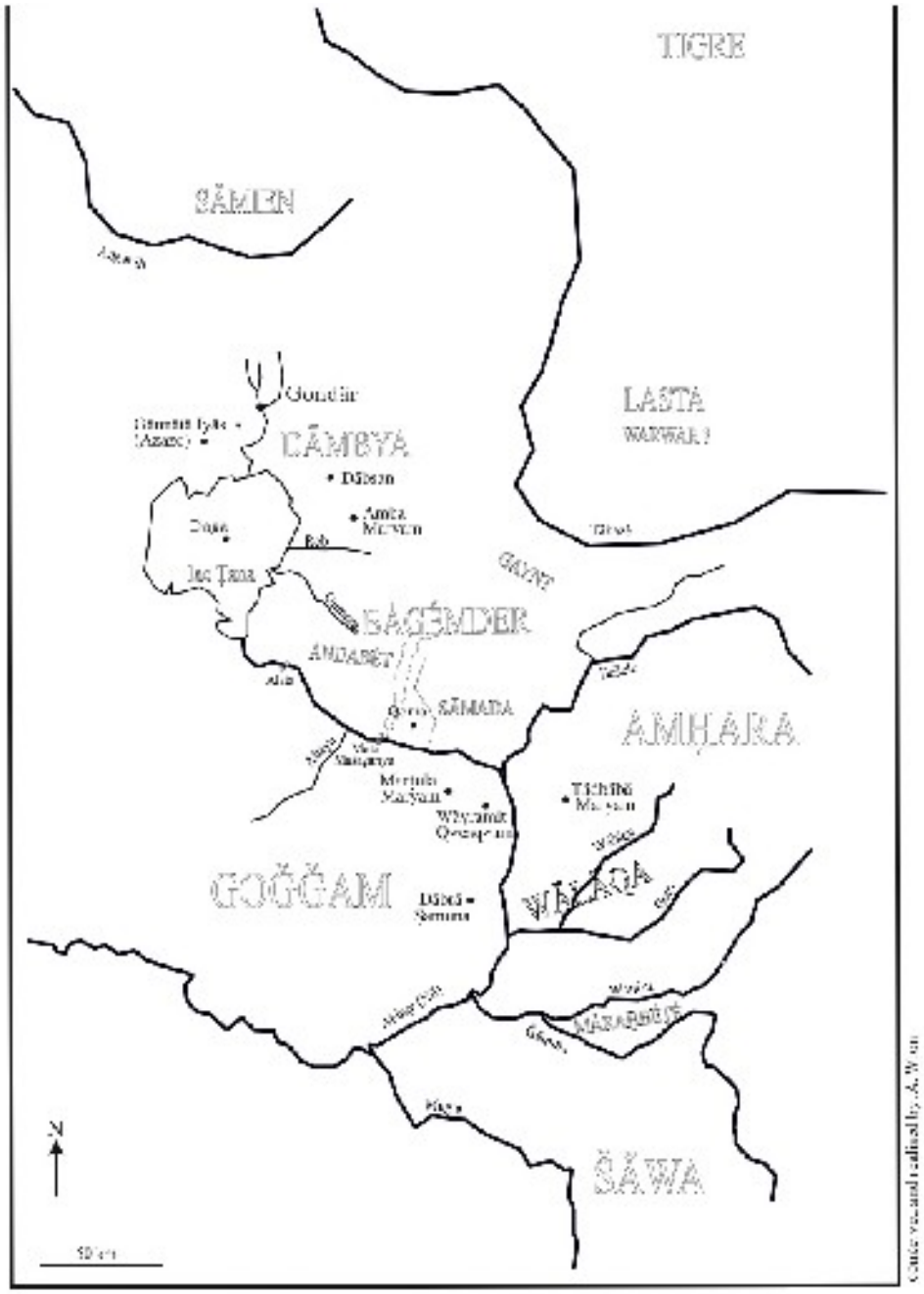
4 According to A. Mendez, Wäld Sä'ala left the royal court because she was opposed to the Catholic policy of her husband. Mendez in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 8, 333-34.

5 I have recorded this very formalized tradition amongst the intellectuals of Qoma monastery, the civil administrators of the parish, some clergy of neighboring churches, and the chiefs of the Muslim and craftsmen communities present on the parish territory.

6 In this version, after having officially declared the conversion of the Ethiopian Church to Catholicism, the tongue of King Susneyos twisted in his mouth and he became mute.

7 The inclusion of this ancient phrase might testify to the tradition's antiquity.

8 Interview with *Liqä Kahenat* Käbädä Fäqadu, civil administrator of Qoma's monastery, 11th and 18th September 1999.



Map 1 : Christian kingdom of Ethiopia in the 17th c. and elements upon Qoma Fasiladäs' network

Despite what this local tradition says, Gälawdéwos was never the legal successor of Susneyos. Fasilädäs was the eldest son alive in 1632[9], at the death of Susneyos, and the King and his court had designated him as the future king[10]. Latter on, circa 1648, Gälawdéwos was arrested, exiled and most certainly killed by his brother, King Fasilädäs, as official and royal sources note. Some foreign observers also reported this event. Between Fasilädäs' accession to the throne in 1632, and the murder of his brother in 1648, what happened and how are those events linked with the fate of Qoma? Why does Qoma's memory bear witness to the legitimacy of Gälawdéwos against Fasilädäs ? How might some of the mysteries, which surround King Fasilädäs' long and famous reign, be enlightened by insights from the traditions of Qoma?

Gälawdéwos was closely associated with his brother at the beginning of Fasilädäs's reign. This unusual situation—Ethiopian kings typically enclosed all their male relatives in a royal jail—may have been dictated by their father[11]. The first indication of the royal brothers' association is that Gälawdéwos was the only male relative of Fasilädäs to receive a grant of property—two Catholic residences, Däbsan and Amba Maryam[12], in northern Bägémder. The short chronicle accounts of Fasilädäs's reign also specify that Gälawdéwos received some military

[9] Fasilädäs was born ca. 1603, see Esteves Pereira, *Chronica de Susneyos*, 2, 36 and 1, 45. He was eighteen years old in November 1621, see P. Pedro Paez S.J., *Historia Aethiopiae, Liber III et IV*, in Camillo Beccari, *Rerum Aethiopicarum Scriptores Occidentales Inediti a Saeculo XVI ad XIX* , 3 (Roma, 1906), 387. Gälawdéwos was 15 or 16 years old in 1624, see *Letter of P. A. de Azevedo to P. N. Mascarenhas, 22 June 1624*, in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 12, 70.

[10] *Letter of Pope Urbain VIII, Rome, 28 November 1630*, in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 12, 422. Two years before his death, King Susneyos informed his Catholic allies that his successor would be Fasilädäs and received from Rome the congratulations of Pope Urbain VIII. The Jesuits did not place much trust in Fasilädäs, as he had already shown anti-Catholic feelings. This letter is, therefore, valuable evidence of his official designation.

[11] Emeri Johannes Van Donzel, *A Yemenite Embassy to Ethiopia, 1647-1649. Al-Haymi's* Sirat al-Habasha *newly introduced, translated and annotated*, Franz Steiner Verlag (Wiesbaden, 1986), 187. We suggest that King Susneyos could have been influenced by his own experience of sharing control of the country with his brother *Ras* Se'ela Krestos. Yet, Se'ela Krestos was sometimes a rival, although he was but the half-brother of the King on their mother's side and could never have tried to win the throne.

[12] Answer of A. Mendez to the letter written by Fasilädäs ordering the Jesuits to leave Ethiopia : "A quem ficarão as casas que fizemos em Debsân e Ambâ Maryam ? A Abetô Cladios vosso irmão. A quem ficou à casa e igreja de Nebesse ? A Elena vossa sobrinha, que tantos maridos tem trocado. A quem Lienegus ? A sua irmaa Olet Naguist. A quem Collelâ e ultimamante Maigogâ ? A Ozioro Unguelavit vossa irmãa, (…)" in *P. E. d'Almeida S.J. Historia Aethiopiae, Liber IX et X,* in Beccari, *RAESOIS*, 7, 324.

responsibilities, maybe in Bägémder[13].
Then conflict broke out between the two brothers.
The most concise account is by Al Haymi, ambassador of Yemen, present in Gondär in 1648-49, just after the "vanishing" of Gälawdéwos. Al Haymi wrote a short chapter entitled, "Narration of how the King arrested his full brother and his stratagem in killing him"[14]. According to him, at the beginning of Fasilädäs' reign, Gälawdéwos was at the head of the king's armies. Becoming more and more arrogant and independent, Gälawdéwos was suspected of plotting against the king. Fasilädäs, being warned, tried to capture his brother, but it took some years before royal soldiers finally arrested him.[15] Their mother, Wäld Sä'ala, then interceded that Gälawdéwos not be killed... and the King promised to save his life. But Gälawdéwos was never heard from again and most people thought he had been murdered. Al Haymi concluded his chapter by linking the execution to the earlier dismissal of *Abuna* Marqos, the Coptic patriarch and chief of the Ethiopian church. According to the Yemeni ambassador, those two men were obstacles to the king's power and this is why Fasilädäs rejected and killed them. Al Haymi was, indeed, well informed since there was a strong link between Gälawdéwos and *Abuna* Marqos, and this alliance will be enlightened step-by-step throughout this paper.

Now, what can be found out about these events in the royal chronicles? A complete chronicle of Fasilädäs seems never to have been written[16], which is quite surprising for such an important reign, Fasilädäs having re-established the Orthodox faith and built the capital city of Gondär. Only the Short Chronicles[17],

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[13] According to one version, Gälawdéwos was *däǧač* of Bägémder, see René Basset, *Etudes sur l'histoire d'Ethiopie* (Paris, 1882), 286 and Francesco Béguinot, *La cronaca abbreviata d'Abissinia. Nuova edizione dal etiopico e commento* (Roma,1901), 49. According to the other version, he came from Bägémder with his soldiers when the King asked him for military support, Jules Perruchon, "Notes pour l'histoire de l'Ethiopie. Règne de Fasiladas (Alam-Sagad) (1632-1667)", *Revue sémitique* 6 (1898), 86 and Franz Dombrovski, *Tanasee 106 : Eine Chronik der Herrscher Äthiopiens,* Äthiopistische Forschungen, 12 (Wiesbaden, 1983), 198.

[14] Van Donzel, *A Yemenite Embassy,* 187-191. References throughout are to the translations, which provide further reference to the original text.

[15] Al Haymi specifies that "for the elucidation of this story, a small space is not enough", Van Donzel, *A Yemenite Embassy,* 189.

[16] Manfred Kropp, "Ein bishernicht beachtetes Fragment einer Chronik des Fasilädäs", *Proceedings of the 7th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Lund, 1982), 243-255.

[17] Different editions of the Short Chronicles have been published. René Basset's is based on manuscripts Paris Bibliothèque Nationale Ethiopien 142 and 143. Close to this version, but translated more carefully, is Francesco Béguinot's. Jules Perruchon and, recently, Franz Amadeus

edited and compiled during the eighteenth century, recount his reign. As far as Gälawdéwos's story is concerned, the different versions of the Short Chronicles are complementary: the version edited by R. Basset and F. Béguinot is the most detailed one. The versions from Qʷarata and Ṭana inform us only about the role of the Ṭana monasteries, Kebran and Daga, on the king's side against his brother [18].

In 1638, Gälawdéwos went to Lasta and prepared an insurrection [19]. Lasta is "traditionally" a region opposed to royal power, since it is the home province of the Zagwé dynasty, overthrown during the thirteenth century by the now-ruling Solomonic dynasty. This topos in the Chronicle could be more symbolic of Gälawdéwos' rebellion than factual. Years later, on 23 Ḫedar 1646, Fasilädäs arrested his brother and sent him into exile [20]. The death of the royal prince is not mentioned in the Chronicles. However, in a computus found in a manuscript in Daga monastery[21], we read that in 1648 a so-called "Gälawdéwos" died. Daga was very interested in this conflict, since for helping the King in his war against his brother, the monastery was rebuilt in 1650 [22]. Therefore, the death of *Abéto* Gälawdéwos was an important event for this community and this mention may refer to his memory.

