

THE GENEALOGY OF THE LATER WALASHMA' SULTANS OF ADAL AND HARAR

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In the late 14th century the Walashma' rulers of Ifat freed themselves from Ethiopian tutelage and became the spearhead of the holy war against the Christians. The policy of confrontation, however, was in the long run not very successful. The most famous warrior of the holy war, Sultan Sa'daddin Abūl-Barakāt, finally was killed in Zayla' and his family had to flee to the Arabian Peninsula. His holy war even then became so famous that Ifat was named after him: Barr Sa'daddin, Land of Sa'daddin.

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When the Walashma' dynasty - supported by the Yemenite ruler - came back to Ethiopia in 1415, it established itself in Adal with its capital in Dakar near Harar. That means that the centre of the Muslim state was moved from Ifat to the plateau of Harar which was not so much exposed to the attack of the Christians. Having consolidated the state, the Walashma' rulers did not continue the holy war but favoured a more peaceful policy towards Christians. They realized that involvement in the transit trade between Ethiopia and Arabia was more profitable than permanent holy wars.

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This policy, however, did not win the approval of the whole population. Holy men, who took the title imām, became the leaders of a religious party which soon came into conflict with the ruling class. The imāms preached the holy war and reproached the rulers for their reluctance to fulfill their religious duties. The religious party grew stronger and at the turn of the 16th century was able to determine the policy of the country. Mahfūz b. Muḥammad, governor of Zayla', became the first imām to raid the Christian territory without the consent of the Walashma' ruler Muḥammad b. Azharaddīn who tried to remain at peace with the Christians.

The conflict continued till the middle of the 16th century. The most prominent religious leaders who shoved the legitimate secular rulers of the Walashma' dynasty into the background were Abūn b. Adash, Aḥmad Grañ and Nūr b. Mujāhid.

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Parallel to the dichotomy between the secular rulers and the religious leaders, there existed in Muslim Ethiopia a dichotomy in historiography. On the one hand we have the - perhaps official - Walashma' Chronicle in which the legitimate Sultans are listed chronologically. The Chronicle is totally silent about the existence of the religious leaders. Aḥmad Grañ, perhaps the only Harari who has a place in world history is not mentioned at all.³ On the other hand, we have the historical and legendary accounts of the religious leaders, Aḥmad Grañ and Nūr

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b. Mujāhid, in which the Sultans play only a marginal and mostly negative role. The *imām* Ahmad Grañ is the hero of 'Arabfaqīh's history of the conquest of Abyssinia (*Futūḥ al-Ḥabasha*)⁴ and Nūr b. Mujāhid is the hero of a short anonymous legendary story⁵ who waged a holy war against the Christian emperor⁶ and other unbelievers.

This dichotomy makes it difficult for the modern historian to harmonize the two local traditions which - at first sight - seem to tell a totally different history. A look at the genealogical tables of the Walashma' dynasty, compiled by René Basset⁷, on the one hand, and by Enrico Cerulli⁸, on the other, shows the discrepancies caused by the different sources of the authors. Basset was dependent on 'Arabfaqīh's *Futūḥ al-Ḥabasha* and Cerulli on the Walashma' Chronicle.

A comparison of the two lists and a critical examination of the texts of 'Arabfaqīh and the Christian Chronicles, however, make possible a reconstruction of a sequence of rulers which fits into the general historical context and, therefore, has some chance to correspond to the historical facts.

Let us start with that part of the genealogy on which the two traditions still agree.⁹ After the death of Shamsaddīn (the 22nd Walashma' ruler according to Cerulli) in 1487, the line of the Walashma' dynasty which can be traced back to Sa'daddīn through Muḥammad and Badlāy, died out. The rule passed over to Muḥammad b. Azharaddīn b. 'Alī b. Abī Bakr b. Sa'daddīn (1488-1518), that means to the descendants of Badlāy's brother Abū Bakr.

