

IslHornAfr – 3rd Field Mission Report
Djibouti, 31st January - 8th February 2016

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I. INTRODUCTION

I.1. The present environment

The third field mission of the project IslHornAfr has been led in the République de Djibouti, the smallest state in the Horn of Africa, called so after its seaport capital. The country extends to inland frontiers from the northern to the southern shores of the Gulf of Tağūra, a narrow inlet of the Gulf of Aden. Containing the Western shore of the Bāb al-Mandab, the strait that joints the Gulf of Aden to the Red Sea, the country has a strategic commercial and military relevance¹. Djibouti is a land of permanent intense heat and drought and at the end of the briefly seasonal flow in watercourses, herds of livestock depend on permanent wells; the Awaš river is the only permanent water supply for the local people, their cattle and agriculture.

Two indigenous ethno-linguistic groups are represented in the country: the 'Afar (around 60%) and the Somali, mainly belonging to the 'Issa clan, the only autochthonous one (around 30%); the rest of the population consists of Arabs (around 11%) and a small Western, in particular French, minority due to the presence of foreign military bases in the region and to its colonial past. In the late 19th century, in fact, the colony of French Somaliland was established in the region according to concessions given by the ruling Somali and 'Afar sultans. With regard to the 'Afar, they include the citizens of four previous sultanates: Tadjoura and Goba'ad entirely, Raḥayto in the majority, and Awsa in a small part. In 1977 Djibouti obtained the independence from France and the Republic of Djibouti was officially established.

French and Arab are the two official languages of the country: but 'Afar and Somali are spoken as

1 The Djiboutian government's recent policy reflects an evident change in the role of the country from being a simple French enclave, after its colonial past, to becoming a self standing geopolitical actor in an international perspective (https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Research/Africa/0413bp_djibouti.pdf; <http://www.notiziegeopolitiche.net/?p=61217>; <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/articles/middle-east/24435-djibouti-the-latest-chess-piece-in-the-riyadh-tehran-game>). The determined foreign policy of the government is also founded on the harsh repression of its opposition, a leaning and attitude which inevitably leads to violence and to the very sensitive perception of specific issues, such as religion (see <http://www.dw.com/en/unrest-and-violence-break-out-in-strategic-port-of-djibouti-on-gulf-of-aden/a-18935041>).

mother tongue by the two ethnic groups. Each people is united by its own links of language, culture, religious membership and patrilineal kinship.

The official religion of the country is Islam, to which about the 94% of the residents adhere; in particular they mostly follow the Sunnī tradition and the Šāfi'ī legal school. The affiliation to Sufi brotherhoods play a prominent role in the region: devotional practices reflect the cult related to local Muslim saints associated with each of the two people, being at the same time also representative of a pre-Islamic religious heritage. As in other regions of the Horn, in fact, Islam in Djibouti consists of an orthodox and a localized dimension and accommodates local practices, which often take priority over the šarī'a. The most spread Sufi *ṭarīqa* in the country seems to be the Qādiriyya followed by the Aḥmadiyya, in particular in the Somali tribe of the Habar-Ġa'lo². In addition to 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ġilānī, whose *maqāmāt* are numerous, various saints either of local or foreign origins are venerated almost everywhere, and pilgrimages to their (sometimes false) tombs are frequent during the year. The veneration to these personalities' tombs is not limited to the local population but sometimes involved pilgrims from the Arab and Somali regions visiting them. These devotional practices and aggregation circumstances become thus a further occasion of intellectual and literary exchange both in an oral and written dimension. Among the Somali, various devout Dervish orders, thus linked to the Šāliḥiyya *ṭarīqa*, have their own particular observance³.

1.2. The historical background

As it is well known, Islam was introduced in the Horn of Africa from the western coast of the Arabia Peninsula shortly after the hiġra⁴: the Dahlak islands had already become Muslim at the beginning of the 8th century and most probably many of the others coastal settlements of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden also began to have their earliest Muslims at the same time. After the 10th century Islam began to make a major breakthrough in the Ethiopian region⁵ and spread in the hinterland along the trade routes during the following centuries. The flourishing of a Muslim “Sultanate of Shewa”, a confederation of Muslim principalities, is well attested from the beginning of the 12th century⁶. Around 1285 A.D. this first Muslim political entity was absorbed by the Sultanate of Ifāt, ruled by the Walašma' dynasty and extending over parts of what are now eastern Ethiopia, Djibouti and northern Somalia. Thanks to its geographical location and its control over the port city of Zayla', Ifāt became the leading among the Muslim principalities of the whole Ethiopian area and around 1415 one of the Muslim principalities subjected by the Sultanate of Ifāt since 1288, 'Adal, became the leading political entity of the confederation and the capital of the Walašma' sultanate, which controlled, at its height, also parts of Eritrea⁷. It is clear that the principality of 'Adal developed and extended, in its eastern

