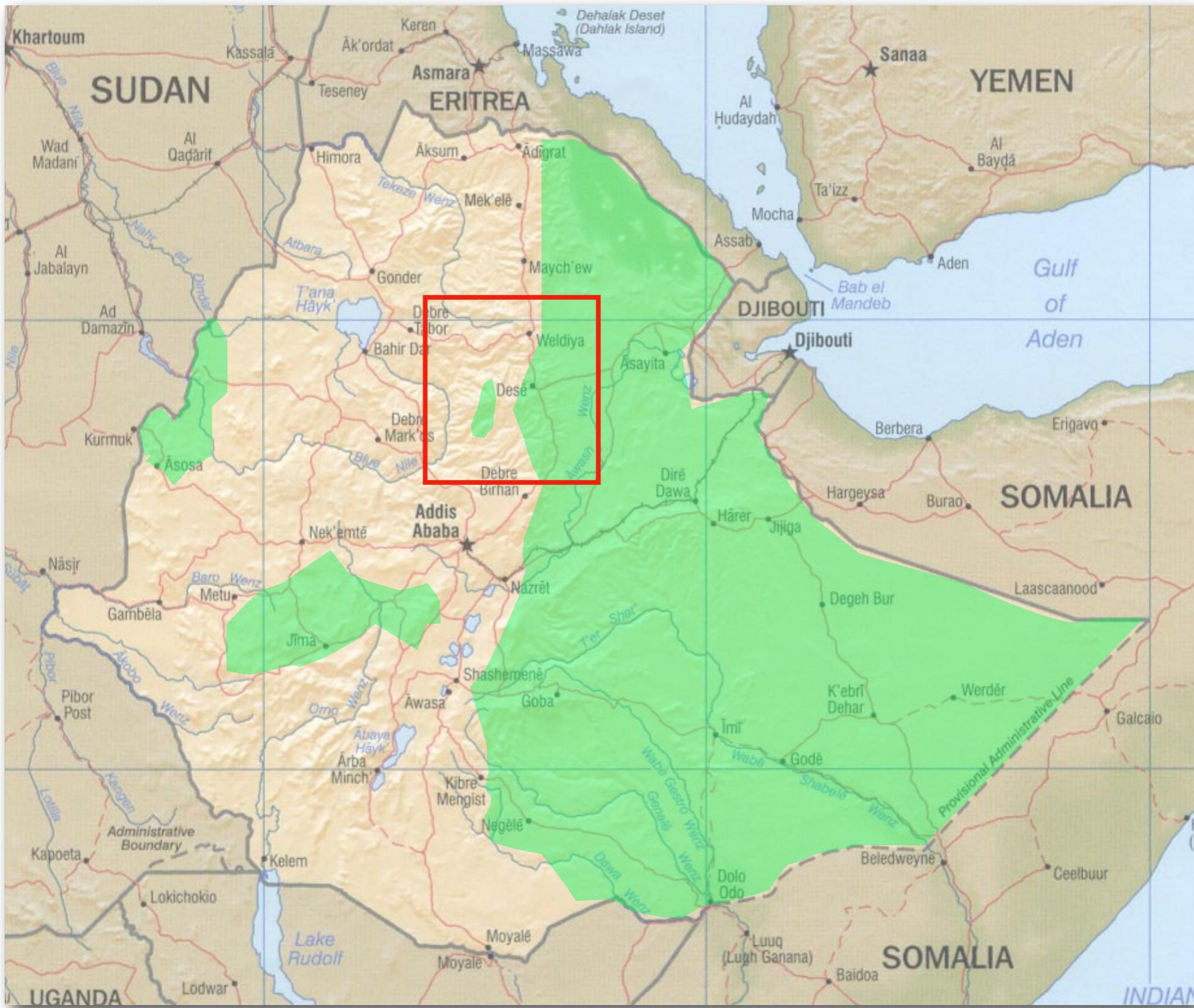


# Amharic literature in Arabic script

Andreas Wetter

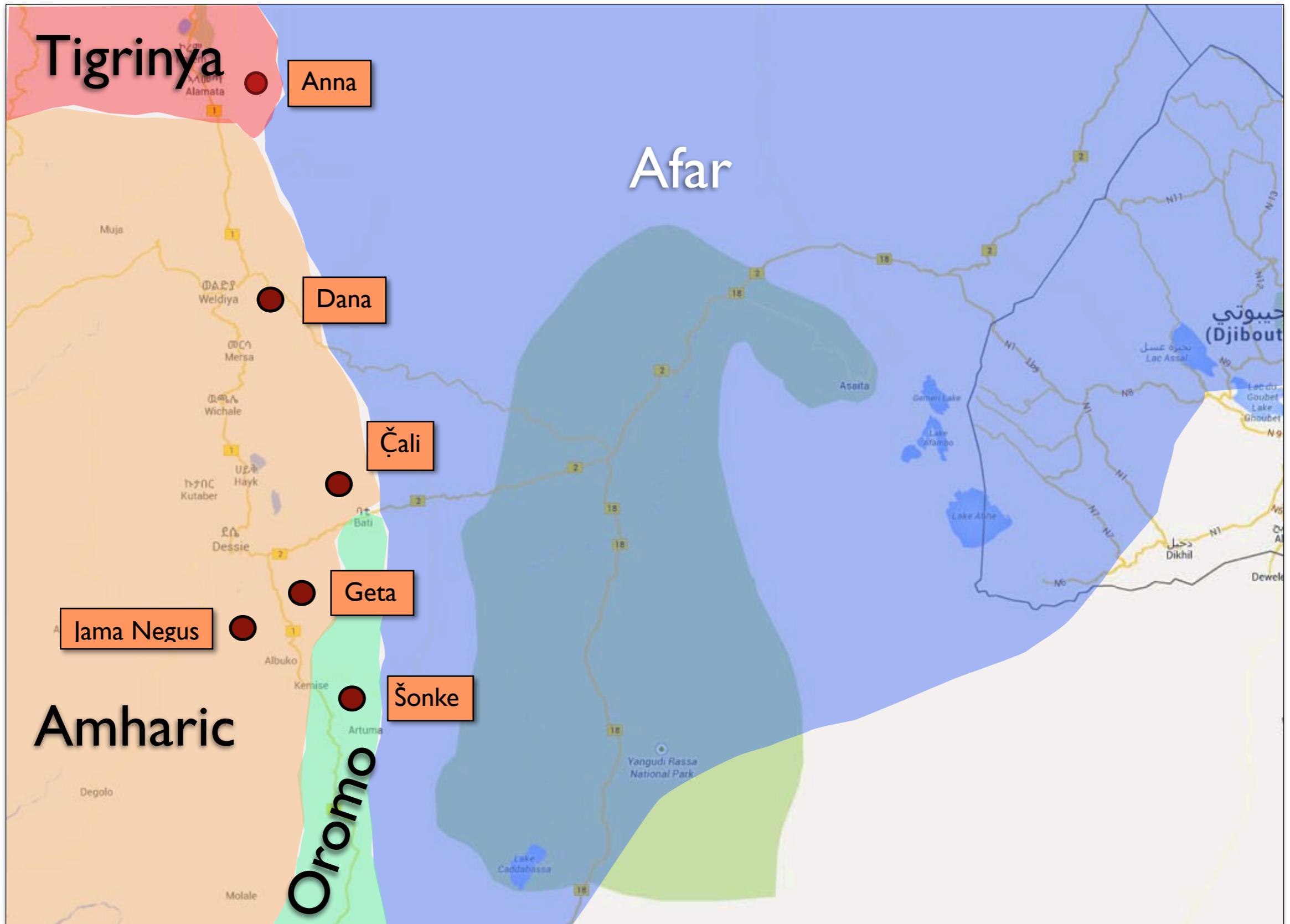
Copenhagen 21.09. 2017

# The region Wällo



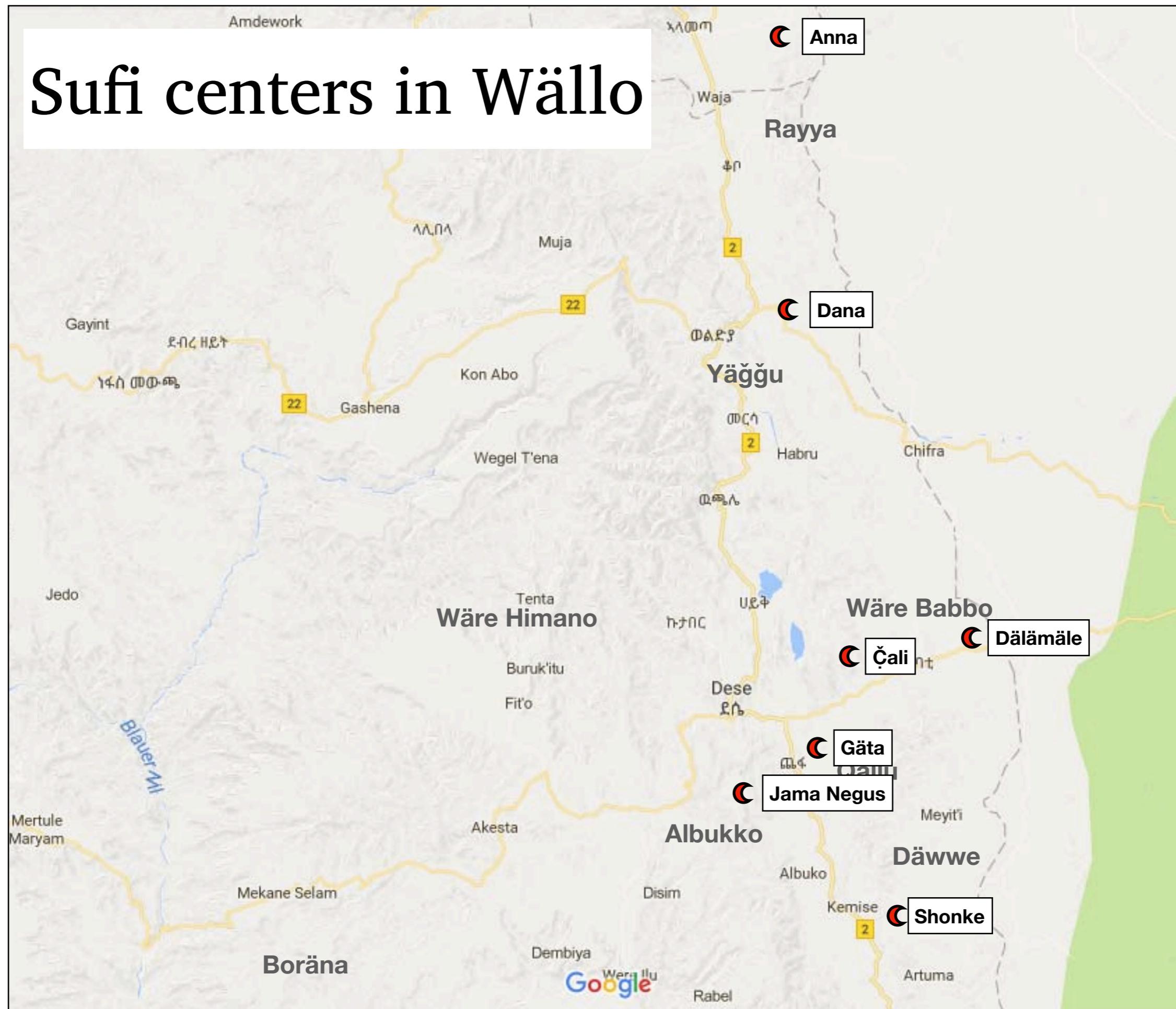
# Ethnic and linguistic composition of Eastern Wällo

- Four ethno-linguistic groups
  - Amharic (Ethiosemitic)
  - Oromo (Cushitic)
  - Afar (Cushitic)
  - Argobba\* (Ethiosemitic)
- Bilingualism and multilingualism widespread
- Amharic spoken by Christians and Muslims in Wällo



Anna

# Sufi centers in Wällo





The village of Shonke



The center at Dana



The center at Čali

# State of research

- 1976 Drewes: *Classical Arabic in Ethiopia*
- 1992 Čämal: *Bä-Wällo kəflä hagär yä-šäh Čali yä-mäwlid  
gäṭəmočč /mänzumawočč/ təntanne käqərsənna  
yəzät ansar*
- 1994 Pankhurst: *Indigenising Islam in Wollo: Ajem, Amharic Verse*
- 2007 Drewes: *Amharic as a language of Islam*
- Abdulwahab *A hand-list of ‘Ajemi manuscripts of Shaykh Ṭalḥa  
Ja‘far (c1853-1936)*
- 2012 Wetter *Rhetoric Means of a Didactic Amharic Poem from  
Wärrä Babbo*
- 2015 Abdulwahab *The Kašf al-ġumma by šayḥ Ṭalḥa b. Ġa‘far (d.  
1935): a messianic and polemical Amharic-ağäm*