Dombrovski, translated versions from a family of Lake Ṭana manuscripts. Subsequent translations of fragments have never ceased to bring up new elements : Ignazio Guidi, "Di due frammenti relativi alla storia d'Abissinia", *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei* , ser. 5, vol. 2, part. 1 (Roma, 1893), 579-605; Carlo Conti Rossini, "Due squarci inediti di cronaca etiopica", *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei*, ser. 5, vol. 2, (Roma, 1893), 668-683 and 804-814 ; Ignazio Guidi, "Due nuovi manoscritti della "Cronaca abreviata" di Abissinia", *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei*, *Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche,* ser. 6, vol. 2, (Roma, 1926), 357-421 and 579-605 ; C. Foti, "La cronaca abreviata dei re d'Abissinia in un manoscritto di Dabra Berhan di Gondar", *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici,* 1, 1941, 87-123. There are several studies of these compilations : André Caquot, "Les Chroniques abrégées d'Ethiopie", *Annales d'Ethiopie* 2 (1957), 187-192 ; Manfred Kropp, "An hypothesis concerning an author or compiler of the "Short Chronicle" of the Ethiopian kings", *Sixth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Tel-Aviv, 14-17 April 1980,* (1980) 359-372; Manfred Kropp, "La réédition des chroniques éthiopiennes : perspectives et premiers résultats", *Abbay* 12 (1983-84), 49-69.

18 Perruchon, *Règne de Fasilädäs*, 88; Dombrovski, *Tanasee 106,* 200.

19 Basset, *Etudes*, 308, n. 286 ; Béguinot, *Cronaca,* 50.

20 Basset, *Etudes*, 288 ; Béguinot, *Cronaca*, 50.

21 Veronica Six *, Äthiopische Handschriften vom Tanasee, teil 3* , Franz Steiner Verlag (Wiesbaden,1999), 147 : manuscript Tanasee 136 = Daga 25.

22 Perruchon, *Règne de Fasilädäs,* 88. Daga's manuscripts record this rebuilding, see Six, *Äth. Handschr. Tana. 3*, 59 and manuscript B.N. Ethiopien 100, fol. 17v°, in Claire Bosc-Tiessé, *Art, église et royauté aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles : écriture de l'histoire et "fabrique" des images dans les églises du lac Ṭana*, thèse de doctorat en histoire de l'art sous la direction de J. Polet, Univ. de paris I - Panthéon Sorbonne (2001), 91-92.

As Al Haymi noticed, what happened between the beginning of Gälawdéwos's rebellion and his capture and death remains obscure. An incident related in one short chronicle may throw some light. After Gälawdéwos's death, in 1649-50, two Coptic metropolitans arrived from Egypt[23]. *Abba* Mikaél had been requested from the Alexandrian Patriarch by the king, while a so-called *Abba* Yohannes came at the request of Gälawdéwos. *Abba* Yohannes was unsurprisingly rejected by the king, and *abba* Mikaél became *Abuna* and was in charge until 1664. This unusual circumstance has never been commented on by historians. Nevertheless, it seems quite peculiar that the Coptic patriarch accepted the request of the brother of the Ethiopian king, and that he then sent two prelates to Ethiopia such an event being virtually unprecedented. It indicates that for the chief of the Alexandrian faith, Fasilädäs and Gälawdéwos both represented royal power, or at least, that Gälawdéwos was feeling powerful enough to ask the Egyptian prelate for a new *Abuna* for the Ethiopian Church after the eviction of *Abuna* Marqos. This event might, in fact, never have taken place, since the Short Chronicles often report events as told by oral traditions, which, in turn, can be very symbolic in form. What is clear is that Gälawdéwos had overstepped his rights and that this is the reason why he was killed.

Let's come back to the report of Al Haymi, who came to Ethiopia with the hope of gaining Fasilädäs for Islam[24] at a period when the religious choices of the King were purposely extremely unclear. According to this Muslim observer, *Abuna* Marqos had been exiled because he was becoming much too rich and powerful. Seizing a pretext, the royal court and the *ečägé*, the Ethiopian prelate located in the Church hierarchy just below the Coptic prelate, dismissed Marqos from his

[23] Basset, *Etudes,* 288, n. 291 ; Béguinot, *Cronaca,* 51. See also the correction of J. Perruchon to R. Basset's translation in Perruchon, *Règne de Fasilädäs,* 88, n. 2. The coming to Ethiopia of two Egyptian prelates is not confirmed by any other source. According to A. Mendez, who, writing from Goa on the basis of information from various informants present in northern Ethiopia, *Abuna* Mikaél would have arrived in 1650. *Relationes et epistolae variorum. Pars prima, liber IV* , in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 13, 382.

[24] This hope was, of course, largely fed by Fasilädäs. The King had renewed strong diplomatic and commercial relationships with foreign countries (Yemen, India and European countries participating in international trade in the Red Sea) and for this, adopted different attitudes and strategic positions according to his interlocutors. See Emeri Johannes Van Donzel, *Foreign relations of Ethiopia, 1642-1700*, Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut (1979), 310 p. and Emeri Johannes Van Donzel, "Foreign relations during the reign of King Fasiladas (1632-1667)", *Proceedings of the 11th conference of Ethiopian Studies* 1 (Addis Abeba, 1994) 117-122.

functions[25]. The trial acts were edited in Arabic to inform the Coptic patriarch in Alexandria of the situation. So, Marqos and Gälawdéwos were both, but maybe not together, challenging royal power and both were eliminated.

Now, let's examine the third version of Gälawdéwos's story, as written from the Jesuits' side. Even though they had been expelled from Ethiopia as soon as Fasilädäs was enthroned, the Catholic missionaries wrote an impressive number of letters, reports and *historiae* after 1632. Some Ethiopian Catholic priests remained in Ethiopia and sent information to d'Almeida and Mendez who interpreted and synthesized them. Their writings were dedicated to their superiors of the Congregation of Jesus and to Catholic readers and they were supposed to give an account of their mission in Ethiopia and of its aftermath.[26]

First, the missionaries depicted Gälawdéwos and his mother, Queen Wäld Sä'ala, as ferociously anti-Catholic[27]. Surprisingly, according to d'Almeida's *Historia de Ethiopia*, in 1641 Wäld Sä'ala and Gälawdéwos suddenly became pro-Catholic[28]. This radical change might be explained in at least two ways. First, d'Almeida and Mendez may have been aware, at this time, of the conflict opposing the King to his brother. The Jesuits were using a binary or antagonistic logic: if Gälawdéwos and Wäld Sä'ala were against the king, who was against the Catholics, therefore, Wäld Sä'ala and Gälawdéwos were defending Catholicism. Furthermore, by 1640, the former Jesuit chiefs of the Ethiopian mission were being challenged by other Catholic congregations and they had to justify their actions and

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25 Van Donzel, *A Yemenite ambassy,* 179-183.

26 On the Jesuits' writings, see Hervé Pennec, *Des Jésuites au royaume du Prêtre Jean (Ethiopie),* Gulbenkian (Paris, 2003), chapter V, "L'écriture de l'histoire comme mission", 241-306.

27 *Patriarchae A. Mendez S.J., Expeditionis Aethiopicae, liber III et IV* , in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 9, 242 ; On the burial of Susneyos following the Orthodox rite according to Wäld Sä'ala's will, see *P. E. Barradas S.J., Tractatus Tres Historico-Geographici* in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 4, 71. On the murder of Ethiopian Catholic priests from Däbrä Ṣämuna by Gälawdéwos in 1635, see Manuel D'Almeida in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 7, 405 and A. Mendez, in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 9, 282 and *RAESOIS* 13, 401

28 "Foi este açoite [Oromo's invasion] tam cruel que athe a may do Emperador e seu irmào Gladios (os maiores inimigos que teve a sancta fée de Roma em Ethiopia), reconhecendo os golpes da justiça divina e causa delles ser terem deixado a verdade e perseguido aos que a insinavào e abraçavào, aconselharào ao Rey que tornasse ao verdadeiro caminho da salvaçao, pera que se aplacasse a ira de Deus e cessacem tantos e tam evidentes castigos e a destruiçam do imperio. Porem seus peccados lhe taparào as orelhas pera nào ouvir tam bons conselhos, e cegarào os olhos da alma pera persevar pertinaz em seu erro e apostasia.", M. D'Almeida in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 7, 439 ; then copied by A. Mendez in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 9, 321.

expenditures in Ethiopia[29]. This is why pointing to the Queen Mother and the royal brother as fierce supporters of Catholicism might have been quite helpful to Jesuit legitimacy. This rhetorical reversal proved permanent and Gälawdéwos, until his death, came to symbolize Catholic interests and hopes in Ethiopia. The whole Jesuit documentation has to be read through this prism.

A. Mendez synthesized two reports made by Bernardo Nogueira and Torquato Parisiani. Nogueira, formerly Mendez's secretary, remained in Ethiopia until his death in 1653. He regularly sent reports to Goa and in at least two letters described the "Gälawdéwos' plot". The first one, dated 16th March 1647 mentioned briefly the death of Gälawdéwos, convicted of treason for favoring the restoration of Catholicism[30]. Mendez wanted more details and asked for a second version[31] of these interesting facts, proving that Catholicism was still alive at the Ethiopian royal court.

Torquato Parisiani was not present in Ethiopia but stayed in the Red Sea area from 1645 to 1647. He wrote a comprehensive description of the "plot", asserting that Gälawdéwos and his allies were so desperate about the decadence of the State that they planned to depose the king, and that *Abuna* Marqos denounced

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29 See a letter of the Augustinian, Brother Emmanuel, denouncing to the Holy Congregation of Propaganda Fidei the lack of caution of the Jesuits in Ethiopia, see Beccari, *RAESOIS* 13, 186-88.

30 *Letter of B. Nogueira to the fathers in Goa, from Ethiopia, 12th of March 1647,* in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 9, 283-287. Translated into Latin by Mendez, in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 9, 379-384, under the title : *Secunda epistola p. Bernadi Nogueira scripta die II martii anni 1647 ad patres Societatis Iesu in India.* Critical explanation of the first letter and the summary of the second version of the story are given also by A. Mendez in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 9, 373-77.

31 "Por outras vias sabemos com mais distinçào que o infante Glaudios, irmào menor do Emperador, se conjurou com alguns Catholicos valentes e muitos criados seus pera matarem ao Emperador e restituirem a fee Romana : do que elle, sendo avisado por hum dos que souberào do conselho, prendeo ao irmào e confessando elle, por conselho de sua may o mandou matar, e a hum filho seu e a outro do infante Marcos, que foy o irmào do meio entre o Emperador e Glaudios, fugindo outro filho do mesmo Marcos pera os Gallas. Foi tambem achada complice da conjuraçao a infanta Oleta Christos irmàa do mesmo Emperador e Glaudios ; a qual foi metida em huma serra muy aspera, em que nao podera viver muito tempo; Morrerao juntamente Asgader, Belatina Goytâ do Emperador (que he o capitào general), criado de ras Sela Christos e grande Catholico todo o tiempo do Patriarcha e padres ; e dous irmaos do insigne Catholico Caba Christos visorey de Tigrê et Belatina Goyta do Emperador, Zamariao, que tambem foi visorey de Tigrê, cunhado do Emperador e Asmaguiorguis Xumo de Sire, que ja forao degradados polla fee. Acrecentào que os Portugueses forào tambem convidados pera esta conjuraçào, mas que elles se escuzarào de entrar nella, dizendo que seus mestres lhe insinarào que numqua se alevantassem contra seus Reys; o que testemunhou o mesmo infante Glaudios. E posto que o Rey ficou satisfeito de sua fidelidade, nào larga o medo dos Portugueses que da India arrecea." Summary of B. Nogueira's second letter, dated 6th of May 1647, *Summa aliarum epistolarum ex Athiopia; Goae facta* in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 13, 291-292.

Gälawdéwos to the King because of his fear of Catholicism[32]. Most certainly, Nogueira and Parisiani both reported that Gälawdéwos wanted to restore Catholicism, because they could not otherwise interpret a rebellion against Fasilädäs[33]. Both of them also reported that Gälawdéwos was supported by numerous princes and royal officers, and that all of them had been killed or exiled by the king. Mendez depicted Gälawdéwos's death, according to him in 1646, as a martyr, his beheaded head being buried in the grave of his father Susneyos, in Gänätä Iyäsus [34].

Forging legal documents : the one who writes the law writes history

In this context, let us examine now the making of legal documents at Qoma Fasilädäs monastery, a religious and royal institution built in a remote area of South Bägémder by the Queen Mother and where Gälawdéwos could have hidden himself during this period and exerted his influence.

