

## ABSTRACTS

### **Texts in the *Mawlud* collection in Harar: some first critical observations**

Alessandro Gori

Together with my colleague S. Tarsitani, I had the opportunity to closely work on the collection of texts currently recited and sung in Harar on occasion of the *Mawlud* feasts and during other *Mawlud* related ceremonies. It is a constellation of texts most commonly known under the title of “Mawlid sharaf al-‘alamin”. The texts of the collection “Mawlid sharaf al-‘alamin” are preserved and transmitted in a quite relevant number of manuscripts kept in Harar, in Ethiopia and abroad and in at least four different printed editions.

In my paper I would like to try to give a first detailed description of the content of the written tradition of this “Mawlid” collection of Harar, as it emerges at the end of a philological and comparative analysis of the four printed editions. A quick glance at the manuscript tradition will also be given without any pretention of completeness but only to hint at the problems that a much necessary but - at least for the moment - only hypothetical critical edition of the collection will be facing. The main literary features of the texts of the collection will also be dealt with. The complex and variegated nature of the influences and of the different suggestions that were at work in the process of formation and development of the “Mawlid sharaf al-‘alamin” will be highlighted. Moreover, the relationship between the written tradition and the musical and liturgical functions of the texts of the collection will be analyzed. With the help of S. Tarsitani, the role that the collective performances of the “Mawlid” played in catalyzing a process of change in the structure and the content of the written tradition will be tentatively studied.

The paper is the direct outcome of an interdisciplinary experience whose main characteristics I and my colleague would like to share here with the participants in the workshop with the hope that it could become an incentive to the cooperation among scholars of different fields for the preservation of the cultural heritage – both written and oral – of the Ethiopian peoples and communities.

### **Integrating local knowledge into the management of African archives: Lessons from Harar**

Belle Asante Tarsitani

For nearly two decades, the most precious examples of Harari tangible and oral cultural heritage were collected and preserved in the private home-cum-museum of Abdulahi Ali Sherif in the city of Harar. Audio recordings of musical and ritual practices, along with the volumes of manuscripts from this collection gave noteworthy substantiation of the idea that the resources of dedicated individuals, when supported by a community of local patrons, can be instrumental in effectively conserving heritage in a local archive, even in the absence of major funding sources. This presentation offers a review of the collection amassed by Mr. Sherif’s, explores his curatorial skills, and highlights some pertinent lessons as to the challenges and prospects of managing archives and cultural artifacts in regional museums in smaller communities.

As the 2006 inauguration of the new Harar City Museum has shown, small archival initiatives may, in time, develop into internationally supported collaborations of collections that are locally owned and globally shared. Despite the physical, financial and administrative complications involved in the conservation and preservation of musical and written heritages (along with their associated artifacts), community actors, in consort with governmental and international organizations, have effectively maintained and supported local Harar collections on a level unprecedented in Ethiopia.

This research presents an example of how the forum of the “community museum” can be a particularly appropriate and accessible venue for engaging a new generation of African participants in the legacies found in local archives. It will be argued that the continued integration of local actors in the management of the museum, and the considerable development of on-site interactive community activities will be imperative to future assessments of whether Harar’s newest museum can herald a successful new model for the community-run African archive of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Tariqa Ritual Activities in Zanzibar**

Chiaki Fujii

The aim of this presentation is to describe the activities of *tariqas* in Zanzibar (Tanzania) and to show the importance of their practices in Zanzibar culture. Since the latter half of the 19th century, *tariqas* had come up to East Africa, especially to Zanzibar, and contributed to the Islamization of the coastal and the trade routes' people. Then *tariqas* became widely popular and the practices have influenced on their daily life as Muslims.

I will examine some participant observations of the anniversary of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday (*mawlid*) and interviews to the leaders of *tariqas*. During *mawlid*, which is celebrated for about 3 weeks in Zanzibar, *zikri* rituals are performed actively.

