

## TEXTS IN THE *MAWLID* COLLECTION IN HARAR: SOME FIRST CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

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**ABSTRACT** In my paper I would like to try to describe in a philological and comparative perspective the content of the constellation of texts most commonly known under the title of “*Mawlid sharaf al-‘alamin*.” The collection is 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. It contains the basic textual material recited and sung in Harar during *Mawlūd* feasts and other *Mawlūd* related ceremonies. The main literary features of the texts of the collection will 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. The role that the collective performances of the “*Mawlūd*” played in catalyzing a process of change in the structure and the content of the written tradition will be tentatively studied.

**Key Words:** Islamic culture in Ethiopia; Islamic literature in Ethiopia; Harari literature.

### PROLEGOMENA: *MAWLID* AS A LITERARY PHENOMENON

*Mawlid* (or *Mawlūd*) collections of texts are a very complex topic in Islamic cultures and literatures. It is not possible to introduce the main subject of this paper without mentioning, at least in a roughly outlined way, some general aspects of the relationship between *Mawlid* and literature.<sup>(1)</sup> The general theological problems related to the legal status of the celebration of the birth of the Prophet Muḥammad are well known, however, and should be briefly mentioned here.

The birthday of the Prophet (12<sup>th</sup> day of the Islamic lunar month of *rabī<sup>c</sup> al-awwal*) is one of the most important festivals in the Muslim calendar. The legitimacy of its celebration has been questioned by many experts of Islamic Law, however. After a harsh debate, which has lasted through the modern era, the status of *bid<sup>c</sup>a ḥasana* (good innovation) was eventually recognized in relation to the *Mawlid* insofar as most of the mainstream Sunni Islamic learned men consider it licit to solemnize this occasion. To discuss the problem of the legitimacy of the *Mawlid*, a great number of treatises and of *fatāwā* (legal opinions) have been produced; perhaps, Ġalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī’s (d. 1505) *Ḥusn al-maqṣid*<sup>(2)</sup> provided the last word on this theological controversy.<sup>(3)</sup>

The collective performance of the festival, widely spread in Sunni Islamic countries since the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards, has also caused debates among scholars, even among those who agreed on the general legitimacy of the ceremony, though the literary outcomes of this debate are wide and to describe them is beyond the

scope of this contribution.<sup>(4)</sup> One of the main and most peculiar characteristics of the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet is the communal reading and singing of pious literature in prose and verse, which is described below.

A peculiar literary genre came into light and became very cherished: works to be read explicitly on the occasion of the *Mawlid* were written particularly within the frame of the mystical brotherhoods. They can be very different in style (prose or verse), in language<sup>(5)</sup> and in content but they normally all share a certain set of topics which are: the description of the prodigies that happened before and immediately after the birth of the prophet; the praises of his mother and father (Āmina and ʿAbdallāh), of his wet nurse (Ḥalīma), the high rank of his genealogy and some episodes of his biography (especially the miraculous night flight from Mecca to Jerusalem, *isrāʿ*, and the ascent to Heaven, *miʿrāğ*)<sup>(6)</sup>.

Moreover, *Mawlid* texts almost invariably convey and spread a very refined theological message that can be considered the main intellectual background of their structure: the light of the Prophet (*nūr Muḥammad*; *nūr muḥammadī*) was created by God before the entire universe came into existence. Once the world was created, the light of the Prophet passed through the generations of the prophets until it was finally revealed to mankind in Muḥammad himself. The earth was thus honored by the manifestation of the *nūr Muḥammad* and the human beings were enlightened by this divine gift.<sup>(7)</sup>

At the same time, poems that were originally conceived as a general praise of the Prophet and a panegyric on his personality (*madḥ al-nabī*) came to be used in organized recitals on the occasion of the *Mawlid* together with what one may call the *Mawlid* texts in a narrower sense (Tarsitani, 2007–2008). This is the case, for example, of the two famous *Burda* poems.<sup>(8)</sup>

One more element must be taken into consideration to understand the formation of the literary tradition of the *Mawlid* text collections: the *ṣalawāt* verses. The idea that the faithful must pray for and ask divine blessing upon the Prophet directly derives from a verse of the Koran.<sup>(9)</sup> The Prophet himself taught the Muslims the most appropriate way to pray for him; It is the text of the famous *al-ṣalāt al-ibrāhīmiyya*, which is commonly recited after *taṣāḥḥud*, during the five daily mandatory prayers.<sup>(10)</sup> With this sound theological background in mind, many Muslim learned men, especially those influenced by mysticism, started writing their own *ṣalawāt*. They are essentially variations on the current blessing formula “*allahumma ṣallī wa-sallim ʿalā Muḥammad*”: this *taṣliyā* is repeated in observance to the religious practice, but at the same time it is transformed according to the inspiration and the poetical skills of the author with the use of epithets magnifying the personality of the Prophet, highlighting his good qualities and recalling his benefits to the faithful. The *ṣalawāt* and *salāmāt ʿalā al-nabī* are a wide spread genre among *ṣūfī* masters and it was almost a natural development that texts of this kind came to be included into *Mawlid* recitals and texts.<sup>(11)</sup>

