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**ARABIC LITERATURE OF AFRICA:
PROJECT AND PUBLICATION**

by

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PREFACE

The items in this publication are partially derived from presentations given at a symposium on Arabic Literature of Africa (ALA), at the Program of African Studies in November 2003. Also included is some detailed information on the contents of already published volumes (*ALA I, II, IIIA, IV*), and "Overviews" of volumes II, IIIA, IIIB, and IV.

Writing in the Arabic language in Muslim areas of Saharan or sub-Saharan Africa, well away from Arabic North Africa, was taken on after 1000 A.D., when Islam became the more widely adopted religion; hence Arabic—the language of the Qurʾān and of the Prophet Muḥammad—played a role that allows it to be described as "the Latin of Africa", i.e. fulfilling a role parallel to what Latin did in Europe, where it was a language used for writing and reading (especially after the adoption of Christianity there, and with Latin Bibles), and with a script that was adopted for the writing of many languages of the continent.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ALA</i>	Arabic Literature of Africa
<i>BIFHA</i>	<i>Bulletin d'information. Fontes Historiae Africanae</i>
CEDRAB	Centre de Documentation et des Recherches Historiques Ahmad Baba [Timbuktu]
<i>CCIM</i>	<i>Culture et Civilisation Islamiques: Le Mali</i> .N.p.[Rabat]:ISESCO,1408/1988.
<i>EI</i> (2)	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , new edn., Leiden: Brill, 1960-2003.
IFAN	Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire [Dakar]
ISITA	Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa
<i>JHSN</i>	<i>Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria</i>
ISSS	<i>Islam et Sociétés au Sud du Sahara.</i> [French journal]
MSS	Manuscripts
<i>RBCAD</i>	<i>Research Bulletin.</i> Centre of Arabic Documentation, University of Ibadan

*THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF ARABIC
LITERATURE OF AFRICA:*

1. WEST AFRICA

The origins of the Arabic Literature of Africa project go back almost forty years, though its inspiration originates even before that. In 1964 at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, I initiated a project called "The Centre of Arabic Documentation". The object of the project was to microfilm Arabic manuscripts from northern Nigeria, and to catalog and analyze them. As part of the project I started in the same year to publish a *Research Bulletin* through the university's Institute of African Studies. In the third issue of the journal, in July 1965, I announced in the introduction to the journal that a project had been conceived to assemble biographical information about authors of Arabic writings and the works they had written, based on existing sources, and supplemented by information arising from the manuscripts that had been microfilmed. The eventual aim was to bring all this information together and publish it in a bio-bibliographical volume on West African Arabic writers. The model for this volume was the celebrated multi-volume work by the German scholar Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*: two original volumes (later revised and updated) and three supplementary volumes, all published in the 1930s and 1940s. These volumes cover the Arabic writing tradition from Morocco to India, with a total of 4,706 pages, but with only four pages referring to Arabic writings in sub-Saharan Africa. Certainly, before the 1950s, little was known about the Arabic writings of Africa south of Egypt and the Maghrib, although one or two collections of such manuscripts did exist in Europe: most notably, the library of *al-hājj* °Umar b. Sa°id al-Fütī and his descendants, seized by French colonial forces in Segu [Mali] in 1890, and preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, but left uncatalogued for almost another century.

In view of the absence of any guide to sub-Saharan Arabic writings, and the evident richness of such a tradition in West Africa, the idea of creating such a guide for West Africa grew in my mind, though at that time it was thought that it would all be contained in a single volume. One just could not imagine how much

Arabic writing there had been, or the huge number of hidden manuscripts of that would eventually come to light.

For the next twenty-five years I continued to gather information about the titles and locations of West African Arabic manuscripts, recording it all, before the existence of computer technology and its public availability, on card indexes. In 1980 (whilst at the American University in Cairo) I discussed the project with Professor Sean O'Fahey of the University of Bergen, Norway, whose greatest area of interest and knowledge, as regards Arabic sources, was the Nilotic Sudan and East Africa. O'Fahey immediately offered collaboration to expand the project from West Africa to include the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. We decided that we would, as it were, divide the continent between ourselves. Whilst I would focus on Africa west of Lake Chad, O'Fahey would work on Africa to the east of Lake Chad, covering the Sudan, the Horn of Africa, and East Africa. The first product of this enterprise was a journal called *Arabic Literature of Africa: a Bulletin of Biographical and Bibliographical Information*, of which three issues were published through the Program of African Studies at Northwestern University between 1985 and 1987.

In the early 1990s we began to plan publication of a series of volumes of such information, and in 1994 and 1995 the first two volumes were published by Brill Academic Publishers of Leiden, Netherlands, the original publishers of Brockelmann's series. Brill has been a publisher of Oriental Studies for 220 years, and has produced some of the most celebrated writings on Islamic religion and culture—one of the most famous of which is the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, the second (and most recent) edition of which consists of 12 volumes (published between 1960 and 2003 - to which I have personally made a number of contributions dealing with sub-Saharan Africa). The academic quality of Brill's publications, and its splendid publication appearances, makes it literally a Brilliant publisher, which I now work for as an editor for its new "Islam in Africa" series; and Professor O'Fahey assists in editing the "Oriental Studies" series.

Volume no. 1 of the *Arabic Literature of Africa*, "The Writings of Eastern Sudanic Africa to c. 1900", was compiled by Professor O'Fahey, assisted by two Sudanese scholars: Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Abū Salīm and Yaḥyā Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, two German scholars: Bernd Radtke and Albrecht Hofheinz, and the

Norwegian scholar Knut Vikør, who together with O'Fahey and Hunwick had, in 1990, launched at the University of Bergen an annual journal called *Sudanic Africa: a Journal of Historical Sources*, in which much information on African Arabic writings has since been published, as well as short Arabic documents in their original Arabic text with English translations.

All volumes of *Arabic Literature of Africa* were planned to refer to "Sudanic Africa", a term primarily referring to the Sahelian region, known in medieval Arabic as the *bilād al-sūdān*, but also to include the rest of "Sub-Saharan Africa". The first volume - on Eastern Sudanic Africa - dealt with the area that now comprises the Republic of the Sudan, covering the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. The format of the volume, and all others since it, was to divide information into chapters according to periods of time, and/or the inter-relationship of the authors and their writings, e.g. members of a Sufi "brotherhood" (*ṭarīqa*). In fact, some of the richest chapters in volume 1 deal with Sufi *ṭarīqas*. Among these was that of a Sufi shaykh, who originated from, and initially functioned, outside of the Sudan, but whose teachings later had much influence on it and on the Horn of Africa. This was Aḥmad b. Idrīs, who was born in Morocco in 1750, and died in the Yemen in 1837. Such an inclusion is justified in the introduction to the chapter, which reads as follows:

We have grouped here the Sufi traditions that derive from Aḥmad b. Idrīs, his son °Abd al-°Alī, and his Sudanese student Ibrāhīm al-Rashīd. This tradition includes the Idrīsiyya (variously called, Aḥmadiyya Idrīsiyya, or Aḥmadiyya), Rashīdiyya, Ṣāliḥiyya and Dandarāwiyya *ṭarīqas*, that were to spread to Egypt, Ottoman Turkey, the former Yugoslavia and Albania, Syria, Somalia, East Africa, and southeast Asia.

One other *ṭarīqa*, originating from a disciple of Aḥmad b. Idrīs, forms another separate chapter. This is the Sanūsiyya, founded by Muḥammad b. °Alī al-Sanūsī, who was born in Mustaghānim in Algeria in 1787, and set up his *ṭarīqa* in what is now eastern Libya, eventually spreading it through southern Libya and Chad, with branches of it going as far east as Dār Fūr in the Sudan and as far west as Kano in Nigeria.

Another major chapter deals with the writings of the Sudanese Mahdī Muḥammad Aḥmad, who took over the Sudan from the Turco-Egyptians in 1884, and his successors, beginning with the *Khalīfa* °Abd Allāhi A follow-up to this volume will be drafted in the coming years by both O'Fahey and myself, with

some Sudanese and European collaborators, dealing with Arabic writings of the Sudan in the 20th century, including material outside the "intellectual tradition", such as the writings of the famous novelist al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ.

This will constitute volume 5 of Arabic Literature of Africa, so what about volumes 2, 3, and 4? Volume 2 was compiled by myself, with the assistance of three Nigerian scholars (including two who did their PhDs with me at Northwestern University: Hamidu Bobboyi, and Muhammad Sani ‘Umar) as well as two German scholars (Roman Loimeier and Stefan Reichmuth). It was published in 1995 with the sub-title "The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa". Central Sudanic Africa is defined principally as Nigeria, but also includes material on parts of Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

The volume starts off with a chapter on "The Central Sudan before 1800", beginning with a poet called Ibrāhīm b. Ya[°]qūb al-Kānemī, who died around 1212, and is known to us through poems he composed when he was in Morocco and Spain (Andalusia), parts of which were recorded in writings by Arabic authors of those regions. He was certainly the earliest known West African writer, but by the 16th century many more writers emerged, not only in northern Nigeria [Bornu and Hausaland], but also in the Timbuktu region. Perhaps the most important chapters in that volume deal with a family whom I call the Fodiawa. The primary scholar of that family was [°]Uthmān b. Muhammad Fodiye, also usually known as Usman d’an Fodio [d. 1817], the Islamic regenerator (*mujaddid*) and creator of an Islamic state, generally known nowadays as the "Sokoto Caliphate". He was a Fulani, whose origins were in Futa Toro [Senegal], from which ancestors of his migrated to Hausaland in the 15th century. He was a noteworthy scholar who wrote at least 100 works in Arabic, plus numerous poems, mainly in Fulfulde. Other members of his family whose works are listed include his brother [°]Abd Allāh [d. 1829], who wrote 88 works in Arabic, and 6 in Hausa, ‘Dan Fodio's son and political successor Muhammad Bello [d. 1837], author of 175 works, including 70 Arabic poems, and [°]Uthmān's daughter Nana Asmā[°]u [d. 1864], who wrote 9 poems in Arabic, 42 in Fulfulde, and 26 in Hausa. In another chapter, the volume includes writings of other relatives of *Shaykh* [°]Uthmān, his brother [°]Abd Allāh and his son Muhammad Bello, as well as the viziers who served *Shaykh* [°]Uthmān and his successors, right down to the *wazīr* Junayd [d. 1992], who

assembled a great library of manuscripts, and himself wrote some 50 works and a *dīwān* of poetry, and to whom volume II was dedicated. Other chapters deal with writers of other areas such as Kano, Katsina, and Bornu, with two chapters recording writings of scholars of the Yoruba-speaking region of southwestern Nigeria [Ilorin, Ibadan, Lagos], both compiled by Stefan Reichmuth. A final chapter focusses on "Polemical Literature for and against Sufism", chiefly compiled by Muhammad Sani Umar. This is the way in which the chapters are set up is to be seen below on p. 18.

After Vol. II comes, of course, Vol. III, currently being compiled by O'Fahey in two parts: IIIA, covering Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia, already published in 2003; IIIB, covering the Swahili region of East Africa, hopefully to be published in early 2006. Both volumes include writings in African languages in the Arabic script, especially IIIB, in which the majority of writings are in the Swahili language. Vol. II included some writings in Hausa and Fulfulde, if the author also wrote in Arabic. Later, I hope it will be possible to produce a volume uniquely focussed on Hausa and Fulfulde writings from Nigeria, Niger, and Cameroon.