2 EI², vol. II, pp. 535-536.

3 See SAMATAR 2007, pp. 1045-1046.

4 The Masġid al-Qiblatayn in Zayla' situated in the adjacent Somalia and dating back to the 7th century is a sound heritage of the first spread of the new religion in the area, as well as the following accounts of Arab geographers and writers, such as al-Ya'qūbī (d. 898) who mentioned Muslims living along the Northern Somali seaboard.

5 After the conflict with the pagan queen of the *banū al-hamwīyya*, in fact, the power of the Christian kingdom of Aksum seriously declined in the interior; at the same time the rise of the independent Muslim power of the Fatimids in Egypt, and the revival of the Red Sea as a major channel of the eastern trade, gave an additional impetus to the growing influence of Islam in the whole region (TAMRAT 1977, pp. 103-104).

6 According to a local Arabic chronicle, the first Mahzumite prince of the so-called “Sultanate of Shoa” began to rule in the last decades of the 9th century (CERULLI 1947, p. 16).

7 See TAMRAT 1977, pp. 134 *et seq.*

part, on a 'Afar and Somali substratum, gradually absorbed and integrated in the new political entity. During the XVI century and the religious military campaign led by Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Ġāzī (d. 1543) against the Christian Ethiopian Empire, Somali tribes inhabiting the southern coast of the Gulf of Taḡūra took part in the expeditions being enlisted in the Muslim army⁸. As for the 'Afar, their influence inside the kingdom of 'Adal is still conjectural due to its multiethnic basis; the fact that the name 'Adal is borrowed from the Ad'āli, an ancient dynasty among the southern 'Afar, seems anyway to suggest that they should have been quite numerous⁹.

The Christian attacks from the west and the Oromo expansion from the south forced the sultan of 'Adal, Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Gāsa (r. 1576-1583)¹⁰, cousin of the *imām* Aḥmad Grañ, to move the capital from Harar (capital of the Sultanate since 1520) to Awsa in 1577. Very little is known about the region of Awsa before that date. The name refers geographically to the region of the lakes where the Awaš river ends and still designates the most ancient 'Afar sub-groups. Until today the Awsa is the only region in which the 'Afar are farmer: agriculture seems to be introduced in the region by the Haralla¹¹, an ethnic group mentioned in the written Arabic and Amharic sources coming from the region of Harar¹²; according to the traditions, they dried the lake which in the time of their arrival occupied the region of Awsa, to farm, even if Awsa, at that time, was possibly already inhabited by sedentary people.¹³ A first migration of the Haralla group to Awsa refers to the period XIV-XVII century, may be as a consequence of the 'Adal submission in 1288 or of the campaign of 'Amdä Şəyon (1332-1333). A second migration is instead related to the period XVII-XX: a first group arrived in the region following Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm Gāsa in 1577 and was then followed by other allies and supporters of the *imām* in 1585; their arrival in the region created tension with the Arab *imāms* (Dardōra) and with the Haralla already established in the region.

Moreover, from the end of the 16th cent. and during the 17th cent. the valley was under pressure of the Oromo incursion from the south, facilitated by the continuous internal struggle for power¹⁴. In this precarious context, moving the capital of the sultanate from Harar to Awsa, finally revealed to be a mistake: the new capital was in fact in a peripheral position to control all the provinces of the sultanate; moreover, being surrounded by the desert it was very difficult to defend. In fact, the region of Harar became autonomous in the middle of the 17th century when 'Alī Ibn Dāwūd founded a new emirate which became an important centre of Islamic learning in the Horn, and Zayla' was soon under Ottoman control. In 1750, the Haralla, supported by the Mōdaytò, set on fire the residence of Salmān, the last Arab *imām* and the last representative of the *imām* Aḥmad's family; then, the control of Awsa passed in the hands of the first sultan Haralla, Muḥammad Dūs, forefather of the Dūrussò branch, who obtained the title of *rā'is* in the Arab chronicle. After his death a new period of struggle for the control of the valley and the access to the pastures started. The Awaš Valley was at that point divided into "Red" and "White" tribes, two confederations, one uniting the "eight thrones" (the eight "Red" tribes)

8 For the role of Somali tribes in the struggle for power internal to the 'Adal Sultanate see *ivi*, pp. 169-170.

9 In the Ethiopian sources the 'Afar are called 'Adal (MORIN 2004, pp. 6-10).

10 He was representative of three important lineages: political (being heir of the Walašma' dynasty), paternal (Balaw, an Arabized group of Beḡa origin from the region of Sawākin) and maternal ('Afar Haralla); see Morin 2004, p. 66.