Up to that point 'Arabfaqīh and the Walashma' Chronicle still agree with each other. Starting with the successors of Muḥammad b. Azharaddīn the two traditions begin to differ from each other. According to the Walashma' Chronicle both 'Alī and Abū Bakr (the 25th and 26th rulers, according to Cerulli) were sons of the just mentioned Muḥammad b. Azharaddī, while 'Arabfaqīh does not mention 'Alī at all, and gives for Abū Bakr the genealogy: Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. Āzar b. Abī Bakr b. Sa'daddīn, which means that instead of Muḥammad b. Āzhardī, comes Muḥammad b. Āzar¹⁰. From this follows that, according to 'Arabfaqīh, Abū Bakr b. Sa'daddīn had two sons: 'Alī and Āzar, and starting with the reign of Abū Bakr the rule transferred from the descendants of 'Alī b. Abī Bakr b. Sa'daddīn to those of Āzar b. Abī Bakr b. Sa'daddīn.

Neither the Walashma' Chronicle nor 'Arabfaqīh mentions this - in my opinion, historically not unimportant - shift of line: the Walashma' Chronicle because it does not mention Muḥammad b. Āzar at all, and 'Arabfaqīh, because he ascribes the deeds of Muḥammad b. Azharaddīn to Muḥammad b. Āzar. Both these errors obviously have their origin in a mixing-up of the names Azhar and Āzar.¹¹ But are they really errors? For some moments one may think that Azhar and Āzar are really identical, the latter being the local pronunciation of the former.

There are, however, two arguments against an identification. First, Āzar is not a

corruption of Azhar, but an original name by itself. According to the Koran, Āzar is the name of Abraham's father. Second - and this argument has much more weight - 'Arabfaqīh, though relating the story of Muḥammad b. Azharaddīn under the name of Muḥammad b. Āzar, makes it very clear that Azharaddīn and Āzar were two different persons because he mentions them just one after the other. He says, "Abū Bakr had two sons. One of the two was 'Alī. He was the ancestor of the sultans Barakāt, Ḥabīb and 'Alī, the sons of 'Umardīn b. Muḥammad b. Azharaddīn b. 'Alī b. Abī Bakr b. Sa'daddīn. The name of the second (son) was Āzar b. Abī Bakr b. Sa'daddīn."

Therefore it is certain, that with Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. Āzar a new line of the Walashma' dynasty came to rule. Before, I said that in my opinion this shift was historically not unimportant, so that now I have to explain it. Muḥammad b. Azharaddīn ruled Adal for thirty years, 1488-1518. He tried to remain at peace with the Christians. His policy, however, failed due to the intensified Islamic propaganda of fanatical chiefs who had acquired control of Adal and had pushed Muḥammad into the background. According to Alvarez¹² Muḥammad's peaceful efforts were especially nullified, by the raids of Maḥfūz, governor of Zayla'. When queen Elēni was still the determining factor in the Christian policy, she and Muḥammad always tried to reestablish peace. When Lebnā Dengel grew up, however, he also wanted a confrontation. On the Muslim side, Muḥammad could no longer resist the pressure from the religious party. He had to join Maḥfūz in his invasion of the Christian province of Fatajār. But the joint Muslim army was heavily defeated, Maḥfūz was slain, and Lebnā Dengel invaded Adal. Muḥammad fled. When he came home however, in 1518, he was murdered by Maḥfūz's grandson Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr Maḥfūz, who according to 'Arabfaqīh, ruled Adal for one year.

After the defeat and death of its leading figure, Maḥfūz, the religious party must have feared the loss of its influence and the possibility of Muḥammad's regaining power, as a vassal king of the Christian emperor. So it was best to murder him. For the next few years, 'Arabfaqīh mentions several rulers who always killed each other after a short time of rule. It seems that there were internal conflicts in the religious faction which ended when Garād Abūn b. Adash came to power. He was a ruler as the religious faction could only wish. That is why he is highly praised by 'Arabfaqīh: "He reestablished law and order, commanded the right and forbade the wrong. He killed the highwaymen, abolished alcoholic drinks, games of chance and the dancing to drum-beats. The land became prosperous, and he loved the descendants of the Prophet, the jurisconsult, the derwishes and the sheikhs."¹³

None of these religious leaders are mentioned in the Walashma' Chronicle. Instead, it only says that Muḥammad b. Azharaddīn was followed by his son 'Alī. This 'Alī, on the other hand, does not occur in 'Arabfaqīh's *Futūḥ al-Ḥabasha*. The only explanation for this discrepancy can be that the religious faction,

after murdering Muḥammad b. Azharaddīn, did not dare exterminate the legitimate dynasty totally. So they made Muḥammad's son 'Alī a puppet king, not mentioned by 'Arabfaqīh because of his political unimportance, but the only one mentioned by the Walashma' Chronicle because he was the legitimate ruler.