Volume IV, compiled by myself, was published in May 2003. This volume, fully totaling 814 pages, deals with Mali, Senegal, Guinea, the "Greater Voltaic Region" [i.e. Ghana and parts of Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso], and a chapter of information on a part of Niger.

How, one may wonder, is information obtained about manuscript copies of all these writings? First of all, there are now numerous collections of manuscripts that have been catalogued, both in African countries, and in Europe—although far more collections exist and still need to be catalogued. Foremost among such catalogued collections are two Malian collections: one in Timbuktu and one in Paris. One is the CEDRAB collection of Timbuktu, which has so far been only half catalogued in Arabic—only 9,000 out of now some 20,000 mss.—through the Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation in London.¹ The Paris collection referred to is the library of *al-ḥājj* ʿUmar and his descendants, seized in Segou by French colonial forces in 1890, and two years later deposited in the Bibliothèque

¹ Nowadays, a new full cataloguing is taking place, plus digitalization of the mss.

Nationale. Finally, in 1985, a catalogue was published, entirely in French, with the title *Inventaire de la Bibliothèque 'Umarienne de Ségou*.² It contains some 700 works by a wide range of authors, both West African, and from elsewhere in the Muslim world. Other catalogued collections in Africa include both some public and private collections cataloged by the Al-Furqan Foundation: in Nigeria part of the Arabic collection of the National Archives, Kaduna has been catalogued, as well as the University of Ibadan library collection, whilst those of the Jos Museum and the important collection of the late Wazir of Sokoto, Junayd b. Muḥammad al-Bukhārī, are in preparation. The research and documentation center of Ahmadu Bello University, known as Arewa House (located in Kaduna), is run by Hamidu Bobboyi, who has recently negotiated agreements with the Sultan of Sokoto and with the Emir of Kano, to undertake cataloging of their manuscript collections, which will most likely contain documents of historical interest as well as works of the Islamic intellectual tradition.

As regards Mauritania, the Al-Furqan Foundation has published a catalog of twelve private collections (six in Shinqīt and six in Wadān), with a total of over 1100 mss; and Charles Stewart of the University of Illinois has catalogued, and made available through his university, the private collection of the family of Shaykh Sidiyya of Boutilimit. In Senegal, too, several private collections have been catalogued by Ousmane Kane [(formerly of Saint-Louis University, Senegal, and now of Columbia University, New York). These include the libraries of Serigne Mor Mbaye Cissé of Diourbel, of the late Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niassé of Kaolack, and *al-hājj* Mālik Sy of Tivaouane, all of which contain large numbers of manuscripts of writings by Senegalese authors, including the library owners themselves. Several other collections have been examined by Ousmane Kane (who provided information therefrom for ALA IV), whilst the archives of IFAN (the Institut Fondamental [formerly français] d'Afrique Noire) at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar contain many hundred Arabic manuscripts by Senegalese authors, plus Fulfulde manuscripts from Guinea.

Elsewhere in West Africa are collections of reproductions of manuscripts, the originals of which were retained by their owners, whose personal collections

² Vol. 2 of the "Subsidia Bibliographica" of the *Fontes Historiae Africae*.

have never been preserved or catalogued. At the University of Ibadan, manuscripts from Nigerian collections were microfilmed in the 1950s and 1960s by the main library, and, after 1964, by the Centre of Arabic Documentation in the Institute of African Studies, totaling some 700 items. At the University of Ghana in Legon a different method was used in the 1960s and 1970s. Manuscripts were borrowed from Muslim scholars and xeroxed in multiple copies. The originals were then returned to their owners together with a number of xerox copies, so that they could share their collections with other scholars. Whilst at least two xeroxed copies of every manuscript were held at the University of Ghana in its Institute of African Studies, it was permissible for any scholar who needed an item to purchase a xerox copy. As a result of this accessibility policy, Professor Ivor Wilks—the leading expert on the history of Muslim communities in Ghana, and a director of the project—purchased copies of every manuscript, and later donated this collection to Northwestern University. The Arabic collection in Northwestern University's Africana Library also contains a collection of some 3,000 mss obtained through the sons of a deceased Tijani scholar of Kano, called Umar Falke [d. 1962], and some 500 items obtained by Professor John Paden in Nigeria. This latter collection not only contains original manuscripts, but also locally published reproductions of some Arabic [and Hausa] writings by Nigerian scholars. These published versions, which I have designated as "market editions", since they are openly sold in market places, have been added to by myself [over 400 items], first from Nigeria, and later from Senegal, where such a manuscript publication method is also popular.

The richest West African private libraries so far known to me are the two famous ones of Timbuktu. First of all, the Mama Haidara Memorial Library, organized and run by Abdul Kader Haidara. This contains some 5,000 manuscripts, just over 3,000 of which are already described in a catalog published by the Al-Furqan Foundation, with a volume of the remainder still awaiting publication. They are stored in a well-designed building, but are awaiting scientific conservation and digitization. They consist of a wide range of writings, both in topic and origin of author, although a considerable number are by authors of the Timbuktu region. The other important private library is the so-called Fondo Kati, a collection of some 3,000 manuscripts belonging to members of a clan

descended from the famous 16th century historian Maḥmūd Ka^cti, author of the *Ta'riḫ al-fattāsh*. The collection is now located in Timbuktu (with many more items still with family members in the village of Kirshamba, about 100 miles to the west of Timbuktu) and is under the direction of Ismael Diadié Haidara and his brother Ousmane Haidara. This extraordinary collection contains some manuscripts whose creation goes back to the 16th century, whilst within it is a beautiful copy of the Koran copied in Turkey in 1420. Unfortunately, the manuscripts have not yet undergone scientific conservation, but recently a building was constructed where they can be safely housed. Now that this is done, it will be possible to catalog them, though in 2001, on behalf of ISITA, the German scholar, Albrecht Hofheinz, put together a draft catalog. Other major libraries include the remainder of the library of a man of Moroccan origin, who settled in Timbuktu early in the 20th century: Bou'l-A'raf the majority of whose manuscripts were, following his death in 1955, inherited by a son of his and given, after 1970, to CEDRAB, The remainder of the collection is looked after by his grandsons, but is neither conserved or catalogued. Also important is the library of Houmal, the imam of Jingere-Ber / the Great Mosque of Timbuktu, which was for years buried below ground and is now being removed, and is in urgent need of conservation and cataloguing. There are many other libraries in Timbuktu: Abdul Kader Haidara, in an article published in 1999 [in *Revue Anthropologique*],³ lists a total of 30 private collections within the city, and approximately 100 in the rest of the Middle Niger region of Mali. A major manuscript library is the Wangari Library, originated by Muḥammad Baghayogho [d. 1594], but mainly containing items (said to be a total of 8,000) obtained by his descendants. It is also known that there are important libraries in southern Saharan locations such as Arawan and Bou Djebéha, which were both, prior to the 20th century, recognized centers of Islamic scholarship. In Bou Djebéha mention should be made of the library of Shaykh Bāy, who inherited it from family members. Shaykh Bāy himself is a leading scholar of the region, and has devoted much energy to retaining his family library. Containing many fine and valuable manuscripts, it greatly deserves conservation and cataloguing.

³ Also published in *Les bibliothèques du désert* (ed. Attilio Gaudio), Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002, 187-203.

Elsewhere in West Africa there are important public and private collections. In Niamey, the capital of Niger, there is a large public collection at the Institut de Recherche en Sciences Humaines (IRSH). Originally, it was assembled by the scholarly president of the Assemblée Nationale of Niger, the late Boubou Hama, but later handed over to the University of Niamey, which incorporated it into IRSH. There are more than 3,200 manuscripts, with no scientific conservation, but recently catalogued.⁴ Although many of the manuscripts are by authors from Niger, there are also many by authors from Mali, and some by authors from what are now Ghana and Burkina Faso. They are stored in a room without any sort of climate control, and some of them are in a fragile condition. This is a major West African collection in easy accessibility. A description of the collection was written in 1984 by the Sudanese-Nigerian scholar Ahmad Kani, and published in the *Bulletin d'Information* of the Fontes Historiae Africanae project (then directed by myself), and he made this interesting observation:

Overall, the IRSH collection covers a wide geographical area, stretching from the old Kanem-Bornu region across Hausaland, through the Niger Bend, and northwards to Aïr and the Saharan regions, and ranges chronologically from the 14th century to the present day. Materials relating to state formation, interstate and external relations, are contained in the collection. The collection also houses important material on various Islamic sciences such as *fiqh* [jurisprudence], *taṣawwuf* [Sufism], *tawhīd* [theology], *tafsīr* [exegesis], and related disciplines. A great deal of literature of North African and Middle Eastern origin is included within the IRSH collection. The Western Sahara is another area of provenance of mss in the IRSH collection. The Shinqīt region in particular has a long-standing tradition of literary activity. The IRSH possesses a photocopy of a manuscript in the author's handwriting of the *Izālat al-rayb wa'l-shakk wa'l-tafrīt fī dhikr al-mu'allifīn min ahl Takrūr wa'l->Sahrā' wa-ahl Shinqīt* by Ahmad Abu'l-A'raf - a work written in 1941-2, a biographical dictionary of 'ulamā' of "Takrūr" and the Sahara. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the IRSH collection, and one which distinguishes it from other collections in West Africa is its holdings of works by West African Sufi shaykhs of the 18th and 19th centuries [especially writings of

⁴ The Al-Furqān foundation published the catalog in late 2004.

the Qādirī shaykh al-Mukhtār al-Kuntī]

The xeroxed collection of the Institute of African Studies of the University of Ghana has already been mentioned, but there are many other private collections in different parts of that country. The Al-Furqan Foundation has recently published a catalog of fifteen such libraries, with a total of over 3,000 manuscripts, including numbers of items on medicine (20), history (80), geography (11), philosophy (17), and astronomy and mathematics (32), as well as the traditional Islamic sciences such as Koranic study.

Some Nigerian manuscripts exist elsewhere in Africa. One set of Arabic manuscript collections in the Sudan belongs to descendants of the Sultan of Sokoto's family and associates, who fled from the British conquest of Hausaland in 1903. They eventually settled in and around a place known as Mai Urno to the south of Khartoum. With them are numerous manuscripts of works by Sokoto writers, and the main collections have been examined by Muhammad Sharif, an African-American student and digitizer of manuscripts (to form a basis for cataloging). Likewise, many Timbuktu manuscripts are elsewhere in Africa; principally in Morocco, now in public collections; some are also in Algeria, brought there by an Algerian man, who in the early 20th century, taught in a Timbuktu school.⁵

The Arabic Literature of Africa project was one of the foundation stones of the Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa (ISITA), set up by myself in the Program of African Studies in collaboration with Prof. Sean O'Fahey in the year 2001. The objectives of ISITA include identification and analysis of Arabic manuscript collections, and the translation and publication of manuscripts dealing with African history and aspects of Islamic thought in Africa. One of our ultimate aims is to map Arabic manuscript libraries in various countries of Africa and to analyze their content. Also, I still plan to undertake more work on ALA: volume VI on Western Saharan Africa (Mauritania) is one I shall work on myself, together with the prominent German scholar on Mauritania, Ulrich Rebstock - and hopefully, with more help from Charles Stewart, who has cataloged a private manuscript collection in Boutilimit in Mauritania. If Muhammad Sani Umar

⁵ That is the 'Fonds Ben Hamouda' in the Bibliothèque National d'Alger, in Algiers.

becomes available - which I hope he will - I would wish him to compile a volume on Hausa and Fuldulde writings of Nigeria and Cameroon,⁶ together with Hamidu Bobboyi - and perhaps with Ibrahim Mukoshy, who, in the 1960s, was my assistant in the Centre of Arabic Documentation in Ibadan, and is now a professor of Nigerian languages at the University of Sokoto.

