

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies

Catalogue of Manuscripts at the
Seddeqiyu Mosque: Jimma Zone
Sokoru

By
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Approved by Examination Board

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Abstract

The philological study of the Islamic literary heritage of Ethiopia has been a shallowly approached field of research. The former kingdom of Ġimma, despite its rich Islamic history, remains almost completely unstudied in respect to philology.

The purpose of this research is to present a description and catalogue of manuscripts at the Seddeqiyyu mosque in Ġimma zone, Sokorru woreda. It has 6 chapters. The first chapter gives an introduction to the whole research. The second chapter deals with the history of Islamization of the five Gibe kingdoms. The third chapter presents the biography of Šayḥ Mus°id al-Dīn Seddeqi, who established the Seddeqiyyu mosque and wrote almost all of the manuscripts to be studied here. In the fourth chapter the kinds of manuscripts of Seddeqiyyu mosque are introduced and typologized; particular emphasis is given to the “strange” texts and pictures which were invented by the Šayḥ. I identified 17 kinds of pictures and 6 kinds of “strange” texts. The fifth chapter is the main theme of this thesis. It deals with cataloguing the manuscripts of Seddeqa. 52 manuscripts are catalogued under four main groups. In the last chapter (six), conclusions and recommendations are given.

The method used to catalogue these manuscripts is based on the one suggested by Yusuf Ziyya. However there are modifications I introduced to it, in order to make the criteria fit the nature of the manuscripts.

Prior to this research the Seddeqiyyu collection was completely unstudied; it is currently kept in bad condition which makes it vulnerable to damage. I hope this study will open the gate for further studies on the collection and on previously unstudied genres of Islamic manuscripts in Ethiopia.

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Bureau and Oromiyya State Information Bureau, and the Institute of Ethiopian Studies.

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KEY TO THE TRANSLITERATION
Arabic (obvious symbols are omitted)

Consonants	Symbol	Example	Gloss
أ	ʾ	ʾanṣār	‘helpers/Medinans’
ث	ṭ	ṭalj	‘snow’
ج	ǧ	jamāl	‘beauty’
ح	ḥ	ḥikāya	‘conversation’
خ	ḫ	ḫayr	‘good’
ذ	ḍ	ḏikr	‘remembrance’
ش	š	šurb	‘drink’
س	ṣ	ṣalawāt	‘praises’
ض	ḍ	ḍaḥk	‘laughter’
ع	ʿ	ʿilm	‘knowledge’
غ	ǧ	ǧaḍab	‘anger’
ط	ṭ	ṭariqā	‘Sufi order’
ظ	ẓ	ẓulm	‘oppression’
ق	q	qaḥṭ	‘drought’

Amharic Consonants

Consonants	Symbol	Example	Gloss
ን	ñ	qāñ	right
ጠ	ṭ	ṭäjj	traditional Ethiopian mead
ጃ	j	ṭäjj	traditional Ethiopian mead

Amharic and Qabeena vowels

	ä	qäñ	right
	ē	qabēna	a tribe from Hadiya nation

Vowels

Arabic has three short vowels and three long vowels.

The Arabic short vowels are:

Vowel	Symbol	Example	Gloss
ـَ _____	a	karb	‘wrath’
ـِ _____	i	miftāh	‘key’
ـُ _____	u	qufl	‘lock’

The Arabic long vowels are:

Vowel	Symbol	Example	Gloss
ا + _____	ā	ṣāḥib/companion	‘friend’
ي + _____	ī	fil	‘elephant’
و + _____	ū	muslimūna	‘Muslims’

°aḡami sounds

Consonant	Symbol used in the manuscripts	Example	Gloss
g	ġ/	Diggiti	Proper name
Vowel	Symbol	Example	Gloss
o	°	Abba Sikko	Personal name

Abbreviations

A.H. After Hijra

A.D. Anno Domini

d. died

ff. folios

pp. pages

Sed . Seddeqa

Chapter One

Introduction

Background of the Study

In Ethiopia, areas like Härär, Wällo, Arsi and Ğimma are most often thought of as rich in Islamic literary heritage. Seddeqiyyu mosque is one of two mosques in the village of Seddeqa, Ğimma zone, Sokorru woreda, in the eastern part of the former kingdom of Ğimma. It is located 189 km southwest of Addis Ababa and 146 km from Ğimma town, almost exactly halfway between the two; it is very close to Gurageland. The Seddeqiyyu mosque was established by Šayḥ Mus°id al-Dīn Seddeqiyyu. He was a student of Šayḥ Šarīf Šayḥ Muḥtār of Qabēna, a scholar who was invited to the kingdom of Ğimma by Abba Ğifar II (1878-1932). In this mosque there is a large and completely unstudied collection of manuscripts, roughly sixty in number. The condition they are kept in makes them highly vulnerable to damage; in 2001 about 60% of the manuscripts were destroyed by fire. Before all of the manuscripts are lost it is vital to conduct research on them. Cataloguing can be a first measure toward securing their continuing existence and will serve to introduce them to the wider academic community.

As a Muslim scholar Šayḥ Mus°id al-Dīn Seddeqiyyu contributed greatly to the establishment of mosques and learning centers. He composed and collected a

large number of manuscripts on both religious and secular themes. Among his works a large portion consist of invented “strange” texts and pictures whose contents remain obscure. Even though the Šayḥ had competence in five languages, namely Arabic, Somali, Tigriñña, Oromo and Qabēna, he apparently wrote only in Arabic.

Though many of the manuscripts are found loose, detached and bundled together haphazardly, they can be classified, either by their content, authorship, or the physical condition in which I discovered them. For this research I classified them based on their physical condition: bound books, unbound books, compilations of loose quires, and unclassified loose sheets.

Islamic Literature of Ğimma

In terms of religious literature written in Arabic, it is clear that a large volume of different kinds of manuscripts can be found in Ğimma. By contrast, °Ağamī manuscripts seem few in number. “Oromo scholars in Ğimma produced only a modest amount of religious literature in their own language... few Oromo scholars produced religious poetry in their own language” (Mohammed Hassen 1990: 159).

Objectives of the Study

- Presenting the contribution of Šayḥ Mus°id al-Dīn Seddeqiyū to the development of Islamic literature in the Ğimma area by describing and cataloguing the manuscripts at the Seddeqiyū Mosque.

- Presenting the biography of Šayḥ Musʿid al-Dīn Seddeqiyyu
- Shedding light on the history of Islamization of the Gibe area

Significance of the Study

To my knowledge, I am the first researcher in the academic sphere to conduct research on the library of Seddeqa Mosque.

- The study shows the contribution of Šayḥ Musʿid al-Dīn Seddeqiyyu to the Arabic literature of Ğimma and Ethiopia in general.
- Cataloguing these manuscripts provides significant introduction about the collection for further researches.
- As it is the first philological study in the manuscripts found in Ğimma; it would introduce the area (Ğimma) as a new and significant source of manuscripts in Ethiopia.
- It also facilitates the collection and preservation of the manuscripts by the responsible bodies.

Research Methodology

This research has four parts, each having its own methodology. The first section, dealing with the history of Islamization in the Gibe Oromo states, was reconstructed based on secondary sources, especially works by prominent historians in the area. For the second section, dealing with the biography of

Šayḥ Musʿid al-Dīn Seddeqiyū, I collected information chiefly from interviews with family members and important Seddeqa individuals. Moreover I used written documents, both primary manuscripts and secondary sources or studies. The third section presents a content-based descriptive typology of the manuscripts of Seddeqa mosque¹, going into detail especially regarding the types of “strange” texts and the pictures. It has no particular methodology beyond an attempt to impose some order on a very large variety of phenomena. The fourth section, and the heart of this research, is cataloguing the manuscripts of Seddeqiyū Mosque. I first give a general description of the cataloguing criteria, followed by a full list of the catalogued manuscripts. The criteria for the cataloguing were suggested by Yusuf Ziya², who presents the methods of manuscript description for Islamic texts in academic research. He gives the following list of points that should be considered in describing a manuscript.

“Manuscript description has its own technique. Description begins from outside and it goes into the inside of the manuscript, as follows

- 1) Author of the manuscript,
- 2) Title of the manuscript,
- 3) Library or place where the manuscript is kept,
- 4) Registration number of the manuscript if it has any,

¹ I will interchangeably use Seddeqa mosque and Seddeqiyū mosque; they mean the same.

² www.iant.com/imam.methodol.txt

- 5) Band [Binding]: the material (leather or paper etc.), color, the figures and marks, bondage [binding] position, figures in the center and corners, framed with one or double lines, its size, whether it is in good condition or not.
- 6) Paper: thickness, whether it is polished or not, does it have watermarks or not, color, whether it is in good condition or it is eaten by bookworms etc.
- 7) Evaluating the paper of the manuscript is very important. Often, manuscripts do not have any date. One may fix the date by evaluating the paper it is written on. Trademarks and watermarks may be helpful in figuring out the factory in which it was manufactured. If we know the history of the factory when it was active, thus we may figure out the century of the manuscript roughly. Of course, this needs a lot of practical experience.
- 8) How many folios is the manuscript? Manuscripts are numbered by each leaf getting a number, but the first page which is at right is “a”, the second page which is at left is “b”, like 3a, 5b etc.
- 9) Size of the manuscript: the size of the paper and size of the written portion.
- 10) Forms and style of writing: Whether text is in the frame, one line or two lines of frame, colorful [colored] – colorless [un-colored], type of writing

(riq'a) [ruq'a], ta'liq, naskh, color of ink, headings, titles, subdivisions, dots, harakahs.

It is important for a researcher to know about paleography and epigraphy of Arabic language...

- 11) Number of lines or verses in each page. Any decorations or change of color, picture, miniature, maps, etc. Generally, the numbers of lines are odd numbers.
- 12) Content of the manuscript: Headings with page numbers.
- 13) Note of copying or drafting: Copier's name, date, place [page number with the text of colophon]. This is [a] very useful part. It may give name, data, and place of copying which may help as substance for identification.
- 14) The colophon: It is the last sentence showing the end of the manuscript.
- 15) If it was compared with another text or copy, or compared to the master or read to the author, and got his approval, then the text is good and accurate. These must be recorded carefully with the number of pages (Sahh, Muqabalah, Qira'ah, sama', ijazah, tamalluk etc.).
- 16) Are there some notes at the margins or not: If yes, what are they?
- 17) The first sentence of the manuscript (awwaluhu).
- 18) The last sentence: (akhiruhu).

Generally the author and the title are given at the beginning and at the end. The period of manuscript may be fixed sometimes with the help of notes related to the ownership, ijazah, etc.”

I used this richly detailed outline as a general guide to my own cataloguing. However, some of the criteria are not fitting to the nature of the manuscripts in Seddeqa. So I rearranged, changed and deleted them as appropriate and formed my own comprehensive set of criteria which I used systematically for the cataloguing process. These criteria are given in chapter 5.

Scope of the Study

Even though I failed to catalogue each and every manuscript in Seddeqa due to financial, time and academic constraints, including the very large volume of material to be studied, I tried to cover most of them. About 6 bound books, 8 unbound books, 28 compilations and 11 miscellaneous manuscripts are catalogued, ranging over perhaps 90 percent of the collection.

Review of Related Literature

Compared to the literature and culture of Christian Ethiopia, Islam and Islamic culture are relatively understudied despite recent efforts to address this problem. Most research on Islam in Ethiopia has focused on Härär and Wällo. Philologically, areas like Ğimma can be considered as almost unstudied in this respect.

Islamic studies in Ethiopia were pioneered by Enrico Cerulli, who collected and studied numerous manuscripts from Härär and Wällo. Additionally, travelers from Europe such as Ewlad Wagner³, Hans Martin Schlobies⁴ and Nicholas Gumilev⁵ collected and catalogued Islamic manuscripts from Ethiopia. In 1952 J.S. Trimingham published his book *Islam in Ethiopia*. Following in his footsteps, other foreign and Ethiopian scholars have studied Islam in Ethiopia from different perspectives – such scholars as A.J. Drewes, Ulrich Braukämper, B.W. Andrzejewski, Hussein Ahmed, Alula Pankhurst and others.

From the perspective of philology the above scholars used some manuscripts in one or another way to further the reconstruction of the socio-economic and political history of Islam in Ethiopia. Pure philological research is gaining momentum after the recent launching of the Masters and PhD program in philology in Addis Ababa University.

One of the few cataloguing projects on Ethiopian Islamic manuscripts to have been done so far was conducted by the Institute of Ethiopian Studies in 1967. In this collection 157 manuscripts are catalogued, among them 140 Arabic, 12 Häräri and 1 Oromo manuscripts.

Concerning the Ğimma area, some work has been done focusing mainly on the history and anthropology of the place and the people. Cerulli in 1922 published a book about the folk literature of southern Abyssinia, in which the oral poetry

³ Encyclopedia Aethiopica vol. 3 p744.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid 746.

of Ğimma is presented. Tadesse Semma (2007), Haile Mariam Goshu (1970), and Aman Seifedin (2006) did their BA or MA theses on the history of Ğimma or other Gibe kingdoms. Herbert Lewis (1965), Mohammed Hassen (1990), Mordechai Abir (1965, 1968), and Minako Ishihara (1996, 1997, 2008, 2010), Gulimma Gameda (1980, 1983, 1984, 1987, 1994 and 2007) are other well-known scholars in this regard. Endalew Djiratta (2007), in his thesis entitled 'Islam and the Muslim Community in the Kingdom of Ğimma (1870-1941),' mentions Šayḥ Mus'īd al-Dīn and his contribution to the Muslim community in the Sokorru area of Ğimma.

The present thesis is the first attempt to deal academically with the manuscripts of Seddeqiyyu Mosque and Sheikh Mus'īd al-Dīn Seddeqiyyu. The Ğimma Zone Culture and Tourism Bureau prepared a bulletin on the occasion of the Ethiopian millennium which has a general section introducing Seddeqiyyu Mosque and the Sheikh. Moreover, there was an article published in the *Kallachaa Oromiya* newspaper which presented valuable information about the Šayḥ and the Muslim community of Seddeqa. Unfortunately, I was not able to trace either of them.

Chapter Two

Islam in the Gibe kingdoms

Background of Islamization

Due to the scarcity of written sources much of the early history of the Gibe area is necessarily based on oral sources. All of the Gibe kingdoms trace their origin back to the six Mech'a Oromo clans who invaded the area around 1700 (Trimingham 1952:199). But the original inhabitants were "Sidāma" (Omoti) peoples who had developed a monarchical state structure. The emergence of five Oromo monarchies in the Gibe area— Limmu-Ennarea, Gera, Gomma, Gumma and Ğimma— represented a considerable change in the Oromo political structure after the large-scale Oromo population movements. There are two reasons suggested by scholars for this change. The majority relate it to the adoption of the political system of pre-existing "Sidāma" kingdoms like Kafa. Others point to the decline of the Gada system due to the territorial vastness resulting from the Oromo population expansion, and to the related rise in power of the Abba Dulas (war leaders). The increase in power of the Abba Dulas was a result of the frequent wars among the tribes. "The rulers [Abba Dulas]... favored the elimination of the [Gada] system partly to break away from the traditional limitations of the gada system on their power. Apparently for this reason, the rulers were attracted to Islam" (Guluma Gameda 1994:67).

Since Islam first reached the Gibe area before the 18th century, it must have been the native Omotic population who were first exposed to it. Based on Kafa oral traditions, Endalew Djirata states that “Islam was introduced to Kafā during the thirteenth century by Muslim merchants’ agents accompanied by Muslim teachers. Through time a large number of people were converted to Islam. The expansion of trade between southwestern Ethiopia and the outside world in the second half of the nineteenth century immensely contributed to the spread of Islam in the region” (2007:50). Similarly: “As with the formation of the states, the spread of Islam among the Oromo in the Gibe region was a phenomenon of the nineteenth century” (Mohammed Hassen 1990:150).

Concerning the introduction and spread of Islam to the Gibe Oromo monarchies, there are three key points. What form did the first contact of Islam with the Gibe Oromo take? What happened during the Islamization process? And how influential was Islam for the ideological and political changes of the Gibe Oromo society?

Trade was the primary catalyst for the spread of Islam in the Gibe area. This area has long been known as the source for various trade items like slaves, gold, ivory, musk, civet, coffee and others. “After the Oromo conquest and settlement in the Gibe region, the Muslim traders continued coming to the area, though less frequently” (Mohammed Hassen 1990:150). Similarly,

The revival of Islam and of trade in Arabia in the first decades of the [18th] century was soon felt on the Ethiopian coast. Ethiopian

merchants, mostly Muslims, were eager to answer the demand [for these trade items] ...and many caravans were organized to go to the sources [i.e. deep inland]. (Abir 1965:207)

Through the trade caravans the Gibe kingdoms were connected to ports such as Massawa. The main inland post of the traders was Gondar; the Gondar traders were called Jabarti. They reached the Gibe area from the northwest, passing through Gojjam, then Wälläga, and finally coming to Gibe. This route was important not just for trade, but because it was the channel whereby the “principles of Islam as well as Muslim *‘Ulamā* from Arabia reached the remotest corners of the highlands” (ibid). Another group of traders originated from Wällo and Šäwa and reached the Gibe land from the east and northeast. They connected Gibe with the southern ports of Zayla and Tajura. This trade was conducted by Oromos of Wällo and by Warjih of Šäwa; Sudanese and Häräri traders had little participation in it. Guluma Gameda (1993:68) additionally mentions traders from Adwa and the Red Sea coast in the 19th century.

During the first half of the 19th century trade was not much practiced in the Gibe area, because “The constant fighting among the Oromo monarchies themselves on the one hand, and the wars against the Omotic kingdoms on the other impeded the movement of merchants” (Guluma Gameda 1994:375). However, local rulers were eager to make their respective provinces prosperous through trade. “The commercial interests of the itinerant Muslim traders ... and of the local clan leaders coincided... the Oromo leaders protected them [the

traders] and extended hospitality to them” (Mohammed Hassen 1990:150). At that time conditions were not favorable for Muslim traders to proselytize Islam. The main reason was the hostility of the Gada officials. The traditional system had its own religious institution called Waqiffacha, and it could be fatal to preach against it. However, the collapse of Gada as a system “and the rise of war leaders” enabled Islam to gain a little ground. “The Muslim traders were encouraged to settle in the Gibe region itself” (ibid). “Gradually, through intermarriage with local people, they formed a nucleus of the first Muslim community in the area” (Guluma Gameda 1994:68). Furthermore, the nobility of the area had an interest in creating strong relations with the Muslim traders because through them they “were enabled to obtain a market for their products and import what they needed” (Trimingham 1952:109).

Trimingham (1952:199) claims that merchants from the Egyptian Sudan played an important role in converting the people of Ğimma. This implies that there was Sudani influence in the spread of Islam in the Gibe kingdoms. However, Abir (1965:208) rejects this idea on two grounds. First, the Sudanese merchants (called Jalabas) were not allowed to penetrate very deeply into Ethiopia, not beyond Gondar. Second, the prevailing maḏhab (school of jurisprudence) in the Gibe kingdoms is the Šāfi‘ī, while in Sudan it is the Maliki maḏhab which is predominant. □bā

The process of Islamization

Mohammed Hassen (1991:152) discusses in depth the stages of conversion to Islam in the Gibe kingdoms. He suggests a scenario involving three stages, which all happened after the permanent settlement of traders and clerics and which were concomitant with the deterioration of the Gada system.

First, through their relations with the nobility, the traders were able to convert some of them. They even assumed responsibility for teaching the children of the nobility, and it is plausible that the subject matter (at least partly) was Islam. For instance, Abba Bagibo of Limmu-Ennarea (1825-61) and Abba Manno of Gomma (1820-40) are believed to have had an Islamic education when they were young. This first stage represents the time until the 1840s.

The second stage saw the advance of Islam as the religion of the people, mainly as a result of zealous kings who made it their duty to spread Islam to the people. For example, Abba Boka of Ğimma (1859-61) ordered the establishment of mosques and sent many preachers and Qadis all over his dominion. He even sent preachers to other Gibe monarchies like Gumma. Another instance was the king of Gomma, Abba Manno, who ordered both the nobility and the common people to embrace Islam.

The third stage was marked by the general spread of Islam all over the Gibe region, supplanting the traditional beliefs to a large extent. The rulers were eager to change the whole system. They favored Muslim scholars as counselors

rather than Gada officials. The ordinary people accepted Islam, though retaining some traditional beliefs and Islamizing others. “Nevertheless, even after its establishment as a dominant religion, Islam continued to co-exist with certain features of traditional religion” (Guluma Gameda 1993:74). For instance, the Wadaja and Butta ceremonies, which had existed for centuries, were Islamized in most of their features. “The monarchs ... retained some features of their indigenous social and religious organizations. Interestingly, the political offices and the state structures in this region remained essentially non-Muslim” (ibid).

The Agents of Islamization

Scholars of the history of the Gibe monarchies like Abir, Cerulli, Mohammed Hassen and Trimingham as well as travelers agree that the predominant agents for the Islamization of the Gibe kingdoms were Muslim traders. However, Guluma Gameda (1993:69) suggests that traders were primarily engaged in their business rather than the preaching of religion. As a result, the active role of conversion was played by itinerant clerics. These clerics accompanied caravans on their journeys and came to the area for preaching purposes. The most notable among these clerics were Sheikh Abdulhakim of Ğimma and Šayḥ Šarif Abdallah and Sheikh Fallata of Limmu-Ennarea. Most of these clerics are believed to have come from the north and some of them from outside Ethiopia.

Therefore it can be concluded that traders played chiefly an indirect role in the Islamization process.

As we have seen, in the process of Islamization local rulers played a very significant role.

In almost all cases the success of Muslim teachers and preachers in spreading Islam depended on the support they got from the kings...the kings were able continually to enlarge and regenerate the ranks of Muslim preachers and teachers by welcoming Islamic scholars from different parts of north east Africa. The kings encouraged the Muslim teachers to establish Muslim schools, to teach children, and lead the people in prayer. (Mohammed Hassen 1990:153)

As most historians agree (Trimingham (1952), Abir (1965), Mohammed Hassen (1990), Guluma Gemedra (1993)), the reason why the rulers favored Islam was that Islam played the role of a sociopolitical ideology that bound together the subjects and made them loyal to their rulers. "The early conversion of the ruling elite also made Islam socially prestigious and politically and economically rewarding" (Guluma Gemedra 1993:74).

The flourishing of local Islamic scholarship consolidated the Islamization of Gibe especially during the second half of the nineteenth century. Local students travelled abroad for advanced study and returned home with much knowledge. "By 1870s and 1880s, the local Sheikhs have emerged as respected

teachers and advisers to rulers... [They] established their own centers of Islamic learning in the Gibe region. One such center is, for example, Shekkotta Gomma, which was established by Sheikhs Ahmed Sayo and Adam Gomma” (ibid: 71).

Islam in the kingdom of Gomma

The founders of the Gomma kingdom were a clan called Awuliani ‘the holy’ who claimed descent from Nur Hussein of Bali (Mohammed Hassen 1990:155). This clan appeared in the Gomma area together with the other clans of the Mech’a Oromo confederacy. The traditions collected by Mohammed Hassen (1990:190) and Guluma Gameda (1982:55), which Aman Seifedin depends on, are basically in contradiction as to when the kingdom was established fully. Mohammed Hassen puts the reign of Abba Mano, the first king of the fully united Gomma, at c. 1820-1840. On the other hand Guluma presents a genealogical tree based on interviews with the elders of Gomma and using a tradition collected by Cecchi in 1870s, according to which the reign of Abba Mano was ca. 1735-1775. Aman Seifedin discusses this contradiction, and I am inclined to accept his point of view which follows Guluma.

Gomma is considered by many historians to have been the first Gibe state to embrace Islam. However, Mohammed Hassen (1990) says that the nobility of Gomma was the second to accept Islam, although it was the first of the Gibe states where the entire population embraced Islam. “Thus, during the first half of the nineteenth century, while Islam remained chiefly the religion of the kings

and nobility in other neighboring Oromo states, it virtually became the faith of the masses in Gomma” (Aman Seifedin 2006: 33). However, the first claim of Mohammed is in contradiction with the tradition collected by Aman and others. Aman reported that the first king of Gomma, Abba Mano (r. ca. 1733-75), is believed to have imported copies of the Qur’ān written on wooden slabs. This implies two things. First, Abba Mano was already converted to Islam or he was originally Muslim (as a member of Awuliani). Second, the time when he was engaged in such Islamic activity was much earlier than the time when Abba Gomol (Bofo) of Limmu-Ennarea converted to Islam. This makes Gomma the first to embrace Islam among other kingdoms in the region. For many people the connection between Awuliani and Sheikh Nur Hussein of the thirteenth century seems a mere attempt to Islamize the origin of the Gomma nobility. However, Aman Seifedin (2006) refers to informants in Gomma who stress that some Oromo clans, including Awuliani, were Muslims long before their settlement in Gomma. Additionally, “the rise of [the] state under the Awaalini clan gave Islam a big boost” (Aman Seifedin 2006:25). Moreover, there was an established connection between the two in the late eighteenth century.

Amir Abd al-Shakur (1783-94), the famous ruler of Hārār, is known to have built a mosque on the holy site of Shaykh Hussein and to have dedicated it to Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani. A Somali shaykh was in charge of that mosque, which became the center of diffusion of the Qadiriya order to the Gibe

region. In fact, the Somali shaykh himself is reported to have brought the Qadiriya order to the Gibe region, to Gomma itself. (Mohammed Hassen 1990:156)

Following the introduction of Islam, the Qadiriyya and other Sufi orders were established in Gomma. As a result the spread of Islam intensified. Accompanying the Jabarti traders, itinerant clerics who came from the north (Gondar and Wällo) preached Islam in Gomma. They were responsible for the conversion of local rulers in different parts of Gomma. “There were some itinerant clerics during the reigns of the first two kings of Gomma, namely Abba Mano and his successor, Abba Bogibo (r. ca. 1775-1805)” (Aman Seifedin 2006:25-26). Their efforts resulted in the creation of local, indigenous clerics. In most cases they harbored in the houses of local officials, in the king’s palace and with the merchants. As a result their influence seldom reached the masses, who were outside their scope.

While the northern clerics were active in propagating Islam in places along the trade routes and administrative centers, the indigenous clerics and saints were responsible for pushing the frontier of Islam far into the rural areas...[the reasons were], they were familiar with the prevailing local customs and traditions. Second, they effectively used their social links established over a long period of time (through

marriage and other means) to reach different sections of society... (Aman Seifedin, 2006:28-29).

Aman Seifedin (2006:26) lists the prominent centers in which the itinerant clerics settled and propagated Islam. The major one was Sayyo, the former capital of the Gomma kingdom. Other centers were Qotaa, Cocee, Agaro, Kilole, Bulbulo and Jimatte Darru.

Islam reached its apex of expansion during the first half of the nineteenth century. “This period coincided roughly with the reign of Abba Rebu (r. ca. 1830-1856)... [he] was ... champion of Islam and Islamic education” (Aman Seifedin, 2007:31). “Abba Rebu forced his court dignitaries to practice Islam. He threatened to confiscate their properties and dismiss them from their offices unless they accepted Islam and practiced it strictly” (Guluma Gemedda 1993:72). The ‘ulama’ and the asqarri were given various incentives from the kings, the nobility and the local officials: “They were given land, horses and oxen” (Aman Seifedin 2006:33).

The Influence of Islam in Gomma

Gomma was the first Gibe state where the whole population embraced Islam. Regarding the influence of Islam among the ordinary people and the nobility, there are diverging attitudes among scholars. Mohammed Hassen (1993:153, 156) says that the kingdom of Gomma forbade various traditional un-Islamic practices like selling their own people into slavery or sending gifts to the Abba

Mudda during the Jilla ceremony. The Islamic practice of circumcision in infancy began to supplant the traditional practice of late circumcision. It is clear that the old traditional practices were either uprooted or Islamized. Concerning the implementation of the Sharia law, “in matters of marriage and inheritance, Islamic law slowly replaced traditional Oromo law” (Mohammed Hassen 1990: 157). Regarding the five basic religious duties of Islam (Shahada, Salat, Zakat, Sawm and Ḥāḡḡ pilgrimage), in Gomma or elsewhere in the Gibe kingdoms “it is not possible to say how much [they]... were rigorously upheld by the people at large” (ibid).

Islamic education flourished in Gomma owing to the establishment of Sufi orders. “These orders established themselves in the countryside, where they opened Quranic schools” (ibid, 156). Education “consisted of learning the Arabic alphabet and the memorization of the Quran” (ibid). Trimingham (1952:200), quoting Cecchi, adds that “both old and young always memorize the Qur’ān which is taught by migrant Muslims who put on the guise of learned men”. As Aman Seifedin (2006:26) describes, itinerant clerics used coffee ceremonies and mourning ceremonies as occasions for preaching Islam. They often narrated stories from the Qur’ān and Hadith, thereby informally reaching the community. Due to fear of alienation they often avoided criticizing the traditional religion directly; rather, they taught the children who would then transmit it to their parents. Moreover, the Islamic education was not confined to the study of Qur’ān but a rich local scholarship also flourished. In

pursuit of further Islamic knowledge many Muslims went to remote places like Daway in Wällo, studied there and returned home to teach their fellow Gommans. Two such prominent scholars were Shekota Adam Gomma and Ahmad Sayyo.

Islam in the kingdom of Limmu-Ennarea

Limmu-Ennarea was the continuation of the ancient petty kingdom of Ennarea which had existed for centuries. The name Limmu designates an Oromo clan which invaded the ancient kingdom of Ennarea “probably at the beginning of the eighteenth century” (Abir 1965:208). The Limmu Oromos were nomads; however, following their conquest of Ennarea they adopted a sedentary life there at the beginning of the 19th century. Their first king was Abba Gomol. He was the champion of unifying the land under one rule. He abdicated to his son Abba Bagibo who ruled from 1825-61. His reign was marked by prosperity of the kingdom. His successor was Abba Gomol II, who ruled from 1861-82 (Guluma Gemedda 1993: 72).

As with all the Gibe kingdoms, the Islamization of Limmu-Ennarea involved two phases: first the conversion of the nobility of the kingdom to Islam, then the conversion of the ordinary population. There are two popular oral traditions concerning how the king of Limmu-Ennarea, Abba Gomol, converted to Islam. Trimingham (1952:201) presents a tradition which states that the Oromo conqueror of Ennarea was Teso, “son of a Galla of Elikki, sister of a Muslim named Sa‘id. He was succeeded by Boko, who remained pagan, but his son

Bofūn [Bofo, also popularly known as Abba Gomol] was converted to Islam by his uncle Mukhtār, the nephew of Elikki”. Additionally, citing Cecchi, he narrates how Abba Gomol’s son, Abba Bagibo (1825-61), was converted to Islam by “Muslim merchants and adventurers who had been penetrating the country for some years previously” (ibid). (This is confusing: did Abba Gomol convert to Islam, and then his son *again* converted to Islam? Trimingham apparently says both things.) These traditions suggest that Islam had been active in the kingdom since before the beginning of the nineteenth century. According to Mohammed Hassen, the fact that Abba Gomol’s uncle Mukhtār had a Muslim name is significant: it shows that “the preparatory conditioning for the acceptance of the new religion [Islam] had already been passed” (Mohammed Hassen 1990:154). The second tradition claims that “Abba Gomol was converted by ‘the miracles of a famous Shaykh’ and his descendants. The name of this shaykh was Sayid Nassrullah” (Mohammed Hassen 1990:154).

As noted above, the rulers of the Gibe kingdoms were in need of a system to enable them to strengthen their monarchical rule over their subjects. In this respect Abba Gomol “accepted Islam for ideological and political purposes... Islam provided him with a focus of unity transcending tribal loyalty” (Mohammed Hassen 1990:105-6). This is proved by the fact that he converted a short while *after* he seized power. “Most of the ruling class and a large part of the population [then] followed his example” (Abir 1965:210).

The conversion of Abba Gomol created a condition in which hundreds of Muslim merchants and preachers could propagate Islam freely (Mohammed Hassen 1990:154). The strategic location of Limmu-Ennarea and its control over most of the trade routes across the Gibe region made Limmu-Ennarea the first of the Gibe kingdoms in which merchants and itinerant clerics permanently settled. This favorable ground fostered the proselytization of Islam among the masses. As the number of preachers and teachers increased, more people joined the new religion. “Large numbers of northern traders and their merchandise including religious texts entered the Gibe region [through Limmu-Ennarea]” (Aman Seifedin 2006:25). By the late nineteenth century, Limmu-Ennarea had become “a launching pad for the activities of clerics and Muslim merchants in the Gibe region” (Guluma Gameda 1993:72). According to Abir (1968: 81), there were at least a few hundred ‘Ulema’ [Muslim clerics] in Saqqa, the capital of Limmu-Ennarea, busy preaching the religion to the people.

Moreover, the Muslim clerics had the chance to cultivate the future leaders of the region; as Mohammed Hassen notes, Abba Bagibo probably was exposed to Islamic education when he was young (1990:151). Another circumstance which facilitated the Islamization of Limmu-Ennarea was the rulers’ willingness to have Muslim clerics in their courts. This enhanced their acceptance among the population and local chiefs. Traditional practices also survived alongside Islam in Limmu-Ennarea. A reflection of this survival was the near-absence of any

mosque in the kingdom; in the 1870s, when Cecchi visited Limmu-Ennarea, the only mosque that was to be found was at the king's Massera (palace). Rather, the Muslim converts stuck to their traditional assembly under trees, an example of syncretism in Gibe Islam (Mohammed Hassen 1990:155; Trimingham 1952:201).

