



# Aethiopia 19 (2016)

International Journal of Ethiopian and  
Eritrean Studies

---

MINAKO ISHIHARA, Nanzan University

## Article

*Change in the Significance of Affiliation to Ṭarīqa  
The Case of Tiḡāniyya in and around Ġimma*

Aethiopia 19 (2016), 149–164

ISSN: 2194–4024

---

Edited in the Asien-Afrika-Institut  
Hiob Ludolf Zentrum für Äthiopistik  
der Universität Hamburg  
Abteilung für Afrikanistik und Äthiopistik

by Alessandro Bausi

in cooperation with

Bairu Tafla, Ulrich Braukämper, Ludwig Gerhardt,  
Hilke Meyer-Bahlburg and Siegbert Uhlig

## Editorial

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 ‘19<sup>th</sup> 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

- AÉ* *Annales d’Éthiopie*, Paris 1955ff.  
*ÄthFor* Äthiopistische Forschungen, 1–35, ed. by E. HAMMERSCHMIDT, 36–40, ed. by S. UHLIG (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner (1–34), 1977–1992; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz (35–40), 1994–1995).  
*AethFor* Aethiopistische Forschungen, 41–73, ed. by S. UHLIG (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998–2011); 74–75, ed. by A. BAUSI and S. UHLIG (*ibid.*, 2011f.); 76ff. 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.  
*EAE* 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 Corrigenda, Maps, Index* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2014).  
*EI<sup>2</sup>* *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, I–XII (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960–2005).  
*EMML* Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa.  
*JES* *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Addis Ababa 1963ff.  
*JSS* *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Manchester 1956ff.  
*NEASt* *Northeast African Studies*, East Lansing, MI 1979ff.  
*OrChr* *Oriens Christianus*, Leipzig–Roma–Wiesbaden 1901ff.  
*PICES* 9 A.A. GROMYKO, ed., 1988, *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Ethiopian Studies, Moscow, 26–29 August 1986*, I–VI (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, Central Department of Oriental Literature, 1988).  
*RSE* *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, Roma, 1941–1981, Roma–Napoli 1983ff.  
*ZDMG* *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Leipzig–Wiesbaden–Stuttgart 1847ff.

## Change in the Significance of Affiliation to *Ṭarīqa* The Case of Tiḡāniyya in and around Ġimma\*

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).<sup>1</sup> 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 *Ṣūfi* orders and how the *ṭarīqa*, or *Ṣūfi* 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 *dikr* (meaning ‘remembrance’) and requesting divine assistance and benevolence (*baraka*) fits in with people’s everyday concerns. Renowned *Ṣūfi*s became venerated by the people, who believed that they, as *ʿwalī* (pl. *ʿawliyā*), are ‘closer’ to Allah and hence, have the ability to mediate between them and Allah. This popular belief in the ability of *ʿawliyā* 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

\* This article is the result of continuing research conducted with budgetary support of the Monbusho Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (especially No. 26300036). This article was originally presented at the 19<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Ethiopian Studies held at Warsaw (24–28 August 2015), which was made possible with financial support from the 2015 Pache Scholarship II-B of Nanzan University.

<sup>1</sup> See Kabha and Haggai (2006), regarding the so-called ‘Al-Aḥbāsh (which means, Ethiopians)’ and its connections with Ethiopia through a scholar named *ṣayḥ* ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad al-Harārī (1910–2008). They are known for their uncompromising and critical stance against the ideas of Ibn Taymiya, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, and the Muslim Brotherhood, a stance which interestingly mirrors the Salafī criticism of Sufism: ‘saint worship’ and animistic belief of the populace.

asked to pray for divine assistance by local lay people. The Cushitic-speaking Oromo people, among whom this research was done, traditionally held *qaalluu*,<sup>2</sup> *qaallicha* or *abbaa muundaa* 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 *ayyaana*), as well as in the power of people able to mediate, shaped the religious practices of the Oromo, Christian or Muslim.<sup>3</sup>

This research was done in and around Ğimma.<sup>4</sup> Ğimma is both the name of a Zone, located in the western part of Oromiya Regional State, and a city, the administrative centre of Ğimma Zone. Ğimma Zone covers 17 *wärädas* (districts) and broadly coincides with the area where the Five Gibe Kingdoms ('Gibe *šanan*') were established in the nineteenth century. Among the five kingdoms (Ğimma, Limmu, Guma, Gomma, and Gera), only the area of the former Guma kingdom is excluded from the Zone and is administratively part of Ğimma's western neighbour, the Illubabor Zone. The ambiguous expression, 'in and around Ğimma' denotes the area where the former Five Gibe Kingdoms existed, i.e. the whole of Ğimma 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 Ğimma Interview Programme,<sup>5</sup> 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

<sup>2</sup> The Oromo terms are written according to Oromo orthography (cf. *Galmee Jechoota Afaan Oromo* (1996)).

