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Article

Arabic Grammar Traditions in Gibe and Harär: Regional Continuity vs Specificity of Scholarship

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The present issue of AETHIOPICA, like the preceding one, is partly monograph-
ic, with a section containing the proceedings of the Panel on Islamic Literature
in Ethiopia: New Perspectives of Research, from the ‘19th International Con-
ference of Ethiopian Studies’, held in Warsaw, Poland, on 24–28 August 2015.

Starting from this issue, the annual bibliography on Ethiopian Semitic
and Cushitic linguistics held from its inception in 1998 for eighteen years
by Rainer Voigt is handed over, on Voigt’s own will, to a pool of younger
scholars, with the substantial support of the AETHIOPICA editorial team. I
would like on this occasion to express the deep gratitude of the editorial
board of AETHIOPICA and of all scholars in Ethiopian Semitic and Cushitic
linguistics to Rainer Voigt for his fundamental and valuable contribution.

Bibliographical abbreviations used in this volume

ÄthFor  Äthiopistische Forschungen, 1–35, ed. by E. HAMMERSCHMIDT, 36–40, ed. by
AethFor  Äthiopistische Forschungen, 41–73, ed. by S. UHLIG (Wiesbaden: Harrasso-
ed. by A. BAUSI (ibid., 2012ff.).
AION  Annali dell’Università degli studi di Napoli ‘L’Orientale’, Napoli: Università di
Napoli ‘L’Orientale’ (former Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli), 1929ff.
CSCO  Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 1903ff.
EAI  S. UHLIG, ed., Encyclopaedia Aethiopica, I: A–C; II: D–Ha; III: He–N; in
cooperation with A. BAUSI, eds, IV: O–X (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010); A.
BAUSI in cooperation with S. UHLIG, eds, V: Y–Z, Supplementa, Addenda et
2014).
EMML  Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa.
JSS  Journal of Semitic Studies, Manchester 1956ff.
OrChr  Orients Christianus, Leipzig–Roma–Wiesbaden 1901ff.
of Ethiopian Studies, Moscow, 26–29 August 1986, I–VI (Moscow: Nauka
ZDMG  Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, Leipzig–Wiesbaden–
Stuttgart 1847ff.
The Arabic language entered the very complex Ethiopian linguistic environment by different channels playing a significant role in the religious and social sphere of Muslim Ethiopians’ lives as well as in their literary production. Its presence is historically related to the commercial and political networks which existed between the northeast African coast and the western coast of the Arabian peninsula. Arabic was originally spoken in different contexts by native Arab-speakers settled in the Horn of Africa, such as the Yemeni migrant communities and by groups of traders, both Christian and Muslim, coming from Arab or Arab-speaking countries.

It was however the new religious identity of the region that gave a major impulse to the transmission and teaching of written and spoken Arabic language within the native population of the Horn of Africa. Ignoring the use of Arabic in the Christian context, which would lead us away from the aim of the present contribution, it is worth pointing out that the most crucial role in the spread of Arabic in the Horn was played by the conversion to Islam of people in different areas of the region. As in the other Islamic contexts, Arabic in Ethiopia, beyond being the language of the Revelation, is also an important factor of unity and identity of the umma (Islamic community), even more effective and necessary if we consider that Ethiopian Muslims represent a minority in the country and that Ethiopian Muslims speak different native languages.

1 This paper was presented at the 19th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (University of Warsaw, Faculty of Oriental Studies, 24th–28th August 2015), Ethiopia: Diversity and Interconnections through Space and Time within the panel devoted to ‘Islamic literature in Ethiopia: new perspectives of research’. The original title was Textual Traditions of Arabic Grammars in Jimma: Regional Continuity and Specificity of Scholarship; for this publication the title has been slightly changed in order to include of new manuscript material collected during the second field mission to Gibe region of the project Islam in the Horn of Africa (see infra).


3 For a general sketch of Arabic in Ethiopia, see ‘Arabic: Arabic in Ethiopia’, EAe, I (2003), 301b–304a (A. Gori), in particular 302b–304a and the related bibliography. It is worthwhile pointing out that the hypothesis according to which Arabic would have been used as a common second language, or lingua franca, for trade has not found any
According to a somewhat simplified assumption, Islam basically entered the region of the Horn of Africa along the trade routes thanks to the more or less intentional proselytizing actions of merchants. This supposition, largely and uncritically accepted so far, often hides a prejudice according to which conversions in the region were encouraged by mere economic advantage or by the acquisition of social prestige; this assumption implies that the level and sophistication of Islam perceived and accepted by the population was actually quite superficial. This perception has finally been reinterpreted by both Western and Ethiopian scholars who offer a more complete picture of the cultural and intellectual life of Islam in the region: while the role of merchants is undeniable, especially for the initial spread of Islam, it is nevertheless well attested that ‘ulamāʾ, šuyūḫ, mudarrisīn (teachers) and ḏuʿāʾ (preachers) moved together with merchants and traders’ caravans, bringing also accurate and refined contents of the religious message. In the course of time, Islam in the region acquired its own characteristics thanks to an original intellectual elaboration which definitely contradicts the idea of passive reception and of the superimposition of a rigid and strict doctrine on the local religious dimension and the traditional social organization.

Two main commercial routes linked Ethiopia to regions to the north, along the River Nile and to the east, across the Red Sea to Arabia and even to India. The networks between the Horn and these two important surrounding regions are well attested since ancient times and long before the arrival of Islam, which eventually penetrated the Horn along the very same routes. Another route, towards West Africa was also well established, passing through the re-

confirmation from the data collected in the field, including the areas with a considerable Muslim population (see Cooper and Carpenter 1976 and Drewes 1976, 175–176 contra Ferguson 1971).

The prejudice behind this theory is that the supposed elementary dimension of the Islamic message and doctrine, being limited to the exterior aspects of the creed, would have allowed local ancestral belief to survive and, for this reason, would have been more easily accepted by the local population (for a more detailed exposition of the subject see Hussein Ahmed 2001, 39–58).

The Red Sea also served as a favourable passage to the southern regions of East Africa. For relations with Arabia see ‘Arabia: Relations in ancient times’, EAe, I (2003), 294a–300a (S. Munro-Hay), in particular 294a–298a; ‘Red Sea: II. Red Sea in Antiquity’, EAe, IV (2010), 346a–347b (A. Bausi and G. Fiaccadori); for the north-south networks see ‘Punt’, EAe, IV (2010), 239a–242b (F. Breyer) and ‘Egypt, relations with: Cultural and political relations in early times’, EAe, II (2005), 240a–241a (H. Erlich and G. Fiaccadori).