Islam in the kingdom of Gumma

The kingdom of Gumma was located “lying to the west between Gēra, Gomma, Ilu Babor, Wallega, and Limmu” (Trimingham 1952: 201-202). According to Mohammed Hassen (1990:159), Gumma was the second kingdom to be formed and the fourth to embrace Islam. The first Muslim king was Jawe Oncho. He “was converted to Islam between 1854-60 through merchants who came from Shoa and Darīṭa Māryām (in Bēgamder) and he imposed its profession upon his subjects” (Trimingham 1952:202). The neighboring kingdom of Gomma contributed a lot for the proselytization of Islam in Gumma. According to Mohammed Hassen, Abba Manno, the king of Gomma ... “persuaded Jawe Oncho ... to abolish the festival of *butta*. It was also Abba Manno who seems to have encouraged the Qadiriya order to establish itself and spread Islam in Gumma” (Mohammed Hassen 1990:159). The most zealous king in spreading Islam was the son of Jawe Oncho, Abba Dula (1854-79). He exerted great effort to spread Islam among the masses of Gumma. Following in his footsteps, his heir Abba Jobir (1879-85) lived for the cause of Islam; he used Islam “as a pretext... in his war against the pagans of Kabba in 1882” (Trimingham

1952:202). Gumma became the most fanatical among the Gibe states during the 1880s. Mohammed Hassen (1990:160) lists three interrelated factors for the intense Islamic fervor in Gumma. First, there were other Sufi orders in Gumma besides the Qadiriyya. Second, the Muslim king of Ğimma, Abba Boqa (1859-61), sent Muslim teachers and preachers to Gumma. Thirdly, in late 1865 or early 1866 Abba Dula received a letter from the guardian of the holy mosque in Medina urging him to declare a Jihad. The end of the short-lived kingdom of Gumma was marked by Menilik's conquest of the Gumma kingdom in 1885. The heir, Gumma Firrisa, escaped to Hijaz "inspired by a Gomma Šayḥ of the Mirghaniyya called Šayḥ 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, returned in 1899, proclaimed a *jihād* against the Christian Amḥara, and maintained the war for two years. He was eventually caught and executed in Ğimma" (Trimingham 1952:202).

The Influence of Islam in Gumma

Though written sources concerning the influence of Islam in Gumma are scanty, the political stance and struggle of Gumma towards non-Muslims is a manifestation how deeply Islam had become rooted in the hearts of the Gummans. In 1878 Gumma succeeded in forming a Muslim League, which encompassed the other Gibe states except Gera (Mohammed Hassen 1990:160). The aim was to spread Islam to the non-Muslim Oromo lands and to resist the expanding Amhara forces from the north.

The dominant Sufi order in Gumma was Qadiriyya, but as a result of Šayḥ ‘Abd ar-Rahman’s preaching a group of Mirghaniyya also was formed (Trimingham 1952:202). Other orders also established themselves in Gumma in the 1860s (Mohammed Hassen 1990:160). The schools of these orders became centers of Islamic education and culture.

Islam in the kingdom of Ğimma

The kingdom Ğimma was the third to be formed and to accept Islam. In 1830 Abba Ğifar came to power in Hirmata as an Abba Dula (war leader). The Ğimma tribes, notably Digo of Manna and Badi of Saqqa, were in continuous conflict with each other. “He [Abba Jifar] embarked upon the forceful unification of the Ğimma tribes; and within a few years of his coming to power he succeeded in establishing the united kingdom of Ğimma, Ğimma-Kakka, or Ğimma Abba Jifar” (Abir 1968:89). Abba Ğifar “was converted to Islam by Shaykh Abdul Hakim, who is known to have been a trader and preacher who came from Gondar” (Mohammed Hassen 1990: 157). As the first Muslim ruler of Ğimma he made a preliminary effort to make Islam the sole religion of the people, “declaring it the religion of the court” (Lewis 2001:41). Abba Ğifar invited preachers and saints to Ğimma from other Islamic areas. However, his conversion seems to have been nominal, and motivated by politics rather than religious devotion; “when Abba Ğifar created the kingdom, he soon realized that it needed wealth and an ideology, which not only would nourish the unity of the people but also would consolidate the dynasty’s grip on the territory”

(Mohammed Hassen 1990:157). He was intelligent enough to manipulate Islam for his political goals. His reign prepared the ground for Muslim clerics, preachers and saints to spread Islam. Their aggregate efforts started to bear fruit in the 1860s when a fanatic and devout Muslim king named Abba Boqa (1859-61) came to power. He was the champion of Islam in Ğimma. Contrary to his predecessors, “[he] devoted his short reign to the cause of Islam” (ibid:158). “Abba Boqa established mosques at his court of Jiren [the capital of the Ğimma kingdom] and in the nearby merchant quarter of Mendera. He also ordered his officials to build mosques in their respective provinces [Qoro]” (Guluma Gameda 1993:72). “The mosque which was built at the court was named masjid[a] Afurtāmā (Mosque of the forty) ...[it] was named after the forty leading Muslim clerics who settled at Jiren and were given land by Ğimma kings” (Tadesse Semma 2007:36).

Abba Gomol (1861-78), who succeeded Abba Boqa, followed in his predecessor’s footsteps in many respects. During his reign Islamic fervor was high. However, it was in the long reign of Abba Ğifār II (1878-1932) that Islam reached its climax. “During the reign of Abba Ğifār II, Ğimma became the center of commerce, Islamic studies and Islamic culture in the [Gibe] region” (Endalew Djirata 2007:53). As Endalew notes, two events contributed to boosting the Muslim community in Ğimma during the reign of Abba Ğifār II. The first was the decline of Limmu-Ennarea as the leading center of commerce in the Gibe region, with the result that many traders and scholars came to

Ġimma instead. The second was the coming of Muslim scholars from Wällo who were escaping the persecution of the Ethiopian Christian King Yohannes IV.

The Influence of Islam in the kingdom of Ġimma

In the 1860s Ġimma saw substantial growth both economically and politically. In this advance Islam played the important role of constituting the ideology binding the different tribes of Ġimma under one rule. Islam brought about various changes in the society of Ġimma. As a result of itinerant Muslim clerics and saints, Sufi orders (*ṭarīqas*) flourished. “The orders were established in the countryside, where they were supported by land grants from the king and gifts from wealthy Muslims...they became centers of Islamic learning and culture” (Mohammed Hassen 1990:158). “Abba Ġifar II ... also remunerated these Muslim teachers with Waqf land to be used by them” (Endalew Djirata 2007:57). The dominant *ṭarīqa* was the Qadiriyya; however, in the 20th century the Tijaniyya order was introduced to Ġimma by Sudanese clerics, and the opening of the new trade route via Gambella paved the way for Tijani Šayḥs to come to Ġimma and spread their order (Endalew Djirata:64). Additionally, Minako Ishihara (2010: 506) notes that the coming to western Ethiopia of a Tijani saint, Al-Faqi Ahmad ‘Umar, in the 1920s was another factor which furthered the spread of the Tijaniyya order in the Gibe region and in Ġimma. Mohammed Hassen also notes that “the Ahmadiyya Order which had its

headquarters at the shrine of Shaykh Hussein in Bali ... [also] established itself in Ğimma” (1990:159; cf. also Endalew Djirata 2007:66).

Islamic education was another manifestation of the deep Islamic fervor in Ğimma. In addition to the itinerant clerics, local clerics played an important role for the development of Islamic education in Ğimma, and all the ṭarīqa centers had Islamic schools. It is evident that at the beginning of the twentieth century Ğimma had become the most famous center of Islamic learning for all Oromo in the Horn of Africa (Mohammed Hassen 1990:159).

With the influx of Muslim teachers and merchants to Ğimma kingdom, a large number of children (students) from Illu Abba Boranaa, Arsi, Bālē, Hārarghē, southwestern Shawā (Walisoo), and the southern peoples of Ethiopia, such as Kafā and the surrounding Gibe Oromo states came to Ğimma to learn Qur’an and Islamic law. (Endalew Djirata, 2007:57)

The most popular Madhab (school of Islamic jurisprudence) in Ğimma was the Šāfi‘ī school, which was introduced by clerics from Wällo. However, the “Hānāfi Madhab which is believed to have been introduced by Shaykh Abdul Hakim from the north had also a significant number of followers in the kingdom” (Endalew Djirata 2007:52).

Concerning the implementation of the Shari’a law, it was practiced in Qadi courts established by the order of the Ğimma kings. Since the rule of Abba

Boqa, Qadis were appointed to work in their respective areas [Qoro]. “[The Qadis were] chosen for their knowledge of the Koran and the Sharia. They settled disputes relating to divorce, marriage and inheritance” (Hailemariam Goshu 1970:28).

In fact Islam in Gibe changed, reshaped and incorporated a number of traditional values of the Ğimma society; despite the Islamic fervor in the kingdom it is not safe to conclude that Ğimmans were particularly orthodox Muslims. As Endalew (2007:63) notes, quoting from Abdo,

Islamic law and culture were simplified though the basic and fundamental rules were not abandoned. For instance, although private mosque (Ḥal wā) construction by private people and daily prayer, Salat and Ramadān were obligatory regulations in the kingdom, some food and drinking avoidance were overlooked.

In Ğimma the consumption of alcoholic drinks like t’äjǰ is common. Additionally, Trimingham reports that women in Ğimma often do not wear a veil on their head as Islamic law prescribes. Similarly, as Hailemariam Goshu (1970:43) notes, “His court was often the scene of many people including women with their hair dressed in the traditional fashion”.

Among the reshaped practices of Islam, pilgrimage stands out. Before the advent of Islam the Oromos of Ğimma used to go on pilgrimage to the site of the Abba Mudda ceremony. The Muslims of Ğimma changed their direction of

pilgrimage to the shrine of Sheikh Hussein in Bali near the river Wabi Shebele (Endalew 2007:54-55, Tadesse Semma 2007:35). And of course the most basic pilgrimage was the Ḥāġġ. Abba Ġifar II even erected a building in Mecca as a pilgrimage lodge for his subjects and for Ethiopian Muslims in general (Endalew Djirata) (Hailemariam Goshu).

Islam in the kingdom of Gera

According to Mohammed Hassen (1990:160-161), Gera was the last kingdom to be formed and to embrace Islam. At the end of the 1840s there was a power struggle between the children of the deceased king Abba Rago. Abba Magal, one of the contenders to the throne, made alliance with Abba Bagibo of Limmu-Ennarea. Abba Bagibo agreed to help Abba Magal if the latter promised to embrace Islam. When Abba Magal succeeded in securing the throne, he kept his promise and accepted Islam. Trimingham (1952:202) has a different story concerning the conversion of the king; according to him “[the] king joined Islam as a result of the visit of Abba Jūbir, the son of the King of Guma, to his court in 1866”. This tradition demonstrates the Islamization of the royal house. By 1870 Islam was vigorously spreading among the ordinary people. Mohammed Hassen, citing Cecchi, the Italian explorer who was in Gera in 1879, states that by then “the court was thoroughly Islamized and several *fuqahas* and shaykhs taught and prayed at the tomb of Abba Magal. The reigning queen was noted

for buying hundreds of copies of the Quran, which she distributed among the nobility” (1990:161).

Compared to the other Gibe kingdoms, the sources for the history of Gera are scanty. They are not enough to follow in detail the spread of Islam through the population of Gera.

Chapter Three

Biography of Šayḥ Seddeqiyū

Early Life and Education

My main source for the Šayḥ's biography was interviews with the Šayḥ's family members (especially his eldest son Abba Tamam Sadat), children of his students, academic researchers on the Rašādiyya order and followers of the Rašādiyya order. I also used written sources where appropriate, insofar as such sources were helpful. There are only four direct written sources for the Šayḥ's life that are known. The first is a full biography written by an anonymous student of the Šayḥ, which unfortunately was destroyed by fire in 2001. The second is a biographical poem written by another student, Šayḥ Jamal Muḥtār. The third is part of a (published) biographical encyclopedia of Ethiopian Muslim scholars by al-Ḥāḡ Muhammad Wale. The encyclopedia is arranged alphabetically, and only vol. 1 has appeared so far; it does not include an article about the Šayḥ, whose biography is supposed to appear under ص for Šiddiqiy (Abba Tamam Sadat, personal communication). The fourth written source (in manuscript only) is a compendium of prominent Rašādiyya personalities in Ethiopia. It was composed by Šayḥ Badr al-Dīn bin al-Ḥāḡ Muhammad Surūr. It has a brief statement of the Šayḥ's biography and casts

light on his virtues. A fifth, indirect written source is the Seddeqa library itself, notably the genealogical accounts of the Šayḥ's parents which were composed by himself, and letters between him and other people in Seddeqa.

Šayḥ ʿAli bin ʿAbd al-Fataḥ was born at Daro Labu, eastern Arsi⁶, in c. 1887 [1304 A.H.]. His father, Šayḥ ʿAbd al-Fataḥ bin Kabīr Muḥammad, was descended from Somalis who came to Arsi in the 16th century. In his genealogy there is a name Liban⁷ which is a common Somali name, a clear indication of his Somali origin. His mother, ʿĀʾiṣa bint ʿAbd al-Raḥim bint Jil bint Alot⁸, belonged to the Sabiro sub-clan of the Hawiya Dande⁹ clan in Arsi, one of the five Awwa clans of Arsi. Shortly after his birth the family moved to Belto Kurkuru, an area in Bale, where he was raised. His father was a scholar of Qurʾan and fiqh, and the young ʿAli learned Qurʾan and introductory fiqh (of the Šāfiʿī school) from his father. After he completed these subjects in his father's *madrassa*, he asked his father to let him go to other prominent Islamic centers in pursuit of further education. His father advised him to go to Hārār where several scholars were teaching. He joined the school of Šayḥ Muḥammad Hārāri, a well-known scholar in the city of Hārār. Despite his brief time in this

⁶ Abba Tamam Sadat.

⁷ Sed unbound book No. 3 pp 88-90.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Abba Tamam Sadat.

school he managed to learn many subjects like Ḥifẓ (Qur’anic memorization), Tajwīd and Hadith¹⁰.

In Arsi Islamic education was weakened at the time of the great famine, in which many scholars died. Hassan Muhammad (2008:52) notes that Islamic education in Arsi was revived by the efforts of the respected scholar Šayḥ °Alī Sammare (d. ca. 1916). Students from all over Arsi flocked to his well-known school. At this time young °Alī was in Hārār, and hearing the news about the new school in his homeland he returned to Arsi.

It was a very important opportunity for him for two reasons. First, he excelled there in fiqh which he had started with his father when he was in Bale. Second, it was there that he met his lifelong friends, Šayḥ Muhammad Jaju, Šayḥ Ahmad Manqul Daro, Šayḥ °Abd al-Raḥmān Lugi, Šayḥ Husain Dange and Šayḥ °Ibrahim Bale. Their master Šayḥ Alī Sammare made the Haj pilgrimage in c. 1906, and in his absence he instructed his students to enroll at different schools in the country. Though some of the students stayed in Arsi many of them went to Hārār, Ğimma and Wällo¹¹. Šayḥ °Alī preferred the latter and traveled to Shonke in Wällo, where he studied Naḥw and Tafsir from different scholars. It was here that he was initiated into the Qadiriyya order by the

¹⁰ Abba Tamam Sadat.

¹¹ Ibid.

famous Sufi mystic Šayḥ Daniyy al-ʿAwwal. He stayed in Šonke for 3 years (c. 1907-10) and returned to Arsi.

Since Arsi at the time was under the hostile control of Minilik’s forces, it was difficult to pursue Islamic education freely. The situation in Ğimma was very different. The Ğimma kingdom was free from direct control of the Ethiopian empire; King Abba Ğifar II supported the Muslim community through different incentives, and the increasing Islamic fervor in the 1880s made Ğimma a receptive place for Ethiopian Muslims, especially students and scholars.

Shortly after his return to Arsi, Šayḥ ʿAlī heard that his Sammare school friends were about to leave for Ğimma to study there. He joined them and together they traveled more than 400 km on foot. On the way to Ğimma they visited the famous Sufi sanctuary of Zabbimolla in Gurageland. It had been founded by Šayḥ Muhammad Rašād Qaqi and Šayḥ Kamal al-Dīn al-Obbi. Most importantly it was the place where the Rašādiyya order was established and made popular¹².

Eventually they reach Shiro, the predominant Islamic center in eastern Ğimma. The master of this center was Šayḥ Šarīf Šayḥ Muḥtār (d. 1939), a celebrated scholar from Qabēna. “He was better known by Shekota Shiro (Shaykh of Shiro)... Shaykh Šarīf [was a] celebrated personality in Ğimma. He had a great [sic] knowledge, especially in the Arabic language. That is why one scholar,

¹² Ibid.

namely Ḥāj Badr ad-Dīn in his poems makes him similar to the well-known Arabic grammarian Sībawayh (d. 177 A.H./793/4 A.D.” (Hassan Mohammed 2008:54). Šayḥ Šarīf came to Ğimma at the invitation of Abba Ğifar II. In addition to his fluency in classical Arabic, he also spoke 6 local languages namely Qabēna, Oromo, Amharic, Tigrigna, Silte, and Argobba. This multilingual situation facilitated the presence in the school of students of many different origins¹³.

When Šayḥ °Alī and his friends arrived at Shiro the master received them warmly. They were assigned as Qur’an teachers to homes of farmers, from whom they were in turn provided with food and shelter. The family which Šayḥ °Alī joined was in Seddeqa, an hour’s walk east of Shiro. The Šayḥ stayed for almost 12 years at the school in Shiro (c. 1910-22). He studied fiqh of all four *madāhib* (schools of jurisprudence), Arabic language, Tafsīr, Hadīth, rhetoric, theology and logic. After completing his studies he received the official certificate (°Ijāza) to teach all of these subjects. The master Šayḥ Šarīf advised all the graduates to take Sufi orders. Šayḥ °Alī and two of his friends from Arsi, namely Šayḥ Muhammad Jaju and Šayḥ Ahmad Manqul Daro, chose to go to Zabbimolla, where they had visited before, to take the Rašādiyya order from the

¹³ Ibid.

founder, Šayḥ Muhammad Rashād al-Qaqī¹⁴. This order is a kind of sub-order within the Qadiriyya. His two friends soon went back to their home in Arsi, while ʿAlī stayed on in Zabbimolla for three years (c. 1922-25). During his stay there he taught fiqh and Hadith to local students of Zabbimolla. He developed a strong attachment to Sufism at this time. He devoted much of his time to performing worship according to the order’s rules. Šayḥ Muhammad Rashād al-Qaqī gave Šayḥ ʿAlī the Sufi name of Musʿid al-Dīn owing to his excellence in Islamic knowledge, asceticism and bravery¹⁵.

The Seddeqa Era

In the year 1925 Šayḥ ʿAlī (now called Musʿid al-Dīn) returned to Seddeqa, where he remained for 10 years until 1935 when the Italian occupation began. His move to Seddeqa was motivated in part by his desire to spread the Rašādiyya order to a place where Islam was lax, i.e. Seddeqa. Before settling permanently in Seddeqa he stayed for several months in the nearby areas of Dobi and Qaqe. When he arrived at Seddeqa he lived with a farmer named Abba Qallo. He began teaching Qur’an and fiqh to the children of this farmer and others. The Qoro of Seddeqa, Abba Bushan, gave land (*waqf*) to the Šayḥ to construct the first school in Seddeqa. When the number of students increased dramatically, they constructed little *halwas* (huts) on the donated land. As

¹⁴ Abba Takka.

¹⁵Abba Tamam Sadat.

more and more people sent their children to the school, it became seriously overcrowded; as a result local chiefs and merchants donated more land and money for the construction of the great mosque and Ḥadra of Seddeqa¹⁶, which served for both worship and teaching. Though Seddeqa was only a small village located near the major center of Shiro, it soon became the predominant school in eastern Ğimma. The influx of students from many parts of Ethiopia— from Ğimma, Illubabor, Wällaga, Gurageland, Shäwa, Arsi and Bale— boosted the school's fame¹⁷. A number of graduates of this school became famous scholars in their own right, among them Šayḥ Diya' al-Dīn Ayno from Arsi, Šayḥ °Umar Gamba from Waliso, Šayḥ Zayn al-Dīn Abada from Omo Nada (Ğimma), Šayḥ Manqul Walqīṭiy from Qabēna, Šayḥ Jamāl Abba Siyyu and Ṭayyib Abba Ruksi from Seddeqa.¹⁸

The subjects he taught were diverse: Fiqh (Šāfi'ī school), Hadīth, Tafsīr, Arabic grammar and morphology, Logic. The diversity of manuscripts found in his library testifies to this fact. He was also one of the most celebrated poets in the Rašādiyya circle; his masterpieces are well known in Ğimma, Gurageland, Illubabor and Arsi.

¹⁶ Abba Takka and Šayḥ Kamāl Šayḥ Muṣṭafā.

¹⁷ Abba Hikam Abba Digga.

¹⁸ Abba Takka.

During his ten years' stay in Seddeqa, he immersed himself in *Fanā*¹⁹. As a result he created many mysterious texts and pictures. A large portion of these mysterious inventions survive in the two Seddeqa mosques today, and are treated in this thesis²⁰.

This particular time can justly be considered as the most productive period in his life. He taught many students every day; he wrote poems and mysterious texts; as a Sufi master he spent much time praying; moreover, he married four of his wives during this period and thus had family responsibilities. Another important achievement of this era is his proselytization of the Rašādiyya order in the Ġimma area, especially in Seddeqa. A large number of people received the order from him including his students, friends and prominent local personalities. Furthermore, he was engaged in missionary activities with the nearby Yem community. He preached Islam to them and many of them converted. Sometimes he traveled out of Seddeqa, either to Shiro to visit his master Šayḥ Šarīf, or when he was summoned to Jiren by Abba Ġifar II. Once

¹⁹ “*Fanā*’ is in the first place an experience which a Sufi is able to obtain at the highest stage of the spiritual life; it is also a philosophical concept which reflects the relationship between the soul and the body and between the soul and the divine world (Maha El-kaysi 2006:119).

John Renard (2005:264) defines *fanā*’ as “annihilation, loss of self, passing away (in God, shaykh, Prophet)”. Renard continues, “Sufis have interpreted the experience in various ways. At one end of the spectrum, the individual is said to lose all traces of individual personality. If God is the only reality, and nothing else possesses authentic existence. The full realization of this ultimate truth constitutes ‘loss’ of self in the One” (ibid:33).

²⁰ See chapter 4.

he went to Addis Ababa to purchase printed books. He even went on Ḥāj pilgrimage with his Seddeqa students and friends²¹. His career in Seddeqa came to an end in 1935 when the fascist Italian army occupied Ethiopia.

Different scholars like Sbacchi (1997) have noted that the Italian occupation gave relative relief to Ethiopian Muslims. This was especially true in Ğimma, where the autonomy of the Ğimma Kingdom (granted by Menilik) was later denied by Haile Sellasie. In order to win easy support from victims of Ethiopian rule, the Italians supported the Ğimma Muslims and the Ğimma royal family.

Sheikh Mus'id actively opposed the occupation of his country by foreign forces.

He gave up teaching in order to oppose the Italians and moved to Abelti, a little village at the mouth of the Gibe River valley, where the Italians had built a prison. It was a very strategic location since it was on the main road to Addis Ababa. He established a mosque in the village. He openly preached against the Italians and even encouraged his fellow people to fight them. Most importantly, he freed the inmates of the prison; when he and his students secretly arrived at the prison in the middle of the night, the guards miraculously were all asleep. His fame reached the Ethiopian patriots who were engaged in guerrilla warfare in southwestern Shāwa and Gurageland. Once he was visited by Qāñ Azmach Geresu Duki, the leader of resistance groups in southwestern Shāwa. The country regained its independence in 1941. After the independence he stayed in Abelti for another year.

²¹ Abba Tamam Sadat.

The Bure Era

In c. 1942 he moved from Abelti to Bure in Illubabor. There are two reasons for this move that were suggested by my informants. Some of them said he moved west because he wanted to perform Haj via Port Sudan. On the other hand, others believe that he went west because he was instructed by Allah to proselytize Islam in Illubabor where the number of Muslims was smaller. The second reason seems more reasonable in two ways. First, since the common route for Hāj was via Massawa or other Ethiopian ports, it was not necessary to make the long detour to Port Sudan. The other reason is that he clearly did in fact proselytize in Bure; a number of people accepted Islam by his calls and perhaps miracles.

At Bure, the nearby village he settled in was Laqi. He established a famous mosque in Bure. He resumed teaching, which he had abandoned for years; however, he himself only taught for one year, thereafter leaving all the teaching (except of his own children) to his senior students, and immersed himself in worship. He was the Wali of the area. Many people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, came to visit him, even local governors.²²

After his arrival a number of people embraced Islam, impressed by his virtues and miracles. He also sometimes preached for non-Muslims who came to visit him. He remained in Bure until his death in 1979 at the age of 92.

²² Ibid.

His Marital Life

He was married to five different wives, some of whom he divorced. Most of them were from Diggo, the royal clan of Ğimma. The first was Ummu Mūsa, who gave birth to his first daughter Hawwa²³. The second one was Diggiti, from whom he had no children; the third, also named Diggiti²⁴, likewise bore him no children. The fourth wife was Ummu Natija; she was from the Argobba community who were living near Seddeqa. She gave birth to a daughter, Barqiyya. His last wife was Ummu Sharafa, the daughter of Abba Waji Abba Dula, an official from the Omo Nadda²⁵ area of Ğimma. She was a famous panegyrist in Ğimma. She had three children namely, Abba Tamam, Muhammad Asrar and Zain al-Abidin²⁶.

His Virtues

As a scholar and a Sufi saint Šayḥ Seddeqiyju was man of multiple virtues. All the sources I have testify to this fact. He was constantly devoted to prayer and teaching. He only slept for two or three hours a day. He performed the Order's prayers every night and day, motivated his students and friends to be steadfast in worship and good deeds. He praised Allah and the messenger very greatly. In his panegyric poem to Šayḥ Seddeqiyju, Šayḥ Jamal Muḥtār²⁷ said:

²³ She was the owner of a famous manzuma manuscript; her name is mentioned in its ownership statement.

²⁴ Diggiti designates a lady who belongs to the Diggo clan.

²⁵ The area between Jiren and Seddeqa.

²⁶ Abba Tamam.

²⁷ Untitled manzuma composed by Šayḥ Jamal Muḥtār about the life and times of Šayḥ Muṣ'īd.

ولا اختيار له مع الله
وتارك لكل ما سوى الله

wa-lā iḥtiyār lahu ma'ā Allāh

wa-tārikun (wa-tāraka?) li-kulli mā siwā Allāh

'He had no choice except Allah,

He abandoned everything except Allah'

دأبه أكثر الصلاة والسلام
على حبيب الله محبوب العالم
عليه أفضل الصلاة والسلام

da°buhu °iktār al-ṣalāti wa-l-salām

°alā ḥabīb Allāh maḥbūb al-°allām

°alayhi °afḍalu al-ṣalāt wa-l-salām

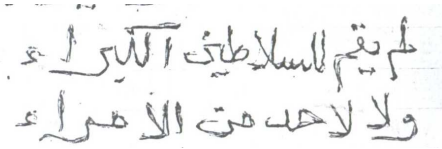
'His habit was abundance of prayer and salutation

On the loved one of Allah, the beloved of the Knower,

May the best prayer and salutation be upon him'.

He was a brave man who was never servile to those in power, although he cultivated a very good relationship with most of the government officials in

Ġimma and Illubabor. On one occasion he even quarreled with King Abba Ġifar II: he opposed the slave trade which was the chief source of income for the kingdom. On another occasion when Emperor Haile Sellasie visited Illubabor, he was told about a famous Sufi mystic and patriot, i.e. the Šayḥ. So he sent messengers to summon him to his temporary court in Bure, but the Šayḥ refused to visit the Emperor. Šayḥ Jamal Muḥtār’s poem describes the Šayḥ’s attitude towards leaders as follows.



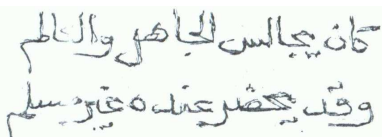
lam yaqum li-l-salāṭin al-kubarā^o

wa lā li-^oaḥadin min al-^oumarā^o

‘He never stand up [even] for the
greatest rulers,

Nor for any of the emirs’

Another virtue of the Šayḥ was his friendliness and openness to everyone, regardless of age, status and religion. In the poem of Šayḥ Jamal Muḥtār it says:



kāna yujālisu al-jāhil wa-l-^oālim

wa-qad yaḥḍuru ʿindahū ġayru muslimin

‘He used to sit with (both) laymen and scholars,
(Even) non-Muslims would attend his gatherings’

Reform Activities

His first reform activities focused on the full Islamization of the nominally Muslim community of Seddeqa. He succeeded in eliminating remnants of the Qallu traditional Oromo religion. Moreover, he was a staunch enemy of the use of magic and magic literature. He used to burn amulets and magic books, as all the informants agree.

It is noteworthy that Šayḥ Seddeqa was actively against slavery. His opposition took many forms. Once he was given 15 slaves by Abba Ğifar II as a gift; but he set all of them free and admitted them as students and disciples in his circle. Though it was not confirmed by any other source, there are informants who claim that the Šayḥ openly asked Abba Ğifar II to stop slavery. Another example of his open criticism of the system was his condemnation of using the term ‘garbū’, which in Oromo means both barley and slave; calling barley by the word ‘garbū’ was thus an evil connotation given to an important grain. He used to say there is no slavery except to Allah²⁸.

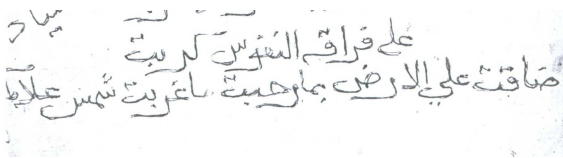
Šayḥ Musʿid is also considered by the people in Bure as the Salafi forerunner of the area. At the end of his life he forbade the chewing of chat, main Sufi

²⁸Abba Tamam Sadat.

activities like asking intercession by prophets and saints, and the recitation of Awrad in his circle. He even gave up initiating people to the Rašādiyya ṭarīqa, telling those who came to take the order from him that ‘ṭarīqa’ is what Allah and the Prophet taught us to perform. It is not permissible to innovate (*bidʿa*)²⁹; you should faithfully perform the prayers and religious duties prescribed in the Qur’an and the Hadīth³⁰.

His Death

As an elderly man, Šayḥ Musʿid suffered from diabetes. He fell ill at the age of 92, and died on Safar 25, Tuesday, in the year 1399 (Jan. 24, 1979 A.D.). A vast number of students, followers of the ṭarīqa, people from Illubabor and Ğimma, and government officials attended his funeral. Šayḥ Jamal Muḥtār expressed the sadness of his death in the following words:



ʿalā firāqihī al-nufūsu kuribat

ḍāqat ʿalayya al-arḍu bi-mā raḥubat

‘At his departure souls anguished,

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Šayḥ Kamal Šayḥ Mustafa.

The earth became narrowed [upon me]
even in her vastness'

He is buried in his village of Laqi near Bure. His famous mosque of Bure and the Muslim community he created there are a luster to the area till today.

Chapter Four

Introduction to the Manuscripts of Seddeqa

In many parts of Ethiopia Islamic manuscripts are kept in very unsafe conditions. This situation is revealed in Seddeqa where all of the manuscripts catalogued in this thesis are found. Before 2001 AD they were kept in the main mosque inside a box. According to informants the box was crowded with a large volume of manuscripts. In 2001 a fire broke out and destroyed the main mosque and over 60 % of the manuscripts. A few years before the fire one of Šayḥ Mus^cid's pupils, Šayḥ Muhammad Šāfi, took most of the fiqh, tafsir and hadīth manuscripts to his homeland Arsi. The remaining manuscripts surviving from the massive fire take the following shapes. About ten manuscripts are intact (bound) books; with one exception these are formatted as normal books, with chapters etc. Neither their binding nor their folios are damaged. A second group of manuscripts which is similar to the bound books is the unbound books, which differ from the first group only because they have lost their bindings. The third kind of manuscripts involves the largest portion of the collection. I call these the "compilations". They are assemblages of folios which I myself put together from separate sheets; they range in size from bifolium to 120 folios. The criteria for assembly were resemblance in their physical appearance, textual content, the type of paper the texts were written on, and occasionally catchwords. Finally, we have a small collection of

miscellanea consisting of letters and legal documents, which are usually single folios.

When I discovered these documents recently they were kept in the residence of the guardian of the mosque (actually two mosques), Abba Hikam Abba Digga, who is the grandson of the Šayḥ. He keeps them in a big box with various recently printed books and other things. The manuscripts were in a single strong plastic bag. Different kinds of manuscripts were tied up in bundles regardless of their content and order. As a result the process of cataloging had to involve an attempt to reassemble many of them in their presumed order based on their contents and type of paper, the size of the paper and condition the paper was in. But this was difficult and necessarily tentative because the guardian did not allow me to examine all the manuscripts at once; rather, he preferred to let me look at just one bundle at a time. The problem is that folios which actually belong together could easily have ended up in different bundles. Since I was not allowed to compare bundles, I was unable to carefully control this. As a result folios which should be in one compilation may actually appear in my catalogue scattered across two or three compilations. The guardian was very suspicious that pages might be stolen. As he told me, he does not allow anyone to study or even to see them except a few trusted people. The reason he allowed me to do the research was because I came to him through his uncle Ḥāḡḡ Abba Tamam Sadat who is the son of Šayḥ Mus^cid al-Din Seddeqiyu. He

also said that despite his fear of losing the manuscripts he wants them to be studied and made known.

During the great fire people managed to save many manuscripts. However, due to lack of expertise and negligence they gathered and tied together unrelated manuscripts. For example, they put grammar and logic manuscripts together as though they were one, simply due to the size and the color of the papers.

There are a number of possibilities to classify these manuscripts. In the case of authorship, we can find copies of many internationally famous works by well-known Muslim scholars on different subjects. Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh), Arabic grammar (Naḥw), logic (Maṅṭiq), Exegesis of the Qur'an (Tafsīr) and prayer books are among them. Books by famous scholars as Mas'ud al-Taftānzānī, Ibn al-'Ajurrum and 'Abd al-Jalīl Al-'Azzum al-Qayrawānī were used in Seddeqa for various purposes. In the field of poetry the well-known long poem by al-Būṣṭī called the *Burdah* is found. On the other hand, locally produced but popular genres of poems are also represented in this collection, for example the famous Salawat composition by Jamal al-Dīn al-'Anni, namely *Rawḍat al-'asrār*. The Šayḥ himself produced a number of works involving different subjects and forms (prose and poetry). His works in poetry are popular among the Sufīs of Ğimma and Arsi. Surely the most interesting works

are his “fantastical” invented texts and pictures, which are very common among the unbound and compiled texts. They are extremely strange in most of their features. I have classified these texts into six types and the pictures into sixteen types, as will be seen below. Finally, there are also manuscripts written by various people in his circle like his pupils, friends, family members and government officials.

