

Preface

From the Conference to the Proceedings

The papers collected in this volume, with one exception (see below), were originally presented and discussed during the international conference ‘Manuscripts and texts, languages and contexts. The transmission of knowledge in the Horn of Africa’, convened at the Universität Hamburg from 17 to 19 July 2014. Therefore, the composition and structure of the volume largely reflects those of the conference, which was organized into four thematic panels, chaired by the convenors themselves. These were Palaeography and Codicology (chaired by Denis Nonsnitsin; the papers are grouped in Chapter 2), History and Historical Geography (chaired by Denis Nonsnitsin; corresponding to Chapter 3 of the book), Gəʿəz Philology and Language (chaired by Alessandro Bausi; the papers are edited in Chapter 4), and Islamic Tradition: Arabic and ʿAḡamī Manuscripts (chaired by Alessandro Gori, who edited Chapter 5 of this volume).

At the beginning of each panel, the Chairs took the chance to reflect on their respective projects (these materials form the basis of Chapter 1 in this volume). Denis Nonsnitsin summarized the preliminary results of the project *Ethio-SPaRe: Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia* (ERC Starting Grant, Hamburg, 2009–2015, see Chapter 1 below for more details). After a short general overview, he dwelt on the new findings in Ethiopian bookmaking that had been revealed by the project team and commented on an updated map of manuscript collections in Təgray. The PI focused in particular on several achievements that were possible due to the interdisciplinary work within the project: new findings on historical ink composition were possible thanks to close cooperation with scientists, advances in manuscript conservation were guaranteed by close cooperation between philologists and book conservators, research into local context was enriched by cooperation with archaeologists. The cooperation was illustrated by a case study on the church of ʾAraʿro Täklä Haymanot in the *wäräda* Gulo Mäḳäda. Here, Denis Nonsnitsin’s study of the history and the collection of the church was further supplied by a virtual reconstruction and three-dimensional modelling by the archaeologist Marco Barbarino (Naples), now visible on the project web site.

Alessandro Bausi spoke about the aims and goals of the project *TraCES: From Translation to Creation: Changes in Ethiopic Style and Lexicon from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (ERC Advanced Grant, Hamburg, 2014–2019, see Chapter 1 for more details). The main scope is the creation of a digital annotated corpus of the Gəʿəz language, linked to a unique online dictionary of Gəʿəz that would include not only words and their transla-

tions but also the information on roots and patterns, and variants, as well as numerous language examples. The computational tools being developed for Gəʿəz lexicography and corpus linguistics were illustrated by Cristina Vertan and Andreas Ellwardt (Hamburg, TraCES project team).

Alessandro Gori described the structure and methodology of the project *IslHornAfr: Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach* (ERC Advanced Grant, Florence – Copenhagen, 2013–2018), aimed at the study of the Islamic literary traditions of the Horn of Africa (see Chapter 1 for more details). With the help of a specifically developed database, it identifies, lists, describes, and classifies texts circulating among the Muslims (whether Arabic or in local languages) according to their genres, contents, titles, authors, places of creation, number of witnesses, distribution of witnesses, and linguistic and graphic peculiarities.

The panel on codicology was primarily dedicated to the issues of manuscript production in Christian Ethiopia (codicology, scribal schools, collections, manuscript preservation were among the central topics covered). The paper by Denis Nosnitsin, was dedicated to the ‘Emergence and decline of manuscript collections in North Ethiopia: problems of study’ (see this volume pp. **-*). It is common practice in philological studies that scholars approach manuscripts and texts as isolated witnesses. However, each witness is part of an ecclesiastic collection, or even of a network of collections. Such collections could go through various stages in their history, closely linked to the history of the relevant owning institution. They could be founded; re-established and/or renovated; have periods of extension and growth, and periods of decline. They could cease its existence through complete or partial physical destruction or dissolving, and remaining manuscripts could be incorporated into other collections. Understanding the level of collections could resolve a number of issues related to individual manuscripts.

