IslHornAfr: Islam in the Horn of Africa. A Comparative Literary Approach

Gori, Alessandro

Published in:
Essays in Ethiopian Manuscript Studies

Publication date:
2015

Citation for published version (APA):
Essays in Ethiopian Manuscript Studies

Proceedings of the International Conference
Manuscripts and Texts, Languages and Contexts:
the Transmission of Knowledge
in the Horn of Africa
Hamburg, 17–19 July 2014

Edited by
Alessandro Bausi, Alessandro Gori,
and Denis Nosnitsin

with assistance from
Eugenia Sokolinski

2015
Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden
The publication of this volume was supported by the European Union Seventh Framework Programme IDEAS (FP7/2007–2013) / ERC grant agreements 240720, 322849, and 338756.

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über http://dnb.dnb.de abrufbar.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the internet at http://dnb.dnb.de.

For further information about our publishing program consult our website http://www.harrassowitz-verlag.de

© Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden 2015
This work, including all of its parts, is protected by copyright. Any use beyond the limits of copyright law without the permission of the publisher is forbidden and subject to penalty. This applies particularly to reproductions, translations, microfilms and storage and processing in electronic systems.

Printed on permanent/durable paper.
Typesetting and copy editing: Eugenia Sokolinski (Hamburg)
Printing and binding: Memminger MedienCentrum AG
Printed in Germany
ISSN 2196-7180
# Table of Contents

Preface. *From the Conference to the Proceedings* .......................... vii

Introduction. *Team work in Ethiopian manuscript studies* ............... xix

Notes to the reader ........................................................................... xxii

**Chapter 1. Projects in manuscript studies,**
edited by Eugenia Sokolinski ............................................................. 1

*Ethio-SPaRe: Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia, Salvation, Preservation, and Research* (D. Nosnitsin) .................................................. 3

Annex: 3D survey and modelling of *Maʾasr Gǝ Españ Mikaʾel* (M. Barbarino) .......................................................... 7

*TraCES: From Translation to Creation: Changes in Ethiopic Style and Lexicon from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (A. Bausi) .............. 11

Annex: Towards a digital lexicon of Ethiopic: the *TraCES* experience (C. Vertan) .......................................................... 14

*IslHornAfr: Islam in the Horn of Africa. A Comparative Literary Approach* (A. Gori) .......................................................... 17

**Chapter 2. Codicology of Christian Ethiopic manuscripts**
edited by Denis Nosnitsin ................................................................. 21

*Deconstructing a manuscript collection: the case of Araʾro Täklä Haymanot* (Gulo Mäkdä, East Tägray) (D. Nosnitsin) ......................... 23

The Ethiopic Psalter manuscripts: scribal practices and text arrangement (S. Dege-Müller) .......................................................... 59

*The apocryphal Acts of the Apostles: unknown witnesses from East Tägray* (V. Pisani) .......................................................... 75

**Chapter 3. Manuscripts and history of Ethiopia**
edited by Denis Nosnitsin ................................................................. 95

*Emperor Zäʾra Yaʾqob to Augusta Helena, ‘Your deed followed You’* (Getatchew Haile) .......................................................... 97

*The Chronicle of Emperor Gälawdewos (1540–1559): a source on Ethiopia’s mediaeval historical geography* (Solomon Gebreyes) ... 109
Table of Contents

(Re)writing the history of Goğam in ancient and mediaeval times: the prism of the nineteenth-century regional historiography (M. Herman) .................................................. 119

Chapter 4. Ethiopic philology
edited by Alessandro Bausi .................................................. 143

‘Cycles of Zion’ in Ethiopic texts (Amsalu Tefera) ........................ 145
An old witness for the Ethiopic version of Ben Sira (Daniel Assefa) ... 153
The textual criticism of Ethiopic Obadiah: identification of five forms of the text (G. Jost) .................................................. 161
On the roots of Ethiopic philology and a bilingual letter from the Jesuit mission period (A. Martínez d’Alós-Moner, L. Cohen) ...... 181
Johann Michael Wansleben’s manuscripts and texts.
An update (A. Bausi) .......................................................... 197

Chapter 5. Islamic manuscript tradition of Ethiopia
edited by Alessandro Gori .................................................. 245

Ma’ūnat al-faqīr by šayḫ Muhammad Šāfi (d. 1806): a first introduction (Endris Mohammed) ........................................ 247
Devotional texts in Ethiopian Islam: a munāḡāḥ invoking the intercession of prophets, male and female saints and ‘ulamā’ (M. Petrone) ........... 259
Magic, traditional medicine and theurgy in Arabo-Islamic manuscripts of the Horn of Africa: a brief note on their description (S. Fani) ...... 273
Waqf certificates of Qurāns from Harar: a first assessment (A. Gori) ... 281
Two Argobba manuscripts from Ṭallo (A. Wetter) .................................. 297
The Kašī al-gumma by šayḫ Ṭalḥa b. Ga’far (d.1935): a messianic and polemical Amharic-aḡām text (Kemal Abdulwehab) .......................... 309

