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Article

Change in the Significance of Affiliation to Ṭarīqa
The Case of Tiğāniyya in and around ḇimma

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The present issue of AETHIOPICA, like the preceding one, is partly monographic, with a section containing the proceedings of the Panel on Islamic Literature in Ethiopia: New Perspectives of Research, from the ‘19th International Conference 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>CSCE</td>
<td>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 1903ff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMML</td>
<td>Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa.</td>
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<td>JSS</td>
<td>Journal of Semitic Studies, Manchester 1956ff.</td>
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Change in the Significance of Affiliation to Ṭariqa
The Case of Tiǧāniyya in and around Gimma

MINAKO ISHIHARA, Nanzan University

Currently in Ethiopia, Sufism, or Islamic mysticism, as opposed to Salafism, is characterized as ‘traditional’, and hence ‘moderate’ in the political sense. The so-called Al-Aḥbāsh school, which the present EPRDF regime began to support in 2011, claims to be a defender of Sufism, and is described as ‘governmental Islam’ (Østebø 2013). Despite the naming which suggests an Ethiopian origin, scholars serving as lecturers in Ethiopia are mainly (Lebanese) Arabs. Why does the government need to invite foreign scholars to lecture about Sufism in Ethiopia, where Sufism is already widely accepted? This question, which I frequently encountered in my research, motivated me to write this article, which deals with Sufism in Ethiopia, how people came to affiliate themselves to certain Ṣūfī orders and how the ṭarīqa, or Ṣūfī order, underwent change in providing alternative ways for Muslims to follow their career under the present regime.

Sufism, with its systematic way of organizing people, was widely accepted among the Muslims of Ethiopia. Its simplistic way of evoking Allah through ḏikr (meaning ‘remembrance’) and requesting divine assistance and benevolence (baraka) fits in with people’s everyday concerns. Renowned Ṣūfīs became venerated by the people, who believed that they, as ‘wali (pl. ‘awliyā’), are ‘closer’ to Allah and hence, have the ability to mediate between them and Allah. This popular belief in the ability of ‘awliyā’ is referred to as ‘saint worship’, or ‘saint veneration’, and was consistent with local or indigenous belief in venerating religious (or ritual) specialists, who were customarily

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1 See Kabha and Haggai (2006), regarding the so-called ‘Al-Aḥbāsh (which means, Ethiopians)’ and its connections with Ethiopia through a scholar named sayyib ‘Abdallah Muhammad al-Harart (1910–2008). They are known for their uncompromising and critical stance against the ideas of Ibn Taymiya, Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, and the Muslim Brotherhood, a stance which interestingly mirrors the Salafi criticism of Sufism: ‘saint worship’ and animistic belief of the populace.
Minako Ishihara

asked to pray for divine assistance by local lay people. The Cushitic-speaking Oromo people, among whom this research was done, traditionally held qaalluu,2 qaallicha or abbaa munda in reverence as ritual specialists able to intercede between people and Waaqa (meaning sky-god). It is generally understood that the Oromo belief in the Divine (Waaqa) and in divinities (spiritual beings like ayyaama), as well as in the power of people able to mediate, shaped the religious practices of the Oromo, Christian or Muslim.3

This research was done in and around Ŗimma.4 Ŗimma is both the name of a Zone, located in the western part of Oromiya Regional State, and a city, the administrative centre of Ŗimma Zone. Ŗimma Zone covers 17 wârâdas (districts) and broadly coincides with the area where the Five Gibe Kingdoms (‘Gibe šanant’) were established in the nineteenth century. Among the five kingdoms (Gimma, Limmu, Guma, Gomma, and Gera), only the area of the former Guma kingdom is excluded from the Zone and is administratively part of Ŗimma’s western neighbour, the Illubabor Zone. The ambiguous expression, ‘in and around Ŗimma’ denotes the area where the former Five Gibe Kingdoms existed, i.e. the whole of Ŗimma Zone and the eastern part of Illubabor. This area is distinct from the surrounding areas due to the fact that it is mainly inhabited by Muslim Oromo, which is, historically, the result of the Oromo migration in the seventeenth century and of Islamization in the nineteenth century. In his monumental work on the history of Oromo, Mohammed Hassen (1990) reconstructed the process of state formation and of the Islamization of the Five Gibe Kingdoms based on a wide range of sources, including archives written by European travellers and priests, the results of the Ŗimma Interview Programme,5 and oral interviews conducted with prominent Oromo nationals living abroad (Mohammed Hassen 1990, 245). Contrastingly, my research focuses on orally transmitted history, conducting a series of interviews, both with individuals and groups, throughout in the area, with local residents, mostly elderly, who are known to be familiar with local history and with descendants of religious leaders held in reverence (having the

2 The Oromo terms are written according to Oromo orthography (cf. Galmee Jechoota Afaan Oromo (1996)).
4 I have been conducting anthropological research in and around Ŗimma Zone since 1992. After two and a half years of research (1992–1995), I have visited the area almost every year, following up on religious and political developments.
5 This was the result of extensive interviews conducted in this region in 1974 by a team of students from the History Department at Addis Ababa University. A copy of this is kept in the Library of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University.
honorific title, ‘Sheekota’). Some learned people preserved manuscripts written in Arabic by themselves or others. Through this research, I came to learn that the area was dotted with a remarkable number of mausoleums (qubba) of locally venerated ‘Sheekotas’, which became landmarks of the Islamization process. These mausoleums are not only historical monuments, but also centres when local people gather at annual festivals and weekly praying sessions.