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⁶ Although such writings are obviously not "Arabic Literature "(of Africa), they were written in those languages in the Arabic script., and their topics are similar to those of the Arabic language writings of the area,

2. ARABIC LITERATURE IN THE EASTERN HALF OF AFRICA

Undoubtedly the oldest Arabic documents concerning sub-Saharan Africa are those excavated at Qasr Ibrim on the Egyptian/Sudan border. These go back to the tenth and eleventh centuries (with some items from the ninth century) and throw light on relations between Muslim Egypt and Christian Nubia in the Fatimid period dates (909-1171). Unfortunately, they have yet to be published.

The following gives a brief survey of what is known about the situation in northeastern and eastern Africa, beginning with the Sudan.

The modern Sudan Republic has a very rich manuscript tradition, still largely unexplored. The various public, and some private, collections are described in the *World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts*.⁷ Here some thirty collections are listed. The oldest manuscript so far located is a commentary on the *Mukhtaṣar* of Khalīl b. Ishāq by al-Jundī, dated 963/1555-56, and there are others from the 16th and 17th centuries. The largest public collection is located in the NRO (National Records Office P.O. Box 1914, Khartoum), which, in addition to pre-colonial and colonial administrative records (numbering over 20 million items), houses about 15,000 literary manuscripts. The NRO possesses one collection which is unique in an African Islamic context, namely the administrative and judicial records of the Mahdist State (1882-98); estimated to comprise some 250,000 items. Although much has been written on the Mahdist State, this mass of documentation, particularly relevant for social and economic history, has hardly been exploited. Additionally the University of Khartoum houses several collections totaling some 3,000 manuscripts; these include an extremely valuable collection of medical manuscripts organized by the late Dr. Tijani al-Mahi, as well as a small collection of manuscripts from Mauritania.

None of these collections is properly conserved or catalogued. However, ALA 1, "*The Writings of Eastern Sudanic Africa until c. 1900*" (Leiden, 1994), provides a preliminary survey of the writings of the nineteenth century and before.

⁷ London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1994, vol. III, 129-54.

In striking contrast to the detailed archaeological surveys that have been made of the Nile Valley, where, for example, over forty archaeological teams have been excavated in Lower Nubia alone, no attempt has ever been made to survey private manuscript holdings along the Nile or in the western or eastern Sudan. Given the exceptionally dry climatic conditions (in this respect, similar to the savanna and Sahelian regions of West Africa) and the existence of numerous Sufi centres, particularly in Omdurman, Shendi, al-Damir, Berber, Dongola, and elsewhere, it is very probable that there are many more manuscripts to be found. I would guess that there are as many manuscripts in private ownership in Omdurman as there are in the public collections noted here; to give only one example, one Sufi leader in Omdurman has produced privately a work of over 300 pages on his manuscript collection.⁸ If the current negotiations to end the conflict in the Sudan are successful, it may prove possible to find funding to make a start on such a survey.

Additionally, it should be mentioned that there is a collection of about 5,000 or more xerographic and photographic copies of manuscripts and documents from the Sudan deposited at the Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, University of Bergen, Norway. These include some thousand items from the various Sufi orders present in the Sudan, particularly the various branches of the Idrisiyya tradition, judicial documents and land charters from the Darfur Sultanate, and the commercial records of a prominent nineteenth-century Sudanese family of traders. A catalogue of this collection is in progress.

Moving eastward to consider Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia, our information is very patchy and uneven. However, one contrast with other areas of Muslim Africa is that northeastern Africa has received the attention of a number of distinguished Orientalists. Thus Enrico Cerulli has written with great authority on the Arabic writings of Somalia while Ewald Wagner has comprehensively catalogued, described and analysed the indigenous writings, in Arabic, Harari, and Silte, of the city state of Harar.⁹ More recently researchers such as Hussein Ahmed (Addis Ababa), Scott Reese (Northern Arizona University), Alessandro Gori (Naples) and Jonathan Miran (Michigan State University) have been

⁸ Hasan b. Muḥammad al-Fāṭih b. Qarīb Allāh; see *ALA* I, 113.

⁹ See *Afrikanischen Handschriften, II, Islamische Handschriften aus Äthiopien*, Stuttgart, 1997.

actively engaged in mapping and cataloguing in the region. What is known to date of the Islamic writings of northeastern Africa is brought together in *ALA IIIA*, entitled *The Writings of the Muslim Peoples of Northeastern Africa*, published by Brill, early in 2003.

East Africa (here meaning Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania), particularly the coastal region, is home to a literary tradition that is unique in Islamic Africa, namely a highly-developed literature in a living African language, Swahili, written for centuries in the Arabic script. Swahili is the most widely spoken African language in Africa with an estimated 100 million speakers. Swahili is also the Islamic African language with the most highly developed literary tradition, inviting comparison, particularly in regard to its poetry, with Farsi (Iran), Urdu (India) and Turkish. Presently, how old the Swahili poetic tradition is, is difficult to say. Here a distinction needs to be made between the physical survival of manuscripts and the longevity of the poetic tradition. The damp humid conditions along the coast have meant that, in contrast to Sudanic Africa, both west and east, few old manuscripts have survived—the earliest we have are from the late seventeenth century; however, the poetic tradition, which may well incorporate pre-Islamic elements, must, on linguistic grounds, be much older. Such poetic cycles as *Fumo Liongo* (comparable to the *Sundiata* cycle in West Africa) probably have their roots in the 13th and 14th centuries. Characteristic of Swahili literature are the *tendi* (*tenzi*), epics, often of 5,000 quatrains or more, on themes drawn from episodes in early Islamic history, themes common to several cultures around the Indian Ocean, reflecting Swahili's unique position as Africa's only urban maritime culture. The longest *tendi* (*tenzi*) is that on the last moments of the Prophet Muḥammad, which comprises 45, 000 quatrains. Some three hundred *tendi* from the eighteenth century to the early twentieth century are known, but of these only six have been properly edited and translated.

Swahili is also exceptional in another sense; it is the one African Islamic literary tradition, apart from Ethiopia and Somalia, that has a history of over a hundred years of study within an Orientalist paradigm. German Orientalists such as van Velten and Ernst Dammann, the Dutch scholar Jan Knappert, French and British missionaries and scholars such as Edward Steere, Fr. Sacleux, and J.W. T. Allen, have contributed much to the study of Swahili both as a culture and

literature. Dammann's catalogue of the Swahili manuscripts in Germany,¹⁰ together with that of Wagner for Ethiopia,¹¹ have set a standard of scholarship that needs to be emulated in other parts of Islamic Africa. While much of this scholarship may be regarded as uneven, it has nevertheless laid the foundation for the further study of Swahili literature.

The study of Swahili in the immediate post-colonial period became subsumed under concerns of nation-building and language-planning, particularly in Tanzania, under the influence of President Julius Nyerere. In recent years the situation has changed with the enthusiastic adoption of Swahili, and Swahili poetic forms, by poets far from the coastal area. This has led to an efflorescence of interest in classical Swahili poetry, and with it, a concern with the preservation of existing manuscript collections. The largest of these is to be found at the University of Dar es Salaam, preserved in the Institute of Kiswahili Research (TUKI). This collection of about 4,000 items was made by the late Dr. J.W.T. Allen in the late 1950s and early 1960s; there exists a preliminary checklist by Allen,¹² but the collection is badly in need of conservation and cataloguing to professional standards. It is hoped that a Norwegian aid agency will fund a program to make a start in this area. In addition to the Dar es Salaam collection, there is a small but very rich collection of Arabic and Swahili manuscripts (the earliest from the late 17th century) held at the Departments of Antiquities, Archives, and Museums, in Zanzibar, comprising some 600-700 manuscripts. Outside Africa there are major collections of Swahili manuscripts in Germany (see Dammann's catalogue - note 5 above) and at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London. The Department of African Languages at SOAS has recently received a very substantial grant to prepare a proper catalogue of the collection at the School.

This has been something of a Cook's tour of the region and its Islamic intellectual heritage. The important point to emphasize is that this is very much a

¹⁰ *Afrikanische Handschriften, I, Handschriften in Swahili und anderen Sprachen Afrikas*, Stuttgart, 1993.

¹¹ E. Wagner, *Afrikanische Handschriften, Teil 2: Islamische Handschriften aus Athiopien*, Stuttgart, 1997.

¹² *A Catalogue of the Swahili and Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Dar es Salaam*, Leiden, 1963.

living tradition. The facility and rapidity with which poets coming out of a non-Swahili and, in many cases a non-Muslim, background have adopted and adapted the classical Swahili poetic forms of *tendi*, *nyimbo* and *shairi*, to local concerns emphasizes that the literary tradition of Swahili is very far from being moribund. One recent survey reckons there are 2,000 - 3,000 "Swahili" poets active as far afield as Rwanda, the Congo, and Zambia) This I hope will be apparent when ALA IIIB, entitled *The Writings of the Muslim Peoples of Eastern Africa*, hopefully forthcoming in 2005, is published. But it cannot be emphasized enough how much more there is to do. Islamic northeastern and east Africa are still very much *terra incognita* in terms of their intellectual, literary and artistic traditions.

SEAN O'FAHEY

CONTENT ARRANGEMENT OF VOLUMES

All volumes are arranged in the following manner: a "Foreword" on the series, jointly by Professors Hunwick and O'Fahey, followed by a "Preface" on the volume concerned, by the compiler of it. Then, after pages on "Transliteration" and "Abbreviations", come two reference sections: "Short Titles of Works Frequently referred to" (i.e. works that authors comment on, abbreviate, or versify), and "General Works of Reference, Journals, and Catalogs", listing abbreviated titles of such works frequently referred to in the volume.

The first true text of the volume is an "Overview", in which the history and nature of what the volume covers are briefly discussed. Then come the individual chapters, tput together in the following fashion:

Each chapter opens with an introduction to the theme of the chapter, and then space is given to individual writers in a chronological order, or sometimes in sub-divisions, based on families, sub-regions, or Islamic organizations such as Sufi *tariqas*. Entries begin with the Arabic version of the author's name, as given in his writings, followed by the popular (or local) name by which he is commonly known, and dates of birth and death. After this comes a list of the sources that provide information about them and their work; and this, in turn, is followed by a brief biography of the author. Focus in the biography is on whom the scholar studied with (and sometimes what works he studied), what travels he may have made (including pilgrimage to Mecca), what positions he may have hel, students he taught, and some indication of the types of writing that he undertook. The biography is followed by a list, in alphabetical order, of the titles of his writings. Each title, whenever possible, is followed by a list of manuscript copies of the work, indicating their location and reference number; followed by any available information on published editions of the work, whether into English, French, or any other European language, or any African language.