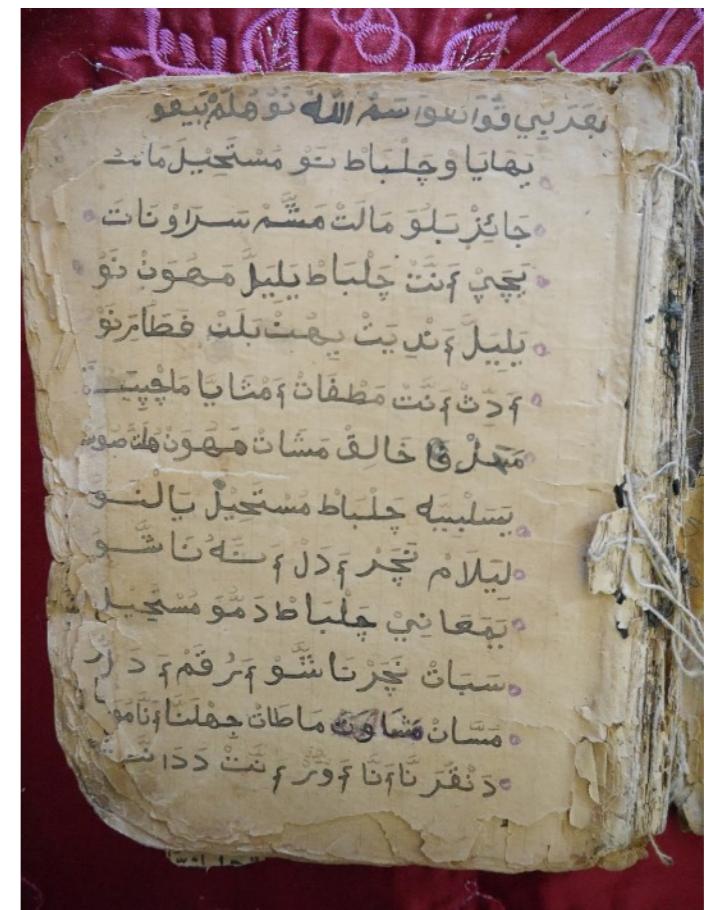


Scanning an Amharic manuscript in  
Jirota, southeastern Wällo (2005)

# Recent findings (2014)

MSS authored by Ҫalha Ҫa'far 345 and 303 pp

Collection of Assiyya Abdusomad, great-granddaughter of Ҫalha Ҫ., Kemise



# Authors

- **Ṯalḥa Ḍa'far** (1853-1935)
  - reformer and militant resistance fighter (Hussein 1989)
  - most productive author of Amharic ağäm texts
- **Ibrāhīm Yāsīn**, a.k.a. Šeh Čali (d. 1956)
  - founder of sufi center in Čali, Wärrä Babbo, which is still active (Abbink 2008)
  - well known author of Arabic and Amharic texts, esp. several panegyrical poems (manzūma) in Amharic
- **Bašir Umar**, Dälämäle in lowland Wärrä Babbo
- **Hasan Məslay**, in Wärrä Himano