Moreover, *ṣalawāt* represents also a kind of religiously indisputable frame in which the entire idea of the celebration of the birth of the Prophet can be easily inserted: praying for Muḥammad is not only licit, but can be considered a daily duty by the faithful. To do it on the day of his very birth in a more lively and emotional way is nothing but an extension of this common practice. Finally,

*tawassul* and *du<sup>ḥ</sup>ā<sup>ḥ</sup>* are two more literary genres that enter in the *Mawlid* collections: to ask for the intercession of the Prophet (but also of some holy men whose closeness to the prophetic model is magnified) and to close the festival with an invocation of God seeking his protection can be considered as a sort of *sunna* of faithful on every solemn occasion.

The convergence of these different literary products (*mawlid* proper; *madḥ*; *ṣalawāt*; *tawassul*; *du<sup>ḥ</sup>ā<sup>ḥ</sup>*) created everywhere in the Muslim world standardized and widespread collections of texts to be read, recited and sung during *Mawlid* and *Mawlid*-related celebrations. These collections are apparently the result of a liturgical —so to speak— practice that brought together texts which were originally separated and put them in a specific sequence which is the base for the practical performance of the ceremony. The textual tradition is thus set up on the liturgical one and stands in a biunivocal relation with it. In many cases, the *Mawlid* collections became the most renowned and the most beloved texts of a whole Muslim community: Harar makes no exception to this general Islamic cultural and literary trend.

#### THE *MAWLID* COLLECTION IN HARAR: A DESCRIPTION OF SOURCES

In Harar, the collection of texts used for recitation during the celebration of the *Mawlid* and on other religious and profane occasions has, nowadays, an apparently recognizable shape and structure. Together with my colleague Simone Tarsitani, I had the opportunity to closely work on this collection of texts. It is a constellation that came to be known under the title (*Kitāb*) *Mawlid šaraf al-<sup>ḥ</sup>alamīn* and is preserved and transmitted in manuscripts kept in Harar, in Ethiopia and abroad and in different printed editions.

Unfortunately, until now, I could not carry out a complete *recensio codicum* of the Harari *Mawlid* collection. I thus can presently mention only five manuscripts: two are kept in the IES library but I had no opportunity to study them closely<sup>(12)</sup>; one<sup>(13)</sup> has been recently acquired by the St. Petersburg Museum of Ethnology and I managed to obtain a description of its content and of some sample photos of it; one is contained in a miscellaneous manuscript (123ff) which was copied in Belbelletti area in the thirties of the past century (1353/1934–1935) by *šayḥ* ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Šiddīq: I have digitalized it entirely<sup>(14)</sup>; one (90ff) is kept in the collection of the late Zakariyāʾ Ḥāmid (ZHa, n.d.), and was photographed by Simone Tarsitani.<sup>(15)</sup> Considering the exceptional diffusion of the *Mawlid* collection, there is no doubt that a deeper and wider research could reveal the existence of many other manuscripts. The need of a comprehensive and exhaustive exploration of the manuscript tradition of the *Mawlid* collection in Harar cannot be underestimated. Of course, such a scholarly enterprise has been suffering until now of the general delay in the research on Islamic culture and literature in Ethiopia.

As far as the printed editions are concerned, I am aware of the existence of six: two were published in Egypt in 1350/1931 (127 pp.) and in 1366/1947 (100 pp.) under the title *Mawlid šaraf al-<sup>ḥ</sup>alamīn*: they remained inaccessible to me.

Two were published in Ethiopia (around 1992 and in 2000) under the title *Kitāb ʿunwān al-šarīf bi-al-mawlid al-šarīf* and are actually the photomechanical reproduction of two manuscripts. The 1992 edition (160 pp.) reproduces a manuscript completed in 1412/1992–1993 by an anonymous copyist. On the front page it is clearly stated that “aḍkār” and “qašāʾid” of important “maddāḥīn” are interpolated into the main text.<sup>(16)</sup> The 2000 edition (171 pp.)<sup>(17)</sup> contains a manuscript completed on the 26 of Ramadan 1421/22 December 2000 by the copyist Ibrāhīm Muḥammad Wazīr who is also the one who in 1412/1991 copied a manuscript of *taḥmīs*<sup>(18)</sup> *al-qašāda al-witriyya* of al-Warrāq<sup>(19)</sup> subsequently published in Dire Dawa at unknown date.<sup>(20)</sup>