<sup>3</sup> Mohammed Hassen 1990, Bartels 1983.

<sup>4</sup> I have been conducting anthropological research in and around Ğimma 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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*'<sup>6</sup>). 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 *ḥakwas* (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 *ṣat* (*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 Tiḡāniyya, 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 Tiḡānī 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 Tiḡāniyya 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 *tariqa* is becoming a political stance and, in recent years, Tiḡāniyya, the most visible *tariqa* in and around Ğimma, is increasingly being co-opted by the present regime.

### 1. Islamization and the role of *tariqa* 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'

<sup>6</sup> 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 *ṣayb*, *sheekota* is usually associated with the name of the place where his reputation is most appreciated (eg *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’,<sup>7</sup> 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 (*naggāde*, 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 *šayḥ* ‘Abdulḥakīm from Gondar, whose mausoleum is located in Ğiren, converted king Abbaa Ğifaar 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.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> Although not directly

<sup>7</sup> 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).

<sup>8</sup> From Zaqaqīq, a city situated in Lower Egypt, in the eastern part of the Nile Delta. Informant: *ḥāḡḡ* Sirāḡ (Nasri clan); interview conducted: June 1, 2004. According to a *manāqīb* (meaning ‘glorious deeds’) of Sayyid Naṣrallāh, written by *ḥāḡḡ* Habīb, Sayyid Naṣrallāh came to Limmu in AH 708 (1308/1309 CE) and lived for ‘220 years’ in Ethiopia. Informant: *Šayḥ* Muhammad Naṣir *ḥāḡḡ* Habīb (Nasri clan); interview conducted: August 29, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> According to this version, it was Abbaa Magal (Odaniy), the son of Badruddīn, 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 Fiixa 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 (*Civeticus civetta*) (Ishihara 2003).

The contributions of these pioneers are remembered by the custom of regularly visiting their mausoleums, and narrating traditions containing miracles supposedly 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 Ğimma 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 Yoḥannəs IV (r. 1872–1889) to the northeast took asylum in the southwest, especially in and around Ğimma. Ğimma 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, *Šūfi* orders such as Qādiriya and Sammāniya were introduced to the people in and around Ğimma. *Šūfi* orders opened the way for ordinary people, who do not have Islamic education, to join weekly rituals of chanting *dikr* and supplicating God, in some cases, summoning their favorite ‘*awliyā*’. This popular aspect of Sufism tends to be overemphasized, obscuring the fact that *Šūfi* 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 ‘*ulamā*’ (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 (*‘ilm*), people may choose to seek the divine reality through direct experience, i.e. esoteric knowledge (*ma‘rifa*) which is accomplished by following an established order (*tarīqa*). For this purpose, he needs to seek an ‘*ālim*’, who is also a *Šūfi šayḥ* (mystical master). The organization of the *tarīqa* is based on the very close relationship between master (*šayḥ*) and his disciples (*murīds*), which is a tightly knit network.

Under the *šayḥ*, a number of *ḥalīfa* (deputy) or *muqaddam* (overseer) were appointed to take charge of regional districts. This master–disciple relationship constitutes the *silsila* (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 *silsila* through which he authenticates his membership in a *tarīqa*. Involving oneself in a *tarīqa* is an

optional career for any Muslim. When a Muslim, in his lifetime searches for knowledge, encounters a *šayḥ*, he may ask him to initiate him into the mystical order. The *šayḥ* may also guide his disciple during a mystical retreat (*ḥalwa*). The *šayḥ*, according to his mystical status, grants him a licence (*iğāza*) and becomes his *muqaddam* (overseer).