Index .......................................................... 325

Plates .......................................................... 345
Preface
From the Conference to the Proceedings

The papers collected in this volume, with two exceptions (see below), were originally presented and discussed during the international conference ‘Manuscripts and texts, languages and contexts. The transmission of knowledge in the Horn of Africa’, convened at the Universität Hamburg from 17 to 19 July 2014. Therefore, the composition of the volume largely reflects that of the conference, which was organized into four thematic panels, chaired by the convenors themselves (who also edited the respective contributions for this collection). These were Palaeography and Codicology (chaired by Denis Nosnitsin; the papers are grouped in Chapter 2), History and Historical Geography (chaired by Denis Nosnitsin; see Chapter 3), Gəz Philology and Language (chaired by Alessandro Bausi; see Chapter 4), and Islamic Tradition: Arabic and ‘Āqamī Manuscripts (chaired by Alessandro Gori, see Chapter 5).

At the beginning of each panel, the Chairs took the chance to reflect on their respective projects (these materials form the basis of Chapter 1 in this volume). Denis Nosnitsin summarized the preliminary results of the project Ethio-SPaRe: Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia: Salvation, Preservation, Research (ERC Starting Grant, Hamburg, 2009–2015, see pp. 3–6 for more details). After a short general overview, he dwelt on the new findings in Ethiopian manuscript making tradition, revealed thanks to the efforts of the project team and commented on an updated map of manuscript collections in Tigray. The PI focused in particular on several achievements owing to the interdisciplinary work within the project: new findings on historical ink composition were achieved thanks to close cooperation with scientists; advances in manuscript conservation were possible due to close cooperation between philologists and book conservators; research into local context was supported by archaeologists. The latter cooperation was illustrated by a case study on the church of Ara’ro Täklä Haymanot in the wärada Gulo Mäkäda. Here, Denis Nosnitsin’s study of the history and the collection of the church (see this volume pp. 23–58 for an extended version) was further supplied by a virtual reconstruction and three-dimensional modelling by the archaeologist Marco Barbarino (Naples), now visible on the project web site. The methodology applied is illustrated in an Annex to the presentation of the Ethio-SPaRe project (see pp. 7–10) on the example of the church of Mä’asar Gw'hui.

Alessandro Bausi spoke about the aims and goals of the project TraCES: From Translation to Creation: Changes in Ethiopic Style and Lexicon from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages (ERC Advanced Grant, Hamburg, 2014–
2019, see pp. 11–13 for details). The main scope is the creation of a digital annotated corpus of the Gəzəz language, linked to a unique online dictionary of Gəzəz that would include not only words and their translations but also the information on roots and patterns, variants, and numerous language examples. The computational tools being developed for Gəzəz lexicography and corpus linguistics were illustrated by Cristina Vertan and Andreas Ellwardt (Hamburg, TraCES project team, see pp. 14–15).

Alessandro Gori described the structure and methodology of the project IslHornAfr: Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach (ERC Advanced Grant, Florence – Copenhagen, 2013–2018). The project aims at the study of the Islamic literary traditions of the Horn of Africa (see pp. 17–20 for more details). With the help of a specifically developed database, it identifies, lists, describes, and classifies texts circulating among the Muslims (whether in Arabic or in local languages) according to their genres, contents, titles, authors, places of creation, number of witnesses, distribution of witnesses, and linguistic and graphic peculiarities.

The panel on codicology was primarily dedicated to the issues of manuscript production in Christian Ethiopia (codicology, scribal schools, collections, manuscript preservation were among the central topics covered). The paper by Denis Nosnitsin, was dedicated to the ‘Emergence and decline of manuscript collections in North Ethiopia: problems of study’. It is common practice in philological studies that scholars approach manuscripts and texts as isolated witnesses. Yet, in Christian Ethiopia, each witness is part of an ecclesiastic collection, or even of a network of collections. Such collections could go through various stages in their history, closely linked to the history of the relevant owning institution. They could be founded; re-established and/or renovated; have periods of extension and growth, and periods of decline. They could disappear by way of complete or partial physical destruction or dissolving, and remaining manuscripts could be incorporated into other collections. Understanding the history of collections could resolve a number of issues related to individual manuscripts. The study of the Ethiopian handwritten book can thus unfold on two interrelated levels: that of the individual manuscript and the of the collection; in many cases the features of a book can be better explained if looked at in the context of another level, that of the collection, and vice versa. This approach of the Ethio-SPaRe project was illustrated by a series of findings (see this volume pp. 23–58 for its application to the study of the collection of Ara’ro Täklä Haymanot).