A third Ethiopian printed edition was published in Dire Dawa with the title *Mawlid šaraf al-ʿālamīn* at the expenses of Maḥdī ḥāḡḡ ʿAbdallāh who is also the sponsor of the publication of the above mentioned *Taḥmīs al-Witriyya*. It seems to be a reprint of one of the above mentioned Egyptian books.<sup>(21)</sup>

Finally in *šaʿbān* 1426/September 2005 a computer typed text (175 pp.) was realized in Addis Ababa under the title *Kitāb mawlid šaraf al-ʿālamīn* by Abū Bakr Ṭābit (Sabit). It is a very careful edition carried out with modern criteria, which comprises also inserted textual elements that are typical of the recited performances, as stated by the same publisher in the front page.<sup>(22)</sup>

As a proof of the high esteem in which the *Mawlid* collection is held in Harari culture, one can mention that an abridged version of it (*muḥatašar*) was recently written and published by the very famous and somehow controversial Harari learned man ʿAbdallāh al-Hararī in Beirut.<sup>(23)</sup>

## PROBLEMS IN THE CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TEXTS OF THE MAWLID COLLECTION IN HARAR

The analysis of a *Mawlid* text collection presents a great deal of problems and difficulties. I have already pointed out some of the general characteristics of this sort of written tradition and its complexities. Now, I will try to enter in some more detail, studying the Harar case and highlighting some very tentative philological elements without pretending to be exhaustive: a critical edition of the collection, at least for the moment, can only be hypothesized.

One more general uncertainty that must be taken into serious account dealing with *Mawlid* collections is related to the attribution of texts. As Frishkopf (2003) has underlined, ideas and perceptions of authorship in Islamic religious poetry (especially in the mystically oriented texts) are very different from current western conceptions about relationships between writers and their works. It is perhaps useful to stress here that commonly used literary procedures like *tarbīʿ*, *taḥmīs*, *tašīr* give authors a wide possibility to graft their names into already renowned poems. In mystical poetry, the picture is made even more complicated by the fact that a conspicuous number of verses and poems are transmitted anonymously or simply attributed to a great master of the past, without any real intention to truly affirm that it is his production, but just to insert the text within a well established scholarly and religious tradition. In view of this attitude toward authorship, the

attribution of many of the poetical texts contained in the *Mawlid* collection in Harar is often uncertain or even simply impossible, while in some other cases it has to be limited to a single part of a poem, normally its incipit and the first verses, leaving to anonymity the rest.

The *Mawlid* collection spread in Harar is basically structured around two main pivotal textual constellations: the first conglomerate of texts is built on the above mentioned *Burdat al-madīh* (*al-Kawākib al-durriya fī madh ḥayr al-bariyya*) of al-Būṣīrī; the second one is assembled around the *‘Unwān al-šarīf* of Abū al-Ḥasan Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī b. Nāṣir.<sup>(24)</sup> The two constellations are linked together in a quite loose way. The *Burda* is followed by a long group of verses some of which are attributed to an otherwise unknown Abū Bakr al-Hanbali “*šayḥ al-madrasa al-Ṭulūniyya*” in Jerusalem<sup>(25)</sup> or a poem whose incipit “*Lā ta’safanna ‘alā al-dunyā wa-mā fihā*” is attributed to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.<sup>(26)</sup>

Subsequently, one finds a prose text<sup>(27)</sup> which is a short preamble to a very long chain of *salāmāt ‘alā al-nabī* (incipit: “*al-salām ‘alayka yā zayn al-anbiyā’*”). Immediately after the end of the *salāmāt ‘alā al-nabī* eulogies, the incipit of the *‘Unwān al-šarīf*<sup>(28)</sup> can be found. Differently, other sources, after the *salāmāt ‘alā al-nabī* and the phrase “*tammāt al-kawākib al-durriya,*”<sup>(29)</sup> present two poems: the famous “*Bi-ḥaqq Allāh riḡāl Allāh*”<sup>(30)</sup> and “*‘Abtadi’ bi-bismillāh madh ḥayr ḥalq Allāh.*”<sup>(31)</sup> Only after these verses, the *‘Unwān al-šarīf* starts.<sup>(32)</sup> If one looks to other *Mawlid* collections, one discovers that the *salāmāt* series of the Harar *Mawlid* collection is the introduction to another very famous *Mawlid* constellation of texts called *Mawlid šaraf al-anām*.<sup>(33)</sup> It is very likely that the series of *salāmāt ‘alā al-nabī* in the Harari *Mawlid* was simply taken from the *Mawlid šaraf al-anām*; also the incipit of the *‘Unwān al-šarīf* resembles vaguely that of the *Mawlid šaraf al-anām*.<sup>(34)</sup>

Moreover, in all the sources at our disposal, the prose passage preceding the *salāmāt ‘alā al-nabī* has definitely the structure and the content of a preface and not of a conclusion.<sup>(35)</sup> As a matter of fact, in ZHa no mention of the end of the *Burda* can be found at this point of the text. It could well be that in a previous stage of the textual tradition the real incipit of *‘Unwān* was here. When at a certain point of the history of the collection the *‘Unwān* constellation was jointed to the *Burda* group of texts, the necessity of a kind of connection was felt: so poetical intermezzos were inserted between the two parts and probably a shift in the reciprocal position of the end of the *Burda* and the incipit of the *‘Unwān* took place. Of course, this is only a logical speculation that could be confirmed or refuted by further philological research.