# Amharic

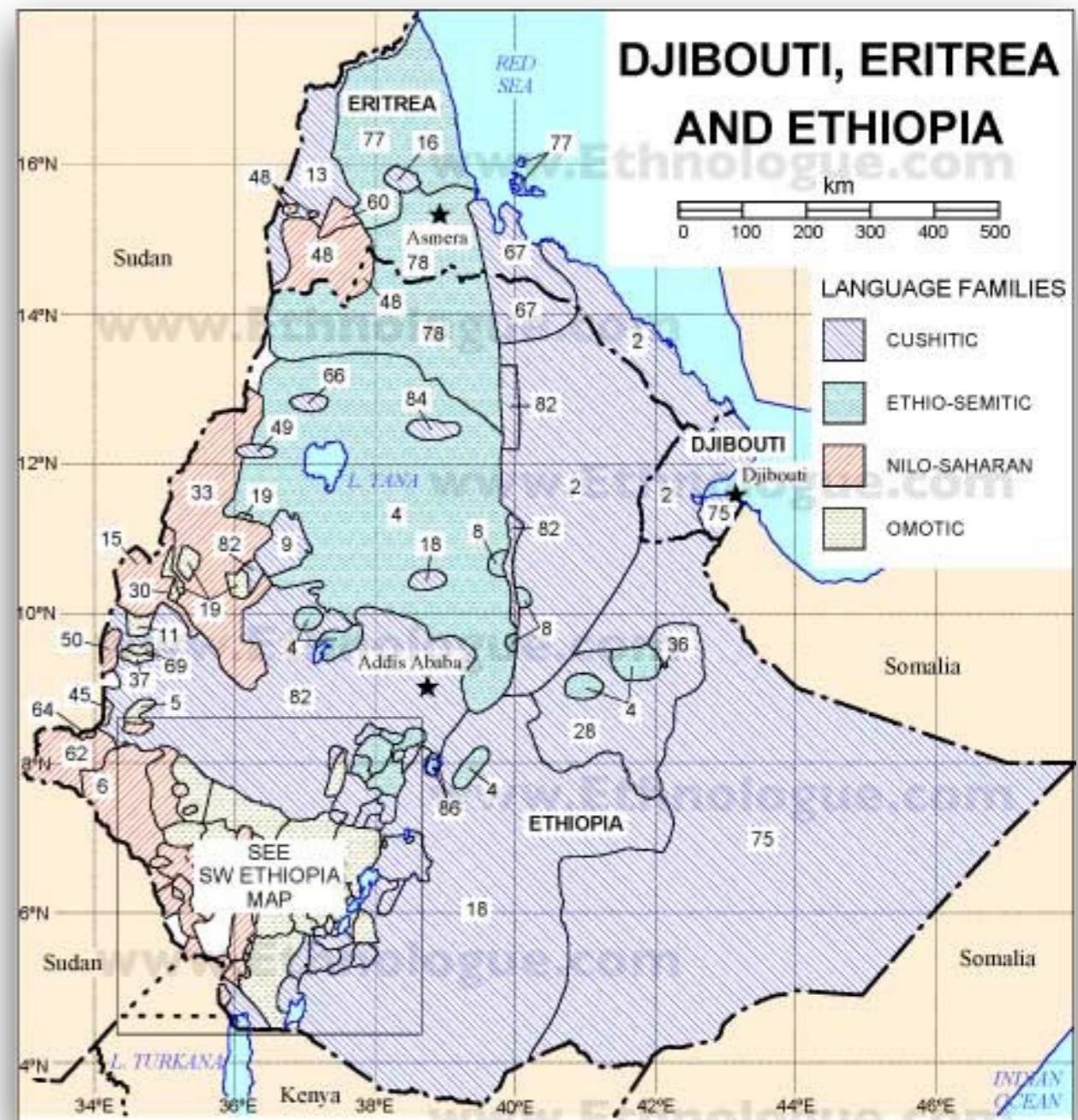
Ethiosemitic

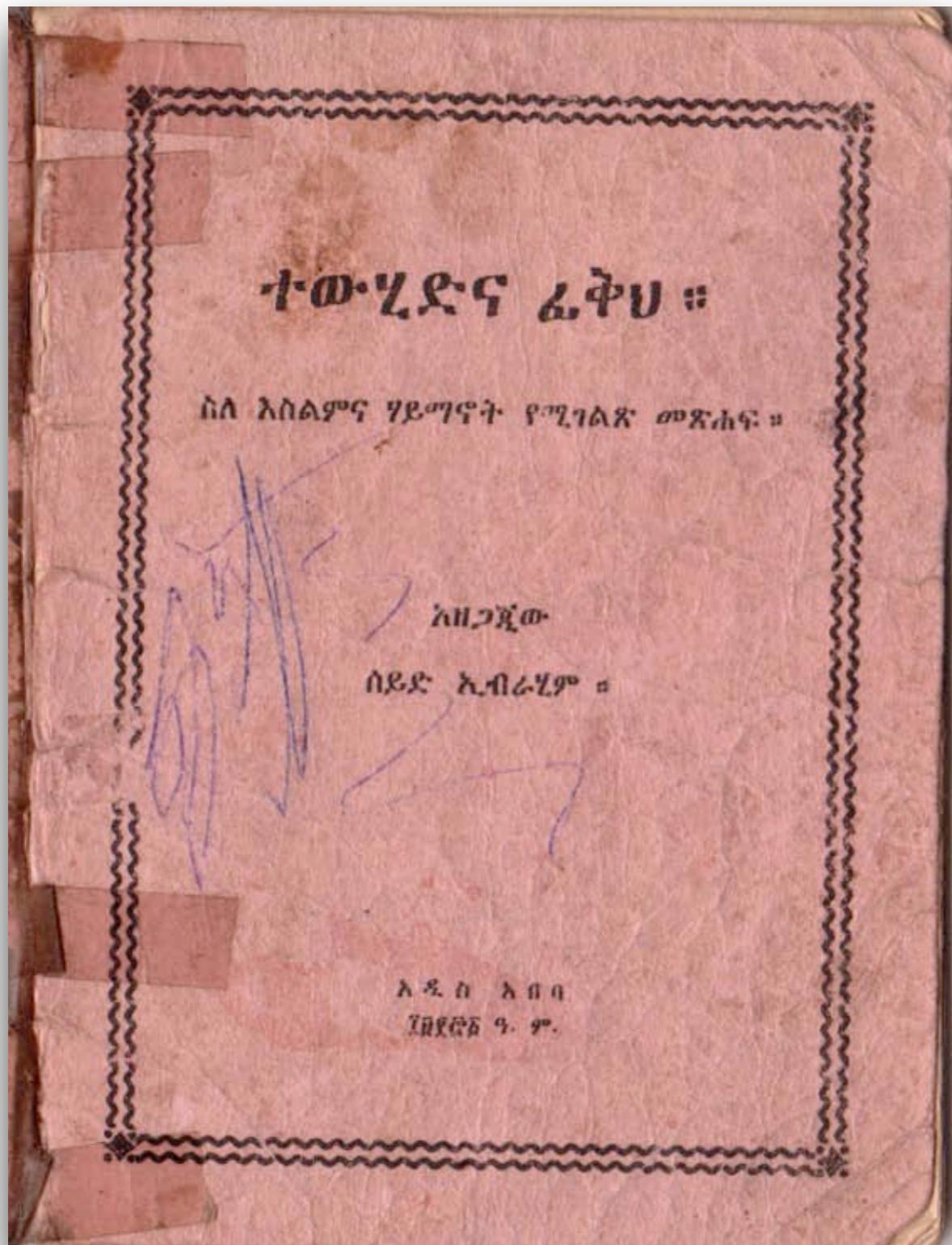
spoken in northern Ethiopia  
& in urban areas