These weekly praying sessions (hadras) are held not only at public facilities built adjacent to mausoleums and zāwiyas (Ṣūfī lodges), but also at halwas (personal huts for prayer) built in residential compounds, and they were instrumental in the Islamization of the local Oromo people. Weekly praying sessions were held informally with neighbours and friends, and involved chewing qat (Catha edulis), drinking coffee, and using incense, which provided a recreational atmosphere. People would chant Arabic verses, if they knew some, or chant along with cassette-recorded manzūmas (religious verses) at such sessions, discuss social matters, and supplicate God in between (Ishihara 1996).

The first part of this article will show how Islam was introduced into the region, and how the royal family was instrumental in the Islamization process. The role of the royal family in the Islamization process is central to understanding why Tiǧāniyya, the most popular Ṣūfī order in the region, became widespread in the region. The second part deals with the careers and life-histories of some Tiǧānī masters, widely known in the region. The careers of these masters reveal that personal connections and networks extended both nationwide and abroad. The third part places Tiǧāniyya in the politics of religion under the present regime. The 2006 incident in which Muslim radicals attacking Orthodox Christians in the region was shocking, because it revealed that the Christian community was not unaffected by internal Muslim strife. Thereafter, despite the fact that the present constitution proclaims that the state should not intervene in religious affairs, the government chose to support one Muslim wing against the other. Affiliation to ṭarīqa is becoming a political stance and, in recent years, Tiǧānīyya, the most visible ṭarīqa in and around Ğimma, is increasingly being co-opted by the present regime.

1. Islamization and the role of ṭarīqa in and around Ğimma area

The introduction of Islam in and around the Ğimma area, where the kingdoms of the so-called Gibe shanan emerged, goes back to the early nineteenth century. Islam was brought to the region by Muslim ‘traders’

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6 The honorific title, sheekota, is used among the Muslim Oromo to denote a man distinguished for his Islamic knowledge and his contribution to the Islamization of the region. Unlike the usual title šayḫ, sheekota is usually associated with the name of the place where his reputation is most appreciated (e.g., Sheekota Dembi, Sheekota Guma, etc.).
coming mainly from the north (Ishihara 2006). It is widely recognized that, in Africa, long-distance trade was conducted by Muslim traders, and that they opened the way for Islam to penetrate inland into non-Muslim societies. This also happened here in southwest Ethiopia.

In the early nineteenth century, when long-distance trade connecting the resource-rich countries of the southwest to the Red Sea coast via the northern Christian territories ‘revived’ traders, mainly Muslim, travelled through the area. Some influential Oromo landlords who extended support to the traders, demanded tax and presents from the traders in exchange for protection and safe passage. Traders were also advised to settle in a village (mandara) near the market and the royal compound (masaraa) (Abir 1968, 84, Mohammed Hassen 1990, 145). Traders (naggade, in Amharic) were synonymous with ‘Muslim’, and Muslim religious leaders who made their way into the region taught the local Oromo people not only the Qurʾān but also how to live as Muslims (Ishihara 2006).

A number of religious figures, some legendary, are remembered in relation to the process of Islamization of each kingdom. For example, in the case of Ğimma, it is believed that šayb ‘Abdulhakim from Gondar, whose mausoleum is located in Ğiren, converted king Abbaa Ğifaa I (r. 1830–1855) to Islam (Lewis 1965, 41, Mohammed Hassen 1990, 157). As for Limmu, the contribution of Sayyid Naṣrallāh is emphasized. Although Mohammed Hassen (1990, 154) refers to Sayyid Naṣrallāh as the one who converted Abbaa Gomol (the first king of Limmu in the early nineteenth century) to Islam, this seems unlikely, if we take into consideration the version given by the guardian of his mausoleum. According to the latter, Naṣrallāh came to Ethiopia in the fourteenth century CE from Egypt. The connection with Abbaa Gomol seems to be through Naṣrallāh’s descendants, the grandson of Ayyūba, the eldest son of Naṣrallāh, who converted Abbaa Gomol to Islam. Although not directly

Abir notes that ‘The expansion of Christian Showa since the second part of the eighteenth century and especially in the beginning of the nineteenth century had completely disrupted the direct route between the Somali coast and south-western Ethiopia’ (Abir 1968, 76).

From Zaqaziq, a city situated in Lower Egypt, in the eastern part of the Nile Delta. Informant: ḥāǧǧ Sirāg (Nasri clan); interview conducted: June 1, 2004. According to a manāqib (meaning ‘glorious deeds’) of Sayyid Naṣrallāh, written by ḥāǧǧ Habib, Sayyid Naṣrallāh came to Limmu in AH 708 (1308/1309 CE) and lived for ‘220 years’ in Ethiopia. Informant: Šayb Muhammad Naṣir ḥāǧǧ Habib (Nasri clan); interview conducted: August 29, 2007.

According to this version, it was Abbaa Magal (Odaniy), the son of Badruddin, who was the son of Ayyūba, who converted Abbaa Gomol to Islam. Abbaa Gomol was converted to Islam when Abbaa Magal gave him his daughter(s) as wife (wives). Informant: Abbaa Fīixa Abbaa Dikko (Sappheera clan). Interview conducted, September 3, 2001, September 11, 2003, January 8, 2004.
involved in the Islamization of the region, Sayyid Naṣrallāh is undoubtedly the most highly venerated religious figure in Limmu, which is manifested in the massive crowd visiting his mausoleum on annual festivals. Naṣrallāh is also conceived of as a kind of ‘culture hero’, pioneering the plantation of coffee, initiating the ritual use of chewing čat, and also encouraging his descendants to keep civet cats (*Civetictis civetta*) (Ishihara 2003).