11 The sources show two group of variants of the name, with two different meanings: the names with final accent (Hararrà, Ḥarlà, Ḥarlā) refer to the ethnonyme of the group coming to Awsa in the XIV century; the variants with the accent on the penultimate syllable (Haràlla, that is Haràr + lé, or Haràr + li, where the suffixes express a quality, the affinity or membership to something) refer to a larger political acceptance, that is the "people of Harar", migrated to Awsa following the *imāms* family in 1577 (MORIN 2000, pp. 173-174).

12 MORIN 2015, pp. 234 *et seq.*, s.v. "Haralla".

13 *Ivi*, pp. 174-175.

14 *Idem* 2004, pp. 65-66.

descendant of Mōday, eponymous ancestor of the Mōdaytò which eventually took the power in 1834 (battle of Darmà). After the battle of Darmà in 1834 and the coming of Muḥammad Illalta (r. 1865-1902), the compromise with the Mōdaytò for the power is reflected in the division of the Haralla in two branches: one depositary of the maraboutic power (the Kabirto) and the other heir of the title of “head of the floodable area” *baddà-h abbà* (the Dardorti)¹⁵.

Some 'Afar tribes of the North West of the present Republic of Djibouti traditionally remained under the command of Awsa. In 1896, after the battle of 'Arraddò in which Awsa was defeated by the army of the *ras Wäldä Giyorgis* over the troops of the *sultān* Muḥammad Illalta, Awsa became tributary. In the years 1902-1917, Yāyyò, son of Muḥammad Illalta came to power and ruled on a sultanate de facto semi-independent and, after a period of prosperity thanks to the trading cattle with Italian army, in 1944, Muḥammad, son of Yāyyò was dismissed by the Emperor Ḥaylā Śəllase I for his cooperation with the Italian invaders and replaced by 'Alī Mirāḥ who was exiled in Saudi Arabia after 1975 and came back only after the fall of the Därg regime¹⁶.

A different historical development is reserved to the northern shore of the Gulf of Tadjoura, today part of Djibouti too; there, an autonomous sultanate seems to be established since the middle of the 15th century. It was around that date, in fact, that 'Asa Kāmil, of Ad'āli origin, founded a local dynasty established on the land left vacant by the Ankālā¹⁷. Starting from the seventh generation after the founder of the dynasty, the power passed alternatively from one faction internal to the dynasty to the other. The Ad'āli power has always been autonomous, then, after 1862, the sultanate passed progressively under French influence.

II. MISSION PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

II.1. Status of the studies on Arabo-Islamic literary tradition in Djibouti

The study of Arabo-Islamic literary tradition of Djibouti seems to be quite underestimated in academical context. Local written sources have been studied by few scholars to trace back genealogies and inter-familiar links mainly in the perspective of historical and / or anthropological analysis; they have been considered firstly for their documentary contribution than as a reflection of the local specificity or development of Islamic thought. For example, Djibouti is not included in the bio-bibliographical overview of the African literature in Arabic and other languages published by R.S. O'Fahey¹⁸ and, at the same time, manuscripts from Djibouti, or clearly identified as such, are not included in any descriptive catalogue or repertoire. As regard the book material collected during this mission, and in particular the collection of Balbala (DJ), a very important source of study, together with the information given by the informants, is the *Dictionnaire historique afar (1288-1982)* by Didier Morin¹⁹. In his introduction to the first edition, the author clearly acknowledges the sources he took

15 *Ivi*, pp. 175-177.

16 *Ivi*, pp. 70-72.

17 Ancient tribe whose presence is attested in Bôri, 'Asàb, and, with the name Ankàli, among the Debné (see MORIN 2004, pp. 55-59). For further information on the historical development of the region and for an attempt of periodization, see *Ivi*, pp. 6-16.

18 R.S. O'Fahey, *Arabic Literature of Africa, Volume 3 - Fascicle A, The writing of the Muslim Peoples of the Northeastern Africa*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2003.