According to Trimingham, five *Šūfi* 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 Muḥammad ad-Dannī (d. 1924), the successor of Shaykh Muḥammad al-Annī, who initiated some Ğimma Oromo (Trimingham 1952, 239–242) into the Qādiriya.

Next to be mentioned is Sammāniya, founded by Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Karīm as-Sammānī (1718–1775), introduced into Sudan by *šayḥ* Aḥmad at-Tayyib ibn al-Bašir (d. 1823). It was introduced into southwest Ethiopia by ‘a trader descendant of Shaykh Aḥmad at-Tayyib called Sharif Husayn’<sup>10</sup> around 1920 (Trimingham 1952, 247).

Affiliation to these *Šūfi* orders, Qādiriya and Sammāniya, is found in the career of *ḥāğğ* Adam (alias ‘Sheekota Guma’, or the great *šayḥ* of Guma).

(A) *Hāğğ* Adam (alias ‘Sheekota Guma’)

*Hāğğ* Adam was born in 1864/1865 in a village called Sawa in Guma. He received Qurʾānic education from Sheekota Tiğge (see below (C)). After finishing his early Qurʾānic studies, he set off for Wällo to study under *šayḥ* Bušra Qoti (or ‘Sheekota Danna’), and was initiated into Qādiriya together with ‘Sheekota Geena’ (whose mausoleum is in Geena, Limmu) and *šayḥ* ‘Umar Gibe (from Gomma) and *ḥāğğ* ‘Alī Naggo. After that he went back to Ğimma in 1894/1895. At that time Ğimma was ruled by Abbaa Ğifaar II (r. 1878–1932), who granted *ḥāğğ* Adam land in Qağelo, Garukke, and Dedo. In 1911/1912, *ḥāğğ* Adam received the Sammāniya *iğāza* from Sayyid Husayn (alias ‘Sheekota Garbi’), who came from Khartoum. *Hāğğ* 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.<sup>11</sup>

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 *ḥāğğ* Adam (A). Affiliation with two *Šūfi* orders

<sup>10</sup> Most probably identical with ‘Sheekota Garbi’ who played a role in the careers of *ḥāğğ* Adam (A) and *ḥāğğ* Yūsuf (D).

<sup>11</sup> Informant: *ḥāğğ* Abbaa Gamal Muhammad *ḥāğğ* Adam (grandson of *ḥāğğ* Adam, at Quda); interview conducted October 17, 1994.



is not surprising in the life of *Ṣūfī* masters, but is not allowed in the case of the Tiḡāniyya order. Tiḡāniyya is known for its exclusiveness, having a prescription that members of the Tiḡāniyya order should neither join other *Ṣūfī* orders nor visit other *awliyā*, dead or alive (Abun-Nasr 1965, 40).

## 2. Careers of Tiḡānī masters

Trimingham stresses two aspects regarding the popularity of Tiḡāniyya in and around Ğimma. The first is the contribution of *ḥāḡḡ* Yūsuf (see below (D)) who ‘gave the order to *sultān* Abba Dula, father of the present *sultān* Abba Jawbir’.<sup>12</sup> And the second is ‘the official protection’ accorded to Tiḡāniyya under the Ğimma Kingdom (Trimingham 1952, 246). This ‘official recognition by the sultans’ and the influence of *ḥāḡḡ* Yūsuf supposedly led to the rapid spread of the *Ṣūfī* order.

According to a manuscript titled ‘A look into the biographies of pious Tiḡānī masters in and around Ğimma (*Nuzhat al-absār fi tarḡamati s-sādāti t-Tiḡāniyya al-abrāri fi Ğimma wa mā haulahā min al-aqtāri*)’, written by *ṣayḥ* Maḥmūd Sulaymān (see below (F)), one of the 47 Tiḡānī masters listed, of whom only 9 were of the royal Diggo clan, excluding *ṣayḥ* Maḥmūd himself.<sup>13</sup>

As was mentioned in the career of *ḥāḡḡ* Adam, it was Abbaa Ğifaar II, the king of Ğimma, who invited many ‘*ulamā*’ and *Ṣūfīs* to live in his kingdom. He is said to have exempted these Muslim scholars and *Ṣūfīs* from paying tax. Abbaa Ğifaar II was also affiliated to the Tiḡāniyya order, being initiated by *ḥāḡḡ* °Alī Grañ<sup>14</sup>. Among those invited to live and teach in Ğimma by Abbaa Ğifaar II was *ḥāḡḡ* Zakariya.