Three manuscripts preserved in Qoma's library[35] contain most of the parish

[32] *P. Torquato Parisiani S.J. relatio de statu Aethiopiae ann. 1647-49* , Beccari, *RAESOIS* 13, 336-337. "Trovandosi le cose d'Etiopia in questo stato desperati gli animi delli suoi vassalli, trè anni sono s'ammutino contro l'Imperator il suo fratello minore con altri capi del regno, quali, mossi dal zelo del ben publico e della christianita, risolsero deporre dal governo l'Imperatore e mettere in luogo suo il fratello chiamare di nuovo li padri della Compagnia per instruire, catechizzare e tirar innanzi quella christianità riducendola tutta all'obedienza del Sommo Pontefice ; ma pero havendo di cio notitia l'Abbuna heretico scismatico, per paura di che, havendo effetto il suddetto, resterebbe privo di sua cattedra et di esser scacciato, si prevalse di questa occasione nel medemo tempo per impedite il male che temeva e farsi piu grato all'Imperatore, e cosi trovando occasione di parlargli solo, gli raccontò tutto il tradimento che suo fratello e gli altri dell'imperio gli ordinavo, et la pretensione che havevano di chiamare li Portoghesi e maestri della fede romana ; e percio Sua Maesta doveva provvedere di rimedio castigando li colpevoli, tanto per la sicurezza della sua persona et imperio, come per essempio agli altri, accio per l'avvenire non ardissero ribellarsi contro il suo Rè e chiamare maestri della fede romana. Con questo avviso restò sopra modo pauroso l'Imperatore e mandò a chiamare subito suo fratello, che subito, senza essamine di testimonii et atti giudiciarii, in presenza sua commandò alli suoi schiavi suffocarlo con une tovaglia, di che mori, e dopo fece occidere tutti gli altri che entrarono nella congiura."

[33] It may even have been possible that Fasilädäs and the court accused the conspirators of Catholicism, which would have been a good reason for their punishment, one which would have gained general acceptance.

[34] Mendez in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 9, 375 ; *Catalogus Martyrum Aethiopiae sub Fasiladas iussu patr. Mendez confectus an. 1654*, Beccari, *RAESOIS* 13, 399-407.

[35] About Qoma's monastic library, see Anaïs Wion, "The Manuscripts Library of Qoma Fasilädäs

archival material: two volumes of the Miracles of Mary,[36] *Tä'ämra Maryam*, offered by Queen Wäld Sä'ala at the time of foundation, and one codex called *Mäṣḥäfä Liq*[37]. I have been able to see and photograph the first two, and the third one has been photographed by D. Crummey[38].

Arabic land charters of Qoma or Waqf

Qoma's archives contain three very unusual texts: written in Arabic[39], attributed to the Coptic patriarch of Alexandria, these *waqf* record the first land grant to the monastery and its affiliation to a mother-house[40]. *Waqf* is a religious endowment—common throughout the Islamic world—a property giving revenues. Three *waqf* are copied in Qoma's manuscripts: one "long version" in the Miracles of Mary number 714, then two "short versions" in Miracles of Mary number 701 and in a volume of the Prophets[41]. In the two volumes of the *Tä'ämra Maryam*,

Monastery", *Proceedings of the XIVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa, 6-11 nov. 2000* 1, (Addis Abeba, 2003), 275-300.

36 They received the inventory number H2 IV 701 et H2 IV 714 in 1987-88, during an inventory campaign made by the Ethiopian Ministry of Culture. H2 IV 701, *Tä'ämra Maryam*, parchment, 33 x 29,5 cm, 256 folios, 2 col., 19 lg., offered to the Qoma church by Wäld Sä'ala ; H2 IV 714, *Tä'ämra Maryam,* parchment, 24 x 22 cm, 184 folios, 2 col., 16 lg., offered to the Qoma church by Wäld Sä'ala. We will designate them by the short numbers 701 and 714.

37 According to Dr. Berhanu Abebe, *Mäṣḥäfä Liq* could be an abbreviation for one of the *Yä- liqawent mäṣḥäfoč* , which are *Haymanotä 'Abäw, Afä Wärq, Qérlos, Epifanyos, Qedasé* and *Abu Šaker.* All those books belong to Qoma's monastic library except maybe *Epifanyos*. It could also designate the *Wanna Mäzgäb* or *Main Register* I heard about while at Qoma but was not able to see.

38 This manuscript is numbered 88.XIX.20-27, in Donald Crummey's catalogue : Illinois/IES, Department of History, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University. See Donald Crummey, *Land and Society in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia*, *from the thirteenth to the twentieth century*, University of Illinois Press, (Urbana, Chicago and Addis Ababa, 2000), 329.

39 Arabic is not totally absent from Ethiopian Christian legal documents. Two other examples are known, edited and translated by Madeleine Schneider, "Deux actes de donation en arabe", *Annales d'Ethiopie* 8, (Addis Abeba,1970), 79-85. See also Pawlos Sadwa, "Un manoscritto etiopico degli Evangeli", *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* 9 (1952): p. 9 sq. and Monti della Corte, *Lalibela*, Società Italiana Arti Graphique (Roma,1940), 136-139.

40 French translation of the *waqf* has been done thanks to the precious help of Pr. Gérard Troupeau (EPHE), specialist in Christian Arabic documents. I warmly thank him for his help, as these texts are written in very complex Arabic, without diacritical signs.

41 This manuscript was photographed during the inventory by the Ministry of Culture. Its inventory number is H2 IV 666, *Nabyat,* 27,5 x 20cm, 278 folios. Only the folio with the *waqf* has been photographed. According to the incipit and to the lists of books enclosed in some Qoma manuscripts, this volume contains the three following texts *Mäṣḥäfä Näbyat Sirak Fälasfa*.

these Christian Arabic texts open the section dedicated to historical notes. A circular seal marks the three of them. The seal of the long version in number 714 is unreadable for being too inky. Number 701's seal is quite readable: at the center is a cross inscribed in a diamond-shaped square and on each side of it are indecipherable Arabic inscriptions enclosed in fine lines. Number 666's seal is quite dim, but seems similar to number 701's. These *waqf* are very rare documents in Ethiopia, not least because of these seals.

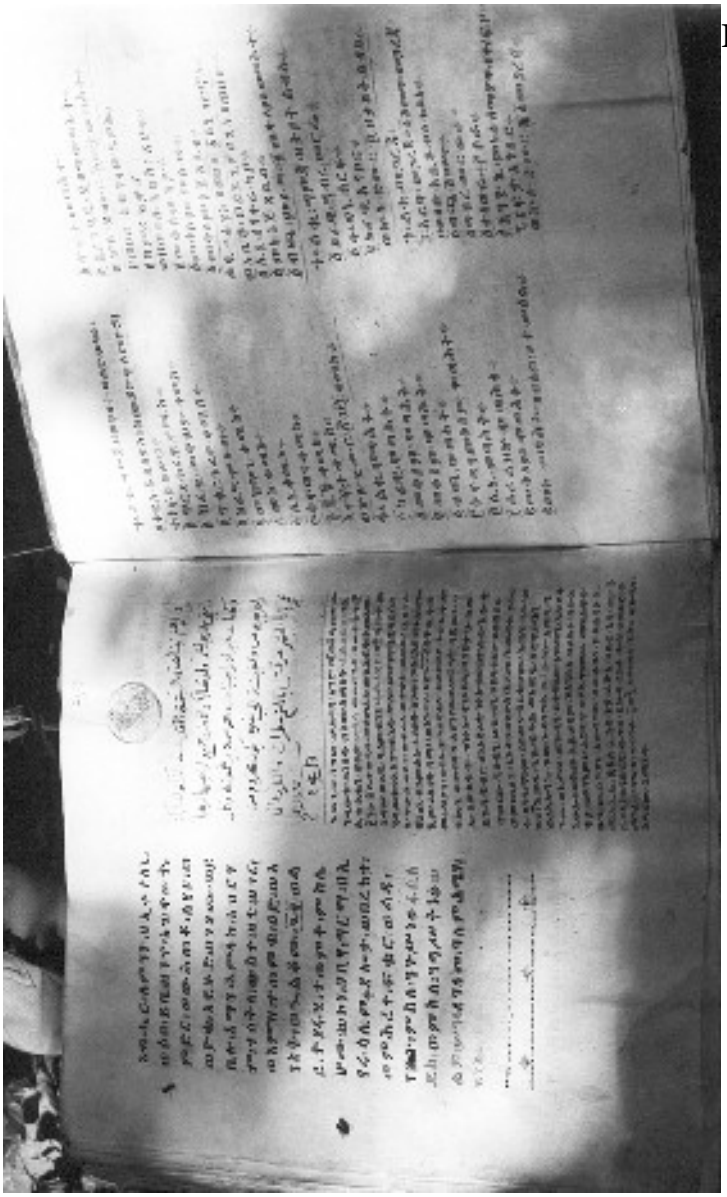

Fig. 1a : Manuscript 701

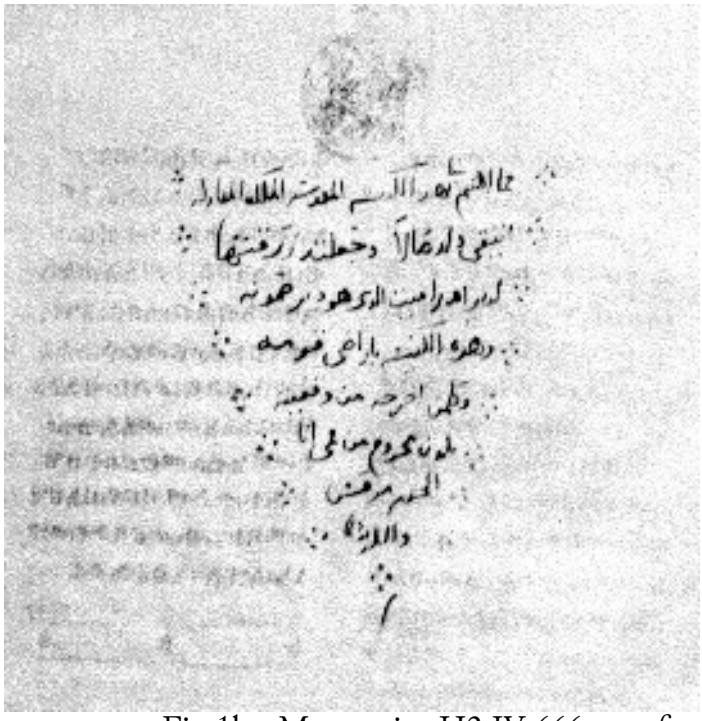

Fig 1b : Manuscript H2 IV 666, *waqf*.

Fig. 1c : Manuscript 714, *waqf*.