Vitagrazia Pisani (Hamburg, Ethio-SPaRe project team) looked at a particular text type as it is found in the various manuscripts she surveyed, ‘The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles: unknown witnesses from East Tigray’ (see this volume pp. 75–94). This work (Eth. Gâdlâ hawaryat) is a collection
of texts translated into Gəǝz from Arabic, which has circulated, with varying intensity, since the end of the thirteenth century. A significant number of witnesses was recorded in East Təgray. They date to the late fourteenth through the seventeenth century and contain between twenty-seven and thirty-six texts. The composition and distribution of these manuscripts are the main focus of the article.

Yohannes Gebre-Selassie (Mekelle) also surveyed manuscripts in Təgray (‘The composition of historical documents in Təgray: the Kəbrə nɑ̂ɡɑ̂śt, Mɑ̂ʃɑ̂fɑ̂ Aksum, Wɑ̂nɡel zɑ̂wɑ̂rɑ̂q and Tɑ̂rɪkɑ̂ nɑ̂ɡɑ̂śt’, not published in this volume). For that, he examined the collections of the churches of Aksum Şɔyɔn and Mɑqɑlɑ Mɑdḥɑn ‘Alɑm, and the monastery of Yohɔnnas Kɑ̅mɑ. Interestingly, he showed that the traditional title Wɑ̂nɡel zɑ̂wɑ̂rɑ̂q (‘Golden Gospel’) may apply to manuscripts not only without any decoration, but also without any Gospel or religious content at all. Thus, the so-called Golden Gospel of Mɑqɑlɑ Mɑdḥɑn ‘Alɑm only contains over 3,500 land ownership documents from the town of Mɑqɑlɑ for the years 1923–1975, and was obviously originally intended for the particular purpose of document archive. Not only the priests refer to the manuscript as the Golden Gospel, they also treat it as one, as they kiss it before opening.

The talk by Ted Erho (Munich), ‘Towards an understanding of early Ethiopic scribal tendencies’ (not in this volume) was dedicated to the paratextual elements introduced by early scribes in biblical manuscripts. Among the most theoretical aspects of research on early Gəǝz manuscripts and the early (and pre-)textual history of the Ethiopic Bible is that of the scribal activities that passed on the various traditions into later, better attested, eras. Much of the problem stems from the lack of serviceable evidence, as it is difficult to find exemplars from before the fifteenth century that are closely enough related to permit such an analysis. One of the rare exceptions occurs with manuscripts EMML no. 6977 and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, éthiopien 7, both of which contain the Old Testament book of Job followed by that of Daniel and possess a genetic relationship unlikely to be more than a couple of generations removed from a common ancestor. While textual variants often form the sole basis for an investigative comparison, paratextual evidence can be used to provide a far more comprehensive picture of scribal habits and tendencies. Erho’s study, focusing primarily on the Book of Daniel in each manuscript, drew upon three paratextual aspects of scribal activity on display: 1) utilization of sense divisions; 2) inclusion of sigla, including paragraphoi; and 3) the formation of headings and use of rubrication. He demonstrated that early Ethiopian scribes had little autonomy to make cognizant changes of any kind to the copied text, suggesting the fairly high probability of relatively stable, but increasingly corrupt, texts (especially biblical
ones) apart from those few times when corrections were actively pursued at scholarly centres.

Sophia Dege-Müller (Hamburg, Ethio-SPaRe project team) presented on the ‘Text arrangement and scribal practices in Ethiopian Psalter manuscripts’ (published as ‘The Ethiopic Psalter manuscripts: scribal practices and text arrangement’, pp. 59–74). Analysing the Psalters recorded by the Ethio-SPaRe project, she demonstrated that a number of frequently overlooked codicological features typical for this type of manuscript (stichometry, midpoint marking, rubrication, etc.) are shared by the Ethiopian tradition with such manuscript traditions as Hebrew, Coptic, and Christian Arabic.

In his paper ‘Portraits of donors in Ethiopian manuscripts of late 19th and early 20th centuries’ (not in this volume), Michael Knüppel (Vellmar) illustrated how the ancient illumination tradition of depicting donors in manuscripts has modified since the introduction of book print and photography.

A large number of conference papers were dedicated to Ethiopian history with the focus on the use of manuscripts for reconstructing Ethiopian cultural landscape of the past. Stéphane Ancel (Hamburg, Ethio-SPaRe project team) presented an overview on ‘Historical texts in manuscripts from East Tigray’ (not in this volume). After introducing the different kinds of historical texts found in that region (genealogies, chronicles, commemoration notes, or short marginalia recording events which occurred in the past), a special attention was paid to the manuscripts preserved in the famous monastery of Däbrä Dammo. Stéphane Ancel showed that, on the whole, historical texts are given considerable importance in manuscripts and in ecclesiastical collections, even if purely historical manuscripts remain a rarity.

