

Prominent Islamic Scholars and Sites of Jimma

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Abstract

Jimma, a major city in the Oromia Region of Ethiopia, is situated approximately 352 kilometers southwest of Addis Ababa. It has a rich historical background, with unique attributes, notably being the second Islamic city in Ethiopia after Harar. However, the Islamic history of the city and its prominent Islamic scholars remain under-researched. This article aims to present a list of prominent Islamic sheiks or scholars of Jimma, which is a chapter from an MA thesis conducted in 2022 titled "Heritage Sites and Their Conservation in the Gibe Region (1800-1980)." The article provides information about these sites, including their locations and historical significance.

Sheik AbdulHakim Kebire Salih

The historical mosque of Sheik AbdulHakim Kebire is located nine kilometres northwest of Jimma town on a hill locally known as Jiren. It stands at an altitude of 2020 meters above sea level. The mosque is within close proximity to the former place of King Jimma Jiren, locally known as Saffara Xireeiignii (Place of the Civet Cat). Approximately, 2.5 km to the northeast of the palaces of Abba Jifar. Sheik Abdul Hakim Kebire Salih is believed to have introduced Islam to the Jimma kingdom, shortly after his arrival around 1830. He was buried on the mosque's grounds



after he died in 1876.



Figure 1. Ajami Manuscripts found at the site

Sheik Aba Arebu

The historical site of Quba Abba Arabu is located 9 km east of Jimma's centre. It stands 2155 meters above sea level on a hill locally known as Daru Mujja. Abba Arebu, originally named Seyid Ali Bin Mohamed, arrived to Jimma around the 1870s as an Arab merchant. His local name is derived from his lineage as it roughly translates to "Father of Arabs." Abba Arebu passed away around 1900. Today, this site serves as a ceremonial space for the Mawlid Al Nebi, attracting over 20,000 visitors each year. Only one manuscript can be found at the site, though production and protection of the site is maintained by a younger member of

the family.



Sheik Sidiqiyo

The mosque of Sidiqiyo is located in Sokoru District, Sediggiyo Kebele, near the town of *Qumbii*, approximately 155 kilometres from the zonal capital of Jimma and along the major highway to Addis Ababa. Mufti Sidiqiyo arrived in Jimma Zone during the 18th century. A reportedly a hospitable and welcoming individual. His mosque is locally known as Mana Abdiyo (father' house). Over the course of 30 years, he produced many manuscripts on various societal issues before

passing away in 1892.



Manuscripts found at Sidiqiyo Site

Figure 2. Manuscripts found at Sidiqiyo Site

Quba Sheik Naseralla

The historical site of Quba Sheik Naseralla is located on a



hill known as Waggamo in Jemattula Kebele. Situated between the districts of Baggie and Coora Botor, 118 kilometers from Jimma's main town. Sheik Naseralla was born in Egypt though the exact time of his birth

date is unknown. He came to Jimma in the late 18th century and

died around 1920.



Manuscript of Sheik Naseralla

Masjidaa Shekota Geenaa

This historical mosque of *Shekota Gena* is located in the South Western part of Jimma Zone 82 k.m outlying from Jimma town and 22, k.m far from the district of Limmu Genet. This site was unique as it provided religious instruction though writing and making of manuscripts.



A Manuscript from Shekota Genna site

The Quba of Waarukkoo

The Quba of Waarukkoo is situated in Quudaa Qunaaco, west of Yaacii, approximately 5 kilometers from the main asphalted road connecting Jimmaa to Beddelle. Various oral historical accounts exist regarding Waarukkoo. One account suggests that members of the Awaalini clan, who ruled the Gomma kingdom from its inception until its integration into Jimma in 1886, may have purposefully emphasized the saintly nature of Waarukkoo, who was also from the Awaalini clan. This might have been done to bolster and glorify their standing among the people they governed. They even constructed an elaborate genealogy directly connecting the Awaalini clan to the family of the Prophet in Arabia. The founder of the Quba is believed to be Mohamed Anwar Abdulbaqi Hussein.



Shekota Gumma and His Qubas

Shekota Gumma, a renowned Islamic Ulema in Gumma,

was recognized by various names, including Haji Adam Gumma and Abba Wari. His historical site, Toba, is situated 67 kilometers from Jimma and 25 kilometers from Agaro town. It is home to a valuable collection of manuscripts authored by Shekota Gumma. This prominent Sheikh was born in Shewa Araadaa around 1852 and passed away in 1936.



A Manuscript from Shekota Gumma site

Masjidaa Kebire Abba Ayuba

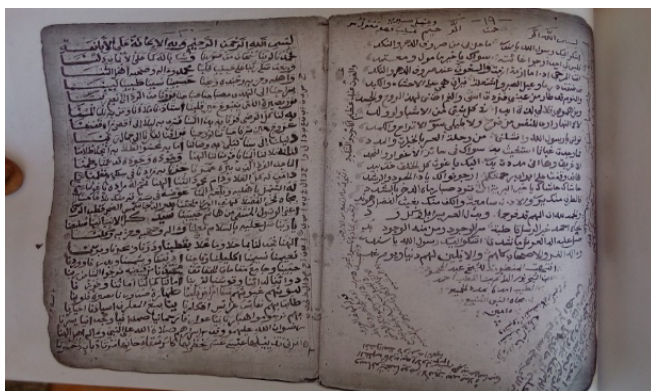
The historical heritage site of the Kebira Abba Ayuba Mosque is located 47 kilometers to the northeast of Jimma Zone, within Agaro Town. It was founded in Coocee Lammi Kebele.