Now we understand why there was a shift in the dynastic line: While 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Azharaddīn was a puppet king totally in the claws of the religious faction, another branch of the Walashma' family which was not willing to submit to the religious leaders, assembled around Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. Āzar to reestablish the old Walashma' rule. They fled to the Somali country. With their support Abū Bakr was able to kill Abūn b. Adash and to restore the legitimate rule of the Walashma'. Abū Bakr was the sultan who transferred the capital from Dakar to Harar in the twenties of the 16th century. Of course, his reputation was very bad according to 'Arabfaqīh: The Somali who helped him were evil-doers and highwaymen while Abūn b. Adash was considered a martyr. During his rule Abū Bakr ruined the country, alcoholic beverages were openly drunk, his courtiers plundered the travellers etc. etc.¹⁴

The religious party did not give up. Ahmad Grañ, one of the followers of Abūn b. Adash, fought the sultan Abū Bakr and finally killed him. Ahmad Grañ became the de facto ruler of Harar and the conqueror of Christian Ethiopia. Even he, however, did not dare finish the rule of the Walashma' dynasty. He, again, placed a puppet king on the throne, but of course not a son of the killed Abū Bakr. He shifted once more to the line of Muḥammad b. Azharaddīn and made 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Azharaddīn's brother, 'Umardīn, the new sultan.

There is only one problem: Though giving the genealogy of 'Umardīn as 'Umardīn b. Muḥammad b. Azharaddī's in b. 'Alī b. Abī Bakr b. Sa'daddīn, 'Arabfaqīh says at the same time that he was a uterine brother of the killed Abū Bakr. This problem may be solved by the supposing that Abū Bakr's mother after the death of Abū Bakr's father Muḥammad b. Āzar, got remarried to the one generation younger Muḥammad b. Azharaddīn, that means to the grand-nephew of her former husband. The product of this second marriage was 'Umardīn. Such a marriage was not unusual in Muslim dynasties.

Let us now have a look at a further development! In Basset's genealogical table there appear a sultan Barakāt and his brother Habīb as descendants of the 'Alī b. Abī Bakr b. Sa'daddīn line of the Walashma' family without commitment to a definite generation. Cerulli's genealogical table finishes with Abū Bakr, but he has edited a small fragment on the last Walashma' rulers,¹⁵ according to which Barakāt was a son of 'Umardīn and succeeded his brother 'Alī b. 'Umardīn (1552-55) to the throne of Harar. According to two small texts published in translation by Paulitschke¹⁶ the sultan Habīb was killed when Rās Hamālmāl plundered Harar in 1559.

That means that we have three names, from which two (Barakāt and Habīb) can be found as undefined descendants of 'Alī b. Abī Bakr b. Sa'daddīn in Basset's genealogical table, two ('Alī and Barakāt) as sons of 'Umardīn in Cerulli's fragment and one (Habīb) in Paulitschke's fragments.

The problem can be solved if we removed a wrong emendation of 'Arabfaqīh's text made by M. Strong and taken over by Basset.¹⁷ Strong inserted a "lahu" into the text. So it was read by him: "wa-li-Abī Bakr waladān ahaduhumā 'Alī. wa-huwa ḡadd as-sult ān Barakāt wa-Habīb. wa-'Alī lahu awlād 'Umardīn." This was translated by Basset: "Abou Bekr eut également deux fils: l'un, 'Alī, aïeul du sultan Barakāt, - c'est de 'Alī que descendent les enfants de 'Omardīn." If we do not add the "lahu", the passage makes a very clear sense. 'Alī was the ancestor of the sultāns Barakāt, Habīb and 'Alī, the sons of 'Umardīn. From this, results not only a confirmation of Cerulli's fragment, but also the certainty that Habīb was a third sultan and son of 'Umardīn and that he is not to be identified with Barakāt as it was conjectured by Cerulli¹⁸ and me¹⁹ in his footsteps.

So, now we know, that three brothers, the sons of 'Umardīn ruled one after the other: 'Alī b. 'Umardīn from December 24, 1552 to May 8, 1555, Barakāt b. 'Umardīn from May 8, 1555 to an unknown date between 1555 and 1559, and Habīb b. 'Umardīn from that date till 1559 when he died in battle against Rās Hamālmāl.