Several presenters focused on the historical geography of Ethiopia. The paper ‘Reconstructing and mapping Aksum’s historical toponymy: a preliminary attempt’ was the result of an interdisciplinary research of an archaeologist, Luisa Sernicola (Naples), and philologist, Antonella Brita (Hamburg) (not in this volume). Centuries of research in and about the area of Aksum have produced a rich corpus of place names, emerging from various types of written sources (traditionally domain of philological research) that may contribute to refine our knowledge of Aksum’s ancient urban topography and the reconstruction of the changes in the spatial organization of the territory (traditionally domain of archaeology). The paper illustrated a preliminary attempt to classify, analyse, and visualize Aksum’s ancient and contemporary toponymy by combining philology, archaeology and geography.

The talk of Solomon Gebreyes (Hamburg) was dedicated to ‘The Chronicle of Emperor Gälawdewos (1540–1559): a source for the research of historical geography of medieval Ethiopia’ (see this volume pp. 109–118). In his paper, Solomon focused on the place names featured on the pages of this im-
important sixteenth-century text, trying to localize them using the text-internal but also text-external evidence and show the changes in the historical geography of the Ethiopian empire under Galawdeos.

Shiferaw Bekele (Addis Ababa) introduced the preliminary results of his research towards ‘Mapping medieval Ethiopia: the province of Wäg, 13th to 16th centuries’ (not in this volume). He showed how the sources that have become available in the past decades, in particular the Stephanite hagiographies, help to identify the location of this historical region with a far greater precision than was possible to the earlier historians. Shiferaw argued that the high areas of Gurageland of today constituted the central parts of the province, the Gurage people being its core population. Five historical monasteries of Wäg could be placed on the map. More sources are needed to draw the precise boundaries of the province.

In his presentation ‘Where was the original place of the Atronsä Maryam church?’ (not in this volume), Derese Ayenachew (Debre Berhan) introduced a manuscript containing the Universal History by Ibn al-ʞAmid (Giyorgis Wäldä ʞAmid) from the church of Atronsä Maryam in Amhara Sayânt. A historical additional note on ff. 143 and 144 of this 229-leaf manuscript, which summarizes sixteenth-seventeenth century events in the history of Ethiopia, seems to suggest that Atronsä Maryam was initially founded elsewhere and was transferred to Amhara Sayânt at a later point in time.

A number of presentations introduced previously unknown sources. The paper by Getatchew Haile (Collegeville), ‘Emperor Zăr’a Ya$qob of Ethiopia to Augusta Helen, “Your deed followed you”’ (read in absentia; see this volume pp. 97–108) presented an Amharic text that may have the answer to the cryptic phrase gəbrək täləwākki from a Nāgś hymn by Emperor Zăr’a Ya$qob of Ethiopia.

A very different Amharic text was the subject of the paper ‘A short Amharic manuscript of the 1840s found in the Vatican papers of Arnauld d’Abbadie’ by Eloi Ficquet (Paris) (not in this volume). Nineteen boxes of unpublished papers of the French-Basque-Irish explorer Arnauld d’Abbadie (1815–1893) are preserved in the Vatican Library: seventeen with the various parts and stages of his memoirs (edited by Jeanne-Marie Allier from 1980 to 1999) and two with different notebooks and some miscellaneous unbound papers. The only Ethiopian manuscript is a single bifolium containing an Amharic text probably written by an informant of the scholar. It seems to be a collection of popular stories and tărät-like sayings and comments on local history of areas in Goğğam and Bägemdär. Another leaf seem to preserve a translation by d’Abbadie. The manuscript is quite an unexpected witness of popular Amharic traditions in the 1840s, before the emergence of an official Amharic literature in the following decades.
Wolbert Smidt (Mekelle) introduced some previously unknown historical documents in his paper on ‘North Ethiopian epistolography—newly discovered letters of Tǝγrǝyǝn nobles from missionary archives (second half of the 19th century)’ (not in this volume). The letters, in Amharic, with Gǝz and Tigrinya elements, were written by northern Ethiopian nobles to Catholic missionaries of the Apostolic Vicariate of Abyssinia and were now discovered among the private papers of Jean-Baptist Coulbeaux. A particular attention was given to the seals we find on the letters, which were compared to the ones known from Sven Rubenson’s publications.

Some papers revisited known manuscripts, trying to find new ways of dealing with them. Two papers approached the manuscript heritage of alǝqa Täklä Iyäsus Nagaro Waqgǝra. In his paper ‘The historical writings of alǝqa Täklä Iyäsus in documenting the literary, cultural and regional landscape of Goğgam’ (not in this volume), Getie Gelaye (Hamburg) examined the cultural, literary and regional landscape of Goğgam as documented in Täklä Iyäsus’s Genealogy of Goğgam (published by Girma Getahun, 2010) and History of Ethiopia (published by Sergew Gelaw, 2009). Getie traced the founders and ancestors mentioned in the genealogy to local communities and offered a thematic analysis of several poems by Täklä Iyäsus, commenting on the linguistic features typical of Goğgǝme Amharic dialect.

