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Panel on 'Islamic Literature in Ethiopia: New Perspectives of Research'

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Panel on 'Islamic Literature in Ethiopia: New Perspectives of Research'

Edited by
ALESSANDRO GORI

The following section of this issue of *Aethiopia* is devoted to the publication of some of the papers submitted to the panel 'Islamic Literature in Ethiopia: New Perspectives of Research' (Panel no. 2.02) organized on the occasion of the '19th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies'.

As was already the case with the previous International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, the International Organizing Committee and the local organizers in Warsaw gave the conveners of the panels the freedom to take part in a cumulative volume of proceedings or to edit the presentations separately in different independent publications devoted to each panel. I have taken this second option and therefore a number of papers submitted to the panel on Islamic literature in Ethiopia is collected here as a monographic section within the regular issue of *Aethiopia*.

Panel 2.02 'Islamic Literature in Ethiopia: New Perspectives of Research' was proposed by myself in the framework of the activities carried out for the research project 'Islam in the Horn of Africa: A Comparative Literary Approach' funded by the European Research Council and based at the Institute of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies of the University of Copenhagen of which I am the Principal Investigator (2013–2018 ERC advanced grant no. 322849; www.islhornafr.eu).

The general focus of the panel was set at a very general level allowing contributions on the whole 'traditional' literature produced (theological, mystical, legal, hagiographical), read and circulated by the Muslims of Ethiopia. As most of the texts of this literature are kept and diffused in codices,

* The revision work on the texts collected here was carried out by the editor in cooperation with the staff of this journal within the framework of the activities of the ERC Advanced Grant no. 322849 IslHornAfr and of the Landesforschungsförderungsvorhaben 'Transmission of Knowledge in Red Sea Area: from the Late Antiquity to Early Modern Times' (TransRedSea).

due attention was also given to the analysis of the Islamic manuscript culture in Ethiopia from a codicological perspective.

The main goal of the panel was to cast light on so far unknown or little known texts (hand-written manuscripts or printed) found among Ethiopian Muslims and to assess the history of their diffusion and their importance for the cultural and social development of the Islamic communities of the country. No chronological limit was foreseen or fixed. However, since the great bulk of the Islamic manuscript production so far available does not predate the eighteenth century, modern and contemporary times were naturally given a more specific attention.

From the submitted proposals, eight papers were accepted for presentation during the panel, of which five are published here: Endris Mohammed Yesufe, 'The *Ramsa* of *šayḥ* Aḥmad Ādam, al-Danī al-Awwal (d. 1903)'; Sara Fani, 'Arabic Grammar Traditions in Gibe and Harär: Regional Continuity vs Specificity of Scholarship'; Alessandro Gori, 'Some Observations on the Text of *šayḥ* Hāšim's *Faṭḥ al-raḥmānī*'; Minako Ishihara, 'Change in the Significance of Affiliation to Ṭarīqa: the Case of Tiġāniyya in and around Ġimma'; Michele Petrone, 'Ethiopian Tiġāniyya in Context'.

Two further papers were presented at the conference which, for different reasons, could not be included in these proceedings: Anne Regourd, 'Some more about the Characteristics of Harari Manuscripts' and Andreas Wetter, 'Yäġūdu bušra ...' a Panegyric Poem in Amharic from Šeh Čali'.

Finally, one paper (Kemal Abdulwehab, 'New Approach to the Studies of Islamic MSS of Ethiopia: Documenting and Cataloguing First-Studied Islamic Manuscripts of Ethiopia') which was to be given as part of the panel, could not be presented at the last moment.