(B) *Ḥāḡḡ* Zakariya ibn Muḥammad (alias ‘Sheekota Muḡḡa’)<sup>15</sup>

Zakariya was a Hausa, born in Kano (Nigeria). His parents were both ‘al-Hasanī’<sup>16</sup>. After accomplishing his Pilgrimage to Mecca, Zakariya crossed the

<sup>12</sup> 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).

<sup>13</sup> *Ṣayḥ* Maḥmūd, a nephew of Abbaa Ğifaar II, played a pivotal role in the spread of Tiḡāniyya not only in and around Ğimma but also among the Muslim Amhara mainly in Bure, Goḡḡam. Most of the 9 Tiḡānī *ṣayḥs* belonging to the Diggo clan were members of the family of Abbaa Ğifaar II.

<sup>14</sup> According to *Nuzhat al-absār*, *ṣayḥ* °Alī Grañ was from Wällo, and was initiated into the Tiḡāniyya order by *ṣayḥ* °Abdallāh al-Fūtī.

<sup>15</sup> Informant: Abbaa Digga Abbaa Garo (Diggo clan, 55), whose mother, A’isha was one of *ḥāḡḡ* Zakariya’s daughters; interview conducted August 17, 2015 at Addis Abāba.

<sup>16</sup> 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 Tiġāniyya, the Somali king safely travelled to Mecca by boat.

'Abbalabbās (Aḥmad at-Tiġānī, the founder of the Tiġāniyya order)', subsequently 'ordered' Zakariya to go to Addis Abāba via Arussi. At Arussi, he encountered a female *walī* called A'īša. A'īša 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 *rūhāniyas* (spiritual beings) to block his passage. The *ḥādīm* ('servant') of Zakariya, Sālim, told the *rūhāniyas* that he and Zakariya were mere travellers (*musāfir*s) who feared the otherworld (*ʿābira*); he commanded them to disappear, invoking the name of Aḥmad at-Tiġānī. This made the *rūhāniyas* vanish at once. Upon reaching Addis Abāba, Zakariya went to see Abbaa Fiixa Abbaa Ġifaar, who took him to his father, who was also in Addis Abāba at the time. Abbaa Ġifaar II requested Zakariya to come to Ġimma, which he agreed to do. Abbaa Ġifaar, however, advised him to take the roundabout route through Limmu because '°Alī Daraar would not let a *walī* pass by'.<sup>17</sup> But Zakariya took the road right under the °Alī Daraar cliff, claiming that any person who chants a Tiġānī verse will not be afraid. At Ġimma, Zakariya was granted the land of Muġġa (near the Giren palace) where he built a mosque and *ḥalwa* (a hut for mystical retreats) and began granting the Tiġānī *iġāza* to people from 1925/1926. Zakariya died at the age of 95, when Abbaa Goobir was *sulṭān* (1936–1941).

(C) *Hāġġ* Maḥmūd Abū Bakr (alias 'Sheekota Tiġġe')

Maḥmūd was born in Qorare (Ifat), to an Argobba family. After finishing his Qurʾān and *ʿilm* education at Qorare, he left for Yemen, and taught Qurʾān az-Zabīd for 18 years. While az-Zabīd, he accomplished his *ḥāġġ*, and received the Tiġāniyya *iġāza* there. After that he went back to Ifat. At that time, Abbaa Ġifaar II was inviting '*ulamā*' from all over the country, and Maḥmūd accepted the invitation. At Ġimma, he was given Abbaa Ġifaar II's sister as wife. But after a while, the '*ulamā*' including *ḥāġġ* Maḥmūd were forced to leave Ġimma owing to a strife between Emperor Mənilək II (r. 1889–1913) and Abbaa Ġifaar. On his way back to Ifat, he dropped by Addis Abāba and met *ṣayḥ* Zeinu, also an Argobba. *Ṣayḥ* Zeinu was a relative of *dāġġazmač* Alāmayyāhu, who had just been appointed gov-

<sup>17</sup> This anecdote is frequently cited for other saintly figures too. °Alī Daraar is a seventeenth century *walī*. A small hill standing in the Gibe valley is named after him (Guluma Gemeda 1993).

ernor of Limmu *awrağga*<sup>18</sup> (ca. 1914–1917). *Hāğğ* Maḥmūd discussed the matter with *dāğğazmač* Alāmayyāhu, who informed Abbaa Duula Abbaa Qerepphe (Ġidda clan), the then *balabbat* (local landlord) of Gomma. Abbaa Duula invited *hāğğ* Maḥmūd to live in Gomma. *Hāğğ* Maḥmūd thus settled in a village named Tiğge, the place he saw in a dream.