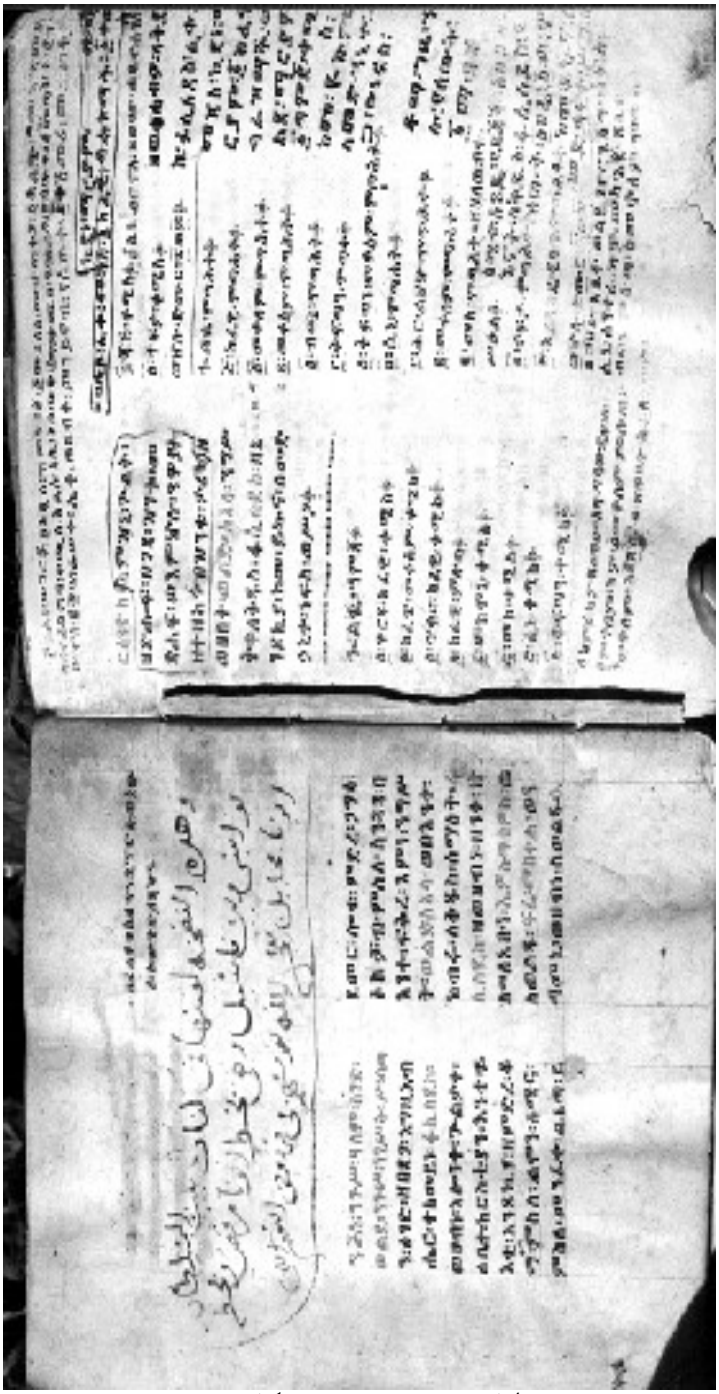

Fig 1d : Manuscript 714.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was under the authority of the Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria until the mid-twentieth century and received her metropolitan, or *Abuna*, from Egypt. This link between the Ethiopian and Egyptian churches was occasionally uneasy, for the first sometimes found it difficult to accept the authority of the second, and the *Abuna*'s seat was often left unoccupied[42]. Nevertheless, the *Abuna* was a figure of considerable importance, being the sole figure in Ethiopia with the power and authority to consecrate churches and ordain priests and deacons. During the Catholic period, from 1620 to 1632, Alfonso Mendez, the head of the Jesuit mission, was established by royal power as the new metropolitan of Ethiopia. During his reign from 1632 to 1667, Fasilädäs reverted to earlier arrangements and the metropolitan came again from Egypt: Marqos, from 1635-36 to 1648-49; followed by Mikaél, who arrived in 1649-50 together with another candidate to the title, Yohannes, requested by the brother of the king; and, last of all, Krestodolu came in 1663-64[43] and was still in office during the succeeding reign of the son of Fasilädäs, Yohannes II (1667-1682). The Arabic texts in Qoma offer a rare occasion to examine the direct intervention of a metropolitan in the creation of a royal church.

The short versions of the *waqf* are as follows:

> The blessed queen whose name is Wäld Sä'ala[44] has endowed the construction of this holy church. She gave all her lands to the monks and the priests of the monastery of Adramit which is part of Däbrä Ṣämuna. Whoever takes it away from its state [of being a waqf] for something else will be excommunicated by my mouth, me the miserable one named Marqos, metropolitan[45]. Grace be given to God forever. 1634[46]
>
> [manuscript 701, fol. 253 v°]

> The construction of this holy, royal and blessed church was achieved by Wäld

[42] Lists of Coptic metropolitans are numerous in Ethiopian archival documents. See Ignazio Guidi, "Le liste dei Metropoliti d'Abissinia", *Bessarione* 4 (Rome,1899), 1-17; Marius Chaîne, *La chronologie des temps chrétiens de l'Egypte et de l'Ethiopie* (Paris,1825), 265-270 ; Salvatore Tedeschi, "Les métropolites de l'Eglise d'Ethiopie (1270-1960) : éléments chronologiques et bibliographiques", *Proceedings of the eight international conference of the Ethiopian studies,* 1, University of Adis Abeba (Addis Abeba, 1989).

[43] Béguinot, *Cronaca,* 53 ; Perruchon, *Règne de Fasilädäs,* 91.

[44] After Wäld Sä'ala's name, one can read *anbaqi* or *anbaqa*. Translating this word is uncertain, it might be a proper name, a title, or an adjective designating the queen. The same word appears in 666's version.

[45] *Mutran* means metropolitan in Syriac, which does not imply a Syrian origin for Marqos. This term was employed in Ethiopia, where the Egyptian bishop was designated by the terms papas or *abuna* .

[46] This date is given in Coptic numbers.

> Sä'ala and she gave it to Däbrä Adramit which is Däbrä Ṣämuna and this church and the lands which are assigned to it, on the land of Qoma, it is forbidden to alienate them. Signed by the poor Marqos, may God have mercy on him.
>
> [manuscript 666]

Even if formulated slightly differently, the same information is delivered by the two *waqf*. First they mention the name of the founding queen, Wäld Sä'ala, who gave the lands. The name of the church itself, founded by the queen, is not mentioned. The only distinctive information is that the domain is "assigned on the land of Qoma". Then the documents specify the name of the mother-house: Adramit which "is" or "is part of" Däbrä Ṣämuna[47][48]. Oral tradition in Qoma clearly identifies Adramit with the monastery of Wäyramit Q^{w}esq^{w}am, which is less important then Däbrä Ṣämuna and located close to it, in northeast Goğğam. Qoma, Wäyramit and Ṣämuna belong to the same monastic network, the Unctionist one.

Here, a brief aside is called for. Within the Ethiopian Orthodox Church there were two principal monastic networks. From the fourteenth century until the Catholic period (1620-32), these networks crystallized around two main monastic leaders: churches under the patronage of Saint Täklä Haymanot, and obedient to the motherhouse of Däbrä Libanos; and churches are under Saint Ewosṭatéwos, a smaller network whose churches are mainly located in Tigré and in Goğğam. Royal churches belonged consistently to the Däbrä Libanos network, until queen Eléni, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, founded Marṭula

[47] Däbrä Ṣämuna may have been founded by a monk, *Abba* Sinoda, during Yeshaq's reign (1414-1430). Two manuscripts of the unpublished *gädl* (hagiography) of *Abba* Sinoda are known. One is stored in Dima Giyorgis church, the other one is inserted in *Gädlä Täklä Alfa*, UNESCO, série 10, n°24. See Kinefe-Rigb Zeleke, "Bibliography of the Ethiopic hagiographical tradition", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 13/2 (Addis Abeba, 1975), 90. Susneyos raided the monastery in 1599 and took away the treasury of queen Säblä Wangel, wife of King Lebnä Dengel (1508-1540), at the outset of his guerrilla campaign for the throne. This is what is related by the Chronicle of Susneyos as translated by Pereira, *Chronica de Susneyos* 1900,13 and 1892, 16. But the episode was not related in the version copied in 1619 by P. Paez in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 3, 304. Was there censorship by the Jesuit father or before him, by the King's historiographer, not to present the King as a church robber. Or was it an addendum by Fasilädäs's writers after Susneyos's death?

[48] Wäyramit is located close to Marṭula Maryam

Maryam[49] and affiliated it with the Ewosṭatéwos network[50]. After the Catholic period, the reconstruction of Orthodox identity led to a redefinition of these networks around distinct Christological positions. Mainly, Däbrä Libanos became the Unionist network, also called *täwaḥdo*, and defended the Union of the divine and human in Christ, whereas Ewosṭatéwos became the Unctionist or *Qebat* network, which emphasized the work of the Unction of the Holy Spirit in effecting the union of the divine and human natures in Christ[51]. This "transposition" from the Täklä Haymanot - Ewosṭatéwos division to the Union-Unction paradigm still lacks systematic study.

The two *waqf* documents were endorsed by *Abuna* Marqos. Manuscript 701's copy adds a date in Coptic numbers: 1634. It must be 1634 *amätä meḥrät* according to Ethiopian calendar, which means 1641-42 in the Gregorian calendar. Moreover, a Ge'ez text examined below, the "foundation act", specifies that Qoma's construction was completed during the eighth year of Fasilädäs' reign, which means 1641-42. The two short Arabic texts are, therefore, the most ancient documents produced by and for the monastery. All the other legal documents of Qoma are either signed by or attributed to the successor of *Abuna* Marqos, *Abuna* Mikaél, metropolitan of Ethiopia from 1649 to 1664.
The long version of the *waqf* is as follows:

> In the name of the merciful and clement God[52]. Eternal and everlasting *waqf* given to the monastery of Saint Fasilädäs, this is the *khaftar* of Qoma. And [the monastery] has boundaries: the oriental boundary is

[49] Alvares reported the construction: Francisco Alvares , *Verdadeira informacào das terras do preste Joào das Indias,* introduçào e notas de Neves Aguas, Lisboa, ed. Europa-América (1989), 253; The chronicle of Iyasu I attributed the first church to queen Eleni, Ignazio Guidi,"Annales Yohannis I, Iyasu I et Bakaffa", *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalum / Serie Aethiopica* 2/5 (Paris, 1905), 71 ; for detailed analysis of this foundation, see Marie-Laure Derat, *Le domaine des rois éthiopiens (1270-1527) Espace, pouvoir et monachisme,* P.U.F. (Paris,2003), 264-272 and Marie-Laure Derat and Hervé Pennec, "Les églises et monastères royaux (XVe-XVIe, et XVIIe siècles) : permanence et ruptures d'une stratégie royale", *Ethiopia in broader perspective, papers of the 13th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* 1 (1997), 17-34.

[50] Tadesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia, 1270-152*, Clarendon press (Oxford, 1972), 289 ; Derat et Pennec, *églises et monastères royaux*, 24.

[51] On *Qebat,* see Getatchew Haylé, "Material for the study of the theology of Qebat", *Proceedings of the Sixth Intenational Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Tel-Aviv* (1972), 205-250. Until now, there is no comprehensive and objective study on the division of the Ethiopian Church between Unionism and Unctionism.

[52] A non trinitarian formula, derived from a Muslim one.

Samada; the western boundary is Andabit; to the north[53] Aqas[54]; to the south[55] Abbay. It is forbidden to whomever to make use of it, to sell it, to buy it, to hire it, to exchange it, nobody can have authority over it except its superior, otherwise he will suffer the fate of Judas Iscariot and Simon the magician[56]. And this is (*aman* ?) a charter […][57] coming from the king, King of the kings, King of the armies of Habaša, the King Fasil, son of Susneyos and of his mother, Wäld Sä'ala.

[manuscript 714, fol. 180]

This text brings new elements vis à vis the "short versions," which are earlier. Now, the monastery is dedicated to saint Fasilädäs. Furthermore, King Fasilädäs is the one who asked for this text to be written. The limits of the territory are now clearly defined and correspond to the contemporary ones (see map 2), except maybe for the northern one.

This text itself is not signed and the seal is illegible. But on the verso of the folio is another Arabic text:

And we found this copy[58] in a book[59] at the palace[60] of King Yohannes, son of Fasil, and it is from the hand of Abuna Marqos and in the handwriting of Abuna Mikaél. May God afford peace to their souls in his Paradise of felicity, amen.

[manuscrit 714, fol. 180v°]

This brief text is copied with the same ink and undoubtedly by the same copyist as the previous one, as the paleography establishes. Moreover, this text explains the mechanism of the "long version" copy: this second *waqf* was copied during Yohannes's reign (1667-82), in Gondär, from a manuscript stored in the royal library[61]. The sentence "it is from the hand of *Abuna* Marqos and in the

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53 Toward the sea ?

54 It may be Agaṭ, the first northern limit of the parish, but not the more northerly one.

55 Literally "toward the *qibla"*.

56 This formula is rare, but sometimes employed in Ge'ez texts. See for instance a *gult* grant from King Zärä Ya'eqob, in G.W.B. Huntingford, *The land charters of Northern Ethiopia*, ed. Institute of Ethiopian Studies and Oxford University Press (Addis-Ababa and Nairobi, 1965), 21.

57 Incomprehensible.

58 *nuskha* : also charter, manuscript, document. Derived from the verb "to copy".

59 *kitab* : book, but maybe here with the meaning of library, since one of the word's meanings is "amongst the books".