Till now, the sultan Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr from the Muḥammad b. Azhar line, mentioned by 'Arabfaqīh, has no place in the sequence of Walashma' sultans, so that, I would like to venture on the following hypothesis: As we have seen, when Ahmad Grañ killed the loathsome sultan Abū Bakr, he did not replace him with Abū Bakr's son Muḥammad as puppet king, but with 'Umardīn of the Muḥammad b. Azharaddīn line. When the Christian emperor Claudius conquered Harar ca. 1550, he deposed the sultan. Unfortunately, the Chronicle of Claudius does not mention the name of the deposed sultan.²⁰ In all probability it was still 'Umardīn, the puppet sultan of Ahmad Grañ. If Claudius placed a new sultan before leaving Harar - a thing not explicitly mentioned in the sources - it was evident for him to fall back to the Muḥammad b. Āzar line and to take a son of that Abū Bakr whom Ahmad Grañ had killed. By this, Claudius was able to do damage to his great adversary even beyond the grave.

This, however, was not the end of the story. According to the already mentioned legendary history of Nūr b. Mujāhid, the latter is said to have killed the sultan and his son before taking over the rule in Harar. Nūr b. Mujāhid was the last great representative of the religious faction. He considered himself as the executor of Ahmad Grañ's will and married his widow, Del Wambara. So it was understandable for him to kill the son of that Abū Bakr, whom Ahmad Grañ had killed too, especially because he was installed by the Christian emperor Claudius

as his vassal. He included the son of the sultan into the killing, evidently, to extinguish the whole Muhammad b. Āzar line. Again, he did not dare overthrow the dynasty totally, and once again the line was changed to the Muhammad b. Azharaddīn stem. Nūr b. Mujāhid made 'Alī, a son of that 'Umar dīn, whom Ahmad Grañ had installed as his puppet sultan, his own puppet sultan. Chronologically this reconstruction does not make any difficulties: Nūr b. Mujāhid became ruler of Harar in 1551/2 and 'Alī b. 'Umar dīn became sultan in 1552.

After 'Alī b. 'Umar dīn, there were still two brothers of his who ruled: Barakāt and Habīb. The latter was killed in 1559 by Rās Hamālmāl. This was, as far as we know, the final end of the Walashma' dynasty.

Cerulli's genealogical table ends with the 26th ruler, Abū Bakr. Now, we are able not only to rectify some of the genealogical connections but also to continue the list of the rulers till the 31st position.

What is more important, however, is that we can bring the dynastic history in congruence with the general historical development. During the whole time under consideration, that means from 1518 to 1559, the sultans of the Walashma' dynasty were only puppet kings who did not influence politics anymore. They were either dependent on the religious faction in Harar or were vassals of the Christian emperor. Though deprived of all real power, the prestige of the dynasty was so high that neither the Christians nor the Muslim faction dared remove the dynasty totally. What they did was that they changed the lines inside the dynasty. As a consequence of that, these changes, which happened four times in the 41 years between 1518 and 1559, reflect the changes in the real power in Harar.