Arabic Grammar Traditions in Gibe and Harār

gion of Sinnār, and has been used and travelled by West-African Muslims of the Sub-Saharan region for both their ritual pilgrimage and their trading.\(^8\)

**Arabic language learning in Ethiopia**

Movements of people obviously entail movements of books and many Arabic texts have in fact entered the region along the same caravan routes as goods to be traded. However, they were primarily educational and ‘intellectual equipment’ for the scholars who brought the Islamic message, to be studied, taught, or exchanged. The subjects of these texts were not limited to religious sciences; they included those related to the Arabic language, such as grammar and syntax, morphology, orthography and, at a later stage, also rhetoric, eloquence, prosody etc. The study of these subjects, when competently taught, not only enables access to and knowledge of the Arab literary heritage, but also allows Ethiopian Muslims to express their intellectual and devotional life in written Classical Arabic. Of the many centres of learning, those located in the more remote rural areas, tended to specialize in specific subjects,\(^9\) forcing the students who wanted to proceed in their Islamic education to move from one place to another, if not abroad to Arab countries; this also contributed to the circulation of written materials. Movements of people and the consequent circulation of texts are basically related to the more advanced levels of learning. From the educational point of view, the organization and pedagogical methods in Ethiopian Islamic schools do not seem to differ from the rest of the Islamic world. The basic aim of the traditional centres of learning is to create a Muslim subjectivity through the acquisition of the doctrinal, moral, and behavioural precepts of Islam, developing common ethical and legal norms and impacting on the relations between the different social classes, and with Muslim communities outside the country.\(^10\) They are organized into

\(^8\) ‘Sinnār’, *EAe*, IV (2010), 665b–667a (W. Smidt), in particular 666a.

\(^9\) The ‘ulamāʾ of Wällo, for example, have a good reputation as masters in *fiqh* and Arabic grammar and syntax (Hussein Ahmed 1988, 98). This was confirmed by our informant ṣayh Kamāl (interviewed in Agaro, February 2016), who moved to Wällo for his education in Arabic grammar. Wällo, in fact, seems to have played a particularly prominent role as a centre of Islamic scholarship since the eighteenth century in a multi-disciplinary perspective. The region was probably Islamized as early as the neighbouring state of Yifāt, but one important impetus for the development of Islamic education is certainly the introduction of the Ḍirāyiyya ṣāffi order from Harār which favoured the establishment of local intellectual centres (Hussein Ahmed 2001, 68–69).

\(^10\) In his study on the perception of traditional Islamic learning in Mali, Louis Brenner underlines how, in the first phase of learning, Muslim subjectivity is fostered by the ‘specific postures of submissiveness’, describing an educational iter similar to that of other Islamic societies including the Ethiopian one; he describes traditional Islamic
different levels, the first of which is the Qur’ānic school: there, Muslim Ethiopian children start to learn the Arabic alphabet, read and write it, and memorise the Qur’ān, even if most of them cannot really use Arabic language when they leave school. It is only the higher levels of education that require a deeper knowledge of Arabic and imply a different pedagogical method: the student (darāṣa or qāliḥā) reads classical Arabic works which are then interpreted and translated by the schoolmaster in the native language of the student; finally the student has to interpret or paraphrase the same passage by himself. The need to teach the students in their native languages also gave rise to a rich Islamic literary production in several Ethiopian languages (such as Harari, Oromo, Amharic, Argobba etc.) written in Arabic alphabet (ağamī literature). The higher levels of learning focus on different branches of the Islamic tradition usually starting with fiqh (jurisprudence), tawḥīd (theology), manṭiq (logic), hadīt (Prophetic traditions) and tafsīr (Qur’ānic exegesis); this assumes that the student is acquired a sound knowledge of classical Arabic.

knowledge both within the context of an esoteric episteme, according to Michel Foucault’s categories, as ‘hierarchical knowledge’ and in its šāfī dimension (Brenner 2000, 6–8,19–20).

In Harari region, children start to attend at the age of five (Leslau 1965, 173).

This elementary level of education has different regional names: k’urān ġey (Abdurahman Garad and Wagner 1998, 69) or ġe qurān ġe (Leslau 1965, 172) in Harar; in Wällo it is called tabaği (Haile Gabriel Dagne 1976, 350 who also includes Ifāṭ; see also Hussein Ahmed 1998, 100 who does not agree with the use of this term in Wällo), meğlis Qur’ān in Harar, Gimm and Arsi, or also šayh in urban areas (Haile Gabriel Dagne 1976, 350). For a description of this educational institution in Ethiopia, see ibid. 350–353; Hussein Ahmed 1988, 98–100; Leslau 1965, 172–188.


Cf. Haile Gabriel Dagne 1976, 353, where this stage is named īlm (i.e. Arab. ‘ilm) with reference to Wällo; in Harar the same institution is called kabirgār (‘Education. Islamic traditional education’, EAE, II, 230b (A. Gori)).


Arabic grammar, expressed by the word nabw in Arabic, is usually mentioned in the consulted bibliography as an advanced learning sector at the same level as fiqh or tafsīr (Hussein Ahmed 2001, 93; Ahmed Hassen Omer 2006, 17; Kebreab, W. Giorgis 1981, 79); the same sources always emphasize that the first level of learning, the Qur’ānic school, is not enough to practice Arabic language at a good level. It is thus conceivable that an intermediate level in which Arabic language is taught to the students precedes all the higher levels of īlm in which a more complex and specialized approach to linguistics also represents an independent sector (including for example rhetoric, prosody etc.). What is not completely clear is whether a specific set of classical texts on grammar is used in this hypothetical preliminary stage of Arabic learning, or if it is completed orally and without the support of the classical literary texts related to the subject. The relatively small number of exercise books on Arabic language in the collections seems to
These schools are generally attached to a mosque or are part of a devotional/educational centre, like zāwiya or hadrās, found in both rural and urban contexts. Within nomadic communities itinerant schools only developed with local learned men or after the arrival of šuyūḫ from outside. As stated by Hussein Ahmed, the two main features of rural education in Wällo— a fact which might also be true of other Ethiopian regions—are the lack of economic resources and institutional support, as well as localization. According to Haile Gabriel Dagne, the limited access to economic resources in rural areas (badiya), in contrast to urban areas (megala), can be found in different perceptions of the Arabic language: in rural areas the learning of Arabic, fundamental in any field of Islamic knowledge, is limited to its religious and cultural purpose; in the urban context however, the language is also useful for commerce and is thus more attractive. It is thus undeniable that the particular Ethiopian multi-religious and multi-linguistic environment implies a specific role and status for the Arabic language, as it was taught, and still is, in non-Government institutions, and to non-native speakers.

