Workshops and conferences

The IslHornAfr project organizes regular workshops and conferences.

2014, March (Addis Ababa, together with CFEE):
Islamic Manuscripts in the Horn of Africa

2014, July (Hamburg, together with Ethio-SPaRe and TraCES projects):
Manuscripts and texts, languages and contexts: the transmission of knowledge in the Horn of Africa

2014, October (Copenhagen):
Islam in the Horn of Africa

2014, December (Paris, together with CNRS):
Manuscrits chrétiens et islamiques d'Éthiopie (XII-XX s.). Une approche comparative

2015, February (Copenhagen):
Mission to the Land of Coffee: first achievements and results

2015, August (Warsaw, a panel within 19 ICES):
Islamic literature in Ethiopia: new perspectives of research

Project team

As of 2015, the project team includes:

Principal Investigator:
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SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

erc

IslHornAfr
Islam in the Horn of Africa
a Comparative Literary Approach

IslHornAfr

The Project

The project *IslHornAfr: Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach* (European Union 7th Framework Programme, ERC Advanced Grant 322849, 2013–2018) was conceived as a contribution to both African and Islamic studies, with the aim of producing a critical and comprehensive picture of the Islamic literary history of the Horn of Africa.

The project explores the Islamic cultural history in the Horn of Africa as it is reflected in the literary traditions of the region (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia). It considers primarily the manuscript tradition but also printed texts in order to reconstruct the history of Islamic thought in the project area. In most general terms, the project aims at expanding our knowledge of the texts composed, translated, or copied by the Muslims in the Horn of Africa.

Languages

The majority of the texts used by the Muslims in the Horn of Africa are composed and transmitted in Arabic. However, an important number of texts (whether entire manuscripts or marginal additions) in local languages (as a rule, in Arabic script, ʿaǧamī) exist. The languages within the project area include, among others, Afar, Amharic, Argobba, Gurage, Harari, Oromo, Saho, Somali, Tigrinya, and Tigre.

Manuscript research

The project team collects data from manuscripts and books in circulation in the Horn of Africa. For that, European library collections shall be evaluated, but primarily first-hand field research in order to access previously unknown material shall be conducted.

Manuscripts at Säddäqa, Oromiyya, Ethiopia, November 2015, photograph by Sara Fani

Field missions shall be organized in Ethiopia, Somaliland, Djibouti, and Eritrea. Institutional (primarily mosques and shrines) and private libraries shall be visited in order to record the manuscripts and their content in their local context. Not only the local literary production of the Horn of Africa but also locally copied texts of foreign origin are being considered.

Texts transmitted by the manuscripts and the manuscripts' physical make-up shall be studied in a general comparative perspective, trying to reveal connections between the Horn and the 'mainstream' Islamic world on the one hand and pinpoint the individual character of the local Islamic teaching on the other hand.

A re-evaluation of external Islamic sources dealing with the project areas shall complete the picture.

Database

All texts (main texts and additional texts in the manuscripts, documents, books, whether in Arabic or in local languages) shall be classified with the help of the project database according to their genres, contents, titles, authors, places of creation, number of witnesses, distribution of witnesses, and linguistic and graphic peculiarities.

The relational database also contains metadata on persons (authors, copyists, scholars) and places (sites of mosques and shrines, manuscript collections, centres of Islamic learning, etc.).