Lingua Franca since 13th  
century

official language since 1955

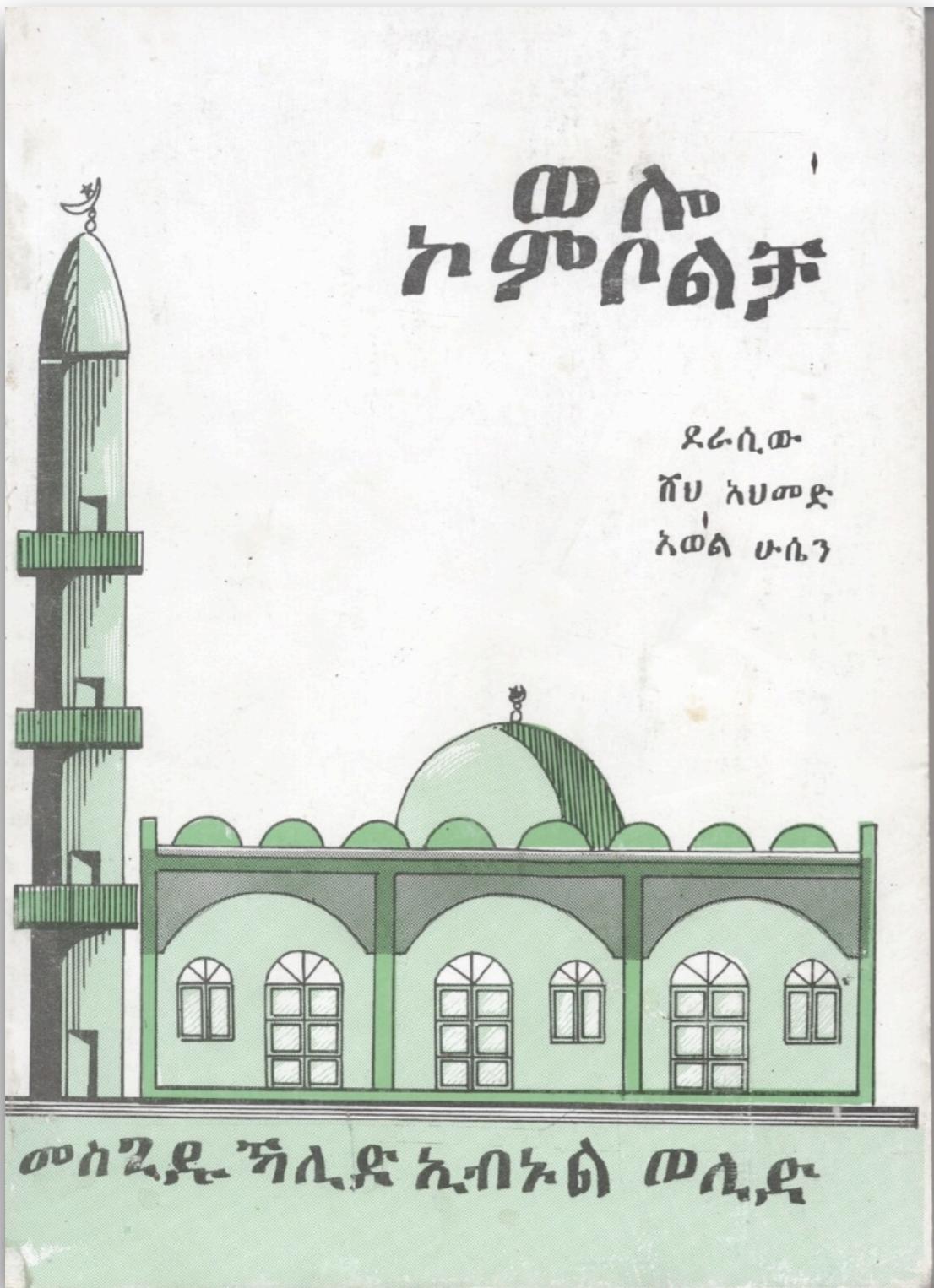
written in Ethiopic writing  
system





መ ማ ቤ. ወ ::

በልማድኬ : (እ) : በሩ : ከታብን : (እ) : ለፈጥር :  
 በረከ : (እ) : እንዳደረገው : ይህንን : ገማግር ::  
 በሉህ : ስም : ፕሮርክት : በሉለው : ይጋራ : (እ)  
 እማንን : ለቦይን : (እ) : ከእስፈላጊ : ወራ ::  
 ከልማምናለሳረ : (እ) : ጉታውን : ለመሰማን ::  
 በወተም : በማታም : ሁልጻዢም : ነው : የሙትን ::  
 ለተተም : ለሰምታም : ይውረድ : በሉ : ለይ ::  
 ወደ : አሉህ : ከመሩት : የሁኔት : በላይ ::  
 በበተሰበቂም : ባለሆቂም : ይውረድ ::  
 እድምቀው : ያቀኑ : የሰልምናን : መንገድ ::  
 በተከታተቂም : ለተቆ : ይውረድ ::  
 በተከከዚውም : በእማን : ገመድ ::  
 ተካማ : ልንገርህ : ወንድመ : ሰማኑ ::  
 ልብ : በሉህ : እድምጥ : እንዳተሆን : ፍጋኑ ::  
 ከሁሉ : እማቅድም : ነው : ተውሃድ : መልመድ ::  
 ከእሉህ : የማያኅጃዎች : የማያኅጃ : መንገድ ::  
 ተውሃድ : የማያውቅ : ስው : ነው : ተከበት : እከላ ::  
 ከቶም : ቁርጥን : በደል : በልህ-መ-እድል ::  
 ለዘዴ : በሉው : ስምት : እድሜ : ለተበት ::  
 በወረብ : በወይም : (እ) ወልድ : እረትት ::  
 ለሽግተኞች : በሃት : ለሳቢ : በርቃት ::  
 ለባለብ : ለመያዝ : እውረብን : ወቅት ::  
 ቁስክተኞች : (እ) : እዋር : ነው : ቁስክተኞች : ወሰድ ::  
 በበናቂዎች : ይግሞ : ሆኖአል : የሳ : ወሳ ::  
 ለባለብው : ቁልጥተት : ቁልጥተት : ቁልል ::  
 ለደም : እንደሰለው : ወደም : ይገበል ::  
 ለማለት : (ወ) : እንዳንተውው : ነፍሰድ : እሽንፈት ::  
 ወለመን : እንዳንተውው : ይህልና : ወረሰን ::



# Wällo Kombolcha, She Ahmäd Awwäl Hussen

ከፍርድ እንጂዚቅ ወደምና አይደለም  
እሉሁ አካባቢ እሉሁ አካባቢ እሉሁ አካባቢ

የኢትዮጵያ መሠረታዊ

በ.ለማለሁ ሁሮንጻይም :

በ.ለመ-ለሁ ማለት ትልቅ ሲ.ር አለው :

በ.ስ ያልተኝመረ በረከጥ የለው :

በ.ስ ፎምረው-ት የሚሰሩት ሥራ :

በ.ሸ ይህንና ህዳሴ ሁሉ አዎሱ :

በ.ሆንም በ.ለማለሁ ተብሎ የሚችምረው :

ቃድ-በና ሌና ሁሉላ ወ-ናን ነው :

በ.ለማለሁ ማለት ሁሉም ሲ.ብኑት :

ሁሉም ነው መናድ ነው የአሁን ሁ-ርመት :

በ.ለመ ከታገኩ-ት ደግሞ ለመሰጣቸው :

በ.የሰደሳም ሲ.የሰከናም ቤት-ናን የሚሰን ነው :

አለም-ለ.ለሁ ለበሌ ጉትናን :

ለ.ለ አይደበውም ቅን ደን በ.ሆን :

ደግሞ አለሁም-ለ.ለሁ ለበለው ለለ-ን :

ክልቅ ታክሂን አድርጊ የጠቀሙኝን :

መናገር ሲ.ቃምር አድም አባት-ናን :

በቀድ-ማ.ም አይረጋው አለሁም-ለ.ለኝን :

ነት ታክሂን ሁሉ ሌ-ና ከቀበር :

አሉም-ለ.ለሁ ነው የአውል ጉማጋር :

አሉም-ለ.ለሁ ገርቱ መጽሑፍት ነው :

ሉ-ለ-ካ-ም አገር መከላይ ቅልና ነው :

አሉም-ለ.ለሁ ሆርሳ (ሁ-ር) ለምንት ነው :

ከደንት አገር ገር በቀጥር አ-ብ ነው :

አሉም-ለ.ለሁ ሁ-ል-ዘ የሚል :

ከከምንት ፍነት ባሻው ይጠባ :

ገን የ'ማ.ያቀበዋ እንዳለ የለም :

ቀይት ማመ-ሙ ሁሉ አ-ብ አይሁልም :

በ.ለመ ከታገኩ-ት ከመሰጣቸው :

በ.ቦ. ሌይ ለመ-ርድ ለለም-ሁ ለለት :

እለት ወሰላም በ.ማኑዳ.ሂ ለመድ :

ባለሁ መለሰተኛ ይመ-ረድ በመሆመድ :