60 *bétä negus*

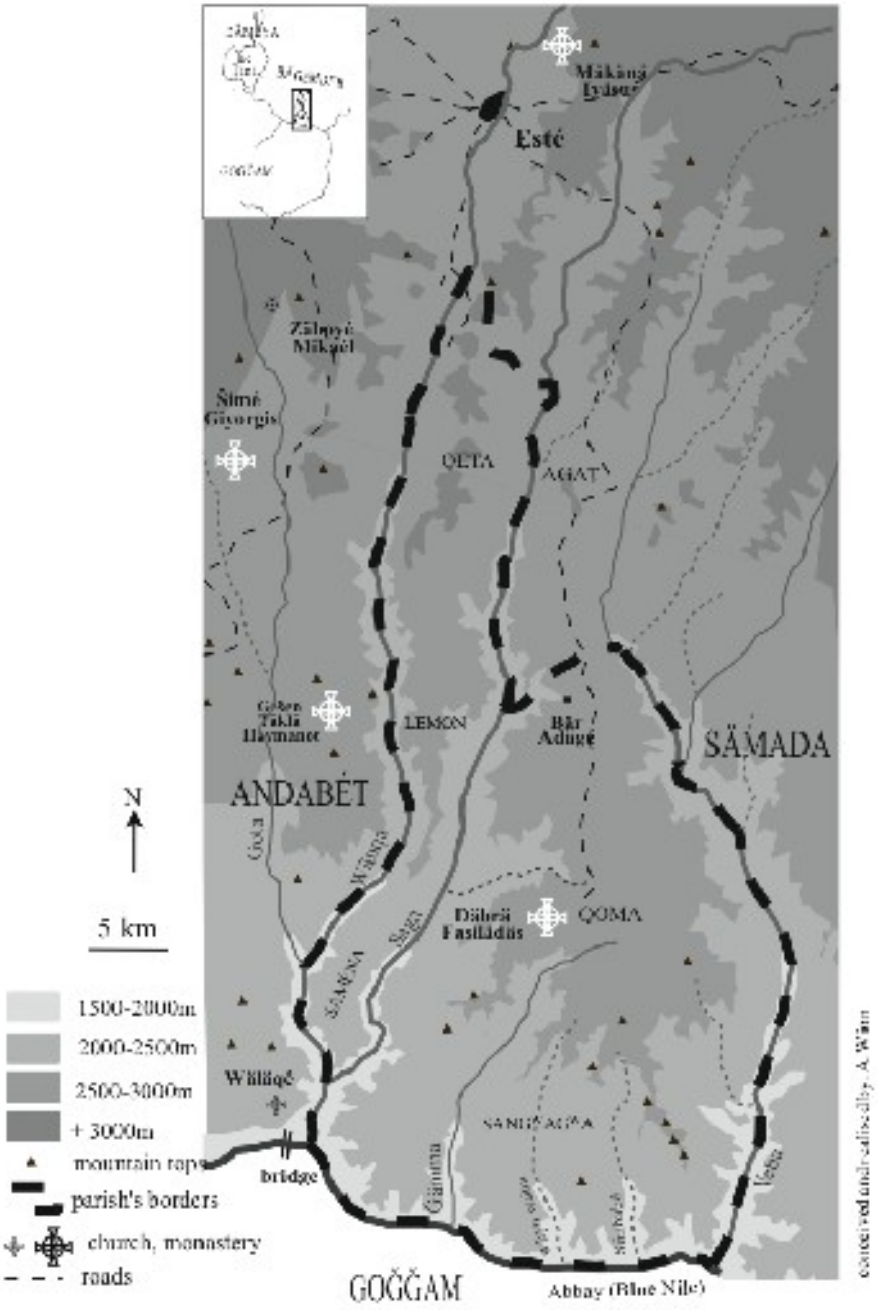
61 The word *kitab* suggests that King Yohannes possessed a collection of books. Nowadays, oral tradition identifies one of the buildings inside the palace compound of Gondar as the "library" of Yohannes, and it is quite possible that this King did have a real policy of copying and conserving written documents, see Monti della Corte, *I castelli di Gondar* (Roma, 1938), 27-29 ; Guidi,

handwriting of *Abuna* Mikaél" shows that the scribe knew the short or original version of the *waqf* and had to mention it. This long version of the *waqf* is presented as a text redacted by *Abuna* Mikaél (1650-64) out of a text written by Marqos (1635-48). Anyway, this *waqf* can only be a later copy of a document originally written by Mikaél, as King Yohannes was enthroned in 1667. The second version pretends to be equivalent to the first one, but we have seen that it adds new elements; mainly introducing the name of Fasilädäs in the legal status of the foundation. So it is an enriched and modified version of the two primitive *waqf*, dated 1641.

The earlier *waqf* are unexpected because they were produced by the Coptic metropolitans and written in a language that few Ethiopian intellectuals knew, but their content is very similar to the most common document found in the legal apparatus of a religious institution: the *gult*. *Gult* is the Ge'ez term for the grant of land made to a church, a monastery, or a private individual.

There is, of course, a *gult* grant redacted in Ge'ez in Qoma. It is signed by *Abuna* Mikaél, and therefore dates from the same period as the long version of the *waqf*. This *gult* is the reference text for regular members of the clergy in Qoma, or for any person coming from outside. And the name of Marqos remains unknown, as nowadays even a good knowledge of contemporary Arabic is not enough to decipher these Coptic *waqf*. And even then, having a quick look at the archival documents, it is easier to find the big Arabic text mentioning Mikael, and to neglect the two short ones.

"Annales Yohannis I, Iyasu I et Bakaffa" 1, 62 and 2, 60. See for instance a transfer of a manuscript from the royal palace to a monastery, in manuscript EMML n°1768, Old Testament of Hayq, 15th c. At folio 184b, a note in Ge'ez from a certain Arka Selassé, *afä mämher* of Hayq monastery, explains how he brought back this volume from King Yohannes's palace, together with a manuscript of *Haymanotä Abäw* coming from King Fasilädäs's palace, in Getatchew Haylé and W.F. Macomber, *A Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts Microfilmed for the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa and for the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, Collegeville. Project Numbers 1501-2000,* 5 (Collegeville, 1981), 240-243.



Map 2 : Qoma Fasilädäs' parish

Faded Memories of Abuna Marqos and Abéto Gälawdéwos

Why was Marqos evicted from Qoma's legal document ? And what is the role of Gälawdéwos in this story, as he also is almost totally absent from any legal documents produced in Qoma, and remembered only by oral tradition ?

One version of the Short Chronicle, published by I. Guidi, introduces another element.

> In the second [twelfth?] year of his reign, [Susneyos] built Dänqaz and chose it as his place of residence. At this time, his wife Wäld Sä'ala built a beautiful church in the land of Qoma and she placed there a tabot dedicated to Saint Gälawdéwos the martyr and she gathered 318 priests and *däbtära*.[62]

First, this paragraph confirms the beginning of the construction of Qoma in 1618[63]. Second, a clear parallelism is established between the royal residence of the King and the queen's church, where she lived all her life with her people and where she was buried. These two historical elements testify that the compiler of this chronicle was handling good information.

This Short Chronicle version goes on to give unusual and precious information: the first dedication of Qoma's tabot, the sacred altar, was to Saint Gälawdéwos and not to Saint Fasilädäs. This information is not contained in Qoma's internal sources. The Short Chronicles have kept traces of oral traditions, which, subsequently, were forgotten. It is notable that in Gondär, some scribe has testified to this primary link between the monastery of the queen Wäld Sä'ala and her son Gälawdéwos. This privileged relation and the actual role of Gälawdéwos in Qoma are nowhere specified in detail, and *Abéto* Gälawdéwos, son of Wäld Sä'ala and brother of the king, is almost never mentioned directly, except in the tradition that states that he was the genuine heir of King Susneyos.

There are, however, at Qoma pregnant indirect references to Gälawdéwos. One of these is through the sixteenth century King Gälawdéwos (r.1540-59), a

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[62] Guidi, "Due nuovi manoscritti", 378: "Nel 2° (sic) anno del suo regno edifico, fondo Danqaz, e ne fece la citta di residenza. In quei giorni la sua donna Wald Sahela costrui una bella chiesa nella terra di Qoma, e vi mise entro il tabot, l'altare dedicato a S. Claudio martire, e vi riuni 318 preti e cantori." The number two might be a mistake by Guidi or before him, by one of the copyist of this text as Dänqäz was erected in the 12th year of Susneyos's reign. This undated manuscript, published by Ignazio Guidi, came from Gondär and the whole text bears witness to numerous differences with previously known versions of the Short Chronicles. For an analysis of this version, see also Caquot, "Les Chroniques abrégées", 190.

[63] In this Chronicle, the 12th year of Susneyos' reign means 1607 + 12 = 1619, as in Qoma's document, the end of the construction happened in the 14th year, counting from 1604. Therefore, the end of the construction happened in 1618-19.

character very much present in Qoma's internal language. For instance, the Short Chronicle version above refers to the first 318 dignitaries established at Qoma. This symbolic number is fundamental to Qoma's identity and intended to strengthen its link with Orthodoxy, making a link with the 318 fathers of the council of Nicea. It is also a reference to the foundation of Tädbabä Maryam by the great King Gälawdéwos (1540-59), as 318 priests and cantors were established there "in memory of the number of Abraham's servants when he was victorious, of the wise men of Rome who administered the city while there was no King and of the number of the Fathers of the council of Nicea who defeated, after a short discussion, the prince of heretics"[64]. King Gälawdéwos fought fiercely against the Muslim invasions and also against the attempts of Catholicism to penetrate Ethiopia. He is, therefore, a symbol of the national faith. As a homonym of Gälawdéwos, son of Susneyos and Wäld Sä'ala, his name is very much referred to at Qoma.

In mural paintings also, Saint Gälawdéwos (Claudius) appears in a remarkable form. The standard representation is respected: the saint is riding a horse and has killed a monster called *säbad'ät*, with a lion's body, a man's trunk and snakes as a tail. However, the painter has added at the top of the picture the hand of God presenting a sword to Saint Gälawdéwos. Typically in Ethiopian church murals, Saint Téwodros is the one so armed by the hand of God, not Gälawdéwos. This slight innovation draws attention to Gälawdéwos. Saint Fasilädäs is, nonetheless, represented in the best position, occupying a large part of the western wall, the wall which plays the major role during the liturgy.

Gälawdéwos and Marqos are therefore evoked, but not directly credited at Qoma.

Let us sum up: in 1640, at the end of its construction, *Abuna* Marqos legislated in Qoma for Queen Wäld Sä'ala and placed Qoma's parish under the leadership of two monasteries from Goğğam, Däbrä Ṣämuna and Wäyramit Q^{w}esq^{w}am, belonging to the former Ewostatian network and about to participate in the Qebat one. During Susenyos's reign, Däbrä Ṣämuna became Catholic after 1620. Theoretically this would have been automatic during this period, but it does seem that the Ethiopian Catholic clergy of Däbrä Ṣämuna were really trained in the Catholic liturgy and were close to the Jesuits. At least, this is what the Jesuits

[64] William Conzelman, *Chronique de Galâwdêwos (Claudius), Roi d'Ethiopie. Texte éthiopien traduit, annoté et précédé d'une introduction historique,* Bibliothèque de l'EPHE (Paris, 1895), 150-151.

themselves reported[65]. Then, in 1638, Gälawdéwos killed three of Däbrä Ṣämuna's Catholic priests, including the superior[66]. This is the very year when the Short Chronicles testify to Gälawdéwos's first rebellion against the king[67]. The killing of the Däbrä Ṣämuna clergy indicates that Gälawdéwos needed to get rid of potential adversaries before designating this monastery as the mother house of Qoma. Gälawdéwos and Wäld Sä'ala had obtained the support of *Abuna* Marqos, the first Coptic metropolitan sent to Ethiopia after the departure of the Jesuits, whose principal mission was to restore the Alexandrian Faith. But the Alexandrian faith was a legal and dogmatic frame, which could not fully contain the complexity of the Ethiopian church. The elimination of the former Catholic clergy of Ṣämuna may have been a condition for gaining Marqos's support. On the other hand, these former Catholic priests from Goğğam, could have been refractory in accepting the authority of a new foreign prelate, which would not contradict the first hypothesis. The conflict might have crystallized around the necessity for Wäld Sä'ala and Gälawdéwos to gain strong support from *Abuna* Marqos, and the regional identity of the Gojjamite network inside which Qoma was to be included, whatever the theological color assigned to it (Ewostatian, Catholic or Qebat).

The religious stakes were very complex during this period and much remains unclear. We can observe in Qoma, during one decade, a separation between the Coptic metropolitan and the king's authority. Moreover, we can hypothesise that the *eṭägé*, the head of the monastic House of Däbrä Libanos, was on the king's side. First, from 1640 until the vanishing of Marqos and Gälawdéwos, no Ge'ez legal documents were produced for Qoma, which might indicate that no Ethiopian authorities had been able to legislate. Second, at this time, the *eṭägé* was the famous Bäträ Giyorgis, who is remembered for his scholarly activities and for having defeated Alfonso Mendez, the Catholic patriarch, in an oral confrontation[68]. However, in Qoma, this well-known act of

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65 "Doctrinado este mancebo na nossa sancta fée em hum mosteiro de Gojam, que chamão Dabrâ Çamonâ", M. d'Almeida in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 7, 404. D'Almeida is quoting a letter of Father Bruno Bruni. Mendez used also this material, A. Mendez in Beccari , *RAESOIS* 9, 280.