NOTES

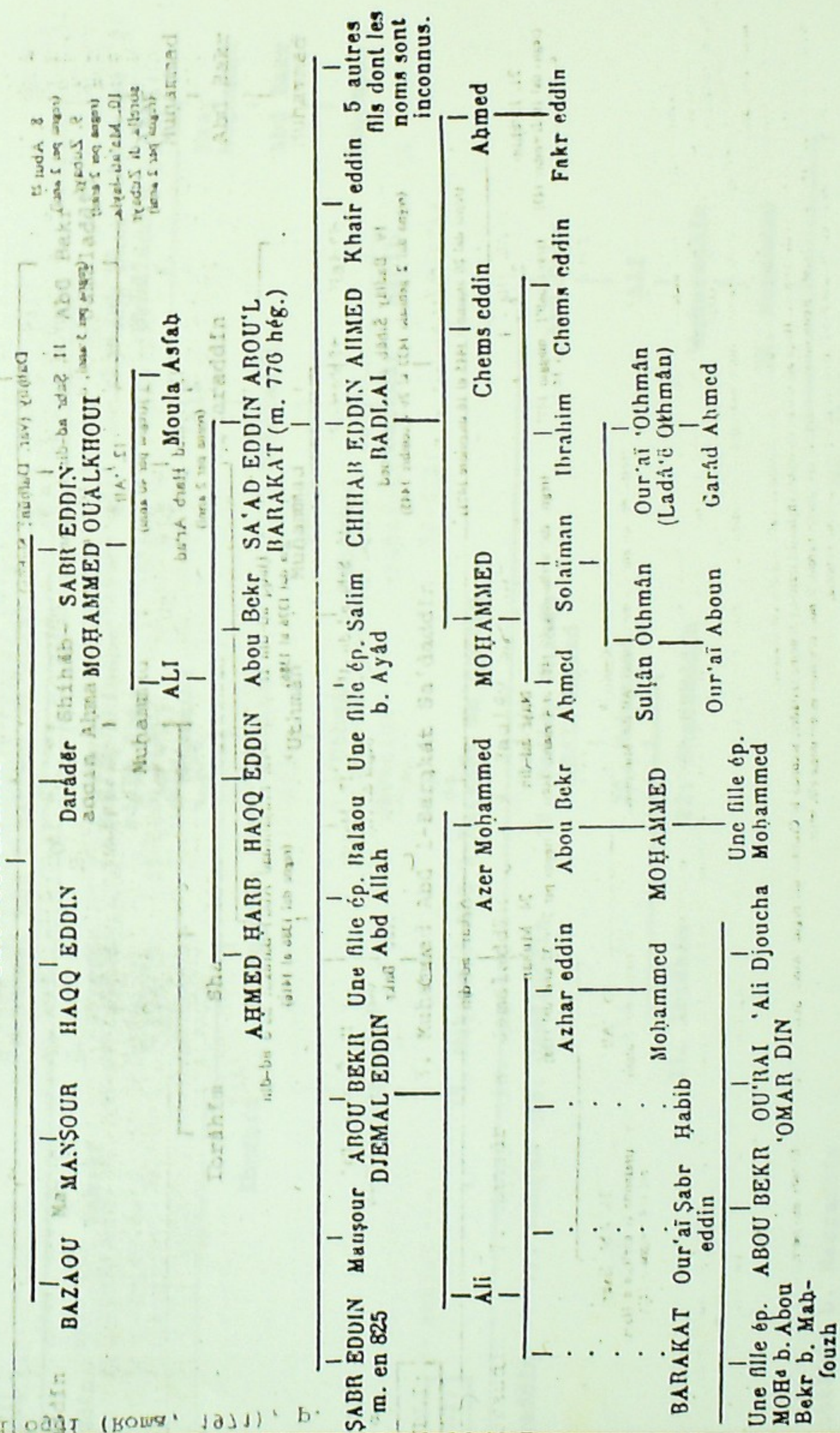
1. For the history of the Walashma' dynasty cf. J. Spencer Trimingham: *Islam in Ethiopia* (London, 1952), pp. 69ff.
2. Cf. Ewald Wagner: "Imamat und Sultanat in Harar. Ein Beitrag zur Auseinandersetzung zwischen religiösem und weltlichem Herrschaftsanspruch in islamischen Randgebieten". In: *Saeculum* 26 (1975), pp. 283-292.
3. The Walashma' Chronicle was first published in German translation by Philipp Paulitschke: *Harar. Forschungsreise nach den Somäl- und Galla-Ländern Ost-Afrikas* (Leipzig, 1888), pp. 503-506. The Arabic text based on another manuscript was published by Enrico Cerulli, together with an Italian translation and extensive notes: *Documenti arabi per la storia dell'Etiopia*. In: *Memorie della R. Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*. Anno 328 = Ser. 6, Vol. 4, Fasc. 2 (1931), pp. 39-101, here pp. 40-51, reprinted in: *idem: L'Islam di ieri e di oggi* (Roma 1971), pp. 135-206, here pp. 137-51. In contemporary Harar there exist lists of Muslim rulers from the earliest times till the Egyptian occupation. They are compilative from different sources, so they have short references to some of the religious leaders,

too. Their compilative character, however, makes them uninteresting in our context. They are more important for the early times; cf. Ewald Wagner: *Die Chronologie der Frühen muslimischen Herrscher in Äthiopien nach den Harariner Emirlisten*. In: *Wort und Wirklichkeit. Festschrift für Eugen Ludwig Rapp*. I (Meisenheim, 1976), pp. 186-204.