At that time, *hāğğ* Yūsuf (see below (D)) and Abbaa Waaği (Diggo clan, brother of Abbaa Ġifaar II, and father of Sheekota Dedo (F)) set out for Mecca. On seeing them off, *hāğğ* Maḥmūd told them to bring him something ‘wonderful’. A year later, the two came back and went to see *hāğğ* Maḥmūd. One of the two, *hāğğ* Yūsuf, humbly handed over ‘*Ġawāhir al-Ma‘ānī*’,<sup>19</sup> a biography of Aḥmad at-Tiğānī, the founder of the Tiğāniyya order. *Hāğğ* Maḥmūd died in Tiğge in 1911/1912, where his mausoleum can still be found.

(D) *Hāğğ* Yūsuf Ḥalīfa Nūraddīn ‘Alī (alias ‘Sheekota Chekorsa’)

It was Yūsuf’s great grandfather ‘Alī who migrated with his brothers from Massawa to Limmu. Yūsuf was born in 1878 in Guma (kingdom), and it was there that he learned the Qur‘ān, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and Arabic grammar (*nabw*) in his childhood. In 1901/1902, he went to Wollo and received the *iğāza* of the Qādiriyya from *šayḥ* Aḥmad ibn Adam ad-Dannī. He studied ‘ilm under *šayḥ* Aḥmad with *hāğğ* Adam (mentioned above (A)), and with him, he travelled to Mecca. There he received the Sammāniyya *iğāza* from *šayḥ* Maḥmūd ibn Nūraddā‘im ibn Aḥmad at-Tayyibī, who was the *ḥalīfa* of *šayḥ* Muḥammad Abdulkarīm as-Sammānī (1718–1775), the founder of Sammāniyya.

Returning to Ġimma, he went to see Sayyid Husayn (alias ‘Sheekota Garbi’, see above (A)), and had his Sammāniyya *iğāza* ‘renewed’. Sayyid Husayn guided many Muslims including *hāğğ* Yūsuf in mystical retreat (*ḥalwa*). In 1913/1914, he accomplished his second *hāğğ* to Mecca, with his friend, Abbaa Waaği Abbaa Gomol, brother of Abbaa Ġifaar (see above (C)). They first stopped in Cairo to pay a visit to the mausoleums of Imām aš-Šāfi‘ī and of Sayyid Muhammad Bakrī, the latter known to have initiated the *Salāt al-Fātib*,

<sup>18</sup> Limmu *awrağga* covers the areas of Gomma, Gera and Limmu districts (*wārāda*). The five Gibe Kingdoms were incorporated into the Ethiopian Empire under the rule of Mənilək II. The Kingdom of Ġimma, however, managed to keep its autonomy to a certain extent. No Christian governor was appointed to the region, and no church was built in Ġimma until after the death of Abbaa Ġifaar II (d. 1932). This was accomplished by the ‘shrewd politics’ of Abbaa Ġifaar II, in exchange for a large amount of tribute and tax paid annually to the central government (Lewis 1965, 45; Ishihara 2007).

<sup>19</sup> *Ġawāhir al-ma‘ānī wa bulūğ al-amānī fi faid Sīdī Abī al-‘Abbās at-Tiğānī*, completed in 1799/1800, was written by ‘Alī Harāzim ibn Barada who was a companion of Aḥmad at-Tiğānī (Abun-Nasr 1965, 40, 42, 193).

a Tiġānī 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 *ḥāġġ* Yūsuf received the *iġāza* of the Tiġāniyya, and was given a copy of *Šarwāḥir al-Maʿānī* (see above (C)). Sayyid Šarīf was granted the *iġāza* from Muhammad Gannūn, who had been initiated into the Tiġāniyya order by ʿArābī ibn Sayih, himself initiated by ʿAlī at-Tammāsīnī<sup>20</sup>, who was a direct disciple of Aḥmad at-Tiġānī.