Vitagrazia Pisani (Hamburg, *Ethio-SPaRe* project team) introduced the case study of a particular text type as it is found in the various manuscripts she surveyed, ‘The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles: unknown witnesses from East Təgray’ (see this volume pp. **-*). This work (Eth. *Gädlä ḥawaryat*) is a collection of texts translated into Gəʿəz from Arabic, which has circulated, with varying intensity, since the end of the thirteenth century. A significant number of manuscripts was recorded in East Təgray. They date to the fourteenth through the seventeenth century and between 27 and 36 texts. The composition and distribution of these manuscripts are the main focus of the article.

Yohannes Gebre-Selassie (Mekelle) also surveyed manuscripts in Təgray (‘The composition of historical documents in Təgray: the *Kəbrä nāgəst*, *Məṣḥəfə Aksum*, *Wängel zəwəraq* and *Tarikä nāgəst*’, not published in this

volume). For that, he examined the collections of the churches of Aksum Şəyon and Mäqälä Mädḥane ʿAlām, and the monastery of Yoḥannəs Kāma. Interestingly, he showed that the traditional title *Wängel zäwäraq* (‘Golden Gospel’) may apply to manuscripts not only without any decoration, but also without any Gospel or religious content at all. Thus, the Golden Gospel of Mäqälä Mädḥane ʿAlām only contains over 3,500 land ownership documents from the town of Mäqälä for the years 1923–1975, and was obviously originally intended for the particular purpose of document archive. Not only the priests refer to the manuscript as the Golden Gospel, they also treat it as one, as they kiss it before opening.

The talk by Ted Erho (Munich), ‘Towards an understanding of early Ethiopian scribal tendencies’ (not published in this volume) was dedicated to the paratextual elements introduced by early scribes in biblical manuscripts. Among the most theoretical aspects of research on early Gəʿəz manuscripts and the early (and pre-)textual history of the Ethiopic Bible is that of the scribal activities that passed on the various traditions into later, better attested, eras. Much of the problem stems from the lack of serviceable evidence, as it is difficult to find exemplars from before the fifteenth century that are closely enough related to permit such an analysis. One of the rare exceptions occurs with manuscripts EMMML 6977 and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, éthiopien 7, both of which contain the Old Testament book of Job followed by that of Daniel and possess a genetic relationship unlikely to be more than a couple of generations removed from a common ancestor. While textual variants often form the sole basis for an investigative comparison, paratextual evidence can be used to provide a far more comprehensive picture of scribal habits and tendencies. Ted Erho’s study, focusing primarily on the Book of Daniel in each manuscript, drew upon three paratextual aspects of scribal activity on display: 1) utilization of sense divisions; 2) inclusion of *sigla*, including *paragraphoi*; and 3) the formation of headings and use of rubrication. He demonstrated that early Ethiopian scribes had little autonomy to make cognizant changes of any kind to the copied text, suggesting the fairly high probability of relatively stable, but increasingly corrupt, texts (especially biblical ones) apart from those brief times when corrections were actively pursued at scholarly centres.

Sophia Dege (Hamburg, *Ethio-SPaRe* project team) presented on the ‘Text arrangement and scribal practices in Ethiopian Psalter manuscripts’ (published as ‘The Ethiopic Psalter manuscripts: scribal practices and text arrangement’, pp. *-**). Analysing the Psalters recorded by the Ethio-SPaRe project, she demonstrated that a number of frequently overlooked codicological features typical for this type of book (stichometry, midpoint marking, rubrication, etc.) are shared by the Ethiopian tradition with such manuscript

traditions as Hebrew, Coptic, and Christian Arabic.

Michael Knüppel (Vellmar) spoke about ‘Portraits of donors in Ethiopian manuscripts of late 19th and early 20th centuries’ (not published in this volume), illustrating how the ancient illumination tradition of depicting donors in manuscripts was transformed since the introduction of book print and photography.