The contributions of these pioneers are remembered by the custom of regularly visiting their mausoleums, and narrating traditions containing miracles supposed to be performed by them. However, Europeans who visited the region in the mid-nineteenth century witnessed syncretic rituals still being publicly performed (Harris 1844: 56, Cecchi 1886: 241-242).

The atmosphere in and around Gimmà in the latter part of the nineteenth century was that of religious fervour. The far echo of the Mahdī movement to the west could be heard, and Muslim religious figures who escaped the Christian Empire under Emperor Yohannäs IV (r. 1872–1889) to the northeast took asylum in the southwest, especially in and around Gimmà. Gimmà became a rallying point for Muslim traders and religious figures, coming from the north, west and east. This is also manifested in personal careers and networks.

In the late nineteenth century, Şūfī orders such as Qādiriya and Sammāniya were introduced to the people in and around Gimmà. Şūfī orders opened the way for ordinary people, who do not have Islamic education, to join weekly rituals of chanting ḏikr and supplicating God, in some cases, summoning their favorite ‘awliyā’. This popular aspect of Sufism tends to be overemphasized, obscuring the fact that Şūfī orders are essentially composed of networks of people who were highly educated, having studied under multiple Islamic religious instructors.

Muslims seeking knowledge travel from one ‘ulama’ (learned man in Arabic, Islamic liturgy and jurisprudence) to another, living both in their own country and abroad. In the course of seeking Islamic knowledge (‘īlm), people may choose to seek the divine reality through direct experience, i.e. esoteric knowledge (*maʿrifa*) which is accomplished by following an established order (*ṭariqa*). For this purpose, he needs to seek an ‘ālim, who is also a Şūfī šayḫ (mystical master). The organization of the *ṭariqa* is based on the very close relationship between master (šayḫ) and his disciples (murids), which is a tightly knit network.

Under the šayḫ, a number of ḥalīfa (deputy) or muqaddam (overseer) were appointed to take charge of regional districts. This master–disciple relationship constitutes the *silṣila* (chain), whereby the disciple swears an oath of allegiance to his master and receives the *wird* (litany) which consolidates the spiritual power of the chain. A person retains the *silṣila* through which he authenticates his membership in a *ṭariqa*. Involving oneself in a *ṭariqa* is an
optional career for any Muslim. When a Muslim, in his lifetime searches for knowledge, encounters a šayḫ, he may ask him to initiate him into the mystical order. The šayḫ may also guide his disciple during a mystical retreat (ḥalta). The šayḫ, according to his mystical status, grants him a licence (iǧāza) and becomes his muqaddam (overseer).

According to Trimingham, five Šūfī orders were introduced into Ethiopia, among which three are found in and around Ğimma. Qādiriya, the oldest and most widespread in Ethiopia, was supposedly introduced into southwest Ethiopia by a ‘Somali shaykh’, which I could not verify. Trimingham also mentions a Wällo connection, referring to Muhammad ad-Dannī (d. 1924), the successor of Shaykh Muhammad al-Annī, who initiated some Ğimma Oromo (Trimingham 1952, 239–242) into the Qādiriya.

Next to be mentioned is Sammāniya, founded by Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Kartm as-Sammānī (1718–1775), introduced into Sudan by šayḫ Ahmad at-Tayyib ibn al-Baṣīr (d. 1823). It was introduced into southwest Ethiopia by ‘a trader descendant of Shaykh Ahmad at-Tayyib called Sharif Husayn’ around 1920 (Trimingham 1952, 247).

Affiliation to these Šūfī orders, Qādiriya and Sammāniya, is found in the career of ḥāǧǧ Adam (alias ‘Sheekota Guma’, or the great šayḫ of Guma).

(A) Ḥāǧǧ Adam (alias ‘Sheekota Guma’)

Ḥāǧǧ Adam was born in 1864/1865 in a village called Sawa in Guma. He received Qur’ānic education from Sheekota Tiǧǧe (see below (C)). After finishing his early Qur’ānic studies, he set off for Wällo to study under šayḫ Bušra Qoti (or ‘Sheekota Danna’), and was initiated into Qādiriya together with ‘Sheekota Geena’ (whose mausoleum is in Geena, Limmu) and šayḫ ‘Umar Gibe (from Gomma) and ḥāǧǧ ‘Alī Naggo. After that he went back to Ğimma in 1894/1895. At that time Ğimma was ruled by Abbaa Ğifaa II (r. 1878–1932), who granted ḥāǧǧ Adam land in Qaǧelo, Garukke, and Dedo. In 1911/1912, ḥāǧǧ Adam received the Sammāniya iǧāza from Sayyid Husayn (alias ‘Sheekota Garbi’), who came from Khartoum. Ḥāǧǧ Adam moved back to Sawa in 1917/1918, and two years later settled at Quda (1 km from Toba), where he passed away in 1936/1937.11

Two connections, a Wällo connection represented in the affiliation to the Qādiriya, and a western or Sudanic connection through the Sammāniya, are embodied in the career of ḥāǧǧ Adam (A). Affiliation with two Šūfī orders

10 Most probably identical with ‘Sheekota Garbi’ who played a role in the careers of ḥāǧǧ Adam (A) and ḥāǧǧ Yusuf (D).
11 Informant: ḥāǧǧ Abbaa Gamal Muhammad ḥāǧǧ Adam (grandson of ḥāǧǧ Adam, at Quda); interview conducted October 17, 1994.
is not surprising in the life of Sūfī masters, but is not allowed in the case of the Tiğāniyya order. Tiğāniyya is known for its exclusiveness, having a prescription that members of the Tiğāniyya order should neither join other Sūfī orders nor visit other awliyāʾ, dead or alive (Abun-Nasr 1965, 40).