Margaux Herman (Debre Berhan and Addis Ababa) presented a paper entitled ‘Writing the ancient history of Goğgam: the screen of the 19th-century regional historiography’ (see this volume, pp. 119–142). She showed how recent written sources on the history of Goğgam, particularly the works of the aforementioned alǝqa Täklä Iyäsus Nagaro Waqgǝra, are closer to the oral tradition than to the mediaeval histories. On the example of the manuscripts examined she demonstrated the close relationship between the written and the oral history and the importance of the earlier documents for proper historical reconstruction.

The paper by Fesseha Berhe (Mekelle), ‘Implications of a 19th-century Tǝγrǝñña manuscript for the study of local history and culture’ (not in this volume), focused on the nineteenth-century Tarık Ityogya (‘History of Ethiopia’) by dǝbitára Fǝssǝña Giyorgis ǝbıyazgi (1895, published by Yaqob Beyene in 1987 and by the Mabbǝr Bahli Tǝγrǝy in 2000/2001). It analysed the importance of the text for the understanding of population movements and interactions in northern Ethiopia, in particular the Saho and the Doba, with a special focus on rarely discussed toponyms and ethnonyms. Fesseha illustrated the close relationship between the written and the oral tradition.

In his talk ‘Ras Alula’s Gǝz biography—revisiting’ (not in this volume), Haggai Erlich (Tel Aviv) readdressed the issues related to the Gǝz document about the nineteenth-century north Ethiopian lord, ras Alula, discov-
ered in 1972 in *ras*’s birthplace (Mänäwe, Tämben) and published (with a translation by Roger Cowley) in 1976.

Bahru Zewde (Addis Ababa) in his presentation ‘Revisiting the 1911 unpublished diary of Ḥaruy Wålď Ĺallase’ (not in this volume) returned to the Amharic manuscript he had already consulted for his presentation at the 15th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies in Hamburg in 2003.

Within the panel on philology, the challenges of *Gǝǝz* language studies was a central aspect. Besides addressing this issue in his project introduction (see above), Alessandro Bausi in his paper ‘The earlier textual Ethiopic heritage’ (not in this volume) contemplated on the history of emergence of Ethiopic literature and its relationship with the history of the Ethiopic language. *Gǝǝz* played a major role of medium for the transmission of written knowledge to the Horn of Africa since the first millennium CE. It is commonly agreed that the earliest Ethiopic texts known so far are translations from Greek, while later works are much indebted to the Christian Arabic literary tradition, particularly to the Copto-Arabic one. There is evidence for the emergence of a rich local written production only later in the course of time. One would expect that the complexity of this literary history is fully reflected in the changes in grammar, lexicon, and stylistic means of the language. The first step in approaching this delicate question—which is one among the tasks of the TraCES project—is a systematic mapping of texts and works attributed on some grounds to a precise period.

Along these lines, Dawit Tessega (Nuremberg), in his paper ‘*Gǝǝz* grammar and vocabulary in the ancient manuscripts and in contemporary usage’ (not in this volume), attempted a comparison of rhythmic structure and grammatical arrangement of *Gǝǝz* poems written in ancient and in modern times.

Stefan Weninger (Marburg) spoke of ‘A new grammar of *Gǝǝz*: challenges and surprises’ (not in this volume). In his talk he addressed several challenges a scholar meets when preparing a descriptive grammar: How can one cope with the diachronic perspective of the documented language history of *Gǝǝz* and with the different linguistic background of the various text genres (Greek, Arabic, Amharic)? Is it possible, or sensible, to establish a standard? Is it possible to incorporate all that we have come to know in the past decades in a new grammar? And how to deal with the lacunae in our knowledge that would necessitate more ad-hoc research?

A particular take on the history of *Gǝǝz* language studies was offered by the paper by Leonardo Cohen (Haifa) and Andreu Martínez d’Alòs-Moner

---

(Hamburg/Gondar), ‘A 1609 Gəˈəz letter by ras Šəˈəlā Krastos: Insights into the language’s status in early seventeenth century Ethiopia’ (published in this volume as ‘On the roots of Ethiopic philology and a ‘trilingual’ letter from the Jesuit mission period’, pp. 181–196). Taking as a starting point a Gəˈəz letter, transcribed in Latin script and translated into Portuguese by the Jesuit Luis de Azevedo, the presenters did not only discuss its historical context but also showed the way early scholars dealt with the Gəˈəz language.

The theme of the seventeenth-century Ethiopian studies in Europe is further developed in this volume by the article by Alessandro Bausi, ‘Johann Michael Wansleben’s manuscripts and texts. An update’ (see pp. 197–244). Not originally part of the conference, this contribution considerably enhances our knowledge of the history of Gəˈəz scholarship, and highlights the importance of considering early studies, that may provide insights far deeper than the results of modern research. Gəˈəz manuscripts copied by Wansleben are briefly discussed.