A large number of conference papers were dedicated to Ethiopian history with the focus on the use of manuscripts for reconstructing Ethiopian cultural landscape of the past. Stéphane Ancel (Hamburg, *Ethio-SPaRe* project team) presented an overview on ‘Historical texts in manuscripts from East Təgray’ (not in this volume). After introducing the different kinds of historical texts found in that region (genealogies, chronicles, commemoration notes, or short marginalia recording events which occurred in the past), a special attention was paid to the manuscripts preserved in Däbrä Dammo. Stéphane Ancel showed that, on the whole, historical texts are given considerable importance in manuscripts and in ecclesiastical collections, even if purely historical manuscripts remain a rarity.

Several presenters focused on the historical geography of Ethiopia. The paper ‘Reconstructing and mapping Aksum’s historical toponymy: a preliminary attempt’ was the result of an interdisciplinary research of an archaeologist, Luisa Sernicola (Naples), and philologist, Antonella Brita (Hamburg) (not published in this volume). Centuries of research in and about the area of Aksum have produced a rich corpus of place names, emerging from commemorative inscriptions, manuscripts, and historical sources (traditionally domain of philological research) that may contribute to refine our knowledge of Aksum’s ancient urban topography and the reconstruction of the changes in the spatial organization of the territory (traditionally domain of archaeology). The paper illustrated a preliminary attempt to classify, analyse, and visualize Aksum’s ancient and contemporary toponymy by combining philology, archaeology and geography.

The talk of Solomon Gebreyes (Hamburg) was dedicated to ‘The Chronicle of Emperor Gälawdewos (1540–1559): a source for the research of historical geography of medieval Ethiopia’ (see this volume pp. **-*). In his paper, Solomon focused on the place names featured on the pages of this sixteenth-century historiography, trying to localize them using the text-internal but also text-external evidence and show the changes in the historical geography of the Ethiopian empire under Gälawdewos.

Shiferaw Bekele (Addis Ababa) introduced the preliminary results of his research towards ‘Mapping medieval Ethiopia: the province of Wäğ, 13th to 16th centuries’ (not in this volume). He showed how the sources that have become available in the past decades, in particular the Stephanite hagiographies,

help to identify the location of this historical region with a far greater precision than was possible to the earlier historians. Shiferaw argued that the high areas of Gurageland of today constituted the central parts of the province, the Gurage people being its core population. Five monasteries of Wäḡ could be placed on the map. More sources are needed to draw the precise boundaries of the province.

In his presentation ‘Where was the original place of the Atronsä Maryam church?’ (not published in this volume), Derese Ayenachew (Debre Berhan) introduced a manuscript containing the Universal History by Ibn al-‘Amid (Giyorgis Wäldä ‘Amid) which he discovered in the church of Atronsä Maryam in Amḥara Sayənt. A historical additional note on ff. 143 and 144 of this 229-leaf manuscript which summarizes sixteenth-seventeenth century events in the history of Ethiopia seems to suggest that the original foundation of Atronsä Maryam was in a different place and was transferred to Amḥara Sayənt at a later point in time.

A number of presentations introduced previously unknown sources. Thus, Getatchew Haile (Collegeville), in his paper ‘Emperor Zär’a Ya‘qob of Ethiopia to Augusta Helen, “Your deed followed you”’ (see this volume pp. **) presented an Amharic text that may have the answer to the cryptic phrase *gəbrəki täläwäkki* from a *Näḡś* hymn by Emperor Zär’a Ya‘qob of Ethiopia.

A very different Amharic text was presented by Eloi Ficquet (Paris) in his paper ‘A short Amharic manuscript of the 1840s found in the Vatican papers of Arnauld d’Abbadie’ (not in this volume). The manuscript is among the unpublished papers of the French-Basque-Irish explorer Arnauld d’Abbadie (1815–1893). 19 boxes are preserved in the Vatican Library, 17 with the various parts and stages of his memoirs (edited by Allier from 1980 to 1999) and 2 with different notebooks and some miscellaneous unbound papers. The only Ethiopian manuscript consists in a single bifolium, the 4 pages being written in Amharic, probably by an informant of the scholar. According to the preliminary research results, the text is a collection of *tärät*-like sayings and comments on local history of areas in Goḡḡam and Bägemdär. Another leaf seem to preserve a translation by d’Abbadie. The manuscript is quite an unexpected witness of popular Amharic traditions in the 1840s, before the emergence of an official Amharic literature in the following decades.