Handwriting can often help us to identify which manuscripts are the Šayḥ’s original works and which are not. In many instances it was easy to identify his handwriting. However, in some cases I faced difficulties in determining whether a particular item was written by the Šayḥ himself or not. Among the handwritings there is one (by an anonymous student) that occurs repeatedly; it is crude and hard to read.

Another possibility for classifying this collection is based on a division into religious and secular documents. By religious I mean prayer books, panegyrics, Islamic educational and magical-medical texts. Secular manuscripts include documents such as personal letters, wills and one power of attorney. However, any such attempt to classify the manuscripts based on their contents is necessarily difficult, because most of the manuscripts contain multiple texts and text types and thus show inconsistency in their nature. A manzuma manuscript may have magic or another kind of text, such as his inventions,

appended at the end of the manuscript or in the middle. Conversely, the invented texts and pictures often appear interspersed with normal texts. Mixed manuscripts of this sort are very numerous and thus defy unambiguous classification. Indeed, it is difficult to find even a single manuscript with just one text.

Looking now not at the manuscripts as a whole, but at the individual texts comprising the manuscripts, they can be divided into two groups. The first group is normal Arabic texts which include the manuscripts of Qur'an, grammar, logic and poetry. On the other hand there are the "strange" texts. They include all kinds of pictures and texts the Šayḥ invented, with semi-nonsense words and mysterious writing. However, it is not possible to use this as a basis for cataloguing the manuscripts because so many manuscripts contain texts of multiple genres.

In light of the above considerations, and as a practical procedure, it was easiest for me to classify the manuscripts by their actual physical condition. As a result four groups emerged:

1. bound books
2. unbound books
3. compilations (assembled folios)
4. miscellanea (independent leaflets)

The details of this classification are given in the next chapter.

The time when the manuscripts were composed also must be dealt with. Based on information I got from informants and other sources like colophons and paper-related information, the period is estimated at around 1909-1941. I have referred to this as the Seddeqa era, the time in which he settled in Seddeqa as a scholar preaching and teaching. Based on the general consensus among the informants, the evidence indicates that most of his panegyric works came into existence in the Seddeqa era. This does not mean that there are no manuscripts composed before or after this period. Prior to coming to Seddeqa, when he was studying in Arsi, Härär, Wällo and Ğimma, he is supposed to have copied different manuscripts for his personal study. As a result many textbooks could have been acquired by him before his settlement in Seddeqa. As for the latest manuscripts in Seddeqa, they were written by certain associates of the Šayḥ who stayed there after his departure to Illubabor.

The Šayḥ's invention of new texts and strange pictures made the collection especially fascinating to study. Questions should be asked as to why they were invented, for what purpose and intention. In light of my study's limitations I will not (in fact, cannot) discuss these issues except superficially in passing. They can be perhaps answered by other researchers in the future. However, according to the information I gathered from the informants, he started

inventing such things after he settled in Seddeqa. They even claim that it is an indication of his excellence in scholarship and religious activities. They said there is an elevated spiritual stage called *fanā'* (divine inspiration) involving individual experiences of obliteration or annihilation (*fanā'*) of the self. According to Wehr's Arabic-English dictionary, *fanā'* means, among other meanings, "nonentity; extinction of individual consciousness". The informants relate all the difficulties concerning the meaning of the Šayḥ's inventions to *fanā'*. Therefore, they say, no ordinary man can understand them unless he has reached a certain level of spirituality.

For the sake of cataloging the "strange texts" I have classified them into six types (numbered I-VI). The details are given in the next section for each type. As for the pictures, they are also believed by the informants to be products of *fanā'*. They occur inconsistently and randomly. The purpose of drawing such pictures is not clear. They are even mixed in with real texts in many places. Even if someone might think them to be decorations, they look totally unlike the kind of pictures normally used as decoration in the common Arabic manuscript tradition. For the time being I will simply consider them as pictures with an unknown purpose. In my observation I identified sixteen kinds of pictures. They are: Orbits; Spider Webs; Sun; Flowers; Quasi-magic squares; Buildings; Human- and Animal-like pictures; Incense Burners; Plants; Round

objects; Compass and cross; Eye; Ka^cbā; Spirals; Wheels; and Turbines. Their detailed physical description is given in the next section.

The “strange” Invented Texts

Type I text and its features: These texts consists of semi-nonsense words and phrases with endings like /-ūt/, /-āt/, /-ūn/ and /-tiyyat/. /-āt/ is a known morpheme in Arabic, marking feminine sound plural; /-ūn/ is the marker for masculine sound plural. /-ūt/ is an abstract formative (e.g *malakūt*).³¹ In the manuscripts the base words that have such morphemes attached to them are often real Arabic words, but with the endings they become “strange”. Such words are sometimes written horizontally and sometimes vertically, but usually not diagonally.

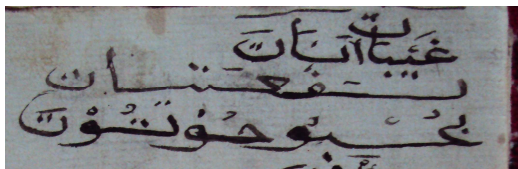


Figure 1: Type I; words with /-ūt/ and /-āt/ endings

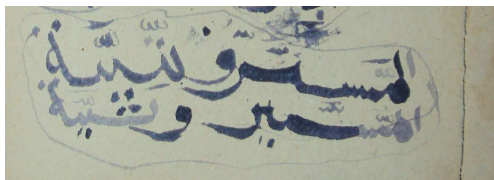


Figure 2: Type I; words with /-tiyyat/ ending

³¹ The ending *-ūt* is already found in the Qur'an; it is an abstract ending of Aramaic and Hebrew origin, appearing in borrowed words (culture words) such as *malakūt*.

In these texts there are also a number of strange words such as *tarqub*, *dibdib*, *tir*, *sant*, *barbar* and many others. Their origin is not clear; they can take any of the suffixes.

Texts of this type have a number of peculiar features which distinguish them from other inventions. Almost all of the text is fully vocalized, including the *šadda* (gemination marker). Often it is written with thick pen and the words are bold (although normal thin letters also appear). Such boldface has higher calligraphical quality in its beauty and legibility. In many pages we can find single such words put in a cartouche; a page may be full of such words, each in its own cartouche. Sometimes the cartouches jointly create a shape like a wall made of bricks.



Figure 6: Type I; words inside cartouches (looking like “a wall of bricks”)

We can find such words not only inside cartouches but also inside triangles, incense burner and orbits. Those which are in triangles are put between parallel ruled lines which are drawn inside the triangle. Those in the orbits have two forms. The first form is like the solar system: each orbit contains one word, put as a “planet”, with each planet having a different radial angle from the center. In the second form, occurring in one example, the planets appear aligned in a straight line. The texts may also appear inside incense burners and quasi-magic squares (this is also true of type II texts).

The variable size of letters is another peculiar feature of this kind of text. They can be divided into small, medium, large and extra-large. Small-sized letters are of the same normal size used to write regular Arabic. The medium and large-size letters are bold and very clear. The extra-large letters can occupy as much as a quarter of a page.

Sometimes there are also single words appearing in these texts that have none of the suffixes. These words are proper names such as Muḥammad, Aḥmad, °Alī, Makkah and others.

Most of the type I texts have no page frame. In a few examples a frame does appear, drawn either with a single or a double line, and the text is aligned within this frame like any normal text.

Finally, often a single word can appear multiple times with different affixes and/or internal changes. For example /ṭayṭūt/ → /maṭṭiyṭūt/ → /ṭayṭiyyūt/ all appear, although the meaning and the morphology are not clear.

Type I texts can incorporate features of other text types. A notable and very common case is the repetition of syllables in word-medial position, which is the defining feature of type II. As a result the word can become much longer than the original word; for example

/dajjāja/ → /dajjājūt/ → /dajjājājājūt/ دجا جا جوت

Such words are thus a combination of type I and type II texts.

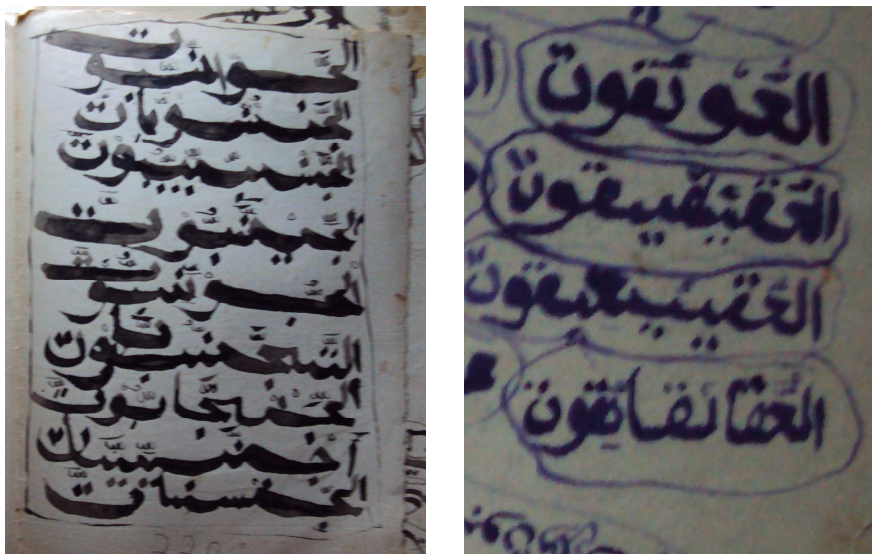


Figure 7: Type I texts with internal repetition

Type II: The long-cursive text

This is a strange and fascinating kind of text. In a few cases, contrary to the conventions of normal Arabic text, this text fails to observe the standard rules of connection between letters. Often but not always these texts have a “messy” appearance on the page. Some but not all of the letters are easy to identify; very commonly we see (clearly) /ب/ bāʾ, /ت/ tāʾ, /ي/ yāʾ, /ن/ nūn, /ج/ jīm, /ع/ ʿayn, /ح/ ḥāʾ and /م/ mīm. Because these letters can be attached to each other from both directions, they can and do chain together to create enormous pseudo-words; often one such “word” fills an entire line.

In addition to the standard Arabic diacritics, there are unknown diacritics like /∨/ which may be simply decoration. The ʾalif (indicating long vowel /ā/) is very common in such texts.

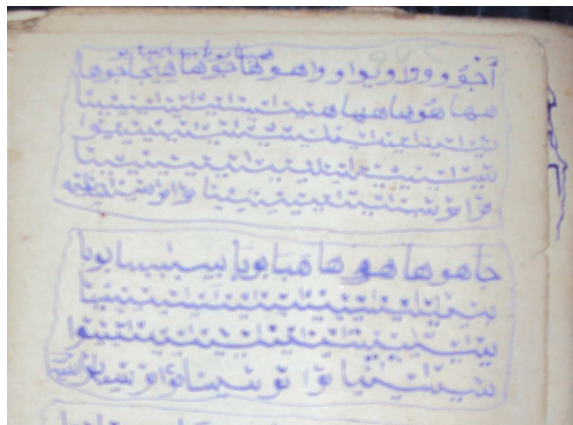


Figure 8: A long-cursive text (Type II)

Another frequent feature identified in such texts is the multiple repetitions of syllables in word-medial position. As a result the presumed words become impossibly long. The exact boundary between such “words” is difficult to determine.



Figure 9: Repeated syllables

A noticeable feature is similarity in line-final position. All the lines will typically end with a repeating syllable or grapheme(s), always with a final alif at the very end.

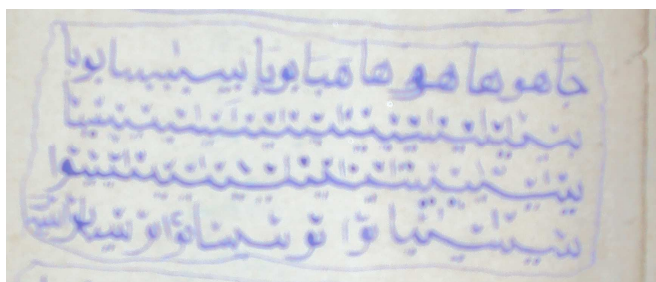




Figure 10: Type II with characteristic line-endings

Type II texts can occasionally take on a somewhat different form in some manuscripts. In such cases the repeating unit is not a giant maxi-word that fills up a whole line, but a smaller unit that looks more like a normal “word”. However, its cursive and repetitive nature is the same as with its long counterpart. Most such examples are very neatly written, and the page layout is observed well. The line frequently ends with *lām ʿalif* /لا/.

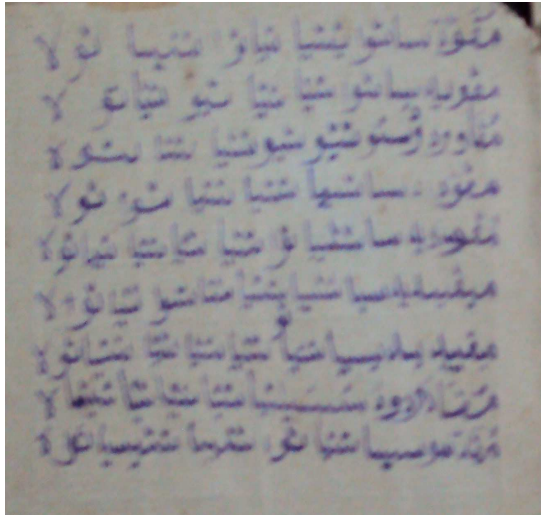


Figure 11: Short-form Type II, with characteristic line-ending /lām ʿalif/

In contrast with type I texts, all type II texts are written with normal thickness of lines and with normal letter-size. Also, when the text appears within a picture, that picture is always the incense burner. In most cases this text appears alone, taking up the whole page. Very often the text is surrounded by a frame, especially if it appears in a page that has other contents. The frame is typically drawn free-hand as a single line, often irregular or wavy. It also happens (frequently) that each paragraph (presumed) is framed with its own single line. This can produce the appearance of a poem because it looks like it is written in stanzas rather than in paragraphs (see e.g. fig. 8 above).

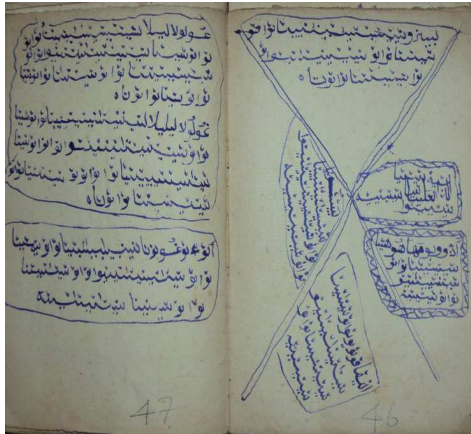


Figure 12: Type II text within incense burner and in frames

Almost all of the manuscripts which contain this type of text are written in purple ink. Red is used less often, and blue only sparingly. Also the short version is written entirely in purple ink.

It is difficult to understand the meaning (if any) that these texts are meant to communicate. One commonly observed pattern that might be related to “meaning” is that the text often has some sort of Arabic content at the beginning, which after a few syllables turns into repeated nonsense syllables.

For example:

‘ilaynyyā....

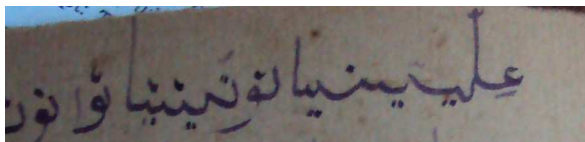


Figure 13: Type II “word” beginning with normal Arabic word / ‘ilay...../

A salient characteristic of Type I and Type II invented texts is the strong overall impression of randomness which they convey.

Type III: The quasi-Chinese texts

This is the most extraordinary kind of text among the Šayḥ's inventions. Anyone who has the chance of observing these texts will be struck by their fascinating similarity to the Chinese, Japanese or Korean writing systems. Mostly they are mixed in with other texts randomly. However, there is a complete bound book consisting entirely of this text type. Owing to superficial similarities, one might think of comparing it with the Oromo orthography invented by Šayḥ Bakri Saḫalō of Hārār (Hayward & Mohammed Hassan 1981). But I failed to make any sense of the texts in this way. Since the Šayḥ was in Hārār for some years to complete his studies, one might guess that he was exposed to Saḫalō's orthography. In these texts each symbol appears separately. Thus it is the only non-cursive invented text type in the entire collection.

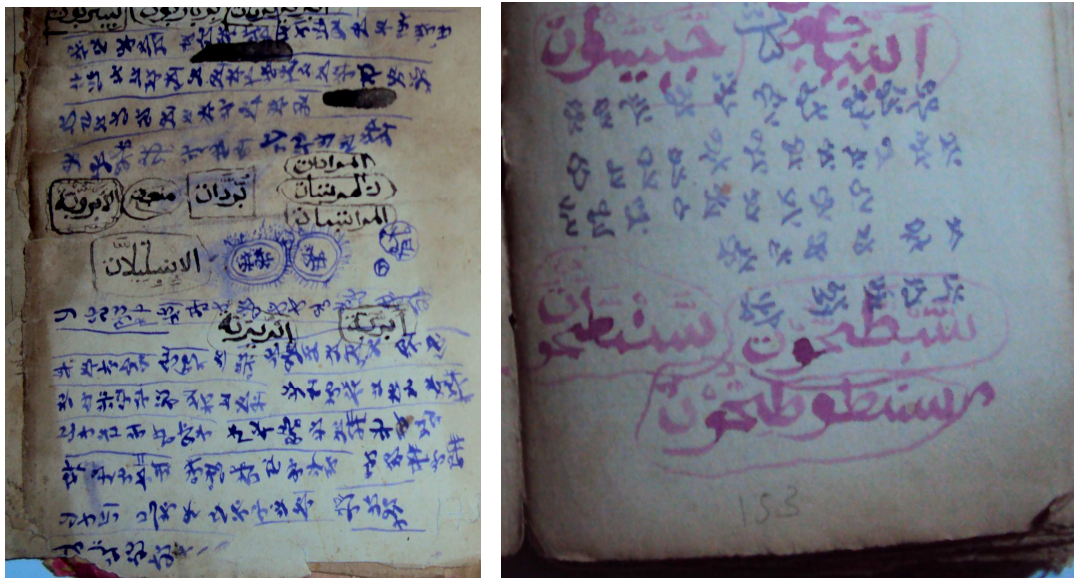


Figure 14: Two examples of quasi-Chinese texts

Progressing through the Chinese book from beginning to end, it can be seen how the writing changes by stages to attain its final quasi-Chinese form. These stages are three, each characterized by changes that are easy to detect. There is a huge difference between the first stage and the third.

In the first stage, which begins on page one, there are strange pseudo-words written in Arabic script. They are accompanied by a number of random strokes which sometimes are written directly on top of (i.e. overlaying) the Arabic. Due to the strokes it is difficult to read the words. The only fully legible piece is a Basmallah at the top of the first page.

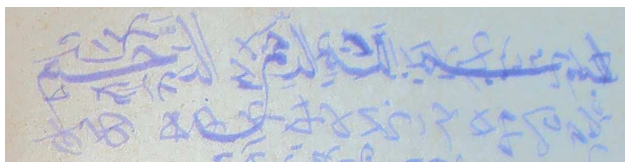


Figure 16: Basmallah overlaid with strokes

After this page, all the text becomes a collection of strokes, written in messy lines but respecting the margins of the paper. Often the strokes cross each other randomly. So it can be difficult to identify symbol boundaries or even to specify a definite shape for a single symbol. These random strokes are often short but there are some long strokes which go below their line and hit the next. In fact, after the first few pages there sometimes occur dots inside or outside of the strokes. Interestingly, the strokes tend to join their tips instead

of crossing each other. The strokes sometimes also tend to become zigzag, triangular or loop-shaped. At first glance anyone would consider such pages as a childish attempt to write. Despite this, the page layout is well observed by the Šayḥ.

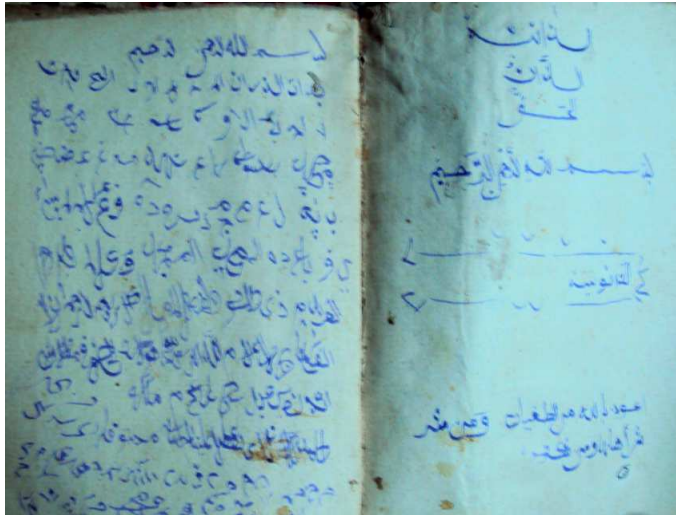


Figure 17: Stage I from the **Chinese book** with corrupt Arabic-like forms

The second stage has a more clearly patterned text. The random strokes become less random: they are transformed into crossed lines, with large loops becoming more clear and frequent. Some of the symbols resemble Akkadian cuneiform, because of small wedge-shaped parts of a letter and nail-like parts. Occasionally there may be blocks of first-stage symbols interspersed with second-stage “text”. In this stage it is easier to establish similarities among the symbols; many symbols take on a well-defined shape which recurs as the text goes on.

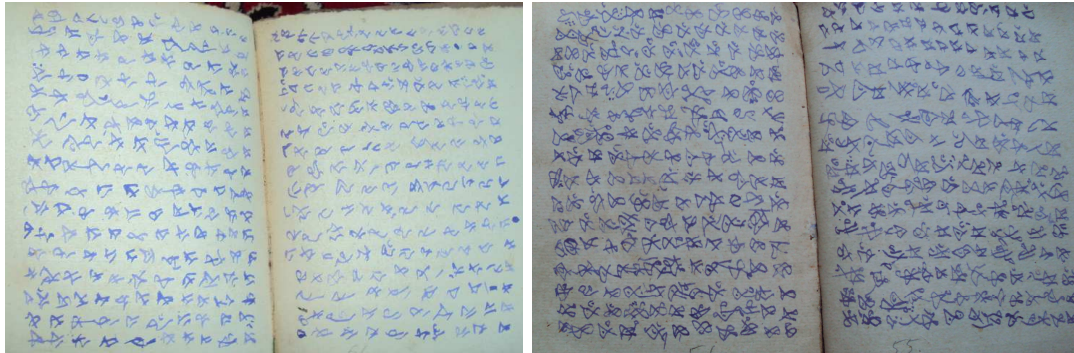


Figure 18: Stage II from the Chinese book

The third stage is the most clearly patterned and formal level of text, hence the term (quasi-Chinese). Both the symbols and the handwriting are executed carefully and with great regularity, with curves, little wedges, crossings, dots and strokes, thus creating a resemblance with the Far Eastern writing systems. In a couple of places, the scribe ends a line of writing in the middle, then leaves a few blank lines, and then resumes writing. Such half-written lines fill up the right half of the line, proving that the direction of the writing was from right to left, like normal Arabic.

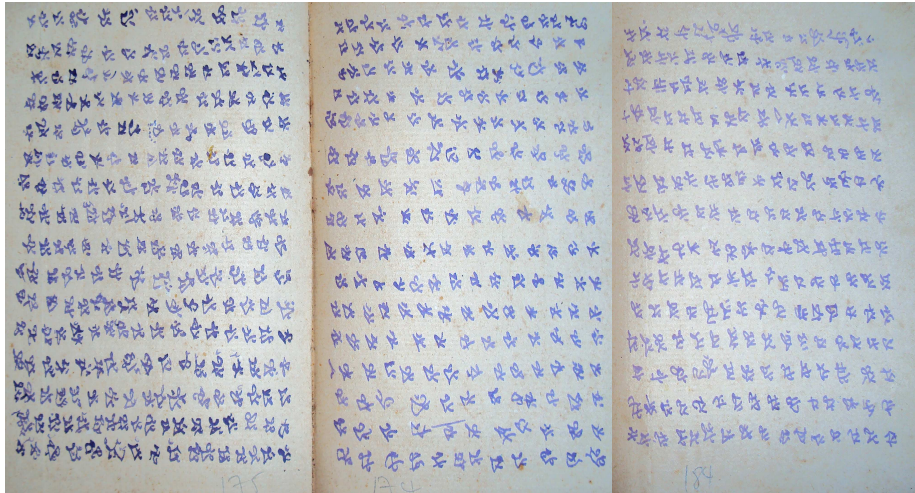


Figure 19: Stage III from the Chinese book

Outside of the Chinese book there are other bits of such texts, most often of the third stage, interspersed among other manuscripts and found together with other text types. I found four examples from different manuscripts that look exactly like the third stage of the Chinese book. In one of these places the text is mixed with type I text. Sometimes, however, these interspersed texts are of a different kind, consisting of mere twisted lines to make a symbol; these have a larger size as opposed to the norm. There are four examples of this latter subtype from two different manuscripts. They are mixed in with type II cursive texts, and as such they have the same frames as any type II text. They also seem to me to be more “Chinese” in appearance than any of the other examples. Their color preference is of two types: those which are made up of twisted lines are written in a red ink unique to them, while those which are

close to “real Chinese script” use purple ink. The pen strokes are thicker than with the other interspersed texts of this type.

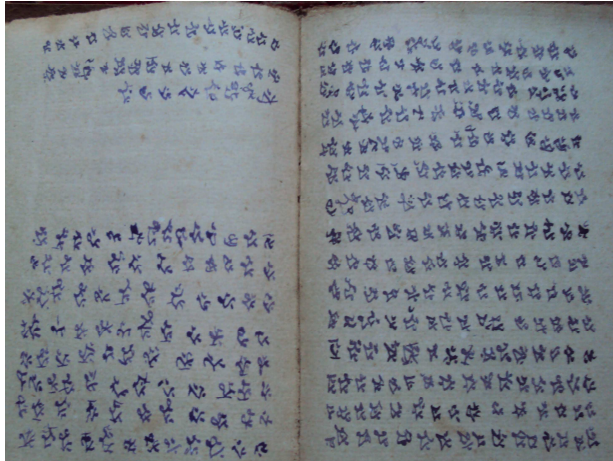


Figure 20: The direction of writing, i.e. from right to left

These texts are a mystery. What was the Šayḥ’s motive behind inventing such a new script? The mysteries of the meaning and the content of the text also invite more questions. If the texts represent a language, was it Arabic or a local language? What was the topic discussed? If someone were to claim that the text is mere nonsense or doodling, he should note that at that time paper was an expensive imported material, not something to waste on doodling. Furthermore, as a scholar and a Sufi he would have had no extra time to compose nonsense texts, given that he was expected to teach and worship for long periods of time every day. On the other hand, if it is really a meaningful text, it is strange that his students and family do not understand a single “word” of it. Rather, they say that the deciphering of these texts will be fulfilled

by someone in the future, thus making the texts appear more mystical. Furthermore, if his students truly understood this writing system, one might expect them to have spread it to places other than Seddeqa. After all, the orthography of Bakri Sapalō was popular in many Oromo areas

Type IV: Ill-Formatted Words and Phrases

This kind of text involves a scattering of individual words or very brief phrases on the page, with no proper format. The words are either normal Arabic words or type I words with the /-tiyyat/ ending; the two sub-types do not occur mixed on a single page. The characteristic feature of this text type is that the Šayḥ writes the words in various different orientations: up, down, at a diagonal, etc. The whole page is written in this fashion, which is why I call the type “ill-formatted words and phrases”. The words are well written, however; the Šayḥ consistently kept the size of the letters as normal and the script as Naskhi.

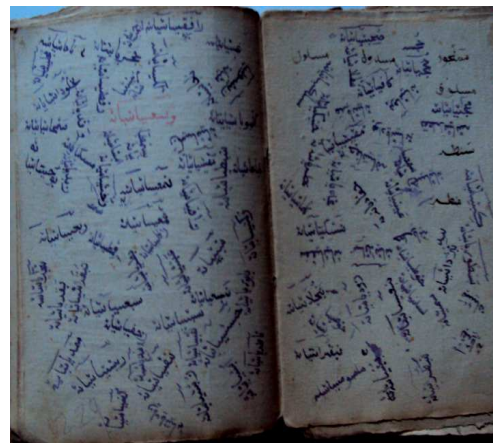
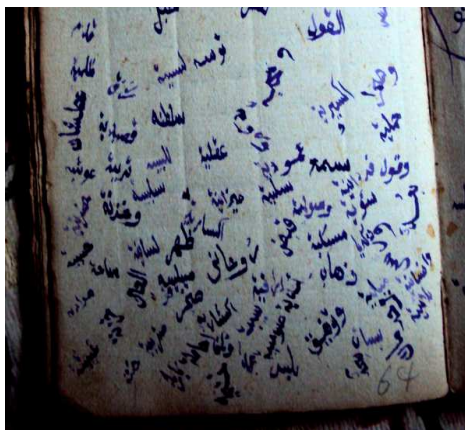


Figure 21: Type IV text with normal Arabic words

Figure 22: Type IV text with type I text

The normal Arabic words and phrases consist of names of Allah and many other nouns which are often related to Islam. His intention in composing this type of text is not known. I tried to collect the opinions of people from around the Seddeqa mosque, family members and people from the academic sphere. Those who are non-academicians (in Seddeqa) insisted that this text is a manifestation of the Šayḥ's lofty position in knowledge and worship. On the other hand, the academicians tended to believe that these are magic incantations; their reason is that the random placement and orientation of the words are among the typical features of magic literature.

Type V: Phrases and short sentences

These are Arabic phrases, typically noun plus modifier, with the same noun repeated many times but with different modifiers. They are put in column format. Often they are written with thin pen, but examples with thick pen also exist. Some nouns commonly used in this type of text are *al-ʿarš*, *al-ʿilm*, *al-šams*, *ḥaḍrah*, *nūr*, *qalam*, *kalām*, *malāʾika*, and *ʿālam*. The noun may be definite (with *al-*), but most commonly it is indefinite; definite and indefinite are never mixed in a single column.

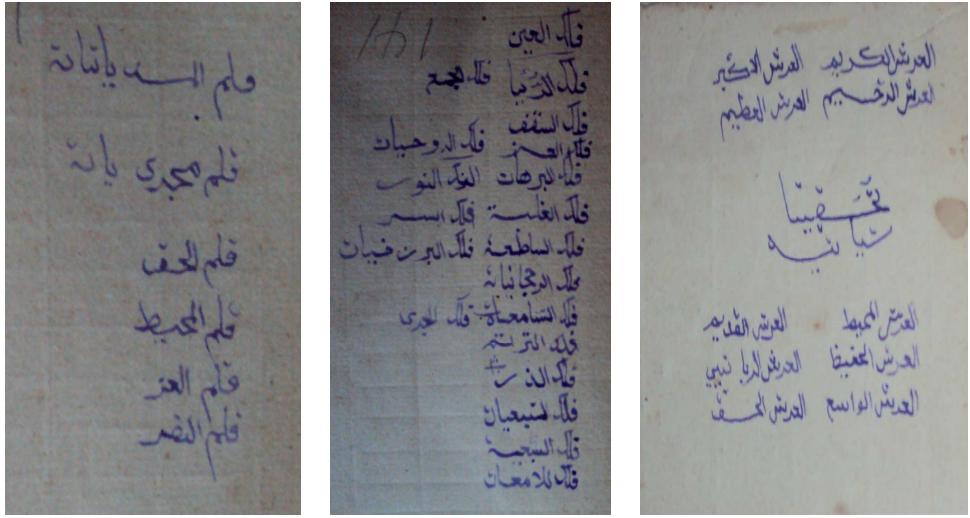


Figure 23: Type V text in column format

If the pen is thick, the column format may not be observed; instead the phrases can be scattered across the page.

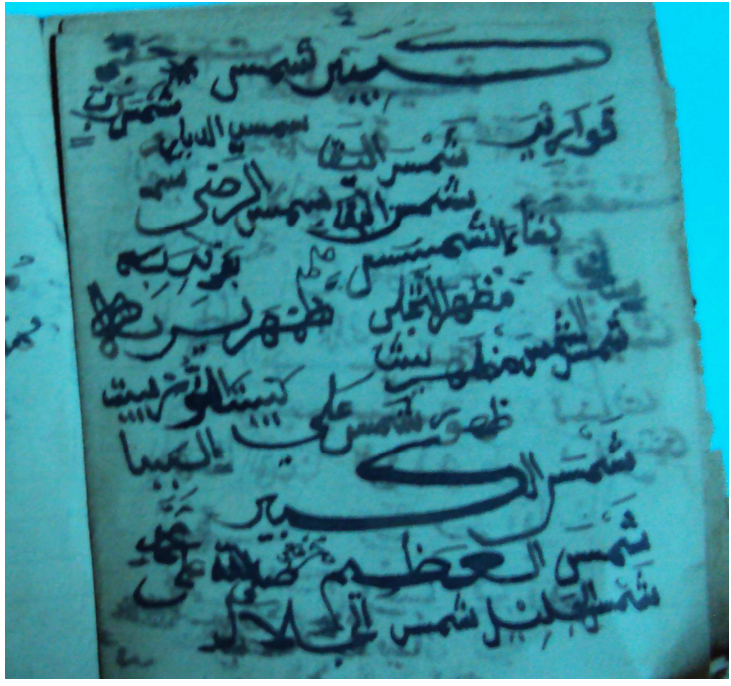


Figure 24: Non-column formatted type V text

For example if we take *al-ʿarš* ‘the Throne’, it can be modified as follows:

al-ʿarš al-karīm ‘the noble’, *al-ʿarš al-ʿazīm* ‘the Greatest’, *al-ʿarš al-muḥīt* ‘the all-encompassing’, *al-ʿarš al-rabbānī* ‘of God’.

These phrases have Islamic content; all the noun combinations listed above are known either in the Qur’an or in other Islamic literature. Yet the Šayḥ’s intent here is just as unclear as with the other types.