Aims of the research

Among the most renowned centres of traditional Islamic learning, Harär, with its literary production, is by far the most studied; Wállo has been the object support the idea that this preliminary phase of linguistic education was not part of the higher level of education and that it was probably studied at a different location, and/or with different teaching methods, or mainly orally.


The lessons are usually held in remote areas, lacking modern comforts and teaching materials, and it is not infrequent to see teaching sessions under the trees in the open air. The schoolmasters (mudarris or muʿallim) are few in number, they do not receive a regular income, but only occasional support from the students’ families or from the farm labour of the students themselves; they usually reside in one place, thus contributing to specialization in a specific field of Islamic sciences in the local education (Hussein Ahmed 1988, 98). In Wállo the place where the schoolmaster teaches is known as dāḫil, the meaning of which in Arabic seems to hint only at the indoor space (ibid. 99; cfr. Ahmed Hassen Omer 2006, 17).

Haile Gabriel Dagne 1976, 350; this is confirmed by Hussein Ahmed who also stresses the difference with church education, preparing students for service in both church and state, while trade seems to be the only possible occupation for Muslim students (Hussein Ahmed 1988, 97). As regards the reputation of urban educational centres, the towns of Harär and Gimma were mentioned by foreign travellers in the nineteenth century because of the quality of their teaching (Pankhurst 1976, 310).

In particular by Ewald Wagner from the 1970s; for an overview on Harari literature see Banti 2010. A thesis specifically devoted to the traditional Islamic centre of learning in
of a well documented study by Hussein Ahmed;\textsuperscript{21} Yifat, Därра and Southern Wällо have been treated by Ahmed Hassen Omer and seem to have attracted Muslim students especially from Southern Šäwa and Gurage.\textsuperscript{22} The pioneering work of Rex S. O’Fahey on the Arabic literature of Northeastern Africa, deserves special mention for the identification of original works compiled by local authors.\textsuperscript{23} A specific study of the teaching of Arabic grammar concerning the local traditional \textit{curriculum} and the literary production of two Ethiopian grammarians, from Wällо and Harär, was published as an article written by Alessandro Gori in which the work of the two contemporary learned men is particularly highlighted.\textsuperscript{24} With the exception of a few studies by local scholars on specific works or manuscript collections other regions remained almost unexplored until now.

New manuscript material has been collected and described within the framework of the project \textit{Islam in the Horn of Africa}. The prosopographic perspective of the project allows to trace the intellectual relations among local ‘ulamá’ or šuyūḫ through the documentary contents of some locally produced texts, from paratextual annotations on the manuscripts, or from oral communications by local informants; at the same time, the presence and diffusion of specific texts in the collections represents in itself the first reflection of these intellectual networks and discipleships among the Muslims of the Horn and also of the relations with other regions of the Muslim world. In the relational data-base of the project, references to specific Arabic works, their being mentioned in notes about book loans, or in quotations in the margins are scrupulously described, since they indicate the presence and knowledge of those texts in that cultural context.\textsuperscript{25} This represents what Charles Stewart and Bruce Hall have defined as \textit{core curriculum} in relation to the West African literary tradition with the intention of identifying the most popular texts in the

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\textsuperscript{21} Hussein Ahmed 2001.
\textsuperscript{22} Ahmed Hassen Omer 2006.
\textsuperscript{23} ALAJ.
\textsuperscript{24} Gori 2008. A restricted list of the most read texts on Arabic grammar is also given in Hussein Ahmed 1988, 100–101, but much more attention is devoted to works on \textit{fuqх}; the same can be said of the study on northern Šäwa published by Ahmed Hassen Omer (2006) with no mention of specific grammar texts. Generally speaking, our informants during the missions of the \textit{IslaHornAfr} project—and the present custodians of the manuscript collections—only mention \textit{al-Ağurrımıyya} by Ibn Ağurrüm, \textit{al-Alfiyya} by Ibn Malik and (less often) \textit{Mulḥat al-i‘rāb} by al-Hartrī.

\textsuperscript{25} For a presentation of the project see Gori 2015b and the website of the project at http://islbornafr.eu/index.html.
Starting from the same assumption, some remarks are necessary to differentiate between the approach of the present analysis and the study of the two academics. The specific aim of this contribution is limited for different reasons, among which the first is the scarcity of material, already gathered and identified: more than 80 private libraries from Mauritania to Nigeria have been analysed for West Africa, while, in the case of the Horn, only 24 collections from Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somaliland, Europe and the United States are at present available; a lot of material in situ still remains to be analysed, so that any general analysis of the whole region would be extremely temporary and not definite. For this reason, this inquiry is intended to be a preliminary survey related only to two well-represented regions of the Horn, that is the central-west Ethiopian region (in particular Gibe region) and the region of Harār (central-eastern Ethiopia); the intention is to compare the manuscript traditions of these two zones and to point out the possible existence of specific regional textual traditions; or, alternatively, of common traditions attesting intellectual relations between scholars of these different areas; or, finally, possible relations with specific areas outside the country. At the same time the location of these two zones, being at the extreme longitudinal borders of the region, suggests the possibility of different external literary influences, in particular from the Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula and from West Africa.

The analysis will be limited to the Arabic grammar tradition for a twofold reason. Firstly, in fact, the localization of the educational centres and their specialization in particular fields of the Islamic learning would lead to non-representative results, and secondly, since Arabic language teaching is the basis of the other fields of study, it is presumably well-attested in any educational centre, thus in any collection. In addition to the classical Arabic works, attention will also be devoted to original local production, but not limited to it.

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26 Hall and Stewart 2011; in their essay they stress the direct relation between the most studied texts, thus the most represented in the collections, and the most popular in the markets, thus the most traded along the caravan routes (ibid. 110).

27 Ibid. 111.

28 For this reason the criteria of inclusion of a text in the so-called ‘core curriculum’ cannot be limited to the four witnesses in three different collections, as proposed in Hall and Stewart’s analysis (meaning in that case ‘three different regions’, ibid. 113); given the scarcity of material at our disposal, any extant copy or direct quotation of the texts have been taken into account, fully aware of the possibility that the results might have to be revised in the future. Moreover, for Ethiopia no bibliographic reliable text written by prominent local scholars that testify the presence and/or knowledge of texts in the two regions, has been considered (see ibid. 115–116), but only documentary notes such as notes about book loans or trade.