Wolbert Smidt (Mekelle) introduced some previously unknown historical documents in his paper on ‘North Ethiopian epistolography—newly discovered letters of Təgrayan nobles from missionary archives (second half of the 19th century)’ (not in this volume). The letters, in Amharic, with Gə‘əz and Tigrinya elements, were written by northern Ethiopian nobles to Catholic missionaries of the Apostolic Vicariate of Abyssinia and were now discovered among the private papers of Coulbeaux. A particular attention was given

to the seals we find on the letters, which were compared to the ones known from Rubenson's publications.

Some papers revisited known manuscripts, trying to find new ways of dealing with them. Two papers approached the manuscript heritage of *aläqa* Täklä Iyäsus Nagaro Waqğəra. In his paper 'The historical writings of *aläqa* Täklä Iyäsus in documenting the literary, cultural and regional landscape of Goğğam' (not in this volume), Getie Gelaye (Hamburg) examined the cultural, literary and regional landscape of Goğğam as documented in Täklä Iyäsus's *Genealogy of Goğğam* (published by Girma Getahun, 2010) and *History of Ethiopia* (published by Sergew Gelaw, 2009). Getie traced the founders and ancestors mentioned in the genealogy to local communities and offered a thematic analysis of several poems by Täklä Iyäsus, commenting on the linguistic features typical of Goğğame Amharic dialect.

Margaux Herman (Debre Markos) presented a paper entitled 'Writing the ancient history of Goğğam: the screen of the 19th-century regional historiography' (see this volume, pp. **-*). She showed how recent written sources on the history of Goğğam, particularly the works of the aforementioned *aläqa* Täklä Iyäsus Nagaro Waqğəra, are closer to the oral tradition than to the mediaeval histories. On the example of the manuscripts examined she demonstrated the close relationship between the written and the oral history and the importance of the earlier documents for proper historical reconstruction.

The (unpublished) paper by Fesseha Berhe (Mekelle), 'Implications of a 19th-century Təgrāñña manuscript for the study of local history and culture', focused on the nineteenth-century *Tarik Ityopya* ('History of Ethiopia') by *däbtära* Fəssəḥa Giyorgis 'Abiyəzgi (1895, published by Yaqob Beyene in 1987 and by the *Maḥbār Bahli Təgray* in 2000/2001). It analysed the importance of the text for the understanding of population movements and interactions in northern Ethiopia, in particular the Saho and the Doba, with a special focus on rarely discussed toponyms and ethnonyms. Comparing the written text to oral sources, Fesseha illustrated the close relationship between the two traditions.

In his talk 'Ras Alula's Gə'əz biography—revisiting' (not in this volume), Haggai Erlich (Tel Aviv) readdressed the document published by Roger Cowley (in 1976).

Bahru Zewde (Addis Ababa) in his presentation 'Revisiting the 1911 unpublished diary of Həruy Wäldä Šəllase' (not in this volume) returned to the Amharic manuscript he had already consulted for his presentation at the 15th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies in Hamburg in 2003.

Within the panel on philology, the challenges of Gə'əz language studies was a central aspect. Besides addressing this issue in his project introduc-

tion (see above), Alessandro Bausi in his paper ‘The earlier textual Ethiopic heritage’ (not in this volume¹) contemplated on the history of emergence of Ethiopic literature and its relationship with the history of the Ethiopic language. Gəʿəz played a major role of medium for the transmission of written knowledge to the Horn of Africa since the first millennium CE. It is commonly agreed that the earliest Ethiopic texts known so far are translations from Greek, while later works are much indebted to the Christian Arabic literary tradition, particularly to the Copto-Arabic one. There is evidence for the emergence of a rich local written production only later in the course of time. One would expect that the complexity of this literary history is fully reflected in the changes in grammar, lexicon, and stylistic means of the language. The first step in approaching this delicate question—which is one among the tasks of the TraCES project—is a systematic mapping of texts and works attributed on some grounds to a precise period.