The interviews of the leaders of the *tariqas* and my observations revealed that *tariqas* in Zanzibar are active not only on the anniversary of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday but also during other occasions, like the visitation of saints' tombs, wedding celebrations, the 40-day period of mourning after funerals, and so on. We can say that *tariqas* play an important role in Zanzibar people's daily life, which is particularly visible during the main Islamic festivals and the rites of passage.

### **The songs of the city: Voices of women from Harar**

Ilaria Sartori

Harari songs, called *gey faqar*, "the Songs of the City", are among the most significant expressions of local intangible cultural heritage. Before DERG repression songs were played, in variety of styles, by most social strata: as historical recordings testify, *mugad* youth associations became particularly fertile in modern forms, while the voice of Shamitu, the most famous woman singer, became a symbol of Harari culture through the continents. Presently, traditional forms of *gey faqar* (implying a voice-percussion configuration) are mostly performed at weddings by mature women: a choir of *ayač* (mothers) and *afoča* (members of neighbourhood associations) is led by an expert or professional singer/poet (*wali*), often accompanied by membranophones (*karabu* and *daf*) and idiophones (*kabal*); women may also play in solo (*salley*), or in duo (*ğaliyei*, *kotankot*). Themes include religion, patriotism, friendship, love and marriage; verses, fixed or improvised, are rich in metaphors and present significant semantic stratification. Performance of *gey faqar* thus combines the expression of a shared literary and musical patrimony with the ability of poetical creation and melodic variation. Texts and melodies of *gey faqar* are not considered as separate entities but rather as a whole, and they are strictly interconnected with the social and ritual event they accompany. Documentation and analysis of the Songs of the City thus imply an interdisciplinary approach -including linguistic, philological, literary, anthropological and musicological study- and cannot prescind from a positive relationship with the community and cooperative interaction with local and international researchers and intellectuals. While Harari women's voices sing for the City, accompany ritual practices and perpetrate literary knowledge thus representing an important facet of Harari living culture, synergy between local community, Harari and foreign scholars, museums, archives and local and international cultural institutions may contribute to cooperative knowledge, projects and works (recordings, transcriptions, publications, workshops, capacity building actions) to develop further reflections and activities towards preservation and valorisation of intangible cultural heritage.

### **Intercultural Dialogue on the Visualization of Local Knowledge: Cases of Films on Musicians and Children in Ethiopia**

Itsushi Kawase

This paper explores the constructive dialogue between an anthropologist/filmmaker and the audience on the visualization of knowledge through anthropological films. Films, in particular, can be a powerful means of communication in many instances, more powerful than the written or the spoken

word, especially in regard to the immediate exchange of ideas not only with the limited scholarly circles but with a wider public/audience. However, the dominant discourse in visual anthropology has treated the recipients of films as passive; it has paid insufficient attention to the viewer's role in the construction of meanings and evaluation of ethnographic inquiry. This paper examines how viewers from different cultural/screening contexts interpret and respond to my works on musicians and children in Ethiopia ([www.itsushikawase.com](http://www.itsushikawase.com)). It also seeks for ways to project the active voice of the audience in regard to the development of existing ideas on how local knowledge is best conveyed via visual media. I consider cases from academic film festivals in Europe, screening seminars among Ethiopian immigrants in North America, discussions via blogs, university lectures in Japan, and so on. The paper focuses on the role of the audience in the formation and rediscovery of cultural identity with regard to local knowledge presented via filmic documentation. Further, it explores the appropriate manner of film-presentation both in the form of montage and screenings, on the basis of my experience in using films as an educational medium.

### **Identity in Change: A History of the Hamina in Twentieth-Century Ethiopia.**

Mesele Terecha Kebede

The Hamina are a group of people who are practicing song-mendicancy in order to ward off debilitating physical impacts of leprosy coming down from a whispered leper ancestor. Leprosy is an age-old scourge of humanity with an unrestrained power of shaping human identities including identities in Ethiopia. Its age-old prevalence, mysterious pathology and dreadful physical impacts gave leprosy a special place in the Ethiopian traditions throughout history. This presentation intends to examine the social history of the Hamina with parallel evaluations of medical, social, economic, political and cultural changes that occurred in twentieth-century Ethiopia.