A series of talks in the Gəˈəz philology panel were dedicated to the earliest stratum of Gəˈəz literature, in particular the biblical text. Daniel Assefa (Addis Ababa) spoke of ‘An old witness for the Gəˈəz version of Ben Sira’ (see this volume pp. 153–160). He presented some preliminary results of collation of one of the earliest witnesses of the Wisdom of Sirach in Ethiopic, MS Gunda Gunde 202, to the other known manuscript versions of the text and the critical text of Dillmann’s edition.

In his paper ‘The conundrum of the Ethiopic personal names in the Ethiopic Bible’ (not in this volume), Martin Heide (Marburg) took a close look at the translation vector as illustrated by proper names. While most are directly transcribed from the Greek, some are evidently transcribed according to a Semitic pattern. These must have been borrowed into Ethiopic prior to the translation of the Bible.

Garry Jost (Marylhurst) presented his research on ‘The textual criticism of Ethiopic Obadiah: a characterization of the shared variants constituting the five families of manuscripts’ (see this volume pp. 161–180). The study was part of the Textual History of the Ethiopic Old Testament Project (THEOT) and illustrated the results of computer-assisted collation and grouping of 33 manuscripts of Obadiah.

The Kəˈbrə nāgāšti, already referred to in the talk by Yohannes Gebre-Sellassie, was also in the focus of Amsalu Teferra’s (Addis Ababa) paper ‘Cycles of Zion in Ethiopic texts’ (published in this volume, pp. 145–152). It was dedicated to the traditional Gəˈəz narrative of the Ark of the Covenant and its wanderings as witnessed by the Kəˈbrə nāgāšti, the Liber Axumae, the Dərṣanā ʃəyɔn, and the Təˈammərə Maryam.
The content of a previously unknown eighteenth-century manuscript was the subject of the presentation ‘An ancient description of the inhabited world, with some anecdotes concerning different cities and sages: The case of a new manuscript’ by Rafał Zarzeczny (Rome, not in this volume). The text transmitted by this witness seems to be a rare compilation of probably translated traditional (legendary or simply mythological) descriptions of the ancient world. Zarzeczny searched for the possible roots and ancient inspirations of this text.

A short study by Gidena Mesfin (Hamburg), ‘Beyond tribal names and denominations in the texts of Miftahi sara manuscripts’ (not published in this volume) offered a survey of proper names that are used for their alleged apotropaic powers in the various ‘magical prayers’. Besides offering an identification of the names, Gidena tried to assign them to particular manuscript types and ‘magic’ practitioners.

Finally, the panel on Islamic tradition (a session running parallel to that on Gǝ̀z studies), welcomed scholars dealing in their research with the manuscripts written or used by the Muslims of Ethiopia.


Michele Petrone (Florence/Copenhagen, member of the IslHornAfr team) presented a paper entitled ‘Some notes about the lists of saints in Harar Arabic manuscripts’ (published in this volume as ‘Devotional texts in Ethiopian Islam: a munâqâb invoking the intercession of prophets, male and female saints and ‘ulamâ’, pp. 259–272). He edited and translated a lengthy invocation in Arabic transmitted as an additional text in an undated manuscript from the collection of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies and containing an extensive list of saints. He compared the text to the other known lists of saints from Ethiopia (in particular, those published by Ewald Wagner) and hypothesized that the text may have been written in the city of Harar.

Additional texts were also in the focus of attention of Sara Fani (Florence/Copenhagen, member of the IslHornAfr team), who spoke about ‘Magic, traditional medicine and theurgy in Arabo-Islamic manuscripts of the Horn of Africa’ (published in this volume, pp. 273–280). Researching documentary notes and paratexts in Arabo-Islamic manuscripts in the collection of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies of Addis Ababa University, she revealed that, in addition to historical and documentary notes, sometimes attesting waqf
or local Islamic qa'di court records, many additional notes and paratexts are related to magical and theurgical practices or to traditional medicine.

A particular type of documentary texts, the waqf certificate, was dealt with by Alessandro Gori in his survey ‘Waqf certificates from Harar: a first assessment’ (see this volume, pp. 281–296). He showed that research on waqf (charitable trust) has been overwhelmingly conducted by social historians and sociologists, their interest being in the investigation of the birth, development and spread of the charitable endowments of economically relevant assets or social institutions in the Muslim world and in their role in the preservation of the social cohesion of the Muslim territories. Little attention has been paid to the waqf of books, and even less to the actual form and style of the waqf certificates. Alessandro Gori presented an analysis of a selection of six unpublished waqf certificates of Qur’anic codices from Harar kept in the Institute of Ethiopian Studies in Addis Ababa.