Along this line, Dawit Tessega (Nuremberg), in his paper ‘Gəʿəz grammar and vocabulary in the ancient manuscripts and in contemporary usage’ (not in this volume), attempted a comparison of the rhythmic structure and grammatical arrangement of Gəʿəz poems written in ancient and in modern times.

Stefan Weninger (Marburg) spoke of ‘A new grammar of Gəʿəz: challenges and surprises’ (not in this volume). In his talk he addressed several challenges a scholar meets when preparing a descriptive grammar: How can he cope with the diachronic perspective of the documented language history of Gəʿəz and with the different linguistic background of the various text genres (Greek, Arabic, Amharic)? Is it possible to establish a standard? Does it make sense to establish a standard? Is it possible to incorporate all that we have come to know in the past decades in a new grammar? And how to deal with the lacunae in our knowledge that would necessitate more ad-hoc research?

A particular take on the history of Gəʿəz language studies was offered by the paper by Leonardo Cohen (Haifa) and Andreu Martínez d’Alòs-Moner (Hamburg/Gondar), ‘A 1609 Gəʿəz letter by *ras Šəʿälä Krəstos*: Insights into the language’s status in early seventeenth century Ethiopia’ (published in this volume as ‘On the roots of Ethiopic philology and a ‘trilingual’ letter from the Jesuit mission period’, pp. **-*). Taking as a starting point a Gəʿəz letter, transcribed in Latin script and translated into Portuguese by the Jesuit Luis de Azevedo, the presenters did not only discuss its historical context but also showed the way early scholars dealt with the Gəʿəz language.

The theme of the seventeenth-century Ethiopian studies in Europe is fur-

1 The article shall appear in M. Wissa and H. Kennedy, eds, *Arabs, mawlās and dhimmis. Scribal practices and the social construction of knowledge in Late Antiquity and Medieval Islam, Colloquium 11 and 12 December 2013, The Warburg Institute, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* (Leuven: Peeters, 2016).

ther developed in this volume by the article by Alessandro Bausi, ‘Johann Michael Wansleben’s manuscripts and texts. An update’ (see pp. **-*). Not originally part of the conference, this contribution considerably enhances our knowledge of the history of Gəʿəz scholarship, and highlights the importance of considering early studies, that may provide insights far deeper than the results of modern research. Gəʿəz manuscripts copied by Wansleben are briefly discussed.

A series of talks in the Gəʿəz philology panel were dedicated to the earliest stratum of Gəʿəz literature, in particular the biblical text. Daniel Assefa (Addis Ababa) spoke of ‘An old witness for the Gəʿəz version of Ben Sira’ (see this volume pp. **-*). He presented some preliminary results of collation of one of the earliest witnesses of the Wisdom of Sirach in Ethiopic, MS Gunda Gunde 202, to the other known manuscript versions of the text and the critical text of Dillmann’s edition.

In his paper ‘The conundrum of the Ethiopic personal names in the Ethiopic Bible’ (not in this volume), Martin Heide (Marburg) took a close look at the translation vector as illustrated by proper names. While most are directly transcribed from the Greek, some are evidently transcribed according to a Semitic pattern. These must have been borrowed into Ethiopic prior to the translation of the Bible.

Garry Jost (Marylhurst) presented his research on ‘The textual criticism of Ethiopic Obadiah: a characterization of the shared variants constituting the five families of manuscripts’ (see this volume pp. **-*). The study was part of the Textual History of the Ethiopic Old Testament Project (THEOT) and illustrated the results of computer-assisted collation and grouping of 33 manuscripts of Obadiah.