29 See supra.
Another important remark about the object of this contribution is that the analysis will focus only on the manuscript heritage: this choice has been determined by the complete lack of printed books in some of the book collections at our disposal. It has to be underlined that the printing culture in Muslim Ethiopia developed much later than in neighbouring Muslim regions, in particular Egypt, as well as in the Ethiopian Christian milieu. In addition to the cultural reluctance to accept printing as a new means for the transmission of knowledge, the lack of economic support and infrastructure, together with the general obstructionism the Christian government, definitely affected the local Muslim production of printed books.30 As Alessandro Gori highlights, the predilection for written manuscripts is reflected in two different aspects of the relationship between people and books: on the one hand, the use of handwritten books continued up to the present as a common means of learning and teaching; on the other hand, the cultural value and allegedly superior reliability of written manuscripts assigns them more prestige, so that they become the favourites in every collection.31 This is possibly the reason why nowadays, in collections that are preserved as a cultural and intellectual heritage and for the prestige of the families, printed books have been removed.32 This does not mean that printed books have not circulated at all in the country: locally produced texts have been printed in Egypt and foreign Arabic texts printed outside the country were carried by itinerant scholars as personal learning instruments or were imported to be sold. The preference for handwritten books, common to the entire umma, at least until modern times, is also reflected in the birth of a particular kind of edition, i.e. the photocopied reproduction of handwritten originals; this preference also defines a particular perception of printed books which are actually used as manuscripts: it is not infrequent to find printed editions showing manuscript commentaries, glosses, or quotations of other works in the margins, exactly as found in manuscript codices. Thus, in the analysis of the intellectual heritage, both printed and handwritten media are significant. The fact that printed material is not represented in some of the collections most probably depends on conservative

30 For an accurate overview of the development of Islamic printing culture in Ethiopia see Gori 2015. In general it can be said that, for different reasons, the only periods in which printing culture was somehow fostered or at least not prevented by the government in Ethiopia, were the Italian Colonial period (1936–1941), and the post-Đàrg period (1991–present).

31 Ibid. 65–66.

32 Another important factor which can be seen as a cause of the absence of this kind of material in the collections is that industrial paper, more rich in lignin, is generally speaking of worse quality and is less durable than handmade paper; it was largely used in printed editions since the middle of the nineteenth century.
factors and/or on the choice of the owners who do not consider this medium worthy of being included in the heritage of their families.\textsuperscript{33} In those educational centres in which Arabic and Islamic studies in general are still vivaciously practised, it has become common in the last decades to find printed books, produced both in Ethiopia and in other regions of the Islamic world.\textsuperscript{34} Among the Ethiopian publications traditional grammar texts can also be found: they of course corroborate the general importance of the subject for the \textit{curriculum studiorum} of Muslim scholars, and also the interest for specific texts which have traditionally become a part of it.\textsuperscript{35}

Finally, no lexicographic works have been included in this analysis because they are not pedagogical texts and because they have no didactic structure in themselves, rather they are additional instruments to be consulted constantly for the enrichment of one’s vocabulary. Moreover, frequent quotations in \textit{marginalia} of this kind of work would have affected the result of this survey.

\textbf{The manuscript collections investigated}

The aim of this preliminary survey is thus to identify the most common works on Arabic grammar in the two regions mentioned above, through their identification in the book collections related to those areas.

The Islamization of these two regions dates back to different periods: to the thirteenth century for eastern Ethiopia, with the old city of Harar as its cultural centre and as capital of the Adal Sultanate from 1520, and to the first half of the nineteenth century for Gibe area.\textsuperscript{36} The latter includes the five ancient kingdoms of Gibe, i.e. Gomma, Goommaa, Limmu Ḫnarya, Ḫimma Abbaa Ḫifaar and Geeraa.\textsuperscript{37} As regards the Oromo region in the south-west, around the city of Ḫimma, five Islamic educational centres were visited during the first mission (November–December 2014) of the IslHornAfr project and their manuscript heritage investigated.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{33} See also Drewes 1976, 172.
\textsuperscript{34} Gori 2015, 75–76.
\textsuperscript{35} Gori 2008, 136 and Appendix 5.
\textsuperscript{36} In this perspective, a future diachronic comparison with material from different regions of the Horn will be extremely interesting.
\textsuperscript{37} See Mohammed Hassen 1994; Abir 1965; Aman Seifedin 2006.
\textsuperscript{38} A description of the sites can be found on the project IslHornAfr website (http://islbornafr.eu/islbornafr_mission1.pdf); additional historical remarks related to the collections will be soon published on the same site by Michele Petrone with the title ‘Notes on the History of some Manuscript Collections in Gibe Region’.
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- Warukko (WRK, 52 manuscripts[^39]), about 65 km northeast from Gimma. The zaawiya was allegedly founded in the eighteenth century by a local saint, Warukko, who is associated with the Islamisation of the kingdoms of Gomma and Guummaa. There the tomb of the founder and his descendants is located. The zaawiya is still in use for devotional rituals and part of the manuscript collection is in fact represented by local devotional poems and songs which are available in situ for believers.

- Tije (TIJE, about 1300 fragments of manuscripts, parts of an undefined number of codicological units, possibly around 100), about 50km north east from Gimma. The place where the collection was previously kept includes the mosque and tomb (qubba) of the religious centre’s eponymous founder, Shekhta Tije al-Qurārī (d. 1917). He was a tiğānī master who married Abbaa Ğifaaar II’s sister (Muslim king of the Gibe Kingdom of Gimma, r. 1878–1932[^40]) and moved to Tije after 15 years where he founded an Islamic intellectual centre. The manuscripts have been kept for decades in an outer part of the mosque in an iron box and are now reduced to fragments.

- Suuse (SSE, 39 manuscripts), about 45 km from Gimma on the road to Agaro. The eponymous founder of this Muslim intellectual centre is šayḫ Yūnus b. Sufyān; he was a member of the Rašādiyya sūfī order that he obtained from Aḥmad al-Ḥawī at the end of the 1950s. In Suuse the manuscripts are no longer used and the place where they are preserved is no longer a centre of Islamic cultural formation nor a devotional place. The texts transmitted in the Suuse manuscripts are mainly devotional poems locally produced and dedicated to the local saints. Among the manuscripts of this collection there are also linguistic works or scientific works in addition to the better known juridical works common in the region.