19 First edition Paris, Khartala, 2004; Nouvelle édition augmentée, Paris, Khartala, 2015.

into account to retrieve the information for his historical dictionary²⁰. In addition to the reference to secondary bibliography, sometimes anyway pioneering for the subject of study, he firstly mentions the reference to oral and written primary sources; the latter offer points of reference to define oral information or give a new interpretation to it. Italian and French sources have been crucially important in this perspective and, through the documentation of genealogical traditions, gave the picture of the political representation of the 'Afar social organization, in which relations are based on territoriality and patrilineality. To the historical traditions collected by Europeans, often influential personalities, the author added short texts compiled by 'Afar under the request of Western scholars, not without underlining the lack of information regarding the socio-economic situation and the thematic and geographic disequilibrium in these sources. To these, two unedited written sources, two chronicles, have been added:

1. *Nawādir* ("Strange and extraordinary things"), by šayḥ Ḥasan b. Ḥamad-La'dé b. Ḥummad b. Lo'oytā. The author of this chronicle was from the family of the sultans Debné of the Gōba'ād²¹ and wrote eight notebooks in Arabic which remained in the hands of his family after his death, in 1972.
2. *Chronique de l'Awsa*, by šayḥ Ğilānī b. ḥāğğ Ḥamza b. Maḥmūd b. Kabīr Ḥamza. The text concerns the history of the region between 1727 and 1873 (1140-1290 H.) and is transmitted by a manuscript brought from Awsa in 1965 by šayḥ Ḥasan b. Ḥamad-La'dé. Its importance and reliability are mainly based on the fact that its author is a member of the Haralla tribe, of the Kabirto branch, directly involved in the political history of Awsa.²²

Finally the author of the *Dictionnaire* also based his investigations on oral sources both direct (such as the testimonies regarding genealogies and tribal distribution) and indirect, thus based on the analysis of the onomastics.

The second unedited Arabic source revealed to be the most important for the study of the manuscript collection in Balbala, the most important corpus of manuscripts and printed books digitized during the mission, and for its historical contextualization. The collection has been firstly identified by Prof. Eloi Ficquet, historian and anthropologist of the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales* (Paris), and represents the intellectual and literary heritage of one of the most important Muslim 'Afar families of the region.²³

The second site that has been object of this mission investigation has been identified during the team's stay in the country: in this case the team has been led by a government functionary to a *maqām* in which books were preserved.

20 MORIN 2004, pp. 2-6.

21 The Gōba'ād Sultanate is a tribal political entity, founded around the 18th century, and situated on the West region of the present République du Djibouti. The Sultanate was abolished by the French colonial system in 1930, but in May 2015, the 21st Sultan of Gōba'ād, Ḥabīb Muḥammad Lo'oytā has been enthroned at the presence of the highest traditional authorities of the country, in particular the Sultan 'Abd al-Qādir of Tadjoura, and official representatives of the government (<http://www.lanationdj.com/le-pays-okar-intronise-le-21e-sultan-du-gobaad/> # consulted 27 April 2016).

22 The text has been edited and translated in the second edition of the *Dictionnaire historique afar* (see *supra* note 19), Annexe II, pp. 395-422, where Morin also gives account of partial reproductions of the same text; see also MORIN 1997, p. 55, note 1.

23 The field work in Djibouti was led and organized by Prof. Eloi Ficquet. During his previous visits to the country, he had in fact established institutional and personal contacts with local intellectuals, academics and politicians, who should have facilitate the field work of *IslHornAfr* project, carried out by the P.I. of the project, Prof. Alessandro Gori with the support of the present writer, Sara Fani, between 31st Jan. and 8th Feb. 2016.

II.2. Logistic organization and equipment

The first collection digitized was placed in Balbala, a southern suburb of Djibouty City, located west of the river Ambouli. The name of the place seems to derive from the Somali verb *bal-bal*, meaning “flashing”, for the close presence of a lighthouse. This neighbourhood, now a separate district of Djibouti City, has developed around a checkpoint erected in 1966 to discourage subversive element at the entrance of the city and included migrants from other part of the region. After the independence of Djibouti, Balbala had to become a residential area, thus starting to attract also people from the rural areas. Nowadays the slum is slowly acquiring urban characteristics, with brick and concrete building and services; according to an estimation of the year 2000 the area was then inhabited by more than 80.000 people.²⁴

Being accommodate in hotels in Djibouti City, the team profited of a car to reach the location where the manuscript collection was kept and worked there for three days [Fig. 1].