After the chapters come lists of "Sources and Bibliographies" on items referred to in the volume. In *ALA IV*, for example, they consist of:

- (a) Manuscript Collections and Archives.
- (b) General Bibliography for Western Sudanic Africa
- (c) Editions and Translations of Arabic Works
- (d) Unpublished Conference and Seminar Papers

At the very end of each volume is a series of four indexes: Authors, Titles, First Lines of Poetry, General Index. Titles and first verses help to reveal the different languages of works in the volume. In *ALA IV* those indexes indicate many languages:

Titles: Arabic, Dagbane, French, Fulfulde, Gbanyito, Hausa, Kotokoli, Songhay, Wolof. **First Verses:** Arabic, Fulfulde, Hausa, Wolof.

*ALA 1: WRITINGS OF EASTERN SUDANIC AFRICA
DOWN TO C. 1900*

CONTENTS

1. The Sudanese Nile Valley before 1820
2. Chronicles and Related Materials
3. The Writings of the Turkiyya
4. (with Albrecht Hofheinz) Popular Poetry
5. The Sammāniyya Tradition
6. (with Yaḥyā Muḥammad Ibrāhīm) The Idrisiyya Tradition
7. (by Knut S. Vikør) The Sanūsiyya Tradition
8. (with Albrecht Hofheinz and Bernd Radtke) The Khatmiyya Tradition
9. The Writings of Ismaʿīl and his Descendants
10. (by Albrecht Hofheinz) The Writings of the Majādhīb
11. The Hindiyya, Qādiriyya, Saʿdiyya and Tijāniyya
12. (with Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Abū Salīm) The Writings of the Mahdiyya

ALA II: WRITINGS OF CENTRAL SUDANIC AFRICA

CONTENTS

1. The Central Sudan before 1800
2. The Fodiyawa: (1) Shaykh °Uthmān b. Muḥammad Fodiye
3. The Fodiyawa: (2) °Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad Fodiye
4. The Fodiyawa: (3) Muḥammad Bello
5. Sokoto (1): Other Members of the Fodiawa and the Wazirs
6. Sokoto (2): Other Writers of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries
7. Kano since 1800 (1): Emirs and Writers of the Tijāniyya *Ṭarīqa*
8. (with Roman Loimeier) Kano since 1800 (2): Writers of the Qādiriyya *Ṭarīqa*, and Unaffiliated Writers
9. Writers of Katsina, Zaria, Bauchi and Lokoja
10. (with Hamidu Bobboyi) Bornu, Wadai, and Adamawa
11. (by Stefan Reichmuth and Razaq D. Abubakre) Ilorin and Nupe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries
12. [by Stefan Reichmuth and Razaq D. Abubakre] Ibadan, Lagos, and Other Areas of Southern Nigeria
13. (with Muhammad Sani Umar) Polemical Literature for and against Sufism
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*ALMA MATER: THE WRITINGS OF THE
MUSLIM PEOPLES OF NORTHEASTERN AFRICA*

CONTENTS

1. (with Jonathan Miran) The Islamic and Related Writings of Eritrea
2. (with Hussein Ahmed and Ewald Wagner) The Islamic and Related Writings of Ethiopia
3. (with Mohamed M. Kassim and Scott S. Reese) The Arabic Writings of Somalia
- 4 (with Lidwien Kapteijns) The Somali Oral and Written Tradition

*OVERVIEW OF ALA IIIA:
THE WRITINGS OF THE MUSLIM PEOPLES OF NORTHEASTERN AFRICA*

by
R.S. O'Fahey

The modern states and near-states that make up the region here defined as Northeastern Africa comprise Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somalia. Although, in terms of population, the area is predominantly Muslim, leaving aside numerous small sultanates, either tribal or urban in origin, the major state-forming tradition in the region is Christian. The size and strength of Ethiopia has waxed and waned over the centuries, but its existence has defined much of the experience of Muslims within its borders, or neighboring upon it. Likewise, real or putative conflict between Muslims and Christians tends to dominate, perhaps overly, surveys, for example by Trimingham (1952), of Islam and the Muslim presence in the region. This is not to say that war and polemic between Christian and Muslim has not happened, but the complexities of co-existence have been understudied (Ahmed (2001)¹³ is a beginning).

Within the wider context of Muslim Africa, both north and south of the Sahara, the region has a unique position within Islamic history, featuring as it does in the *sīra* of the Prophet. In about 615 CE, the first *hijra* took place, when several small groups of Muslims took refuge in the court of the *Negus*, assumed to be the ruler of Axum, in what is now Northern Ethiopia.¹⁴ The details of this episode or its historicity do not concern us here, but its consequences, or rather the imagined recollection of its consequences, do. A Tradition of the Prophet is reported thus, "Leave the Abyssinians in peace so long as they do not take the offensive."¹⁵ From this tradition arose an ambiguity among the Muslim learned class about the status of Christian Ethiopians within the Islamic *Weltanschauung* that was embodied in a distinctive literary *genre*, the *faḍā'il al-ḥabash* (or *ḥubshān*), "The virtues of the Ethiopians", which in an indirect way goes back to the "Blameless

¹³ Hussein Ahmed, *Islam in Nineteenth-century Wallo, Ethiopia: Revival, Reform, and Reaction*, Leiden: Brill, 2001.

¹⁴ See J.S. Trimingham (1952), 44-46

¹⁵ Abū Daʿūd, ii, 133, quoted in Trimingham (1952), 46.

Aethiops” of Herodotus. This is no antiquarian issue; in modern modern times, the status of Axum as a place sacred to both Christian and Muslim has been, and is, a contentious issue between the two communities. Two political examples of overarching ambiguity in the region are the membership of Somalia in the Arab League and the “Arabism” debate concening Eritrea’s identity in the 1960s and 70s.¹⁶ In this respect, both Eritrea and Somalia have affinities with the Sudan Republic, which has its own ambiguous relationship to the Muslim Arab world.

In this respect, Ethiopia and its environs, mark themselves off from much of the Muslim Africa recorded in the volumes of this series in that they partake of some of the issues that mark the complex multi-confessionalism of the Middle East and, for example, Muslim Spain. *Jihād* and counter-*jihād* there certainly were, but there was also a scholarly polemic, exemplified in the writings of Enbāqom and Zakaryas (*qqv.*). Little of this is found elsewhere in Muslim Africa, although there are some traces of it in the Christian/Muslim encounters of the late nineteenth century in East Africa (see, for example, °Alī b. Muḥammad b. °Alī al-Mundhirī in *ALA III B*).

It is not possible here to give a detailed ethno-history of the Muslims of Northeastern Africa. Crudely, the Muslim communities of the region may be characterised as nomadic, for example the Somali and Beja; settled agriculturalists, as in Wallo in Ethiopia, or dwelling in small urban coastal settlements such as Maṣawwā°, Zaylā°, Harar, Mogadishu or Brava, the latter two being extensions northwards of the Swahili urban environments that dominated the East African coast, and whose writings will form the bulk of *ALA IIIB*, while the former form part of a nexus of maritime city-states that rim the Red Sea (including Jiddah, al-Līth, al-Ḥudayda and al-Mukha on the northern coast, and Sawākin on the southern coast) and which have their roots in Graeco-Roman times.

It is from one of these cities, Zaylā°, that the first Islamic writings come, namely the scholarly production of a group of emigré Zaylā° scholars, largely based in Cairo in the fourteenth century. Their surviving writings are recorded here in Chapter Two. This tradition continued with the presence in Cairo of Ethiopian

¹⁶ See Hagai Erlich , *Ethiopia and the Middle East* (Boulder [CO], 1994), 151-64.

Muslims, somewhat later designated as Jabart, and concretized by the establishment of a *riwāq al-jabartiyya* or hostel (literally "corner") for the maintenance of Jabartī Muslim students at al-Azhar. The most famous Jabarti was undoubtedly the Egyptian chronicler, °Abd al-Rahmān b. Ḥasan al-Jabartī, whose writings fall outside our purview, but whose family had a long connexion with the *riwāq*. The longevity and complexity of Islamic connexions in the region are well illustrated by the fact that the *riwāq al-jabartiyya* was to have an important role in the formal establishment in July 1960 of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), which in turn led to an Eritrean state in 1991. The Islamic strand in the emergence of a distinctive Eritrean nationalism is a complex and ambiguous one.

The sixteenth and seventeen centuries were the high point of the Muslim/Christian confrontation between the Christian highland empire of Ethiopia and the largely lowland Muslim cities. Here, for the first time, unless one includes the period of Abraha—the Sassanian Persian and Byzantine involvement in the region at the time of the birth of the Prophet—the region becomes the scene of a semi-global geo-political involvement, pitching alliances between Ethiopia and the Portuguese against the city states of the Hawash Valley, their largely Somali nomadic rescuers under Aḥmad Gran, backed to a degree by the Ottomans. The *Futūḥ al-Ḥabash* (*q.v.*) is the major record of this struggle. The geo-political scene moved on; the Christians fell out among themselves, as Portuguese Jesuits failed to win over Orthodox Ethiopia, while the Ottomans consolidated their control of the coast.¹⁷ It was only in the nineteenth century that confrontation resumed, with the wars between the Mahdist Sudan and a resurgent Ethiopia under Johannes and Minilik.

It is very hard to generalize about the character of Islamic writings. In one sense, they differ little from what will be found elsewhere in Muslim Africa. At one end of the spectrum are the commentaries and super-commentaries on approved texts of *fiqh*, here largely from the Shāfi°ī school, which dominates the region. But it is clear that both in Wallo and Somalia, from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries onwards, there were winds of change in the form of greater *ṭarīqa* activity, an activity that may very loosely be described as "Neo-Sufi". This

¹⁷ G. Orhonlu, *Habesh Eyalati*, Istanbul 1969.

activity was characterised by the establishment of communities¹⁸ of adherents to specific Sufi traditions—in our region mainly Qādiriyya, Sammāniyya, Tijāniyya, Sālihiyya, Dandarawiyya and Idrīsiyya—and who were often recruited from hitherto marginalized groups. Other new trends appear to include the production of *manāqib* literature centred on both “international” and local saints (Harari writings are rich in this category), and the production of popular poetry, either in Arabic or in various vernacular languages; these two categories obviously overlap. Here one can usefully compare the careers of Muḥammad Shafi b. Muḥammad (*q.v.*) with that of Uways b. Muhammad al-Barawī (*q.v.*), the one from central Ethiopia, the other from southern Somalia. One research area that is still in its infancy is the study of the links in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries between the Muslim communities of Northeastern Africa and those of the Islamic heartlands, in particular the Hijaz and the Yemen.

Popular Islamic poetry, whether in Arabic or in vernacular languages, is to be found throughout the region. Research on the various traditions in the region is very uneven; the work of Cerulli and Wagner on Harari writings and, more recently, Samatar, building on Andrzejewski and Jammac Cumar Ciise (*q.v.*) on the Somali male poetic tradition, and Kapteijns on Somali-sung womens poetry, only highlight how much more there is to be done. There are interesting comparisons here to be made in terms of themes and the influence of classical Arabic prosodic forms both with Sudanese popular poetry (see *ALA I*, Chapter 3) and the complex prosodic developments of Swahili poetry (which is documented in *ALA III B*).