2. Careers of Tiğānī masters

Trimingham stresses two aspects regarding the popularity of Tiğāniyya in and around Ġimma. The first is the contribution of hāǧǧ Yūsuf (see below (D)) who ‘gave the order to sultān Abba Dula, father of the present sultān Abba Jawbir’. And the second is ‘the official protection’ accorded to Tiğāniyya under the Ġimma Kingdom (Trimingham 1952, 246). This ‘official recognition by the sultans’ and the influence of hāǧǧ Yūsuf supposedly led to the rapid spread of the Sūfī order.

According to a manuscript titled ‘A look into the biographies of pious Tiğānī masters in and around Ġimma (Nuzhat al-absār fī tarqamati sādāti ṭ-Tiğāniyya al-abrārī fī Ġimma wa ma āhaulā min al-aqtārī)’, written by šayh Mahmūd Sulaymān (see below (F)), one of the 47 Tiğānī masters listed, of whom only 9 were of the royal Diggo clan, excluding šayḫ Mahmūd himself.

As was mentioned in the career of hāǧǧ Adam, it was Abbaa Ġifaar II, the king of Ġimma, who invited many ‘ulamāʾ and Sūfīs to live in his kingdom. He is said to have exempted these Muslim scholars and Sūfīs from paying tax. Abbaa Ġifaar II was also affiliated to the Tiğāniyya order, being initiated by hāǧǧ ‘Alī Grañ. Among those invited to live and teach in Ġimma by Abbaa Ġifaar II was hāǧǧ Zakariya.

(B) Hāǧǧ Zakariya ibn Muḥammad (alias ‘Sheekota Muǧǧa’)

Zakariya was a Hausa, born in Kano (Nigeria). His parents were both ‘al-Hasanī’ After accomplishing his Pilgrimage to Mecca, Zakariya crossed the

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12 The fact that Trimingham refers to ‘Sultan Abba Jawbir’ as the ‘present Sultan’, indicates that his research was carried out during the Italian occupation (1936–1941). At that time Al-Fakī Aḥmad ‘Umar (E) was still living in Minko (a village 10 km east of Dāmbi Dolo).

13 šayḥ Mahmūd, a nephew of Abbaa Ġifaar II, played a pivotal role in the spread of Tiğāniyya not only in and around Ġimma but also among the Muslim Amhara mainly in Bure, Goğğam. Most of the 9 Tiğānī šayhs belonging to the Diggo clan were members of the family of Abbaa Ġifaar II.

14 According to Nuzhat al-absār, šayḥ ‘Alī Grañ was from Wällo, and was initiated into the Tiğāniyya order by šayḥ ‘Abdallāh al-Fūtī.

15 Informant: Abbaa Digga Abbaa Garo (Diggo clan, 55), whose mother, Aʾisha was one of hāǧǧ Zakariya’s daughters; interview conducted August 17, 2015 at Addis Abāba.

16 Descendants of Hasan, the first son of ‘Alī, cousin of Prophet Muhammad, thus Qurayshi.
Red Sea and entered Somalia. In Somalia, the king, having been usurped by his uncle, was locked in a dungeon. The king, on hearing of Zakariya’s reputation summoned him from the dungeon. Zakariya helped him out and advised him to stay in Mecca for four years until his uncle died. Having been initiated into Tijāniyya, the Somali king safely travelled to Mecca by boat.

‘Abbalabbās (Ahmad at-Tiğānt, the founder of the Tijāniyya order), subsequently ‘ordered’ Zakariya to go to Addis Abāba via Arussi. At Arussi, he encountered a female wālī called A’īsā. A’īsā sent a message ordering Zakariya to come and see her, if he wished to make a safe passage. But when Zakariya refused, she dispatched a troop of 80 rūḥāniyas (spiritual beings) to block his passage. The ḥādim (‘servant’) of Zakariya, Sālim, told the rūḥāniyas that he and Zakariya were mere travellers (musāfirs) who feared the otherworld (‘āḫira); he commanded them to disappear, invoking the name of Ahmad at-Tiğānt. This made the rūḥāniyas vanish at once. Upon reaching Addis Abāba, Zakariya went to see Abbaa Fiixa Abbaa Ğiifar, who took him to his father, who was also in Addis Abāba at the time. Abbaa Ğiifar II requested Zakariya to come to Ğimma, which he agreed to do. Abbaa Ğiifar, however, advised him to take the roundabout route through Limmu because ‘Alt Daraar would not let a wālī pass by’. But Zakariya took the road right under the ‘Alt Daraar cliff, claiming that any person who chants a Tiğāni verse will not be afraid. At Ğimma, Zakariya was granted the land of Muğga (near the Giren palace) where he built a mosque and ḥalwa (a hut for mystical retreats) and began granting the Tijāniyya ĭğāza to people from 1925/1926. Zakariya died at the age of 95, when Abbaa Ğoobir was sultan (1936–1941).

