‘AŞamî 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

Paris, 11 December 2014
Dias 1
Project framework

Islam in the Horn of Africa: A Comparative Literary Approach

Financing by the European Research Council
Seventh Framework Programme (FP7)
Advanced Grant no. 322849
Period of financing: 2013-2018
Originally based at the University of Florence (01.07.13)
Transferred to the University of Copenhagen on 01.02.14
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 Ethiopian 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 Syllologes of šayḥ Zākkarāyas (Christian but of Islamic origin) in Arabic and Amharic: EMML 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-Ǧīlānī)

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

All in fidāl 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


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

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Manuscript EMML 6239

183 ff., 1 col., 17-18 lines; lined exercise book; 20th century
Manuscript EMML 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 ye’əti mäkanä ‘aḍmu länəgus Mika’el tälawiha láṣədqä 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

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Manuscript EMML 6239: Content

Ff. 4r-183v: Sylloges of Šayḫ Zākkarēyas

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 Mānilēk 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
• 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 Zākkarēyas: 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 Zakkārēyas to preach among Muslims?

**Amharic Sylloges:** ms IES1148 dated 24 mäggabbit 1961 E.C.
(02/04/1969)
Library of the Qəddəst Səllase Cathedral
Commissioner Liqä səlṭanat Habtä Maryam Wärqnäh
Interest for Islam and religious discussion (commissioner also
of two copies of the Anqaṣā amin)
šayḫ Zäkkarēyas: bilingual Sylloges in EMML 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 Zākkarēyas: bilingual Sylloges in EMML 6239

Incipit f. 4r:

ወሰሰቡ፡ሀዛታዕ፡አሊፍ፡የዚህ፡ድርሰት፡አወጣጥ፡ሰበቡ።

• (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

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Dias 16
šayḫ Zäkkarǝyas: bilingual Syllloges in EMML 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

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Dias 17
šayḥ Zakkarēyas: bilingual Sylloges in EMML 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 ẓāl 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: dwa e.g. f.16r
šayḥ Zākkarēyas: bilingual Sylloges in EMML 6239

Division of the words not corresponding to the original:
e.g. 5v āgli:suni

Amharic indications to the reader (often abbreviations) over the line:
annabāh = reading the words in a phrase
aṭbēq (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 Zäkkarĕyas: bilingual Sylloges in EMML 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

Liqä Səltanat active also in this case?
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Dias 21