Returning to Ethiopia, *ḥāġġ* Yūsuf initiated many people into Tiġāniyya. In 1928, he accomplished his third *ḥāġġ*, this time with his son, Abbaa Tamaam. In Medina, he met Sayyid Muḥammad al-Fūtī Alfa Hashim<sup>21</sup> (from West Africa) and had his Tiġānī *iġāza* ‘renewed’. In Mecca, he met ʿUṭmān Al-amīn, a Tiġānī ʿālim from Morocco.

Returning to Ethiopia in 1929, he spent his Ramadan at Chekorsa, moving to Ġimaate Daru (in Gomma *wārāda*) in 1929/1930, and contributed to the expansion of Tiġāniyya in Ġimma and Gomma. Hearing of the reputation of Al-Fakī Aḥmad ʿUmar (see below, (E)), *ḥāġġ* Yūsuf visited him at Minko (western Wällāga) in 1935, and stayed there for 6 months during which he performed the mystical retreat (*ḥalwa*) under Al-Fakī Aḥmad ʿUmar’s supervision. Returning from Minko, he retired to Sedi<sup>22</sup>, 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 Ġimaate Daru, where he died in 1937/1938 at the age of 61.<sup>23</sup>

(E) Al-Fakī Aḥmad ʿUmar (Ishihara 1997; 2009)

Aḥmad 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 *maʿrifa*. At the age of 19, losing both parents, Aḥmad set off for Mecca.

<sup>20</sup> Aḥmad at-Tiġānī appointed Sidi ʿAlī at-Tammāsīnī to succeed him as supreme head of the order (Abun-Nasr 1965, 23)

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

<sup>22</sup> Sedi is a village located near the border of Gomma and Gera. Sedi has now become a Tiġānī centre, where some of the descendants of Al-Fakī Aḥmad ʿUmar resides. There is also the mausoleum of Sayyid Muhammad-Hasan (the eldest son of Al-Fakī Aḥmad ʿUmar) in Sedi where one of the biggest Mawlid Festivals in the region is celebrated (surrounding the mausoleum).

<sup>23</sup> Informant: Abbaa Ġihaad *ḥāġġ* Yūsuf (son of *ḥāġġ* Yūsuf, at Ġimaate Daru). Abbaa Ġihaad was consulting a written manuscript during the interview. The interview was conducted September 7, 1994.

After accomplishing the *ḥāḡḡ*, 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 Aḥmad ʿUmar his sister as wife. During his stay at Asosa, Aḥmad ʿUmar received the Tiḡāniyya *iḡāza* (*iḡāza tawfiq*) from *šayḥ* Abdullāhi ibn Mubārak aš-Šingīti (from Mauritania), who was granted the *iḡāza* from *šayḥ* Ibrāhīm, who took his *iḡāza* from *šayḥ* Abdulkarīm, who, again, was granted his *iḡāza* from the founder, Aḥmad at-Tiḡānī, who was granted the order from the Prophet himself. After this, Aḥmad ʿUmar sent a letter asking his elder brother to have his *iḡāza* renewed, only to be informed of his death. In despair, Aḥmad ʿUmar performed a mystical retreat for 40 days. On the fortieth day, the Prophet appeared and granted the *iḡāza* (*iḡāza tašrif*) to him directly. Leaving Asosa, he went southwards to western Wällāga, 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 Ġimma area, and eventually to Afallo (Agalo Sheekota), in Gera. In 1951, Al-Fakī Aḥmad ʿUmar went on his second *ḥāḡḡ*, after which he temporarily returned to his home country in West Africa. In 1953, Al-Fakī Aḥmad ʿUmar reappeared in Asosa, and, together with his followers, went to Yaʿa (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 Qurʾānic education, his father Abbaa Waaḡi arranged for an ʿālim called *šayḥ* Ibrāhīm to settle at Wogamo. The father gave the latter his daughter in marriage, and *šayḥ* Ibrāhīm taught Maḥmūd ʿilm. Maḥmūd was not only intelligent, but was diligent, spending most of his time studying and reciting *diker*, rather than enjoying a social life. He preferred to read books on mystical knowledge and about the Prophet.