(C) Ḥāǧǧ Maḥmūd Abū Bakr (alias ‘Sheekota Tiğgē’)  
Maḥmūd was born in Qorare (Ifat), to an Argobba family. After finishing his Qur’ān and ‘ilm education at Qorare, he left for Yemen, and taught Qur’ān az-Zabīd for 18 years. While az-Zabīd, he accomplished his ḥāǧǧ, and received the Tijāniyya ĭğāza there. After that he went back to Ifat. At that time, Abbaa Ğiifar II was inviting ‘ulamā from all over the country, and Maḥmūd accepted the invitation. At Ğimma, he was given Abbaa Ğiifar II’s sister as wife. But after a while, the ‘ulamā’ including bāğg Maḥmūd were forced to leave Ğimma owing to a strife between Emperor Manlāk II (r. 1889–1913) and Abbaa Ğiifar. On his way back to Ifat, he dropped by Addis Abāba and met šayḥ Zeinu, also an Argobba. Šayḥ Zeinu was a relative of dāǧgazmač Alāmaya’yāhu, who had just been appointed gov-

17 This anecdote is frequently cited for other saintly figures too. ‘Alt Daraar is a seventeenth century wālī. A small hill standing in the Gibe valley is named after him (Guluma Gemeda 1993).
ernor of Limmu awragga (ca. 1914–1917). Ḥāǧǧ Mahmūd discussed the matter with dāǧgazmac Alāmāyāhu, who informed Abbaa Duula Abbaa Qerepphe (Gida clan), the then balabbat (local landlord) of Gomma. Abbaa Duula invited Ḥāǧǧ Mahmūd to live in Gomma. Ḥāǧǧ Mahmūd thus settled in a village named Tiğge, the place he saw in a dream.

At that time, Ḥāǧǧ Yūṣuf (see below (D)) and Abbaa Waaği (Diggo clan, brother of Abbaa Gifaa II, and father of Sheekota Dedo (F)) set out for Mecca. On seeing them off, Ḥāǧǧ Mahmūd told them to bring him something ‘wonderful’. A year later, the two came back and went to see Ḥāǧǧ Mahmūd. One of the two, Ḥāǧǧ Yūṣuf, humbly handed over ‘Ǧawāhir al-Maʿānī’, a biography of Ḥmad at-Tiǧānī, the founder of the Tiğāniiyya order. Ḥāǧǧ Mahmūd died in Tiğge in 1911/1912, where his mausoleum can still be found.

(D) Ḥāǧǧ Yūṣuf Ḥalīfa Nūrāddīn ‘Ali (alias ‘Sheekota Chekorsa’)

It was Yūṣuf’s great grandfather ‘ʿAlī who migrated with his brothers from Massawa to Limmu. Yūṣuf was born in 1878 in Guma (kingdom), and it was there that he learned the Qur’ān, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) and Arabic grammar (nahw) in his childhood. In 1901/1902, he went to Wollo and received the iǧāza of the Qādiriya from šayḥ Ahmad ibn Adam ad-Dannī. He studied ‘ilm under šayḥ Ahmad with Ḥāǧǧ Adam (mentioned above (A)), and with him, he travelled to Mecca. There he received the Sammāniyya iǧāza from šayḥ Mahmūd ibn Nūrāddīn ibn Ahmad at-Tayyibī, who was the Ḥalīfa of šayḥ Muhammad Abdulkarīm as-Sammānī (1718–1775), the founder of Sammāniyya.

Returning to Ḡimma, he went to see Sayyid Husayn (alias ‘Sheekota Garbi’, see above (A)), and had his Sammāniyya iǧāza ‘renewed’. Sayyid Husayn guided many Muslims including Ḥāǧǧ Yūṣuf in mystical retreat (ḥalwa). In 1913/1914, he accomplished his second Ḥāǧǧ to Mecca, with his friend, Abbaa Waaği Abbaa Gomol, brother of Abbaa Gifaa (see above (C)). They first stopped in Cairo to pay a visit to the mausoleums of Imām ʿṢafī’ and of Sayyid Muhammad Bakrī, the latter known to have initiated the Salāt al-Fāṭih, 18 Limmu awragga covers the areas of Gomma, Gera and Limmu districts (wäräda). The five Gibe Kingdoms were incorporated into the Ethiopian Empire under the rule of Menlik II. The Kingdom of Ḡimma, however, managed to keep its autonomy to a certain extent. No Christian governor was appointed to the region, and no church was built in Ḡimma until after the death of Abbaa Gifaa II (d. 1932). This was accomplished by the ‘shrewd politics’ of Abbaa Gifaa II, in exchange for a large amount of tribute and tax paid annually to the central government (Lewis 1965, 45; Ishihara 2007).

19 Ǧawāhir al-maʾānī wa bulūg al-amānī fi fād Dīdī Abī al-ʿAbbās at-Tiǧānī, completed in 1799/1800, was written by ‘ʿAlī Harāzīm ibn Barada who was a companion of Ḥmad at-Tiǧānī (Abun-Nasr 1965, 40, 42, 193).
a Tiǧānī litany. From Cairo they visited Syria and Jerusalem, and headed for Medina. Having spent Ramadān in Medina, they encountered a Moroccan Sayyid named Šarīf Abdulqādir, from whom hāǧǧ Yūsuf received the iǧāza of the Tiǧāniyya, and was given a copy of Gauwābir al-Maʿānī (see above (C)). Sayyid Šarīf was granted the iǧāza from Muhammad Gannūn, who had been initiated into the Tiǧāniyya order by ʿArābī ibn Sayih, himself initiated by ʿAlī at-Tammāsīnī, who was a direct disciple of Ahmad at-Tiǧānī.