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 بِاللَّهِ سُمْ جَمَرْ كَيْ بِلِيلُو شَرْ كَا بُشْ بِسْ جَمَرْ يَهُو نَالْ بَرْ حَا  
 لَجُودِ اللَّهِ كَيْتَا يَنْ لَامْسِكَنْ بِسْطَمْ بِسَامْ مَشُومْ مَسْكَنْ  
 كَيْتَا شَنْ أَنْدَ تَوْ يَعْقَمْ بَدَانْ قُطْرَأَيْدَ رَسْمْ يَنْعَمْ بَزَاتْ  
 يَنْعَمْ أَيْنَتَا بِشَلَنْيَشْ مَانْوَ كَيْتَا يَأْيَنْو تَلْقَوْ أَيْمَانْ تَوْ  
 رَحْمَمْ دَهْشَتْ مَرِيتَنْ يَمُولَا بَنَى لَانْ يَرْ دَبْمُونْ هَلَّا  
 يَمَشَا يَا يَمَانْ يَسْلَمَانْ تَكَرْ تَقْرَأَ وَتَكْنَيْوَالْ بَنَيَاوْ أَتَانَا كَرْ  
 بَدَكْ صَنْفَلَثْ يَا اللَّهِ بَارَا بَشِيرْ سُتْهَوْتْ يَا طِلَمَهْ إِهْنْ قَرِئَنْ دَشَنْ  
 أَهِي تَحْسَفْ إِزَهْ وَرَبَا بُرْ بَعَامْ قَرَا وَأَجْ شَلَا أَتَبْلَأْ بَسَرْ  
 حَاحِبُوشِي آذَنْطَوْا مَكْرَاشَهْ بَجَتَهْ أَنْدَهُونْ يَا خَرَا يَنَا شَهْ  
 تَرِحِيدَنْ قَرَا وَأَجْ زَفَنْ أَتَزْقَنْ تَوْجِيدَنْ مَقْرَأَنْ تَوْسِلَمْ لَجْ زَفَنْ

سَلَامْ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَنْيَ سِلَامْ عَلَيْكَ بَنْيَ عَ  
 بَجُودِ بَشَرَ كَيْ بَوْجُودِ مَشَرَ كَيْ  
 أَلَّهَنْ سَرَبِ الْقَدَرَهْ أَمْسَحَيْوَكَحَدَهْ  
 بِسِيمِ اللَّهِ لَادَرَهْ يَيَامَزَكَوْشَنْ سَادَرَهْ  
 دَادَمَظَهُو سَايْطَفَا وَسَطُونَ الْقَطَاطِفَا  
 يَطِيبَاوَنْ مَصَطَفَا بَامَارَيَا السَّتِي لَطَرَاهْ  
 بَعَربَ سَنَ دَكَرَوَ مَعْنَاوَسَنَتَوْنَ الْكَرَوَهْ  
 بَامَارَيَا الْكَرَوَهْ بَحَبَابَاوَ اِجَ سَرَوَهْ  
 أَلَّهَهْ مَتَأْوَقِ بَشَا بَجَهَالَ اسْوَانَدَشَا  
 بَطِفَافَكَ مَكَبَشَا تَدَفَّقَنْ سَانَسَرَا  
 نُورَنْ بَفَتْ خَلَقَوَ كَحَضَرَا وَأَفَلَقَوَهْ  
 بِلِيجِسَتَا اِزَلَقَوَ لِيَلَوَنَ أَنْدَهَرَا  
 تَعَا

Amharic in the Arabic script, examples of to mss

# Linguistic features - the Wällo dialect

- The language used displays several features that are typical for the „Wällo“ Dialect:
  - absence of consonant ş: mätom مَطْوُمْ ‘to fast’
  - preposition tä- instead of kä-: tä-gonu تَكْنُو ‘at his side’
  - different use of pronouns for honorific and 3rd plural, and agreement marker:  
yəñña näbi näwot يَنِيَا نَبِي نَوْتْ ‘our prophet is ...’

# Linguistic features - Lexicon

- high frequency of Arabic loanwords and the extension of the lexicon by using Arabic lexical material
- Amharic words are replaced by loans from Arabic
- loan translations of Islamic concepts from Arabic into Amharic
- creating „new“ words by derivation of Arabic loanwords with Amharic morphologic patterns

# Arabic loanwords

يَخَالِقُونَ عَذَابَ يَلْوَانْ قَمْسَوَا

*yä-haliq-an*    *'adab*    *yäläwall*    *qämäsäw*

GEN-creator-ACC   punishment   3SG:M-say.IPV      taste.IMP.-OBJ.3SG:M  
-OBJ.3SG:M-AUX

“He tells him: ‘Taste from the punishment of  
the creator’.” (2,6)

# Frequency of Arabic loanwords

əne ləngäračuh **näbin** täkätälu / nägä **bä'ahira** lattämänattälu  
bäzzih 'af **sännäfnäw** ligära / **iman əsləmənnan** əsetum läwändum  
**iman əsləmənna** yämmayqäramma säw / **yä'ađabən** tənat 'ayqäräm sayqämsu  
**iman** yälämmädä 'andät / täsat yətäbbəqal yəgäbal **bäğännät**  
**imanən** tämawäq əwqätačuh bäyatər / əne ləngäračuh **yäymanən** quṭər  
**iman** səddəstu näw andu mamän näw / **yähälläqän** geta 'andə bəčča näw  
**bämälä'i kočun** yəh näw hulättäñña / bəssu **kitabočəm** yəh näw sostäñña  
'arattäññaw dämmo **banbiwoču** mamän / amməstäññaw dämmo bämäčärräšaw qän  
səddəstäññaw mamän **bäqäda bäqädär** / yägeta näw bəlo **häyrəm** bihon **wäyšär**  
bazäl yäfärrädäw **qädā** ənği näw səmu / ifā mawṭatu əmma **qädär** näw bəssämu  
yäsəddəstu **iman** wəstü bizzärräzzär / **mä'naw** bəzu näw əndä allətəzärazzär (wbt\_03)

bägetačən mamän sost **käfiyya** näw / **iman** yälelläw säw əssu 'əndä ahəyya näw  
andu **wağib** näw **mustahil** näw / yännäzzih sostäñña lägeta **ğa'iz** näw  
haya **şifät wağib** näw / **bä'aqläňa** əhennən mawäqu **wağib** näw  
andu gəññət näw andu **qädimənnät** / sostäññaw dägəmmo bəččawn qärənnät  
andu **mäḥaläf** näw andu **hälqun** balä mämsäl / **s'ahibe** ləngärəh **la'hirāh** bəsäl  
amməstäññaw mma bänäfsu mäqom näw / səddəstäññaw əmma dägəmmo andənnät näw  
gənəññətta yalnäw yəbbalal **näfsiyyah** / tässu huwala yallut amməstu **sälbiyyah**  
lägeta **wağib** näw mäčal ənna **mäšat** / attəggäññəm näbbär čučan ənkwan balşat  
**lähaliq wağib** näw əwqät ənna **hayat** / dämmo **wägbollätal** mayät ənna mäsmat  
männagär lägeta **wağib** näw admaṭu / asrasosttu abäqqa bätam asrägäṭu  
**täsälbiyya** huwala yalluttu säbattu / **mä'ani** 'əkko naččaw yəhennən **atbätu** wbt\_05