Loren Stuckenbruck (Munich) spoke of ‘Challenges in the text-critical study of the Ethiopic Book of Enoch’ (see this volume pp. **-*). While scholars more or less unanimously agree that this best known and studied Gəʿəz text of Aksumite provenance was translated directly from a Greek text, likely around the fifth century, a millennium of unknown transmissional vicissitudes exists before any extant manuscript evidence arises. At the same time, published critical editions of this book, the most recent appearing thirty-five years ago, are limited to no more than eight manuscripts of its earlier recension, whereas recent investigations have increased this number to more than two dozen full and partial copies. On the example of two chapters of Enoch, Stuckenbruck discussed some of the challenges in editing a text with a complex and wide-ranging Gəʿəz textual tradition as well as sporadic non-Ethiopic evidence which may or may not be helpful in identifying or reconstructing its physically lost Aksumite ‘original’ version.

The *Kəbrä nägästä*, already referred to in the talk by Yohannes Gebre-

Sellassie, was also in the focus of Amsalu Teferra's (Addis Ababa) paper 'Cycles of Zion in Ethiopic texts' (published in this volume, pp. **-*). It was dedicated to the traditional Gə'əz narrative of the Ark of the Covenant and its wanderings as witnessed by the *Kəbrä nägäšt*, the *Liber Axumae*, the *Dərsanä şəyon*, and the *Tä'ammərə Maryam*.

The content of a previously unknown eighteenth-century manuscript was the subject of the presentation 'An ancient description of the inhabited world, with some anecdotes concerning different cities and sages: The case of a new manuscript' by Rafał Zarzecny (Rome, published in this volume on pp. **-*). The text transmitted by this witness seems to be a rare compilation of probably translated traditional (legendary or simply mythological) descriptions of the ancient world. Zarzecny searched for the possible roots and ancient inspirations of this text.

A short study by Gidena Mesfin (Hamburg), 'Beyond tribal names and denominations in the texts of *Mäftəhe səray* manuscripts' (not published in this volume) offered a survey of proper names that are used for their alleged apotropaic powers in the various 'magical prayers'. Besides offering an identification of the names, Gidena tried to assign them to particular manuscript types and 'magic' practitioners.

Finally, the panel on Islamic tradition (a session running parallel to that on Gə'əz studies), welcomed scholars dealing in their research with the manuscripts written or used by the Muslims of Ethiopia.

Several papers introduced previously unknown texts and documents in the Arabic language.

In his paper 'Introducing an Arabic manuscript of *şayḥ* Muḥammad Şāfi (d. 1806)' (published in this volume as '*Ma'ūnat al-faqīr* by *şayḥ* Muḥammad Şāfi (d. 1806): a first introduction', pp. **-*), Endris Mohammed (Addis Ababa) offered a preliminary study of an unpublished Arabic religious treatise authored by the famous Wällo Muslim scholar, *şayḥ* Muḥammad Şāfi b. Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Asqārī.

Michele Petrone (Florence/Copenhagen, member of the *IslHornAfr* team) presented a paper entitled 'Some notes about the lists of saints in Harari Arabic manuscripts' (published in this volume as 'Devotional texts in Ethiopian Islam: a *munāğāḥ* invoking the intercession of prophets, male and female saints and *'ulamā'*', pp. **-*). He edited and translated a lengthy invocation in Arabic transmitted as an additional text in an undated manuscript from the collection of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies and containing an extensive list of saints. He compared the text to the other known lists of saints from Ethiopia (in particular, those published by Ewald Wagner) and hypothesized that the text may have been written in the city of Harar.

Additional texts were also in the focus of attention of Sara Fani (Florence/

Copenhagen, member of the *IslHornAfr* team), who spoke about ‘Magic, traditional medicine and theurgy in Arabo-Islamic manuscripts of the Horn of Africa’ (published in this volume, pp. **.*). Researching documentary notes and paratexts in Arabo-Islamic manuscripts in the collection of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies of Addis Ababa University, she revealed that, in addition to historical and documentary notes, sometimes attesting *waqf* or local Islamic *qaḍī* court records, many additional notes and paratexts are related to magical and theurgical practices or to traditional medicine.