### **An attempt to accommodate diverse images of Muslim *awliya*: Written documents, oral tradition and *manzuma* (religious verses)**

Minako Ishihara

Historians and anthropologists interested in local customs of venerating *awliya* (Muslim holymen), tend to encounter multiple obstacles and problems in collecting oral and written information on life histories of *awliya* (Muslim holymen). By comparing three examples of my own experience in collecting 'historical' information on three different *awliya*, I discuss some approaches that may be viable in accommodating diverse images of *awliya* without denying authenticity of some information in favor of others.

Al-Faki Ahmad Umar (d.1953), a Tijani *shaykh* from Bornu, is widely venerated among Muslim Oromos in western Ethiopia (Ishihara 1997, Ishihara 2007). The Tijani cult has its centers in Ya'a, Jimma and western Wollega. Three of his disciples have written his life history in Arabic, one of which was published in Cairo. During research conducted in the 1990s, I had the chance to interview informants who knew and met him contemporarily. These contemporaries were sources of information whereby oral tradition was created. Descendants counting over a hundred, have connections with learned persons who possess written material and authentic sources of oral tradition. Other than these 'authentic' sources, there are numerous followers/admirers of Al-Faki, whom they blindly venerate as *wali*. These followers include generations who never had contact with him when he was alive, but still love him because of their own experiences, which they interpret as 'miracles'. *Manzumas* are composed in admiration of Al-Faki, and his photographs are available at photo shops, owners of which were his admirers.

Hajj Bushra, introduced as a Muslim reformer living in 18<sup>th</sup> century Wollo (Hussein 2001), is widely venerated in Wollo (northeast Ethiopia). Despite his reputation as an Islamic reformer, the descendants generously handed me an Amharic version of his life history and a list of miraculous deeds, which gives a contrasting image of the Hajj as a *wali* and miracle-maker.

Sitti Momina (d.1929), is a highly venerated Muslim holywoman from Wollo. She is not related to one of the known *tariqas*, but is well-known for her spiritual powers. Faraqasa, situated in Arsi

(southeastern Ethiopia), where her *qubba* (mausoleum) is built, is a pilgrimage center and regarded as a magical place in itself. Her life history, the *munaqib*, believed to have medicinal effects is recited only at *hadras* (religious gatherings) on special occasions. Thus I was only permitted to listen to the *munaqib* and given explanation on her miraculous deeds.

### **Scholarship on Ethiopian Music: Retrospect and Prospect**

Simeneh Betreyohannes

While broad and significant appraisals of Ethiopian studies have been carried out with thematic and/or disciplinary orientations, musical topics have generally been denied attention. Examples of such important literature include Bahru Zewde's article "A Century of Ethiopian Historiography", Alula Pankhurst's "Research on Ethiopian Societies and Culture During the Second Half of the 20th century", Gebre Yntiso's book "Anthropological Training in Ethiopia" and Belete Bizuneh's "Women in Ethiopian History: Bibliographic Review". As one would expect, music could be a relevant aspect of such works, yet it is hardly addressed. Furthermore, to the author's best knowledge, there is no or very little independent and comprehensive assessment on Ethiopian music scholarship. This paper explores the existing Ethiopian musical studies by utilizing critical works from a variety of disciplines and periods. It discusses the evolution and current trends of music scholarship, as well as some pertinent issues drawn from assessing past works. It also introduces some of the major musical themes covered and personalities who are involved in musical research. Further more, it highlights the research gap and the potential for further research.