# Replacement of nouns

Amharic	gloss	Arabic source	Standard
<i>'adab</i>	punishment	<i>'adāb</i>	<i>qəṭat</i>
<i>ḡa'iz</i>	permitted	<i>ḡā'iz</i>	<i>yätäfäqqädä</i>
<i>ḡännät</i>	paradise	<i>ḡanna</i>	<i>gännät</i>
<i>mä'na</i>	meaning	<i>ma'nan</i>	<i>tärgum</i>
<i>ṣahib, sʷahib</i>	friend	<i>sāḥib</i>	<i>gʷadäñña</i>
<i>ḥaliq</i>	creator	<i>ḥāliq</i>	<i>fätari</i>
<i>ḥäyr</i>	good, superb	<i>ḥair</i>	<i>ṭäru</i>

# Replacement of verbs

Amharic	gloss	Arabic source	Standard
<i>kättäbä</i>	to write	<i>kitāb</i> (n.), <i>kataba</i> (v.)	<i>s'afä</i>
<i>sonnäfä</i>	to compose, write	<i>ṣannafa</i> (v.)	<i>därräsä</i>
<i>wäggäbä</i>	to be an obligation	<i>wāgib</i> (n.), <i>wağaba</i> (v.)	<i>gəddeta honä</i>
<i>qärра</i>	to read	<i>qara'a</i> (v.)	<i>anäbbäbä</i>
<i>hälläqä</i>	to create	<i>halq</i> (n.), <i>halaqa</i> (v.)	<i>fättärä</i>
<i>'allämä</i>	to teach	<i>'allama</i> (v.)	<i>astämarä</i>

# Loan translations

geta-ččən əmmäsgän for *al-hamdu-li-llah*

lord-POS.1P thank

yä-**'ahbab**-očč mätär antä nä-h zənab-u  
GEN-beloved-P rain you:M COP-2SG:M rain-ART

allah bi-y-ša-w for *inša'* *allah*  
god IF-3SG:M-want.IPV-OBJ.3SG:M

# Amharic verb morphology

- perfective pattern: C<sub>1</sub>äC<sub>2</sub>C<sub>2</sub>äC<sub>3</sub>-
  - **yä-hälläq-ä-n**                      geta „lord who has created us“ [Ar. halaqa]  
REL-create.PER-3SG:M-ACC lord
- imperfective pattern: -C<sub>1</sub>äC<sub>2</sub>C<sub>3</sub>
  - masawäq yə-wägb-all „it is an obligation to inform“ [Ar. wağaba]  
inform.VN 3SG:M-be.obligation.IPV-AUX
- converb pattern: C<sub>1</sub>äC<sub>2</sub>C<sub>3</sub>-
  - **wägb-o-ll-ätt-all** „he has made it an obligation for him“  
be-ob.obligation.CV-3SG:M-APP-OBJ.3SG:M-AUX

# Derived nouns & adjectives

*wäliyy-ənnät*

sainthood

*walīy*

*qädim-ənnät*

very old age

*qadīm*

*dämb-äñña*

criminal

*danb*

*häyr-äñña*

good

*hayr*

*‘aqəl-äñña*

reasonable

*‘aql*

*əsləm-ənna*

Islam

*islām*

*šərkə-nna*

Polytheism

*širk*

# Derived Verbs

lä-qärra-ä-w                    täkätb-o-all                    bä-ñña-w                    annägagär  
for-read.PER-3SG:M-ART    be.written.CV-3SG:M-AUX.3SG:M    in-GEN-we-ART    speech

„It is written for the one who has learned (reading)“

säm-aččäw-n                    mäktäb                    ənd-y-yyaz                    dägg                    nä-w  
name-POSS.3PL-ACC    write.VN    COMP-3SG:M-be.taken.IPV    good                    COP-3SG:M

„It is good to write their names so that they are remembered.“

yəhän askättəb-o                    yämm-y-awṭa                    gälṭ  
DEM    let.write.CV-3SG:M    REL-3SG:M-bring.out.IPV    mistake

„he has it written, the mistake he has brought out“

sära-n                    askätabi                    bä-qäbər                    räwman                    nä-w  
work-ACC    who.has.it.written    in-grave                    räwman                    COP-3SG:M  
„The one who has (it) written in the grave is Roman“

# Derivational patterns

derivational prefix	Amharic	Amharic gloss
tä-	<i>tä-kättäbä</i>	to be written
	<i>tä-sonnäfä</i>	to be composed, written
as-	<i>as-kättäbä</i>	to let s.o. write
	<i>as-wäggäbä</i>	to make it an obligation

# Morphology: double plural marking

بَنِيٌّشْ مَامَنْ كَفِيَّاُو سُوْسْتْ نَوْ  
*bä-näbiy-očč mamän käfyiyaw sost näw*  
“The sort of belief in the Prophets is three.” (7,11)

Arabic singular form ***nabi***  
& Amharic plural marker -očč

أَرَاتِيَاُو دَمَوْ بَانِبِيُّوشْ مَامَنْ  
*'arattäññaw dämmo b-anbiw-očču mamän*  
“And the fourth is believing in the Prophets.” (3,8)

Arabic plural form ***anbiya***  
& Amharic plural marker -očč

أَصْحَابُوشْ مَايَتْ نَوْ سِبِلْ سِطَّطُو  
*'ashab-očč mayät näw sibälu sit'ät'u*  
“Seeing the companions when they eat and drink.” (9,5)

Arabic plural form ***ashhab***  
& Amharic plural marker -očč

يَالَّهْ مَلَائِكُوشْ قُطْرَاشُو نَوْ بَزْ  
*yallah mälä'ik-očč qutraččäw näw bazu*  
“The number of the messengers of God is many.” (14,2)

Arabic plural form ***mala'ik***  
& Amharic plural marker -očč

# A register?

- socio-cultural context
  - religious content
  - didactic and persuasive function
  - addressing the religiously non-learned