66 "(…) os particulares do martirio de outros tres sacerdotes, hum chamado Assarâ Christos, idest *vestigium Christi* mestre de Debrâ Çamonâ", M. d'Almeida in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 7, 405.

67 Basset, *Etudes,* 308, n. 286; Béguinot, *Cronaca,* 50.

68 Foti, "La cronaca… di Dabra Berhan di Gondar", 117 ; Guidi, " Di due frammenti", 20-29 ; Ignazio Guidi, "Un squarcio di storia ecclesiastica di Abissinia", *Bessarione* 8 (Roma, 1900) 10-25 ; *Amharic Dictionary of Ethiopian Tewhado Orthodox Church* 13 (1990) 149-150 ; *Amharic Dictionary of Ethiopian Tewhado Orthodox Church* 7 (1988)165 ; manuscript B.N. Ethiopien 245, fol. 50-59v°, see Marius Chaîne *Catalogue des manuscrits éthiopiens de la collection Mondon-*

bravery is credited to the first mämher, or abbot, of the monastery and not to the *ečägé*[69], a conscious historical rewriting enhancing Qoma and dismissing Bäträ Giyorgis. We may conclude then, that, in the 1640's, there were two pro-Orthodox parties in Ethiopia, one sustained by *Abuna* Marqos and oriented toward the Gojjamite network, and another one represented by the king, whose religious policy has still to be studied in detail, for information is scarce and contradictory.

How did Fasilädäs seize Qoma ?

Let's come back to Qoma's oral tradition. As the mämher, or abbot, of Qoma says :

> "After the construction of the Fasilädäs church, queen Wäld Sä'ala and her son *Aṣé* Fasil were living in dissension, for *Aṣé* Fasil had killed his older brother Gälawdéwos, the heir to the crown. The killer would have said : "If I am alive, he will not be crowned !" Some elders arbitrated and begged the queen that she should be reconciled with her son Fasil. The queen refused. Then the elders insisted on a reconciliation. Then the queen stipulated: "Providing that my son build churches around [Qoma] Fasilädäs, as many as in Gondär and that the confines be a fire and the centre, Paradise"[70]. Therefore, according to the will of the queen, Aṣé Fasil built forty four churches (*däbr*), as many as in Gondär and those forty-four *däbr* pay tribute only to the tabot [of Qoma Fasilädäs]. It was authorised that no one was to intrude[71]."[72]

The establishment of the laws ruling the parish and defining the role of the monastery as its centre is related to the exercise and acceptance of royal power. Fratricide is an answer to the situation caused by the denial of Fasilädäs's legitimacy. The *liqä kahenat* of Qoma, its civil administrator, adds the following details :

> "After instituting all this, Wäld Sä'ala realised that a monastery, a parish, cannot

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Vidailhet, Leroux (Paris, 1913) 38 ; manuscript Tanasee 136 = Daga 25, in Veronica Six, *Äth. Handschr. Tana. 3,* 149

69 Interview with *Märigéta* Andargé, Qoma Fasilädäs, 1st September 1999.

70 ዳሩን እሣት መሃሉን ገነት ብሎ በሳንደር ልክ አድርጎ ይደብርልኝ. Almost the same sentence can be found at the end of a gondarine *gult*, see Crummey, *Land and Society,* 62. I have chosen this formula as the title of my Ph.D. for it sums up the policy of the queen and her desire to live in her own place, with her own rules. Although it looks like a poetical phrase, it really indicates a juridical status which described the independence of the parish and the centralized role of the monastery. It explains also why Qoma has kept its tradition until now: its autonomy became loneliness.

71 ድበረ ሓገር ለታቦቱ እንጂ ማንም እንዳይገባ.

72 Interview with *Mämher* Känfä Gabriel, abbot of Qoma Fasilädäs, 11th of September 1999.

> exist without the approval and the protection of the government. She reconciled herself with her son, thanks to the mediation of the *liqawent* [elders]. The forty-four *däbr* were, therefore, placed under Saint Fasilädäs' name, under its patronage. And *Aṣé* Fasil established the forty-four *däbr* for them to last, for the monastery to be a beautiful country of the Cross [*mäsqäl* agar][73]. (…) *Aṣé* Fasil, for the rule not to be destroyed, neither by the hunters[74] who come from outside, nor by the Arabs, nor by the *balabat*[75] who are inside, for this monastery to be respected, *Aṣé* Fasil pronounced an anathema[76]. Thanks to this anathema, he made a good monastery. This is written in the *Tä'ämra Maryam* and in other books."[77]

Indeed, King Fasil and his mother came to an agreement, after the death of Gälawdéwos, and legal documents testify to this second birth of the monastery.

The Ge'ez landgrant or gult

There are at least five copies of the *gult* grant. Three of them present a long version, each of them copied in the three manuscripts already referred to.[78] Two short versions are copied in the blank pages at the end of two other volumes from Qoma: one book of the Hawi, n° H2 IV 685[79], folio 308 v° and one volume of the Octateuch, n° H2 IV 678[80], folio 443. Both manuscripts are also part of the first donation of books to the monastery by Wäld Sä'ala[81].

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73 ፀንቶ ጥሩ የመስቀል አገር ገዳም አንዲሆን አድርገው ደብረውላችዋል፡፡ አፄ ፋሲል ደብረውታል፡፡ *Mäsqäl agär* is much more than a metaphor, and designates a judicial land structure. It is a territory "lié à la function sacerdotale et exempté à ce titre de redevances foncières. Sous ce terme on peut donc rassembler les *qès märét* ("terre de prêtres"), les *däbtära märét* ("terres de *däbtära*") et les *diqunna märét* ("terres des diacres")", in Berhanu Abebe, *Evolution de la propriété foncière au Choa (Ethiopie), du règne de Ménélik à la constitution de 1931* (Paris, 1971), 1-2.

74 *adän*, አደን.

75 The *balabat* are the owners of *rest*, whether they obtained their *rest* at the time of foundation, or had already possessed a right on the land which the founder respected.

76 *wegez*

77 Interview with *Liqä Kahenat* Käbädä Fäqadu, civil administrator of the monastery of Qoma, 11th and 18th September 1999.

78 *Miracles of Mary*, 714, fol. 182v°; *Miracles of Mary*, 701, fol. 255; *Mäṣḥäfä Liq*.

79 H2 VI 685, *Hawi*, Treaty of moral theology, parchment, 38 x 33 cm, (311 folios), 3 col., 38 lg., folio 308v°.

80 H2 IV 678, *Orit*, Octateuch, parchment, 41 x 35 cm, (446 folios), 3 col., 36 lg., folio 443.

81 Wion, *Manuscripts library,* 276-77.

[82]ንሕነ[83] ዓለም ሰገድ ወልደ ንጉሠ ነገሥት ሥልጣን ሰገድ ዘበጸጋ እግዚአብሔር ተሰመይነ ፋሲለደስ ወሀብነ እሎንተ ጕልታተ ለቤተ ክርስቲያን እንተ ይእቲ አንጾኪያ። ዘምድረ ቆማ። ቆማ ምስለ ልሞን ሳሜና ምስለ መንፈቀ ጨጣ። ይደመር ሎቱ ጋግሳ። ሶስቻብ ምስለ ሰንጓጓ። በእንተ ፍቅረ እምነ ወልድ ሰዓላ ወበእንተ ፍቅሩ[84] ለቀዱስ ሰማዕት ፋሲለደስ ዘወሀብነ ዘንተ ኵሎ ለአቡነ ኤዎስጣቴዎስ ወለወልዱ ፍሬ መስቀል ወዳግመኒ ወሀብነ ለወልዱ አርሳንዮስ። እምዝኒ ጕልት ዘጽሑፍ በገጸ ዝንቱ መጽሐፍ። ወእምኵሉ ንዋያት ዘተዘከሩ በዝንቱ ታሪክ[85] ከመ ኢይንሣእ በተኃይሎ ወኢ በምንትኒ ምክንያት። ወለታሪከ መጽሐፍ[86] ጽሕፈቶሂ ከመ ኢይፍሐቅ እመሂ ንጉሥ ወመኳንን[87]። አው መኑሂ እምሰብአ ዓለም እለ ይትነሥኡ በተዋልጦ አዝማን። አውገዝኩ በሥልጣነ ጳጳስናየ አነ ሚካኤል ጳጳሰ ኢትዮጵያ ረድአ አብ ክቡር አባ ማርቆስ ሊቀ ጳጳሳት ዘእስክንድርያ ወይኩን ውጉዘ ወምቱረ እምአባለ ቤተ ክርስቲያን በአፈ አብ ወወልድ ወመንፈሰ ቀዱስ ወበአፈ ዓሠርቱ ወ፪ ሐዋርያት ሰብአ ወ፪ አርድእት ወበአፈ አበው ርቱዓነ ሃይማኖት ፫፻፲፰ወ፷ እለ ተጋብኡ በኒቅያ ወክልኤ ፮እለ በኤፌሶን ፮ወ፯በቈስጥንጥንያ[88]። ወአልቦ ዘይክል ፈቲሖተ ዛቲ ግዘት እመሂ ጳጳስ አው ኤጲስቆጳስ እስከ ፍጻሜሃ ለዓለም። አጽሐፍነ ዘንተ ውስተ ኵሎ መጻሕፍት ዘአድበራት[89] ከመ ይኩን ስምዓ ለዘይመጽእ ትውልድ ለዓለመ ዓለም።

We, Aläm Sägäd, son of the King of Kings Śelṭan Sägäd, who[90], by the grace of God, have received the name of Fasilädäs, we give these *gultat* to the present church of Antioch, from the region of Qoma: [Qoma with Lemon, Saména with half of Č̌äṭa, to which are added Gagsa, Sosčab with Säng^{w}ag^{w}a.]. This is for the salvation of our dear mother Wäld Sä'ala and for the dear martyr Fasilädäs that we give all this [and for *Abuna* Ewosṭatéwos and for his (spiritual) son Feré Mäsqäl and also for his (spiritual) son Ärsanyos]. Therefore this *gult* is written in the pages of

82 Manuscripts 685 and 678 begin with this sentence : ዘወሀበት ወልድ ሰኣላ ንግሥት ለቅዱስ ፋሲለደስ ዘአንጾኪያ ከመ ይኩና ለመድኃኒተ ነፍስ ወሥጋ። "What the queen Wäld Sä'ala has given to Saint Fasilädäs from Antioch for the salvation of soul and body". The same sentence concludes the first part of the *gult* in manuscript 714.

83 714's version adds: *neguś*.

84 *Mäṣḥäfä Liq*, 714, 678 and 685 : ክብሩ

85 እምዝኒ ጕልት ዘጽሑፍ በገጸ ዝንቱ መጽሐፍ። ወእምኵሉ ንዋያት ዘተዘከሩ በዝንቱ ታሪክ። This sentence is encircled in the first part of 714's copy and opens the second part.

86 This word is incorrect. It has been underlined and overlined in the 701's copy, and does not exist in the two other long versions.

87 *Mäṣḥäfä Liq*, 678, 685 and 714 : ወእመሂ መኳንን

88 In 714's copy, numerals are written with words. But in the other copies, they are noted with numbers.

89 *Mäṣḥäfä Liq*: ኵሎ አድበራት መጻሕፍት

90 The relative pronoun *zä* does not exist in the Ge'ez sentence, but it should be taken as implicit otherwise the grammatical construction is incorrect.

this book, together with all the goods which are registered in this document [91] so that they not be taken out by force nor in other way. [This text is written in this document] in order that it will not be erased by the King nor by the princes, nor by anyone in this world who will come in the future. I have excommunicated (them), through the authority of my metropolitanate, I Mikael, metropolitan of Ethiopia, servant of the respected father, *Abba* Marqos, patriarch of Alexandria [92]. Let them be excommunicated and banished from the Church, by the mouth of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and by the twelve apostles, and by the eighty-two disciples, and by the mouth of the fathers of Orthodoxy, the three hundred and eighteen who gathered in Nicea, the two hundred of Ephesus, and the one hundred and fifty of Constantinople. Nobody can suppress this anathema, even if he is a metropolitan or an archbishop, until the end of time. [We have this written in each of the books of the monasteries to establish proof for the coming generations] [93].

[manuscript 701, fol. 255][94]

A *gult* (pl. *gultat*) grant is a legal document testifying to the donation of lands to a religious institution or a private person by a King or a member of the royal family[95]. The *gult* of Qoma was written under the authority of King Fasilädäs (1632-67) and Abuna Mikaél (1649-64). As a *gult* grant, it specifies clearly the name of the lands granted to the monastery : " Qoma with Lemon,

[91] *Tarik* means here "written document". This acceptance can be found for instance in the *gult* given by King Susneyos to his brother Se'ela Krestos in 1627, in Pereira, *Chronica de Susneyos,* 1900, 76 ; Huntingford, *The land charters,* 60.

