Ethiopian Islam through its Manuscript Legacy: some examples from the Jimma Region

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Oromo Kingdoms. Cambridge History of Africa IV 84.
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Sites studied during the mission

Wolkite zone:
Zabi Molla
Seddeqa

Jimma – Agaro zone:
Warukko
Tije
Suuse
King Abba Jifar II (d. 1932).
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Elements defining collections’ keepers attitudes towards manuscripts:

• Care for privacy or secrecy of their texts
• Isolation from other Islamic groups or centers in the region
• Underestimation of the manuscripts as a cultural and material resource

Incipit of the Dalāʾil al-Ḥayrāt, IES 2638, f. 6r.
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Persistent tradition
Vs
Interrupted tradition

*Incipit* of *Dalā’il al-Ḥayrāt*, IES 2638, f. 6r.
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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

*Incipit of of the Dalāʾīl al-Ḥayrāt, IES 2638, f. 6r.*
Library of the ḥaḍra of Zabi Molla, Wolkite.
Minaret of the mosque 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.
Kemal Ibrahim with a bag of manuscripts in Seddeqa.
‘Abd al-Fattāḥ
Muṣʿīd al-Dīn al-
Ṣiddiqī
Farming activity in Seddeqa.
Bags of manuscripts outside the mosque of Seddeqa.
Interior of the Great Mosque of Seddeqa.
The guardian of Suuse manuscripts with some members of his family.
Quran reciters outside the Great Mosque of Seddeqa.
Text composed by ʻAbd al-Fattāḥ Muşʿīd al-Dīn al-Ṣiddīqī, constituted of a series of letters without an evident meaning.
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Genres of the texts found in Jimma area:

• Devotional texts (poems, litanies)
• Basic Arabic grammar
• Basic jurisprudence
• Advanced learners' books in Islamic law
• Local History
• Private correspondence
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Typological classification of the collections:

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