لَقَرَّأْو تَكْتُبُواْلْ بَنِيَاوْ آنَّكَأَپَرْ

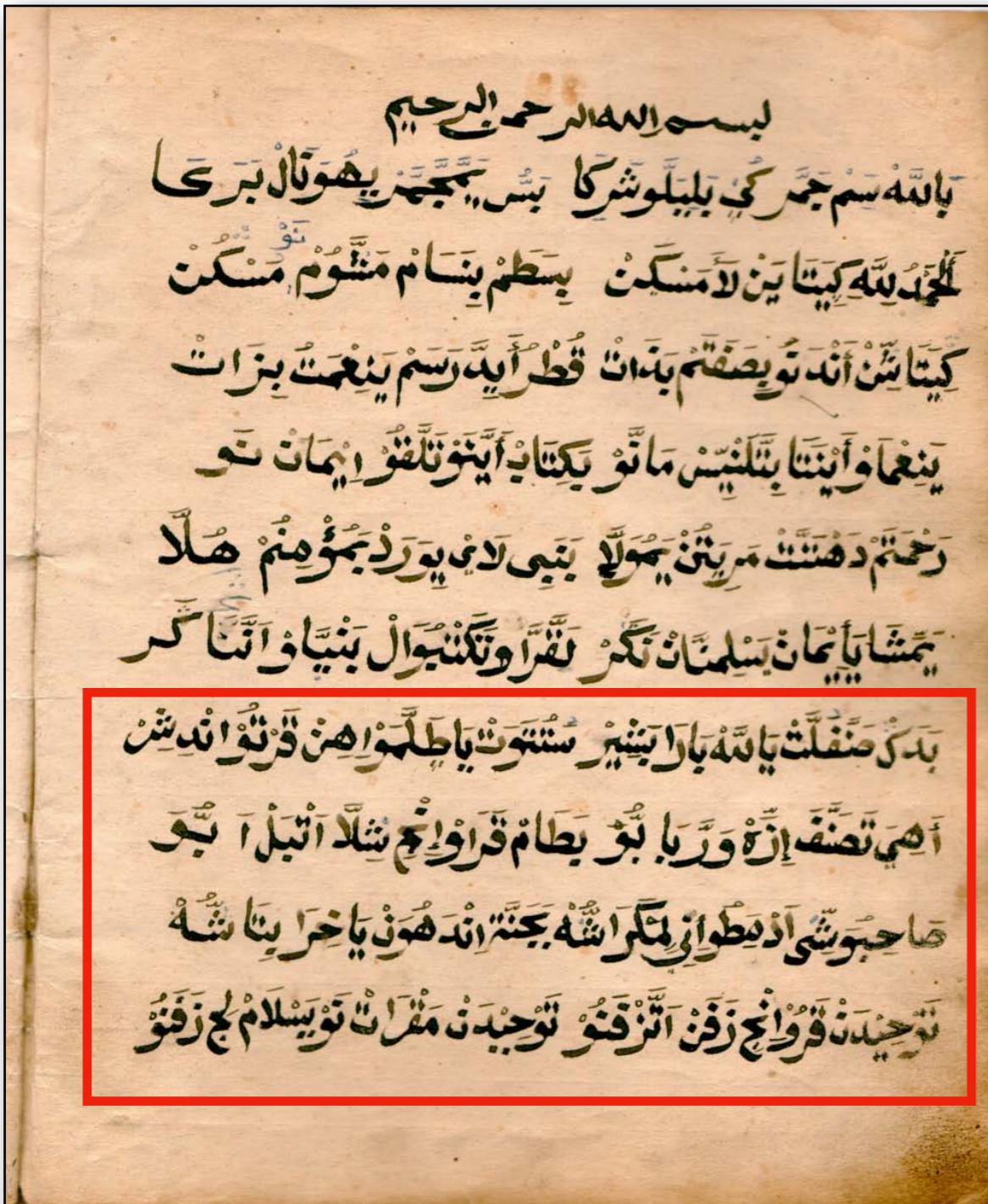
*läqärraw täkätbwall bæññaw 'annägagär*

“For the one who studied, it has been written in our language” (1,7)

# Orthography

- four consonants differ considerably from Arabic
  - ġ: ڇ, ڇ:
  - ġ: ڏ
  - g: ڇ/ڦ/ڇ:
  - ñ: ڦ, ڦ:
- ejectives are represented by closely „related“ signs
  - q: ڦ, t: ڦ

# A tawhīd (didactic poem)



سُتْتَوَثْ يَا طَلَمُوا هُنْ قَرْنَهُ أَنْدَشَنْ  
 أَهْيَ تَعْنَفَ إِزْهَوَرَ بَا بُو بَطَامَ قَرَوْأَجِ شَلَادَ أَتَبْلَا بَعَ  
 حَاجِبُو شَيْ أَذْمَطَوَانِي مَتَكَراَشَهُ بَجَنَهُ أَنْدَهُمْنِ يَا خَرِيَا شَهُ  
 تَوْحِيدَهُ فَرْوَاجِ زَفَنَ اَتْزَقَنُو تَوْجِيدَهُ مَقْرَاتْ تَوْسَلَامُ لِجِ زَفَنُو

Tawhīd from Dälämäle (Wärrä Babbo),  
written by Šeh Bašir Umär

بَدَلْ صَنَفَلتْ يَا اللَّهَ بَارَا بَشِيرْ / سَتْتَوْتْ يَا ظَلَمَوْ إِهِنْ قَرْتُو اَنْدِشِيرْ

bä-däg [g] sonnäfälät yallah bara Bäsir, sätawot yaçällämäw 'əhən qärto 'əndisər.

*He composed it well, the slave of God, Bašir, so that the one who was blinded by ignorance is healed.*

أَهِيَ تَصَنَّفَ إِزْهُ وَرَبَابُو / بَطَامْ قَرَاوْ إِنْجَ شِلَّا اَتِبْلُ أَبُو

'əhe täsonnäfä 'əzzih Wärrä Babbo, bätam qəraw 'ənġi čəlla atəbäl abbo!

*This was composed here in Wärrä Babbo, study it very well (and) don't take it lightly!*

صَاحِبُوشِيْ أَدْمَطُو أَنِي لِكَرَاشْهُ / بَحَنْتَمْ إِنْدَهُونْ يَا خِرَا بِّتَا شَهْ

swaḥibočče 'admətu 'ene ləmkäraččuh, bägeññätəm əndähon yaxira betaččuh.

*My friends listen, (and) let me tell you, so that your house in the hereafter will be in paradise.*

تَوْحِيدَنْ قَرُو إِنْجِ زَفَنْ اتَّزْفَنُو / تَوْحِيدَنْ مَقْرَاتْ نَوْ يَسْلَامْ لِجِ زَفَنُو

täwħidən qəru ənġi zäfän atəzfänu, täwħidən mäqrat näw yäslam ləg zäfänu

*Study the tawħid and don't sing songs, studying the tawħid is the Muslim's song.*

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Thank you!