The second collection, was instead very close to the city centre, thus reachable in a five minutes walking. Being the number of books very limited in this site, the digitizing work took only few hours.

The technical equipment for the digitization during the field work consisted in [Fig. 2]:

- Nikon D750 FX-format digital SLR camera with Nikon AF-S FX NIKKOR 50mm f/1.4G lens.
- Manfrotto MT055CXPRO4 055 Carbon Fiber 4-Section Tripod with Horizontal Column.
- Portable Led Light for dark settings.
- Accessories for the set, such as dark Reemay® background, plumb bob cord to held folios in position, colour scale, etc.

III. Book collections identified and digitized

III.1. Balbala – Kabīr Ḥamza's family²⁵

The present custodian of the manuscript collection digitized is 'Alawī, a descendant of the Kabirto lineage [Fig. 3]. The Kabirto faction, from the Arabic *kabīr*, here used in the meaning of “learned man”, issued from *kabīr* 'Alī b. Muḥammad Dūrus of the Haralla. As mentioned above, the Kabirto represent the maraboutic branch of the Haralla group, separated from the branch of the Dardōrti, among whom the *baddà-h abbòbti* (the “head of the floodable area”) was elected. Didier Morin attests that the spiritual dimension of the Kabirto power is sometimes related to the death of Šayḥ Ḥamza, also known as *kabīr Ḥandà*, other times to the victory of the Mōdaytò at Darmà in 1834.²⁶

The custodian keeps in his private house part of the manuscript collection of his family which has been kept in Awsa, by his grandfather, Hāḡḡ Šarīf, until 20 years ago. Information about the genealogy of his family are attested in the Arab chronicle edited and translated by Didier Morin; moreover a type written genealogy is kept in 'Alawī's house and was shown to the team together with the manuscripts and printed books of the collection [Fig. 4]. The genealogy and other information related to the

24 ALWAN, MIBRATHU 2000, p. 20.

25 The house is situated in the centre of Balbala, just few meters from the Pharmacie de Balbala, in Place Mahadsanid (11°33'29"N 43°6'40"E).

26 MORIN 2004, p. 201.

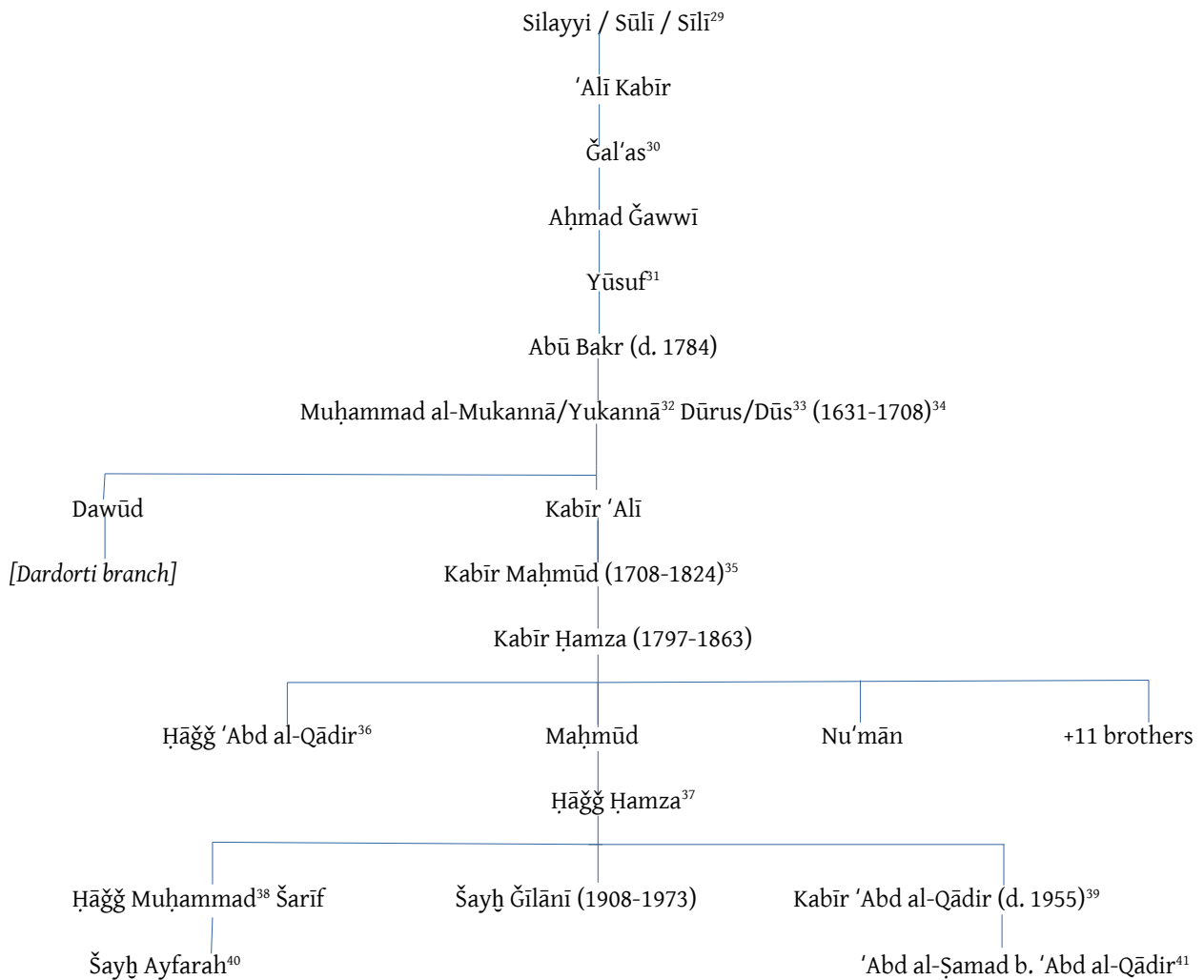
lineage are also transmitted by some manuscripts from the collection²⁷.