Manuscript from Kebire Abba Ayuba site

Shekota Elleni

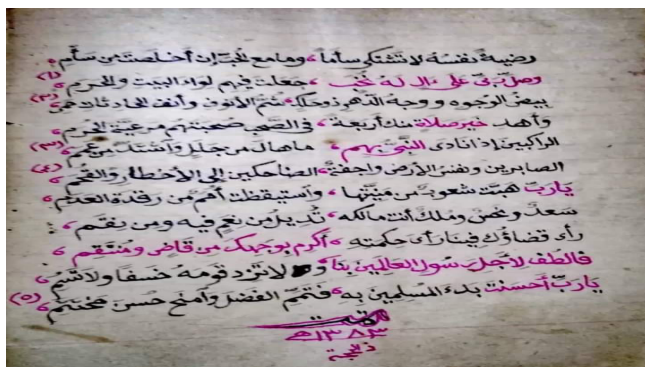
Shekota Elleni is one of the well-known Islamic centers at Dedo. It is approximately 30 k.m from the center of Jimma. The mosque follows the Sufi Tijaniya Islamic teachings. The original name of Shekota Elleni was Sheik Mohamed Ahme. While the name Elleni is taken from the place where Sheikh Ahmed lived. He died around 1956.



A Manuscript from Shekota Elleni site

Shekota Tijjee

Shekota Tijjee is one of the well-known Islamic Sheik of the Jimma zone located at a 42 k.m distance from the central Jimma Zone in Agaro. The place is another vibrant Islamic religion teaching center Tariqa of Tijaniya by Haji (Sheek) Mohamed Abu-Bakr (Shekota Tijjee) Al qurari. He died in 1917.

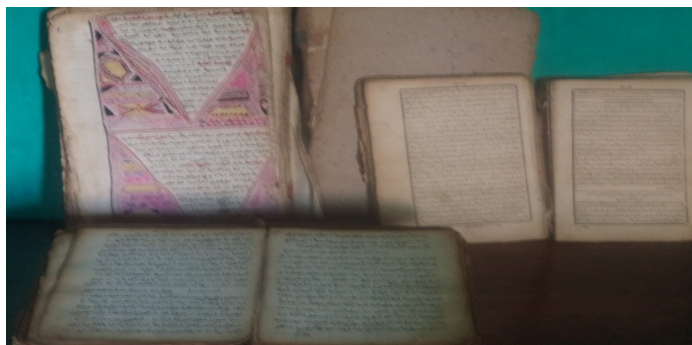


A Manuscript at Shekota Tijjee

Jemaliya Mosque

This mosque is located in Tiro Afataa, Gura Bidaru Kebele, situated 87 kilometers from Jimma town and 23 kilometers north of the Omo Nada district. Its name is derived from a man named Jamal, who was the first to translate the Quran from Arabic to Afan Oromo at this mosque and spread the teachings of Islam in Afan Oromo. What sets this mosque apart is its library, which houses a collection of very ancient historical and religious books. Jamal lived in the 19th century and passed

away in the 1940s.



Shekota Abba Jemal

Shekota Abba Jemal was among the Sheiks situated near Seqqa Chekorsa, approximately 20 kilometers from Jimma Town, near Shebe. This location is renowned for the continued teaching of the Tijaniya Tariqa Islamic order by his descendants. He lived during the 19th century, with no specific date recorded. He

passed away around 1970.



A Manuscript from Shekota Abba Jemal

Shekota Sheikh Ahmed

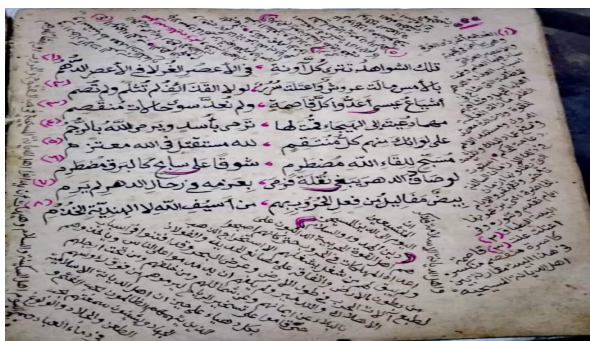
This historical site is located in Dedo District at *Waro Kolobo* within a distance of 20 k.m from the central Jimma town. Sheikh Ahmed's full name is Sheikh Ahmed Sheikh Bushera and his descendants include Sheikh Umer Yusuf Ibn Kalifa Hajji Nuredin. The Sheikh studied his teaching from:

- Shekota Abba Temam (Nawi, Quran, Kitab, Fiqa and Uramay)
- Shekota Sheikh Musa Adal (Nawi)
- Shekota Sheikh Umer Nunu (Nawi)
- Shekota Sheikh Ahmed Gudo
- Shekota Abba Jemal Coqorsaa (Istihara aruda, Fiqa, Fatual Wahid)
- Shekota Abba Jemal. Tijaniya Tariq
-

Shekota Seyid Hassen

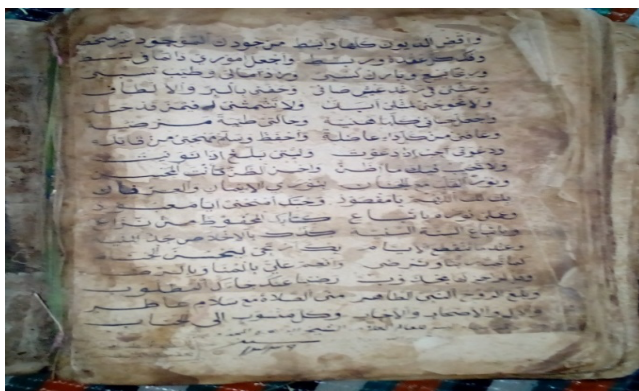
This historical site is located in the Gera district, situated 73

kilometers from Jimma town and 24 kilometers from the Gera district, specifically in the Saddii Loyyaa Kebele. The historic mosque was constructed by Shekota Dambi (Ahmed Umer), a follower of Shekota Seyid Hassen.



Shekota Gellaa

The historical site of Shekota Gellaa is situated 101 kilometers from the center of Jimma town and 8 kilometers from the Gera district. The name "*Gellaa*" is derived from the location where the Sheik resided, and the name of the Sheik at Shekota Gellaa is Sheik Mohamed Zeyn.



Shekota Sheik Widad Abba Jebal

This historical site is situated in Dedo, 18 kilometers from

Jimma, at a specific location known as Waro Kolobo Kebele. The site boasts a comprehensive collection of handwritten and printed manuscripts. Among these, there are manuscripts authored by the grandfather of Sheik Widad Aba Jebal, Shekota Abba Jebal, and Shekota Abba Temam, Haji Yesuf. The grandfather started the manuscript collection.

Shekota Keta

This historical site is located in the Dedo district, approximately 19 kilometers from Jimma town, at a special place known as Warokolobo, near Shekota Sheik Widad. The name "Keta" refers to the place where Shekota Haji Temam Hajji Jemal resided in the late 19th century.

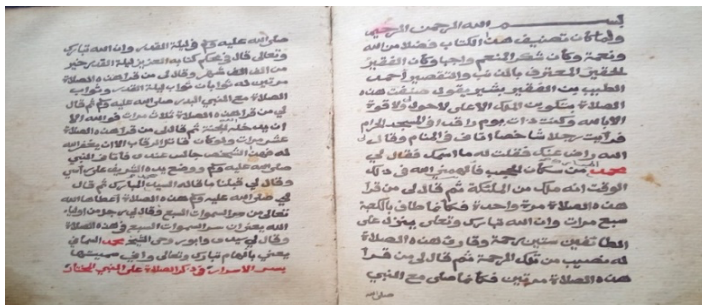
Shekota Bilo

This historical site is situated in the Dedo district, 20 kilometers from Jimma town, at a special location called Warokolobo, near Shekota Sheik Widad. As with many other sites, the name is derived from a specific place, it was established by Sheik Shekota Haji Mudaser.

Shekota Haji Harun

This historic site is situated in the Seqqa Chekorsa district, approximately 20 kilometers away from Jimma town, at a special place known for its significance in teaching Tijaniya. It was

founded by Sheikh Shekota Hajji Harun Tijaniya.



A Manuscript from Shekota Haji Harun site

Shekota Gerbi

This historic site is located in the Dedo district, 19 kilometers from Jimma town, at a special place called Warokolobo, near Shekota Sheik Widad.

Shekota Shek Sahili

This historical site is located in Limmu Seqa, situated 100 kilometers away from Jimma town. It was established by Shekota Haji Bushera Taha Hashimiyyi Al-Harary, the son of Sharif AbdulAziz Al-Gondery, around the 1850s. It was established by his ancestors, Shekota Sheik Sahili. This historic site is replete

with historical and handwritten manuscripts.



Conclusion

Jimma has a rich history in Islamic teaching and manuscript production. Unfortunately, many of its historical sites remain largely undocumented and unknown. The contributions of Islamic scholars from Jimma and the knowledge they generated represent an untapped resource of historical and religious significance. This presentation offers only a glimpse of what lies beneath the surface and what can be explored. Therefore, it is recommended that further research be conducted for the purpose of documenting, preserving, and promoting the historical heritage sites in Jimma.

Reference

Aman Sayfadin, "Islamic and The Muslim Community of Gomma A Historical Survey (1886-1974), MA, Thesis, History, Addis Ababa University, 2006, p.53. Unpublished Thesis.