Turning now to a brief analysis of the *Burda* constellation of texts, two main textual possibilities may be found: 1) the presence of the plain *qasīdat al-Burda*<sup>(36)</sup> or 2) the presence of the *Tahmīs al-Fayyūmī ‘alā al-Burda*.<sup>(37)</sup> This is a great divide in the *Mawlid* collection that calls for deeper investigation: at this stage of research, it is not clear when and how the difference came into light. The three manuscripts which I examined contain only the *Burda*. It could thus be surmised that the insertion of the *Tahmīs al-Fayyūmī ‘alā al-Burda* is a recent innovation, yet only more research can prove this assumption.

The *Burda* section comprises several poems and verses both in Arabic and in Harari. I cannot go into the details and enumerate all the components of this part

of the collection in the different sources, thus only some general observation can be presented here. What seems constant is the presence of the following elements: the opening anonymous verses: “Asīr al-nafs”; the poem “Yā rabbī hayyī’ la-nā”<sup>(38)</sup>; a long *du‘ā*’ in Harari language called *Du‘ā al-muṣṭafā* and, finally, the *qaṣīda* “Tuf bi-ḥānī/ḥālī.”<sup>(39)</sup> It is remarkable that none of these poems is contained in the manuscript sources, while in the Dire Dawa printed edition some other verses are inserted and only the first four verses of “Yā Rabbī hayyī’ la-nā” (p. 14) are quoted.

As for the *‘Unwān* constellation, the general aspect of the group of texts is perhaps clearer. One can easily set apart a basically prose (partially rhymed and rhythmic prose, *saġġ*) series of texts presented as *aḥbār*<sup>(40)</sup> (traditions of historical content) transmitted by great keepers of the prophetic sayings and traditions like Ibn ‘Abbās and Ka‘b ibn Aḥbār. This long set of traditions recounts how the mystical light of Muḥammad was created before the world and how the different parts of the universe were brought into life. It then tells how the *Nūr Muḥammad* passed from prophet to prophet until it became manifest to the world in the birth (*mawlid* in the narrower sense) of Muḥammad. The first stages of the life of the Prophet are also narrated and the great virtues of his mother and his nurse are magnified. The text ends with the mention of the death of Āmina when Muḥammad was only five years old.

Finally, a conclusive prose section starts: it contains the story of a Jewish couple who—in Baṣra (or in Egypt, according to other variants)—embraced Islam after having heard the performance of a *Mawlid* ceremony. This is exactly the same closing story which one may find in the text of the above mentioned *Mawlid šaraf al-anām*: one more clear proof of the influence of this *Mawlid* work on the Harar *Mawlid* collection.

This typical *Mawlid* prose text is intercalated with verses that highlight the crucial moments of the narration. Without analyzing all these poems, one may still mention the recurrence of the following *qaṣīda*-s: “Salamun salamun ka-miski al-ḥitām”<sup>(41)</sup>; “Hādī al-‘ays adrik ka’s al-hanā”<sup>(42)</sup>; “Bi-bismillāh mawlānā ibtadaynā”<sup>(43)</sup>; “A‘limta min rakb al-burāq ‘afimā”<sup>(44)</sup>; “Qif bi-ḍāt al-safḥi man aḍūmm”<sup>(45)</sup>; “Riyāḍ naġdi bi-kum ġinān”<sup>(46)</sup>; “Bušrāki yā Ḥālīma bi-al-durrat al-yatīma.”<sup>(47)</sup> Moreover, all our sources have a group of *šalawāt ‘alā al-nabī* just after the mention of the birth of Muḥammad. It is the same series of *šalawāt* which one can find in the *Mawlid šaraf al-anām*: this is thus the third connecting element which link the Harari *Mawlid* with the *Mawlid šaraf al-anām*.<sup>(48)</sup>

Finally, once again, one has to underline that the manuscripts and the Dire Dawa printed edition are less prone to insert verses and poems in the prose text. The Dire Dawa edition relegates some poems at the very end of the collection. The same procedure is followed by manuscripts ZHa, SPt and Bal.