Returning to Ethiopia, hāǧǧ Yūsuf initiated many people into Tiǧāniyya. In 1928, he accomplished his third hāǧǧ, this time with his son, Abbaa Tamaam. In Medina, he met Sayyid Muḥammad al-Fūṭī Alfa Hashim (from West Africa) and had his Tiǧānī iǧāza ‘renewed’. In Mecca, he met ʿUṭmān Al-amīn, a Tiǧānī ʿālim from Morocco.

Returning to Ethiopia in 1929, he spent his Ramadan at Chekorsa, moving to Ğimaate Daru (in Gomma wārāda) in 1929/1930, and contributed to the expansion of Tiǧāniyya in Ğimma and Gomma. Hearing of the reputation of Al-Fakīḥ Ahmad ʿUmar (see below, (E)), hāǧǧ Yūsuf visited him at Minko (western Wälläga) in 1935, and stayed there for 6 months during which he performed the mystical retreat (ḥalwa) under Al-Fakīḥ Ahmad ʿUmar’s supervision. Returning from Minko, he retired to Sedi, in an attempt to avoid the many visitors, and spent his remaining days with his family devoting himself to ʿibāda (religious observances). Having fallen ill at Sedi, he returned to Ğimaate Daru, where he died in 1937/1938 at the age of 61.23

(E) Al-Fakīḥ Ahmad ʿUmar (Ishihara 1997; 2009)

Ahmad was born in 1891/1892 in Bornu (present-day Nigeria). When he was 9, he finished his Qurʾānic education in 4 months, and went on to study ʿilm and maʿrifā. At the age of 19, losing both parents, Ahmad set off for Mecca.

20 Ahmad at-Tiǧānī appointed Sidi ʿAlt at-Tammāsīnī to succeed him as supreme head of the order (Abun-Nasr 1965, 23).

21 According to Abun-Nasr (1965, 142), a prominent Tiǧānī leader named Alfa Hashim (d. 1930/1931), one of the famous hāǧǧ ʿUmar ibn Saʿīd al-Fūṭī’s (d.1864) nephews took refuge in Medina at the beginning of the twentieth century. While in Medina he arranged for Tiǧānts from West Africa to meet Tiǧānts from other countries while on pilgrimage, and gave them directions on political and religious matters.

22 Sedi is a village located near the border of Gomma and Gera. Sedi has now become a Tiǧānt centre, where some of the descendants of Al-Fakīḥ Ahmad ʿUmar resides. There is also the mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad-Hasan (the eldest son of Al-Fakīḥ Ahmad ʿUmar) in Sedi where one of the biggest Mawlīd Festivals in the region is celebrated (surrounding the mausoleum).

23 Informant: Abbaa Ğihaad hāǧǧ Yūsuf (son of hāǧǧ Yūsuf, at Ğimaate Daru). Abbaa Ğihaad was consulting a written manuscript during the interview. The interview was conducted September 7, 1994.
After accomplishing the ḥāǧǧ, he settled at Khartoum, where he conducted the mystical retreat many times. During one such practice, he heard a voice ordering him to go to Ethiopia. He entered Ethiopia and settled at Asosa in Beni Šangul, where Muḥammad ibn Abdurrahmān was king. The latter gave Ahmad ‘Umar his sister as wife. During his stay at Asosa, Ahmad ‘Umar received the Tiḡāniyya īğāza (īğāza tawfiq) from šayḥ Abdullāhī ibn Mubārak aš-Šīngūtī (from Mauritania), who was granted the īğāza from šayḥ Ibrāhīm, who took his īğāza from šayḥ Abdulkartm, who, again, was granted his īğāza from the founder, Ahmad at-Tiḡānt, who was granted the order from the Prophet himself. After this, Ahmad ‘Umar sent a letter asking his elder brother to have his īğāza renewed, only to be informed of his death. In despair, Ahmad ‘Umar performed a mystical retreat for 40 days. On the fortieth day, the Prophet appeared and granted the īğāza (īğāza tašrīf) to him directly. Leaving Asosa, he went southwards to western Wälläga, settling at Minko, where he lived for about 25 years. After the Italian Occupation, he retired to Kusaye. In 1947/1948, he moved to the Ǧimma area, and eventually to Afallo (Agalo Sheekota), in Gera. In 1951, Al-Fakī Āḥmad ‘Umar went on his second ḥāǧǧ, after which he temporarily returned to his home country in West Africa. In 1953, Al-Fakt Āḥmad ‘Umar reappeared in Asosa, and, together with his followers, went to Ya’a (Beni Šangul), where he eventually passed away.

(F) Šayḥ Maḥmūd Sulaymān (alias ‘Sheekota Dedo’ or ‘Sheekota Abbaa Macha’) Maḥmūd was born in Wogamo (Dedo). Having finished his Qur’ānic education, his father Abbaa Waqījī arranged for an ilm called šayḥ Ibrāhīm to settle at Wogamo. The father gave the latter his daughter in marriage, and šayḥ Ibrāhīm taught Maḥmūd ilm. Maḥmūd was not only intelligent, but was diligent, spending most of his time studying and reciting dikr, rather than enjoying a social life. He preferred to read books on mystical knowledge and about the Prophet.

He received his Tiḡānt īğāza initially from ḥāḡg Yūsuf (D). Hearing of Al-Fakt Āḥmad ‘Umar’s reputation (see above (E)), he visited him at Minko, and had his īğāza renewed, and receiving the īğāza granted to Al-Fakt Āḥmad ‘Umar from the Prophet, and staying there for 15–20 days.