The branch of the Kabirto starts from *kabīr* 'Alī, son of Muḥammad Dūrus, while from his brother, Dawūd b. Muḥammad, originated the Dardōrtī branch of the Haralla group.

The different sources agree on the following Kabirto genealogy²⁸:

²⁷ They can be found, for example, in loose folios in ms DJBL049 and DJBL048.

²⁸ Note that the following genealogy, and especially the dates of birth and death of the people, have been noted down here after a brief survey of the manuscript material gathered and reproduced during the mission. Possible mistakes will be hopefully corrected after the process of description in the database of the project *IslHornAfr*.



29 See DJBL050 Img3771, Img3774; DJBL052 Img3844; see also MORIN 1997, p. 55 where the *nisba* al-Saliyyī is referred to another member of the family.

30 His name is usually followed by *al-wāfidi ilā bilād Awsa* (“the one who arrived to Awsa”).

31 In Morin his full name is Egrašif, that is Egrà Yūsuf, but he is mentioned as father of Aḥmad Ġawwī, while all the sources in the collection state that he was his son (cfr. MORIN 2015, p. 235, ms DJBL052 img3844 or the type written genealogy in Balabala collection, img3110).

32 Ms DJBL050 img3771.

33 “Dūs” is attested only in ms DJBL044 img2947 and in MORIN 2015, p. 235 and *passim*.

34 Ms DJBL049, img3703.

35 Ms DJBL046 img3513; DJBL002 img0113.

36 Vd. ms DJBL050 Img3774 and ms DJBL042 img2675; this 'Abd al-Qādir is not the same 'Abd al-Qādir of note 29 as attested in ms DJBL042 img2675 and DJBL img3774 that confirm the presence in the genealogy of another 'Abd al-Qādir two generations older than the author of DJBL044, imgs2953-2969, see also ms DJBL039 img2482 (“Awlād Kabīr Ḥāġġ Ḥamza b. Ḥāġġ Kabīr Maḥmūd”).

37 Ḥandà is never attested in the mss, cfr. MORIN 2015, p. 235 and *passim*.

38 See ms DJBL052 img3849 and DJBL010 img0849.

39 The names Šarīf and 'Abd al-Qādir are not mentioned by Morin in his *Dictionnaire*, where the genealogy stops at Šayḥ Ġilānī. It has anyway to be confirmed the identification of Šayḥ Ḥāġġ al-Ġilānī with Šayḥ Ḥāġġ 'Abd al-Qādir. According to the genealogy reported in the mss (for ex. DJBL050 Img3752) Šarīf and 'Abd al-Qādir (i.e. Ġilānī?) should have been brothers, being Šayḥ Ayfaraḥ the son of Ḥāġġ Šarīf. The year of 'Abd al-Qādir's death is mentioned in DJBL004, img0326.