Another area that deserves investigation is the creation of literacy in vernacular languages, whether through the adaptation of the Arabic script to the needs of local languages, whether Oromiñña, Harari or Somali, or the creation of new scripts, for example Abū Bakr b. Usmān Odā’s (*q.v.*) invention of a script for Oromiñña and the complex history of the Osmania script in Somalia. This is a complex theme in the region; one example is the contemporary debate among Ethiopian Muslims, not on whether to translate the Qurʾān into Amharic, but whether to print it in Ajjami, i.e. the Arabic script, or in the Ethiopic alphabet.

¹⁸ *Jamāʿa* in Arabic, *camaa* in Somali.

These debates have their echoes both among the Hausa and others in West Africa, and among the Swahili of East Africa. But, it is, I think, true to say that the orthographic debate is more complex in Northeastern Africa than anywhere else in Muslim Africa.

The Islamic literatures of Northeastern Africa thus represent and reflect a variety of different impulses. Proximity to the Middle East, but not simply proximity, since there is also the imperialist intervention of Ottoman Turkey and Khedivial Egypt to consider, plus the Islamic policies of Italy, and later Britain, in Eritrea, means that the nature of the relationship of Northeastern Africa with the Islamic heartlands was different in kind from, for example, West Africa. In intellectual terms there were, indeed, the traditional patterns of "shaykh-seeking", of the transmission of *isnāds*, both in *fiqh* and *taṣawwuf*, both from within the region and from without, the writing of commentaries and the like, and the coming of new Sufi affiliations, especially in the nineteenth century. But, because of the involvement of the region in both local and regional conflicts that consciously or unconsciously cut cross the religious divide, whether it be Turk versus Portuguese, British and Italian against the Mahdists of the Sudan with reverbrations in Eritrea and Western Ethiopia (see Ṭalha b. Jaʿfar) or ʿAbdille Muḥammad Ḥasan (*q.v.*) versus the British, Italians, and Ethiopians in Somalia, the nature of Muslim/non-Muslim interaction was qualitatively different in Northeastern Africa by comparison with most of the rest of Muslim Africa. Northeastern Africa is not quite Africa, nor is it quite the Middle East; it partakes of both, but is not quite either, and this is reflected in the complexities of its Islamic intellectual traditions.

*OVERVIEW OF ALA IIIB*¹⁹

by

R.S. O'Fahey

The Study of Swahili

No other living Islamic African language, including Arabic²⁰, has had such a long and complex pedigree of scholarship brought to bear upon it as Swahili, both as a language and culture (see further Mieke and Möhlig (1995))²¹. In the Western scholarly tradition, the first generation was represented by Ludwig Krapf, J. Rebmann, W.E. Taylor, Edward Steere, and Charles Sacleux. all Christian missionaries, as were several key figures of a later generation such as Ernst Dammann and Roland Allen.

But Krapf (d. 1887) was not the first outsider to take an interest in Swahili, rather it was a Muslim scholar from Oman, Nāṣir b. Jā'id al-Kharūṣī (d. 1847; *q.v.*) who wrote at least two works comparing herbal medicine as practised in Oman and Arabia with that among the Swahili. A tradition of interest in, and increasingly the practice of Swahili, especially poetry, grew among the Omani and Ḥaḍramī 'ulamā' of the coast and islands, as they interacted in various complicated ways with the local scholarly and literary elites. This tradition was to intersect in various ways with the Christian missionary tradition.

Christian missionary interest in Swahili was essentially utilitarian, a way into the community, and eventually as a means of proselytization. The Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA), based in Zanzibar, was prohibited from missionary activity directed towards Muslims by the sultans, but they were allowed to proselytize among freed slaves. There was some tension between Muslim and missionary, which Bishop Edward Steere (d. 1887) helped to provoke by holding public sermons in the slave market, by the side of which the Anglican Cathedral was built. The famous Zanzibari scholar, 'Abd al-'Azīz b.

¹⁹ Not the final overview for publication in the volume to come.

²⁰ Brockelmann has some 8 pages devoted to Africa in his five volumes published between 1937 and 1949. By the 1940s the study of Swahili was nearly a century old..

²¹ See details of this (and other items) in the Bibliography, p. 49.

ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-ʿAmawī (*q.v.*), wrote a response to Steere, which unfortunately appears not to be extant. However one response has survived, namely a defence of Islam entitled *Jawāb ʿalā ‘l-Risāla al-mansūba ilā al-Masīḥ b. Ishāq al-Kindī al-Naṣrānī* by the Ibādī scholar, ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Mundhirī (*q.v.*). However, the exchanges between the missionaries and the ʿulamāʾ seem to have been essentially gentlemanly; al-ʿAmawī helped Steere with the latter’s work in translating the Bible into Swahili.

Relations between W.E. Taylor (d. 1927) in Mombasa, and many of the local scholars there, seem to have been especially cordial, even if Taylor seems to have harboured ambitions of converting Swahili Muslims to Christianity. This cordiality had important consequences for Swahili literature, in that the friendly collaboration between Taylor and Muhammad Sikujuu (*q.v.*) led to the recording for posterity of much of the poetic production of Muyaka b. Haji al-Ghassaniy (*q.v.*), an outstanding poet of *mashairi* of a generation before them. Without Sikujuu and Taylor, Muyaka would be a lost voice. In Mombasa, and to a lesser extent in Zanzibar and Lamu, there appears to have been an interaction between two scholarly traditions that were able to respect each other.

In Lamu the role of Muhammad Kijumwa, poet, calligrapher, wood-carver, and dance master (*q.v.*), as an interlocutor with several researchers, among Alice Werner, W. Hichens and Ernst Damman, was of profound importance to Swahili studies.

In several respects the missionaries, and later colonial officials and nationalist language-planners, had a specific agenda. One aspect was the romanization of Swahili. As Frankl has noted ((1998), 191-93), there is no particular reason to romanize Swahili; the language is no easier or more difficult to read in either script. The administration of German East Africa, throughout its duration, regarded Arab script as normal (Sw. *Kiarabu*), and no effort to change it. Although nowhere explicitly stated, the “decoupling” of Swahili from the Arabic script may be regarded as a way of “de-Islamising” the language.

Decisive in this was the decision to adopt Kiunguja (the dialect of Zanzibar, which was never an acceptable form in classical Swahili literature) as “Standard Swahili” by the Interterritorial Language Committee, established in

1930²² in preference to Kiamu (the dialect of Lamu) or Kimvita (the dialect of Mombasa), both of which are the preferred forms for classical Swahili writing.²³ Wilfred Whiteley, who was actively engaged in the enterprise, sums it up thus, “In Swahili ... the standardization [was] effected on a non-literary dialect during a period of Colonial administration. Inauspicious augury for a national language”.²⁴ Whiteley does not explain why Kiunguja was chosen; R.A. Snoxall, author of a Swahili/English dictionary and member of the Interterritorial Committee offers an explanation:

First of all [at a conference meeting], I was asked why had Kiunguja or Zanzibar dialect of Swahili been chosen for standardization rather than the other forms, such as Kimvita, which I had mentioned. I replied that it was because it was more used in commerce than the other forms and its commercial value really dictated its being chosen as the standardised form of the language.²⁵

If one is talking of the late 1920s when Mombasa was becoming the major port for East Africa, this does not seem to be a very persuasive argument.

Questions of Definition

Swahili literature poses a major challenge in terms of defining boundaries. For example, much of the *tendi*, or epic poetry writing in Swahili, was, and is, produced within an Islamic milieu. However, a number of *tendi* are on modern secular themes. Many of these have been included, either for the sake of their form or because they were written by people from a Muslim background. Again, transitional writers, that is writers emerging from a Swahili Muslim background, but who increasingly wrote on “national” or secular themes – Shaaban b. Robert (*q.v.*) is an outstanding example – are generally included.

The problem of boundaries is compounded by contradictory definitions of “secular” and “Islamic”. Ibrahim Noor Shariff (Shariff (1991), 41) argues that, “At every stage of history, the Swahili have produced a far greater volume of secular poetry than of homiletic verse”, but continues that, “Swahili society has

²² W. Whiteley, *Swahili. The Rise of a National Language*, London 1969, 79-95 on the promotion of “standard” Swahili.

²³ This is not to overlook the body of poetry in Chimini or Chimbazazi, the Swahili dialect of Brava in southern Somalia.

²⁴ Whiteley, *Swahili*, 94. What is striking is that Whiteley never really explains the rationale behind the decision. The whole episode invites further investigation..

²⁵ R.A. Snoxall, “The East African Interterritorial Language (Swahili) Committee”, in *Swahili Language and Society*, ed. Joan Maw and David Parkin, Vienna 1984, 22 (15-24).

traditionally attached great importance to the *preservation* [Shariff's emphasis] of religious verse for posterity." In other words, although at any given time, more non-religious verse was being composed, much less of it has survived. This is probably true of any literate Islamic society. But here one must be careful to distinguish between 'secular' in the sense of not being about overtly religious topics, and 'Western-influenced' or 'modern'. Muyaka bin Haji al-Ghassany (*q.v.*), indeed, wrote verse on secular topics, but did so within the context of a Muslim community.

Shariff further argues that Western scholars of Swahili have compounded the problem by over-emphasising the Islamic nature of Swahili culture and literature. He quotes Knappert: "Swahili literature is entirely Islamic from its inception in 1728 [the date of the *Hamziyya* (*q.v.*)] until the advent of German administration in 1884".²⁶ If Knappert is defining 'Islamic', in a generalized cultural context, as the literary production of a Muslim society, then it seems to be an unexceptional generalization. This alleged bias is *de facto*, based on problems of source-criticism. It is understandable that Knappert chose, as a scholar, to concentrate on Swahili Islamic poetry, in as much as there were available some general yardsticks by which to analyse it. Thus in researching on *tendi*, recounting episodes in the life of the Prophet, or the early years of the Islamic era, Knappert was able to build upon the researches of Rudi Paret (1927-28 and 1930) on the *maghāzī* legendary found throughout the Muslim world (see further *EI* (2), v, 1161-64). Shariff argues that there is another reason for this over-emphasis on the religiosity of Swahili literature, quoting Lyndon Harries: "There are hundreds of short Swahili poems in the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, which still defy interpretation, partly because no one is able to provide the context in which the poem was written".²⁷ A look at Professor Abdulaziz's admirable study (1994) of Muyaka's *shairi* will confirm Harries' point. The problem is a continuing one; there are many poems, particularly in the very rich and varied collections at the School of Oriental and African Studies (London) that are of such a specific and occasional nature that

²⁶ Knappert (1971), 5.

²⁷ Harries (1962), 2.

their interpretation has probably been lost forever. This is not a problem peculiar to African literatures.

Following further this line of argument, Shariff continues by contending that the sophistication of Muyaka's verse—and that of his contemporaries—is such, “that it could not have been invented by Muyaka or his contemporaries”.²⁸ The argument is analogous to that used in the study of classical Greek literature: that Homer is too sophisticated to have stood at the beginning of a literary tradition.

We argued above that the secular quota of literature (not necessarily in writing), in most Islamic societies, was probably greater than what has survived until today. Indeed, this is probably true of the pre-modern literatures of all the monotheistic religions. What was written down and has survived is what the people of the time thought important; and they tended to give priority to religious or homiletic literature. 'Secular' literature was transient, or survived for non-literary or marginal, or ironically religious, reasons; the Arabic poetry of the *jāhiliyya*, 'the ignorance' that is the pre-Islamic period, survived in part for its importance to the canons of Arabic style, essential to an understanding of the sacred book.