Two other sites, one located in the neighbouring K’abena area of Wälqite, the other in the Gibe Valley, were visited during the mission and have been included in this comparative analysis because of the well-established intellectual relationships of the local learned men with representative scholars of the Gimma region.

- Zabbi Molla (ZM, 30 manuscripts), just outside the town of Wälqite. The site is represented by the mosque and zaawiya established by šayḥ Muhammad Rašād al-Qaqī (founder of the Rašādiyya sūfī order) and šayḥ Kamal al-Dīn al-Ubbī. The baṭra is still actively frequented as a religious centre and is still used as a Qur’ānic school.

- Sāddāqa (SDQ, 46 manuscripts), about 65 km southwest from Wälqite. This zaawiya and intellectual centre, situated in a very remote area of the Gibe Valley, developed thanks to the activity of its eponymous founder, šayḥ ‘Alī b. ‘Abd al-Fataḥ, born in Arsi in c.1887; he resided in Sāddāqa in the years 1925–1935 having studied in Arsi, Harār, Wállo (where he was initiated into the Qādirīyya order), Zabbbi Molla (where he joined the Rašādiyya order) and Širo. Under his guidance Sāddāqa became a major centre of Islamic teaching in eastern Gimma attracting many students from different

[^39]: After the name of the collection, usually corresponding to the toponym of the place where the collection is kept, the initials of the shelf marks used in IslHornAfr data-base and the number of codicological unities digitized will be indicated. Each codicological unit usually hosts more than one text (and also different production units).

[^40]: See Lewis 1965.
regions of Ethiopia. Some 60% of the original collection was destroyed by fire in the last decades. Most of the surviving texts were produced by the šayḫ himself.41

In addition to the sites just mentioned, new ones were visited during the second mission of the project IslHornAfr (February-March 2016). They are mainly located around the town of Agaro and some of them are closely connected with the Tiǧāniyya šūfī order, quite widespread in the region thanks to the activity of Tiǧānī masters.42

– Bulado (AGL, 4 manuscripts), 4 km directly northeast of Agaro; here the manuscript and printed book collection of Abbaa Gullī, a disciple of Shekhota Tije al-Qurārī, is preserved in the house of his son, Abbaa Saalam.

– Haro (HDR, 22 manuscripts), 30 km north of Žimmīa; the collection of Abba Jamaal, a Tiǧānī master who died in 1992; it was preserved and enlarged by his disciple Abbaa Dura.

– Jimmate (JMT, 40 manuscripts), 13 km straight line northwest of Agaro; the collection of Abbaa Jihaad (d. late 1990s), Abba Jamaal's brother; the present custodian of the corpus is his son Mukhtar. As attested by Michele Petrone, there is clear evidence in the corpus of a connection between Abbaa Jihaad and the intellectual and religious traditions of the western regions of Sub-Saharan Africa and Maghreb.43

Other sites not directly linked to the Tiǧānīyya were visited during the same mission, specifically:

– Limmu Gannat, Suntu (LMG, 137 manuscripts), 35 km directly northeast of Žimmīa; the manuscript collection of Shekhota Gena, descendant of the last king of Limmu, Abbaa Bagiboo II (b. 1867, r. 1882–1886), which is now kept by the former's son, Abbaa Karam, together with several boxes of documents relating to political relations among the local political authorities.

– Toba (SGU, 9 manuscripts), 20 km directly northwest of Agaro; the collections of Shekhota Guummaa Hajj Adam are now kept in the house of his grand-grand son, Abbaa Raya Abbaa Jamal.

– Agaro town, Shaykh Kemal's collection (SKA, 52 manuscripts) also includes books of his father, a fagīh. Sheykh Kemal studied Arabic grammar in Wāllo and came back to Agaro to teach.

– Agaro (5 km south from the town), the collection of Abbaa Biya Abbaa Nuura (ABI, 17 manuscripts), one of the three custodians of the book heritage of Shekhota Tije;44 the collection is now in the care of one of his descendants, the young Muḥammad Sayf.

– Žimmīa Museum, the collection of Abbaa Gifaaar II, King of Žimmīa (r. 1878–1932) (AJI, 12 manuscripts).

41 The manuscripts and history of this collection were first described by Kemal Ibrahim in his MA thesis (Kemal Ibrahim 2012).

42 For a detailed historical description of these collections and of the religious and learned men related to them, see the contribution by Michele Petrone in this volume. A description of the mission and of the sites visited will also be available on the project web-site (http://islhornafr.eu/publ.html).

43 See Petrone in this volume. This is also attested by writing styles specific to these regions, such as in manuscripts JMT0169 and JMT0116).

44 Ibid.
With the exception of the last collection, the manuscript *corpora* identified here are now kept in private houses or *zāwiyas*; the present owners and custodians are the descendants of learned men and sometimes founders of Islamic educational centres around which the collections developed by gathering books of various provenance, copying them *in situ*, collecting the works of local scholars or composing new works themselves.

As regards the city of Harār, manuscripts coming from that area can now be found in established Ethiopian collections (public and private) as well as in European collections. Specifically the *corpora* taken into account are:

- The manuscript collection of the ʿAbdallāh Ṣarīf Museum in Harār (HRAS, around 500 manuscripts), a publicly accessible private collection which continues to grow through donations and purchases mainly from the area of Hararge.\(^{45}\)
- The Library of Muhammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Ṣakūr, last Sultān of Harār (1272–1292/1856–1875) (SHA, 99 manuscripts). The reconstruction of his library is based on a document listing the properties belonging to the estate of the ruler of Harār, including his books.\(^{46}\)
- The manuscripts of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies of Addis Ababa evidently related to the city of Harār (IES, 50 manuscripts not including documentary texts). They constitute the beginnings of the collection and some of them are still identified by an old shelf mark ‘Harār …’ on an adhesive label.\(^{47}\)
- Gerald Weiner’s manuscript collection, in Chicago, IL, USA (USWE, around 200 manuscripts which probably come from Harār).\(^{48}\)
- Luigi Robecchi Bricchetti’s (1855–1926) collection in the Biblioteca Pubblica di Pavia, Italy (ROB, 12 manuscripts); a small group of manuscripts brought from his expedition in the region of Harār (1888–1889).\(^{49}\)
- The manuscripts collected by Enrico Cerulli and left to the Vatican Library (CER, 8 manuscripts from Harār).\(^{50}\)

It has to be emphasized that this analysis refers both to the material already described in the literary data-base of the project *IslHornAfr*, as well as to material not yet included and elaborated, thus, any consideration at this stage of the work can only represent a direction or trend, which may or may not eventually be integrated, depending on the addition of further material from this or from other regions.\(^{51}\)

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45 The web-site of the museum was not accessible at the time when this contribution was reviewed: http://everythingharar.com/AS-Museum/; last access: March 06, 2017.