In my opinion and until further research, absence of some poems and different positions that poetry occupies within the prose frame of the *‘Unwān* may support the hypothesis that most of the Arabic poetry that encircles—so to speak—the (*taḥmīs al-*) *Burda* and fractionates the prose text of the *‘Unwān al-šarīf* was included in the written tradition only very recently. This hypothesis is in line with the supposition of S. Tarsitani (made on the basis of the late Zakariyā’

Hāmid’s reflections) that the insertion of the references to the Harari *zikri*-s in the written collection, particularly as testified in the 2000 printed edition (B2000), is most probably an innovation and was started under the impulse of the “liturgical” usage of the *Mawlid*.

SOME PRELIMINARY TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS

I hope that what precedes has given a general but precise idea of the structural complexity of the *Mawlid* collection in Harar and of the intricacies in its textual tradition. It is clear that this puzzling and sometimes bewildering joint of poem and prose sections in the *Mawlid* is due to the influence of the performances and of the liturgical praxis.

*Mawlid* collections are basically meant to be recited: they cannot be properly understood if they are separated from their performances. It is almost obvious to assume that liturgical elements (poems, verses, instruction for the recitation) which were originally not part of the written texts found their way into manuscripts and then into printed editions. Only a parallel study of the written tradition and of its performance can help the researcher to reconstruct the history of the *Mawlid* and of its usage: variations in the performance may explain differences in the written texts and may shed light on the evolution of the written tradition and of

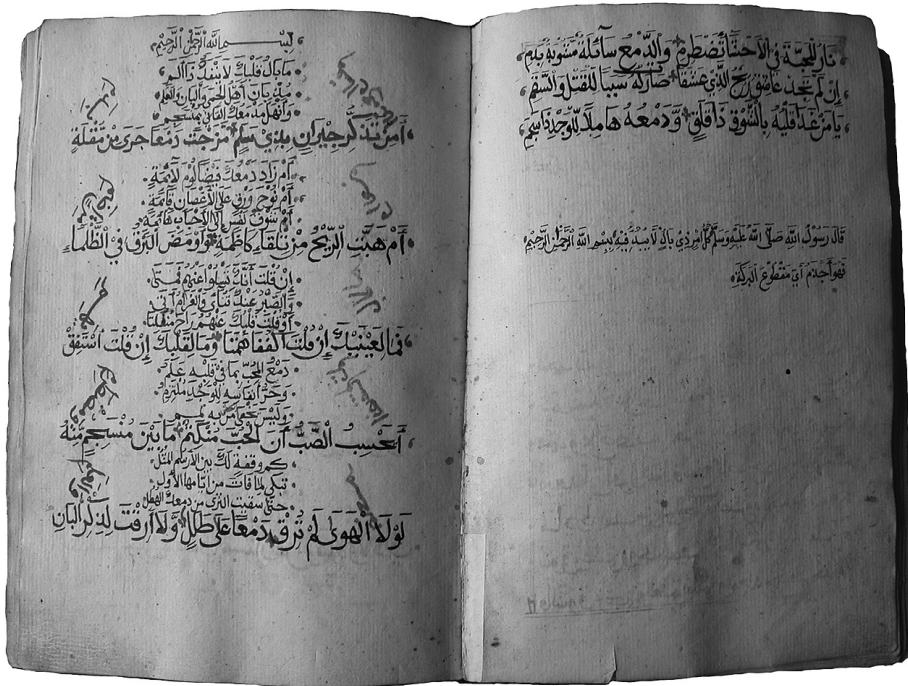


Fig. 1. Zakariyā’ Hāmid’s manuscript (ZHa) ff. 18v–19r, incipit of *Tahmīs al-Fayyūmī ‘alā qaṣīdat al-Burda*. Photo courtesy of Simone Tarsitani.