The present volume is intended to be a record of what *exists* (or is reported to have once existed) in the way of writings of a primarily Islamic character in the region, although some discussion of oral forms will be included. Thus, no attempt is made to engage in the debate about the identity of the Swahili people, their origins, or the degree to which their literature is Islamic or secular—themes on which there is already a large and often polemical literature.²⁹

Rollins notes:

Between the years 1900-1950, there were approximately 359 works of prose published in Swahili; 346 of these were written by Europeans and published mainly in England and Germany.³⁰

He continues by noting that, overwhelmingly, this literature was Christian, and that it tended to impose a Euro-Christian norm on the language. Needless to

²⁸ Shariff (1991), 43

²⁹ See for example, the polemic against the Western “Orientalist” imposition of an Arab Muslim identity upon the Swahili and their literature in Mazrui and Shariff (1994).

³⁰ (1985), 51.

say, this literature is not included here. To the present compilers, very striking is the degree to which European scholars of Swahili have indulged in aesthetic and other value judgments about the literature they are studying—to a far greater degree for example, than Western scholars of Arabic literature.

When the time comes to write a general history of Swahili literature, to which hopefully the present volume [IIIB] will be a useful contribution, the complex interaction between 'Orientalist', colonial administrator, and Christian missionary, and indigenous (however defined) writers, will present an analytical problem of the greatest complexity.

On the Periodization of Swahili Poetry

Before the twentieth century, Swahili literature seems to be primarily poetry. There is little or no evidence that the language was used to write prose, except for the odd letter, some of which survive from the early eighteenth century. For prose, Arabic was used; there are parallels here with Farsi and Urdu.

Swahili poetry is at once oral, sung, and written; the complex interaction between the three is beyond the scope of this *Overview*.

Despite the pioneering researches of Taylor, Dammann, Harries, the Allens (father and son), and Knappert, our understanding of this tradition is still fragmentary. There is much basic philological, lexicographical, and textual work to be done before any reliable overview can be given. No one has been more assiduous in warning against premature generalizations than Jan Knappert in his various surveys. The comments that follow must be seen in this context.

In presenting a very preliminary periodization, one must begin with the poetic cycle by, or about, the northern Kenyan coastal 'culture hero', Fumo Liongo, a figure of anywhere between the seventh and seventeenth centuries, who may have existed or not, and who may have written some, but surely not all, of the poetry ascribed to him. What might be essayed at this stage is the assertion that it is within the Fumo Liongo cycle complex that the origins of *tendi* as a poetic tradition may be found.

This latter point raises again, for the moment, the unanswerable question as to the transmission of "popular" Islamic themes, that later were transmuted into Swahili in epic forms. Again, there is an ambiguity here, in that the earliest,

physically surviving, long poem, the translation dated by Knappert to 1652 of the *Ḥamziyya* by Bwana Mwengo (*q.v.*), is a rendering into Swahili of a well-known Arabic literary text. What we know of the *Ḥamziyya* points to a Pate origin, and the scanty evidence we have of the origin of *al-Inkishafi*, possibly the greatest of Swahili *tendi*, suggests a very sophisticated poetic milieu in that city in the eighteenth century. The earliest manuscripts are epics, *chuo* or *tendi*, for example the *Chuo cha Herkal*, one manuscript of which is dated 1141/1728-29.

At this stage in our knowledge, about the only safe generalization one can make is that poems such as *al-Inkishafi* were not the products of a young untried tradition, but rather the productions of a very refined and sophisticated poetic tradition. How literary, or how oral, this tradition was in its inception is an open question.

A further question for consideration in exploring the history of Swahili poetry is the extent to which the forms and content of the poetry reflected the changing socio-political realities along the East African coast.

Again generalizations are probably premature, but one might argue that the post-Portuguese period (effectively after about 1700) saw a certain political hegemony in Pate/Lamu, the area that, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, produced some of the classics of Swahili literature like *al-Inkishafi* and *Mwana Kupona*. This may be related to patterns of trade on the Benadir coast in Somalia before the coming of the Omani hegemony that is in a northerly direction.

In the mid-nineteenth century Mombasa, under an assertive Mazrū^cī clan fighting against the inroads of Sa^cīd b. Sulṭān of Oman and Zanzibar, there emerged new poetic forms, supremely espoused by Muyaka bin Hajji, namely the *shairi*, intimate, dialogic, and polemical. In terms of what has survived, it is the nineteenth-century dialogue/polemic poetry that is the most substantial, if one accepts that most of the epics we have today, outside the so-called “classical” corpus of *tendi*, are *de facto* modern. The bulk of the Taylor (SOAS) and Dammann (Berlin) collections comprize this genre. But this is essentially 'occasional' poetry, where, as Harries reminds us, the occasion of its composition is often beyond recovery. However, its recovery and interpretation are a challenge to future historians of Swahili literature. This dialogic tradition,

kujibizana, about which Ann Biersteker has written much, has reinvented itself in the twentieth century in the newspapers. It seems not unreasonable to see a continuity between Muyaka bin Hajji and Moza binti Ali (.q.v.), writing on the topics of the day in the Zanzibari newspaper, *Mwongozi*. While some poets will hail the coming of the East African shilling, or the birthday of King George V, others deal with much more enduring themes.

Once established, the writing of *tendi* became an integral part of Swahili literary culture. The present work documents in detail the enormous range and variety of the Swahili poetic epic tradition. Less well known is the writing of poetry of a didactic character by, for example, the Brava poetess, Dada Matisi or Muhyī 'l-Dīn al-Qaḥṭānī. Here one is at a meeting point between the past and modernity; Matisi and al-Qaḥṭānī used Swahili (or in the former case, Cimini) to present Islamic teachings in the vernacular. Out of this was to grow indigenous (as opposed to missionary-inspired) Swahili prose literature (see below).

Swahili Prose Writing

If in the nineteenth century, and before, Muslim scholars of the coast and islands wrote prose in Arabic, and poetry in Swahili (although some, such as al-Qaḥṭānī, wrote poetry in both languages). Swahili prose writing emerged approximately in the 1920s.

The pioneers here were Muhammad al-Amin al-Mazrū'ī (.q.v.) and his brother-in-law, Muhammad Qassim (.q.v.). The Mazrū'īs and their Zanzibari counterpart, Abdallah Saleh Farsy (.q.v.). produced a very considerable body of Swahili Islamic prose literature, which is duly recorded in the present volume. Most of this literature is didactic in nature, essentially pamphlets, or booklets, giving elementary information on a variety of Islamic topics. More ambitious are the various translations, beginning with the Ahmadiyya version, of the Qur'ān.³¹ The production of such literature has vastly increased in recent years. and there are few mosques that do not have a bookseller outside their doors. There is some reason to believe that much of this literature is directed towards women, who are becoming an increasingly visible element in Muslim public life.

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Godfrey Dale.

I exclude from consideration here the translation of the Qur'ān by the missionary,

From the 1930s there has developed a tradition of writing fiction in Swahili. Many of the leading exponents of fiction-writing write out of an Islamic milieu. The most influential figure was Shaaban bin Robert (*q.v.*), whose father converted to Christianity, but who himself returned to Islam. Bin Robert is a transitional figure in the emergence of Swahili as a national language.

Arabic Writings

The earliest Arabic writing, apart from the classical Arab geographers, that throws light on Islam on the East African coast, is *al-Sīra* or *al-Maqāma al-Kilwiyya* by Muḥammad b. Saʿīd al-Qalhātī (late 6th/12th to early 7th/13th cent.; *q.v.*), which is an Ibādī polemic written around 1116 to two brothers living at Kilwa, ʿAlī b. ʿAlī and Ḥasan b. Alī, who were actively propagating Ibādī Islam in the Kilwa region.

The earliest indigenous Arabic writing is the Kilwa Chronicle entitled *al-Sulwa fī akhbār Kilwa* (*q.v.*). The original version was written by an unnamed author who was born on Monday, 2 Shawwāl 904/Monday, 13 May 1499. The antiquity of this chronicle, the oldest in sub-Saharan Africa, is confirmed by the fact that Joao de Barros (1496-1570) quotes a partial translation in his *Da Asia*, first published in 1552 (see Freeman-Grenville (1962), 34).

Little in Arabic has survived before the nineteenth century except for some Ibādī texts dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, brought to Zanzibar under the sultanate. In 1880 Sultan Barghash (*r.* 1870-88) established a printing press in Zanzibar and embarked on an ambitious programme of printing Ibādī works of theology and jurisprudence, involving a network of scholars from the Wādī Mزاب (Algeria), Cairo, Oman and Zanzibar (see Chapter Two).

Since the dominant *madh'hab* in East Africa is Shāfiʿī, much of the Arabic writing concerns that school's jurisprudence.

ALIA IV: WRITINGS OF WESTERN SUDANIC AFRICA

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OVERVIEW OF ALA IV:
THE WRITINGS OF WESTERN SUDANIC AFRICA

by
John Hunwick

Western Sudanic Africa constitutes a large and diverse region. This volume [ALA IV] only attempts to cover certain parts of it—those where sufficient research has been done, and where a strong manuscript tradition exists. To a large extent this also reflects the areas where Islamic scholarly and literary traditions have been most prominent.

One of the key centres of Islamic scholarship, from a millenium ago right down to the twentieth century, has been Timbuktu; and not only the city itself—though this was the inspirational heart—but also the neighboring regions of Azawād—the semi-desert region to the north of the Middle Niger— and the western reaches of the Niger Bend from Gimbala down to Māsina. As Timbuktu established itself as a centre of commercial interchange between tropical Africa and Saharan and Mediterranean Africa during the fourteenth century, it began to attract men of religion as well as men of business—the two categories sometimes overlapping. The city was early settled by members of the Masūfa tribe of the Ṣanhāja confederation following the apparent dissolution of the Almoravid movement in sub-Saharan Africa. To what extent they brought with them the Mālikī juristic tradition is not clear. When Ibn Baṭṭūṭa visited Timbuktu in 1352 he noted the predominance of the Masūfa, but had nothing to say about Islamic learning there. A century later, however, a Masūfa clan—the Aqīt—migrated to Timbuktu from Māsina, and they clearly brought with them a deep tradition of learning, especially in the sphere of *fiqh*. Muḥammad Aqīt's descendants, intermarried with another Berber, and possibly Ṣanhāja, family, provided the *qādīs* of Timbuktu over the next century and a half.