Type VI: The pseudo-Arabic alphabet

The letters of the Arabic alphabet, but not in any standard order (also not in the *abjad* order), occur in four places in the manuscripts. Three of the examples are written in Naskhi script, while one seems to me like Farsi. The three Naskhi examples are written normally, from right to left, with each letter written separately (not joined); in the other example the letters are scattered all over the page with no consistent orientation. Generally, this pseudo-alphabet occurs on a page by itself; once it is accompanied by type I and type II texts. Two of the examples are framed with a freehand line.

Again the purpose of these pseudo-alphabets, and the principle (if any) behind their ordering, are not clear. For many people such texts look magical.

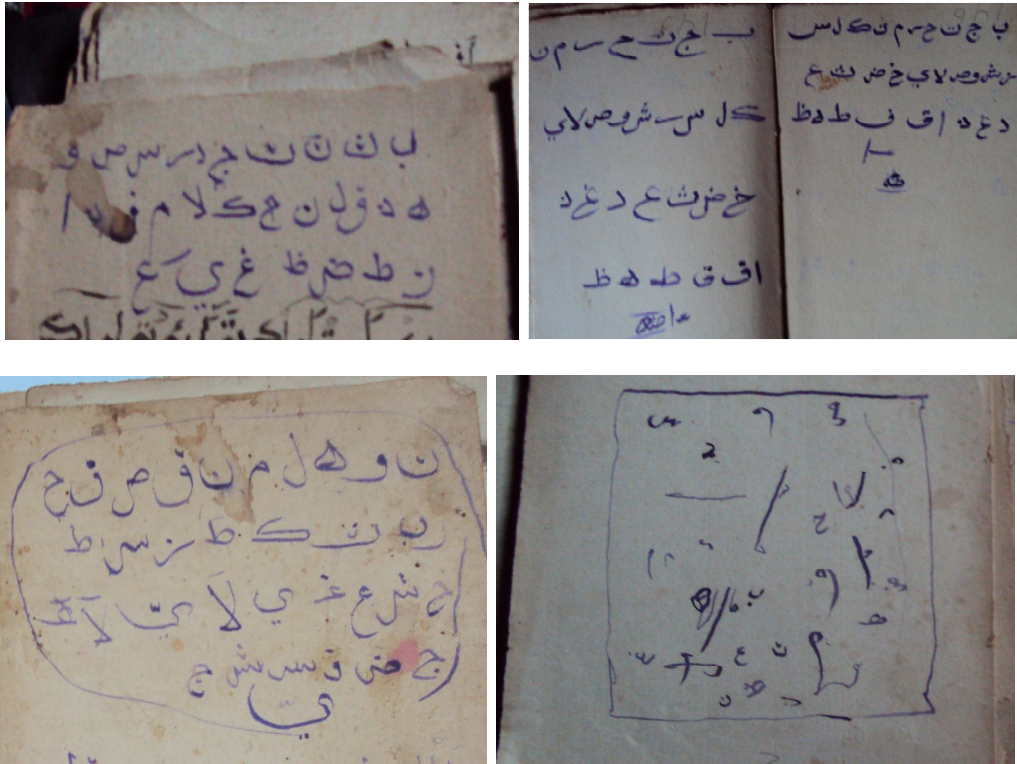


Figure 25: Pseudo-Arabic alphabets from different manuscripts

There is one remarkable page consisting of perhaps a dozen lines, each line formed by repeating a single Arabic letter 20 or more times. The resulting image resembles (perhaps) a kind of strange plant.



Figure 26: “Plant” formed with repeated single Arabic letters

The Pictures

I classified the pictures into sixteen kinds, on the basis of their shape and resemblance with particular objects.

Orbits: These are sets of concentric circles resembling a model of the solar system. They are drawn in purple (most commonly), blue, and red or rarely

black. The lines which make up the circles are not always carefully drawn; they sometimes touch each other and often are “wavy” instead of perfectly round.

The orbits are not made up only of lines. There are orbits composed of very small circles which are assembled and formed into an orbit– as if the orbits were made of prayer beads. There is also a picture of an orbit composed of both beads and lines.



Figure 27: Orbits composed of “beads”



Figure 28: Bead-like and line orbits combined

There is one characteristic observed among many orbit pictures that particularly makes them resemble pictures of the solar system. Just as the solar system has a planet on each orbit, so this kind of picture has a word (either normal Arabic or type I) on each orbit like a kind of “planet”. The radial

position of the words is often random, just like most models of the solar system. However, in one beautiful instance the words all have the same radial angle and are neatly aligned, one parallel to the other, going regularly from the center to the outermost orbit.



Figure 29: Orbits with words as “planets”



Figure 30: Neatly aligned words as “planets”

There is one sub-type which combines type I text with the orbits. Here the text fills the gap between successive orbits; each ring in the circle is filled with writing. The text is very beautiful and sometimes harmonizes in color with the orbits. In a few cases the color of the text can differ from orbit to orbit; if the text in one orbit is blue the next is red, etc. These are the most highly decorated among the orbit pictures.

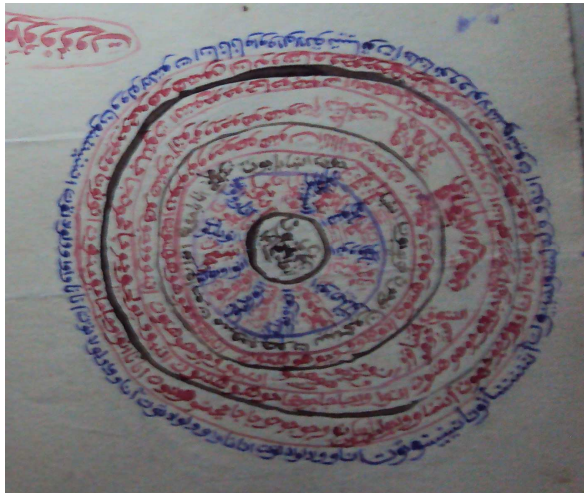


Figure 31: Type I text combined with the orbit

It is (again) not clear for what purpose these orbit pictures are drawn accompanied with other texts and pictures. It is difficult to conclude that they are drawn simply for decoration, because they differ from the commonly known forms of decorations and pictures (calligraphy, illumination) in the Arabic manuscript tradition.

The Šayḥ used three colors of ink to draw these text-pictures, purple, red and black (in order of decreasing frequency).

Spider webs: These pictures look like spider webs. I observed two kinds:

1. Single-line webs: Like a real spider web, these involve single lines radiating from one central point (a big dot or small circle). These rays cross through a number of concentric circles.

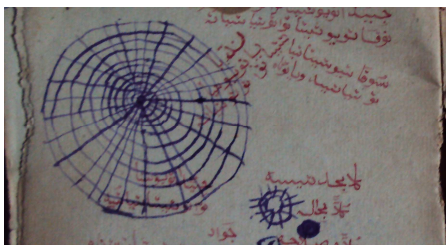


Figure 32: Single-line spider web

2. Double-line webs: These differ only in that the rays are double lines.

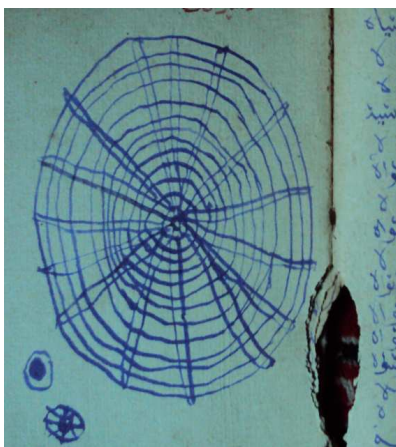


Figure 33: Double-line spider web

Unlike the orbits, the spider web pictures have no accompanying text. They occur randomly in various manuscripts in the collection. One spider web, or two, or several, can occur on a single page. When two webs occur on a page, they may overlap, and one is smaller than the other. When multiple webs occur, they are all (of course) quite small, even as small as $\frac{1}{2}$ cm radius. I also observed unfinished webs with their radial lines not fully drawn, but the concentric circles are there. This indicates that the circles were drawn first, then the spokes.

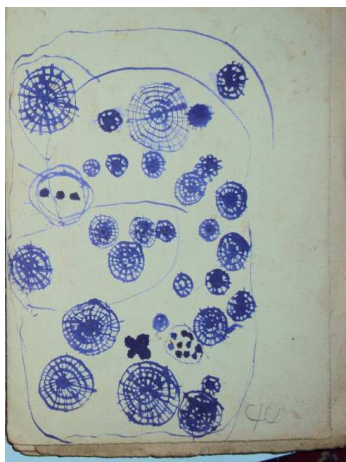


Figure 34: Multiple small spider webs



Figure 35: Overlapping spider webs

In some of the pictures, the outer circles of the web are interrupted by the frame (and hence are not drawn fully).

Only purple and red inks are used to draw these pictures. The above-noted problem of imperfect, wavy circles is seen in this type also.

Flowers: There are different types of flower pictures in the collection. They are pen-and-ink drawings, not paintings. It is known that flowers are commonly used in the Arabic manuscript tradition for decoration purposes. Nevertheless, the flowers in our manuscripts seem to be drawn for no clear reason. Only a few of them could be called beautiful.



Figure 36: Flowers

It is difficult to determine which kinds of flowers these drawings represent in the real world. But they may resemble daisies, sunflowers, oleanders, orange lilies or the Ethiopian *adey* (mesqäl flower). There are no texts attached to these pictures. Also often they are found in combination with other pictures and texts. Ink of many colors is used: purple, blue, black and brown.

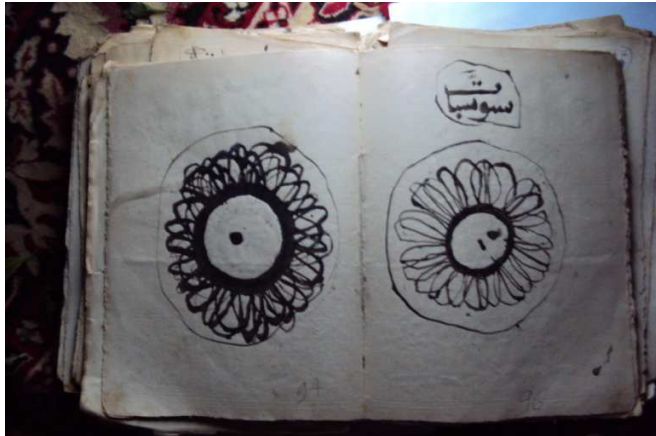


Figure 37: Sunflowers

Quasi-magic squares: These are magic square grids with many new forms. In real magic squares the number of horizontal and vertical cells is the same, but not always in these quasi-magic squares. In real magic squares the cells are typically filled with letters of the Arabic alphabet; in the quasi-squares they may be filled with repeated Arabic letters, little circles or dots, two Arabic letters in one cell, unknown symbols or even left empty. Even the entire grid may be left empty. In one example the grid is drawn with dotted lines. Also, some empty grids have Arabic and strange words written *outside* of them, running either horizontally or vertically.

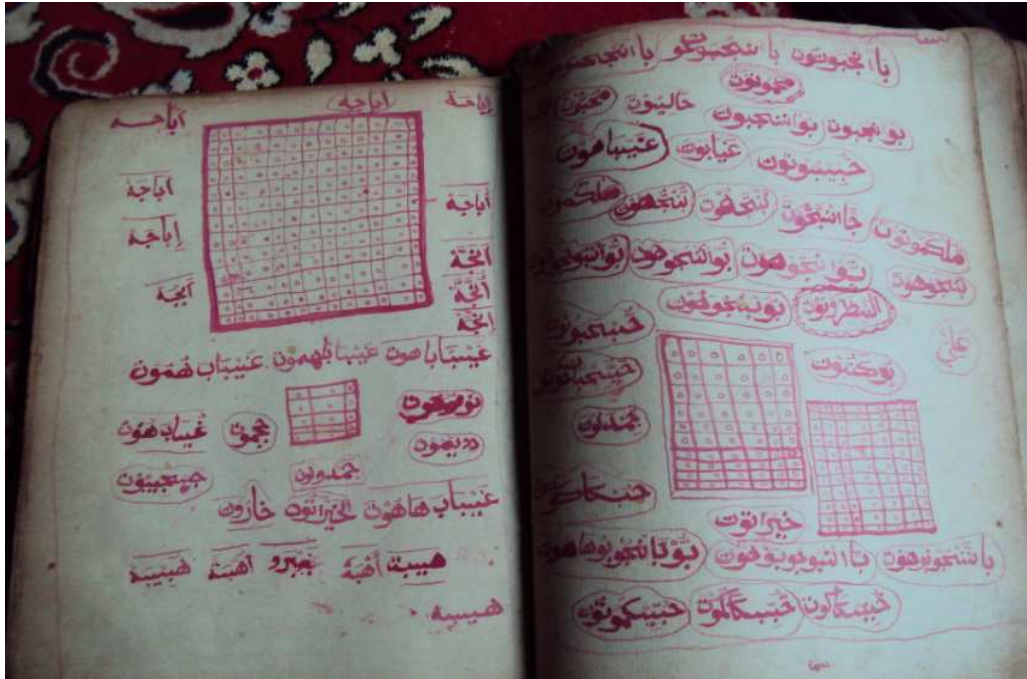


Figure 40: Quasi-magic squares with little circles inside the cells

Buildings: In various folios of different manuscripts, pictures of buildings, parts of buildings, or plan-like sketches are found. The buildings are of three types:

1. Typical Islamic architecture: Large buildings with minarets, domes, and arch-shaped gates and columns.

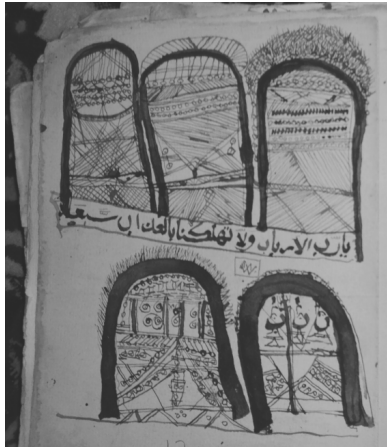


Figure 41: Arch-shaped gates, typical of Islamic architecture



Figure 42: Minaret

2. Local architecture, comprising local round grass houses of different forms.

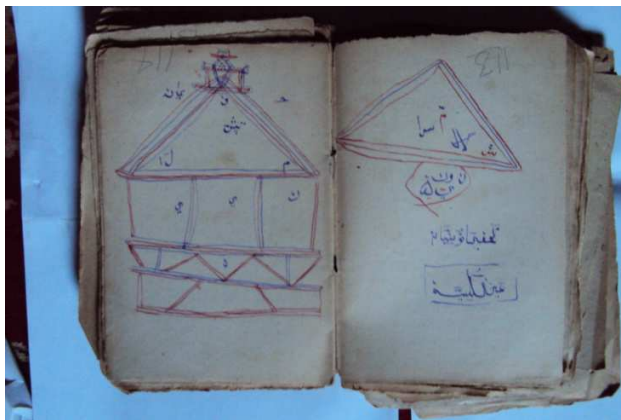


Figure 43: Local architecture, grass house

3. Hybrid architecture: A mixed kind of architecture involving both Islamic and local elements. In this category a local house may have minarets at the top or columns inside.



Figure 44: Hybrid architecture

The plan-like sketches look like unfinished, schematic houses. But some of them look like the top view of a house, and these are very close to real plans. Also there are plan-like houses with Arabic and °Ađami letters written in different sections of the plan. Some of the buildings accompany texts while others stand alone on the page. Moreover, they demonstrate the Őayđ as an artist. The pictures are not well done, and the lines are crudely drawn; these defects may be due partly to his non-use of rulers in drawing lines.

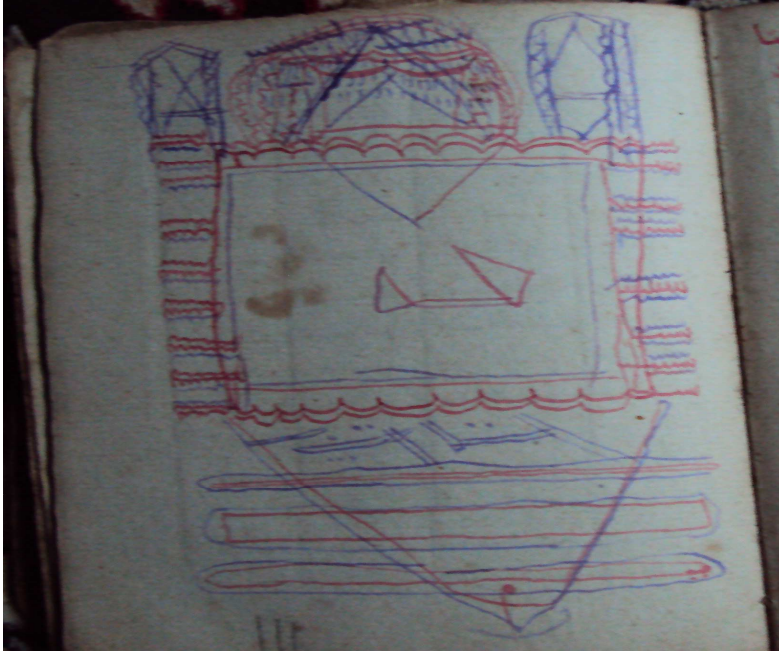


Figure 45: Plan-like sketch

Human- and animal-like pictures

These are pictures of presumed humans, insects and other animals. They look like childish sketches. The humans have only eyes and a nose on their faces while they lack a mouth. The presumed insects are not 6-legged but their legs resemble the legs of real insects. Also their body is typically like a shell, a feature which is found in many kinds of Bugs. The shells always have some kind of decoration.

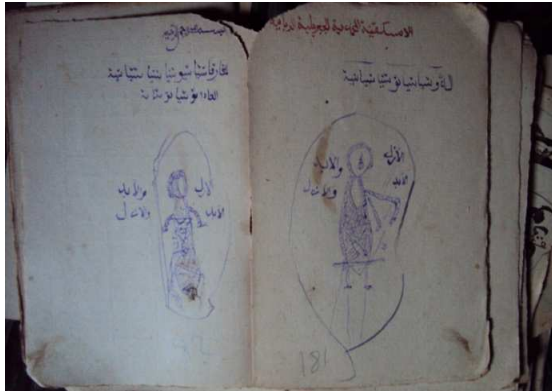


Figure 46: Human-like picture

There are some pictures which look like fantastic birds with four or even six pseudo-wings (see figure 48). They are often surrounded by texts of type I or II; in a very few cases a type V text occurs inside the picture.



Figure 47: Imaginary animals

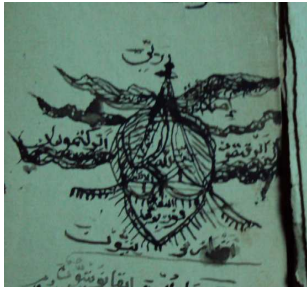


Figure 48: Extraordinary bird with 6 wings

Incense burners: It may not be fair to call such pictures incense burners, but it is the only thing they seem to resemble. Basically, they are composed of two tripods, one right-side up and one upside down, joined at their narrow ends. Like the other pictures they have different forms but the basic tripod is always there. All of them are full-page pictures. The lines are well drawn, unlike the crudeness of the buildings. This is probably due to the pen, which is thick and draws thick lines; the lines thus have less probability of being imperfect or wavy. In some examples the wide bases of the two tripods are connected with each other at the corners by two long vertical lines. As a result the picture comes to look like the two diagonals of a rectangle (see figure 49). Some unfinished burners are found, where one of the tripods is open at its wide base.



Figure 49: Incense burner

These incense burner pictures occur in many places with type I texts inside (see fig. 49), which makes them among the most fascinating works in the collection. The text sometime occurs outside the tripods as well. Purple and blue inks are generally used for both the picture and the text, although a few of the texts are in red.

Plants: These are pictures of trees and other plants. The various plants in these pictures are meant for decoration, but not in the way that is familiar from the normal Arabic manuscript tradition. The plants have different forms and sizes. Most of the trees are big, filling up as much as half the page. Either they are like abstract images or they resemble real plants. The abstract trees have foliage composed of a criss-cross network of lines, with thick dots at the intersections (see fig. 50).



Figure 50: Trees

Another smaller plant-type consists of a single stem with two equal-sized leaves.

In one case Arabic words are written inside the tree. There are also other tree pictures with texts surrounding the tree and sometimes overwritten on it. Most of the tree pictures are concentrated in a single manuscript.

Round objects: In this group, pictures of a number of circular and elongated objects are found. They are of various types. Some pictures consist of a circle filled with little dots. Two others resemble a little boat from the bottom view; these pictures are formed with joined arc lines to make a shape like an elongated onion. Real boats made of wood or papyrus have such a form.

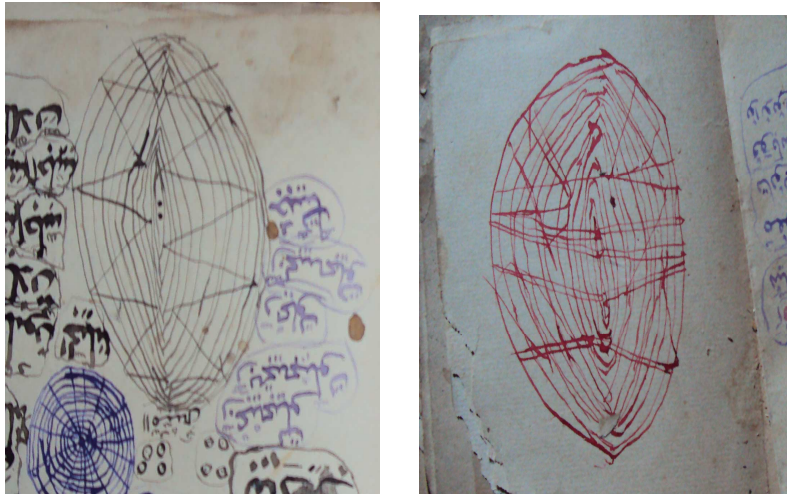


Figure 51: Boat-like pictures

The vast majority of the “round” pictures could be described as falling under the category of shields. They are of two kinds:

- Circular shields: These are popular in Ethiopia traditionally. The decoration on these shield pictures is close to that of real shields.



Figure 52: Circular shield

- Elongated shields: In southern Ethiopia and in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, such shields are very common.

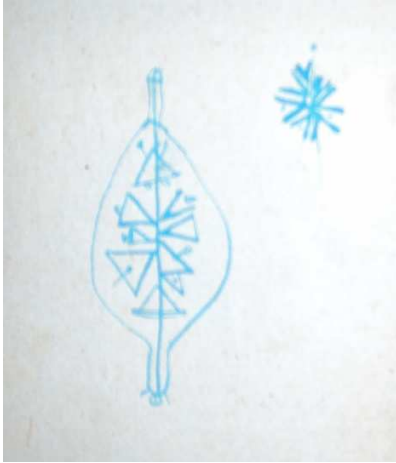


Figure 53: Elongated shield

There are other kinds of shields made up of many little strokes, which are well patterned so as to result in a big beautiful shield.



Figure 54: Shield formed with patterned strokes

- Painted circles: these are large circles ($2\frac{1}{2}$ cm radius or bigger) which are painted in completely, always with purple ink. They are found in two manuscripts only.

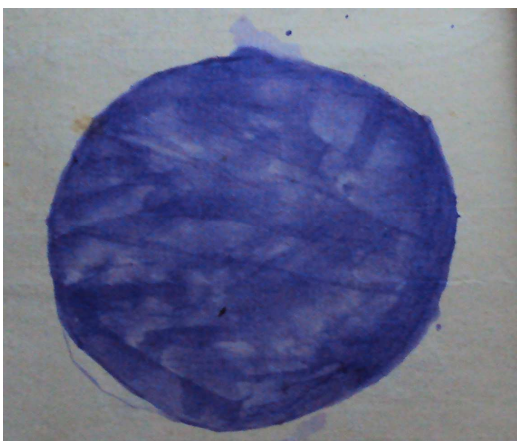


Figure 55: Painted circle

The compass and the cross

There are two kinds of pictures of compasses that I identified. The first consists of two examples of a circular compass indicating the four compass directions, each marked with a little circle drawn on the circumference of the big circle. Each direction and its respective name is written. The second type consists of lines that cross each other at one intersection, representing all the directions. Again all the directions are indicated by writing their names.



Figure 56: Circular compass with four directions

What I have considered as crosses are unfinished compasses with only the four cardinal directions indicated without mentioning their names. They have the exact shape of a cross. In one example a few concentric circles are overwritten on top of the cross, like an unfinished spider web.



Figure 57: Compass with eight directions (one line missing)

Ka^ʿbā: A number of square-shaped pictures appear in the manuscripts. Some of these contain the place-name “Mecca” or “Ka^ʿbā”; some show decoration that seems to resemble the Ka^ʿbā. Hence I call these ‘Ka^ʿbā pictures’. Most of these pictures are in front view, while the rest are (apparently) in top view. Black, blue and some pink inks are used.



Figure 58: Front view of Ka^ʿbā

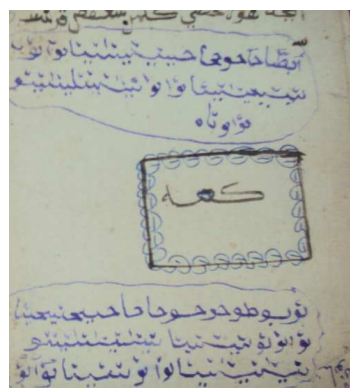


Figure 59: Top view Ka^ʿbā image

As noted, the name “Mecca” or “Ka^cbā” often appears inside these pictures, or sometimes beside them. In addition, a type I (once a type II) text typically accompanies the illustration, always appearing outside the picture.

Sun: This is usually composed of a circle with rays originating from the circumference of the circle, of the type well known from schools and children’s art. Moreover, there also appear other forms of the sun, with a square instead of a circle. These “square suns” are huge and can cover a whole page. Furthermore, in one example, a type I text consisting of two or three parallel text-lines is written between the rays; in fact such text-lines look like rays themselves. These kinds of suns show a high degree of beauty and complexity as compared to the smaller childish portraits of the sun.

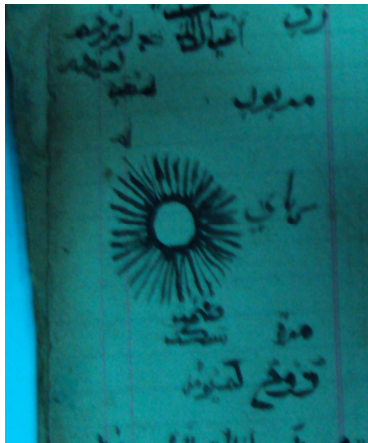


Figure 60: Normal picture of the sun



Figure 61: Picture of the sun with text-rays

Spirals: These are often quite large spiral pictures, as big as a full page, and sometimes overlapping onto the next page. Other spirals fill up half a page, and I also found five little, badly drawn spirals. The lines in the spirals are all imperfectly drawn and sometimes touch each other. The very large spirals are all found in one manuscript. Purple ink is typically used for these pictures. The pictures have no accompanying text.



Figure 62: Spirals

Wheels: These are circles having a central hub and spokes radiating from the hub to the outside rim. They resemble spider webs, except that the main spokes are very thick and fewer in number. They have various forms– for example, there are two examples which look like a bicycle wheel. Also, in one manuscript there is a wheel drawn with red and black ink; the outline is made with black ink while the red ink is used as paint.



Figure 63: Wheel in two colors

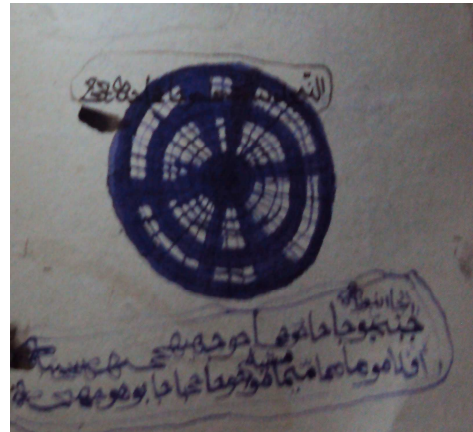


Figure 64: Bicycle-type wheel with double rim

Turbines: These look like wheels without rims. The “spokes” look like the blades of a turbine or propellor. In a few manuscripts they are found repeatedly. The artist tries to make the blades equal in shape and size. Most of them are big and resemble wind turbines which are used for water wells. In one case there are small turbines, five on a single page. There is a typically no text attached to them; moreover, the ink has no preferred characteristic color.



Figure 65: Five turbines on a page

Triangles: There are many drawings of triangles found in different manuscripts. They are of different sizes and styles. Often many small triangles are concentrated on a single page, creating the impression of a village composed of little huts, or American Indian village of tepees. The triangles typically have symbols put between and inside them, such as crosses, dots, small circles, or x-shapes. In one instance these small triangles have extra lines appended going in different directions.



Figure 66: Triangles with extra lines appended on them

All the triangles are accompanied by some kind of text, typically sitting on the top apex of the triangle or inside it. The text may be type I, type II or single Arabic letters. The “village”-type pictures have type I text, or alphabetic letters, over every triangle (see figures 66 and 67). Big triangles, by contrast, have the text inside, e.g. a type I text written with thick pen. Their sides are decorated with zigzag lines serving as frames. Triangles (big or small) may also be empty.

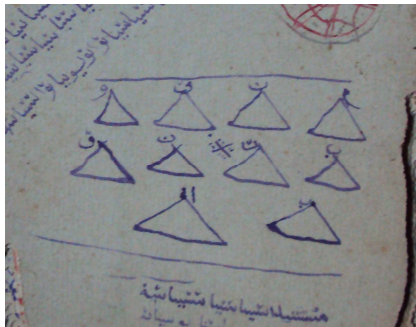


Figure 67: Triangles with Arabic letters

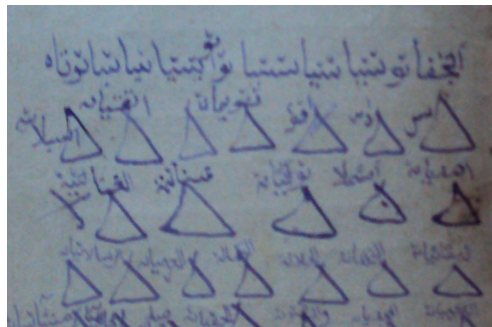


Figure 68: Triangles with type II text



Figure 69: Big triangle containing type I texts



Figure 70: Triangle containing small circles

Tallies: these pages consists of a very large number if parallel vertical strokes, having the general appearance of a tally. The margins are observed carefully, just as in normal texts.



Figure 71: Tallies from different pages of a manuscript

Normal Arabic texts

Normal Arabic texts exist either in the form of bound books or as fragments. On a given page, the text may cover the full page or less than a page. Because the collection has been exposed to damage, many texts are found inconsistent, unfinished and missing. A number of loose pages occur which were clearly once parts of different books.

The texts consist of prose and poetry. Turning first to the poems, almost all of them are manzumas. As a Sufi, the sheikh composed many manzumas having various forms and content. People claim him to be the author of many others; among these I discovered several very popular and standard manzuma poems, for example

- Ḥidāyat al-muḥtadīn wa-buġyat al-muršidīn wa-ʾasrār al-ʿārifīn
- Ġāyat al-murād
- Bustān

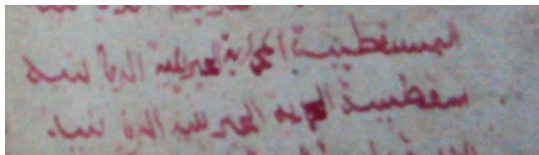
These three are popular in Ġimma, Arsi, Ilubabor and Bale. Many people remember the sheikh for these three works. They serve for different ritual services, like the celebration of Mawlid. A large number of fragmented manzumas which are found in the leaflets and occur randomly in different compilations may or may not be his own authored works. They may instead be the works of other prominent Sufis of the time. Furthermore, famous masterpieces like Būšīrī's *Burda*, Jamāl al-Dīn al-ʾAnni's *Rawḍat al-ʾasrār fī ṣalawāt ʿalā al-Muṣṭafā*, and *Qaṣīdat al-Witriyya* are parts of this collection.

Some leaflets from the “Mawlid collection” are also found.³³

³³Gori 2010, Texts in the *Mawlid* Collection in Harar: Some First Critical Observations. *African Study Monographs*, Suppl.41: 51-62, March 2010

In his poems he praises Allah, the Prophet and prominent Ethiopian Sufis like Sayyid Nūr Hussain, Jamal al-Dīn Al-ʿAnnī, Šayḥ Danna of Wällo and his own mentor, Šayḥ Muhammad Rašād Qāqiy.

There is one genre of poem I call the Ṭariqa poem. It seems to be on the boundary between a real poem and a “strange text”. The word Ṭariqa here refers to the Šayḥ’s Sufi order, the Rašādiyya order, in which he was initiated after he graduated from Shiro. This type of pseudo-poem, although written in verse, has a very strange form. In each line all the words have the same ending morpheme, /-tiyyat/. Significantly, one line differs from the next line only in the first word; all the other words are identical. For example:

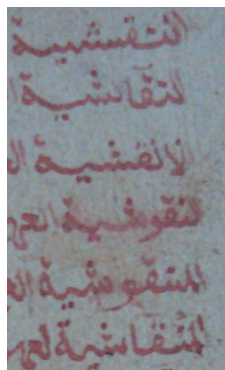


Al-masqaṭiyyat, al-muḥammadiyyat, al-jibrīliyyat, al-rabbāniyyat (first line)

Suqūṭiyyat, al-muḥammadiyyat, al-jibrīliyyat, al-rabbāniyyat (second line)

Within this general schema there are many variants. Often the “poem” is divided into stanzas of 4 or 5 lines. If so, there is a clear morphological relation between the variable first words within a stanza: the same root will be involved

in the first word on each successive line, but embedded in a different CV pattern. The particular CV patterns may vary from stanza to stanza. For example:



al-naqāshiyyat

al-naqāshiyya

al-ʾanaqāshiyya

al-nuqūshiyya

al-manqūshiyya

al-manqāshiyya

The typical pattern is that all the words except the variable first word are constant, not just within a stanza but within the whole “poem”. Here too, however, there can be variation. Occasionally the 2nd or 3rd word may show changes. But the final word of each line (*al-rabbāniyya*) is constant.

