



Faculty of Humanities



'Aḡamī in the opposite way. An Arabic manuscript text written in Ethiopian script (EMML 6239)

Alessandro Gori

IslHornAfr (EU 7th Framework Programme, ERC Advanced Grant 322849)

Dept of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies
University of Copenhagen
Karen Blixens Vej 4
2300 Copenhagen S
Email frd322@hum.ku.dk

www.islhornafr.eu

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Project framework

Islam in the Horn of Africa: A Comparative Literary Approach

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Now based at the Institute of Cross-cultural and Regional Studies/University of Copenhagen



Project framework: staff

Islam in the Horn of Africa
A Comparative Literary Approach

Principal Investigator: Alessandro Gori

Associated Researchers:

- Dr. Sara Fani
- Dr. Adday Hernandez
- Dr. Michele Petrone
- Dr. Anne Regourd
- Mr. Orhan Toy



Arabic in *fidäl* in Ethiopic Christian manuscripts

Marginalia:

Short Arabic texts (e.g. the Lord's prayer)

Simple lists of Arabic words written in *fidäl*: e.g. the practical glossaries

Arabic words, phrases and almost complete texts in magical prayers

'Enbaqom's Anqäšä Amin contains several Arabic words and short phrases in Ethiopic script



Arabic written in fidäl in contemporary Islamic texts



- Translation of religious texts into Amharic from Arabic originals
- Basic manuals for Islamic practise
- Booklets for the average faithful
- Instruction guides for performing the fundamental rites of the Islamic religion
- Translation of the Qur'ān (and ḥadīṭ) into Amharic and Tigrinya (Harari)
- Fidäl widespread among Ethiopian Muslims
- Emergence of an Islamic calligraphy in fidäl?



Examples of Arabic in *fidäl*

No complete and well structured Arabic (-Islamic) text written in *fidäl* but

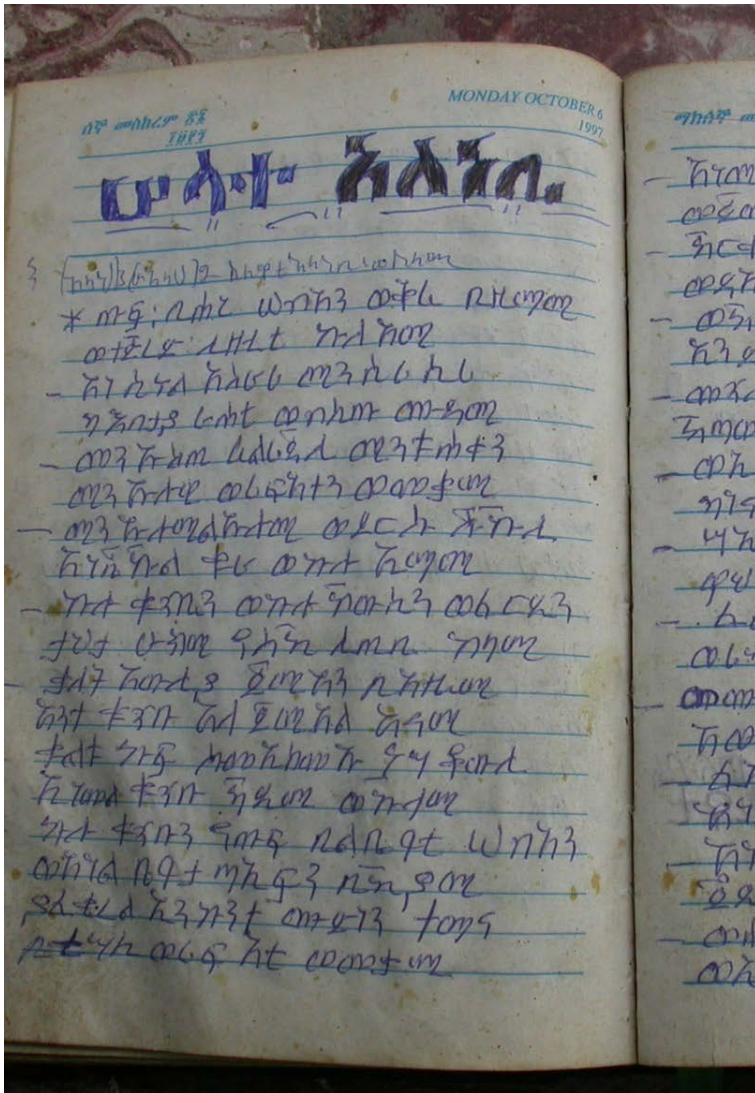
Recently found examples of full Arabic texts kept on manuscripts and written in Ethiopian script:

1) Collection of traditional Islamic texts from Harar (Simone Tarsitani's research)

2) The Sylloges of *šayḥ* Zäkkarəyas (Christian but of Islamic origin) in Arabic and Amharic: EMMML 6239 (to be catalogued; courtesy of Ted Erho)



An Islamic Manuscript found in Harar



terminus post quem 1997
(photo: Simone Tarsitani,
Harar, September 2003)

Private collection

Text in Arabic of the poem *Ṭuf bi-ḥānī* (attributed to 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ġilānī)

Manuscript contains:

Mawlid collection of Harar:
texts in Arabic and Old Harari
A few Oromo Islamic texts

All in *fidäl* but with some small
sections in Arabic script



An Islamic Manuscript found in Harar

Possible background:

Harari written in fidäl since 1986

Fidal is now officially used to write Harari

E. Wagner, "Die Wervendung der aethiopischen Schrift fuer das Harari", in V. Boell et alii (eds.), *Studia Aethiopica. In Honour of Siegbert Uhlig on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, Wiesbaden Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2004, 355-360.

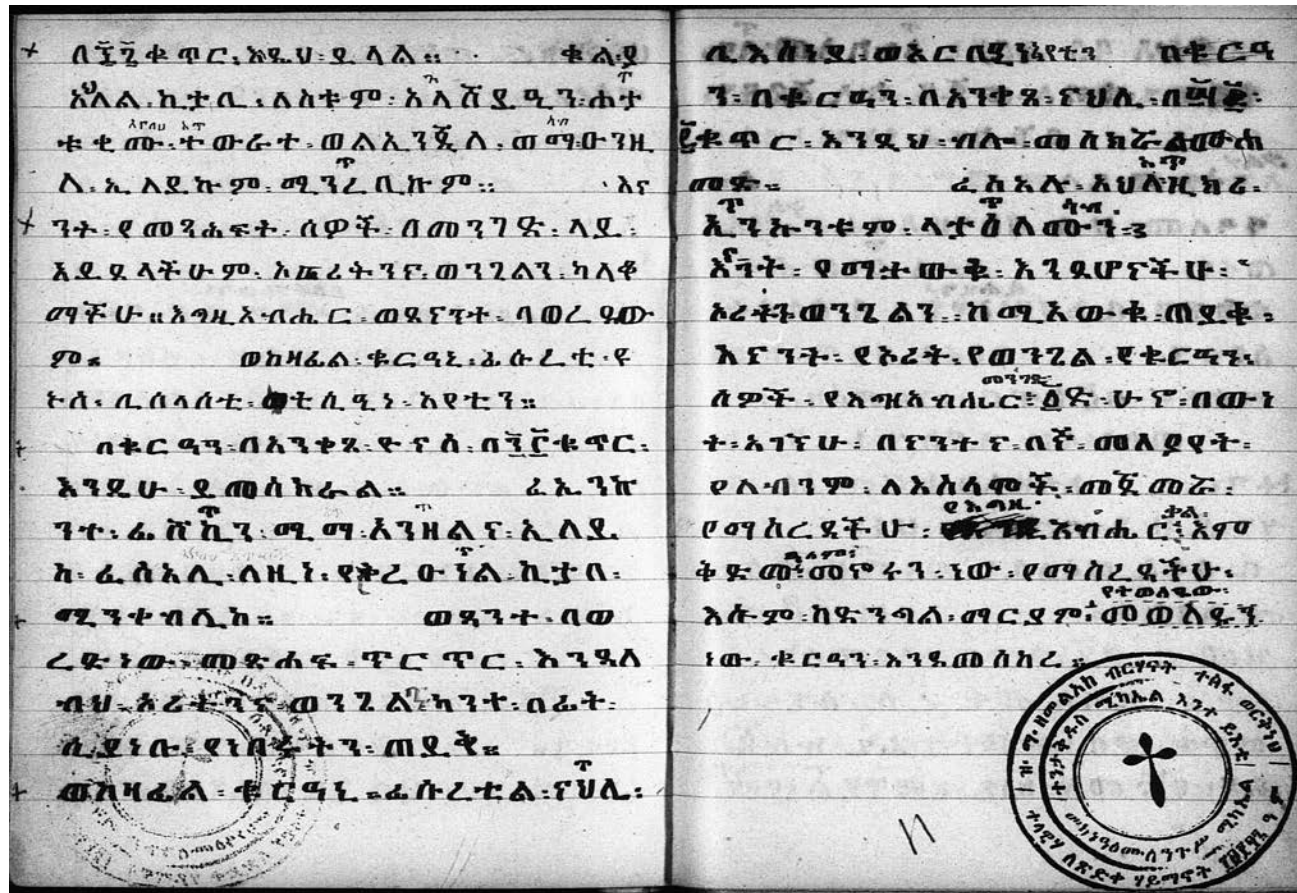
Arabic script still very known in Harar but in regression

