Collections and models of ownership in manuscript collections of Ethiopia

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The Database of IslHornAfr Project

Complex relational database of the works circulating among the Muslims in Africa:

• descriptions of texts and manuscripts
• authors
• places.
• bibliography
• no image will be displayed, due to copyright issues
Area of work of the first mission (November-December 2014)

Oromo Kingdoms. Cambridge History of Africa IV 84.
Main cities involved in the mission

Map of South Western Ethiopia
Sites studied during the mission

Wolkite zone:
Zabi Molla
Seddeqa

Jimma – Agaro zone:
Warukko
Tije
Suuse
King Abba Jifar II (d. 1932).
Languages found in the manuscripts

1. Arabic
2. Amharic (ʻaḡamī)
3. Afaan Oromo (ʻaḡamī)

Incipit of the Dalāʾil al-ḥayrāt, IES 2638, f. 6r.
An example of Amharic ‘َاግ'amī
Manuscript sample

Collection of devotional poems, Tije collection.
Evaluation of the situation of collections in Ethiopia

1. Evidence of the presence (or absence) of an active transmission of Islamic knowledge connected with the manuscripts and their owners (both teaching and ritual use)
2. Model of ownership (single-multiple inheritors, custody)
3. Position of the owners in local society
4. Evidence of knowledge of Arabic language
5. Genres of texts found in the collections
Two main groups of collections

Persistent tradition

Vs

Interrupted tradition

*Incipit of the Dalā’il al-Ḥayrāt, IES 2638, f. 6r.*
Library of the ḥaḍra of Zabi Molla, Wolkite.
Library of Zabi Molla, Wolkite.
Boards for the study of the Quran in the library of Zabi Molla, Wolkite.
Šayḥ Nāṣir in the mosque of Warukko
Interior of the mosque of Warukko
Manuscripts and printed books outside the mosque of Tije
The house of the descendants of Shekota Tije.
ʻAbd al-Fattāḥ
Muṣʿīd al-Dīn al-Ṣiddīqī
Interior of the Great Mosque of Seddeqa.
Quran reciters outside the Great Mosque of Seddeqa.
Text composed by āBd al-Fattāḥ Muṣʿīd al-Dīn al-Ṣiddīqī, constituted of a series of letters without an evident meaning.
Farming activity in Seddeqa.
Bags of manuscripts outside the mosque of Seddeqa.
The guardian of Suuse manuscripts with some members of his family.
Conclusions

Typological classification of the collections:

1. Museum - Library: Zabi Molla - Seddeqa
2. Texts in use: Warukko
3. Inherited books: Tije - Suuse