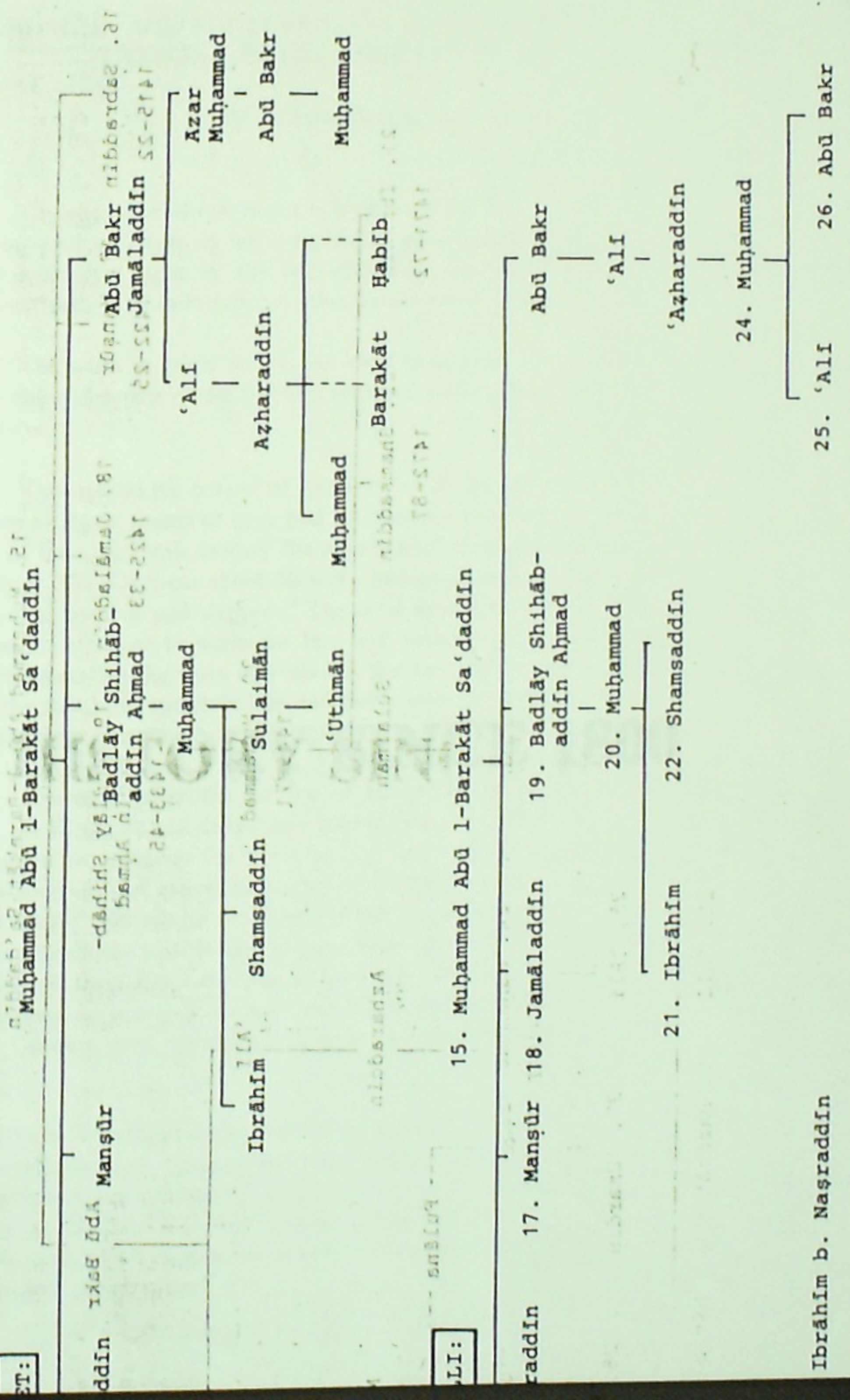
4. Ed. and transl. by René Basset: *Histoire de la conquête de l'Abysinie (XVI^e siècle)*. T. 1.2 (Paris, 1897).
5. The Amharic version was published by Kurt Wendt: *Amharische Geschichte eines Emirs von Harar im XVI. Jahrhundert*. In: *Orientalia* NS 4 (1935), pp. 484-501. The Arabic original together with a new Amharic text based on two manuscripts was edited by Getachew Haile and Ewald Wagner: *Die Geschichte Nūr b. Muğahids von Harar oder The History of A z Zār'a Ya'qob*. In: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 139 (1989), k pp. 43-92.
6. Anachronistically the emperor is named Zar'a Yā'qōb, while in reality not Zar'a Yā'qōb, but Claudius was the opponent of Nūr b. Mujāhid. Since Zar'a Yā'qōb was the most famous emperor his name was used for every emperor.
7. In his: *Histoire de la conquête* (cf. note 4), T. 1, p. 17 (table IV).
8. In his article: *L'Etiopia medievale in alcuni brani di scrittori arabi*. In: *Rassegna di studi etiopici* 3 (1943), pp. 272-94; reprinted in: *L'Islam di ieri e di oggi* (cf. note 3), pp. 257-80, table between p. 268 and 269. The table is mainly based on the Walashma' Chronicle as published by Cerulli in his: *Documenti arabi* (cf. note 3), but slightly corrected in the older part (ascendants of Muhammad Abū l-Barakāt Sa'daddīn), which does not concern us here, according to a short note by al-Taghribirdī.
9. There are also discrepancies in the older parts of the genealogy which are not the topic of this paper. They are due to the fact that 'Arabfaqīh shortened the genealogy in those generations which were far from his own times. First, 'Arabfaqīh made Sabraddīn Muhammad b. Dallūy (no. 11 of Cerulli's list), who belonged to the fifth generation of the Walashma' dynasty, a brother of Bazyū and Hıqqaddīn of the second generation. By this he identified Sabraddīn's brother Hıqqaddīn (5th generation) who is mentioned in the Chronicle of 'Amdā Seyon (G.W.B. Huntingford: *The Glorious Victories of 'Amdā Seyon, King of Ethiopia* [Oxford, 1965], pp. 53-7), with the ruler Hıqqaddīn (2nd generation). Second, Arabfaqīh made the sons of Ahmad Harb Ar'ad: Hıqqaddīn II. and Sa'daddīn Muhammad his brothers. So, he transposed them from the eighth to the fourth generation. Here, the Walashma' Chronicle is the more reliable source which is generally confirmed by al-Maqrīzī. *K. al-Ilmām bi-akhbār man bi-ard al-Hibasha min mulūk al-Islām* (Cairo, 1895).
10. In his genealogical table Basset (cf. note 4) writes Azer Mohammed while his text and his translation correctly give: Muh ammad b. Āzar.
11. Basset (cf. note 4) T. 2, p. 9, note 2 (and, depending on Basset, Cerulli [cf. note 3], p. 147, note 43) already points to this mixture of names by 'Arabfaqīh.
12. Francisco Alvarez: *Narrative of the Portuguese Embassy to Ethiopia*, transl. by Stanley of Alderley (London, 1881), pp. 304-10.
13. For 'Arabfaqīh's enumeration of the rulers and his description of Garad Abūñ cf. Basset (cf. note 4) T. 1, pp. 5-6 (Arabic text); T. 2, pp. 9-13 (transl.).

16. Harar (cf. note 3), pp. 513; 515. The text in an Amharic version is also known from Bairu Tafla: *Asma Giyorgis and his work. History of the Galla and the Kingdom of Šawā* (Stuttgart, 1987), pp. 142-47; 850-53.
17. (cf. note 4), T. 1, p.5 (Arabic text). T. 2, p. 8 (transl.). In his *Variants, additions et corrections*, p. 374, Basset revokes the emendation, without however, changing his translation or his genealogical table.
18. *L'Islam di ieri e di oggi* (cf. note 3), p. 150, note 55.
19. In my review of Bairu Tafla: *Asma Giyorgis* (cf. note 16) in: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 139 (1989), pp. 233-40, here p. 237.
20. William E. Conzelman: *Chronique de Galāwdēwos (Claudius), roi d'Éthiopie* (Paris, 1895), pp. 146-47.

GÉNÉALOGIE DES ROIS D'ADAL ET DE HARAR



Relevant entries from Basset's and Cerulli's tables



Rectified Genealogy of the later Walashma' rulers