40 This Ayfaraḥ has not to be confused with Šayḥ Ayfaraḥ 'Abdallāh b. Aḥmaddīn Kurāwalé b. Dawud, who died on 28th June 1784. He came to Awsa at the time of *imām* Salmān (d. 1750) where he started his preaching. Morin underlines that the name Ayfaraḥ became a title referred to religious leaders in Awsa; the only mentioned connection of Šayḥ Ayfaraḥ 'Abdallāh b. Aḥmaddīn Kurāwalé with the Kabirto lineage is the fact that he is buried, according to Morin, in Kaḍḍa Ma'arra, next to the father of Kabīr Ḥamza, that is Kabīr Maḥmūd (d. 1824) (MORIN 2015, p. 95-96).

41 He is mentioned as scribe in the colophon of ms DJBL043 img2884; see also his stamped *ex libris* in ms DJBL042 img2721.

The corpus include devotional literature compiled by member of the Kabirto lineage, in particular devotional poems, praise to the Prophet and *mawlid* by:

- Šayḥ Ḥāğğ Kabīr Ḥamza b. Kabīr Maḥmūd b. Kabīr 'Alī⁴²
- Šayḥ Ḥāğğ Ḥamza b. Ḥāğğ Maḥmūd b. Kabīr Ḥamza b. Kabīr Maḥmūd⁴³
- Šayḥ Ḥāğğ 'Abd al-Qādir b. Kabīr Ḥamza b. Kabīr Maḥmūd b. Kabīr 'Alī⁴⁴
- Šayḥ 'Abd al-Qādir b. Ḥāğğ Ḥamza b. Ḥāğğ Mḥmūd b. Kabīr Ḥamza⁴⁵

A *qaṣīda* included in ms DJBL015 seems to be compiled by different members of the family, in particular by Ḥāğğ Kabīr Ḥamza b. Kabīr Maḥmūd b. Kabīr 'Alī, and two of his sons 'Abd al-Qādir and Nu'mān⁴⁶.

Many of the most recent manuscripts, copied on modern exercise books, contain *ḥuṭab*⁴⁷. Manuscript DJBL003 contains different poems in praise of the Prophet in Afar language ('*ağamī*); they are composed by:

- Ḥāğğ Kabīr Nu'mān b. Kabīr Ḥamza b. Kabīr Maḥmūd b. Kabīr 'Alī
- Ḥāğğ Ḥamza b. Ḥāğğ Mḥmūd
- Kabīr Ḥamza b. Kabīr Maḥmūd b. Kabīr 'Alī.

Mss DJBL052, DJBL022, DJBL018, DJBL016, DJBL015, DJBL010, DJBL003, DJBL002, DJBL001 are copied by Šayḥ Ayfaraḥ himself⁴⁸, while ms DJBL044 and DJBL045 are copied by Šayḥ 'Abd al-Qādir b. Ḥāğğ Ḥamza and DJBL007 is copied by Ḥāğğ Nu'mān b. Ḥāğğ Ḥamza in 1877 A.D.

The traditional bindings of the collection resemble West African mss: the book blocks are made of loose folios⁴⁹ and the two covers can be detached, not having a spine⁵⁰, or attached one to the other by a leather or cloth spine⁵¹ [Fig. 5]. Some of them present an external sewn cloth envelope [Fig. 6].

These manuscripts are mainly copied on Italian paper with watermark representing a crescent with human profile inside a shield. This paper comes from the mill of Andrea Galvani in Pordenone and, in at list one kind, it is possible to read two different countermarks, one in Italian on the right side of the shield ("Andrea Galvani / Pordenone") and one in Arabic on the left side ("ورق ابو شباك")⁵² [Fig. 7].

III.2. Djibouti City - Maqām al-Rifā'iyya

In this case the visit was organized by a functionary of the Ministry of Culture, who invited the team

42 Mss DJBL050, DJBL052, DJBL046, DJBL022, DJBL010, DJBL002.

43 Mss DJBL050, DJBL052, DJBL022, DJBL021, DJBL004, DJBL002.

44 Mss DJBL050, DJBL036, DJBL002.

45 Mss DJBL050, DJBL044, DJBL039, DJBL002.

46 Ms DJBL015.

47 DJBL011, DJBL013-014, DJBL017, DJBL019, DJBL024-027, DJBL029-034; many are also copied in loose bifolios or photocopied and preserved in paper folders.

48 Img3844 and img1504 in which is the colophon dated 1316 H (1898 A.D.). Possibly also other manuscripts are copied by him but with no explicit evidence in the colophon.