[92] Marqos VI, patriarch of Alexandria from 1650 to 1660.

[93] I would like to express all my thanks to Pr. Dr. Manfred Kropp, Mainz University, Germany, for his precious help in establishing the French translation. I thank also Gérard Colin (CNRS) for having done the last revisions to this text. Both of them are also to be credited with the translation of the text below, the "foundation act".

[94] Manuscript 701 has been chosen for the reference text for this version because of its better style and grammar. This could indicate that 701's version is the last one, for the copyist seems to have corrected the slight mistakes found in 714's and *Mäṣḥäfä Liq*'s versions. All sentences between brackets are not present in the short versions, manuscripts 685 and 678.

[95] The first study on this type of document was made by G.W.B. Huntingford, *The Landcharters of Northern Ethiopia*, and published in 1965. Based on northern Ethiopia's *gultat*, mostly from the medieval period, this book was the first comprehensive study of the formal structure of this type of text, which obeys a certain number of codes. *Gultat* studied by G.W.B. Huntingford come mainly from a collection of documents called *Liber Axumae*, manuscripts Oxford Bodleian n°26 and Paris B.N. d'Abbadie 152. See also Carlo Conti Rossini, *Documenta ad Illustrandam Historiam. 1 Liber Axumae*, CSCO, Scrip. Aeth., 27, 58 (Paris, 1909); and Carlo Conti Rossini, "L'evangelo d'oro di Dabra Libanos", *Rendiconti della Reale Academia dei Lincei* 5/10, (Lincei,1901), 177-219 and Tadesse Tamrat, "The Abbots of Däbrä Hayq, 1248-1535", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 8/1 (Addis Abeba, 1970), 87-117. A recent study by D. Crummey has widened this field of study and permits an understanding of the interactions between political power and the administration of lands and territories, especially during the gondarine period. Crummey, *Land and Society*.

Saména with half of Čäṭa [Qéṭa], to which are added Gagsa, Sosčab with Säng^{w}ag^{w}a". The first four names and the last one are still names found inside the parish. Sosčab is now located outside of the parish, in Sämada region. And Gagsa is unidentified. (see map 2)

The *gult* grant proceeds to indicate the beneficiaries of the foundation, first of all the Queen Mother, Wäld Sä'ala, who is unequivocally the grantee, and no longer the grantor as she had been designated in the first *waqf*. The queen is associated with the first spiritual leaders of the monastery, Feré Mäsqäl and Arsanyos. Their monastic filiations are clearly indicated: they are the spiritual sons of *Abuna* Ewosṭatéwos, the schismatic Ethiopian saint of the 14th century, leader of the so-called Ewostatian monastic network. Feré Mäsqäl came from Däbrä Ṣämuna, according to his portrait on the southern wall of the *mäqdäs*, or inner sanctuary, inside the church of Qoma, which depicts him together with *abba* Sinoda, first abbot of Däbrä Ṣämuna[96]. Abba Arsanyos is well known from Qoma's oral tradition as the spiritual father of the queen and he was originally from the monastery of Wäyrämit Q^{w}esq^{w}am, dependent on Däbrä Ṣämuna. His relic (literally his "bones") is still in the *mäqdäs* of Qoma's church, together with the relic of Wäld Sä'ala.

The *gult* grant, thus, clearly indicates that Qoma belongs to the Ewostatian and Gojjamite monastic network. This was already specified in the first version of the *waqf*. Such an explicit statement is quite unusual in a *gult* grant and this innovation indicates how important it was for the identity of Qoma's church that it belonged to the Ewostatian network.

Another feature of Qoma's archives is the presence of "short versions" of the *gult* grant. These omit two types of information: first, essential data such as the name of the lands granted and the monastic filiations; second, the short versions also omit two sentences enhancing the importance of the copy of the grant: [This is why this text is written in this document] and [We have this written in each of the books of the monasteries[97] to establish a proof for the

[96] Concerning *Abba* Sinoda, see note xlvii. In this image, *Abba* Sinoda is blessing *Abba* Feré Mäsqäl. Both characters are clearly identified by accompanying legends. See Anaïs Wion, "Les peintures murales du monastère de Qoma Fasilädäs", *Annales d'Ethiopie* 17 (Paris, 2001), 290-291, fig. 7.

[97] This plural could indicate that monasteries other than Qoma received copies of its legal documents. It would, indeed, enhance their preservation and give a neutral place where the documents could be consulted in case of a problem. We have been looking for pieces of Qoma texts in the copies of archival documents of different monasteries linked with Qoma, mainly in British Library gondarian manuscripts, in the EMML collection and in D. Crummey's collection, but unsuccessfully. Anyway,

coming generations]. So what are such copies made for? As they contain the excommunication made by *Abuna* Mikael, they cannot be considered as "original versions" of the long *gult*. On the contrary, the aim seems to be to hide essential data and consequently, to have at disposal some "empty" copies of the *gult*. They engage neither the donor, nor the monastery. I point out this curiosity just to indicate that when finding one copy of a gult grant, we cannot be sure that we really have a comprehensive document. Faced with only one legal document, one must take care not to suppose that the piece of text encloses enough information to support definitive conclusions.
And therefore, Qoma possesses another legal document.

The "foundation charter": a formal innovation

እምአመ ነግሠ ሥልጣን ሰገድ በ፲ወ፪ዓመተ መንግሥቱ ሐነፀት በስመ ሰማዕት ፋሲለደስ ብእሲቱ እቴጌ ወልድ ሠዓላ ወሠርዓት በውስቴቱ ፫፻፲ወ፷ሊቃውንት ማዕምራነ መጻሕፍት፣ እምአመ ነግሠ ወልዳ ዓለም ሰገድ ፋሲለደስ በ፷ዓመተ መንግሥቱ። አስተጋብአት ኵሎ ሥርዓተ አድባር እንዘ ትሁብ ወርቀ ወብሩረ ወተኵሰ ወምድረ ፡ ለበትረ ያሪክኒ ዘአምሐራ ረሰየቶ ፀጋመ ፡ ወለርእሰ ርዑስ ዘጐጃም ረሰየቶ የማነ ፡ ወለንቡረ እድኒ ዘተግሬ[98] ረሰየቶ ሊቀ ዘመራህያን ፡ ወለሊቀ ካህናትኒ ዘወርወር ኮነ ሊቀ ሥዩማን ወመጋቢሃ ለሀገር። ወሥርዓተ ገዳምኒ ሀሎ በውስቴቱ። ዝኵሉ ተሠርዓ በበፆታሁ ከመ ይኩን ደብር መልዕልተ ኵሉ። ወበታሕተ እሉ ተተሠርዑ ንዑሳን ሥዩማን ዘይትለአኩ ለደብር። ወምክንያተ አስተጋብፆታስ እስመ እሙንቱ ይነብሩ በገጸ ንጉሥ በበመናብርቲሆሙ እመሂ ጊዜ ምክር ወእመሂ ጊዜ ፍትሕ ወእመሂ በተዋሥኦ ፡ ወለእሎንኪ ከመ ኢይንሣእ በተጋብሎ እመሂ ንጉሥ ወእመሂ መኳንን በተዋልጦ አዝማን እለ ይትነሥኡ። ወከመ ኢይሠየም ዘእንበለ ዘልሕቀ በውስቴታ ወዘየአምር ሕጋቲሃ ወዘኢተምህረ መጻሕፍት ቤተ ክርስቲያን አውገዝኩ በሥልጣን ጵጵስናየ አነ ሚካኤል ጳጳሰኢትዮጵያ ረድአ ክቡር አባ ማርቆስ ዘእስክንድርያ፣ ውጉዘ ይኩን በአፈ አብ ወወልድ ወመንፈሰ ቅዱስ ወበአፈ ፲፪ሐዋርያት እስከ ፍጻሜሂ ለዓለም አሜን።

While Susneyos was reigning, in the fourteenth year of his reign, his wife, *Etégé* Wäld Sä'ala constructed (this monastery) in the name of the martyr Fasilädäs and she endowed three hundred and eighteen *liqawent,* erudite in the books. While her

a systematic study of this type of document has to be made and the practice of dispersing official documents is an interesting hypothesis.

98 Addition in the superior space between the lines.

son Fasilädäs was reigning, in the eight year of his reign, she gathered everything that a monastery might possess, giving gold and silver, cattle[99] and lands. As far as the *bäträ-yarik* of Amḥara is concerned, she appointed him on the left side, and as far as the *r'as-re'us* of Goğğam is concerned, she appointed him on the right side. And for the *neburä 'ed* (of Tigré)[100], she appointed him chief of the guides[101]. And the *liqä kahenat* of Wärwär became *liqä śeyuman*[102] and administrator of the region. The monastery has its own rule. All this has been instituted according to each one's rank, in order that the monastery be superior to everything. And under it were instituted the little *śeyuman*[103] who serve the monastery. The reason why [they] have been gathered is that all of them already sat in front of the king, whether during consultation time, whether during judgment time, whether during the debates. Therefore, to those ones[104] [is addressed the following anathema]: nobody can take the property [of this monastery], whether he is a King or a prince. And no-one shall be appointed here if he has not grown up here, or if he does not know its traditional laws, or if he is not learned in the ecclesiastical books. I excommunicate him by the power of my charge as metropolitan, I, Mikaél, *papas* of Ethiopia, servant of the glorious *abba* Marqos from Alexandria. Let him be excommunicated by the mouth of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and by the mouth of the twelve apostles until the end of the time, amen.

[manuscript 701, fol. 253 v°]

Only one copy of this text exists, located in manuscript 701, between the original version of the *waqf* and the most developed Ge'ez version of the *gult*. This document is a very innovative one in respect to what we know about the standards of Ethiopian legal documents. We can call it a "foundation charter" for it delivers

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99 *täkʷäsä* comes from an Amharic verb : ተኮሰ, which means "to brand cattle" and in a wider sense, "to tax livestock" in Thomas Lepper Kane, *Amharic-English Dictionary*, Harrassowitz (Wiesbaden, 1990), 989-90. This word appears in the chronicles of Susneyos and clearly designates the tax associated with livestock, see Pereira, *Chronica de Susneyos,* 1900, p. 32 : **አሜሃ በውእቱ ጊዜ ነበረ ዘመነ ተኮሰ ወበኵሉ ጉልተየ ይተኮሰ ወዓልየ ስኖ፡፡ እምድኅረ ተኴሰሰ ይጽንሐኒ በእዴሆሙ ወኢ የሀቡኒ እምቅድመ እምጻእ ይሚምሂ ወይስዐር በጉልትየ፡፡** E. Pereira translated *täkʷäsa* by "to burn, to set fire to," but misunderstands the term. We suggest the following translation : "Now this is the time for branding the cattle and in all my *gult*, my guard Seno is having the branding done. Then, he will take care of [the perception of] the tax on the livestock from them, and if they do not pay before I come, he will appoint and demote in my own *gult*."

100 Addition in the superior space between the lines.

101 *liq zä-märahyan,* chief of the guides.

102 chief of the governors but most probably here chief of the clergy.

103 *seyuman* literally means "those who have been appointed" and, according to the context, can be understood as "clergy;" see Derat, *Le domaine des rois,* 241.

104 *alon-ki* : therefore, to those ones (the anathema is addressed).

the following information:
- dates of beginning (1618) and end (1640) of the construction of the church;
- names of the founders, Wäld Sä'ala being clearly identified as the grantor and as the main actress in this foundation;
- political dignitaries associated with the foundation;
- rules for nominating its abbot;
- immunity clause.

The legislative and historical background of the foundation is clearly defined in this document. As for the long versions of the *waqf* and for the *gult*, they are signed by *Abuna* Mikaél. So except for the first short version of the *waqf* signed by Marqos, all the other legal documents of Qoma are at least a decade later than the end of the construction. Why was this text written, for the *gult* grant and the second *waqf* gave all the necessary information a monastery needed to have? The second part of this document has to be scrutinized very closely for it reveals the whole strategy of Wäld Sä'ala.