46 See Drewes 1983.


48 The manuscripts are believed to come from Harār (*ibid.* xxxvii), but there is evidence that some of them come from Wāllo.

49 See Traini 1974, 1–19.


51 The data-base of the project is constantly expanding and includes new text descriptions, both from collections already known, and from the new sites visited during the field mis-
The Arabic linguistics tradition in context

Didactic grammars emerged in the Arabic literary tradition in the late fourth/tenth century, with the establishment of the madrasa, i.e. the institution in which the rigid educational system was transmitted: knowledge had to be packaged for the curriculum, requiring not only a sound theoretical basis, but also a style of presentation suitable for classroom teaching at different levels. Some works composed in such a cultural environment eventually gave birth to a sort of ‘literary filiation’ made up of commentaries, glosses, versifications, rewriting, abridged versions etc. which, as along with the primary works, spread throughout Muslim countries and are included in the curriculum studiorum of every learned man until the present.

Among Arabic grammars in Ethiopian manuscript collections it is possible to identify some main works with their relative literary filiations.

– The first pedagogical grammars – fifth/eleventh century:

Few witnesses among the Arabic manuscripts of the Gibe region transmit examples of the most ancient texts of this genre. One such text at least has to be mentioned: a copy of Ibn Bābašād’s (d. 1077 CE) al-Mufid fi al-naḥw (IES 0289, copied in the nineteenth century). Another text of the twelfth century is well attested in Ethiopian collections: the long poem Mulḥat al-iʿrāb by Abū Muhammad al-Qāsim b. ʿAlī al-Ḥarīrī (d. AH 516/1122 CE). Sections of the text can be found in manuscripts in both the Harär and Gibe collections, and copies of its commentary, Kašf al-niqāb an muḥaddarāt Mulḥat al-iʿrāb by al-Ḥakīm from Mecca (d. AH 972/1565 CE) are also well represented in the two regions. Other derivative works of the Mulḥat al-iʿrāb, including the autocommentary of al-Ḥarīrī, seem to be more common in Harär collections, even if there are only a few copies; there is also a copy of the Tuḥfat al-ḥābīb wa-turfat al-ḥābīb by the Yemeni Muḥammad b. ʿUmar b. Mubārak Bahraṣ (d. AH 930/1524 CE).

– The apogee of pedagogical grammars was reached in the seventh/thirteenth century with the works of two great masters whose works came to be the best known and the most widely used in the Islamic world: of the two main works by the Egyptian Ğamal al-Dīn Ṭūmān b. ʿUmar b. Abī Bakr Ibn al-Ḥāḡib (d. AH 646/1249 CE), known as al-Kāfiyya, on syntax, and al-Šāfiyya, on morphology, only the first one is attested among the manuscripts of Gibe region, not in its primary redaction, but in several derivative works, including a strophic commentary; these are not attested in the Harär collections. It
should be stressed that the rich literary filiation of the work is attested in only one *codex* in the Zabbi Molla collection, through fragments and quotations, around the two main works *al-Fawāʾid al-dīyāʾiyya* by the Persian al-Ǧāmī (d. AH 898/1492 CE) and the anonymous glosses referring to it (*Ḥāšiya fi bātimat al-Fawāʾid al-dīyāʾiyya*). Only one copy of *al-Fawāʾid al-dīyāʾiyya* has been identified in the Harār collections although it is mentioned in an unidentified commentary in the library of sultan Muhammad Ibn ʿAbd al-Šākir. No copies of the *Ṣāfiya* nor literary filiations of the work have been identified yet in the two regions investigated, nor in other collections.

Only one copy of another widespread masterpiece, the *al-ʿAlfiyya* by Ibn Mālik (d. AH 672/1274 CE, born in al-Andalus but eventually settled in Syria) with all its further literary elaborations, has so far been found in Gibe region collections; this copy is found in the Shekhot Gummma collection. In contrast, this textual family is widely attested in Harār region in particular in the original work by Ibn Mālik and the comment by Ibn ʿAqīl (d. AH 769/1367 CE, after spending his life in Cairo); other commentaries on the text attested in Harār are those of Ibn Hišām (d. AH 761/1360 CE), al-Azharī (d. AH 904/1499 CE) and al-Suyūṭī (d. AH 911/1505 CE).

Furthermore it should be pointed out that another grammatical poem of the same author, *Lāmiyyat al-dafʿāl*, is well attested in manuscripts from Gibe region, including a copy of a seldom found commentary by the Yemeni Ḥamāl al-Dīn al-Šāfiʿī al-Ḥimyarī al-Ḥadrāmī (d. AH 930/1523 CE), while just one witness is found in the Harār collections.

– To the following century belongs the famous grammarian Ibn Hišām (d. AH 761/1360 CE): his *Qaṭr al-nadā wa-ball al-ṣādā* is known in both regions in particular through the commentary *Muğib al-nidā fi ʿarb Qaṭr al-nadā* of al-Fākihī, while other derivative works are only attested in Harār, where another work of Ibn Hišām is also attested, *al-Ḥrāb ʿan qawāʾid al-Ḥrāb*, specifically in the commentary of al-Azharī (d. AH 904/1499 CE), *Muwaṣṣil al-ṭullāb ilā qawāʾid al-Ḥrāb*. No copy of the *Qaṭr al-nadā* is found in central-west Ethiopian collections and only one witness of a commentary by al-Damāmnī on another famous work by Ibn Hišām, the *Muğni al-labīb ʿan kutub al-ʿarbīb*, has been identified in Harār.

But the most famous author of the fourteenth century is of course the Moroccan schoolmaster Ibn Āġurrūm al-Ṣanhāġī (d. AH 723/1327 CE) who reduced the syntax of Arabic to a dozen pages easy enough to be memorized even by children. His masterpiece is *al-Muqaddima al-Āġurrūmiyya* which has inspired more than 60 commentaries and, together with *al-Kāṣfya*, was printed at the end of the sixteenth century in Rome, thus becoming one of the most wide-spread linguistic instruments for the first ‘orientalists’. These con-
siderations seem to be confirmed by the presence of witnesses of the text and of derivative texts in the central-west Ethiopian collections, while fewer witnesses have also survived in the Harär collections.

