



Faculty of Humanities



Islam in the Horn of Africa.

A comparative literary approach

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Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Administrative data

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Originally based at the University of Florence (01.07.13)

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Now based at the Institute of Cross-cultural and Regional Studies/University of Copenhagen



Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Staff

Principal Investigator: Alessandro Gori

Associated Researchers:

- Dr. Sara Fani
- Dr. Michele Petrone
- Dr. Anne Regourd
- Mr. Orhan Toy

One more position to be filled



Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Geographical context



The Horn of Africa

- Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somaliland, Puntland, Somalia

Highly unstable

Main recent conflicts:

- Eritrea/Ethiopia (1998-2000)
- Ethiopia/Somalia (2006-9)
- Somaliland/Puntland (2007-present)
- Djibouti/Eritrea (2008)



Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Project fields

Arabic Literature in a wider sense:

- Both classical (pre-modern) and modern
- Both "Texts that are intended to do more than instruct and inform" (Geert Jan van Gelder)
- and especially:
 - Arabic grammar and rhetoric
 - Scientific literature
 - Historical and geographical literature
 - Theology
 - Law
 - Mysticism (devotional literature; invocations; supplications)



Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Project scope

Islamic Studies

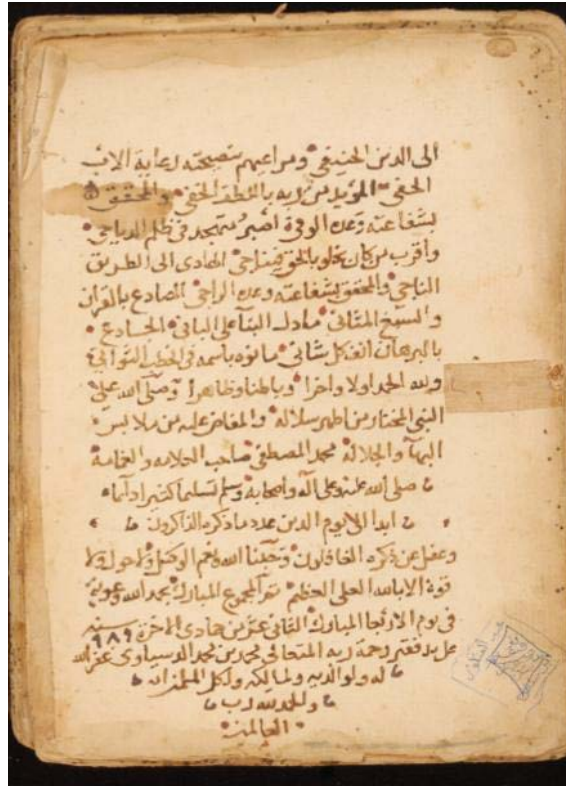
- The project focuses on the Islamic intellectual tradition in the Horn of Africa

African Studies

- The Project focuses on Islam in Africa (or African Islam) and its dialectic connexion with “main stream” Arab Islam



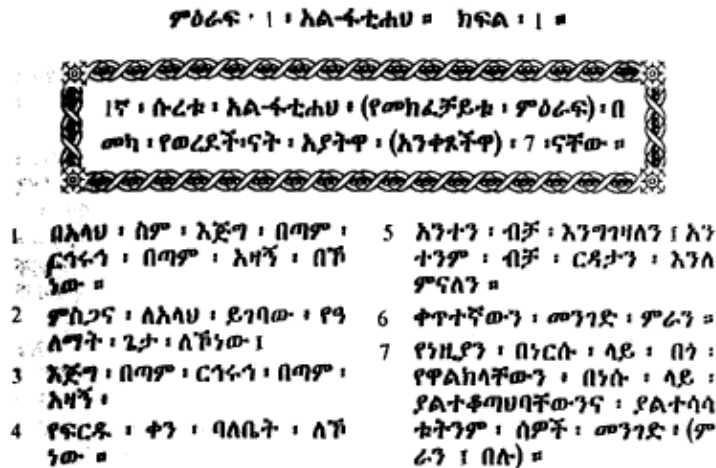
Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Documentary base



Manuscript and printed texts

- Oldest so far found dated Islamic manuscript in Ethiopia
22 ġumāda al-āhira 989
A.H./14 July 1581 A.D.
— IES 1852, colophon.

Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Documentary base



- Contemporary production
- Islamic printing presses and publishing houses exp. since 1991 after the fall of the "Derg" regime
- Large contemporary production of Islamic printed books
- Islamic calligraphy in local languages

Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Documentary base



Texts copied or printed abroad

- E.g. manuscripts copied Egypt (or Yemen) and taken to Ethiopia
- Books printed in Cairo and sold in Ethiopia

Manuscripts copied and books printed in Ethiopia

فيلقيا



Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Documentary base



- Texts written in Arabic and in local languages (Old Harari, Amharic, Oromo, Somali)



Maqaa Rabbiitiniin Jalqaba, Maqaan isaa Rahmaan kan tahe, maqaan isaa Rahiin kan tahe.