He received his Tiḡānī *iḡāza* initially from *ḥāḡḡ* Yūsuf (D). Hearing of Al-Fakī Aḥmad ʿUmar’s reputation (see above (E)), he visited him at Minko, and had his *iḡāza* renewed, and receiving the *iḡāza* granted to Al-Fakī Aḥmad ʿUmar from the Prophet, and staying there for 15–20 days.

One day, when *šayḥ* Maḥmūd and many others gathered to celebrate Mawlid (the birthday of Prophet Muḥammad) at Abbaa Gissaa Ginḡo’s *zāwiya* in Ġimma, the *qasīda* (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 *Därg* regime (1974–1991).

The *Därg* 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 *Därg*, the system of *qariya* seems to have survived.

Nevertheless, living in an increasingly materialistic and secularized atmosphere, the choice of becoming a *Šūfi* 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 *awliyā*' (saints) are not only 'backward' and 'anachronistic', but 'heretical (*bid'a*)'. A more 'modern' way of being Muslim is being pursued, emphasizing the Qur'ān 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 Alī

*Šayḥ* Muhammad Alī was born in Assäbä Täfäri (Chiro) in around 1930. His Islamic Studies were directed by *ḥāgg* Kabīr, a graduate of the Azhar University, at Dawwe (Wällo). When he was 25, he left for Khartoum via Asmāra. However, when he attempted to enter Egypt, he was suspended for not possessing a passport and was sent back to Asmāra, 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), Begi (west Wälläga), Dämbi Dolo (west Wälläga), Chora Qumbabe (Illubabor), and finally reaching Ğimma. He preferred to live in a remote rural area, and finally chose Batala village (near Boto town), about 20 km south of Agaro (Gomma *wärāda*). 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 *šayḥ* Muhammad Alī is respectably remembered as a learned *ʿālim* 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 Ğimma 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 *wärāda*) 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 *ʿālim* 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.<sup>24</sup>

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

<sup>24</sup> 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 Ğimma).

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 šayḥ* ‘Abdallāh al-Hararī (pejoratively referred to as ‘al-Ahbaš’) to give ‘anti-Wahhābiya’ or ‘pro-Sūfiya’ lectures to them (Østebø 2013).

This coincided with the formation of a domestic religious NGO named ‘Ethiopian Ahl as-Sunna wa l-Ġamaa as-Sufiy Association’ (ASWJS). Founded in 2012 by a learned Qādiriya *šayḥ* 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 *qābāle* level, and to preserve and enhance the long inherited ‘Sūfiya’ tradition.

The main purposes of the association are:

- 1) protection and conservation of historical places (*hadra bāt, 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 ‘Wahhābī’ stance, by re-educating them in the *Šūfi* 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 Ġimma, 7 ASWJS members are elected from each *qābāle*, the top 2 being members of the ASWJS *wārāda* (district) committee, from which 2 are selected as *wārāda* representatives of the Islamic Supreme Council. And although the ASWJS association does not require its members to belong to one of the *Šūfi* orders, most of the representatives of both the Mağlis and the ASWJS belonged to Tiğāniyya in Ġimma Zone.

#### 4. Conclusion

In the course of their academic careers in Islamic studies, people choose to seek Islamic mystical knowledge. Which *Šūfi* 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 *Šūfi* order is determined by influential individual mystics, who migrated to the region, having support from the political elite. In Ġimma region, a number of *Šūfis* belonging to different orders were invited to settle, especially under Abbaa Ġifaar II’s reign. However, the prevalence of Tiğāniyya does not result from ‘official support’ granted in the Ġimma Kingdom, as suggested by Trimingham, but rather from the influence of prominent religious masters such as *hāğğ* Zakariya (B), *hāğğ* Maḥmūd (C), *hāğğ* Yūsuf



(D), Al-Fakī Aḥmad ʿUmar (E), and *šayḥ* Maḥmūd Sulayman (F), and their descendants and disciples.

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 ‘*Šūfi*-inclined knowledge’ along with *ʿilm*. 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 Ğimma region, the Muslim community was facing the challenge of losing the younger generation to the ‘Wahhābiya’ influence. However, after the Bašaša incident, measures were taken to counteract this development, and the ‘Sufiyya’ are gaining ground with governmental backing. Among the *Šūfi* orders in Ğimma region, the Tiḡāniyya seems to be the only *Šūfi* order having an organized network that connects people living in both rural and urban areas. Thus, nowadays, the Tiḡānīs enjoy governmental support, becoming core members of the Ğimma branch of the nationwide religious NGO, Ahl as-Sunna wa l-Ġamʿa as-Sufiy Association and of the Maglis. Sufism, in this sense, is becoming political.

