ETHIOPIA

by

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PREFATORY NOTE

The compiler’s personal circumstances have prevented him from investigating collections other than the one detailed below. It is hoped that a more comprehensive survey of the country can be undertaken in the near future.

INDIVIDUAL COLLECTIONS

ADDIS ABABA

Institute of Ethiopian Studies: Manuscript and Documentation Centre

Addis Ababa University, PO Box 1176, Addis Ababa
Tel.: 55-08-44, ext. 359
Date of establishment: 1986
Status: University departmental library

Conditions of access: Foreigners must obtain formal permission from the Institute before arriving in the country.

Total number of Islamic MSS: 157 (140 Arabic; 12 Harari; 1 Oromo; 1 Arabic/French/Amharic; 3 Arabic/Harari).

Description of collection: The present collection of Arabic/Harari manuscripts (about 9,000 pages in all) contains copies of important (although in some cases, incomplete) documents on local dynastic history (mostly on the emirate of Harar), historical narratives, a biography, a biographical dictionary, an encyclopaedia, religious manuals, commentaries on fiqh, poems in praise of the Prophet and texts of the Qur'ān, as well as documents on the sale and purchase of landed property, and on Arabic grammar.

The manuscripts were written or copied between the second half of the 16th and the middle of the present century. Although most of them are leather bound, they have not been able to withstand rough handling by researchers. They have also suffered considerable damage due to the inadequacy of the existing storage facilities. Consequently, the leather covers have fallen off and the leaves have fallen out. The rebinding of the MSS is therefore a matter of utmost urgency.
Among the rare and unique MSS are a Qur‘ān with calligraphic decoration written in 1141 AH [1728–29], a biographical dictionary of famous ‘ulamāʾ written in 1055 AH [1645], an encyclopaedia, and a version of the chronicle of the campaigns of ʿĪsām ʿAbd Allāh ʿIrbrāʿīm (fl. 1506–43). The documents were either donated, acquired or purchased by the Institute, or deposited by researchers. These MSS have not been systematically catalogued.

Published catalogue:
Survey of the collection, with details of a number of the more important MSS.

Unpublished catalogues:
Inventory of most of the manuscripts.
Card list.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX

Al-Ḥabasha (Athiyawbiya), vol. 1, p. 370, no. 1373.