Another certificate type, the igaza, was studied by Hassen Mohammed Kawo (Addis Ababa/Cape Town), who spoke of ‘Sayh ‘Abdalla Walenso (d.1369/1949) and his legacy in transmission of haddith in southeastern Ethiopia’ (not in this volume). He offered some preliminary remarks on two igaza certificates of haddith from eastern Arsi, issued to sayh Muhammad Aliyyii Tii’oo and sayh Muhammad salah b. kibir ‘Ali better known as Muhammad salah Hwaatee in Arsi. The certificates maintain the educational chain through sayh ‘Abd Allâh b. Adam (better known as sayh ‘Abdalla Walenso, after the place of Walenso in eastern Harärge) to his teacher, sayh Ahmad b. Sulaymân of Baallakasaa. The documents are witnesses to the diffusion of the haddith teaching in Ethiopia.

Other contributions were dedicated to manuscripts containing texts in local languages written in Arabic script. The languages included the Cushitic Saho and Somali, and the Semitic Argobba, Amharic, Harari, and Tigrinya.

Giorgio Banti (Naples) read the paper he co-authored with Moreno Vergari (Bolzano) and Axmadsacad Maxammad Cumar on ‘Saho Islamic poetry and other literary genres in ‘ağami script’ (not in this volume). He focused on the nazme hymns, sung by the Saho during the mawlid and other religious ceremonies. These hymns are generally associated with popular Sufi Islam, in particular the Ḥatmiyya brotherhood. Most nazme are transmitted orally, and there is no printed collection, but occasionally sayhs would record them in Arabic script. The paper focused on the nazme by Sheekh Soliiman Ismaacil Maxammad (recited and written down in Irhaafalo, Eritrea, in 2010) and provided some other examples of Saho ‘ağami texts read by the Saho diaspora in the UK.

‘Ağami manuscripts from southern Somalia: sheekh Awees from Brava (d. 1907)’ was the title of another talk by Giorgio Banti (not in this vol-
Sheekh Awees from Brava, killed by supporters of the ‘mad Mullah’ Maxamed Cabdille Xasan, composed several religious hymns both in Arabic and in southern Somali, with features of the local dialects of the communities for whom he had composed his poems. Some of these qasīdas have been published (by Enrico Cerulli and Martino Mario Moreno). Banti discussed some of the hymns which he could obtain in copy (by sheekh Abuukar Maxamed Yare) during his visit to Buloimareerto in the 1980s.

‘Two Argobba aġam manuscripts from Wållo’ (see this volume, pp. 297–308) were the topic of the talk by Andreas Wetter (Berlin). The two documents are rare examples of Argobba ‘ağami and unique witnesses of a particular dialect of this highly endangered language. They play a crucial role in the reconstruction of language history of Argobba since the variety used in the manuscripts differs considerably from the Argobba variety spoken today.

Kemal Abdulwahab (Addis Ababa) dedicated his talk to the ‘Kašf al-Āumma by ūlayr al-Ḳaṭar b. Džaƙfar (d.1935): a messianic and polemical Amharic-aġam text’ (see this volume, pp. 309–324). The renowned Muslim scholar ūlayr al-Ḳaṭar b. Džaƙfar, from Argobba in Wållo, used Amharic as the language of religious teaching; the existing manuscripts all use the Arabic script. One of his treatises, Tawīl inna fiqh has been published (in fidāl); his poetic works remain largely unstudied. One of them, the Kašf al-gumma, transmitted in at least three manuscripts, is particularly interesting for illustrating the relationship to the outside Islamic world, and in particular to the Dervish movement led by Muḥammad Ahmad b. ‘Abdallāh (al-Mahdī) in Sudan.

In his paper ‘Bun Fatah, a Harari supplication related to coffee ceremony’ (not in this volume), Ahmed Zekaria (Addis Ababa) discussed a manuscript copied by ūstad Ibrāhīm Wazīr in Harar in 1409/1989 from a notebook of the late ṭaqqī Ahmad ‘Alī Malāk. The main text of the manuscript is a description of the coffee ceremony in Arabic; it is interspersed with a supplication in Harari. A first analysis of the syntax and word formation suggests that it is an old supplication.

Amira Ibrahim (Addis Ababa) presented a paper entitled ‘Describing a Tigrinya aġamī manuscript’ (not in this volume). She offered a first analysis of a Tigrinya manẓūma by ūlayb ʻUmar Abrār from Tagray. The text, transmitted in a manuscript written in Arabic script, concerns the impression of the Prophet Muhammad on his first wife, Ḥadiqa—a unique topic since women were rarely addressed in early times.