- Manuscript demonstrates
 - Rooting of fidäl in the Harari society
 - Modern Harari in fidäl
 - Spread of Amharic both in the city of Harar and in the Harari communities in Ethiopia



Manuscript EMMML 6239

183 ff., 1 col., 17-18 lines; lined exercise book; 20th century

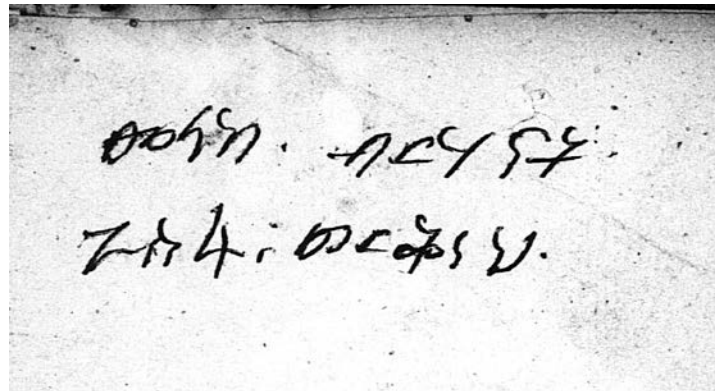


Manuscript EMMML 6239: provenance

Possession note: [f. 1r]: Mäl'akä bərhanat Täsfa Wärqnäh

Stamp [ff. 4r, 11r, 70v, 175v, 183v]: Zə ma[htäm] zämal'akä bərhanat Täsfa Wärqnäh Tänta Qəddus Mika'el əntä yə'əti mäkanä 'aḍmu länəgus Mika'el tälawiha läşədqä haymanot 1957 E.C.

Originally kept in the church of Qəddus Mika'el, Tänta, Wällo then brought by the owner to Addis Ababa where it was microfilmed



Manuscript EMMML 6239: Content

Ff. 4r-183v: Sylloges of of šayḥ Zäkkarəyas

Alessandro Gori [ed., tr.], “La Silloge di Šah Zakkāreyas. Testo arabo originale, introduzione, traduzione e note”, *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Atti, Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche, Memorie*, ser. 9a, 13, 4, 2001, 453–583 [Arabic in Arabic script];

Alessandro Gori, [ed., tr.], “La Silloge di Šah Zakkāryās sull’Islam – Versione amarica. Testo amarico originale, introduzione, traduzione e note”, *ibid.* 16, 2, 2003, 57–319 [Amharic translation]).

Alessandro Gori, Zäkaryas, šayḥ in Siegbert Uhlig, Alessandro Bausi (eds.), *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, volume 5, 116-7.



šayḥ Zäkkarəyas: main facts

šayḥ Zäkkarəyas (Zakariyā' b. Ğibrīl b. Dawūd al-Bayyamadarī
(b. Ca. 1840 Nägälla; d. ca. 1920)

- Muslim learned man active in Lasta
- 1892 had a series of divinely inspired visions
- Interpretation of the Koran according to Biblical principles
- Christianizing interpretation of the Koran
- Muslim learned men opposition against his preaching
- Summoned by Mənilək to Addis Ababa in 1906
- Defense of his theses in front of the Emperor
- Menelik permitted him to continue teaching
- He obtained imperial privileges
- Ownership of land in Lasta



šayḥ Zäkkarəyas: Christianity

- Baptized in 1910 under the name of Nəwayä Krəstos
- Aläqa Tayyä Gäbrä Maryam wrote a poem in his honour (A. Gori, "La poesia di alaqa Täyya in onore di šah Zakkäryäs", *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, 43, 1999, 65-112).
- Conversion movement: from Islam to Christianity
- Uncertain relationship with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church
- Addis Krəstyian: possibly 7000 individuals
- Proximity to the Swedish Mission
- His *Sylloges* was apparently published in Cairo by the Danish Protestant Mission in Aden
- Most of Zäkkarəyas' followers entered the Adventist Church after his death
- No information about the further developments of the movement



šayḥ Zäkkarəyas: Sylloges

Arabic Sylloges: ms IES 429b (acquired 19/12/1972)

Photocopied and donated by D. Crummey

Originally in possession of *aläqa* Motbaynor of Däbrä Tabor
disciple of the šayḥ

Terminus ante quem in a marginal note: 18/01/1946

Used by Zakkärəyas to preach among Muslims?