One day, when šayḥ Maḥmūd and many others gathered to celebrate Mawltād (the birthday of Prophet Muhammad) at Abbaa Gissaa Ginqū’s zāwīya in Gimma, the qaṣida (religious verse) composed by šayḥ Maḥmūd was found to be so beautiful that it was chanted throughout the day and throughout the night. Soon afterwards šayḥ Maḥmūd fell from his horse, which severely disabled him and he was unable to walk for the last 40 years of his life.

He authored many books, some of them published in Cairo. He died in 1991 at Wogamo, where his mausoleum is built.
3. Islamic education in transition

All of the religious masters, described above (except for (F)) ended their careers during the imperial period (before 1974). Critics have often claimed that, under the imperial regime, Muslims had a lower political and social status. However, the evidence shows that there was considerable freedom in religious affairs, and that informal educational gatherings were widely conducted at religious centres as well as in residential areas, clear-cut contrast to the state of affairs under the Dārg regime (1974–1991).

The Dārg regime is remembered as a time of religious stagnation; governmental control was extended even to the remotest parts of the rural areas, and, with regular attendance at locally organized community meetings becoming compulsory, gatherings for any other purpose, including religious, were undermined. Religious education was downplayed in favour of secular education, and most foreign instructors engaged in Islamic education left the country.

Nowadays, in the rural areas in Ğimma, there is still a system called qariya (cf. Hussein Ahmed 1988, 102). Students gather from far and near to gain Islamic knowledge from learned ‘ulamā’. In rural areas, where boarding facilities are not available, students beg, hoping for places to stay free of charge with local residents living near the ‘ālim. The student, if granted permission to stay and share meals with the family, will help his host family in their daily activities when he is not studying. The ‘ālim teaches in shelters attached to the local mosque, reading Islamic texts written in Arabic and translating it into the local Oromo language. These students are generally not schooled in the official school curriculum. Despite the social atmosphere against religious gatherings of any sort during the Dārg, the system of qariya seems to have survived.

Nevertheless, living in an increasingly materialistic and secularized atmosphere, the choice of becoming a Šūfī undergoing ascetic practices such as ḥalwa, is becoming less attractive. One part of Muslim society is beginning to claim that Sufism and the custom of venerating awliyāʾ (saints) are not only ‘backward’ and ‘anachronistic’, but ‘heretical (bidʿa)’. A more ‘modern’ way of being Muslim is being pursued, emphasizing the Qurʾān and the Hadīth.

In the Gomma district, this religious stance was represented by one individual, reverentially called the ‘Mufti (expounder of Islamic laws)’.

(I) The ‘Mufti’ of Gomma, šayḥ Muhammad Allī Šayḥ Muhammad Allī was born in Assābä Tāfāri (Chiro) in around 1930. His Islamic Studies were directed by hāǧǧ Kabīrī, a graduate of the Azhar University, at Dawwe (Wāllo). When he was 25, he left for Khartoum via Ḡasmā. However, when he attempted to enter Egypt, he was suspended for not possessing a passport and was sent back to Ḡasmā, where he remained for 5 months. When he was able to travel again, he set off for Palestine via
Khartoum, and then to Damascus, where he stayed for 4 years. There he got a Syrian passport and went to study at the Azhar University (Cairo) for 8 years. Gaining a degree in Sharīʿa (Islamic jurisprudence), he returned to Khartoum, and thence to Ethiopia, staying at Asosa (Beni Šangul), Dāmbi Dolo (west Wälläga), Chora Qumbabe (Illubabor), and finally reaching Gīmma. He preferred to live in a remote rural area, and finally chose Batala village (near Boto town), about 20 km south of Agaro (Gomma wāråda). There, given the title ‘Mufti’ out of respect, he taught his own interpretation of Islam to a large number of students until his death in 1999.

Although ṣayḥ Muhammad Alī is respectably remembered as a learned ʿalīm with a balanced stance, his followers became vocal opponent: of the veneration of ‘saints (awliyāʾ)’ and of Sufism; hence they are called ‘Wahhābiya’. The ‘Wahhābiya’ influence gained much influence in both rural and urban areas in Gīmma Zone.

Some of the disciples of the ‘Mufti’ radicalized after his death in 1999. Having visited Boto in 1993, I had the chance to revisit in 2003. The change in the religious attitude of the people living in and around Boto was very obvious. The number of men with long beards had increased, and rituals of Oromo culture (e.g. buna qalaa, shananii, etc.) were being downplayed.

The ‘Wahhābiya’ influence is very visible: new mosques, and private elementary schools with Arabic names, presumably built by ‘money coming from Arabic states through individual connections and organizations’. People taking the ‘Wahhābiya’ position have disrupted the peaceful and amicable relationship established between the Christian minority and the Muslim majority in the region. The situation worsened, resulting in the Bašaša (Gomma wāråda) incident in 2006. Bašaša is a small town near the village in which ‘Mufti’ used to reside. This incident was a shocking event, visually transmitted worldwide via internet, involving the killing of 6 Christians (including 2 women) gathering for an annual celebration at the only Orthodox church in Bašaša (built in 1992/1993). The local people told me that the Bašaša incident was incited by the imām (prayer leader) of the Bašaša mosque, who was initially a student of the ‘Mufti’, but radicalized after leaving the region and after being cursed by the ‘Mufti’. His influence as an ʿalīm of several hundred darāsas (students) enabled him, to gather supporters to attack the church. It is presumed that over 700 Muslims attacked a mere 100 Christians at Bašaša Awwe Church.24