But such Saharan peoples were not the sole source of Islamic knowledge in Timbuktu at that period. In fact, the most celebrated member of the Aqīt clan, Aḥmad Bābā (1556-1627) had as his principal *shaykh* a Juula scholar from Jenne, Muḥammad Baghayogho. The Juula were undoubtedly among the first West

Africans to acquire Islamic knowledge, being originally a merchant group who traded gold with North African merchants in Ancient Ghana. They may well have been influenced eventually by Almoravid Mālikī teachings. At some point in time (perhaps after the break-up of Ancient Ghana), some of them settled in the Māsina region, and by the fifteenth century had opened up a trade route southwards from Jenne for acquiring gold being mined in the Akan forests of what is now the Republic of Ghana. Some also moved into the central Niger Bend region, especially Timbuktu, whilst others moved eastwards to Hausaland. They played a significant role in bringing Islam to areas of what are now the Ivory Coast, and southern Burkina Faso. Another group of them, originally settled in Diakha in the Māsina region, dispersed westwards, and became celebrated as proponents of Islamic knowledge under the name Diakhanke (i.e. people of Diakha), better known as the Jahanke. Timbuktu distinguished itself from the sixteenth century onwards as a centre of study which attracted students from many parts of West Africa, and scholars of Saharan oases from Walāta to Awjila, and also from North African cities. The city's educational reputation has led some people to speak of a Timbuktu university, beginning with Félix Dubois, who wrote of the "University of Sankore".³² While the Sankore quarter in the north-east of Timbuktu certainly was an area which attracted many scholars to live in it, nevertheless, there is no evidence of any institutionalized centre of learning. Teaching of some texts was undertaken in the Sankore mosque, and also in the Sīdī Yaḥyā mosque and the "Great Mosque" —*Jingere Bēr*—but teaching authorizations (*ijāza*) always came directly from the individual shaykhs with whom the students studied. Much of the teaching was done in the scholar's homes, and individual scholars had their own personal research and teaching libraries. In terms of writings, Timbuktu was noted for its *fiqh* works right down to the twentieth century, and apart from anything else, there is a rich *fatwā* literature in the Timbuktu region. Timbuktu is also noted as a source of historical writing. One of the earliest such works, the *Jawāhir al-ḥisān* was a product of the sixteenth century written by one Bābā Gūru b. *al-ḥājj* Muḥammad b. *al-ḥājj* al-Amīn Gānū, of whom nothing is known, and whose book has never come to light, but is known of, since it was a source for the celebrated

³² Félix Dubois, *Timbuctoo the Mysterious*, London: William Heinemann, 1897, 275.

Taʿrīkh al-fattāsh, written by members of the Kaʿti family. A twentieth-century scholar, Aḥmad Bābēr (d. 1997), wrote a book with the same title designated to take the place of the lost sixteenth century work. The other great chronicle of Timbuktu and the Middle Niger region, the *Taʿrīkh al-Sūdān* of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Saʿdī, was written at about the same time as the *Taʿrīkh al-fattāsh*, (mid-1650s), while roughly a century later an anonymous chronicle, *Dīwān al-mulūk fī salāḥīn al-sūdān*, recorded the history of Timbuktu and its region under the rule of the Moroccan forces from 1591 onwards. The Timbuktu chronicle tradition appears to have spread far and wide over West Africa. In what is now the Republic of Ghana there has been a strong chronicling tradition, beginning with the *Kitāb Ghanjā* in the early eighteenth century. Following the Moroccan conquest of Timbuktu in 1591, many of the city’s scholars dispersed, and it is known that some went as far south as the Volta river basin. That region (called in Chapter 12 “The Greater Voltaic Region”) was also a meeting point for scholars from east and west. From the west came Juula scholars, from the time of the establishment of the trade route from Jenne, leading down to the town of Begho just north of the Akan forests. Others established themselves in towns of the northern Ivory Coast such as Bonduku, Buna, and Kong, and eventually in Ghanaian polities such as Wa and Gonja. From the east, in the late seventeenth century, Hausa merchants from what is now northern Nigeria began to pursue their trading activities in the Greater Voltaic basin, while in the late nineteenth century such activity brought in trader-scholars such as *al-ḥājj* ʿUmar b. Abī Bakr, originally from Kebbi, who settled and made his scholarly reputation in Salaga.

In a very broad sense, Arabic writings of Western Sudanic Africa may be classified under four headings: historical, pedagogical, devotional, and polemical. Historical writings help Muslim communities to establish and confirm their identities, a necessary exercise for those living in remote areas surrounded largely by non-Muslim peoples, but also valuable in terms of community solidarity for those dwelling in recognized centres of Islam, such as Timbuktu, Arawān, or Jenne. Only occasionally, in the twentieth century (and under the influence of European colonial administrators), do we find a broader, and what might be called more “secular”, approach to history. A notable example of this is the celebrated

Zuhūr al-basātīn of the Senegalese writer Mūsā Kamara (d. 1943 or 1945), a broad history of the lands and peoples of Futa Toro and its neighbors; some writings of *al-ḥājj* ʿUmar b. Abī Bakr of Kete-Krayke in Ghana (d. 1934) also fall into this category. He also wrote works in verse that are of historical significance, including an account of the 1892 civil war in Salaga, and commentaries on colonial intrusions into the Volta region. The historical writing tradition of what is now the north of the Republic of Ghana is very rich. As Bradford Martin once wrote: “If this material could be used for research it would contribute very greatly to a rewriting of the history of this region, which is so badly needed”.³³

Pedagogical writings arise from the need for students to have text books. Whilst texts from outside of West Africa circulated within the region, teaching shaykhs often abridged some of them, wrote commentaries on them, or versified them so as to make them easier for students to memorize. This was especially true in great educational centers such as Timbuktu, but is also characteristic of the Greater Voltaic region, where, no doubt, copies of texts from elsewhere were rather more difficult to obtain, due to the remoteness of the region from the trans-Saharan trade networks. Noteworthy among such teachers was *al-Ḥājj* Marḥabā (d. 1401/ 1981), who wrote treatises on aspects of the Arabic language, but who was also noteworthy for his writings on Muslim communities of the region.

Devotional writings are common throughout West Africa, written both in Arabic and in local languages, such as Fulfulde. Both al-Mukhtār al-Kuntī (d. 1811) and his son Muḥammad (d. 1241/ 1825-6) wrote a considerable number of prayers which have been preserved and recopied over the past two centuries. Al-Mukhtār also wrote a major work on devotion for the Prophet, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb fī 'l-ṣalāt ʿalā 'l-nabī al-ḥabīb*, which was commented on by his son, who himself wrote a collection of panegyrics of the Prophet, *al-Sitr al-dāʿim li'l-mudhnib al-hāʿim*. Poems in praise of the Prophet, and seeking his intercession are indeed a popular form of writing. Aḥmad Bamba (d. 1927), the Senegalese Sufi leader, wrote dozens of such poems, and these are recited by members of his *ṭarīqa* in chanting fashion rather like the singing of hymns in Protestant Christian communities. Paper copies of many of these are available in the form of market

³³“Arabic materials for Ghanaian history”, *Research Review* [Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana], ii/1(1966), 83.

editions reproduced in Dakar. In the other widespread Sufi *ṭarīqa* of the Senegambia region, the Tijāniyya, there is a considerable volume of writing, especially poetry, in praise of the originator of the *ṭarīqa*, Aḥmad al-Tijānī, and beseeching him to bless, and intercede on behalf of, his adherents. The most famous writer of such works was the Senegalese Tijānī leader Ibrāhīm Niasse (d. 1975), whose *al-Kibrīt al-aḥmar* is entirely made up of such poems. He also wrote and published a collection of six *dīwāns* totalling nearly 3,000 verses, but these were in praise of the Prophet Muḥammad. Ibrāhīm Niasse himself became an almost legendary figure in West Africa, and was regarded as a saint by many of his numerous followers. As a result, many writers in the region wrote poems honoring him.

As for polemical writing, that is mainly a feature of the rivalry between the Qādiriyya and the Tijāniyya *ṭarīqas*, which surfaces in the mid-nineteenth century, or, under the influence of Wahhābī teachings, attacks on Sufism as a whole, generally in the second half of the twentieth century, as the Saudi Arabian impact on Muslim Africa increased. In the nineteenth century the Kunta scholar Aḥmad al-Bakkāʿī (d. 1865) was a leading anti-Tijānī polemicist, not least because his authority over the Timbuktu region was challenged by the Tijānī conqueror *al-ḥājj* ʿUmar (d. 1864). Some of his sharpest conflict was with a Qādirī “convert” to the Tijāniyya, generally known as Yirkoy Talfī (or in Arabic [translation] Wadīʿat Allāh), whose strong response was to “make al-Bakkaʿī weep”—*Tabkiyat al-Bakkāʿī*. Aḥmad al-Bakkaʿī not only attacked local Tijānīs, but even entered into polemic with a Moroccan Tijānī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Akansūs (d. 1877), to whom he addressed the treatise *Fath al-Quddūs fī 'l-radd ʿalā Abī ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad Akansūs*, as a rebuttal of the latter’s *al-Jawāb al-muskit*. In the twentieth century a leading early figure in such polemics was ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Yūsuf al-Ifrīqī (d. 1957), a Malian scholar who studied in Saudi Arabia, and who wrote *al-Anwār al-Raḥmāniyya li-hidāyat al-firqa al-Tijāniyya*, an attack on the Tijāniyya, and encouragement to its adherents to abandon it. Even recently in Senegal there has been a sharp controversy over Sufism. Muḥammad Aḥmad Lo, a scholar with Saudi connections published his *Taqdīs al-ashkhāṣ fī 'l-fikr al-sūfī* in Riyāḍ in 1996, to which Shaykh Tijān Gaye wrote as a response, *Kitāb al-taqdīs bayn al-talbīs wa'l-tadlīs wa'l-tadnīs*. Most recently (1997)

Muḥammad Aḥmad Lo published (evidently in Saudi Arabia) his doctoral thesis with the title *Jināyat al-ta'wīl al-fāsīd 'alā 'l-[°]aqīda al-Islāmiyya* which constitutes an attack on many interpretations of Islam, including both Twelver and Ismā'īlī Shī'ism, and Islamic philosophers, and culminates with an attack on Sufism. Western Sudanic Africa is not, of course, the only locus of such polemics. Anti-Sufi writing and responses thereto are also to be found in Central Sudanic Africa, specifically Nigeria (see *ALA II*, chapter 13).

In addition to the abundant Islamic literature written in Arabic in Western Sudanic Africa, there are also Islamic literatures in African languages. The best known of these (and perhaps the most abundant) is the Fulfulde literature of Futa Jallon in Guinea (see Chapter 10). Fulfulde was also written in Futa Toro in Senegal, but little is known of it other than the famous *qaṣīda* of Muḥammad 'Alī Cam (or Mohammadou Aliou Tyam), a supporter of *al-ḥājj* 'Umar, whose poem is about the latter's life and work. In Senegal there is also writing in Wolof, using the Arabic script (see, for example Serigne Mūsā Ka), but it has not been possible to incorporate much of that literature into the present volume. In Mali the Songhay language has also been written in Arabic characters, and some Songhay devotional poems are preserved in the Centre Ahmad Baba in Timbuktu, but again, it has not been possible to list such material. Finally, it must be pointed out that some Muslim writers of the twentieth century have composed works in French, or translated some of their Arabic writings into French. Noteworthy among such writers is Sa'd b. 'Umar b. Sa'id Jeliya (known as Saad Oumar Touré), director of a school in Segou, who has written five works in French as well as twenty-one in Arabic. The Senegalese founder of the Union Culturelle Muslumane, Cheikh Touré (b. 1925) has written mainly in French - eight books and some twenty articles. The practice of writing in English in an anglophone country such as Ghana appears to be less common. The only clear example is a bi-lingual work by Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Kāmil (b. 1936), a disciple of Aḥmad Bābah al-Wā'iz, and director of the school he founded in Kumase. That work is his *Bayān niṣāb al-zakāt al-ḥawlī li'l-dhahab wa-qīmat rub[°] al-dīnār al-shar[°]ī fī 'umlat sīdī al-ghānī. Notes on Zakat and Dowry in Islam*, a bi-lingual publication on the minimum amount of capital upon which *zakāt* is to be paid, calculated in Ghanaian cedis, and the lawful minimum dowry payment in cedis.