1. Rabbiin guddate khan mootummaan waa hundaa isa harka jirtu, Rabbiin waa hundarrattuu dandayaa dha.

2. Rabbiin khan du'aa jiruu uume, isin laaludhaaf, isinirraa eenyuu dalagaa gaarii dalagaa, Rabbiin injifataa dha, Rabbiin araaramaa dha nama toowbateef.

3. Rabbiin samii torba wal-gubbaa godhee uume, waan Rahmaan uume kheeyatti wal-dhabbiifi eeyyii hin agartu, samii Rabbiin uume irra deddeebi'ii mee laali baqaqaa wahi agartaa?

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١﴾

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢﴾

الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَوتٍ فَآرْجِعْ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُتُورٍ ﴿٣﴾

Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Digital research environment

IslHornAfr Relational Database Concept

Main Entities (Authority files): Texts, Manuscripts, Books, Collections, Places, Persons, Bibliography titles
Possible Authority files: Publishers, Genres, Languages, Scripts, Scholars

IslHornAfr datamodel 2: Manuscripts

Ms signature	Signature	[Single line]
Ms collection	Collection	[Lookup Collection]

IslHornAfr datamodel 3: Text witnesses (derived from Manuscripts+Texts)

Text	[Text]	[Lookup Text]	In view several of the fields from Text may be shown
Text part	Text chapter	Single line	
Manuscript	[Manuscript]	[Lookup manuscript]	In the view several fields may be shown
Folio from			Possibly numerical field
Folio to			Possibly numerical field
Copyist	[Name]	[Lookup field Persons]	Note: unbound, or Multiple Lookup
Translator	[Name]	[Lookup field Persons]	Note: unbound, or Multiple Lookup
Language		Dropdown or Lookup Languages	
Script		Dropdown or Lookup Scripts	
Date copied	From To	[Year Numeric] [Year Numeric]	Note: 1500-1600 = 16 th century etc.
Date comment	[Multi-line]		
Comments	[Multi-line]		

IslHornAfr datamodel 6: Places

Place name	normalized original	[Single line Latin script] [Single line Arabic/Fidel etc.; a param must define the language]	Note: this set should be unbound, i.e. repeatable in case multiple titles
Region		[Single line]	
Country		[Single line]	
Collections present	auto-generated lists from "Collections", with clickable links		
Texts written	auto-generated lists from "Texts", with clickable links		
Manuscripts copied	auto-generated lists from "Text witnesses", with clickable links		

IslHornAfr datamodel 7: Persons

Name	normalized original	[Single line Latin script] [Single line Arabic/Fidel, define the language]	Note: this set should be unbound, i.e. repeatable in case multiple titles
Dates of activity	From To	[Year Numeric] [Year Numeric]	Note: 1500-1600 = 16 th century etc.
Place of activity	[Place name]	[Lookup field Places]	
Texts authored	auto-generated lists from "Texts", with clickable links		
Manuscripts copied	auto-generated lists from "Text witnesses", with clickable links		
Texts mentioned in	auto-generated lists from "Texts", with clickable links		

IslHornAfr datamodel 8: Collections

Collection		[Single line]	
Place		[Lookup Place]	
Man in	auto-generated lists from "Manuscripts", with clickable links		

IslHornAfr datamodel 1: Texts

Title	normalized original	[Single line Latin script] [Single line Arabic/Fidel etc.; a param must define the language]	Note: this set should be unbound, i.e. repeatable in case multiple titles
Language	translated	[Single line translation]	
Author	Arabic/Arabic/Harari/Tigrinya/	[Lookup field Persons]	Note: this field should be unbound, i.e. repeatable in case multiple authors, or Multiple Lookup
Place of creation	[Place name]	[Lookup field Places]	Note: this field should be unbound, i.e. repeatable in case multiple places
Literary genre	Fish/Geography/ Grammar/Quran/ Tahrir/Document/ Specific on the genre	Dropdown expandable or Lookup Genres [Multi-line or Lookup?]	e.g. documents: waqf/taza etc; law: harafimamki etc.
Date of creation	From To	[Year Numeric] [Year Numeric]	Note: 1500-1600 = 16 th century etc.
Persons mentioned	[Name]	[Lookup field Persons]	Note: this field should be unbound, i.e. repeatable in case multiple authors (or Multiple Lookup)
Text structure	1.2.3	[Multi-line]	
Transcription	RTP (esp for documents)	[unbound]	
Translation	RTF	[unbound]	
Edited in	[Bib]	[Lookup Bibliography]	Note: this field should be unbound, i.e. repeatable or Multiple Lookup possible
Translated in	[Bib]	[Lookup Bibliography]	
Further bibliography	[Bib]	[Lookup Bibliography]	
Subform Sources	Man witnesses (from Text witnesses) ins, folio range, text part, copyist, date, etc.		
Subform Sources	Book witnesses (from Book witnesses) book, page range, text part, publisher, date, etc.		