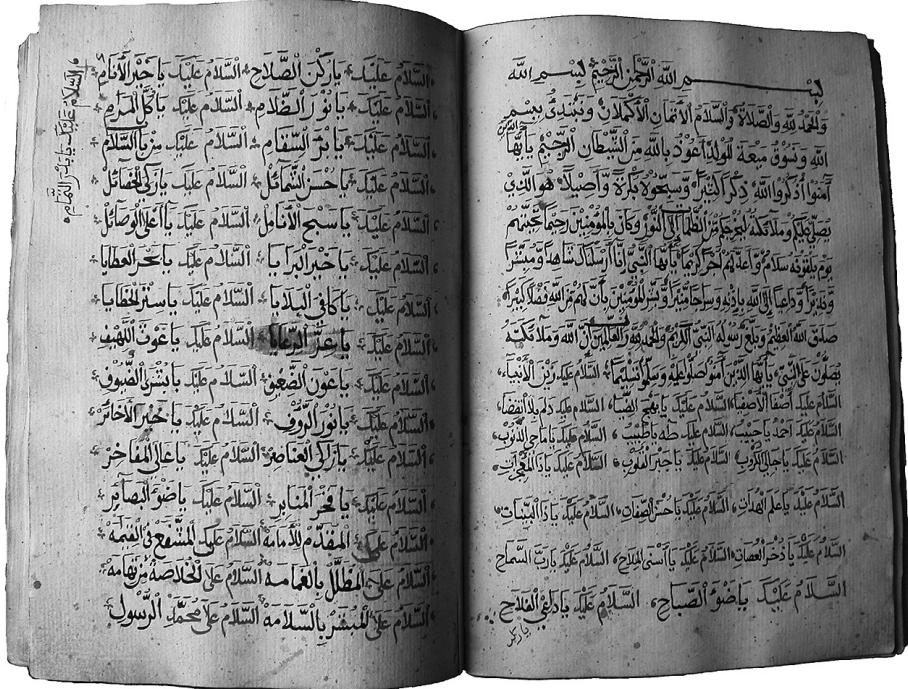


Fig. 2. Zakariyā’ Hāmīd’s manuscript (ZHa) ff. 36v–37r, incipit of *Salāmāt ‘alā al-nabī* (between the *Burda* and the *‘Unwān al-šarīf*). Photo courtesy of Simone Tarsitani.

the liturgical practises.

If some general indications can be inferred from the research I have carried out with my colleague Tarsitani, these could be the following:

- 1) There is a critical need for a wider and deeper analysis of the written tradition of the Harari *Mawlid*. This means that a substantial and exhaustive collection of manuscripts of the *Mawlid* must be carried out. Only the study of the manuscript tradition will enable us to reconstruct the developments of the texts and their reciprocal relationships;
- 2) This research has to be carried out in the frame of a continuous cooperation with experts of ethnomusicology, as the philological work can and must be supported by the analysis of the performances, their structures, their internal differences and their developments.

It seems that the research on the *Mawlid* can be considered a paradigmatic case in which scholars of written tradition (one of the marvellous peculiarities of the Ethiopian culture, clearly setting it apart from other African countries) and of oral tradition (in the specific instance: ethnomusicology) can and must cooperate to achieve a better understanding of the heritage of the country.

NOTES

(1) On this general question see Fuchs, de Jong & Knappert, “*Mawlid*,” in *EP*, s.v. (Edited



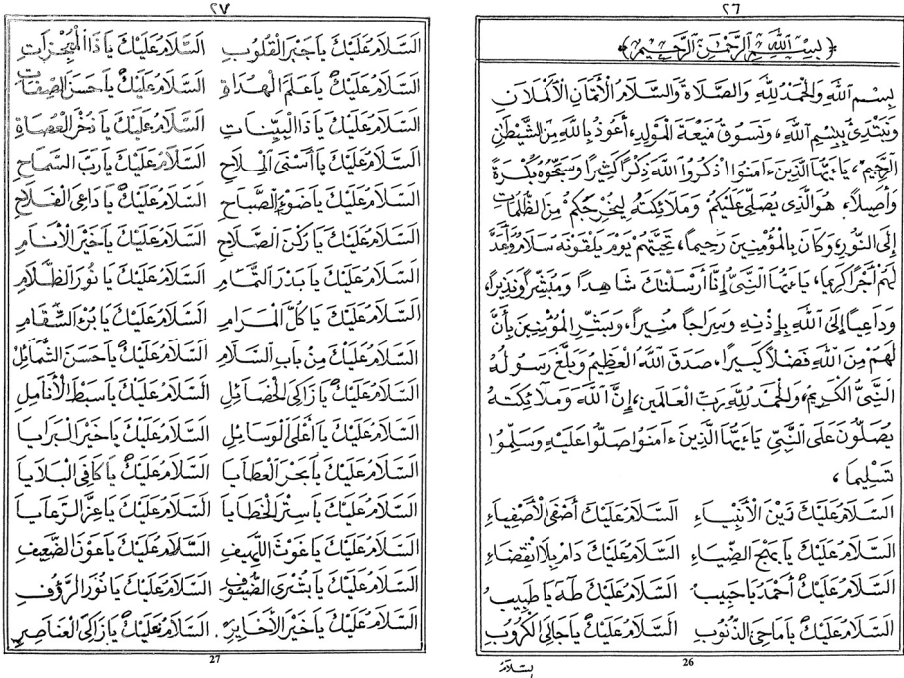


Fig. 3. *Mawlid* book, B2000: 26–27, incipit of *Salāmāt ‘alā al-nabī* (between the *Burda* and the ‘*Unwān al-šarīf*). Photo courtesy of Simone Tarsitani.

by P.J. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs et al., *Encyclopædia of Islam*, 2nd Edition, 12 vols. with indexes and etc., Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960–2005).