The future may well see an increase in the amount of bi-lingual Islamic literature in both francophone and anglophone countries, as the *madrassa* system continues to expand. More and more Islamic schools are being established, many of them combining traditional Islamic teaching in Arabic with elements of “Western” disciplines, taught in either French or English. What will be interesting will be to see to what extent more Islamic literature is written and published in African languages—a phenomenon that certainly grew during colonial rule in Guinea. Some authors, however, even use traditional Arabic verse styles to deal with contemporary political (even non-Muslim) figures, or to comment on modern issues. Prominent among these is the Senegalese scholar and Arabic schools inspector Shaykh Tijān Gaye, who has written poems about President Léopold Senghor and Nelson Mandela, and another verse work on Islam and humanitarian organisations.

*MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES
FOR WEST AFRICA*

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- Algiers (BH) Bibliothèque Nationale d'Alger, Fonds Ben Hamouda.
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- IHAAA
Jos Institut d'Histoire, d' Art et d'Archéologie Africaines, Abi Nigerian National Museum, Jos. See Aida S. Arif & Ahm Abu Hakima, *Descriptive Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts Nigeria: Jos Museum and Lugard Hall Library, Kaduna*. London: Luzac & Co., 1965.
- Kaduna (NA) National Archives of Nigeria, Kaduna. See Bābā Yūnus Muḥammad, *Fihris Makhṭūṭāt Dār al-Wathā'iq al-Qawm al-Nayjīriyya bi-Kādūnā, al-Juz' al-Awwal*, ed. John O. Hunwick. London: Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1995; Last (1966) and (1967b) and registers *in situ*.
- Kaolack Maktabat al-ḥājj Ibrāhīm Niyās. See Ousmane Kane, *Fihris makhṭūṭāt al-shaykh Mor Mbāy Sīsī wa-maktabat al-ḥājj. Sī wa-maktabat al-shaykh Ibrāhīm Niyās fī Sinighāl*. London: Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1997.
- Legon Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon. Osmanu Eshaka Boyo, Thomas Hodgkin & Ivor Wilks, *List of Arabic Works from Ghana*, Legon: Institute of African Studies, 1962.
Accession lists in Martin (1966), and K.O. Odoom & J. H. (1965), (1967), (1968.) A duplicate xerographed set of this collection may be consulted at the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, North-western University, Evanston, IL.
- London (BL) British Library, London. For works by African authors, see index *in situ*.
- London (SOAS) See Adam Gacek, *Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*. London: SOAS, 1981.
- MAMMP Malian Arabic Manuscript Microfilming Project. Microfilm collection held at the Sterling Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT. Copy in CAMP [Collective Africana Microfilm Project].

- Marrakesh See al-Şiddīq b. al-°Arabī, *Fihris makḥṭūṭāt khizānat Yūsūf Marrākesḥ*, Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1414/1994.
- Miknās (JK) Maktabat al-Jāmi° al-Kabīr. See Dilayru “Qā°ima awwali °l-makḥṭūṭāt min mu°allafāt al-ashiqqā° al-Mūritāniyyīn v jumla min al-Ifrīqiyyīn al-ukhar fī °l-maktabā al-maghribi Communication presented to the ALECSO conference on Arabic MSS in Africa, Nouakchott.(1977).
- Miknās (KhA) al-Khizāna al-°amma. See Dilayru (1977).
- Niamey Institut de Recherche en Sciences Humaines, Niamey. Cyclostyled list *in situ*. See also Kani A new source on the literary activity of the °ulamā° of the Central and Westerr Sudan: the Niamey collection”, *BIFHA*, ix/x, (1984),41-8
- NU/Brenner Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, Xerox copies of / books published in Africa, from Louis Brenner’s collectio
- NU/Falke Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, °Umar Falke Col of the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies. Data base catalogue *in situ*.
- NU/Hiskett Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, Mervyn Hiskett I Collection of the Melville J. Herskovits Library of Africa Studies.
- NU/Hunwick Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, John O. Hunwick Collection of the Melville J. Herskovits Library of Africa Studies. Data base catalogue *in situ*.
- NU/Paden Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, John Naber Pade Collection of the Melville J. Herskovits Library of Africa Studies. Data base catalogue *in situ*. See also E. Saad in *E in Africa*, vii, 1980, 369-72
- NU/Wilks FN Ivor G. Wilks, Field Notes, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University. Copies of these notes may also be consulted at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon and at the Rhodes House Library, Oxford, U. K.
- Paris (BI) Bibliothèque de l’Institut de France, Paris. See H.F.C. Sn

- "Source material for the history of the Western Sudan", *J. i/3*, (1959), 238-47. and Hunwick & Gwarzo, "Another look at the De Gironcourt papers", *RBCAD*, iii, 2 (1967), 74-99.
- Paris (BN) Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; MSS orientales. See Nour Ghali, Mohammed Mahibou and Louis Brenner, *Inventaire de la Bibliothèque 'Umarienne de Ségou*. Paris: Editions. du CNRS, 1985 (Fontes Historiae Africanae, Subsidia Bibliographica, II). See also Vajda "Contribution à la connaissance de la littérature arabe en Afrique occidentale", *Soc. Africanistes*, x, (1950), 229-37. H.F.C. Smith, "Arab manuscript material bearing on the history of the Western Sudan: the archives of Segou", *Suppl. Bull. of News* (Historical Society of Nigeria), iv/2. (1959), Sauvan *et al.*, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes. Index (n. 6836-7214)*. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale., (1987).
- Paris (MAAO) Musée des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie. See Jilali Adnani, "Inventaire des manuscrits du Fonds Archival de la Bibliothèque du Musée National des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie", *Islam et Sociétés au Sud du Sahara*, 14-15 (2000-2001), 153-75.
- Rabat (AF) Khizānat Mu'assasat 'Allāl al-Fāsī. See 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Arabī al-Ḥarīshī, *al-Fihris al-mūjiz li-makḥṭūṭāt Mu'assasat 'Allāl al-Fāsī*, Rabat.
- Rabat (KhA) 3ème série (1954-1957), *Fihris al-makḥṭūṭāt al-'arabiyya mahfūza fī 'l-khizāna al-'amma li'l-kutb wa'l-wathā'iq*, v Rabat: M. al-Tūmī, 1973; Vol. 5, ed. Ṣāliḥ al-Tādīlī & Sa Murābiṭī, al-Ribāṭ: Manshūrāt al-Khizāna al-'amma li'l-wathā'iq, 1997. Also card indexes *in situ*.
- Rabat (KhH) Al-Khizāna al-Ḥasaniyya [Bibliothèque Royale]. See Muḥammad al-'Arbī al-Khaṭṭābī, *Fahāris al-khizāna al-malikiyya/Catalogues of Al-Hassania Library*. 6 vols., Rabat, 1980-7.

- Rabat (MDI) Ma'had al-Dirāsāt al-Ifrīqiyya, Jāmi'at Muḥammad al-Kl (Institut des Etudes Africaines, Université Mohammed V) published catalogue.
- Rabat (Unesco) *Liste de manuscrits selectionés parmi ceux qui sont conse la Bibliothèque Générale et Archives du Maroc, reprodui l'Unité Mobile de Microfilm de l'Unesco*. Rabat: Mission l'Unesco, 1962.
- Salé See Muḥammad Ḥajjī, *Fihris al-khizāna al-ilmīyya al-Ṣubayḥiyya bi-Salā/Catalog of Subaiheyya Library in Sal Kuwait: ALECSO, 1406/1985*.
- Shinqīt Private libraries of Ahl Habut, Ahl Aḥmad Sharīf, Ahl Ḥāmāni, Ahl 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Ahl Ludā', and Ahl al-Sal Aḥmad w. Muḥammad Yaḥyā, *Fihris makhṭūṭāt Shinqīt w Wādān*, ed. Ulrich Rebstock. London: al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1997.
- Tamgrout Library of the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya, Tamgrout. See Muḥamn Mannūnī, *Dalīl makhṭūṭāt Dār al-Kutub al-Nāṣiriyya bi-Tamgrūt*, Rabat.
- Timbuktu (CEDRAB) Centre de Documentation et Recherche Ahmad Baba, Timbuktu. See *Fihris makhṭūṭāt markaz Aḥmad Bābā li 'i tawḥīq wa'l-buḥūth al-ta'rikhiyya bi-Tinbuktu*. London: Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation. Vol. I, ed. Sīdī 'Um 'Alī, 1995. Vol. II-V, ed. Librarians of the Centre, 1997-9
- Timbuktu (MMHT) Maktabat Mamma Ḥaydara al-Tidhkāriyya. See *Catalogu Manuscripts in Mamma Haidara Library*, 3 vols., prepared Abdelkader Mamma Haidara, edited by Ayman Fu'ād Sa London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1481/20
- Tiṭwān (KhA) Al-Khizāna al-Āmma, Tiṭwān [Biblioteca General de Te See *Fihris al-makhṭūṭāt - Khizānat Tiṭwān*, Tetuan, 1981.
- Tiṭwān (JK) Maktabat al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr, Tiṭwān [Bibliothèque de la G Mosquée, Tetuan]. See Dilayru (1977).
- Tivaouane (Sy) Maktabat al-ḥājj Mālik Sy. See Ousmane Kane, *Fihris makhṭūṭāt al-shaykh Mor Mbāy Sīsī wa-maktabat al-ḥājj*.

- Sī wa-maktabat al-shaykh Ibrāhīm Niyās fī Sinighāl*. London: al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1997.
- Tunis (BN) Bibliothèque Nationale, Tunis/Dār al-Kutub al-Qawmiyya. *al-Fihris al-‘āmm li’l-makhtūṭāt*, ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥafīz Maṣṣūf. Tunis: al-Ma‘had al-Qawmī li’l-Āthār, 1975.
- Tunis (MA) Maktabat al-‘Abdaliyya. See *Barnāmaj al-Maktaba al-‘Abdaliyya*. 4 vols., Tunis, 1908-11.
- Tunis (MZ) Bibliothèque de la Mosquée de Zeitouna, Tunis.
- Wādān Private libraries of Ahl Muḥammad b. al-Ḥājǰ, Ahl al-Kitāb, Ahl Dāhī, Ahl ‘Īdī, Ahl Yāya Būya, and Ahl Aḥmad Sharīf. See Aḥmad w. Muḥammad Yaḥyā, *Fihris makhtūṭāt Shinqūt wa Wādān*, ed. Ulrich Rebstock. London: al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1997.
- WORLD *World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts*, ed. Geoffrey Rope. 19 vols. London: Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1997.
- SURVEY See Leon Nemoy, *Arabic Manuscripts in the Yale University Library*. New Haven, 1965 (*Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences*, xl, Dec. 1956, 1-273).
- Yale
- Zaria Northern History Research Scheme, Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. See ‘Uthmān al-Bīlī, *Inventory of Arabic Manuscripts of the Northern History Research Scheme*. Khartoum: Khartoum University Press, 1984; *Second Interim Report, Zaria, 1967*, *Third Interim Report, Zaria, 1975*, *Fourth Interim Report, Zaria, 1977*, *Fifth Interim Report, Zaria, 1977*, *Sixth Interim Report, Zaria, 1987*; and card index *in situ*.

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