Conclusions

For a sound proportional reading of the present survey a preliminary consideration has to be done regarding the amount of material taken into account: the total number of codicological units from Gibe region is 560, including the assumed number of codicological units from Tije. The number of manuscripts from Harär is 869, thus 50% more than the number of western manuscripts. As a general consideration it can be stated that the Harär collections seem to stand out for the variety of texts on Arabic linguistics: a total of 32 titles versus 27 titles in Gibe area. Nevertheless, taking into account the proportion of the codicological units investigated, the number of different grammar texts in Harär is not much higher than that of Gibe (even if we consider that at least 10 texts in Gibe are quoted in only a single manuscript from Zabbi Molla). But to understand the real level of study and of knowledge of any text, it is necessary to point out the typology and number of the derivative forms studied as well as their spread in each region. Thus, an analysis based on the different literary filiations of each text seems to be more productive. In this respect, two or three cases should be highlighted: the literary derivations of the Ḳāfiyya are well attested in Gibe area (10 witnesses, 10 different texts) while only 2 such texts are present in the Harär collections; the literary filiation of the Āǧurrūmiyya is represented in Gibe area by 13 witnesses (3 in Harär) and by 5 different texts (2 in Harär); the relative distributions indicate a wider spread of both works in the western region of Ethiopia and seem to confirm the cultural projection of that region towards the regions of origin of these two texts, i.e. to North and West Africa. On the other hand, the literary family of the Alfiyya is much more widely diffused in Harär (5 texts, 12 witnesses) than in Gibe (only 1 witness), while in Gibe the other famous work by Ibn Mālik, the Lāmiyya, is relatively more widely spread (4 witnesses, 2 titles) than in the eastern region.

Among the different collections, four emerge with the highest incidence of grammar texts: Zabbi Molla (17 texts from 30 manuscripts), the Susse collection (8 from 39), the collection of Abbaa Biya Abbaa Nura in Agaro (4 from 17) and IES collection (11 from 50); but the general proportion between the two areas is not so different: 44 grammar texts from 560 manuscripts for Gibe and 56 from 869 for Harär.

So far in Gibe area there is no evidence of grammar texts produced locally; they are however attested in other regions.52 Two such authors are worthy of

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52 The anonymous works mentioned in the appendix cannot of course be considered as locally produced without valid clues.
mention: šayḫ ʿAbd al-Basīt b. Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Mināṣī (Wāllo AH 1308/1908 CE–AH 1413/1991–1992 CE) and šayḫ Muḥammad Amin b. ʿAbdallāh b. Yusūf (born in in Harār region AH 1348/1929–1930 CE).53 Part of their literary production on grammar has been published in Addis Ababa, as is the case with a few classical grammars, but it is significant that no trace of their work has been found so far in the local manuscript tradition. On the one hand this might be explained by the loss of manuscript material, but at the same time, it confirms the idea that to have a sound idea of the literary heritage of this region, information transmitted by paratexts and notes of different kinds reveals to be crucial.

As already stated, all the comparative considerations proposed above have to be regarded as preliminary and provisional: only the investigation of further collections of manuscripts from the same areas and from other so far underestimated regions can lead to more conclusive results and can contribute to a more precise definition of the Ethiopian Islamic literary tradition.

Bibliography


53 Gori 2010.


Appendix

Arabic grammar literary tradition in context

Ibn Bābaṭāḏ, Ṭāhir b. Ahmad al-Miṣrī al-Ḥasan al-Ġawhārī (Egitto d. 1077)

al-Mufīd fī al-nabw [MTTIMA 3571/3 (edited)]
1 Harār: IES00289

Mulḥat al-ʾiʿrāb

al-Ḥarīrī, Abū Muhammad Ahmad al-Qāsim b. ‘Ali (Iraq, 1054–1122 CE)

Mulḥat al-ʾiʿrāb [GAL I, 277; GAL S I, 488]
3 Harār: IES0029; USWE0074; USWE0147
5 Gise: SSE0026; SSE0038; ZM0011; LMG0003; SKA0052

1 Harār: HRAS0016

2 Harār: USWE0028; HRAS0196
4 Gise: SDQ0042; AB10003; AB10016; SKA0065;

Bahraḥ al-Yamānī al-Himyārī, Muhammad b. ‘Umar b. Mubārak (Yemen Aḥ 869–932)

Ṭabṭab al-ʾiʿrāb wa-turfat al-ʾaṣḥāb
1 Harār: USWE0028

1 Harār: USWE0181

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Ismāʿīl b. Muhammad b. Ḥaḍir al-Muḥammad b. ʿ Abd al-Qādir al-Ṣābiyāṭī
Miṣāḥ al-ḥalab biqbaq al-frāb mulḥat al-ʿrāb
1 Harār: HRAS0164
Anonymous
Ḥāsiyat Mulḥat al-ʾrāb
1 Harār: USWE0034

Kāfiyya

Ibn al-Ḥāǧib, Ğamāl al-Dīn ʿUṭmān b. ʿUmar b. A. Bakr (d. AH 646/1249 CE)
Al-Maḍāʿidin al-Kāfiyya fi ʿilm al-naḥḥa/Kāfiyya al-dāb fi ʿilm kalām al-ʿarab [GAL I, 303; S I, 531]
ʿĪz al-Dīn al-Muḥammad b. Ṣalāḥ b. Ḥasan b. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Muʿayyadī
1 Gibe: ZM0020
ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Ǧāmī (d. AH 898/1492 CE)
1 Harār: HRAS0393
1 Gibe: ZM 2020
Waḡīb al-Dīn al-Arzanḡānī, ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Muḥṣin (d. AH 700)
1 Gibe: ZM0020
1 Gibe: ZM 2020
Waḡīb al-Dīn b. Ṣāḥib al-ʿUmār al-Gūjarī (AH 911–998)
1 Gibe: ZM0020
1 Gibe: ZM 2020
ʿĪsām al-Dīn b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. ʿArab Šāh (AH 873–945)
Ḥāsiyat ʿĪsām al-Dīn al-ʿArab al-Fawāʾid al-dābiyya
1 Gibe: ZM0020
Anonymous
Ḥāsiyat fi ʿilm al-Fawāʾid al-dābiyya
1 Gibe: ZM0020
Ṣafī al-Dīn b. Ṣāḥib al-Dīn b. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Dīn (al-Hindi)
1 Gibe: ZM0020
1 Gibe: ZM0020
1 Gibe: ZM0020
1 Gibe: ZM0020
Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Dīn al-Astarābādi
al-Muṭahhāsib fi ʿilm al-dābiyya al-wṣāfiyya [GAL I, 304]
[strofic comment]
1 Gibe: ZM0020
Anonymous
Ṣāḥib al-Kāfiyya fi-ʿilm Ḥāǧib
1 Harār: SHA0049