- (2) Published in Ġalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (1982: 251–252).
- (3) For a clear opinion against *Mawlid* see the discussion of the famous theologian Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1348) in Ibn Taymiyya (1999: 272–273).
- (4) See for example Kaptein (1993) on the problem of the so called *Berdiri Mawlid* in Indonesia.
- (5) Mostly Arabic, but also local Islamic languages, e.g. the very famous Ottoman Turkish *Vesiletünneccat* of Süleyman Çelebi (d. 1422; see Burrill, “Süleymān Çelebi Dede,” in *EF*, s.v.) which was then translated in almost all the languages of the Balkan and Kurdish. A very interesting analysis of the tradition of this text is in Ateş (1954).
- (6) See Robinson, “Miṣrādī,” in *EF*, s.v.
- (7) For a general description of the Islamic theological concept of “light of Mūḥāmmād” see Rubin (1975).
- (8) The two poems of the *Mantel of the Prophet* (“*Burda*”) are the famous *qaṣīda Bānat Sūrād* by the companion of the Prophet Kaʿb b. Zuhayr (see Basset, “Kaʿb b. Zuhayr” in *EF*, s.v.) and the most renowned *al-Kawākib al-durriyya fī madḥ ḥayr al-bariyya* by al-Būšīrī (d. 1294 or 1298; see “al-Būšīrī,” in *EF*, s.v. and S.P. Stetkevych, 2006). Also the *qaṣīda al-Muḍariyya fī madḥ ḥayr al-bariyya* and the *qaṣīda al-Hamziyya*, both by al-Būšīrī, and the *qaṣīda al-Munfariġa* by al-Ġazzālī are very commonly read in *Mawlid* celebrations.
- (9) “God and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. O you who believe! Ask blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation” (Cor. 33: 56).

- (10) Narrated ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Laylā: Kaʿb b. ʿUḡra met me and said, “Shall I give you a present?” ʿAbd al-Raḥmān said, “Yes, give it to me!” I said, “We asked God’s Apostle: O God’s Apostle! How should one (ask God to) send blessings on you and the members of your family, for God has taught us how to salute you (in prayer)?” He said, “Say: O God! Send Your Mercy on Muḥammad and on the family of Muḥammad, as You sent Your Mercy on Abraham and on the family of Abraham, for You are the Most Praise-worthy, the Most Glorious. O God! Send Your blessings on Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad, as You sent your blessings on Abraham and on the family of Abraham, for You are the Most Praise-worthy, the Most Glorious” (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Buḥārī, kitāb al-daʿwāt, bāb al-ṣalāt ʿalā al-nabī, ḥadīṯ 6357*).
- (11) On the *ṣalawāt* genre, its origins and evolution see Meier (2002, 2005).
- (12) Mss. Harar 34 and 35 mentioned by Jomier (1967: 291).
- (13) In the following this manuscript will be quoted as SPT; it is composed by 154ff and was copied in 1885–1886 by Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and owned by *al-ṣarīf* Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUṯmān b. Ḥusayn a noble descendant of the prophet.
- (14) In the following this manuscript will be quoted as Bel.
- (15) In the following this manuscript will be quoted as ZHa.
- (16) In the following this book will be quoted as B1992.
- (17) In the following this book will be quoted as B2000.
- (18) For a general description of the procedure of *taḥmīs* in Arabic literature, see Kennedy *art. “Takhmīs,” EP, s.v.*
- (19) Maḡd al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Warrāq (d. 1281; Brockelmann, 1898: 250; Brockelmann, 1937: 443–444) wrote a *taḥmīs* on the famous *al-Qaṣīda al-Witriyya fī madḥ ḥayr al-bariyya* by Maḡd al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr b. Raṣīd al-Wāʿiz al-Baḡdādī al-Witrī (d. 1264; Brockelmann, 1898: 250; Brockelmann, 1937: 443). The text of the *taḥmīs al-Warrāq* is widespread in Harar. A manuscript copied by the famous *ṣayḥ* Hāšim b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz in 1140/1727–1728 was published in Addis Abāba by *al-ḥāḡḡ* Yūsuf ʿAbd al-Raḥmān in 1386/1966–1967.
- (20) It is worth while mentioning the fact that, in the opening page, these two editions start with a marginal mention of the *ṣalāt al-tafrīḡiyya* (called also *al-ṣalāt al-tāziyya* as attributed to *ṣayyidī* Aḥmad al-Tāzi) and its benefits on the base of Ibn Ḥagar al-ʿAsqalānī: if it is recited 4444 the request of the faithful will be fulfilled by God: this reference to a quite famous prayer for the Prophet not to be found in other manuscripts of the Harari *Mawlid* collection.
- (21) In the following this book will be quoted as DD.
- (22) In the following this book will be quoted as B2005.
- (23) Beirut, at Dār al-maṣāriʿ, s.d.
- (24) For a possible identification of this author see Jomier (1967: 291).
- (25) DD: 41; SPT 44.1; Bel: 37: in this last manuscript the person is called Abū Bakr al-Ġilī, with the *nisba* referring to the Iranian region of Ġilān, like the one of ʿAbd al-Qādir and ʿAbd al-Karīm, very renowned Muslim holy men.
- (26) B2000: 24–25; B2005: 48–49; cfr. *Maḡmūʿat al-mawlūd*, pp. 92–95; in B2000: 25 it then follows an anonymous poem transmitted by al-ʿAtabī whose incipit is: “Yā ḥayra man dufinta” and which is also in B2005: 170.
- (27) Called “*maʿyat al-mawlid*” (in B1992: 24; B2000: 26; B2005: 50; ZHa: photo 3169; Bal: 38–39) but “*qiṣṣat al-mawlid*” (in DD: 43).
- (28) DD: 45–46, ZHa: photo 3170, SPT: 48–41, and Bel: 40.
- (29) B1992: 26, B2000: 28, and B2005: 52.
- (30) Called also *al-ṭarīqa al-madaniyya* in *Maḡmūʿat al-qaṣāʾid wa-al-mawālīd*, pp. 46–50.
- (31) In B2005: 52–54 only *bi-ḥaqq Allāh* can be found but not *abtadīʿ*.