### ***Mawlud* and *zikri* in the Islamic rituals of Harar**

Simone Tarsitani

This paper aims to describe the most common religious rituals performed in Harar, one of the most important centers of Islamic learning in the Horn of Africa. *Zikri* is a devotional activity characterized by singing hymns with lyrics praising Allah, the Prophet Mohammed and the saints. Among the great variety of traditions developed in the frame of the Islamic mysticism, the *zikri* rituals of Harar convey the rich repertoire of religious poems and their link with the history of this city. The wide repertoire of texts written in the local languages, the sung melodies and their rhythmic accompaniment, the ritual and social function of their performance developed interesting peculiarities. *Mawlud* in Harar is mainly used to denote the most diffused collection of sacred texts performed to celebrate *Nabi Mawlud* as well as other Islamic feasts and weddings; every ritual based on the recital of this collection is also addressed as *Mawlud*.

This paper will analyze features of the performance of the liturgies and of the religious poems associated with *Mawlud* and *zikri*, showing a lively tradition that is linked to the repertoire of texts, which can be found in manuscripts and printed books. By integrating the knowledge reflected in this presentation with the research initiated by other scholars, I hope to provide an example of the benefits of interdisciplinary approaches to the study of the intangible heritage presented herein.

### **Making *Pilgrimage to Ya'a*: Filmmaking as a collaborative work between filmmaker and the subject**

Yasuo Matsunami

Ya'a, an Oromo village located in Beni Shangul and Gumuz Regional State in Ethiopia, is one of the most significant Muslim pilgrimage centers in Ethiopia. Acknowledging common features among pilgrimage customs in Ethiopia, each pilgrimage center has distinctive characteristics closely associated with the personality and contributions of the founder, and the cultural and historical background of the center. Ya'a became a pilgrimage center when a Tijānī *shaykh*, *Al-Faki* Ahmad

Umar, died there in 1953. A mausoleum was built and people (mainly Oromo) who revere *Al-Faki Ahmad Umar* settled around the mausoleum.

This presentation is about the filmmaking process of the film titled *Pilgrimage to Ya'a*. I, the filmmaker, participated in the pilgrimage ritual, and involved the residents of Ya'a in making the film. The presentation describes how I accompanied a group of pilgrims traveling on foot and how the festival performed at Ya'a was organized by the residents. The film was screened at Ya'a in October 2007, and the presentation introduces how the viewers, the residents of Ya'a, had reacted to the film. The presentation reconsiders the collaborative approach in making ethnographic films and examines the possibility of a participatory filmmaking.

### **Significance of Harari Music: The case of Harari Pop Songs Produced in Cassettes/CD**

Woube Kassaye

The purpose of this article is to show the significance of the Harari pop songs analyzed in Cassettes/CDs. Harari is a language dominantly spoken by the Harari/Hadere people, most of whom are Muslim. Little researches have been made on Harari music. The method employed for this study is both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The source of the study is Harari songs produced either in cassettes or CD, Policies (Culture, Education and Training, Religion, Women). Purposive sampling was considered. The central question of this article is to what extent the songs are interconnected with the intent of the different Policies concerning Education and Training, Environmental protection, Preservation of cultural heritage, Muslim religion. Two categories – the core messages and the music part for interpreting the analyzed songs – were developed. The Core Message Category (CMC) consists of: a) Love (heterosexual relationship), b) Personal, Social, Cultural and Economic Development, c) Occasion and Ceremonies (Occasional and Ceremonial songs), d) Norms and values, e) Muslim religion, e) Physical features, Sovereignty and Development of ones Region, Country or Continent, and f) Politics. The Music Part Category (MPC) consists of: a) Meter, b) Musical instruments, c) Harmony (arrangement, voice), d) scales (pentatonic). The study comes up with some findings: a) the messages of the songs are significant in promoting Education, the Muslim religion, protecting Cultural heritage, maintaining the required Norms and Values; b) the music part of the songs (scales, meter, harmony) could be taken as a very important element that contributes to teaching music education in the region as well as at Federal level.