A particular type of documentary texts, the *waqf* certificate, was dealt with by Alessandro Gori in his survey ‘*Waqf* certificates from Harar: a first assessment’ (see this volume, pp. **.*). He showed that research on *waqf* (charitable trust) has been overwhelmingly conducted by social historians and sociologists, their interest being in the investigation of the birth, development and spread of the charitable endowments of economically relevant assets or social institutions in the Muslim world and in their role in the preservation of the social cohesion of the Muslim territories. Little attention has been paid to the *waqf* of books, and even less to the actual form and style of the *waqf* certificates. Alessandro Gori presented an analysis of a selection of six unpublished *waqf* certificates of Qurʾānic codices from Harar kept in the Institute of Ethiopian Studies in Addis Ababa.

Another certificate type, the *iğāza*, was studied by Hassen Mohammed Kawo (Addis Ababa/Cape Town), who spoke of ‘*Šayḥ* ʿAbdalla Walenso (d.1369/1949) and his legacy in transmission of *ḥadīṭ* in southeastern Ethiopia’ (not in this volume). He offered some preliminary remarks on two *iğāza* certificates of *ḥadīṭ* from eastern Arsi, issued to *šayḥ* Muḥammad Aliyyū Taaʾoo and *šayḥ* Muḥammad Šāliḥ b. *kabīr* ʿAlī better known as Muḥammad Šāliḥ Hwaatee in Arsi. The certificates maintain the educational chain through *šayḥ* ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿĀdam (better known as *šayḥ* ʿAbdalla Walenso, after the place of Walenso in eastern Haräрге) to his teacher, *šayḥ* Aḥmad b. Sulaymān of Baallakasa. The documents are witnesses to the diffusion of the *ḥadīṭ* teaching in Ethiopia.

Other contributions were dedicated to manuscripts primarily containing texts in local languages written in Arabic script. The languages included the Cushitic Saho and Somali, and the Semitic Argobba, Amharic, Harari, and Tigrinya.

Giorgio Banti (Naples) read the paper he co-authored with Moreno Vergari (Bolzano) and Axmadsacad Maxammad Cumar on ‘Saho Islamic poetry and other literary genres in ʿ*ağamī* script’ (not in this volume). He focused on the *nazme* hymns, sung by the Saho during the *mawlid* and other religious ceremonies. These hymns are generally associated with popular Sufi Islam, in particular the Ḥatmīyya brotherhood. Most *nazme* are transmitted orally,

and there is no printed collection, but occasionally *šayḥs* would record them in Arabic script. The paper focused on the *nazme* by *Sheekh* Soliiman Ismaaciil Maxammad (recited and written down in Irhaafalo, Eritrea, in 2010) and provided some other examples of Saho *‘aḡamī* texts read by the Saho diaspora in the UK.

‘*Aḡamī* manuscripts from southern Somalia: sheekh Awees from Brava (d. 1907)’ (see this volume, pp. **-**) was the title of another talk by Giorgio Banti (Naples). *Sheekh* Awees from Brava, killed by supporters of the ‘mad Mullah’ Maxamed Cabdille Xasan, composed several religious hymns both in Arabic and in southern Somali, with features of the local dialects of the communities for whom he had composed his poems. Some of these *qasīdas* have been published (by Enrico Cerulli and Martino Mario Moreno). Banti discussed some of the hymns which he could obtain in copy (by *sheekh* Abuukar Maxamed Yare) during his visit to Buulomareerto in the 1980s.

‘Two Argobba *aḡām* manuscripts from Wällo’ (see this volume, pp. **-**) were the topic of the talk by Andreas Wetter (Berlin). The two documents are rare examples of Argobba *‘aḡamī* and unique witnesses of a particular dialect of this highly endangered language. They play a crucial role in the reconstruction of language history of Argobba since the variety used in the manuscripts differs considerably from the Argobba variety spoken today.