IslHornAfr datamodel 10: Bibliography

Short title		Single line	Unique required field
Publication type		Drop-down Book/Chapter/Conference paper/Article/Dissertation/Manuscript	
Author(s)	Author last name, first name	[Lookup Scholars]	Multiple Lookup or unbound/ repeatable
Title article	Title article	Single line	= TE <title level="a">, Endnote T1
Editor(s)	Editor last name, first name	[Lookup Scholars]	Multiple Lookup or unbound/ repeatable
Translator(s)	Translator last name, first name	[Lookup Scholars]	Multiple Lookup or unbound/ repeatable (Possible to auto-refer within the Entity? To the original of the translation?)
Title monograph	Monograph	Single line	= TE <title level="m">, Endnote T2
Journal	Journal	Single line	= TE <title level="j">, Endnote J0
Book volume	Book volume	Number	= TE <title level="vol">, Endnote V1
Journal issue	Journal issue	Number	
Series	Series	Single line	TE <title level="s"> unbound/ repeatable (together)
Series volume	Series volume	Single line	
Place(s)	Place	Single line or Lookup Places	TE <place level="p">, unbound/ repeatable
Publisher	Publisher	Single line or Lookup Publishers	TE <publisher>, Endnote PB
Year	Year	Single line	
Pages	Page from Page to	Number Number	
Language			
URL			
Comment			
Questions	Reprints? Reviews? Import from online DB?		

IslHornAfr datamodel 4: Books

Book short title	Short title	[Single line]	Note: this field should be unbound
Author(s)	[Name]	[Lookup field Persons]	Note: this field should be unbound, i.e. repeatable in case multiple authors, or Multiple Lookup
Editor(s)	[Name]	[Lookup field Persons]	Note: this field should be unbound, i.e. repeatable in case multiple authors, or Multiple Lookup
Title	normalized original	[Single line Latin script] [Single line Arabic/Fidel etc.; a param must define the language]	Note: this set should be unbound, i.e. repeatable in case multiple titles
Language	translated	[Single line translation]	
Publisher	Publisher	[Lookup Publishers or expandable Dropdown]	
Place	[Place name]	[Lookup field Places]	Note: unbound, or Multiple Lookup

IslHornAfr datamodel 5: Book witnesses (derived from Books)

Text	[Text]	[Lookup Text]	In view several of the fields from Text may be shown
Text part	Text chapter	Single line	
Book	[Book]	[Lookup Books]	In the view several fields may be shown
Page from			numerical field
Page to			
Editor	[Name]	[Lookup field Persons]	Note: unbound, or Multiple Lookup
Language		Dropdown or Lookup Languages	
Script		Dropdown or Lookup Scripts	
Comments	[Multi-line]		

IslHornAfr datamodel 9: Scholars (= authors of publications used in bibliography, could be merged with Persons but better separate)

Name	Last First	[Single line Latin script] [Single line Latin script]	Possibility to add name variants in other script/ lang ?
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IslHornAfr possible datamodels:

Languages		
Publishers		
Scripts		
Genres		

Complex relational database of the works circulating among the Muslims in Africa

- descriptions of texts and manuscripts
- authors
- places.
- bibliography
- A user-friendly browsing and search interface
- sample text editions (theological and legal thought, historiography and hagiography)



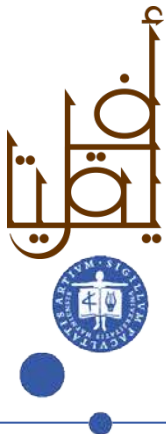
Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Methodology