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Alfiyya

Ibn Mālik, Abū 'Abd Allāh Ğamāl al-Dīn Muhammad al-Ẓā'ī al-Ǧayyānī (AH 600–672/1204–1274 CE)
4 Harār: IES0309; HRAS0159; HRAS0161; SHA0082

羰字 Alfiyya Ibn Mālik [GAL II, 88; SII, 104]
[commentary]
1 Harār: SHA0082

1 Gibe: SGU0002

Ibn Hiṣām (d. AH 761/1360 CE)
字 al-masālik il-āl Alfiyyat Ibn Mālik [GAL I, 298]
[comment]
1 Harār: SHA0020

1 Gibe: USWE0028

3 Gibe: TIJE0002; SSE0014; SSE0005

Fatḥ al-iqf wa-darb al-amānāt fi šarb lāmiyya al-safāl [MTTIMA 8366/13]
1 Gibe: SKA0048

Qatr al-Nadā

Ibn Hiṣām al-Ansārī, ‘Abd Allāh b. Yūsuf (d. 1360 CE)
Qatr al-nadā wa-ball al-ṣafāl [GAL II, 23; MTTIMA 4098/31]
1 Harār: HRAS 160
1 Gibe: SDQ0042

1 Harār: SHA0042; IES0304; IES0305; USWE0070
2 Gibe: SSE0005; SKA0047

al-Ṣirbānī, Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥāṭib (d. AH 977)
羰字 šawābah Qatr al-nadā [GAL S II, 441]
[commentary]
1 Harār: USWE0028
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Anonym

Ḥāšiya `alā Qatr abnādā
1 Harār: USWE0049

I’rāb ‘an Qawā‘īd Al-I’rāb

al-I’rāb ‘an qawā‘īd al-rāb [GAL II, 24, 27; S II 18–19]
   al-Azhari, Ḥālid b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Abi Bakr (1434–1499 CE)
   Muwaṣṣil ašṣūlāb ilā qawā‘īd al-rāb [GAL II, 24, 27; S II, 18–19]
   [commentary on al-I’rāb]
2 Harār: IES305; HRAS0162

Āgurrūmiyya
Ibn Āgūrūm, Abū `Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Dāwūd al-Ṣanḥāji (thirteenth/fourteenth century)

al-Muqaddima al-Āgurrūmiyya [GAL II 237–238; S II, 332–335]
2 Harār: USWE0149; USWE0147
4 Harār: SSE0204; SSE0206; SDQ0042; ZM0011
   al-Azhari, Ḥālid b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Bakr (fifteenth century)
1 Gibe: ABI0015

Abū al-Naǧā, Muḥammad

Ḥāšiyat `alā Šarḥ al-Azhari li-al-Āgurrūmiyya
1 Harār: USWE0028
Anonym local author

al-Hāšiyat al-šābīyya šarḥ al-Muqaddima al-Āgurrūmiyya
1 Gibe: JMT0199


Šarḥ al-Muṣālik al-ġantīyya `alā Mutammīmat al-Āgurrūmiyya [GAL SII, 334; II, 238, 389]
3 Gibe: SHA0090; USWE0087; ABI0017

Others

Šarḥ Šudūr al-ḏahāb fī mā rīfat kalām al-ʿarab
1 Harār: USWE0028

Zakariyyā’ al-Anṣārī, Abū Yahyā b. Muḥammad b. Zakariyyā’ (d. 926)

Bulūq al-ʿarab bi-šarḥ Šudūr al-ḏahāb [MTTIMA 1148, n. 3102/10]
1 Harār: IES0304

al-Damāmnī, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr b. ‘Umar (ca. 1400 CE)

Tubṣīfat al-ģanī/Sarḥ Muḥni al-ḏahāb [GAL II, 26]
1 Harār: USWE0028

al-Fāṣihī, Abū Allāh b. Abī Ṣalāh

Huṣūd al-naḥw
1 Gibe: ZM0020

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Ibn Mālik
Tashīl al-qawā'id wa-taknīl al-maqāṣid fī al-naḥw
1 Harār: HRAS0163
al-Bāğūrī, Ibrāhīm b. Mūḥammad (Egypt 1198–1276)
Fatḥ al-ḥabīb ʿalāfatīf bi-ṣaḥīḥ matn al-tarīfī [GAL SII 741]
[comment on al-Tarīfī fī ṣīḥ al-tarīfī by al-Muršīdī, Abd al-Rahmān b. Ṣā‘ī (d. AH 1037)]
1 Harār: USWE0074
al-Ḥawāṣṣ, Ahmad b. ʿAbd b. al-Qīnāʾī (Egypt, d. AH 858)
al-Kāfī fī ʿilm al-ʿarīf wa-dīwān qawāfī [Zirikli I, 142; GAL II, 27; S II, 22]
2 Gibē: SSE2014; SKA0116
Šams al-ʿalām wa-dīwān ʿalām al-ʿArab min al-kulūm [GAL SII 528]
1 Gibē: ZM0202
Ilūn al-Ǧinnī (tenth century)
Muḥṭasār lūmā fī al-naḥw
1 Harār: ROB0012
Anonymous
Fawā'id ʿalālī fī qawā'id al-ʾarīf
1 Harār: IES0305
Anonymous
al-Muḥṭasār fī al-tarīfī
1 Harār: IES0289
Anonymous Arabic grammar in verses
1 Harār: IES0309
Anonymous
Tables of verbal conjugation
1 Harār: IES0304
Anonymous
Naṣṣ ʿalā ʾal-ʾarīf
1 Gibē: ZM0207
Anonymous
Urūṭāʾa on grammar
1 Harār: ROB0010

Summary
The present study is based on the analysis of manuscript collections of two regions of Ethiopia in part collected during two field missions and in part already known. Gibe and Harār areas were chosen both for the interesting history of their Islamisation and for their location directed towards West and North Africa from the one side, and East Africa and the Arabian peninsula from the other. Among the different fields of Islamic education, Arabic grammar has been identified as a subject not specific to certain collections or areas, being Arabic learning at the base of every Islamic curriculum studiorum. The traditional core curriculum for Arabic learning has been determined according to the presence of traditional grammar works together with their comments, abridgements, glosses etc. in order to highlight possible specificities or common traditions between the two areas and between these and the surrounding regions through implicit intellectual networks along the historical trade routes.