- (32) B1992: 31, B2000: 33, and B2005: 54.
- (33) The 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 (Becker, 1932: 93–94) and in Indonesia (Kaptein, 1993: 126).
- (34) *Mawlid šaraf al-anām*: “Al-ḥamdu lillāh allaḏī šarrafa al-ānām bi-šāhib al-maqām al-aʿlā”; *Unwān al-šarif*: “Al-ḥamdu lillāh allaḏī šarrafa al-ʿālamīn bi-ašraf al-ʿālamīn.”
- (35) This is evident in the content of the quranic verses quoted and the phrase: “nasūq maʿyat al-mawlid.”
- (36) In B1992 and B2000.
- (37) In DD; B2005; SPT; ZHa; Bel. *Tahmīs al-Fayyūmī ʿalā al-Burda* was written by šayḥ Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Fayyūmī (Brockelmann, 1898: 264–265; 1937: 469–470). See also Witkam, 2007: 98.
- (38) The first four verses of the poem are attributed to qāḏī ʿUmara al-Yamanī (d. 1175); they are very widespread and the famous mystic ʿAbd al-Ġānī al-Nābulusī (1641–1731) composed a *tahmīs* on them.
- (39) Written by ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Ġilānī; the text preserved in the Harar *Mawlid* collection is different from that contained in ʿAbd al-Qādir’s *Dīwān* (al-Ġilānī, s.d.: 157–164).
- (40) For the concept of *ḥabar* (pl. *aḥbār*) see at least Wensinck *art.* “*Khabar*” in *EP*, s.v.
- (41) Traditionally attributed to šayḥ al-Ḥaddād (m. 1720); B1992: 44–46; B2000: 46–48; B2005: 79–80; the text has become very popular in contemporary *inšād dīnī* thanks to a version by the famous *munšid* Ḥammūd Ḥidr.
- (42) *Tahmīs* on a poem attributed to ʿAbdallāh b. Ġaʿfar al-Yamanī; B2005: 84–93; inserted in a sort of appendix after *duʿā ḥatm al-mawlūd* in B1992: 113–124 and B2000: 113–124.
- (43) B2005: 105–106. Attributed to Abū Bakr b. ʿAbdallāh al-ʿAydarūs the famous holy man from Aden (m. 1503) who is allegedly considered to have first spread the Qādiriyya brotherhood in Ethiopia (Trimingham, 1952: 234, 240).
- (44) *Qašida* written by the famous Yemeni mystic poet ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Burʿī (d. 1058; al-Burʿī, s.d.: 75–78); B2005: 114–120; in a sort of appendix in the DD: 91–95, in B1992: 125–130 and in B2000: 124–130.
- (45) *Qašida* by al-Burʿī, (al-Burʿī, s.d.: 93–94); B2005: 131–134, not present in two of the printed editions; put in a sort of appendix in the DD edition, pp. 98–100.
- (46) al-Burʿī, s.d.: 158–159; B2005: 157–159; not present in the other printed editions.
- (47) Attributed to Aḥmad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Bakrī; B2005: 161–162; only the incipit is mentioned in B1992: 97 and B2000: 97.
- (48) The position of an anonymous *tahmīs* of the very renowned *qašida* Bānat Suʿād (by Kaʿb b. Zuhayr) in the Harari collection must also be mentioned: in B2005: 138–150 this *tahmīs* is directly inserted within the prose of the *ʿUnwān*, fully entering in its constellation. In B1992: 131–145 and B2000: 131–145, on the contrary, the *tahmīs* is put in the above-mentioned poetic appendix after the closing *duʿā*.

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