Amharic Sylloges: ms IES1148 dated 24 mägğabit 1961 E.C.
(02/04/1969)

Library of the Qəddəst Səllase Cathedral

Commissioner Liqä səłtanat Habtä Maryam Wärqnäh

Interest for Islam and religious discussion (commissioner also
of two copies of the Anqašä amin)



šayḥ Zäkkarəyas: bilingual Sylloges in EMMML 6239

f. 8v table of content

ff.4r-19v: first chapter on the eternity of the Word of God

ff.20r-69r: second chapter on prophecy

ff. 69r-113v: third chapter on the birth of the Christ

113v-118r: fourth chapter on baptism

ff. 118r-134v: fifth chapter on the Offering (Eucharist)

ff. 134v-158v: sixth chapter on the death and resurrection of the Messiah

ff. 158v-175r: seventh chapter on the “abrogating and the abrogated”

ff.175r-183v: eighth chapter on polytheism



šayḥ Zäkkarəyas: bilingual Sylloges in EMMML 6239

Incipit f. 4r:

ወሰሰቡ፡ሀዛታዕ፡አሊፍ፡የዚህ፡ድርሰት፡አወጣጥ፡ሰበቡ።

ቢኢዝኒላሂ፡ወታዕሊ ሚሂ፡መአለመኒ፡አሐዳን፡ሚነል፡መኸሉቃቲ።

እግዚአብሔር፡በፈቃዱ፡መራኝ፡እንጂ፡ከፍጥረት፡፩እንኳ አልመራኝም።

- (a kind of) interlinear translation: Arabic followed by Amharic
- No significant difference between the text of the bilingual Sylloges and previously known Arabic and Amharic versions
- Collection of relevant passages from the Koran, the Old and the New Testament
- Commentary
- Amharic translation incorporates some interpretation
- Similar to “tafsīr” translations of the Koran



šayḥ Zäkkarəyas: bilingual Sylloges in EMMML 6239

Varia:

Some Arabic letters on f. 12v, 69v (bi s mi)

f. 1r: words written in Latin script (possibly Italian: “una scatola?”)

f. 3v: two Amharic short notes on Islam and Muslims; the Pater Noster in Italian (in Ethiopic script)

71v-72r: questions and answers on Muḥammad, his wives and his sons



šayḥ Zäkkarəyas: bilingual Sylloges in EMMML 6239

Some observation on the Arabic orthography:

No consistent distinction between *'ayn* and *hamza*

No consistent distinction between *hā'* and *ḥā'*

No use of supplementary signs so:

No distinction between *ḍāl* and *zāl*

No distinction between *ṭā'* and *sīn*

šād written with *sīn* but followed by a labial vowel: so

ḍād written with *d* but followed by a labial vowel: *d^wa* e.g. f.16r



šayḥ Zäkkarəyas: bilingual Sylloges in EMMML 6239

Division of the words not corresponding to the original:

e.g. 5v *ağli:suni*

Amharic indications to the reader (often abbreviations) over the line:

annabäh = reading the words in a phrase

aṭbəq (and ṭ) = geminate the consonant

lalla = non-geminated consonant

sab = coalesce

Possibly inspired by the '*alāmāt al-waqf*' of the Koran

It seems to have been written down from a reading session but with a further check on a written text



šayḥ Zäkkarəyas: bilingual Sylloges in EMMML 6239

Background of the text

- Unknown place of copying
- Possibly Wällo, Tänta, Qəddus Mika'el
- Circulating there
- Connection with a Christian-Islamic environment typical of Wällo

Bilingual useful to discuss with the Muslims in both Amharic (local spoken language) and Arabic (prestige language of the Muslims) and sacred language of the Koran

Role of the Ethiopian Church in the revival of the Amharic Sylloges

Liqa Səltanat active also in this case?





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