Islam in the Horn of Africa.
A comparative literary approach

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Dias 1
Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Administrative data

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Dias 2
Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Staff

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Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Actions

Location of manuscripts, printed books, manuscript and book collections
Public institutions and private ownership (especially educational institutions, sufi centres and shrines; e.g. in Somaliland places like Berbera Zaylac, Borama, Shiihk, Guriga Dariiqada, Mayt)

Digitization of the items
Content analysis
Collection of data about authors and works
Collection of data about the history of the items
Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Project fields

Arabic Literature in a wider sense:

Both classical (pre-modern) and modern

“Texts that are intended to do more than instruct and inform” (Geert Jan van Gelder)
But especially:
Arabic grammar and rhetoric
Scientific literature
Historical and geographical literature
Theology
Law
Mysticism (devotional literature; invocations; supplications)
Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Project scope

Islamic Studies
• The project focuses on the Islamic intellectual tradition in the Horn of Africa

African Studies
• The Project focuses on Islam in Africa (or African Islam) and its dialectic connession with “main stream” Arab Islam
Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Documentary base

Manuscript and printed texts

- Oldest so far found dated Islamic manuscript in the region
- 22 ǧumāda al-āḥira 989 A.H./14 July 1581 A.D.
- IES 1852, colophon
- Ḥuṭab al-ǧum'a
Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Documentary base

Texts written by local authors in Arabic and in local languages (Old Harari, Amharic, Oromo, Somali) in Arabic script

e.g. 52v HAR 02 du‘ā’ in Somali in latin script with instructions on how to read it
HAR 35 (ms) 29 folios mostly loose sheets or bifolios 2r-28v
Ownership (f. 2r): Mālik ḥāḍā al-kitāb limā siwā Allāh al-ḥā qq
Hasan b. ḥā qq ‘Abdī Colophon (f. 28v): Wednesday 1 rabi‘ al-awwal 1329 (02/03/1911)
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Texts of not local authors copied in the region
e.g. HAR 37 (ms) 26
23 folios (non bound; loose sheets and bifolios)
ff. 2r-19v Lamiyyat al-afāl fī šarḥ šayḥ Badr al-Dīn wa-aydān yusammā Durrat al-lā’lā
colophon f. 2r Monday ṣawwāl 1326 (Oct.Nov.1908) Copyist Ādam b. aw Aḥmad b. aw Guled
min ‘iyāl ‘Abdallāh Ishāq written for šayḥ ḥāqq Ḥasan b. šayḥ hagg ‘Abd b. šayḥ Ibrāhīm. Ownership
(f. 2r): Mālikuh Ḥasan b. al-ḥāqq ‘Abd al-Raḥman
Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Documentary base

Texts copied or printed abroad
- E.g. Egypt (or Yemen) and taken to the Horn
- Books printed in Cairo or elsewhere and sold in the Horn (often via Yemen and Djibouti)
- E.g. HAR 20 (27)
- Singapur: Sulayman Mara‘ī n.d.

Stamp of the bookshop: Muḥammad Sālim Bā Midḥāf Hargeysa

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Dias 10
Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Documentary base

HAR 27 (34)
- Unbound book
- Fatḥ rabb al-bariyya ‘alā al-durra al-bāhiyya naẓm al-ağurrūmiyya
- Author Ibrāhīm al-Bīğawī
- On the margin Naẓm al-AGurruymiyya by šayḥ al-ʿUmriṭī
- Cairo: Dār al-kutub al-ʿarabiyya 1325
- Stamp on the title page: Ḥāǧǧ ’Ibādī Ḥasan al-kutubī ’Adan

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Dias 11
Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Documentary base

Har 07
On the margin: Itḥāf al-murīd sarḥ ʿAbd al-Salām al-Mālikī ʿalā Ǧawharat al-Tawhīd
Cairo Maṭbaʿat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-awlāduh 1368-1948
Possession note: ḥādā al-kitāb haqq Allāh wa-lakin bi-yad al-faqīr al-rāḡi ṭarāḥmat rabbiḥ Muḥammad ʿAwale al-qādiriyyya wa-qīmatuh miʿa arbaʿūn

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Dias 12
Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Documentary base

HAR 26 (33)
Unbound Ḥāšiyat Aḥmad al-Dardīr ‘alā qiṣṣat al-miʿrāg authored by Naǧm al-Dīn al-Ǧiṭī
On the margins: the qiṣṣa
Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-‘arabiyya Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-aḥawayhi Bakrī wa-‘Īsā) rabīʿ al-ṭānī 1328
On the title page: ownership Ḥāǧǧ Ḥasan b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān
Stamp in Gujarati language and English Saik Khairuddeen
Kept together with
Extracts (377-429) from Ḥāsiyat al-Baḡūrī ‘alā šarḥ al-Ḡazzī ‘alā matn Abī Šuḡā‘
Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Maymaniyya 1321
Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Documentary base

- Birth and flourishing of printing presses and publishing houses in the Horn
- Huge contemporary production of printed books also of Islamic traditional content
- Islamic calligraphy in local languages
Project tools

Digital Research Environment

relational database of the works circulating among the Muslims in Africa

- descriptions of texts and manuscripts
- authors
- places.
- bibliography

- A user-friendly browsing and search interface
- sample text editions (theological and legal thought, historiography and hagiography)
Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Methodology

Methodology of the research
• Identification of texts (both known and previously unknown)
• expand the corpus of available texts to make a more representative research

Classification according to
• genres
• contents
• titles, authors
• places of creation
• number of witnesses
• distribution of witnesses, and linguistic and graphic peculiarities
Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: First results

- Handlist of the codices
- Only main works listed
- Codicological analysis
- Selected images of dated manuscripts
Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Texts

Texts produced by local authors (main genres):

- Arabic grammar
- Commentaries on the Qur’ān
- Historical texts
- Pietistic literature
- Mystical literature

Texts produced in the wider Islamic world (main genres):

- Theology
- Law
- Science

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Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Main goals

Creation of:

- critical picture of the literary history of the Horn of Africa (in the wider frame of the Arabic Literature of Africa)
- growing database of African Islamic literature, African biography and African topography

Comparative research:

- between the different sub-regions of the focus area
- between the African “local” Islam and the “mainstream” Islamic tradition
Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Main goals

Increase the awareness:

- of Islam in Africa for the scholarship
- of the value of local tradition in Africa itself

Contribute to the mapping of the intellectual landscape of the Horn of Africa
Contribute to the understanding of the main historical processes of in the focus area and in Sub-Saharan Africa in general

Contribute to the preservation and valorization of the cultural heritage in the area

Main targets:

- local people (esp. youth) and
- the international community
Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Obstacles

- Absence or limited availability of infrastructure
- Lack of economical and logistical support
- Unclear historical and cultural consciousness
- Recent religious sectarianism
WAAD MAHADSANTIHIIN

اشكركم على حسن اصغائكم

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Dias 22
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Dias 23