The line itself is usually composed of four words. But lines of three words also occur.

Not all Ṭariqa poems have stanzas of this kind. Another recurrent pattern is that particular words may occur in successive lines in the position of the

variable first word. Notably, the sequence *al-šuhūdiyyat* on one line followed by *al-dātiyyat* on the next line (or vice versa) recurs 5 or 6 times (see fig. 70).

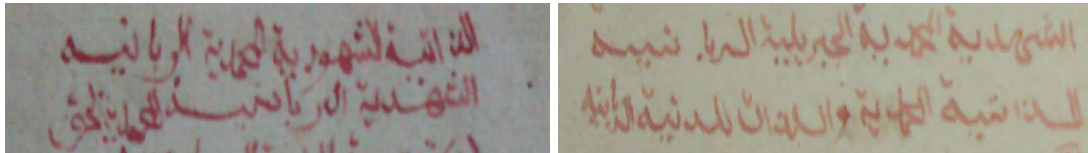


Figure 72: Consecutively repeated words

It is hard to determine “how many poems” of this type exist in the collection: there are perhaps 15-20 pages altogether that have such texts, but they are usually loose sheets. Moreover, the loose sheets were usually found in separate bundles of manuscripts. Since the guardian of the manuscripts was not willing to let me see all the bundles of manuscripts at once, it was difficult for me to determine whether distinct pages from different bundles actually belonged together or not. Accordingly, I have catalogued most of the pages as distinct “poems”.

The texts of this genre are written in parallel horizontal lines of a normal appearance. The letters are of normal size and in clear handwriting. The ink is almost always red, except for two places where apparently the writer ran out of red ink and continued in purple.

Prose texts include texts of grammar, fiqh, the Qur'an, instructions for the ritual of particular Sufi order prayers (Qādiriyya and Rašādiyya), Ṣalawāt, Du^{ʿā}, logic and miscellaneous texts like letters and wills.

The only Qur'an I found is the oldest manuscript in the collection. It is dated "213" [i.e. 1213 AH] (1798). It contains the Qur'an from chapter 19 (Sura Mariam) to chapter 114 (Sura al-Nās). Its handwriting is clear, and all the vowel marks are present. The paper is different from that of the other manuscripts.



Figure 73: Qur'an manuscript

There is one Fiqh (jurisprudence) compilation in the collection. It is not written by the Ṣayḥ, as the handwriting is different. The quires are detached and all the

pages are individual folios, which I had to assemble. It is not clear to which school of jurisprudence this book belongs; the most likely guess is that it is of the Šāfi'i school. The manuscript also contains other subjects like Tawhīd and Taṣawwuf (Sufi mysticism).

Logic was one of the subjects that Šayḥ Seddeqiyu taught in his mosque. There is one manuscript that testifies to this. It is based on a book originally authored by Sa'ad al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī 722/1322; however, the manuscript at our disposal is an exegesis of this book entitled *Šarḥ al-tahḏīb fī al-manṭiq*, made by 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Širāzī. On the introduction page the author of the original book, Sa'ad al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, is mentioned.



Figure 74: The logic manuscript

As we saw in the chapter on his biography, the Šayḥ studied grammar with the Shiro Šayḥ (d. 1936), a notable Muslim scholar of Ġimma. When he was at Seddeqa he taught this subject to his students. I found several grammar books in the collection, although I had to compile them from loose pages. They are popular texts in the Muslim world: *al-ʿajurrumiyya* by Ibn al-ʿAjurrum, *qaṭr al-nadā* by ʿAfif al-Dīn ʿAbdullah, and also *kašf al-niqāb*.

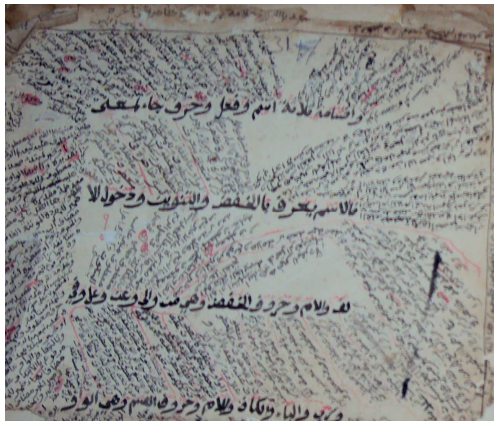


Figure 75: Grammar manuscript

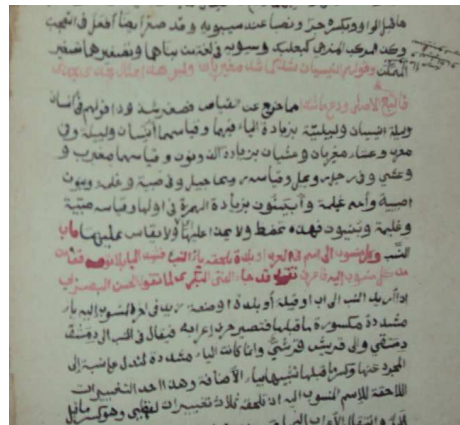


Figure 76: Syntax (ʿirāb) manuscript

As a Sufi scholar the Šayḥ had many instructional texts which give details about the ritual of how and when to perform certain prayers, especially prayers of the Qādiriyya and Rašādiyya orders, to which the Šayḥ himself belonged. More interestingly I also found prayer instructions of the Mirḡaniyya order written on a single bifolio leaflet; the handwriting suggests it is some other person's work. The prayers always include *ʿistiḡfār* (asking Allah for

forgiveness), *Ṣalawāt* and *ʿAwrād* (praises and salutations to the Prophet), and *tasbīḥ* (praising and exalting Allah). They are found scattered randomly in different parts of numerous compilations and manuscripts.

The miscellaneous texts include some letters, one will and a power of attorney (*wikāla*). As a leading scholar and religious leader the Ṣayḥ taught many students from different parts of Ethiopia. In my research I found some letters written to him from these students. There are also anonymous letters whose senders are not known. Moreover, he received and sent letters from government officials and other notable personalities, including the brother of king Abba Ğifār II of Ğimma. Also there exist some letters by him which were never finished or sent. They are written on pages of some manuscripts and on loose sheets.

Chapter 5

Catalogue of the manuscripts of Seddeqa

Criteria of the catalogue

The main theme of this work is cataloguing the manuscripts at Seddeqa mosque. In the first chapter I presented the parameters needed to describe Arabic manuscripts as laid out by Yusuf Ziyya in his article 'Methodology of Islamic Research'. In the course of my field research I decided that some of these parameters should be rearranged, others which are important should be added, and some unnecessary parameters should be removed so as to better fit the nature of the manuscripts in the Seddeqa collection. The parameters which I finally settled on can be divided into four groups:

1. Physical description of the manuscript
2. Description of the writing (paleography etc.)
3. Content description
4. External (additional) information about the manuscript

1. *Physical description of the manuscript*

These parameters present information about the manuscripts as a physical thing. They involve descriptions of the binding, the paper and the ink.

- Binding: Is the manuscript bound or not? If yes, by what material, what kind of decorations found on the binding, what is the condition of the binding (detached, eaten by mice or worms,

spoiled by moisture), what is the size of the binding? Has the sewing survived or not?

- Paper: What kind of paper it is? Color; ruled or not; watermark; condition of the paper or the quire (detached, eaten by mice or worms, spoiled by moisture); the size of the paper; number of folios.
- The ink: What kinds of inks are used? What colors (black, blue, purple, red, green or pink)? Is the ink bright or dull?

2. Description of the writing

- Type of script: What kind of Arabic script is used – Naskhi, Ta'liq, Ruq'a, others?
- Rubrication: Are there rubrications in this collection? What color?
- Handwriting: Is the handwriting in the manuscript only the Šayḥ's, or did other scribes also contribute? Is the handwriting clear and legible?
- Vocalization: Are the words vocalized or not? Fully/partially?
- Pagination or foliation: Are the pages or the folios numbered?
- Catchwords (if any)
- Frames (if any)
- Marginalia: What kinds of marginal notes are found? Which margin(s)? Orientation?

- Interlinear notes (if any)
- Decorations: What types of decorations are used in the manuscripts?
- Number of lines and verses: How many lines are there on the page (prose or poetry)?
- Size of the written portion: What is the size of the written portion of the page?

3. Content description

This section deals with what is contained in the manuscript. List of sections, and/or list of different texts in the particular manuscript. Subject matter of the manuscript (from pp. xx-yy if multiple topics). Pictures and decorations, if any. Colophon, if any (author, copyist, date, place, perhaps other valuable information). Title page, if any (title, date, etc.).

Incipit: the first sentence of the manuscript (not of individual sections).

Desinit: the last sentence of the manuscript (not of individual sections).

4. External information about the manuscript

In this section I will give any comments of my own about the manuscript and comments by other people. I also mention certificates of validity (*ʿijāza*) and statement of ownership (*tamalluk*), if any, and how this manuscript was kept and in what condition I discovered it. All the manuscripts come from the same place, namely the library of Šayḥ Seddeqa.

Top-level classification of the manuscripts

As the principle of top-level classification of the manuscripts, I decided to use the physical form of the manuscript. There are four types:

- A. *Bound Books*:** These are complete books whose cover is intact. Usually they are in good physical condition. There are ten of these, but in a few of them the binding is loose.
- B. *Unbound books*:** In this category are those books which have lost their covers but in which the sewing is intact.
- C. *Compilations*:** These are collections of loose (unbound) folios or loose quires which were assembled by me based on the resemblance of the text(s) they contain and of the kind of paper and ink used in them. The folios/quires in a compilation all have relatively the same features as regards both the physical and the content descriptions. Sometimes I found loose pages tied together in bundles, and sometimes (but not always) these pages appeared to “belong together”. In all cases a given compilation reflects my own judgment.
- D. *Miscellanea*:** There are separate leaflet documents like personal letters, wills and powers of attorney. The letters were often sent by his students and friends; but there are also documents which I believe to be copies of letters written by the Šayḥ, whether sent or unsent, finished or unfinished.

General features of the manuscripts

The following general features are found among the manuscripts. The reader will need to be familiar with these in order to understand the cataloguing process.

Physical Features

Binding: Except for one manzuma book which is bound in leather (book case), the rest are bound in hard cardboard. Most of them are half-bound books.³⁴ There is no visible decoration; one manzuma book has onlays³⁵ made of leather on the cardboard. The spine is usually covered with a soft cloth; in some cases a soft cardboard is used instead.

Paper: Most of the manuscripts are written on a Turkish paper. This is clear because the paper has a watermark involving the symbol of the company which produced the paper and also the company's name. The symbol is a crescent moon face in a shield. The name reads as *بياض ابوشبك اسطمبولي عال اصي لي*

³⁴ A half-bound is a book having the back and corners covered in one material, the sides in another (Glaister 1996: 212). Half-bound books are usually half-leather, that is, the spine and an adjacent narrow area of the board as well as the corners are covered with leather and the rest with paper. Quarter-bound books (usually quarter-leather) have only the spine and the adjacent narrow area of the board covered with leather. Half-bound books are encountered in the Ottoman period, especially in the 12/18th and 13/19th centuries (Gacek 2009: 118-119).

³⁵ Onlays are pieces of leather or tinted (coloured) paper, attached (laid on) by means of paste to the leather covered binding to give it a kind of mosaic effect. Leather onlays are rare and apparently only one specimen has thus far been recorded (Déroche et al. 2006: 282). Paper onlays, however, are quite common from about the 12/18th century on (ibid: 171-172).

“bayād ʿabū šabak ʿištambūlī ʿāl ʿaṣī lī. It is a laid paper³⁶ and has a yellowish cream color.



Figure 3: Watermarks of the Turkish paper



Figure 4: Moon face in shield watermark (from Gacek 2009: 291)

A thick paper appears in several of the manuscripts, but with various watermarks. The thick paper used for the Qur’an has a watermark of three crescents. A manzuma manuscript is printed on European thick paper bearing a watermark consisting of a crown and a star surrounded by three crescents.

³⁶ Laid paper is a type of paper which shows a pattern of lines which are the result of the natural pressure exerted by the weight of the pulp in the mould. In other words, these lines are marks reflecting the pattern of the mesh of the mould (ibid: 139).



Figure 5: Watermark of the Qur'an paper (from Gacek 2009: 291)



Figure 6: Watermark of the European paper



Figure 5: Watermark of the European paper (from Gacek 2009: 291)

Other thick papers used for manzumas bear the name of an Italian paper company, “Cartiera di morri vittorio”.³⁷ The texture of all these papers is similar, but I am not certain whether they are “the same”.³⁸

³⁷ Alessandro Gori (p.c) confirmed the reading of this name.

³⁸ For these watermarks see Gacek 2009.

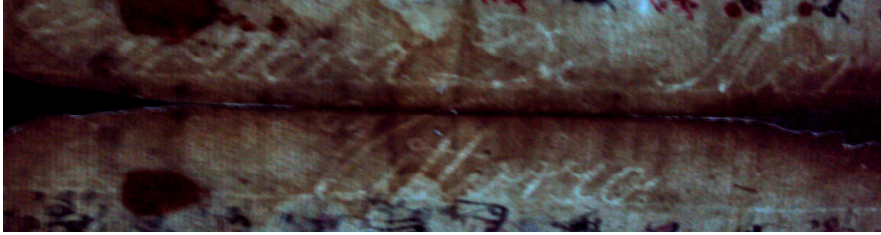


Figure 6: Watermark of the Italian paper

There is a third kind of paper which is used for a few manuscripts. It is a thin, cream-colored Arab paper with a soft texture. Unfortunately no watermarks are detected in it.

The last and the most commonly used paper after the Turkish one is modern ruled paper. These sheets all apparently came from exercise books. One of the exercise books is fully intact; the other ruled pages are detached quires or disjunct leaves. All of these ruled papers fall into the text category of compilations.

Inks: Most of the inks are traditional inks. Black is the predominant color. It is difficult to find an entry that has no black ink at all. Black is used for both pictures and writings.

Red ink is also common. It occurs in the *Ṭariqa* poem, and rubrications are made with it; more generally, it is sometimes used with all kinds of pictures.

Purple and blue inks also occur frequently. They are commonly used for the type I, II, and III “strange” texts. Some picture types like the spider web are also drawn with these inks.

Green, light green, blue-black, and brown traditional inks appear only rarely. Ballpoint pen ink sometimes appears; I believe such cases to be recent insertions by other people.

2. Description of the writing

Type of script: Naskhi script is the dominant script used in the collection. In a few instances there are Naskhi texts which appear to me to have characteristically Sudanese handwriting. Interestingly, no other style of Arabic script occurs in the collection. There are some manzumas written in a beautiful script which superficially looks like Maghribi script but is actually Naskhi.

Layout of the page: The normal Arabic texts in this collection are rigorously restricted to a rectangular field delimited by borders on all four sides. In many instances marginal or interlinear notes are written. By contrast, the invented texts have no regular layout or consistent form at all. It is common for the page to be written all the way to the edge of the paper; the handwriting occurs in all possible orientations; and there are overwritings as well.

Rubrication³⁹: Following the common tradition of Arabic manuscripts, the normal (non-strange) Arabic texts often have rubrication. The main books which have rubrication are the Qur'an, grammar, logic and some poetic (manzuma) texts.

³⁹ Rubrications are headings and important words in texts which were highlighted by being written in red ink, though other colors of ink, and even occasionally gilt, were also used. The most common color, however, was red, and the term rubrication comes from the Latin term for red, *rubrica*. (Islamic Medical Manuscripts Home Page).

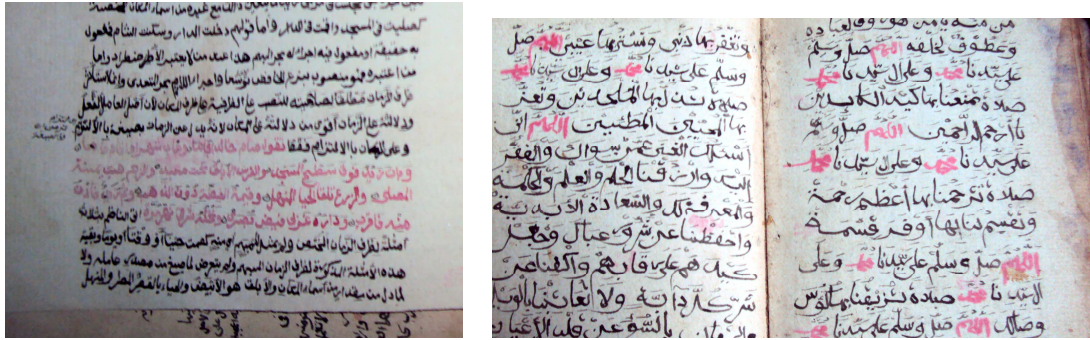


Figure 7: Rubricated texts (prose and poetry)

Handwriting: Most of the works were written by the Šayḥ himself in his own characteristic handwriting. His handwriting is easy to identify, and is legible and clear. But other handwritings also appear in the collection. There is one of these other handwritings which repeatedly occurs. It is not neat; I think it belongs to one of his disciples, who wrote it after the Šayḥ's departure from Seddeqa. The Šayḥ's handwriting can be identified especially by its distinctive Basmallah. In the following samples (from different manuscripts) we can note, for example, the large interval between *lām* and *hā* in the word *Allah*.



Figure 8: Basmallahs of the Šayḥ

Vocalization: Most frequently the normal Arabic texts are not vocalized. If they are vocalized it will typically be partial. By contrast, the invented texts (type I and type II) are fully vocalized, including the *šadda*. Type I texts in particular have completely standard vocalization.



Figure 7: Fully vocalized type I texts

Page numbering (Pagination): Page numbers are found in only one manuscript in the collection, a compilation of which the loose folios are the surviving parts of a numerology book. The page numbers are written at the top of the page. However, there is widespread use of catchwords among the normal Arabic texts. “The initial function of catchwords was to ensure the correct order of the quires as they were usually placed on the last folio of each quire (gathering). Later, however, their main role was to indicate the order of leaves (folia) in a quire” (Gacek 2009: 50). The catchwords in this collection appear at the bottom of the verso pages, as is standard practice. The majority of the manuscripts (especially the invented or “strange” texts) have neither page numbers nor catchwords.

For the purposes of cataloguing, I myself have numbered all the pages in all the manuscripts of the collection. The catalogue is based strictly on page numbers, not on folio numbers.

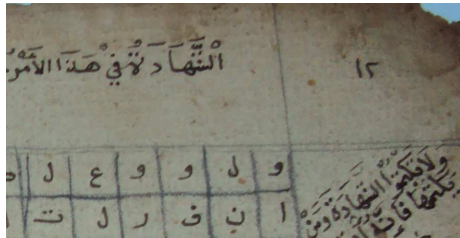


Figure 9: The only paginated manuscript (page 12 is shown)

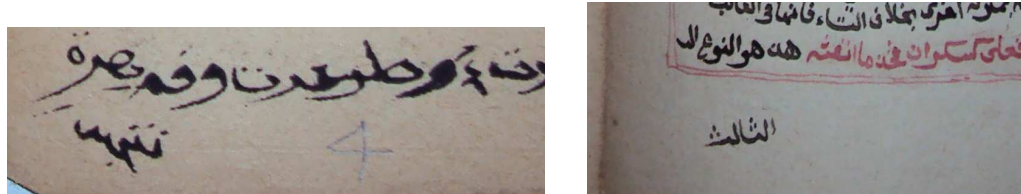


Figure 10: Catchwords from different manuscripts

Frames⁴⁰: Frames are abundant in this collection, appearing especially in normal Arabic and type II texts. The normal type of frame is simply a single line or sometimes a double line. Decorated frames are few, appearing only in colophons. In bound books the frames are well drawn and straight, reflecting the use of a ruler. Moreover, there is one fascinating type of frame occurring with type I texts, typically consisting of a “brick wall” of cartouches enclosing each single “word” or “phrase” (see chapter 4, type I text, figure 4).

⁴⁰ The term "frame" as used here refers to a border of parallel thin lines drawn around the text area in the manuscript itself. The lines composing the frame are usually drawn in colored inks, with the spaces between occasionally filled with gilding.



Figure 11: Frames from different manuscripts

Marginalia: The normal Arabic texts, especially bound books, typically have marginal notes, which is a common feature of the whole Arabic manuscript tradition. Marginal notes may occur in all four margins. Often the marginal notes can be more extensive than the main text, and can completely fill all the margins; this is especially true with the grammar texts. The invented texts have no marginal notes – or if they do, it is unclear whether it is a marginal note or the main body of the “text” itself.



Figure 12: Marginal notes

Interlineations: Interlineations have the same purpose as marginal notes, but occur between the lines, not in the margin. They are less common in the collection than marginal notes. Most of the interlineations are used for insertions, sometimes for corrections.

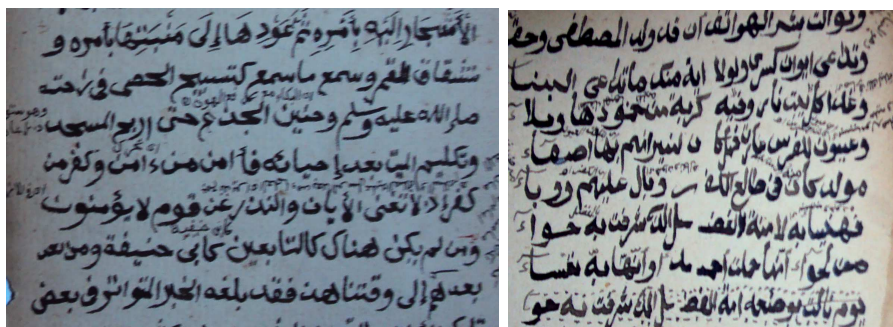


Figure 13: Interlineations (prose and poetry)

Decorations: There are a huge number of pictures in this collection, occurring however almost entirely in the “strange” texts. It is difficult to consider most of these as standard decorations because they occur randomly all over the “strange” pages. However, some real decorations do occur,

especially with the colophons. There are some instances of cloud-bands⁴¹ surrounding the entire colophon (see fig. 14). Moreover, there are type I texts with extremely large letters which themselves seem to function as decorations.

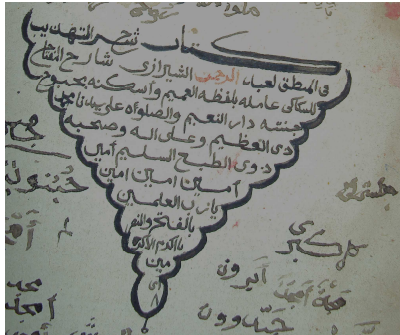


Figure 8: Decoration with cloud-bands

Number and orientation of lines: The normal Arabic texts, as well as the “Chinese book” of invented texts, have normal, neatly written horizontal text lines, roughly 10-20 lines per page. By contrast, the other invented texts are random in their orientation and appearance, and do not have any consistent page layout; also, pictures and texts appear mixed and overwritten. In the catalogue the number of lines per page for each manuscript is given, including variations among the pages.

3. Content description

The manuscripts contain three kinds of texts:

⁴¹ Cloudbands are decorative bands resembling clouds, used to fill in the space between the lines, the interline. They were created by outlining the shape of the line of writing and decorating the space in between with gilt (Gacek 2009:61).

1. Normal Arabic texts
2. Invented texts
3. Different kinds of pictures

The normal Arabic texts will be described in the catalogue in much greater detail than the invented texts. For the normal texts, the content of each section of the manuscript will be briefly stated, along with the page numbers of that section. The content can be poetry, logic, grammar, *dū'a*, magic and numerology, Salawāts, letters, wills, genealogies and even one power of attorney. Manuscript pages which do not fall under the normal text types contain “strange” texts of various kinds. I will give no detail for these pages except to specify whether the strange text is of type I, II, III, IV, V, or VI. Pages which have pictures will be identified as such, but no detail about the kind of picture will be given.

Title page: “Traditionally the title page in a book is the page which carries the title of the work and other information pertaining to its authorship and transmission” (Gacek 2009:277). It is always found at the beginning of the book or a section. In this collection there are many title pages for normal Arabic texts.

Title: If the manuscript has a title (given in the title piece or in the colophon), it will be given here. In some cases I myself have given a title to a book or a compilation. Some of the Arabic rhyming titles which are given in the title pieces are not translated, since the title seldom says anything about the content. There are two peculiar titles which are enormously long and rhyming; in some ways they resemble the “strange” texts.

Colophons: There are three examples of colophons in this collection. These contain only a title and date, and one scribal verse.

The **incipit** is the first sentence of normal Arabic text in the given manuscript after the Basmallah, while the **desinit** is the last sentence of normal text (including the colophon, if any). In some manuscripts the beginning (or ending) pages may be full of “strange” texts; these pages will not be considered when stating the incipit and desinit. In such cases, the page number of the incipit and desinit will be given.

4. *External Information*

In this section I include where the manuscripts are kept and their general condition when I discovered them. I also include important information like certificate of ownership and any peculiar features of the manuscript. (In fact there was only one certificate of ownership discovered.)

Differences in format between individual entries

Since different manuscripts are of different types and have different contents, not all the entries in the catalogue have a consistently uniform format. For example, the entry for an unbound manuscript will not have a section “Binding”; if the manuscript has no pictures, there will not be a section “Pictures”.

List of Catalogued Manuscripts

Bound Books

Sed book No. 1: Şalawāt, manzuma

Hidāyat al-muḥtadīn wa-buġyat al-muršidīn wa-ʿasrār al-ʿārifīn

Physical description

Bound in brown cardboard, covered with cotton cloth; at each corner is a triangle of hard blue paper. The binding is in good condition. There is also a rectangular piece of modern ruled paper attached to the binding; it connects (perhaps reinforces) the cotton cloth and the cardboard. Inside of the cover there is a text written on an attached paper about prominent Rašādiyya personalities. Size of the cover is 18 cm x 13 cm.

Turkish paper, yellowish cream color, with watermark reading *بياض ابوشبک اسطمبولي*

bayāḍ ʿabū šabak ʿiṣṭambūlī ʿāl ʿaṣī lī. It is in good condition with no observable damage; 90 folios.

Black ink, with specific words rubricated in red and rarely purple. The handwriting is clear and legible.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, normal size letters, page size 14 cm x 8.5 cm, written field is 12.5 cm x 6 cm; in the magical part often the entire page is written on.

Specific words like Allah or Muhammad are rubricated in red ink. Apparently he ran out of red ink in places, for at times the word is written in purple or a blank space is left.

Except for the magic portion, which may not be his work, the text is clear and legible. It is well vocalized. Catchwords are used for foliation. Frames are found on page 151 (single lines) and 152 (double lines).

11 lines per page are common but some pages have a different number of lines: 12 lines on pages 48, 51, 52, 73, 77, 78, 79, 104, 106, 141, 142, 147, 148; 13 lines on pages 46, 69, 74; 10 lines on pages 70 and 72.

Content description

Ṣalawāt, manzuma, by the Sheikh; the last 5 pages contain ruqya, i.e. medical-magical prayers written in a very different handwriting possibly by a different person; pages 174-176 appear to be a later addition by the Šayḥ. The first folio has several short du'as mentioning prominent rašādiyya personalities. The actual title page, which is on page 3, contains the title and date of the manuscript (13??), and adds a scribal verse consisting of Ṣalawāt. It also has the Sheikh's stamp which reads "Sayyid Mus'id". It has

an ownership statement on the cover, written on the added piece of modern ruled paper; it reads: *hādā haqqu šayḥ ḥassan abba gojjam.*

Incipit: After the Basmallah, it reads: *Allahumma ʾinni nawaytu al-šalāta wa-al-salām ʿalā sayyid al-mursalīn.*

‘Oh Allah I intend blessing and salutation on the Master of the prophets’.

Desinit: *Allahumma ṣalli wa-sallim ʿalā sayyidina wa-mawlānā Muḥammad wa-ʿalā sayyidina Muḥammad bi-ʿadadi kulli ḍarratin ʾalf ʾalf marrāt ʾāmīn*

‘Oh Allah make your peace and salutations upon our Master and chief Muhammad and upon our Master Muhammad (as numerous as) the number of atoms, a thousand and thousand times, amen’.

External information

It is kept in the residence of the guardian Abba Hikam Abba Digga in Seddeqa. The manzuma is one of the Sheikh’s unquestioned masterpieces.

It is popular in Ğimma, Arsi and Bale.

Sed book No. 2: Ṣalawāt, manzuma

Ġāyat al-murād

Physical description

It is a half-bound book in which the hard cardboard has leather onlays on the 4 outer corners. It has a separate cover inside consisting of hard paper (classeur). The size is 24 cm x 19 cm. It is in good condition.

Turkish paper, yellowish cream color, with the common watermark (moon face and shield). It is in good condition. 138 ff.

Black ink; specific words and the sub-sections (mašārib) are rubricated in red, with purple replacing the red ink in a few places. The handwriting is clear and legible.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, normal size letters. The paper size is 23.5 cm x 15 cm; written field is 19 cm x 14 cm.

Rubrication is used for the mašārib and important words. The manuscript includes some type I text, enclosed by frames in purple or black ink. Often the frame is a double line. Catchwords for foliation. A few corrections appear between the lines or in the margins. The handwriting is clear and legible. 16 lines per page are common, but pages 16, 21, 22, and 25 have 14 lines, and pages 5, 8, 9, 17-20 and 29 have 15 lines.

Content Description

On pages 1-3 type I text and pictures. Pages 4 -209 is manzuma; pages 210-211 have another manzuma which is written in black and purple ink. It ends halfway down page 211. From 211 (halfway down) to page 269 there is type I text (written upside down) and various pictures, like orbits, shield, wheel etc.

It has a colophon on page 209 which reads:

tammat al-qaṣīdatu wa-bi-tamāmihā tammat al-majmūʿa wa-al-ḥamdu li-

Allāhi rabb al-ʿalamīn [sic] 1352 sana

‘The poem is finished, and with its completion the compendium is finished, praise be to Allah, the Lord of creation 1352 A.H. (1933 A.D.)’

Incipit (after Basmallah): al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm bismi Allāhi al-Karīm al-Wadūd Allahumma ṣalli ʿalā sirr al-wujūd

‘The gracious the merciful, in the name of Allah, the bountiful, the affectionate, Oh Allah may your praise be upon the secret of existence (the Prophet)’.

Desinit: = colophon

External Information

It is one of the intact bound books composed by the Šayḥ. It is kept along with other mss in the box. It is the Šayḥ’s second-most famous manzuma.

Sed book No. 3: qaṣīda, manzuma

Bustān

Physical description

Bound in thick hard leather and covered with dirty cotton cloth; the size is 25.8 cm x 18 cm. The cotton cloth is partly detached at the top, but the binding is in good condition.

Remarkably, the book consists of quires of both Arab and modern ruled paper mixed; pages 1-62 Arab, 63-79 modern, 83-146 Arab, 147-257 modern. The modern paper is ruled with green lines. All the paper (of both types) is in good condition. The last two pages show some exposure to moisture and the text is somewhat damaged. 129 ff.

Black ink; the usual words and the section headings (*mašārib*) are rubricated, usually with red ink, in some places with brownish black. Blue ballpoint ink is used on the first page for the *tamalluk* (ownership statement).

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, normal size letters. Size of Arab paper is 25.5 cm x 17.5 cm, and of modern paper 25 cm x 17.3 cm. Written field 21 cm x 10 cm.

Clear and legible handwriting; not fully vocalized. As usual for manzumas in this collection, catchwords are found regularly. 15 lines per page are common; 13 lines are on pages 147-153; 14 on 154-55; 16 lines on 156, 158; 17 lines on 157, 159, 160, 163, 164, 167, 168 and 183; 18 lines on 162, 165, 166, 169, 178, 182.

Content description

Entirely manzuma. The ratio of long and short lines varies; from “6 short, 1 long” to “11 short, 1 long”. It has 37 *mašarib*. On page 257 there is colophon with date only and scribal note. It reads:

Tammāt bi-ʿawni Allāh fi šahri Dū al-Ḥijjah baʿda muḍiy tisʿi yawm 13??
sana.

‘Completed with the help of Allah in the month Dhu al-Hijjah, after the passage of nine days in the year 13??’

It has ownership (*tamalluk*) statement on page 1 written with ballpoint pen.

It reads:

Hād[a] [al-]kitāb milku sayyidati Ḥawwā bint sayyid sādāt Ṣaddīqiy ḥaṭṭu a[l]-
sayyid Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn bin sayyid sādāt Ṣaddīqiy

‘This book is the property of Mistress Hawwa, daughter of the Ṣaddīqiy Master of masters; copied by master Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, the son of Master of masters Ṣaddīqiy’

Incipit: after Basmallah it reads:

Al-ḥayyu yā al-ḥayyu yā al-ḥayyu yā al-ḥayyu ṣallī ʿalā ḥatm al-anbiyāʾ

‘Oh you the ever-living [Allah] (three times), praise the seal of the Prophets [Muhammad]’

Desinit: = colophon.

External information

According to the guardian the manuscript used to be kept in the main Ḥaḍrah (gathering place) of the great mosque of Seddeqa; but when I made my visit it was together with all the other manuscripts in the small mosque.

It is one of the two manuscripts with a certificate of ownership; the certificate states that the manuscript was once in the possession of the Šayḥ's daughter. Now it is in the possession of her son, the guardian of the mosques.

Sed book No. 4: The Chinese book

Physical description

Bound book in half-bound fashion, with hard cardboard; it is intact. The size is 25 cm x 13 cm.

Turkish paper with the watermark common watermark, yellowish cream color. It is in good condition. 201 ff; 92 folios are written on and 109 are blank.

The entire book is written in pink and blue-black ink.

Description of the writing

Almost entirely "Chinese text". On page 1 there is type V text, also a Du^ca³, in normal Arabic script. The text on page 2 looks like deformed Arabic, except for the Basmallah; another Basmallah occurs on page 17. in normal Arabic script. 15 and 16 lines per page are common; page 1 has 13 lines. Page size is 18.5 cm x 11.9 cm, written field is 16.5 cm x 9.3 cm.