The security situation prompted the Government to support the ‘Sūfiya’ (people standing against the Wahhābiya and supporting Sufism). This oc-

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24 After the incident, the Bašaša Awwe Church was reconstructed and the residents of Bašaša, both Christian and Muslim, committed themselves to rebuilding the social atmosphere for religious coexistence, and became an officially recognized ‘model case’. Informant: sub-chairman of Bašaša qäbäle; interview done August 15, 2015 (at Gīmma).
cured in 2011, when the ‘Mağlis (Islamic Supreme Council)’, in association with the Federal Government, gathered Muslim representatives from every regional state at Haramaya University, and invited Lebanese instructors from Markaz šayḫ ‘Abdallāh al-Hararī (pejoratively referred to as ‘al-Ahbaš’) to give ‘anti-Waḥhābiya’ or ‘pro-Sūfīya’ lectures to them (Østebø 2013).

This coincided with the formation of a domestic religious NGO named ‘Ethiopian Ahl as-Sunna wa l-Ǧamaa as-Sūfī Association’ (ASWJS). Founded in 2012 by a learned Qādiriya šayḫ from Dangila (Amhara Regional State), and officially recognized as an NGO, ASWJS worked in cooperation with the ‘Mağlis (Islamic Supreme Council)’ to organize the Muslim community nationwide from the qäbäle level, and to preserve and enhance the long inherited ‘Sūfīya’ tradition.

The main purposes of the association are:
1) protection and conservation of historical places (hadra bät, masara, qubba) and historical material (literature, biographies)
2) guiding people back to religious tolerance and co-existence
3) reintegrating the youth who strayed toward the ‘Waḥhābi’ stance, by re-educating them in the Sūfī path.

Although ASWJS and the Islamic Supreme Council are different organizations, at the local level, the two seem to work in cooperation. This is manifested in the election process of representatives of Islamic councils. In Gīmma, 7 ASWJS members are elected from each qäbäle, the top 2 being members of the ASWJS wäräda (district) committee, from which 2 are selected as wäräda representatives of the Islamic Supreme Council. And although the ASWJS association does not require its members to belong to one of the Sūfī orders, most of the representatives of both the Mağlis and the ASWJS belonged to Tiǧāniyya in Gīmma Zone.

4. Conclusion
In the course of their academic careers in Islamic studies, people choose to seek Islamic mystical knowledge. Which Sūfī order they choose depended on which order their masters belonged to, and they might choose another order as they encountered mystics at a higher stage. Therefore, the prevalence of a particular Sūfī order is determined by influential individual mystics, who migrated to the region, having support from the political elite. In Gīmma region, a number of Sūfīs belonging to different orders were invited to settle, especially under Abbaa Gīفار’s II reign. However, the prevalence of Tiǧāniyya does not result from ‘official support’ granted in the Gīmma Kingdom, as suggested by Trimmingham, but rather from the influence of prominent religious masters such as ḫāǧǧ Zakariya (B), ḫāǧǧ Mahmūd (C), ḫāǧǧ Yūsuf
Nowadays, there are still some people who move about seeking Islamic knowledge. However, religious education is considered not only optional but secondary to non-religious education, and those who seek higher level religious knowledge need to go to urban centres, where a markaz (centre) and a madrasa (school) are found. Some of these schools offer ‘Ṣūfī-inclined knowledge’ along with ‘ilm. However, very few students are ready to perform the strenuous practice of ḥalwa (mystical retreat). Sufism, in this sense, is increasingly becoming non-Sufistic, or non-ascetic.

In Ḡimma region, the Muslim community was facing the challenge of losing the younger generation to the ‘Wahhabiya’ influence. However, after the Bašaša incident, measures were taken to counteract this development, and the ‘Sufiya’ are gaining ground with governmental backing. Among the Ṣūfī orders in Ḡimma region, the Tiǧāniyya seems to be the only Ṣūfī order having an organized network that connects people living in both rural and urban areas. Thus, nowadays, the Tiǧānts enjoy governmental support, becoming core members of the Ḡimma branch of the nationwide religious NGO, Ahl as-Sunna wa l-Ḥam’ah as-Sufiy Association and of the Maglis. Sufism, in this sense, is becoming political.

References
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Summary

This article deals with Sufism in Ethiopia, how people came to affiliate themselves to certain *Ṣūfī* orders and how the *ṭarīqa*, or *Ṣūfī* order, underwent change in providing alternative ways for Muslims to follow their career under the present regime. The first part of this article will show how Islam was introduced into the region, i.e. in and around Gīmma Zone, and how the royal family was instrumental in the Islamization process. The role of the royal family in the Islamization process is central to understanding why Tiğiṇīyya, the most popular *Ṣūfī* order in the region, became widespread in the region. The second part deals with the careers and life histories of some Tiğiṇī masters, widely known in the region. The careers of these masters reveal that personal connections and networks extended both nationwide and abroad. The third part places Tiğiṇīyya in the politics of religion under the present regime. The 2006 incident in which Muslim radicals attacking Orthodox Christians in the region revealed that the Christian community was not unaffected by internal Muslim strife. Thereafter, the government chose to support one Muslim wing against the other. Affiliation to *ṭarīqa* is becoming a political stance and, in recent years, Tiğiṇīyya, the most visible *ṭarīqa* in and around Gīmma, is increasingly being co-opted by the present regime.