Kemal Ibrahim (Addis Ababa) introduced the ‘Unique manuscript collection of Sāddāqa, Ḟimma zone’ (not in this volume). This was one of the first glimpses into the manuscript tradition of the former Gibe kingdoms of south-western Ethiopia. Kemal surveyed and catalogued 52 manuscripts from the collection of the Sāddāqa mosque. In addition to the ‘usual’ manu-
scripts such as the copies of the Qur’an, fiqh and tawhid, texts, personal letters etc., there are manuscripts written in unknown ‘secret scripts’, invented by šayb Mus‘īd al-Dīn Sāddāqī. Some have strange symbols which superficially resemble Chinese characters. It is possible that the writing is fully invented and cannot be deciphered.

Finally, Orin Gensler (Addis Ababa) contemplated on the possible influences of Christian writing tradition upon the Arabo-Islamic one in his talk ‘Word-breaking in Ethiopian Arabic: Evidence for intimate Christian-Muslim contact (with an appendix on semantic change in Harari)’ (not in this volume). In particular, word division at line ends, as a rule next to impossible in ‘canonical’ Arabic scribal practice, seems to be a frequent feature of Ethiopian Arabic manuscripts. This may have been mediated by the Muslim communities that were intimately woven into the fabric of Christian Ethiopia—Gabārti, and/or Christian converts to Islam. Gensler also showed that many words in Harari have undergone semantic change compared to their older meaning presumably recorded in Ǧǝz. As the same shift of meaning is mostly present in Amharic, the change in Harari (spoken by Muslims) could be due to an influence of Amharic (spoken by Christians).

While none of the papers specifically dealt with manuscript conservation, many of the surveys commented on the preservation state of manuscripts and entire collections. Denis Nosnitsin, in his report on the Ethio-SPaRe project, described in detail the interdisciplinary efforts towards the reconstruction and conservation of several precious ancient manuscripts.

This cursory overview illustrates well the thematic extent of the conference. Most of the various issues connected with the study of the manuscripts, their material form and context, their content, and finally their place in scholarship have found their way into the four chapters of this volume.

The editors would like to thank on this occasion the Universität Hamburg for offering rooms and logistic support and the invited discussants whose comments during the conference have considerably influenced the shape of the edited contributions. These were David Appleyard (London), Baye Yimam (Addis Ababa), Ulrich Braukämper (Göttingen), James McCann (Boston), Gianfranco Fiaccadori (†), Ran HaCohen (Tel Aviv), Steven Kaplan (Jerusalem), Ewald Wagner (Giessen), and Rainer Voigt (Berlin). Last but not least, the editors thank the main funding organization, the European Research Council of the European Union (Seventh Framework Programme), for making the conference, and the publication of this volume, possible.

Editors
Hamburg, 5 June 2015
**Introduction**

Team work in Ethiopian manuscript studies

The papers collected in this volume were originally presented and discussed during the international conference ‘Manuscripts and texts, languages and contexts. The transmission of knowledge in the Horn of Africa’, convened at the Universität Hamburg from 17 to 19 July 2014.

The conference was convened by the Principal Investigators of three projects in Ethiopian studies, all funded by the European Union’s 7th Framework Programme. These were *Ethio-SPaRe: Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia: Salvation, Preservation, Research* (ERC Starting Grant, Hamburg, 2009–2015, PI Denis Nosnitsin), dealing with recording and cataloguing manuscripts preserved in ecclesiastic libraries in the northern Ethiopian highlands; *TraCES: From Translation to Creation: Changes in Ethiopic Style and Lexicon from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (ERC Advanced Grant, Hamburg, 2014–2019, PI Alessandro Bausi), dealing mainly with Gǝǝz written heritage; and *IslHornAfr: Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach* (ERC Advanced Grant, Florence and Copenhagen, 2013–2018, PI Alessandro Gori), dealing with the Islamic manuscript tradition of Ethiopia and the Horn. For *Ethio-SPaRe*, the main sponsor of the event, this was the major closing conference.

In the recent decades, project work has become an important engine in all fields of research. Team work—whether inter-, multidisciplinary, or not—has become a nearly absolute necessity in order to get financial support and be able to carry out research full-time. Individual long-term research initiatives, mostly undertaken by scholars with tenured academic positions, are to a varying degree integrated into relevant major scale research schemes. Ethiopian (and in general African and oriental) studies have been no exception to this phenomenon. The three projects behind the present volume are an illustration to this tendency. The majority of the speakers at the conference have been involved in one or more of such projects at some moment in time.

While project frameworks do impose some limitations upon research, the advantages for the scientific community cannot be denied. The precise planning and budgeting that are usually a prerequisite for a major project to be launched ensure that, even if failing some of the goals, such project achieves the majority of its aims. This is in particular significant in potentially extendable projects based on (often multidisciplinary) team work. In Ethiopian studies, in Hamburg alone, the past years have seen the successful completion of the fifteen-year editorial endeavour *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* (sponsored primarily by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and several other foundations) and of the five-year research networking programme *COMSt: Com-