Content description

It consists almost entirely of the quasi-Chinese text; a Du^ca³ and type V text are found on page one. For details see chapter 4, section 'Type III Text'. The normal Arabic part reads:

Incipit: The Basmallah

Desinit: ʾaʿūdū bi-Allāhi min al-ṭuġyān wa-min šarri {ms: repeats šarri}
ʾahlihā wa-min al-kufr [?]...

‘I seek refuge in Allah from tyranny and from the evil of its[?] people and from disbelief...’

On page 19 there is a double line which seems to indicate the end of a section of “text”. On page 168 and again on page 179 there is an unfinished “paragraph” of text, evidently written from right to left like the Arabic writing system (see sec. on Type III text) Page 17 has a Basmallah as a heading followed by more “Chinese” text.

External information

This mysterious text is considered by the people of Seddeqa as a sign of the Šayḥ’s holiness. My informants told me that the Šayḥ prophesized that these texts will be deciphered by someone who will come in the future.

Sed Book No. 5: Type I and V text and pictures

Physical description

Modern exercise book. It is well bound in cardboard painted with a black layer which is scratched away in places; on the inside there is another cover in white hard paper. On both the inside front cover and first leaf of the book there is a sign of the producer reading ‘ATM’, with each letter in turn written

inside one petal of a three-petaled flower. This is a good proof that the book is of European origin. It is generally in good condition.

It is written on modern ruled paper (with some vertical columns). The paper is thick and soft, grey in color; it has no watermark, but the sign on the cover suggests its European origin. The quires are partly detached though the binding holds them together to some extent. On pages 45-51 the bottom margin is damaged by moisture near the spine; on many folios coffee drops are visible. 46 folios.

Blue, black, blue-black, pink, and purple inks are used. The ink is blurry in some instances; also some words and pictures are deformed due to water drops.

Description of the writing

The type I and type V texts are in Naskhi script, page size is 17.8 cm x 11 cm, the written part is highly variable. The letters are both medium and large. The type V text is legible and clear, but there are a number of instances of type I texts which are blurry due to the ink's poor quality. Almost all the texts are well vocalized except for a few examples of non-vocalized type I text. Orientation of the writing is random, and there are many overwritings.

Content description

It contains type I and type V texts, with no normal text. There are many pictures, on pages 4, 18, 19, 21, 23, 25-27, 31, 36, 40, 41-47, 54, 55, 60, 61, 64-66, 69, 73, 75-79, 81, 86, 88 and 92: buildings, shaded circles, animal-like pictures, tree-like pictures, sun, wheel, orbits, and others. This book contains many of the extraordinary bird pictures, as well as type I text and the non-column format kind of type V text.

External information

The book seems to have the appearance of a magical book. It was bundled together with other books having a different kind of paper.

Sed book No. 6: “Book of everything” (see below)

Physical description

Two pieces of cardboard attached to each other at the spine with cotton cloth and sewn together. The traditional wheat syrup (*aṭmit*) is used as glue. The binding is in half-bound fashion. Both the binding and the quires are in good condition but detached from each other. Inside the binding there is a date written in Hijri and Gregorian calendar which reads: tawāriḥ dū al-qā'ida 21, 1377 Hijra, milād 1955 Mayo [May 8]. These are not the same date, which is presumably a mistake. The page size is 17.5 cm x 13 cm. On

the outer cover there are half-a-dozen fidāl characters, partly illegible and making no sense.

Turkish paper with the usual watermark, yellowish cream color, in good condition. The quires are intact and in good condition. 103 ff.

Blue, black, red, pink and green inks are used; bright and clear.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, page size is 17.5 cm x 13 cm, the written portion is variable. Most of the text is in normal-sized letters, but a few type I words are extra large. Pages 77-78 have Du^{ca}, with rubrications in red ink, for words like *Allah*. The handwriting is legible throughout the book. A minority of the texts are fully vocalized. Type II text has frames drawn with a single line. The type I texts have cartouches in some instances. Overwriting is extremely common. Pages which are Du^{ca} have from 15-16 lines, other pages are variable.

Content description

Pages 2-3 have notes about al-Šādīliy (founder of the Šādīliyya order) and others Sufi saints; pages 4 and 67 have many lines of the ṭarīqā poem; pages 40-45, 53, 57, 58 have a single line of the ṭarīqā poem at the top of the page, with invented texts on the rest of the page; pages 75, 77-79, 92, 95, 99-100, 106-107, 126 are Du^{ca} composed of Qur'anic passages. On pages 15 and 114 there is Ṣalawāt. The remaining portion has invented

texts of all kinds. There are also pictures like quasi-magic squares, flowers, buildings and round objects.

Incipit: page 2 (where the normal text begins): Basmallah followed by Ḥamdallah, then continuing: wa-al-°āqibatu lī-al-muttaqīn wa-ṣalla Allāhu wa-sallam °alā sayyidina Muḥammad wa-°alā °ālihi wa-ṣaḥbihi wa-sallam.

‘May the ultimate end be to the pious, and may Allah’s praise and salutation be upon our master Muḥammad, his Family and Companions’.

Desinit: page 152, the last page has normal text.

Wa-ṣallā Allāhu °alā sayyidinā Muḥammad wa-°alā °ālihi wa-ṣaḥbihi wa-sallam bi-°adadi kulli ḍikrin wa-ḍikruhu °ilā yawm al-dīn.

‘May the salutation of Allah be upon our master Muḥammad, his family and companions, with the number of all invocations, and his invocation [shall be] until the Day of Judgment’.

External information

It is kept under the guardianship of Abba Hikam. Unlike all the other manuscripts except the Qur’an, it was not tied together with other books. The invocations and the instructions how to perform them give detailed information about the Šādiliyya order. It is a sort of “book of everything” because it contains all forms of the invented texts.

Sed book No. 7: Type II text and calligraphy

Physical description

It is a half-bound book with two cream-colored cardboards attached together as one single paper. On the inside there is a separate hard blue paper with a mark of the paper producer written in red ink; it says “moṭā Muḥammad ʿalī”, which might be the name of a company which produces bound exercise books. The paper is bigger than the binding (!). There is a lot of dirt on the binding. Both the quires and the binding are attached strongly.

Turkish paper with the usual watermark. good condition, yellowish cream color. 24 cm x 18 cm, written field on the page varies. 242 ff.

Black, purple, blue-black and red colors are used, all bright and visible. In many places large-sized words are found.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, with more large-sized letters than in other manuscripts; but medium and small-sized letters are abundant. The handwriting in the manzuma part is legible but it is worse than in the normal texts of other manuscripts. There are many instances which appear to resemble Japanese calligraphy. Page 74 has 16 lines of manzuma, page 75 has only 6 lines, page 90 has 18 lines, page 91 has 21 lines and page 92 has 8 lines.

Content description

It has manzuma on page 74-75 which is muḥammas (four short verses followed by one long verse). On pages 90-92 the poem instead has a ratio of 1 long to 5 short lines. Pages 249-250 have a note about Sufism. However, the vast majority of the manuscript involves large amounts of type I text and different kinds of pictures: buildings, shields, orbits, painted circles, quasi-magic squares, flowers, sun, cross, plant-like images, spider webs, eye etc. The pages which contain pictures are 2, 3, 7, 12, 17, 29, 36, 42, 49, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 61-65, 70, 71, 77, 78, 84, 86, 96, 97, 99, 103, 111, 126-128, 134, 138, 140, 142-146, 163-165, 168-173, 179, 180-184, 197, 200, 202-206, 223, 224, 230, 236, 241, 253, 255, 257, 259, 262, 276, 278, 292, 293, 299, 314, 342, 355, 377, 387, 391, 417, 473, 476, and 488. The other pages have Type I text.

It is the most beautiful work in the collection. The type I text is presented in an elaborately decorated manner. Often the words appear in a cartouche. There are also a few formally framed pages, e.g. page 477. On many pages one word occurs many times, “conjugated” creatively in different forms— a kind of pseudo-i‘rāb. Such words are written in a column so that it is easy to observe the changes. As already noted, the type I text on many pages features very large letters resembling Japanese calligraphy.

Incipit: page 74 manzuma begins with: al-salāmu °alaykum ‘peace be upon you’, repeated multiple times.

Desinit: page 92, wajādu ḥawd al-maqā[m] al-°ajam wa al-°arab bi šamsi
nājuhu fī al-°ilm

External information

This is by far the biggest book in the collection, and yet, despite the large number of folios, it has little normal text. It does not seem to me to be reasonable to believe that the Šayḥ was just doodling on expensive paper at that time.

Sed Book No. 8: Book of the type II text.

Physical description

Binding is blue folded cardboard; the binding and the quires are detached from each other. Some quires have also lost their sewing. 25 cm x 13 cm. It is eaten by mice at the center of the spine. Also both covers are eaten to some extent at the left margin.

Turkish paper with the usual watermark. Twenty folios are eaten by mice at the bottom left margin. Size 18 cm x 12.5 cm. The written part of the pages is highly variable. 32 ff.

Purple, red, green, and black inks are used. Type II text is always written in purple or red. The normal Arabic text is in black ink.

Description of the writing

The only normal Arabic text in this book is on page 31 (4 lines only); it is written in Naskhi script. Compared to the dominant type II text, this brief

text has smaller letters and is written less carefully. The script type of the type II cursive texts is not easy to determine. The type II text is thoroughly vocalized. Its text often has frames drawn with a single line; such frames are found on pages 8, 10-12, 14, 15, 48, 52, 58 and 59. Usually the type II text written in red ink has no frames, while the text in purple repeatedly does have frames.

Content description

Type II texts overwhelmingly dominate the book, though there are pictures and a very short normal text. Pages 29, 51 and 52 have type I text with thin letters. The brief normal Arabic text is a fragment of a Sufi poem.

Incipit [of the normal text]: *jāmi^c al-wujūd nūr al...* 'the verifier of existence'

Desinit: ... *raḥmat al-wadūd* 'mercy of the Lover'

Unbound Books

Sed unbound book No. 1: The Noble Qur^ʿān

European paper with watermark, i.e. three crescents, thick and cream-colored. It is generally in good condition, but the first five folios are damaged by moisture at the spine, and the corners of the book are partly destroyed. Page size 22 cm x 16 cm, written field 17.7 cm x 11.5 cm. The number of folios is 152 ff. with catchwords as usual.

The dominant color of the ink is black but red is used for rubricating. The ink is strong and visible.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, normal size letters clearly written. Some selected words are written with larger letters. Rubrication is extensive: the name of each Qurʾānic chapter, the numbering of the verses, dot marking verse boundaries, and some of the vowels are done in red ink; some important words are bold. The concluding remark, which is a supplication, is in an indifferent and less careful handwriting. This is the most vocalized of the normal texts in the collection. All the standard signs for the recitation of the Qurʾān are used. Catchwords are written at the bottom left margin of the verso. Marginal notes (in red) indicate only the divisions of the Qurʾān (*juzʾ* and *ḥizb*). 15 lines per page.

Content description

The manuscript contains the Noble Qurʾān from sūra Maryam (19) to sūra al-Nās (114). There are end remarks (a scribal verse) which given the date and which supplied to Allah to help the copyist avoid mistakes while writing. The date is ([1]213 AH), 1798 AD. The handwriting is not the Šayḥ's. Incipit: sūrat maryam ṭamānin wa-tisʿūna ʾāyah wa-hiya nazalat makkah
'the sura of Mary, [it has] 98 verses and it was revealed in Mecca'

Desinit: rabbana taqabbal minnā ḥatm al-Qurʿān wa-tajāwaz ʿannā mā kāna fī tilāwatihi min ḥaṭāʾin ʾaw nisyān ...ʾaw ziyādatin aw nuqṣān aw taʾwīl ʿalā ḡayri mā ʾanzaltahu ‘Oh Allah may You accept our completion of (recitation) of the Qurʿān, and may you pass over (forgive) us for any mistakes that occur in its recitation, or negligence ...or insertions or deletions or interpretations (allegorical) which You did not reveal’

External Information

The guardian claims that this Qurʿān was copied by the Šayḥ himself. However, this is impossible. The handwriting is wrong, and the date found in the manuscript is a century earlier than the Šayḥ’s birth date.

Sed unbound book No. 2: Kitāb rawḍat al-ʾasrār fī ṣalaw[ā]t ʿalā al-muṣṭafā al-muḥtār

Physical description

Turkish paper with the common watermark, cream-colored except that the last three folios are dirty due to moisture. In the left margin on the bottom, mice have nibbled a small piece out of many pages. The size of the folios is 17.5 cm x 12.3 cm; written field 12.5 cm x 7 cm, in relatively good condition. 81 ff, with catchwords.

Black is the predominant ink color; red is used for rubrication. Except for the last folio which is blurry due to moisture, all the text in the book is clear and legible. However, the quires are loose.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, normal size of letters clear and legible, a few words are written bold. Marginal notes are on pages 4, 5, 7, 9, 12, 118 and 119; pages 159-161 consist entirely of annotations. The rubrication involves important words like Allah and Muhammad and the mašārib; handwriting is legible, fully vocalized, with catchwords. Frames are found on the title page (page one), drawn with double-lines but only two sides are completed. Pages two and three share a single large frame. Pages 60 and 61 have their own double line frames, as does page 150. Pages 1, 150, and 159 have colophon-like texts with cloud band decoration and the usual triangle shape; page 1 is the title page, while pages 153 and 159 are at the end of subsections. Page 159 also bears a date. The ṣalawāt part has 10 lines per page; pages 160-161 have 15 and 17 lines.

Content description

It is a ṣalawāt book (pages 1–159) authored by Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn al-ʿAnṣarī, with some appended notes on Sufism. Three sections: pages 1-60 the first, pages 61-149 the second and pages 150-153 the third. Each section has a concluding remark in the form of a Duʿāʾ. Pages 154-159 contain

additional Du^{ʿā}. Page 160 has annotations involving Hadīth. The last two pages (161 and 162) contain sayings of prominent Sufi figures about Sufism. The title page, page 1, states the title and the author of the book. The colophon on page 159 has a Du^{ʿā}, instruction for the ṣalawāt and a date [1319 AH] (1901); it is accompanied by annotations. Page 153 is the end of a section; it gives a Du^{ʿā} which has a colophon-like appearance, involving, a triangular shape and cloud-bands as decoration.

Incipit: kitāb rawḍat al-ʿasrār fī ṣalaw[ā]t ʿalā al-muṣṭafā al-muḥtār

‘The garden of secrets in praising the selected one [Muhammad]’

Desinit: Fa-ʿiḍa māta hawwana Allāhu taʿālā jawāb nakīr wa-munkar

When he dies, Allah the exalted will facilitate the response(s) he gives to Nakir and Munkar⁴²

External Information

This book was kept in the larger of the two mosques of Seddeqa. The local people claim that the Ṣayḥ brought this manuscript from Dawway in Wällo, which is plausible since he stayed there for some time before coming to Ğimma.

Sed unbound book No. 3: Book of genealogy

⁴² These are angels who appear to the person just buried and interrogates him about basic tenets of Islam. If he answers properly they record him for paradise; if not, for hell.

Physical description

Modern ruled exercise book, (lines in green ink); paper is cream-colored, soft and of medium thickness. Book is in good condition but the last two folios from page 111-114 are almost detached from the quire and due to moisture the color of the paper has become darker of these pages, 19 lines per page, size 16.8 x 10.5 cm. The written field in the manzuma part 14.8 cm x 8 cm. 57 ff.

Pink, black, blue, and blue-black inks are used; a recent addition in ballpoint pen is found on page 95. The inks are bright except on pages 88-90 and 94, where a liquid (presumably water) has affected the ink.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, normal size letters, legible handwriting; only the type I text is vocalized. Page 71 has 9 lines. The manzuma, has 18 lines on pages 106, 108, 110, 112 and 114; page 111 has 16 lines. In the genealogy, pages 88-89 have 16 lines, and page 90 has 18 lines.

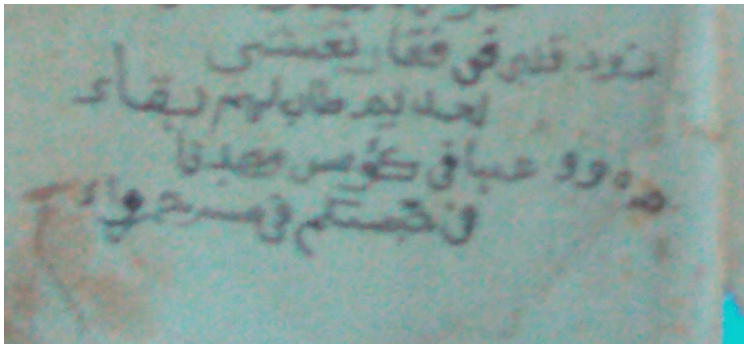
Content description

Page 71 is a note about the ending date of the fasting month Ramadan. Page 88-90 gives the genealogy of the Šayḥ on his father's side is presented on page 88, and the mother's side is on pages 89-90. Both the lines going back to Adam (!). The older part of this genealogy is anachronistic because it contains Arab names only a few generations after Adam and it is also much too short. A manzuma (written upside down) is found on pages 105-112,

formatted in one undivided column. Except for these pages, the book is overwhelmingly occupied by type I texts, and pictures of the Ka[°]bā, spider webs, and other types.

Incipit: sab[°]a wa-ṭalaṭūna sana ma[°]a ṭalāṭati ʾašhur. ‘73 years and 3 months’.

Desinit: mostly illegible blurry ink



External information

The manuscript contains invaluable information about the genealogy of the Šayḥ. Originally his maternal ancestors were Somalis who came to Arsi.

Sed unbound book No. 4: Mixed contents

Physical description

Not bound but there is a blue hard paper which looks an inside cover that is attached to the quire. Turkish paper with the common watermark, some of the quires are loose, cream color. On pages 35-37 the color of the folios has darkened due to moisture. The page size is 18 cm x 12 cm. the written field of the ṭarīqā poem is 15 cm x 8 cm. 113 ff.

Red, blue, blue-black and black inks are used. The ink is in good condition.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, normal medium size letters, Page 44 and 109 have single-line frames. On Page 1, 20 lines, page 2 has 3 lines, page 4 has 4 lines, and page 44 has 5 lines. Page 51 has 15 lines, page 52 has 11 lines, page 61 has 4 lines.

Content description

Page 1-2 is a note about making supplication, with a Hadīth reported by Ibn Abbas followed by a Du^{ʿā} involving Allah's beautiful names. Pages 4 and 44 have notes about the ṭarīqā; page 61 has a Du^{ʿā} of *tawassul* (supplication of intercession) invoking the name of Šayḥ Nur Hussein of Bali. Pages 145-146 have a quasi-Arabic alphabet set. Page 51 has 15 lines of the ṭarīqā poem, it continues on the first 11 lines of page 52. Pictures are found in most of the manuscript, on pages 53, 127, 12-146, 177 and 220: spider webs, flowers, the compass, the orbits, and so on. There are also type I texts with cartouches, with extra-large letters and with beautiful calligraphy, and type II texts.

Incipit: fā'idāt fī dīkr al-ʿadʿiya al-mustajāba li-l-šayḥ ʿabī al-faḥ al-maqdisī raḥimahu Allāh 'benefits of mentioning the (highly) accepted supplications by Šayḥ Abu al-Faḥ al-Maqdisi, may Allah have mercy upon him'

Desinit: page 177: ṣalla Allāhu ʿalā sayyidina Muḥammad wa-ʿalā ʿālihi wa-ṣahābatihi ʿajmaʿīn ʿamīn ʿilā yawm al-dīn ‘may Allah blessour Master Muhammad, his family and all of the companions, Amen, until the Day of Judgment’.

External information

The handwriting on page 1-2 and 61 are very different from the Ṣayḥ’s, It indicates that the people in Seddeqa were writing on the open fields of his manuscript after he moved to Illubabor.

The paper and most of the text and pictures it contains, strongly helped me to compile it as one entry.

Sed unbound book No. 5: Book of numerology (ʿAwfūq)

Physical Description

Turkish paper, of rough and hard texture. Eaten by mice near the spine at the bottom all the marginal edges are spoiled by dirt and moisture; there are also drops of coffee on many pages. The (single) quire is loose; the thread is cut from one of the sewed holes. 16.4 cm x 5 cm, the entire sheet of paper is often written on. 6 ff.

Black ink is used for the letters, for the lines and for Qurʿānic verses. Some red ink is also found. The ink is clear and intact.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, normal size of letters. Clear and legible handwriting, which (NB) is different from the Šayḥ's. Qur'an verses, which fill up most the marginal space, are marked with a red dot at the beginning and the end of the verse. The Qur'anic verses and the titles on each page are fully vocalized. Each magic square table has 16 x 10 cells. This is the only manuscript with page numbers; the pagination uses Arabic numerals which are written the top right corner. Strangely the number range from page 11-22.

Content description

Numerology; a type of fortune telling which employs the Arabic alphabet an abjad, assigning assigning a numerical value to each letter; the letters are put in a rectangular array with the property that the sum of the numbers in each vertical, horizontal, and or diagonal row is the same. Based on this grid, the sum of the letters of an individual's name will be calculated and his fortune told. The fortune deals with marriage and other issues. There is a new heading on each page, which typically asks a question or presents a field of enquiry. All the marginal space is fully of Qur'anic verses directly pertaining to the respective title. Examples:

Page 11 (1): hal yaşīru ḥarbun ʿam şulḥun

‘Will war come or reconciliation?’

Page 12 (2): ittiḥādatun fī hāḍa al-ʿamr ḥayrun ʿam lā

‘Is consensus in this issue a good thing or not?’

Page 13 (3): ʿaqd al-nikāḥi ḥayrun ʾam lā

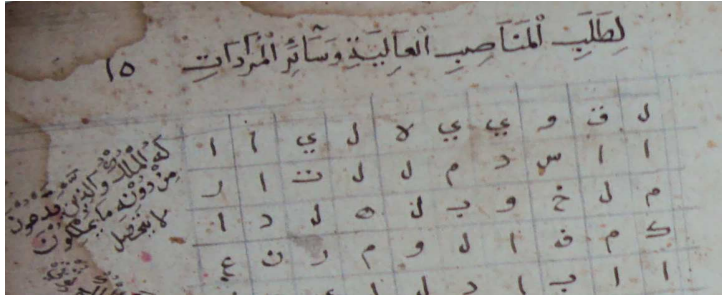
‘Is it good to arrange a marriage or not?’

Page 14 (4): hal taḥfaẓu ʾamānatan ʾam lā

‘Should she keep a deposit in trust or not?’

Page 15 (5): li-ṭalab al-manāṣibi al-ʿāliyati wa-sāʾir al-murādāti

‘In search of higher position(s) and other desiderata’



Page 16 (6): hal yabīʿu wa-yaštārī ʾam lā

‘Should he buy and sell or not?’

Page 17 (7): al-maḥbūsu yataḥallaṣ ʾam lā

‘Will the prisoner be freed or not?’

Page 18 (8): hal hāḍihi al-marʾatu tatazawwaj ʾam lā ‘Will this lady get married or not?’

Page 19 (9): al-musāfiru yajrī sarīʿan ʾam yabṭi

‘Will the traveler travel fast or slow?’

Page 20 (10): ʿāqibatu hāḍa al-ʾamru ḥayrun ʾam lā

‘Will the outcome of this matter be good or not?’

Page 21 (11): fī maʿrifat al-ġālib wa-al-maġlūb

‘On identifying the winner and the loser’

Page 22 (12): hal hādihi al-nafsu ḥāmilatun ʿam lā

‘Is this person (woman) pregnant or not?’

Each of these heads shows what topic is being dealt with by numerology on this particular page. The header is immediately followed by a magic square (see photo).

External information

I heard from the people in the mosque that the Šayḥ was against such divination practices. He even burnt many magic manuscripts. The handwriting of this work also suggests that it was not his work. It might be suggested that such practices were only started in Seddeqa after the Šayḥ’s departure to Illubabor, by those who remained behind.

Sed unbound book No. 6: List of books

Physical descriptions

Turkish paper with the common watermark, cream color, loose quires in which some folios are detached. The sewing is loose but it still holds the quire together. On pages 11-16 a diagonal piece is torn away from the bottom on the side away from the spine; on pages 19-20 the same thing occurs at the top. A few pages are soiled due to dirt and moisture. Page

size is 16 cm x 12 cm, but on pages 23-24 a strip of paper is cut away from the upper and bottom margins so the size is 14 cm x 12 cm. The written field ranges from the full page to 16 cm x 12 cm. 18 ff.

Black, red and blue inks are used. On page 32 a liquid (perhaps water) has damaged part of the text so that it is not readable. The remaining text is clear and legible although considerable parts of the paper have been exposed to liquids.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, normal size of letters, rubricated with red ink on pages 13, 24 and 36; an overline mark occurs on page 19. Entirely in the Šayḥ's handwriting. Often he writes some words and phrases vertically or diagonally in the margin or as an interlinear. At least some of these seem to be integral parts of the text (e.g. they include *kitāb* titles). The number of lines is available, e.g. page 3 is 21, page 5 is 25, page 7 is 23, page 8 is 14, page 9 is 20, page 19 is 21, page 27 is 19 lines. Most of the pages (like these) have a relatively high number of lines, but some pages only have 3 or 4 lines of writing. There is only one picture on page 2, consisting of three little in a row circles joined by two arcs; each circle has a dot at the center. Above each circle there is a phrase about directions (šarḥ al-ʿawwal, etc.).

Content description

This text, which is primarily a list of book titles, could be an important piece of evidence for the wider knowledge of the Šayḥ, if indeed these books really exist(ed). Headings are found on pages 19, 24, 30 and 31, signaled by the Basmallah. On pages 3-11 it presents a list of numerous books, using the phrase *kitāb al-....* Page 13 contains a Du‘a’. Page 19 is a note about the Rašādiyya order, with instructions on how to perform the prayers. On pages 21-24 the list of books continues. Page 27 has a manzuma in praise of Šayḥ Muḥammad Rašād Qaḳiy (the founder of the Rašādiyya order). Page 30 has a note about the four seasons in Arabic; it then lists the names of the months in Amharic and Argobba in Arabic script (‘ajami), explicitly stating that these month-names are from these respective languages. At the end of page 30 is a Qurānic quotation (9:36) which deals with the division of the year into 12 months. Page 31 contains a Du‘a’, which includes various quoted phrases from the Qur‘ān. At the beginning of the Du‘a’ he seeks refuge in Allah. Page 32 continues the list of books, and also has a poem in praise of the Prophet Muhammad. Pages 33 and 36 continue the list of books.

Incipit: *kitāb mawlid al-nabiḳ* ‘book of the Prophet’s birthday festival’

Desinit: *kitāb tafriḥ al-madaniḳ* ‘book of solace for the city dweller [or: for the Medinan]’

External information

This book presents a very long — perhaps impossibly long — list of book titles. It is not clear which are real books and which (perhaps) are invented titles. Many of the titles look artificial; often successive titles rhyme. It perhaps gives a clue about the linguistic competence of the writer in that he seems to know Amharic and Argobba.

Compiled books (loose pages)

Sed compiled book 1: Kitāb jawāhir mašhad al-mašhūd, wa-jannat al-wujūd al-khulūd, wa-masjid al-wadūd ḡū al-rafi° wa-al-maqām wa-al-‘izz wa-al-madām wa-barqat al-tamām wa-mafšī al-salām wa-al-rakz wa-al-maqām ‘amīn.

Wa-kitābu fatḥ al-hamīd fī-hāšiya alfāz al-Qur’ān

Physical description

Turkish paper with the common watermark, ivory in color. The quires are either separated or loosely attached. The folios in the first and last quires are fragile; pages 3 and 4 and pages 177-180 have holes due to mice. Paper size is 24 cm x 17.7 cm. The Arabic prose part has catchwords. I have assembled the pages together based on catchwords, size of the paper and similarity of the text they contain. 94 ff.

The normal Arabic text is written with black ink; the remaining “strange” types are composed with black, red, blue, and purple inks.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, with normal size letters. The handwriting is less legible than in most of the other normal Arabic texts. Written field 20.5 cm x 12.5 cm for the normal Arabic text. Page 3 has one black overline (found only once), as if to mark a marginal note, but the word has no corresponding gloss in the margin. Only page 4 has catchwords. Pages 3 and 4 have 30 lines; page 2 has only 24 lines. Page 150 has 9 lines.

Content Description

The first 4 pages are commentary on the words of the Qur’ān, written by the Šayḥ himself. Nothing else of this book has survived; the catchword on page 4 (the last extant page) suggests that the remaining pages of the book are lost. The other piece of normal text on page 150 is a ṣalawāt, written bold and covering 9 lines. Except for these 4(5) pages, only invented texts exist. Type I text is dominant; however, type II and type IV also exist to some extent. A large number of pictures from different categories also are found: Shield, wheel, orbits, spider webs, cross and animal-like pictures. Page one contains only the title of the book.

Incipit: = Title

Desinit: wa-man yurīdu Allāhu ḥayran yašraḥ ṣadrah[u] li-al-ʿislām.

‘Whoever Allah wishes good to him, let him expand his breast to (accept) Islam’.

External information

The title of the book suggests that it was meant to be commentary on the vocabulary of the Qur’an; however, it was not completed. When I discovered these folios they were in a loose mixed bundle. I compiled them together based on the kind of paper, the kind of text and handwriting.

Sed compiled Book No. 2

[Title illegible; poor handwriting, blotted by water and dirty]

Physical description

Turkish paper, with the common watermark, cream color, the quires are loose and detached, pages 1-3, and 50-53 spoiled by moisture to some extent. It is not in good condition. Size is 24.3 x 18 cm. There are 118 ff.

Black ink for the normal Arabic text, other kinds of texts are in black, red, purple, and blue inks.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, normal size letters, the handwriting is clear and legible. On the only two pages containing normal text, the written fields are 8 x 5 cm (page 2) and 8 cm x 4.5 cm (page 24). Page 2 has 11 lines and page 24 has 6 lines. The (large) remainder of the compilation consists of “strange” texts

whose format is very variable. Thin type I text is found with normal size letters.

Content description

Page one is the title page. On page two there is an introduction to the book, apparently about Sufism; but he stopped writing after 11 lines and continued (on the bottom of page 2 and on the following pages) with his invented texts. Page 24 has an excerpt from sura al-Raḥmān in the Qur'an (55:1-12). However, verses 5-12 are to some extent distorted, by deleting, adding, clipping two consecutive verses, and confusion with similar passages elsewhere in the Qur'an.

These are the only normal texts in the book. There are many kinds of pictures — spider web, shield, cross, flowers, turbine, triangles, and wheel — found on pages 1-3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, 18, 21, 23, 26, 27, 30, 32-35, 38-40, 42-45, 47, 50-53, 58, 60, 62, 63, 65-67, 71-82, 85-87, 89-91, 94, 100, 103-114, 116, 118, 119, 123-126, 128-130, 132, 134,136, 138, 140, 142, 145, 146, 149-151, 154, 155, 157-160, 162, 166, 168, 171-173, 175, 178-180, 184, 196, 198, 200, 203, 205, 206, 210, 213, 215, 216, 220, 222-224, 227, 228, 232 and 234. Many type I, II and III texts are found throughout the book; a piece of Type I text is also found at the bottom of the title page.

External information

This is (or would have been) one of the Šayḥ's self-authored books, as is explicitly stated on the title page. But he actually wrote only a half-page introduction and nothing more. I compiled the folios based on the type and the physical condition of the paper.

Sed compiled book No. 3

Physical Description

Turkish paper with the common watermark, comprising two large quires. Both quires are somewhat loose, one much more than the other: it has detached pages and very loose sewing. On pages 65-66 the folio is damaged by moisture. Page size is 18.5 cm x 12 cm. The pages are in relatively good condition. On about one-third of the pages (which contain most of the poems) the lower corner is eaten by mice, but without damaging the text. 41 ff.

Black is the predominant ink; the normal Arabic text and two "strange" types (type I and type V) of invented texts are written in it. Red, blue and purple are also used.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, medium size letters in the "strange texts". The handwriting is clear, although the manzuma is written in a different hand. Frames are found on pages 2, 31, 39 and 51. Although there are many short pieces of

poetry scattered through the manuscript, only one folio (pages 67-68, containing a manzuma) has the appearance of a “normal” text; its written field is 14 cm x 9 cm. All the other pages are irregularly formatted in various ways. The two-page manzuma has 9 lines on page 67 and 11 lines on page 68. 16 lines of the ṭarīqā poem are found on pages 81-82. On page 53 there are 16 lines of type V text. Page 52 has 16 lines. Page 30 has 13 lines. Page 24 has 13 lines.

Content description

The contents are very mixed. On page 24 a text occurs which appears to be confused and ungrammatical, and in very unclear handwriting. A strange quasi-manzuma (perhaps about ṭarīqā) occurs on page 30. Page 52 has a set of type V texts mentioning angels. On page 66 there are bits of a list of (imaginary?) books. Pages 67-68 (as already noted) have a manzuma (1 long; 3 short lines). Pages 81-82 have the ṭarīqā poem. The remaining portion of the text (the huge majority) is mostly type I text in different forms, sometimes with thin letters, or with cartouches, or as usual with extra-large letters. The pictures include plants, animal-like figures, the cross, orbits, and Ka^cbā. °

External information

The two quires were compiled together because the last page of one quire and the first page of the other quire match extremely well, in content, format, ink, and handwriting. In general these two big quires resemble each

other in the kind of texts they contain and in their type of paper (Turkish); additionally, they were found in the same bundle.

Sed compiled book No. 4

Physical Description

Bound with two pieces of cardboard sewn to a blue-black nylon cloth with cotton thread. The quires are detached, with no necessary relation between the binding and the quires. Size of the binding 22 cm x 12.3 cm.

Turkish paper, with the common watermark, cream color, quires are detached and some disjunct leaves are found. Size of page 18 cm x 12.5 cm.

Written field on pages 13-17 is 15 cm x 8.5 cm; for the *ṭarīqā* poem on pages 50-55, 107, 169, 171-175, 184-193, 197, it is 14 cm x 8 cm. There are full-page *manzumas* on pages 120-121. There are 103 ff.