## References

- Abir, M. 1968. *Ethiopia: The Era of the Princes* (London: Longmans, 1968).
- Abun-Nasr, J.M. 1965. *The Tijaniyya: A Sufi Order in the Modern World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965).
- Akkaadaamii Afaan Saboota Itoophiyaatiin 1996. *Galmee Jechoota Afaan Oromoo* (Finfinnee: Ministeera Beeksisaa Aadaa, 1996).
- Bartels, L. 1983. *Oromo Religion: Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia—An Attempt to Understand—* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1983).
- Cecchi, A. 1886. *Da Zeila alle Frontiere del Caffa*, II (Roma: Ermanno Loescher & Co, 1886).
- Guluma Gemedā 1993. ‘The Islamization of the Gibe Region, Southwestern Ethiopia from c.1830s to the Early Twentieth Century’, *JES*, 26/2 (1993), 63–79.
- Harris, Major W.C. 1844. *Highlands of Ethiopia*, III (London: Longman, 1844).
- Hussein Ahmed 1988. ‘Traditional Muslim Education in Wallo’, in *PICES* 9, 94–106.
- Ishihara, M. 1996. ‘Textual Analysis of a Poetic Verse in a Muslim Oromo Society in Jimma Area, Southwestern Ethiopia’, in Shun Sato, Eisei Kurimoto, eds, *Essays in Northeast African Studies*, Senri Ethnological Studies, 43 (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 1996), 207–232.
- 1997. ‘The Life History of a Muslim Holyman: Al-Faki Aḥmad Umar’, in K. Fukui, E. Kurimoto, and M. Shigeta, eds, *Ethiopia in Broder Perspective: Papers of the XIIIth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Kyoto, 12–17 December 1997*, II (Kyoto: Shokado, 1997), 391–402.

- 2003. ‘The Cultural Logic of Civiculture in Ethiopia’, *Nilo-Ethiopian Studies*, 8–9 (2003), 35–60.
- 2006. ‘The Religious Roles of the Naggaadie in the Historical Gibe Oromo Kingdoms’, in S. Uhlig, M. Bulakh, D. Nosnitsin, and T. Rave, eds, *Proceedings of the XVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (Hamburg 2003)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag), 119–127.
- 2007. ‘Ethiopia teikokuenu housetsuto chihono keisei (The Formation of the Ethiopian Empire and the Making of a Local Society with special focus on the former Gibe Oromo Kingdoms)’, in K. Fukui, ed., *Teikou to Funsou no Shiteki Approach* (‘Historical Approaches of their Conflicts & Resistance in Southwest Ethiopia’) (Kyoto: Kyoto University, 2007), 72–96 (in Japanese).
- 2009. ‘Ethiopia no Muslim Seijasuhai: Tijani doushi Al-Faki Aḥmad Umar to Seibu Oromo shakai (Muslim saint veneration in Ethiopia: Tijani master Al-Faki Aḥmad Umar and Western Oromo Society)’, Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Tokyo.
- Kabha, M. and H. Erlich 2006. ‘Al-Ahbash and Wahhabiyya: Interpretations of Islam’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 38/4 (2006), 519–538.
- Lewis, H.S. 1965. *A Galla Monarchy: Jimma Abba Jifar, Ethiopia 1830–1932* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1965).
- Mohammed Hassen 1990. *The Oromo of Ethiopia, a History 1570–1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
- Østebø, T. 2013. ‘Postscript’, in P. Desplat and T. Østebø, eds, *Muslim Ethiopia: The Christian Legacy, Identity Politics, and Islamic Reformism* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
- Trimingham, J.S. 1952. *Islam in Ethiopia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952).
- 1998. *The Sufi Orders in Islam, with a New Foreword by John O’Voll* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998; 1<sup>st</sup> edn: London: At the Clarendon Press, 1971).

### 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 Ġimma 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 Tiḡāniyya, 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 Tiḡānī 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 Tiḡāniyya 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, Tiḡāniyya, the most visible *ṭarīqa* in and around Ġimma, is increasingly being co-opted by the present regime.