Kemal Abdulwahab (Addis Ababa) dedicated his talk to the ‘*Kašf al-ḡumma* by *šayḥ* Ṭalḥa b. Ġaʿfar (d.1935): a messianic and polemical Amharic-*aḡām* text’ (see this volume, pp. *-). The renowned Muslim scholar *šayḥ* Ṭalḥa b. Ġaʿfar, from Argobba in Wällo, used Amharic as the language of religious teaching; the existing manuscripts all use the Arabic script. One of his treatises, *Tawḥīd inna fiqh* has been published (in *fidāl*); his poetic works remain largely unstudied. One of them, the *Kašf al-ḡumma*, transmitted in at least three manuscripts, is particularly interesting for illustrating the relationship to the outside Islamic world, and in particular to the Dervish movement led by Muḥammad Aḥmad b. Abdallāh (al-Mahdī) in Sudan.

In his paper ‘Bun Fatah, a Harari supplication related to coffee ceremony’ (not published in this volume), Ahmed Zekaria (Addis Ababa) discussed a manuscript copied by *ustad* Ibrāhīm Wazīr in Harar in 1409/1989 from a notebook of the late *ḥaḡḡī* Aḥmad ‘Alī Malāk. The main text of the manuscript is a description of the coffee ceremony in Arabic; it is interspersed with a supplication in Harari. A first analysis of the syntax and word formation suggests that it is an old supplication.

Amira Ibrahim (Addis Ababa) presented a paper entitled ‘Describing a Tigrinya *‘aḡamī* manuscript’ (not published in this volume). She offered a first analysis of a Tigrinya *manzūma* by *šayḥ* ‘Umar Abrar from Təgray. The text, transmitted in a manuscript written in Arabic script, concerns the impression

of the Prophet Muḥammad on his first wife, Ḥadīḡa—a unique topic since women were rarely addressed in early times.

Kemal Ibrahim (Addis Ababa) introduced the ‘Unique manuscript collection of Säddäqa, Ğimma zone’ (not published in this volume). This was one of the first glimpses into the manuscript tradition of the former Gibe kingdoms of south-western Ethiopia. Kemal surveyed and catalogued 52 manuscripts from the collection of the Säddäqa mosque. In addition to the ‘usual’ manuscripts such as the copies of the Qurʾān, *fiqh* and *tawḥīd*, texts, personal letters etc., there are manuscripts written in unknown ‘secret scripts’, invented by *ṣayḥ* Musʾid al-Dīn Saddaqī. Some have strange symbols which superficially resemble Chinese characters. It is possible that the writing is fully invented and cannot be deciphered.

Finally, Orin Gensler (Addis Ababa) contemplated on the possible influences of Christian writing tradition upon the Arabo-Islamic one in his talk ‘Word-breaking in Ethiopian Arabic: Evidence for intimate Christian-Muslim contact (with an appendix on semantic change in Harari)’ (not published in this volume). In particular, word division at line ends, as a rule impossible in ‘canonical’ Arabic scribal practice, seems to be a frequent feature of Ethiopian Arabic manuscripts. This may have been mediated by the Muslim communities that were intimately woven into the fabric of Christian Ethiopia—*Ġäbärti*, and/or Christian converts to Islam. Gensler also showed that many words in Harari have undergone semantic change compared to their older meaning presumably recorded in Gəʿəz. As the same shift of meaning is mostly present in Amharic, the change in Harari (spoken by Muslims) could be due to an influence of Amharic (spoken by Christians).

While none of the papers specifically dealt with manuscript conservation, many of the surveys commented on the preservation state of manuscripts and entire collections. Denis Nosnitsin, in his report on the *Ethio-SPaRe* project, described in detail the interdisciplinary efforts towards the reconstruction and conservation of several precious ancient manuscripts.

This cursory overview illustrates well the thematic extent of the conference. Most of the various issues connected with the study of the manuscripts, their material form and context, their content, and finally their place in scholarship have found their way into the ***** chapters of this volume.

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