Red, black and purple inks are used. A presumed recent insertion is found written with ballpoint pen.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, normal sized letters for the normal Arabic text. The handwriting is clear and legible. The invented texts are vocalized but (exceptionally) non-vocalized type I text is found on page 72. Type II texts have the usual frames. The number of lines per page is highly variable:

Page No.	Number of lines
169 Page	

50	4 lines
17, 139	5 lines
140, 142 and 152	6 lines
107	7 lines
169	12 lines
13, 15, 141, 171, 190-191	14 lines
14, 16, 52, 15, 173-175, 186, 193, 197	15 lines
53-55, 172, 184, 187-189, 192	16 lines
185	17 lines
120	24 lines, second column is 25 lines

Content description

Most of the compilation contains “strange” texts. But there are some normal texts. On page 11 is an illegible letter-like text. On pages 13-17 there are Du‘a’ texts. On pages 52-55, 106-107, 169-175, 181-187, and 189-196 there are pieces of the ʔariqā poem. Page 108 has instructions on how to perform ʂalawāt. There is a recently added manzuma on pages

120-121 written in two columns per page with ballpoint pen; it is a muḥammas.

Page 122 has a recently added normal Arabic text which is salutations to the Prophet Muhammad. Almost all the rest is type I and type II texts. Some type III “quasi-Chinese” text is found on page 183. Quasi-alphabets are found on pages 2 and 7. A number of different pictures are found like shield, human-like, Ka’ba, and flowers.

Pages 141-142 have type V text. Pages 115-116, and again page 139, have a poem-like text which contains a single phrase only on each line.

Incipit: page 11, an apparently deformed Basmallah followed by illegible text.

Desinit: (ṭarīqā poem) al-šūhūdiyyatu al-muḥammadiyatu al-jibrīliyyatu al-rabbaniyya. (The handwriting is difficult to read.)

External information

The compilation has no colophon. It was initially compiled by the people of the mosque a short time after the big fire. I added one quire which contains the same text type.

Sed compiled book No. 5: The grammar texts

Physical description

Two cardboards joined together with a dirty white cotton cloth, covered with a shiny red layer. The left cardboard is eaten (apparently) by mice at the bottom; also lower part of the cover has a hole. Size is 26 cm x 29 cm.

Turkish papers with the common watermark, cream color, most of the pages are spoiled due to mild exposure to moisture. The bottom of the first three folios is partially lost on the side opposite the spine. The quires are severely detached and often disjunct leaves are found. Page size is 18 cm x 24.4 cm but two folios, page 53-54 and 69-70, are narrower (15 cm x 24.4 cm). There are four texts that make up the compilation, each with its own page layout; as a result it is impossible to give any single indication of the size of the written field. 51 ff.

Black ink; rubricated with red ink (texts 1 and 2) and with both red and pink ink (texts 3 and 4). The writing is intact, but in few places like pages 8-11 water and coffee drops have spoiled the red ink of the titles.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, densely written; an enormous quantity of marginal notes (much more than any other manuscript), written in small-size letters. It is the most heavily rubricated manuscript in the collection: titles, important words, phrases, sentences and verses are rubricated in red or pink. Clear and legible handwriting. Some parts of the prose and the entire poem on pages 3-16 are thoroughly vocalized. The prose part often has catchwords. Frames are found on pages 1, 2, 60, and 61, in red ink or black highlighted

with red. The frame on page 1 is a double-lined frame highlighted with red ink; page two has a red double-lined frame which is put inside a bigger frame. The marginal notes are copious grammatical explanations of the rubricated words and phrases in the main text (both prose and poetry). Some of the marginal notes have the physical shape of a triangle or funnel. In addition to the marginal notes there are also interlineations. The title page on the last page (of the compilation) has the shape of a triangular cloud band. The number of lines for texts 1 and 2 is as follows:

Page No.	Number of lines
23	1 line
31, 32, 97, 98	6 lines
5, 6, 9, 10, 12-13, 15	15 lines
75 – 78, 95, 96, 99	16 lines
3, 4, 7, 11, 16	17 lines

Texts 3 and 4 have a variable number of lines, between 18-32 lines of main text per page.

The untitled grammar poem (the 1st text) is a two-column poem accompanied by marginal glosses and interlineations, rubricated with red ink. The ³Ajurrūmiyya (the 2nd text) has a main-text format involving bold sentences accompanied by small densely written glosses which are oriented vertically and diagonally; the main text looks like a poem. It also

has more interlineations than the other three texts in the compilation. The Qaṭr al-Nadā and Kašf al-Niqāb (texts 3 and 4) both are in prose format, with accompanying marginal glosses and interlineations.

Content description

This compilation comprises three famous Arabic grammar books and a well-written (nameless) grammar poem, which I found all in the same bundle in the mosque. The first one is an untitled (grammar) poem about parts of speech; its author is not mentioned. It is found on pages 3-16. The second is al-ʿAjurrūmiyya by Ibn al-ʿAjurrūm, found scattered through the manuscripts on pages 1, 23, 24, 31, 32, 75-78, and 95-100 (according to my pagination). The third one is Qaṭr al-Nadā by ʿAfif al-Dīn Riḥlat al-Ṭālibīn ʿAbdullah Fakhī. The fourth is the ʿIrāb book called Kašf al-Niqāb. Since these last two have the same format, handwriting and color(s) of rubrication it was difficult for me to figure out which pages belonged to which text, so I have described them together. (I was not able to obtain an independent copy of these two texts for comparison.) There are two title pages in this compilation. The first is on page 1; the title is written inside a frame. This page states the title of the book al-ʿAjurrūmiyya, the name of the copyist, Ibrāhīm bin Šaykh ʿUmar, the date and the copyist’s note about the beginning date of copying the book, 1333 A.H. However, the verso of the very same folio, and the following 22 pages, do not contain the

announced work “al-ʿAjurrūmiyya”, but rather the nameless grammar poem. The other title page is on the last page of the compilation (i.e. the last page in the order in which I actually found the pages). It bears the title of the book *Qaṭr al-Nadā* and the name of the author, ʿAfif al-Dīn Riḥlat al-Ṭālibīn ʿAbdullah Fakhi, next to a cloud triangle in which there is a Duʿa written in triangular shape. (The other named text, *Kašf al-Niqāb*, has no title page, but its title is mentioned in its introduction, on page 94.)

Incipit: page one, *Yaquḷu al-faqīr ʿibrāhīm ibn šayḥ ʿumar ʿinni ʿumirtu ʿan ʿaktuba nuṣṣatan mina l-ʿajurrūmiyya fa-daḥaltu al-ʿān fi kitābatihī wa-ʿasʿalu Allāh ʿan yatimma lī bi-ḥayr daḥaltu fihī 1333 sana.*

‘The poor Ibrahim bin Šayḥ Umar said: I am commanded to write a copy of al-Ajurrumiyya. I have now started writing and I ask Allah to let me complete it successfully. I started it in 1333 [1914/5]’

Desinit: page 102, *Hādā matn qaṭr al-nadā li-al-šayḥ al-ʿimām al-ʿālim al-ʿallāma al-baḥr al-fahhāmatu, Sībawayhi zamānihi, ʿAfif al-Dīn Riḥlat al-Ṭālibīn ʿAbdullah Fakhi* ‘This is the text of *Qaṭr al-Nadā* by Šayḥ the Imam, the very erudite scholar, the sea of profound understanding, the Sibawayhi of his time, [he is] ʿAfif al-Dīn Riḥlat al-Ṭālibīn ʿAbdullah Fakhi’.

External information

My informants told me that these grammar texts testify to one of the subjects which were taught by the Šayḥ during his stay at Seddeqa. Three of the books are standard textbooks of grammar in the Islamic world.

When I discovered these grammar texts they were bundled together with other quires having different content. I tried to rearrange them by using catchwords but I had not much success. The pages of the grammar poem (the first text) were mixed and scrambled in with the other pages, but due to their distinctively poetic appearance (in contrast to the other 3 prose texts) it was easy to put them together, though I am not certain of the order.

Sed compiled book No. 6

Physical Description

Turkish paper with the common watermark, cream color; the quires are very loose and detached. A few pages are torn; a full quire (pages 100-118) is eaten by mice from the center, creating a narrow hole. Pages 28 and 59 are stained by liquid, perhaps coffee. Size 18 cm x 12 cm. 123 ff.

Black, blue, light blue, purple and red inks are used.

Description of the writing

Most of the manuscript consists of “strange” texts. Normal text appears only on pages 46-47, 59, 60, 65, 71-72, 79, 87, 90, 104, and 113. Naskhi script; normal Arabic texts are written in medium and normal size letters; clear and legible handwriting. On page 60 and the first three lines of page 79 are fully vocalized normal Arabic texts. Pages 79 (7 lines) and page 114 (3 lines) are vocalized only with šadda, many kasra and a few fatha. Only page 60 has a catchword but the following page has only pictures. On pages 121-138 single-framed texts are found, accompanied by type II text. Page 6 has only three lines of normal text; pages 46-47 have 19 and 16 lines respectively. Pages 59-60 have 14 lines; page 89 has 5 lines. Page 90 has 4 lines. Page 104 has 5 lines. Page 113 has 6 lines. Page 87 bears the stamp of the Šayḥ in black ink.

Content description

In addition to the “strange” texts, the compilation contains many scattered fragments of normal texts. The name of Šayḥ Nūr Ḥusayn al-‘Arusi appears on page 2. Pages 46-47 have a “pseudo-ṭarīqā” poem of unclear content and grammar. On page 59, and also on pages 71-72, is a list of books; it is not clear if they are authored by the Šayḥ himself or by other Sufi scholars. Page 60 has Ṣalawāt. Page 65 has type V text. Page 79 has an unfinished Friday Sermon. Pages 87 and 90 have unfinished Du‘a’. Page 104 has a note about Sufism. Page 113 has Du‘a’ seeking

protection by Allah. On pages 15, 68 and 88 quasi-Chinese text is found. Pictures are found on pages 1, 13, 38, 49, 52, 53, 55, 61-63, 68, 85, 87, 91, 103, 104, 110, 111, 114 and 132. They are animal-like, shield, sun, spider web, quasi-magic squares and flowers.

The compilation consists predominantly of type I and type II texts. Type VI text occurs on pages 34 and 66.

Incipit: page two, mursal li-šayḥ Ḥusayn [illegible] al-°Arūsi walā[°] jamī°
°umūr °aw ḥubb al-°ībād. ḍahaba al-ḥaqqu minni °ilayhi, ḍahaba al-ḡulmu
°ilā [°ilayyā?]

‘Sent [sender?] to Šayḥ Husayn al-Arusi, benevolence for every issue or love of the Servants [??]. The truth went from me to him, the evil went to [or: to me]...’

Desinit: °a°ūḍu bi-Allāhi wa-min al-nār wa-min šarri al-šayṭān wa-l-lisān
wa-min al-°ins wa-l-jānn[?] yā rabbi yā raḥmān wa-min kulli al-dīdān[?]

‘May I be protected by Allah (and) from (Hell) fire and from the evil of Satan and the [evil] tongue and from humans and jinn, O my God, O gracious one, and from all worms’

External information

This compilation contains four kinds of invented texts (I, II, III, VI). The compilation shows my personal judgment, based on similarity of paper type, paper size, ink, and (sometimes) use of cartouches.

Sed compiled book No. 7

Physical Description

Turkish paper with the regular watermark; a single quire with intact sewing, cream color, in good condition. Size is 18 cm x 12 cm. 8 ff.

Black, purple, pink, red, and green inks are used. They are bright.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, normal size letters; except on page 14 the text is legible.

There are frames but only for pages which contain type II text. Only a few pages have normal Arabic text: page 2 has 4 lines, page 6 has 3 lines, and page 14 has 12 lines.

Content description

A poem about Sufism on page 2, individual unfinished *Ṣalawāt* sentences on page 6, magical utterances on page 7. Page 14 has the *ṭarīqā* poem written both horizontally and vertically. Pictures are found on pages 2, 4, 5, 8, 10 and 11. They are spider web, triangle and sun; interestingly, a sun made of lines and of type I text (comprising the sun's rays) is found on page 10. On page 2 is a colophon-like decoration; it is a decorated picture resembling a pot with a combination of lines and normal Arabic texts. The combination resembles orbits, but the general shape is different. The page also has two vertically adjacent words, *Aḥmad* and

Muhammad, one rightside up and one upside down. Page 87 bears the stamp of the Şayh.

Incipit: Hatta qad qaşat [qaşsat?] al-daʿirati ʿilayhim [untranslated]

Desinit: al-qāṭib šāṭib hāṭib [nonsense text?]

External information

I found this one single quire at the bottom of a bundle. It did not obviously “belong” together with any of the other compilations.

Sed compiled book No. 8

Physical description

Turkish paper with the normal watermark, cream color; pages 41-66 are dirty. Sewing is gone; individual quires are identifiable as such, but they are not combined. Many pages are eaten by mice at the bottom on the side away from the spine; these are pages 1-8, 15-16, 29-30, and 41-66. The size is 18 cm x 12 cm. The written fields on the pages of “normal” text are: page 1, 12 cm x 10 cm; page 6, 14 cm x 11 cm; pages 18-21, 15 cm x 10 cm; page 22, 2.5 cm x 10 cm; pages 23-27, 16 cm x 10 cm; page 29, 17 cm x 11 cm, page 37, 18 cm x 11 cm; page 38, 16 cm x 12 cm; page 58, 7 cm x 6 cm. Except where eaten by mice, the text is in relatively good condition, in . 33 ff.

Black, purple, blue, and red traditional inks and blue ballpoint ink, readable on all pages (including the dirty pages).

Description of the writing

Normal Arabic text is found only on pages 1, 6, 18-27, 29, 32, 37-38, 58. Naskhi script, normal size letters; on pages 20-21 and pages 23-27 important words, new section beginnings, and verse divisions are rubricated with red ink. Moreover, it has overlines (as keys to marginal notes?) though none of the expected marginal notes appears. The handwriting is clear and legible. The handwriting is clearly the Šayḥ's, except perhaps on pages 37-38, where the handwriting is very different. On pages 18-19, 20-22 and 23-27; the respective handwritings are slightly different from each other, but they are all the Šayḥ's; the differences may be due to the use of a different type of pen. Pages 25-27 are partially vocalized. Only page 38 has a catchword. The only frame of the normal Arabic text is on page 1; however, the type II texts typically have a number of frames. Number of lines:

Page No.	Number of lines
22	3 lines
1	10 lines
6	11 lines
18, 26-27	14 lines
19, 20, 23	15 lines
21, 25, 38	16 lines

24	17 lines
29	20 lines
38	19 lines

Content description

Page 1, has a short Ṣalawāt followed by a Du‘a’. On page 6, there is a Du‘a’ seeking protection by Allah. Page 16 has a single “normal” line consisting of the ‘Abjad numerals combined into words ‘Abjad, ḥawwaz, ḥuṭṭī, kaliman, etc. On pages 18-22 is a Du‘a’ praising Allah by invoking his beautiful names. Pages 23-27, have Du‘a’ used for exorcism, and supplications to Allah by his beautiful names. Page 29 has a full page of muḥammas manzuma praising Allah. Page 37 has a note praising ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilāni. Page 38 the famous Ethiopian genre in praise of Nur Hussein: ‘Allahumma ‘irḥām Nūr Ḥusayn “O Allah forgive Nur Hussein”. Page 58 is a mixture of random bits of normal and “strange” texts. Page 59, phrases written with large sized letters and thin pen. The vast majority of the compilation consists of “strange” texts, mainly type II and some type I, although page 59 has a few “quasi-Chinese” symbols (looking more like cuneiform!). Page 42 has type VI text which is

overlined. Pictures are found on pages 8, 16, 40, 54 and 55 (surprisingly few). They are turbines, pot-like, Ka[°]bā, and the compass.

External information

One could wish that more pages of the normal Arabic text had survived; full pages of manzuma or Du[°]a[°] exist which must have been continued on other folios, but these folios (apparently) did not survive, or at least I could not find them. The specific mention of [°]Abd al-Qādir al-Jilāni provides concrete evidence that the Šayḥ belonged to the Qadiriyya order. I compiled this entry based on the similarity of paper type and physical condition except the last little quire I added it because it was a unique quire in the bundle, but with no different content so instead of cataloging it alone I decided to compile it with this entry.

Sed compiled book No.9

Physical Description

Turkish paper with the common watermark. the sewing has disappeared, but the phrases were found folded together to compromise two quires. Bottom partly side edge is soiled. Pages are in good condition. Size is 18.5 cm x 12.3 cm, the written field is 16 cm x 9 cm. 14 ff.

Black, blue, red and purple traditional inks are used.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, normal Arabic texts with normal size of letters. The type I text has medium size letters. The handwriting is the Šayḥ's. Page 19 contains two mašrabs: one an insertion in the top margin in red ballpoint ink, the other written in the left margin. Type I and type II texts are vocalized. There are a few frames for the type II text. There are refrain words forming a tail (upward-pointing) on every long line on every manzuma page. Pages 18-21 have 15 lines, Page 23 has 14 lines. Pages 24-25, 27 have 16 lines. The other pages have "strange" texts.

Content description

the normal text begins on page 18 with a prose Du^ā which contains Qur'anic verses; it is then followed by a manzuma which starts in muḥammas format and then begins to vary the short-long ratio. because of this variation, which is found in other works of the Šayḥ, I believe this manzuma to be the Šayḥ's own composition. The remainder is mostly type I and type II texts. There is also a type VI (quasi-alphabet) set on page 8. Type V text is found on page 13. The pictures are shield, sun, plant-like, Animal-like and the Ka^ʿbā.

Incipit: page 18 li-llahi mā fi al-samāwāti wa-fi-al-^ʿArḍi

'Allah's is what is in the heavens and what is in the earth'.

Desinit: page 27 wa-ṭāba ʿayṣuhum wa-dāqū bi-l-suʿūd mimmā nāla al-murād [??]

‘And their life became good and they tasted joyfully of what has attained the purpose [?]’

External information

This manzuma is of the Šayḥ’s own composition. The handwriting is the Shaik’s. Moreover the manzuma is written on consecutive pages, but with an interruption: page 21 has type II text, while page 22 resumes the manzuma. Thus folio 11 has manzuma on one side, and type II on the other. Type II (like all the strange texts) is a hall mark of the Šayḥ himself; thus the manzuma text on the other side is also likely to be his own work.

Sed compiled book No. 10

Physical description

Turkish paper, thick and soft; all the edges are dirty due to moisture; dark-cream color. It is a collection of disjunct folios; all the sewing has disappeared. The paper is in relatively good condition. 24 cm x 18 cm; written field is 18.5 cm x 15.4 cm. 14 ff.

Only black ink is used. Though the paper is dirty at the edges the text is completely intact.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script; normal size letters; clear and legible handwriting. Catchwords. Some marginal notes in thin small letters are found. Interlineations also exist; they are insertions and glosses. The only decoration is on page 2; it consists of the word *tammāt* 'finished', written creatively with the letters consisting of unshaded white space inside a fully shaded rectangle. Page 1 has 18 lines, pages 3-9 have 12 lines (3 blocks of 3 + 1), pages 10-28 have 16 lines (4 blocks of 3 + 1) on each page. Except for a single page written as a double column, the text has the form of muḥammas (3 short lines, one long line). The long lines typically have an extended "tail" written vertically or diagonally.

Content description

The compilation is entirely poetry: the famous Sufi poem by Buṣīrī, the *Burda*. The text is written in two formats: a double column format on pages 2-3 continuing a single column in muḥammas format on pages 3-28. Both formats have headings with Basmallah, on pages 2 and 3. I compared this *Burda* text with standard versions of the *Burda* available on the internet; it has a slightly different content.

Incipit: after Basmallah, bism Allāhi ʿanšaʿa al-ašyāʿ min ʿadam

ʿin the name of Allah who created all things from nothingʼ.

Desinit: wa-al-ḥaqqu yazḥaru min maʿnā wa-min kalim [?]

‘The truth will be manifest from meaning and from speech’

External information

The existence of such masterpieces in the library of an Ethiopian Šayḥ in Ğimma shows to what extent famous Islamic works penetrated deep into the Ethiopian heartland. It demonstrates that the Sufi culture flourished around Seddeqa and the Gibe area. It also contains both formats of the Burda: the two column and the muḥammas (taḥmis)⁴³.

Sed compilation No. 11

Physical description

Turkish paper with the usual watermark, cream color, rough in texture. The margin next to the spine is partly eaten by mice. It is a collection of detached folios belonging to a manzuma manuscript. Moisture has created stained blotches. Black ink, with purple rubrication. 24 cm x 18 cm; the written field is 20 cm x 14.5 cm. 18 ff.

Description of the writing

The text is the Burda poem, written in Naskhi script, with bold letters, beautiful and clear handwriting, which however does not look like the Šayḥ’s — it has no curved letters, which are a hallmark of the handwriting of the Šayḥ. Each long line has an elongated and diagonally

⁴³ The taḥmis of Burda is done by was written by šayḥ Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Fayyūmī, it is namely, Taḥmīs al-Fayyūmī ʿalā al-Burda (Gori 2010:61).

rising tail at the left, written in purple ink. It is well vocalized. Order of folios is clearly established by catchwords, which are found at the bottom left of each verso. Muḥammas format (3 short lines + 1 long line).

Four stanzas per page = 16 lines.

Content description

It is the famous poem of Buṣīrī named al-Burda in praise of the Prophet Muhammad. The elongated “tail” at the end of each long line is a standard feature of the poem. This text may have been copied by other people in the Mosque or perhaps brought from other Muslim areas.

Incipit: fa-šarru mā ʿanta taḥšā min ʿādānihimā [illegible]

Desinit: yā ʿakram al-ḥalqī mā li man ʿalūdu bihi siwāka ʿinda hulūl al-ḥādiṭi [al-ʿamam]⁴⁴

‘Most generous of mankind, I have no one to take refuge in, except you at occurrence of [widespread] calamity’⁴⁵

External information

There are altogether four copies of the Burda in the collection; this one stands alone on the basis of its handwriting and paper type.

⁴⁴ The word al-ʿamam is added here based on the internet Burda text. It may have constituted the diagonal/vertical tail of the line in our text, but if it existed, the ink has faded or been washed away.

⁴⁵ sayid burda transl.

Sed compilation No. 12

Turkish paper, with the common watermark, cream color. Its edges are spoiled by moisture to some extent. Two folios (total) detached from a quire. Small parts of the bottom corners of the pages have been torn away, but all of the text is intact. 24 cm x 17.8 cm, written field is 21.5 cm x 14.5 cm.

Black is the only color of the ink. Except for the first sentence on page 1, where the ink has run, all the text is intact and the ink is bright.

Description of the writing

A fragment of the Burda poem, with catchwords on the verso, beautiful Naskhi script; the handwriting is not the Šayḥ's. All letters medium sized. There are lines of poetry written in all four margins having the same length as the long lines of the muḥammas poem. As is typical for the muḥammas style of manzuma (3 short + 1 long line), the long lines have an extended "tail" written vertically or diagonally. Pages 1, 3 and 4 have 17 lines (with a long line at both the top and the bottom), while page 2 has 16 lines.

Content description

All 4 pages of the bifolio contain text from the Burda. On the last page below the poem there are four lines added about the Prophet Muhammad.

Incipit: [hard to read, blurry ink]

Desinit: wa-bitta tarqā ʿilā ʿan nilta manzilatan min qāba qawsayni lam
tudrak wa-lam turam(i)

‘And you continued ascending until you attained a position at the
distance of 2 cubits length, as has never been attained nor sought.’

External information

As noted already, the existence in the library of several different copies of
the Burda shows the great popularity of this text during and after the
Šayḥ’s time. The Burda was a frequently read text, especially during
Mawlid.

Sed compiled book No.13

Physical description

Turkish paper with the usual watermark. Cream color, but the right
margin and the bottom are dirty and darkened. 23.5 cm x 17.8 cm; the
written field is 19 cm x 13.5 cm, excluding the marginal notes. 4 ff.

It is entirely written in black ink, which is clear and intact despite the
dirt and moisture.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script; the handwriting is clear and legible. Catchwords are
present and establish the order of the folios. It has copious marginal
notes on each page, which are commentaries on the verses and words in
the poem. Interlineations also found in many of the verses, giving

glosses, corrections and comments. Pages 1, 2 and 6 have 14 lines. Pages 3 and 7 have 16 lines. Page 4 has 18, page 5 has 17 lines and page 8 has 13 lines. The poem is written in the normal two-column style of Arabic poetry.

Content description

It is Madh (praise of the Prophet Muhammad); in Ğimma and Gurageland this manzuma is considered as a standard poem of the Rašādiyya order, In this compilation, page one contains instructions to recite al-Fatiha for the sake of the founder of the Rašādiyya order, Šayḥ Kamāl al-Dīn. It has one heading with Basmallah on page two. Moreover some pen trial words have been written in randomly.

Incipit: after Basmallah, (al-fātiḥa) li-šayḥina al-Jalī[l] wa-al-nūr al-°ilāhi wa-l-°ālim al-rabbaniy.

‘Recite sura Fatiha for our noble Šayḥ, and the divine light and the godly scholar’

Desinit: Minhu fi kulli muqlatin al-aqdā° (wa huwa mā saqaṭa fi al-°ayn)

“From him, in every eyeball, fine dust (and this is what falls in the eye)⁴⁶,

External information

⁴⁶ This text in the parenthesis is added as a marginal gloss to the word al-aqdā°

This manzuma has many marginal glosses and interlineations, which I apparently indicate that it is a masterpiece manzuma.

Sed compilation No. 14 : Mawlid Šaraf al-ʿAnām

Physical description

It is a European paper with a watermark consisting of three crescents. Dark cream color, thick and rough texture. The folios are disjunct leaves and single bifolios. 16 cm x 11.2 cm. 9 ff.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, with bold letters; important words and word boundaries are rubricated in red ink. The handwriting is clear and legible; it is not the Šayḥ's. Fully vocalized; catchwords. From pages 15-17 the poem continues at the marginalia of the paper. On page 15 a Hadith is written vertically in small letters in the right margin. Pages 1, 2, 5, 6, 9 and 10 have 13 lines. Page 7 and 8 have 12 lines. Page 11 has 16 lines. Page 3-4 have 14 lines. Pages 14-18 have 15 lines and page 13 has 14 lines. The written field 12.5 cm x 7.5 cm

Content description

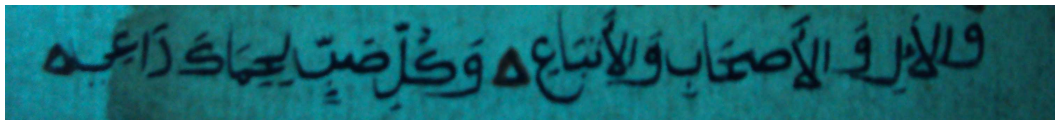
Almost all of the folios are poetry, clearly belonging to the Mawlid collection (see External information). On pages 1-10 poetic biography of the Prophet, on pages 11-14 praise (madḥ) for him, on pages 15-18 are

supplications to Allah. Page 15 has a long (10-line) Hadith carefully written vertically in the right margin, which tells about a scorpion that will punish people on the Day of Judgment; it uses up much more of the page than the main text. Headings with Basmallah are on pages 11 and 16. Pages 3-7 contain Salāmāt ʿalā al-Nabī (salutations on the Prophet); such ṣalawāt and salāmāt ʿalā al-nabī are very common in Sufi poetry.

Incipit: Yaʿti qāʿiluhumā yawm al-qiyāmah ḡayr al-ḥāʿinin.

‘The sayers of these two things [reference unclear] will come on the Day of Judgment, without treachery.’

Desinit: [photo given in lieu of text; 2nd half hard to read]



‘And on his Family, Friends and Followers... [???’]

External information

“Mawlid sharaf al-ʿAnām” it is a standard collection of poems and prose in praise of the Prophet, including his biography and virtues. It is a famous service book in the Sufi tradition of Ethiopia. During the celebration of the Prophet’s birthday it is recited and chanted by the people. The present compilation consists of individual scattered folios

of the Mawlid collection from Seddeqa (all poetry except for one prose story). For general information see Gori 2010.⁴⁷

Sed compiled book No.15: Tanbih al-ʿanām fī bayān ʿuluw al-maqām nabiyyinā Muḥammad

Physical description

Italian paper with the watermark of “cartiera de mori vittorio”, yellowish cream color, eaten by mice at the top; page size is 19.4 cm x 13.6 cm, written field 10.7 cm x 18 cm. It is in relatively good condition. Written in black ink with red used for rubrication. 5 loose folios comprising a single quire.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, medium size letters, beautiful handwriting. Titles, headings, important words and dots indicating verse boundaries are rubricated in red; it is fully vocalized. 12 lines on each page. It is interesting that the copyist has left blank spaces for many of the commonly repeated ṣalawāt phrases, although he does write in the name of Allah and Muhammad. Presumably he meant to come back and fill in the phrases later.

⁴⁷ “The [Mawlid] collection is anonymous, but sometimes erroneously attributed to Ġaʿfar b. Ḥasan b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Barzanġī (ca. 1690–1763) author of another much renowned *Mawlid* text. It is the most widespread *Mawlid* collection in East Africa ... and in Indonesia” (Gori 2010:61).

Content description

It is the famous long Sufi poem called *Tanbīh al-ʿAnām* by Ibn ʿAzzūm al-Qayrawānī. These five folios contain parts of only two sections of the poem. One section heading is found on page two; it reads: *bāb fī ʿiṭmi man taraka al-ṣalāt ʿalayhi ʿinda dīkrihi fī sirrihi wa-jahrihi*. ‘This Section deals with who those fail to recite ṣalawāt on him [the Prophet] when he is mentioned, whether openly or secretly’.

Incipit: *Bidʿatwhu taḥta tijāratihī*

Desinit: *allaḍī man ʿaḥḍaʿa ʿalayhi*

External information

This book is a universally known standard Sufi genre all over the Muslim world. In Ethiopia it is recited as part of Thursday evening prayers, during mourning and as part of Mawlid.

Sed compiled book No.16: Fiqh, Taṣawwuf and Tawḥīd compilation

Physical description

It is thin Arab paper, cream color, with no watermark. This kind of paper is peculiar to this manuscript. It is a compilation of leaflets and loose single bifolios. 18.2 cm x 11.2 cm, the written field is 15 cm x 8 cm. On pages 18-44 the margins of the folios are dirty and fragile. On pages 35-40 the outside margin of the folios are spoiled by dirt at the bottom. The

last folio is especially fragile. Only black ink is used; it is undamaged. 22 ff.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, normal size letters. The handwriting is not good; it is clear that the Šayḥ was not the scribe of this book. Catchwords are used throughout. On page 14 there are pen trial letters in the left margin. Pages 1-8 and 13-17 have 11 lines, page 9-12 have 10 lines, page 19-28 and 33-43 have 13 lines, pages 29-32 have 12 lines.

Content description

This book contains different kinds of subjects. It was reassembled with the help of the catchwords; however, there are missing folios which sometimes made the process difficult. Pages 1-18 fiqh, pages 19-42 teachings about knowledge, worship, and asceticism (zuḥd). Pages 43-44 have Du^{ʿa}'s. judging by the contents, I have divided the compilation into 3 chapters: pages 1-18 (fiqh), pages 19-42 (taṣawwuf), pages 43-44 (tawḥīd). Subsections are marked with the word faṣl. In the first chapter, Fuṣūl occur, on page 2 (twice) and once on pages 8, 10, 11 and 16. The content is Fiqh (jurisprudence); I have guessed that this is the Šāfiʿī school, because the Šayḥ belonged to this school. The second chapter

begins on page 21(19); only one faṣl is indicated, the third brief chapter is tawḥīd concluding with Du‘a’ and finally the word tammat ‘finished’.

Incipit: Wa-l-ttamayyuzū wa-al-niqā‘ an al-ḥayḍ wa-l-nifās

... and going apart and purification after menstruation and childbirth.

Desinit: Wa-‘alā ‘alihi wa-‘aṣḥābihi al-‘aḥyār min al-muhājirīn wa-l-‘anṣār. tammat.

[may Allah’s salutation] be upon his [the Prophet’s] Family and his best Companions who are among the emigrants [Meccans] and Helpers [Medinans], finished.

External information

This compilation has a special and distinctive kind of paper which seems unusual. With this single exception, all the paper types I discovered are thick and hard; however, this one is thin and soft. It is not clear whether this book is his authorship or it is a standard genre in the Šāfi‘ī jurisprudence school.

Sed compiled No. 17

Physical description

Turkish paper, with the common watermark, cream color. Its edges are spoiled by moisture to some extent. Two folios (total) detached from a quire. Small parts of the bottom corners of the pages have been torn

away, but all of the text is intact. 24 cm x 17.8 cm, written field is 21.5 cm x 14.5 cm.

Black is the only color of the ink. Except for the first sentence on page 1, where the ink has run, all the text is intact and the ink is bright.

Description of the writing

A fragment of the Burda poem, with catchwords on the pages, beautiful Naskhi script; the handwriting is not the Šayḥ's. All letters medium sized. There are lines of poetry written in all four margins having the same length as the long lines of the muḥammas poem. As is typical for the muḥammas style of manzuma (3 short + 1 long lines), the long lines have an extended "tail" written vertically or diagonally. Pages 1, 3 and 4 have 17 lines (with a long line at both the top and the bottom), while page 2 has 16 lines.

Content description

All 4 pages of the bifolio contain text from the Burda. On the last page below the poem there are four lines added about the Prophet Muhammad.

Incipit: [hard to read, blurry ink]

Desinit: wa-bitta tarqā ʿilā ʿan nilta manzilatan min qāba qawsayni lam tudrak wa-lam turam(i)

‘And you continued ascending until you attained a position at the distance of 2 cubits length, as has never been attained nor sought.’

External information

As noted already, the existence in the library of several different copies of the Burda shows the great popularity of this text during and after the Šayḥ’s time. The Burda was a frequently read text, especially during Mawlid.

Sed compiled No. 18

Physical description

Modern ruled exercise book, with 15 horizontal lines, pale yellow color. The quire stitching has disappeared; as a result all the folios are bifolios and detached leaves. The page size is 17 cm x 10.5 cm. 10 ff.

Purple ink is used for the type II texts, blue for the type I texts.

Description of the writing

Almost entirely invented texts, written in Naskhi script. All type II texts have the same size of letters which is normal; the type I texts have medium-large letters. The type II texts have almost all the typical characteristics of type II texts which I discussed in the previous chapter. Also they are well vocalized. Type I and Type VI texts are written in thin

strokes in legible and clear handwriting. On pages 5 and 6 there are underlines.