This very unusual text referred to four important dignitaries, who represent a wide array of geographic and ideological or dogmatic origins. The *bäträ-yarik* of Amḥara is the spiritual leader of the monastery of Tädbabä Maryam [105]. The *r'as-re'us* of Goğğam is the spiritual leader of the monastery of Marṭula Maryam [106]. *Neburä 'ed* is the chief of the Aksum cathedral, although the title was also held by the heads of the other major churches of Tigré [107]. The liqä kahenat of Wärwär, in

[105] *bäträ-yarik* could be a corruption of the word patriarch : Kane, *Dictionary,* 916 ; Conzelman, *Chronique de Galâwdêwos,* 150-153 ; Carlo Conti Rossini,"Historia Regis Sarsa Dengel (Malak Sagad) accedit Historia gentis Galla, curante I. Guidi", *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalum / Serie Aethiopica* , series altera 3, 2 vol. (Louvain,1907), 6-8.

[106] Guidi, "Annales Yohannis I, Iyasu I et Bakaffa", 71 ; Donald Crummey, Daniel Ayana and Shumet Sishagne,"A Gondärine Land Grant in Gojjam : the case of Qäranyo Mädhané Aläm", *Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* , ed. by Bahru Zewde, R. Pankhurst, Taddesse Beyene, IES, AAU, 1 (Addis Abeba, 1994), 103-116 ; Kane, *Dictionary,* 398.

[107] *Amharic Dictionary of Ethiopian Tewhado Orthodox Church* 5, ed. Sergew Hable Sellassie (Addis-Abeba, 1984-1990), 29-32 ; According to Huntingford, *The land charters,* 107-108 : "The civil governor of Aksum, who was also a high dignitary of the Cathedral and keeper of the Book of the Law. He had the privilege of sitting during a lawsuit. He is the "nebret of canons" of Alvares. The title means "one who is put in office by the laying on of hands". (plur. *neburâna ed*). The plural form can indeed exist, and in Huntingford, *The land charters,* some land grants refer to one *nebura ed* of Bankual (41), one *nebura ed* of Madarâ (30) and one *nebura ed* of Mäqdäsa Mâryâm (25). See also Carlo Conti Rossini, "Il libro di re Zar'a Ya'eqob sulla custodia del Mistero", *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* 2 (1943), 163.

Lasta[108], is an officer of the *eçägé* and chief of the secular priests.[109] At the end of the seventeenth century, this title was given together with the title of *azmač* of Bägémder[110], a detail which might indicate the need to eradicate, at least in the administrative representation of the state, the autonomy of Lasta.

No other document in Qoma mentions these titles, nor the very general duties or seats of "the left side", "the right side", "chief of the guides" or "*liqä śeyuman* and administrator of the region" to which they are nominated. Even more remarkable, those high dignitaries appointed by Wäld Sä'ala are not mentioned with their proper names. If we consider the general structure of Ethiopian legal documents, we notice that dignitaries' names are always specified together with their titles, for it is a way to specify the context of the institution of a law. For instance, such formulas are very frequent: "when A has this function... and when B this one..." or "at the time of *liqä kahenat* X and *märigéta* Y...". Even if centuries later it can be difficult to identify these names, at the time of the writing of the documents, it was part of implicit knowledge. Mentioning an exact date is quite rare in Ethiopian documents, and identifying proper names is one of the most frequent element for dating them.

Our text seems to place Qoma in an eternal pecking order: the lack of proper names permits the renewal of this patronage. So why are these four public officials mentioned in this document? One hypothesis is that they were present to give a royal status to the foundation as " all of them already sat in front of the king". They represented the diversity of the royal network and, therefore, allowed at least a symbolic control of the King over Qoma. Another hypothesis, which is not exclusive of the first one, is that they served as warrants to avoid a sectarian drift. Qoma has, indeed, a very closed way of functioning, and being under the patronage of Marṭula and Tädbabä, the two main leaders of Ewostatian and Däbrä Libanos monasteries at this time, was the best guarantee of a certain open-minded attitude.

So who asked for those four dignitaries to be present, or to be mentioned: Wäld Sä'ala because she wanted her monastery to be considered a real royal place? Or Fasilädäs because he wanted to keep an eye on what happened here? After examining other Qoma documents and sources, we have to conclude that those

[108] Carlo Conti Rossini, "Catalogo dei nomi propri di luogo dell'Etiopia contenuti nei testi gi'iz ed amharina", *Atti del primo congresso geographico italiano* (Genova, 1894), 52.
[109] Huntingford, *The land charters,* 107.
[110] See Guidi, "Annales Yohannis I, Iyasu I et Bakaffa", 152.

prelates played no role in Qoma's life, although. they may have been present during the foundation ceremony. This could explain the meaning of the four "hollow" functions of "left", "right", "chief of the guides" and " *liqä seyuman*".

The social organization of Qoma's clergy is, in brief, the following:[111] it is collegial. The first college is composed of the eight Wäläqoč, a name formed from Wäläqa, the province of Wäld Sä'ala's family. The queen and her seven brothers and sisters designate amongst themselves the *liqä kahenat,* or civil administrator. The second college consists of the forty-six monks, or *mänäkosat*, from amongst whom is chosen the mämher or abbot. Then comes the college of forty-six *märihyan* who designate the *märigéta*. Then, one hundred and sixty *däbtära* (scribes or choristers) are divided in two groups, of left and right, ruled by a *qañgéta* (master of the right) and a *gragéta* (master of the left).

So the *bäträ-yarik*, who was placed on the right side, would play the role of —or supervise—the *qañgéta*, at the head of the right division of däbtära, while the *r'as-re'us* could have supervised the *gragéta* and the left group. The *neburä 'ed,* who was appointed "chief of the guides"—*liq zä-märahyan*—would play the role of the *marigéta*, placed over the group of the *märihyan*. The *liqä kahenat* of Wärwär, who is *liqä śeyuman* and administrator, would play the role of the *liqä kahenat* of Qoma. The *mämher* is the only one, as the spiritual leader of Qoma, not to have anybody representing him.

Therefore, an inauguration ceremony gave the needed smokescreen of royal control over Qoma. But the foundation charter specifies very clearly that, "Therefore, to those ones [is addressed the following anathema]: nobody can take the property [of this monastery], whether he is a King or a prince. And no-one shall be appointed here if he has not grown up there, or if he does not know its traditional laws, or if he is not learned in the ecclesiastical books."

Being closely associated with the royal network imposed some limitations. If high dignitaries had been associated with the foundation of Qoma, they could not participate in its administration and spiritual leadership. The internal charges or functions of the monastery were strictly reserved for the priests and monks who already belonged to the monastery. We must keep in mind that being constructed to be the burial place of the queen, the monastery and its parish would have to be guaranteed the autonomy of its administration and the integrity of its patrimony

[111] See Wion, *Aux confins le feu…*, chapter 9 " L'organisation d'une nouvelle société : les colons, leur hiérarchie et sa pérennité", 337-395.

after the death of the founder. This text, added to the *gult* grant, claims that Qoma belonged to the royal network and that, at the same time, it was autonomous.

Who gave Qoma its lands?

The previous texts do not agree upon who donated the lands of Qoma. The oldest documents, the short *waqf*, specify that the queen "Wäld Sä'ala has endowed the construction of this holy church. She gave all her lands to the monks and the priests of the monastery of Adramit which is part of Däbrä Ṣämuna"[112]. If the queen was the donor, we have to notice that she gave the land of Qoma and the church erected on its territory to Däbrä Ṣämuna. The long waqf does not specify who gave the land, but attributed the charter to King Fasilädäs and to his mother. The *gult* grant credits the King Fasilädäs, "We, Aläm Sägäd, son of the King of the kings Śelṭan Sägäd, who, by the grace of God, have received the name of Fasilädäs, we give these *gultat* to the present church of Antioch, from Qoma's region : (...). This is for the salvation of our dear mother Wäld Sä'ala and for the dear martyr Fasilädäs that we give all this," while the foundation charter points to the queen as the donor: "she gathered everything that a monastery might possess, giving gold and silver, cattle and lands".
A fourth document, copied in the Hawi, manuscript number 685[113], makes all this clear :

> **ወለምድረ ቆማሂ ዘወሀቡኒ ነሢኦሙ እምስብስትያኖስ ወለምድረ ልሞነሂ ነሢኦሙ እመአብሀቶ ዘወሀቡኒ ንጉሥነ ሥልጣን ሰገድ ወአነሂ። ዘወሀብክዎ ለቅዱስ ፋሲለደስ ከመ ይኩነኒ ለመድኃኒተ ሥጋ ወነፍስ።**

And for the land of Qoma, which our King Śelṭan Sägäd[114] gave me[115] [after] he

[112] The other copy of the first *waqf* says that the queen "gave [her church] to Däbrä Adramit which is Däbrä Ṣämuna and this church and the lands which are assigned to it, on the land of Qoma, it is forbidden to alienate them".

[113] H2 VI 685, *Hawi*, parchment, 38 x 33 cm, (311 folios), 3 col., 38 lg., folio 308v°.

[114] Śelṭan Sägäd is the royal name of Susneyos. It is also one of the royal names of Fasilädäs, who, more often, was called Aläm Sägäd. In this document, it is clearly used to designate Susneyos. First, in the Qoma documents King Fasilädäs is always designated by "Fasilädäs, King of the faith". Second, the name of Susneyos had been erased in the very few places where it has been written, for its memory was cursed after he returned to the Orthodox faith. But the very fact that his name has been written then erased shows that he had been associated with the very first moments of the foundation.

[115] In the three previous documents copied on this folio, the singular first person designates the queen

took it from Sebestyanos[116] and for the land of Lemon, which he gave me [after] he took it from Abhäto, I am the one who gave them to Saint Fasilädäs for serving the salvation of my body and soul.

We notice that, even if this short text is not signed by *Abuna* Mikaél, the fact that the monastery is dedicated to saint Fasilädäs permits us to date it posterior to 1640. This is the only place where the name of King Susneyos appears in Qoma's manuscripts. His name had been written down in some of the very first manuscripts offered to the church, together with the name of Wäld Sä'ala, but it was later rigorously erased.

According to this document, King Susneyos gave to the queen two pieces of land—Qoma and Lemon—which he had taken from some private persons, and she gave these lands for her monastery. Qoma and Lemon would thus be the first land grant. The *gult* grant confirms and enlarges this first donation, as it specifies that King Fasilädäs gave: "Qoma with Lemon, Saména with half of ḉäṭa, to which are added Gagsa, Sosčab with Säng^{w}ag^{w}a". Fasilädäs gave the lands of Qoma and Lemon a second time, and added sizeable territories.

The succession of Susneyos took place within a climate of tension of which no official sources kept trace, and the challenge to King Fasilädäs's legitimacy by his brother was resolved only fifteen years after his enthronement. We do not know all the steps and consequences of this competition, and the analysis of Qoma's documentation is before all a study of a very localised fight: the battle of a queen with her son for autonomy as reported by the victories each of them made in writing laws and history. The role of oral tradition in the preservation of local memory is also very important in Qoma.

Qoma's foundation history is complex and reveals the tension between the construction of a strong royal power by Susneyos and by his son Fasilädäs, and the creation of regional and royal territories. This ambiguous system of sharing control can be observed in detail in Qoma, where the existence of a real threat to the king's authority has left some traces. Of course, Gälawdéwos lost the competition and disappeared. His ally *Abuna* Marqos was exiled. The religious and political choices that those men and their clan were fighting for will remain unclear, or maybe they were only fighting for themselves. The fact is that queen Wäld Sä'ala

Wäld Sä'ala.

[116] Sebestyanos might be an *azzaž* whom Susneyos fought against and defeated in the last year of his reign. See Pereira, *Chronica de Susneyos,* 1900, 255-58 and M. d'Almeida in Beccari, *RAESOIS* 7, 159-163.

succeeded in preserving her foundation and its autonomy.

When Gälawdéwos was alive and active, the monastery of Qoma was living only under the legislation, written in Arabic, of the Coptic metropolitan, Marqos. This denial of the King and of the Ethiopian prelates' authority seems powerful and maybe legitimate enough, as Fasilädäs, when establishing the official documents of Qoma, did not erase or destroy this text. On the contrary, he tried to copy it by making a longer Arabic text, pretending it to be a copy of the first text signed by *Abuna* Marqos and therefore grounding its authenticity in it. Then the traditional *gult* grant, written in Ge'ez, confirmed and enlarged the first land grant and affirmed the monastic filiations to the Ewostatian network, which was a choice made by Wäld Sä'ala. This text, already uncommonly detailed, is doubled by the "foundation charter" which defined very clearly the situation of Qoma inside of the royal network and protected the territory, its administrative, spiritual and economical organization from any royal interference. The only tangible victory of Fasilädäs—after having eliminated his competitors—is that the monastery became dedicated to his patron saint, and will be remembered until the end of time as the church of Däbrä Fasilädäs of Qoma.