49 Some of them, such as DJBL040-042, present bifolios corresponding to the middle of the original quires, thus suggesting that their book block consisted in loose quires whose external bifolio have detached for the lack of protection.

50 Mss DJBL004, DJBL038-039.

51 Mss DJBL007, DJBL043-045.

52 The production of this paper is dated around the last quarter of the XIX century (Regourd 2014, pp. l-ii).

to attend a devotional ceremony in the Maqām al-Rifā'iyya⁵³ [Fig. 8]. The ceremony was possibly organized in the occasion of our visit; it was led by members of the family of the *šayḥ* who founded the *maqām*, in particular his only daughter, who led the women's chant from a separate area of the *maqām*, and other men of the family, including her sons and husband [Fig. 9 and 10]. The lady told us that his father, went to Somalia as a *murīd*, but, as he started to be considered insane, he decided to leave and stopped in Djibouti City where, next to the tomb of al-Rifā'ī, he finally found relief and consolation. A cenotaph placed in a separate room and close to the covered courtyard where the ceremony took place, in fact, is considered to be the tomb of Aḥmad al-Rifā'ī⁵⁴ [Fig. 11]. On the main wall of the courtyard is the traditional representation of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ġilānī, with the lion to his feet [Fig. 12 and 13].

The collection preserved in the *maqām* consisted in five pieces, among which three were manuscript and two were printed books. The manuscripts, all copied in very recent time (around the 90s) by the *šayḥ*, mainly contain devotional poems composed by Somali authors or prominent Sufi leaders of the end of the 19th, beginning of the 20th century, such as Yūsuf al-Baḥr⁵⁵, Šayḥ 'Abd al-Raḥmān Šūfī al-Šāšī (1829-1904)⁵⁶, 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Zayla'ī (b. 1820-1882)⁵⁷, Ġa'far al-Šādiq al-Mīrḡanī (b. 1822-23, d. 1860-61)⁵⁸, 'Abd Allāh al-Quṭb (d. 1370/1951)⁵⁹, Yūsuf al-Nabhānī (d. 1922)⁶⁰ and others⁶¹. One printed book is the *Maḡmū'a mawlid šaraf al-anām*, printed in New Delhi and bought in the Librairie Islamique in Djibouti City; also the other printed book of the collection was bought in the same book store: it is the *Tanbih al-anām* by Ibn 'Azzūm al-Qayrawānī (only the second part), printed by the Maṭba'a Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī in 1928.

53 The Maqām is situated in Rue de Geneve (11°35'40"N 43°08'42.6"E); it was previously recognisable through a big sign which is now covered by an enclosure wall.

54 See MARGOLIOUTH 1995 and BOSWORTH 1995. Al-Rifā'ī's tomb and shrine were actually located near Tal 'Afar in northern Iraq and were destroyed during the 2014 Northern Iraq offensive by ISIS.

55 DJRF002 img4043, 4044, 4047, 4067, ALA3, p. 108; he is sometimes identified with Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Bakrī (<http://www.somaliatodaynews.com/port/2009-05-06-15-01-48/1567-2010-10-18-09-27-22.html> or <http://arabic.alshahid.net/biographies/59787>).

56 DJRF001 img3911, 3913, 3949, 3951. He is 'abd al-Raḥmān b. 'abd Allāh al-Šāšī [or al-Šānšī] al-Maqdišī al-Qādirī al-Šāf'ī al-Aš'arī al-Sūmālī (ALA3, p. 79).

57 DJRF001 img3978, 3980 (ALA3, pp. 81 et seq.).

58 DJRF002 img4067, 4091 (ALA1, pp. 207 et seq.).

59 DJRF002 img4035 (see √ <http://arabic.alshahid.net/biographies/92690>); تراجم بعض رواد مدرسة التصوف الإسلامي في الصومال : <http://arabic.alshahid.net/biographies/92690>

60 DJRF001 img3985 (Kaḥḥāla, XIII, pp. 375-6).

61 In ms DJRF001 a certain Šayḥ Qāsim is mentioned who is possibly to be read as Qāsim b. Muḥī al-Dīn b. Qāsim al-Barāwī al-Qādirī (b. 1295/1878-79, d. 14 Ramaḍān 1340/12 May 1922), author of a *maḡmū'a* containing nine poems by prominent Sufi leaders of his time (ALA3, p. 70). See also DJRF002 img4072, where the name is clearly written.

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