Content description

Type II text predominates in the compilation. On page 5 there is type VI text; on page 8 there is normal Arabic text; pages 3, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13 and 14 have type I texts. Despite its textual variety it has no pictures, which is uncommon.

Incipit: page 8 ʾiṣlāḥ al-ʿamal wa-al-ḥāl wa-al-nafʿ ...

The improvement of action, and condition, and benefit...

Desinit: Page 8 wa-al-tarbiyyat

“and upbringing”

External information

Though this compilation has only one page containing normal Arabic text, it involves three types of invented texts (I, II, VI). The folios were in a single bundle when I discovered them, but partly separated from each other. I compiled these folios together based on similarity of paper and text type(s). There may be other similar folios in other bundles, but I limited myself to just this one bundle as I mentioned before I was not allowed to work on more than one bundle once.

Sed compilation No. 19

Physical description

Turkish paper with the common watermark, cream color. Pages 5-11 are lightly soiled. Pages 7-8 bottom edge away from the spine is torn. The writing in all pages is in good condition. Size is 18 cm x 12 cm, written field on pages 5-11 is 15 cm x 9.5 cm. 7 ff. comprising a single quire.

The normal Arabic part is written in black ink, the type I in blue. On page 1 center, right edge, some words have become blurry due to moisture.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, normal size letters; the letters are thin. The handwriting is evidently the Šayḥ's, because the Tariqa poem and other works of the Šayḥ also have the same handwriting. Page 1 has 18 lines; page 2 has 15 lines written in two columns. Pages 5-11 have 16 lines. The other pages contain "strange texts"

Content description

Page one has a full-page essay about good and bad qualities of people, including a discussion of hypocrisy. Pages 5-11 contains a muḥammas, each stanza of the form [3 short + 1 long], 4 stanzas per page; manzuma. The remaining pages contain unvocalized type I text, written in thin strokes and mostly arranged vertically in short pseudo-phrases. Page one seems part of a larger treatise of which the remaining parts are dispersed

or lost. Unlike most other compilations, but like the previous one, this compilation has no pictures.

Incipit: page 1, ... dīnahum wa-yalbasūna al-dībāj.

‘... their religion; and they wear brocaded silk.’

Desinit: page 15, wa-qāmu bi-ḥaḍratihi wa-nālu bihim mala³u al-rijālī

‘They stood in his presence [the Prophet] and men the chief [?]’

External information

I compiled these folios together based on similarity of paper and text type(s).

Sed compiled No. 20

Physical description

Modern ruled exercise book, with 20 lines. The pages are separated fragile, and affected by moisture. A number of pages have dirt in a cloud-like shape. Page size is 16 cm x 10.4 cm. 37 ff.

Blue, black, and brown traditional inks and blue ballpoint inks. The traditional ink is more damaged by moisture than the ballpoint, and in many pages is washed out or blurry.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script is used for the normal Arabic text. There are two Arabic quasi-alphabets which are written in the same script. Type I text is written by medium sized letters. The ballpoint insertion presumably

could not be by the Šayḥ himself, since he left Seddeqa in the 1930s, before there were ballpoint pens in Ethiopia. There is a mosaic-like picture on page 42; it is drawn in blue ink but painted brown. The normal Arabic text on page 57 has five lines, page 66 has 8 lines, page 67 has 12 lines, and page 73 has 8 lines.

Content description

Almost entirely “strange texts”. The compilation can be considered as a book of magic, because it has many strange pictures along with unattached letters of the Arabic alphabet, combined so as to give the impression of a magical formula. The normal Arabic contents are as follows: page 57, a saying of a Sufi saint, written in ballpoint and unfinished. Pages 66-67, a will, written in ballpoint pen; a number of the Šayḥ’s companions are mentioned. The last page, i.e. page 73, has unfinished Du‘a-like text. On the other hand there are a large number of pictures and magical formulas. The pictures are mostly orbits. Many of them are of a different style from the orbits we see in other manuscripts, being composed of little circles joined together like beads. These orbits are found on pages 2, 3, 14-16, 26, 28, 41, 43, 49, 52, and 61. There are also spirals on pages 7, 56 and 59. Others pictures are flowers and exceptional, unique pictures like sword, comb, microwave transmitter tower (!), stars and nets. The magical formulas (in ball point) consist of separate Arabic letters written parallel to the rays of a shining sun-

picture. Such magic formulas also exist between successive orbits of an orbit-picture on page 27 and 34.

Incipit: page 57 a few lines in a childish scribe, almost illegible.

Desinit: Page 73 *inna nahnu nazzalnā al-dīkr [wa-³inna] lahu la-ḥāfīzūn.*

(Sura 15:9).

We [Allah] revealed unto you the Remembrance [the Qur'an] and we are its protectors. [Sura 15:9; but the word *wa-³inna* cannot be identified]

External information

This book has a very strange content compared to that of others because the magical formulas never exist on other manuscripts with a form like this. Some of the pictures are very strange in which I have no general classifications as I did for other pictures in the entire collection.

Sed compiled No. 21

Physical description

Modern ruled exercise book; paper of rough texture, with cream color. It has 18 lines. The quire's sewing is loose. The folios are clean and in good condition. Size is 15.7 cm x 10.5 cm, the written field is 12.5 x 10.5 cm for manuma part. 8 ff.

The entire text is written only with black ink.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, written in beautiful handwriting. The handwriting has the appearance of Mağribī script, because the tail of some letters like wāw و , Raʾ ر , zāy ز is elongated downwards. The size of the letters is normal. Remarkably, all the letters are bold. Only the type VI text is vocalized. Catchwords. Page 1 has 15 lines, pages 2-6 14 have lines, page 7 has 13 lines.

Content Description

It contains a manzuma poem on pages 1-7. The manzuma is written with unusual proportion of long and short lines. The common type of manzuma is one long to three short lines; in this poem the ratio one to eight and one to nine. The long lines have few refrain words as an upward-pointing tail. After the manzuma the remaining pages are covered with type VI text.

Incipit: page 1, ʾdriknī ʾdriknī yā rasūl allahī

‘catch me, Oh catch me, O messenger of Allah’

Desinit: Page 3, wa-kaḥḥil kuḥūlī wa-waṣṣil wuṣūl [??]

‘and paint me with kohl, and bring me to the Goal’

External information

I think it is likely that this manzuma was authored by the sheikh, although its author and title are not mentioned and other quires are lost.

The same as Bustan manzuma (which **is** by the Šayḥ) it has an

uncommon layout of lines. this manzuma has 9 short lines for one long line; the Bustan has mostly ratios of 9:1 and 11:1.

Sed compiled No. 22

Physical Description

Turkish paper with the common watermark, the folios are loose and partly detached from their respective quires. Some folios are spoiled due to moisture. In relatively good condition. Size is 18 cm x 12.5 cm, the written portion is 14.5 cm x 8 cm. 34 ff.

Written with red, purple, black and blue traditional inks, and some blue ballpoint ink is also found. On the last page liquid has damaged the upper margin of the folio. When the Šayḥ ran out of red ink he used other inks like purple, blue or sometimes black. (an example is on page 12).

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, the letters are normal size. The handwriting is the Šayḥ's, except for the ballpoint text on page 34. Pages 24-26 have a text rubricated with purple ink. The most common number of lines for the tariqā poem is 16 lines, while the maximum number of lines is 19. The line count of the prose is not constant, but often 8 lines per page are found.

Content Description

Most of this compilation is the ṭarīqā poem. On page two there are a few ʾIstiġfār phrases ‘asking forgiveness from Allah’. Pages 24-25 contain Duʿaʾ and ʾAḍkār ‘remembrance of Allah’. Page 34 has instructions for supplications to be made during Ramaḍān. This compilation also contains type I – V texts. The type I text is often within a cartouche. The type III text has the most Chinese-like text in the entire collection. Pictures are found on pages 32, 34, 43-45 and 47. They are spider web, buildings, and Kaʿbā.

Incipit: page 3, ʾastagfiru[?] ʾAllāh al-ʿazīm al-Raʿuf al-Rraḥīm

I ask forgiveness from Allah, the mighty, the compassionate, the merciful’

Desinit: page 34 ʾAllahumma irziqna laḍḍati naẓar(in) li-wajhika al-Karīm.

‘Oh Allah nourish us with the bliss of a look at your noble countenance’

External information

Some of the folios were still attached together. I have compiled these together with other loose folios on the basis of paper type and textual content. In this compilation five types of “strange” texts are found – not the record however (see Sed. comp. 26).

Sed. compilation No. 23

Physical Descriptions

Turkish paper with the common watermark, cream color; all the folios are loose and detached. On a number of folios part of the paper has been torn away. Pages 123-124 and 127-128 are spoiled by dirt. Size is 18 cm x 12 cm. 87 ff.

Black, blue, purple and red traditional inks are used. All the inks are in good condition.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script; normal, medium-large size of letters are found. the handwriting on page 5 is different from that on page 22; page 5 seems to have been written in a rush or distractedly, though the content of both pages indicates that it was written by the Šayḥ, the handwriting is different. Only the invented texts are vocalized. Type II texts have frames, while type I appears with cartouches. Of the normal texts, there are 12 lines on page 5 and 13 lines on page 22.

Content description

Only pages pages 5 and 22 contain normal Arabic texts. Page 5 has a Du'a°, while page 22 has praise to Allah in rhymed prose. almost the entire compilation is invented texts, of all types except type III and type VI. There are a few pictures, among them an unfinished incense burner.

Incipit: page 5, bada°nā bi-ḥamdin li-Rabb al-karīm.

‘We begin with praise to the beneficent God’

Desinit: Page 101 šillillāh ... malja° al-hanā° [??]

[unclear; randomly oriented phrases all over the page]

External Information.

The pages in this compilation were found tied together in one bundle, of different sizes. The basis for this compilation is weak: I compiled together all pages of this particular size that were found in the bundle. The content is a heterogeneous mixture of “strange” texts.

Sed compiled No. 24

Physical Description

Turkish paper with the common watermark. the sewing has disappeared, but the phrases were found folded together to compromise two quires. Bottom partly side edge is soiled. Pages are in good condition. Size is 18.5 cm x 12.3 cm, the written field is 16 cm x 9 cm. 14 ff.

Black, blue, red and purple traditional inks are used.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, normal Arabic texts with normal size of letters. The type I text has medium size letters. The handwriting is the Šayḥ's. Page 19 contains two mašrabs: one an insertion in the top margin in red ballpoint ink, the other written in the left margin. Type I and type II texts are vocalized. There are a few frames for the type II text. There are refrain words forming a tail (upward-pointing) on every long line on every

manzuma page. Pages 18-21 have 15 lines, Page 23 has 14 lines. Pages 24-25, 27 have 16 lines. The other pages have “strange” texts.

Content description

the normal text begins on page 18 with a prose Du^{‘a} which contains Qur’anic verses; it is then followed by a manzuma which starts in muḥammas format and then begins to vary the short-long ratio. because of this variation, which is found in other works of the Šayḥ, I believe this manzuma to be the Šayḥ’s own composition. The remainder is mostly type I and type II texts. There is also a type VI (quasi-alphabet) set on page 8. Type V text is found on page 13. The pictures are shield, sun, plant-like, Animal-like and the Ka^{‘bā}.

Incipit: page 18 li-llahi mā fi al-samāwāti wa-fi-al-[‘]Arḍi

‘Allah’s is what is in the heavens and what is in the earth’.

Desinit: page 27 wa-ṭāba [‘]ayṣuhum wa-ḍāqū bi-l-su[‘]ūd mimmā nāla al-murād [??]

‘And their life became good and they tasted joyfully of what has attained the purpose [?]’

External information

This manzuma is of the Šayḥ’s own composition. The handwriting is the Shaik’s. Moreover the manzuma is written on consecutive pages, but with an interruption: page 21 has type II text, while page 22 resumes the

manzuma. Thus folio 11 has manzuma on one side, and type II on the other. Type II (like all the strange texts) is a hall mark of the Šayḥ himself; thus the manzuma text on the other side is also likely to be his own work.

Sed compiled No. 25

Physical description

Turkish paper with the common watermark. It is a large compilation of two blocks of folios(1-155, and 156-end, according to my penciled in pagination)⁴⁸. Demonstrate different physical conditions. The pages however, the two blocks from 1-16 are loose and the first two bifolios are detached. From pages 31-120 all the folios are fragile and are eaten by mice on the side away from the spine at the top and bottom. Also these pages are spoiled by dirt and moisture. From pages 16-18 the bottom half of the page is soiled by oil. Pages 121-155 are clean and intact. Starting on page 156, two the folios are detached. page size is 17.7 cm x 12 cm. 101 ff.

Black, red, blue, purple and green traditional inks are used.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script with normal and medium size of letters. handwriting is everywhere the Šayḥ's. Except for some of the normal Arabic texts it is

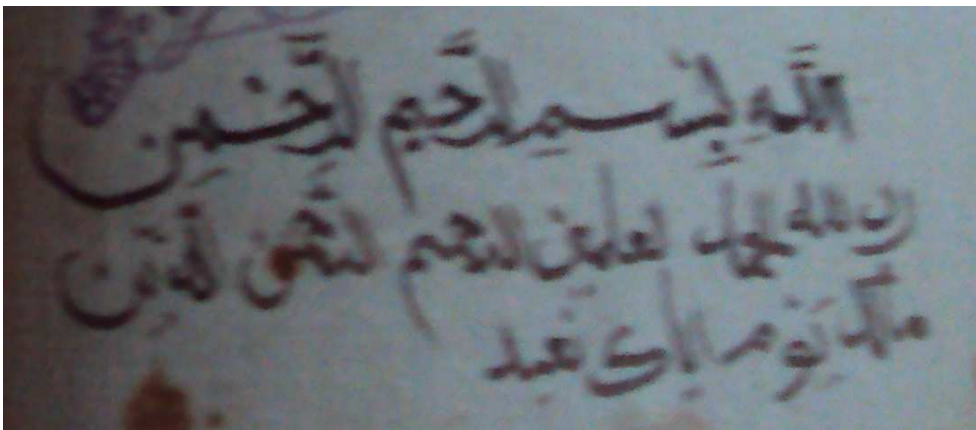
⁴⁸ Each block is mostly intact and sewn.

vocalized. Frames are found with type II text. There are also cartouches surrounding type I words on many pages. There is very little normal Arabic text, as follows. Page 1 has 5 lines at the top, and 6 lines in the middle, page 16 has 6 lines, page 143 has 3 lines, page 153 has 3 lines.

Content description

Page one is a special page. It has praise to the Prophet in the top margin; in the middle there is a Du'a^a written at the center of concentric orbits; below that there is type V text. Page 16 has a Qur'anic verse (3:26) with Basmallah heading. Page 143 gives the first three lines of sura al-Fatīḥa; astonishingly, however the words are almost totally out of order.

Here is the text:



In this compilation. all six kinds of invented texts are found⁴⁹. Pictures are found on pages 1, 8, 13, 17-21, 30, 37-39, 41, 42, 44, 51, 52, 59, 60, 62, 65, 74, 77, 81-83, 85, 87, 89, 91, 102, 115, 117, 119, 124-126, 130,

⁴⁹ Some of my penciled-in pagination is apparently off by 1; I do not have the original manuscript to check the pages.

132, 137, 142, 143, 145, 146, 155, 168-170, 176, 188-190, 193-195 and 197. They are spider webs, buildings, triangles, the compass and the cross, Ka'ba, Shields, orbits and others.

Incipit: page 1, fa-hah bayān dawā'irān [dawārān] al-'akbar li-l-nabiyyīn

'This is information about the greatest rank for the Prophets'.

Desinit: Page 143, al-dīn mālik yawm 'iyyāka na'budu [sic]

'Of Judgment, master the day (of); only you we worship, [distortion of sura 1:3]

External information

There are almost no normal Arabic texts found in this book. Bycontrast, the invented texts are overwhelmingly abundant. Note that type VI text exists in this compilation a larger extent than in any other manuscript or compilation.

Miscellanea

Letters

Sed letter No. 1

Turkish paper of pale yellow color. A single piece of paper, written on one side only. 12.3 cm x 10 cm, the written field is 11 cm x 8.5 cm. The paper is in good condition. On the bottom left a small piece of the paper is missing.

Naskhi script, clear handwriting. Purple ink used throughout. 8 lines and one extra line to write the date. ³³

It is a letter sent from Šayḥ Mahmud (his contemporary scholar?) to Šayḥ Seddeqiy. He praises the Šayḥ and asks how he is. The date is 1351 A.H. (1932/3).

Incipit: al-ḥamdu lillāhi ʿallaḍi nawwara baṣāʿir al-ʿārifin bi-nūr al-maʿrifa

‘Praise to Allah who illuminated the insight of the knowledgeable with the light of knowledge.’

Desinit: wa-sallamakum salāman jazīlan šayḥī ʿabba Ḥarā. budūḥ 1351 hijriyya.

‘And my Šayḥ Abba Haraa greets you with a full greeting. Budūḥ [apotropaic formula]. 1351 A.H. (1932/33 A.D.)’

Sed letter No. 2

Modern ruled paper of grey color. Single piece of paper, written one side only. Much of the top right corner is torn away (about ¼ of the whole sheet). Size is 15.8 cm x 11.5 cm, the written field is 10.7 cm x 10.5 cm.

Naskhi script, the handwriting is clear and legible. Blue-black ink. 11 lines.

It is sent from Abba Digga Ibn Abba Rorro, a Qoro from the Sokorru area, in the locality of Dimaʿz which is mentioned in the letter. There is a stamp at the bottom which bears his name, thus confirming that he was a notable

personality. The addressee is not stated; presumably it appeared in the torn-off part. The surviving part adjacent to the torn-off part contains some praise words and salutations to the (unmentioned) receiver. The issue discussed concerns a *jāriya* (slave girl or servant girl) whom the receiver of the letter apparently bought for the sender. The sender asks that the girl be sent to him as soon as possible.

Who was the recipient of the letter? Even though the beginning of the letter contains extravagant praise, it would not have been sent to the Šayḥ, for several reasons. First, the Šayḥ was against slavery. Second, the time mentioned in the letter, 1336 H (1917/18), does not match with the time that the Šayḥ was living in Seddeqa as a scholar. Third, the Šayḥ's son, Abba Tamam, told me that this letter was sent to Abba Bushan, who was a well-known official and trader.

Incipit: missing

Desinit: hādā wa-al-salāmu maʿrūf al-karḥī (?) budūḥ

'This is the end. [??] Budūḥ [apotropaic formula]'

Sed letter No. 3: Letter draft

Turkish paper of dark cream color, it has drops of coffee and the red ink has run and created a cloud-like discoloration due to moisture. It is eaten by mice at the center, thus creating one big and one small hole and removing some of

the text. Size is 23.5 cm x 18.4 cm, written field is roughly 19 cm x 17 cm. One single piece of paper.

Naskhi script, clear and legible handwriting. Written in black ink, 16 lines. There are interlineations in the first paragraph and the beginning of the second paragraph.

A draft of letter which the Šayḥ planned to send to unnamed *sayyid*, perhaps his Sufi master or his Islamic teacher. He discusses what he experienced after separating from his mentor during a journey. He mentions one place as a village of Hadiyya; this may be one of the Ğimma villages near Seddeqa known for their Qabēna (Hadiyya) settlers. He also informs his mentor that he bought a mule. The date is missing; only the word *sana* ‘year’ has survived. The document is ungrammatical, inconsistent, and full of visible corrections, thus arguing that it is a draft.

Incipit: ʾaḥmaduhu ḥamdan yuwāfi biʿumri [ripped away] karamahu wa-
ʾaškuruhū mawlā niʿmihi

‘I praise [Allah] with a praise which...’

Desinit: ʿalā [?] šāhibiha ʿalayhi wa-sallam ṣalāt

Sed letter No. 4

Turkish paper of cream color, stained with drops of coffee and some red ink. The size is 23.5 cm x 18 cm, the written field is 10 cm x 13 cm. A single piece of paper.

Naskhi script, the handwriting is clear and legible. Written with black ink, 10 lines. It has no date.

It is an (apparently) incomplete letter meant for someone who is addressed as “Sultan of the hosts of all times” and full of extravagant praise. It contains a Du‘a’.

Incipit: Basmallah, Hamdallah, wa-l-‘āqibatu li-l-muttaqīn

‘...and may the end of the pious be [victory]’

Desinit: yā ‘aḥibbatī kayfa ḥālukum wa-ḥāl man ma‘akum wa-‘in tafaddaltum ‘anni fa-bi-‘afwin wa-‘āfiyatin [hard to read]

‘O my dear ones, how are you and those with you? And if you wished me favor and health, [hard to read].’

Sed letter No. 5

Turkish paper of cream color, size is 24.5 cm x 18.4 cm, written field is 23 cm x 13 cm. A single piece of paper, 21 lines. Naskhi script, clear and legible handwriting. Black ink. Date is given as 1345 A.H. (1926 A.D.), but the day is illegible.

The Šayḥ sent this letter from Abelti to Seddeqa, asking the people in charge in Seddeqa to prepare the mosque for the coming Mawlid festival. He also says that he is not happy to be in Abelti. This letter is the only written indication we have that he spent time in Abelti; all the informants, however, agree that he lived in Abelti for 5 years during the Italian occupation. The year mentioned in the letter is one year after the apparent date of his settlement as a scholar in Seddeqa.

Incipit: Basmallah, Hamdallah and Ṣalawāt °alā al-nabī

Desinit: wa-salām °alā man ittaba°a al-hudā 1345 sana

‘...and may peace be upon those who follow [divine] guidance, year 1345’.

Sed letter No.6

Turkish paper of cream color, 18.3 cm x 11.3 cm, written field is the entire page. 16 lines on a single sheet of paper.

Naskhi script, with clear and legible handwriting, written in black ink. It bears the Šayḥ’s stamp.

The letter is to an official referred to as Sultan Abba Dula, brother of King Abba Ğifar II. The Šayḥ asks for help in capturing a man who cheated the Šayḥ’s guests of money. He also demands return of the money. The handwriting, as well as the praise of the Šayḥ himself, indicates that it was written by someone else following his dictation. On the reverse of this letter,

written in pencil, is a genealogy of Šayḥ Ḥal ʿil bin Abba Bushan, long-time student and friend of the Šayḥ.

Incipit: Basmallah, Hamdallah and Šalawāt ʿalā al-nabī

Desinit: ʿamma ʿantum fa-ḥlubū ḥaqqahum wa-ʿanšifū bi-l-ʿadal

‘And as for you, make a claim for their property, and be just and honest’

Sed letter No. 7

Turkish paper, cream color, good condition. It was once folded in half, and the fold mark is visible. 6 lines on a single sheet of paper.

Naskhi script, unknown handwriting, black ink.

It is a letter sent to Šayḥ Mahmud, a student in the Seddeqa madrasah. The writer is Šayḥ Bushra (Šayḥ Mahmud’s brother); he tells of the death of their father on the 14th day of Ramadan. Also his mother’s salutations for him are included.

Incipit: ḥamdan li-man aḥyā wa-amāta

‘Praise to the One who causes life and death’

Desinit: wa-ḥayyaʿtu wa-faqadtū al-maskan wa-al-ma...

‘And I have lost and been deprived of the house and the... [this complaint is from his mother.]’

Power of attorney

Modern ruled paper, cream color, 16.7 cm x 10.1 cm, written field 13.4 x 10 cm. Single sheet of paper, 15 lines.

Naskhi script, clear and legible handwriting, black ink. It bears the thumbprints of three people. The scribe is Šayḥ Ḥalīl bin Abba Bushan.

It is a power of attorney given to Šayḥ Ḥalīl bin Abba Bushan⁵⁰ from Diggitti bint Abba Sikko regarding the property she inherited from her father; she authorizes him to manage it all. Five witnesses are listed. The judge was Abba Qiṭṭi Abba Magal. The three thumbprints are accompanied by the names of the giver, the receiver, and the judge.

Incipit: wa-qālat Diggitti bint Abba Sikko °inda Abba Qiṭṭi Abba Magal li-šayḥ ḥalīl bin abba būšan bin abba sajji ja°altuka wakīlan lī...

‘Diggitti, daughter of Abba Sikko, said to Šayḥ Ḥal īl bin Abba Bushan bin Abba Sajji in the presence of Abba Qiṭṭi Abba Magal: I give you my power of attorney ...’

Desinit: wa-qāla šayḥ ḥalīl bin abba būšan °alā ha°ulā°i al-šuhadā° kuntu wakīlan lahā bikulli mā qālat diggitti bint Abba Sikko ṭaliyān mut

⁵⁰ Longtime student and friend of the Šayḥ; his genealogy is found on the reverse of letter No. 6.

‘And Šayḥ Ḥal ʾil bin Abba Bushan said before these witnesses: I am her representative in whatever she, Diggitti, the daughter of Abba Sikko, testifies. Let Italy die (by Italy’s life)⁵¹.’

Refund request

Turkish paper, cream color, 10 cm x 27 cm, written field is the full page, 9 lines.

Naskhi script, with good handwriting; occasionally vocalized, black and green ink. The writer is the brother of the addressee of the letter, Abba Bulgu. There is a short green overline on line 8, which is explained below the main text (again in green ink) as a kind of footnote.

It is list of expenditures spent on the father of Abba Bulgu and the writer himself. The writer was looking after their father while he was sick for a year, and incurred considerable expense in the process. In this letter he seems to be listing every conceivable expense with the intention of making it known to Abba Bulgu (and indirectly requesting a refund). He even lists the time he spent in every place he went with their father in search of medical treatment. Well-known students of Šayḥ Seddeqa are mentioned in the letter, like Šayḥ Uthman Seddeqa.

Incipit: Hamdallah, then ṣalawāt, then lā nabiyya ba’dahu

⁵¹ He is swearing by the common formula in Amharan culture: let someone die; or, by someone’s life. The wording also indicates that the deal was arranged during the Italian occupation 1935-1941.

‘...no prophet after him’

Desinit: wa mā bi[°]tu wa-ḥarrajtū min ḥaqqihi al-[°]arḍ alġā wa-[°]amatun wa-
ġulāmun wa-[°]ajūzatun [°]innā li-llāhi wa-[°]innā [°]ilayhi rāji[°]ūn

‘And what I sold and excluded from his property (was) the land of Alga,
and a maidservant (slave), and a boy servant, and an old woman (servant).

We are Allah’s and to him we shall return.’

Sed Bifolio No. 1

Physical description

Thick Turkish paper with rough texture, cream color. The top, bottom and left margins are somewhat soiled and there are also a few coffee drops. It is a bifolio which survived the great fire at Seddeqa. As a bifolio which was originally part of a quire, the first two pages form a coherent block, and the last two pages form a different coherent block. The paper is in good condition, despite being slightly eaten by mice at the corners. On the last page in the left margin, there is an extraneous piece of burnt paper attached to the bifolio by melted plastic — a tangible sign of the fire which burnt many of the Seddeqa manuscripts. Size is 23.8 cm x 17.5 cm.

Black ink is used for the main text and the marginalia. Red is used for rubrication. The ink is clear and intact.

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, with bold letters. The handwriting is apparently not the Šayḥ's; the rubrication involves red dots to mark sentence boundaries, and overlines on important words to be explained. On page 1 and the first half of page 2 (only), it is fully vocalized. There are many marginal notes, which are glosses to words and sentences in the main body, and also interlinear notations. There are catchwords. 18 lines, written field is 19.5 cm x 12.7 cm.

Content description

As a single surviving and folded bifolio, it contains texts of two different chapters from the book. The first two pages contain discussion about prophesy (*nubuwwa*), while the last two pages discuss the effect of evil deeds. This bifolio has all the characteristics of a standard book like marginal and interlinear notes, and the theme of each section is consistent and coherent within itself. On the last two pages the phrase “as Imam Sanusi said” recurs numerous times; thus this bifolio might be from a commentary on some book by Imam Sanusi. The copyist is not mentioned by name.

Incipit: page 1 [mā yu^ctī ??] allāhu li-man yašā³u (lā) min ^cibādihi lā tunālu
bi-šay³in min al-^cabdi

‘[What] Allah [gives?] to whomsoever he wishes of his servants, cannot be gotten in any way by the servant (himself).’

NB: I have reconstructed the words mā yu[‘]ṭī for the assumed final words of the preceding page, which is missing.

Desinit: Page 4 ... tilka al-[‘]ayātu kamā qāla al-[‘]imām al-sanusī...

‘... those signs, as Imām Sanusi said...’

External information

It appears that this book is a fragment of some standard Islamic book, and not an original composition by the Šayḥ. Only a few of the Seddeqa books fall into this category: the Qur[‘]ān, the Mawlid collection, perhaps a fiqh compilation.

Sed Bifolio No. 2: Sufi notes

Physical description

Physical description

Turkish paper, cream color, margins are spoiled by dirt to some extent, the spine is very loose. Size is 23.7 cm x 17.5 cm. a single bifolio. Black ink only. On page 4, a number of sentences are blurry, perhaps due to the ink’s poor quality (diluted).

Description of the writing

Naskhi script, normal size letters; poor handwriting very different from the Šayḥ's, perhaps written by one of his students. Written field is full page.

Content description

It is instructions for Sufi Du'a° (supplication and Ṣalawāts). In each successive paragraph the Prophet, his Companions, his Family, prominent Sufi personalities in the Islamic world and local Sufi saints (respectively) are praised, among them °Uṭmān al-Mirḡanī, °Aḡmad al-Badawī, Jamāl al-°Anṣarī, Muḡammad al-°Anniy (local), Ahmad bin °Idrīs, °Abd al-Qādir Jaylāni, °Ibn °Arabī, and others. The supplicant is told to recite sura al-fatiḡa for all of these personalities in succession. It gives instructions how many times various suras of the Qur'an are to be recited and when. Many Sufi orders are mentioned by name together with their founders; however, the extravagant praise specifically accompanying the name of °Abdul al-Qādir Jaylāni implies that the manuscript is a Qadiri order supplication. It also provides good evidence for the diversity of Sufi groups at that time in Ġimma.

Incipit: al-qalb al-fardānī wa-minḡat al-raḡmāni...

'The unique/individual heart and the favor of the Merciful'

Desinit: Sayyid °Aḡmad al-Badawī

External information

All Sufi orders have their own specific prayers to be performed at particular hours of the day and night. This is the theme of the present manuscript.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Recommendations

The emergence of Gibe Oromo monarchial states as their Islamization is a phenomenon of the 18th and 19th centuries. The Islamic fervor in the second half of the nineteenth century especially in Ğimma provided a fertile ground for the flourished Islamic education and culture. Many scholars from all over the Muslim areas of Ethiopia moved to the Gibe states pursuing the fervor, which was provided by the autonomous kings. This resulted in a large amount of Islamic literature which is mostly ignored by academic researches.

Sheikh ʿAli bin Abdu al-Fatah or commonly known as Musʿid al-Dīn Seddeqi is one of the scholars who contributed for the development of Islamic literature in the former kingdom of Ğimma. He stayed in the kingdom as student scholar for almost thirty years. He established mosques and strengthened the Islamic culture in the eastern part of the kingdom. In the mean time he composed many masterpieces of manzuma which are famous in most of Muslim Oromo areas. Adding to this fact he had invented “strange” texts and pictures which their meaning remained obscure. At this moment there is a large collection of manuscripts in the Seddeqa mosque. Most of them are written by the Šayḥ. The remainder is the product of his students, friends, and family.

In my research I have catalogued 52 manuscripts, which are grouped in to four groups based on their physical condition. The groups are bound books, unbound books, compiled loose pages and miscellanea.

The unique content of these manuscripts urged me to dedicate a chapter in order to describe their content in fairly enough detail. In this chapter I also gave the bases to classify these manuscripts.

Description and catalogue of the manuscripts of Seddeqa is not complete by itself without mentioning the biography of the chief writer Šayḥ Musʿid al-Dīn Seddeqi. He lived in 1887-1978. He lived in Arsi, Hārār, Wällo, Ğimma and Illubabor. However, in this research I gave more emphasis on the time he stayed in the kingdom of Ğimma and his contributions for the then Muslim community.

In my opinion the literary resource of the Gibe area needs deep academic researches. My research can open the gate to use the area as a source of manuscripts. Moreover, the “strange” inventions of the Šayḥ, which are still mysterious can be uncovered by further researches.

List of informants

Name	Place of Interview	Date	Age
Abba Tamām Sādāt	Alemgena town	A number of times including telephone conversations	63
Abba Hikam Abba Digga	Seddeqa	January 5, 2010; February 18, 2010; March 3, 2010 and many telephone conversations	46
Abba Takka Khalil	Seddeqa	January 5, 2010	78
Šayḥ Kamāl Mušṭafā	Seddeqa	January 5, 2010	63
Million Tigist	Ġimma	February 18, 2010; March 3, 2010 and many telephone conversations	35



The Great Mosque (Hadra) of Seddeqa

Power of attorney

وقالت دعيتى بنت اباسكو عندك ابا
 قط ابامغال لشيخ خليل بن
 ابابوشن بن اباسا جعلتك
 وكيلا لي بمخلصامة امرى كلها
 وبمال ابى كلها ارضا وعبيدا و
 جارية وبما ملك ابى كلها وبما
 وجك وما اتليف والشاهد على ذلك
 ابابكو اباجوبير و ابادر بن اباجوبير و ابا
 دكو بن ابار عي و اباد و لال بن اباسين
 و شيخ طيب بن ابار سكي و قرمتي هذا
 نجس طاليان مت وقلا شيخ خليل
 بن ابابوشن على هو لاء الشهدا كنت وكيلا
 لها بكلها قالت دعيتى بنت اباسكو طاليان مت

دعيتى بنت اباسكو
 خليل بن اباجوبير
 قط ابامغال



Type I text with extra large size letters

هو مطرفة لات اللفظية
من عن انك والمعنى
ون لشي الموشاة له نفا

هو مطرفة لات اللفظية
من عن انك والمعنى
ون لشي الموشاة له نفا

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ون لشي الموشاة له نفا

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والسورة في السور

10

باب معرفة معرفة
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والسورة في السور

باب المعرفة والنكرة
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Grammar poem

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Hybrid architecture

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Glossary of terms

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/arabic/glossary.html>

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