Methodology of the research

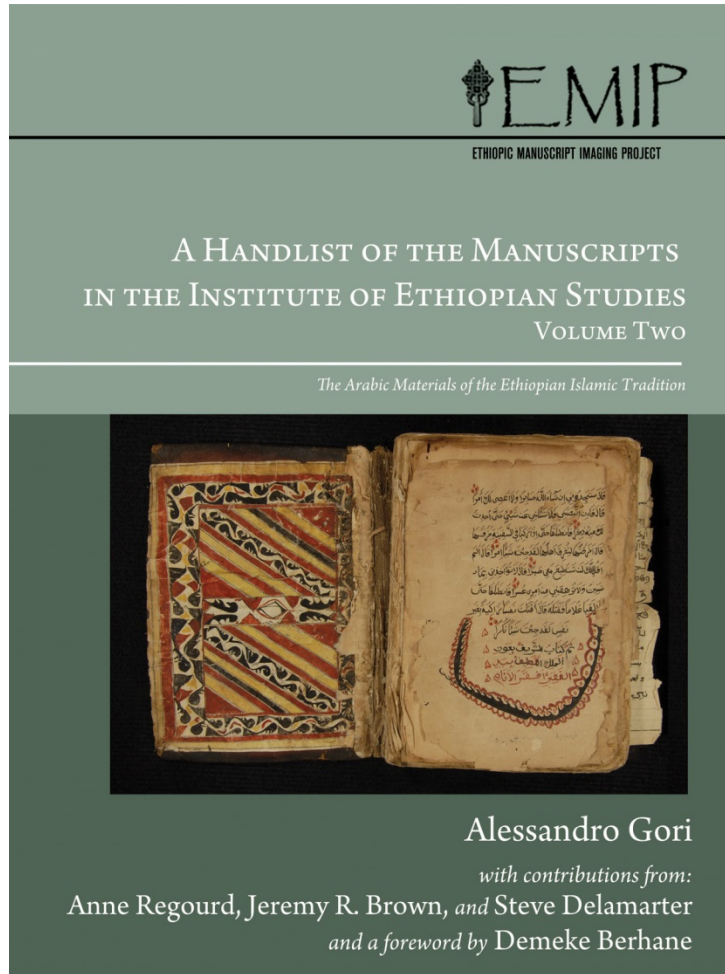
- Identification of texts (both known and previously unknown)
- expand the corpus of available texts to make a more representative research

Classification according to

- genres
- contents
- titles, authors
- places of creation
- number of witnesses
- distribution of witnesses, and linguistic and graphic peculiarities



Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: First results



Ethiopic Manuscripts, Texts, and Studies Series • Volume 20

- Handlist of the codices
- Only main works listed
- Codicological analysis
- Selected images of dated manuscripts

Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Texts

Texts produced by local authors (main genres):

- Arabic grammar
- Commentaries on the Qur'ān
- Historical texts
- Pietistic literature
- Mystical literature

Texts produced in the wider Islamic world (main genres):

- Theology
- Law
- Science



Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Main goals

Creation of:

- critical picture of the Islamic literary history of the Horn of Africa (beyond the Arabic Literature of Africa)
- growing database of African Islamic literature, African Islamic biography and African Islamic topography

Comparative research:

- between the different sub-regions of the focus area
- between the African “local” Islam and the “mainstream” Islamic tradition



Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Main goals

Increase the awareness:

- of Islam in Africa for the scholarship
- of the value of local tradition in Africa itself

Contribute to the understanding of the processes of Islamization in the focus area and in Sub-saharan Africa in general

Contribute to the preservation and valorization of the Islamic cultural heritage in the area

Main targets:

- local people (esp. youth) and
- the international community



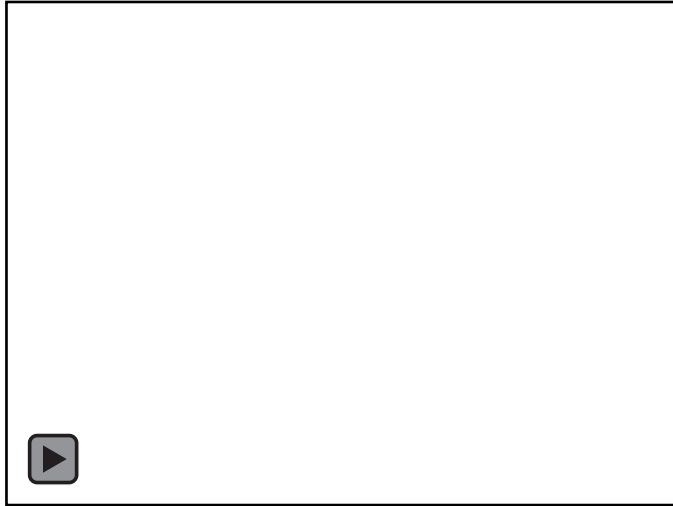
Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Obstacles



- Absence of infrastructure
- Lack of economical means

Harar, private museum of
'Abdallāh Šarīf

Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach: Obstacles



Unclear historical and cultural consciousness

Religious sectarianism

Film: Kisimayo (Somalia), 2012. Destruction of the holy shrines





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