

A catalogue of  
selected manuscripts  
from the exhibition

Timbuktu  
Script &  
Scholarship

2008



Timbuktu  
Script &  
Scholarship

Edited by Lalou Meltzer, Lindsay Hooper and Gerald Klinghardt



*'The rich king of Timbuktu has  
many plates and sceptres of gold...  
he keeps a magnificent and well furnished  
court... There are numerous doctors, judges,  
scholars, priests – and here are  
brought manuscript books from Barbary  
which are sold at greater profit than  
any other merchandise'*

Leo Africanus, 16th century traveller

# CONTENTS

- 7 Acknowledgements
- 8 Message from the President of South Africa *Thabo Mbeki*
- 9 Message from the President of Mali *Amadou Toumani Touré*
- 10 Foreword *Professor H.C. Jatti Bredekamp, CEO of Iziko Museums of Cape Town*
- 13 Introduction: Travelling Timbuktu books *Dr Shamil Jeppie*
- 21 Ahmad Baba of Timbuktu (1556–1627) : Introduction to his life and works  
*Mahmoud Zouber, translated by Susana Molins Lliterate*
- 33 Conservation in the Extreme: Preserving the manuscripts of Timbuktu *Mary Minicka*
- 46 The manuscripts, with notes by *Shahid Mathee, Dr Shamil Jeppie, Lindsay Hooper,*  
*Dr Gerald Klinghardt and Lalou Meltzer*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The exhibition, *Timbuktu Script & Scholarship*, and this catalogue arise from the South African-Mali project, which was initiated in 2003 by President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and is the first cultural project of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The catalogue draws on the shared expertise of the Timbuktu Exhibition Project team, most especially Dr Shamil Jeppie and Shahid Mathee of the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Cape Town; Alexio Motsi of the National Archives of South Africa, Mary Minicka of the Western Cape Archives and the Director and members of the Iziko Social History Collections Department, Lalou Meltzer, Lindsay Hooper, Dr Gerald Klinghardt, Esther Esmiol and June Hosford.

The following people are also gratefully acknowledged for their assistance in the preparation of the catalogue: Naefa Khan and Susana Molins Lliterase, postgraduate students in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Cape Town; and Riason Naidoo, Project Co-ordinator of the South Africa-Mali project (Timbuktu Manuscripts).

The support of the CEO of Iziko Museums of Cape, Professor H.C. Jatti Bredekamp, and the Executive Director of Core Functions, Dr Patricia Davison, is acknowledged with appreciation.

We thank the Department of Arts and Culture, and in particular the Minister of Arts and Culture, Dr Pallo Jordan, and Director-General Themba Wakashe. Iziko is privileged to have been tasked by the Department to produce this important catalogue and exhibition which will open at Iziko and then travel to five other museums and galleries. The facilitating role of the National Archivist, Dr Graham Dominy, is also acknowledged.

The exhibition would not have been possible without the support of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Mali and the Director-General of the Ahmed Baba Institute, Dr Mohamed Dicko. We thank them for allowing us to bring these rare manuscripts to South Africa so that thousands of South Africans may encounter them and understand their significant contribution to the cultural heritage of Africa.

Photographs of manuscripts and conservation procedures were supplied courtesy of the Timbuktu Manuscripts Project. Photographs of Timbuktu provided by Iziko Museums (L. Hooper and H.C. Bredekamp), and the Timbuktu Manuscripts Project.



*Members of the South Africa–Mali Project team with staff of the Ahmed Baba Institute in Timbuktu.*

## MESSAGE

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

*Thabo Mbeki*

The campaign to call attention to the long-established written heritage of Timbuktu is underlined by this exhibition of manuscripts. When we first saw the manuscripts in Timbuktu in 2001, their complexity and beauty convinced us of the need to conserve them for posterity. While we had known of the great tradition of learning of Timbuktu, it was a revelation to experience first-hand such a rich and distinctive range of writing.

The governments of South Africa and Mali initiated a collaborative programme to conserve the important collection of manuscripts held at the Ahmed Baba Institute in Timbuktu, and we in South Africa took the lead in the visionary project to build a new library and archives building for the Ahmed Baba Institute, in Timbuktu, to be presented to the people of Mali by the people of South Africa. It has proven a unique partnership and a profound learning experience for all participants, particularly as this has been adopted as NEPAD's first cultural project. Since the initiative began some five years ago, steady progress has been made. This exhibition, therefore, is an expression of the broader programme and commitment to conserve the manuscript heritage of Timbuktu.

As the exhibition travels through major South African cities, visitors will be given the opportunity to view a diversity of manuscripts from Timbuktu. Various kinds of writing materials and subjects are included, revealing a multi-faceted history of reading and writing in Africa. The manuscripts point to a lively and changing intellectual environment in and around Timbuktu and express an African intellectual engagement with a larger world of ideas. An exhibition of this nature in South Africa is, therefore, another reminder of our connection with the rest of the African continent. Only if we are confident in our identity as Africans, can we claim a common humanity. In strikingly beautiful ways, both simple and complex, this exhibition of manuscripts from Timbuktu reminds us of our participation in a collective human endeavour to engage creatively with the world around us.

My thanks and special appreciation goes to the President of Mali and his government for the generous spirit of co-operation shown throughout the project.



## MESSAGE

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALI

*Amadou Toumani Touré*

A remarkable intellectual heritage was constituted in Africa over the past millennium, as demonstrated by the wealth of manuscripts in Arabic and in African languages written in Arabic script.

One of the regions characterised by this flourishing intellectual activity is Timbuktu, situated along the northernmost bend of the Niger River, in Mali. Starting from the 14th century, Timbuktu became a renowned centre of Islamic studies. Not only were books brought there, but local scholars also wrote their own works in order to teach the sciences and literature and to satisfy the demand for scholarly books in areas such as law, Koranic studies, the traditions of the Prophet, theology, and the Arabic language.

The erudition of these wise elders fostered the production of an original and varied body of important works in mathematics, esoteric arts and practices, medicine, poetry and music, as well as astronomy, and reflections on the resolution of community and ethnic conflicts. The existence of this heritage, which spread from the north to south, and from the east to west of the continent, clearly refutes the prejudices and assertions that Africa is a continent of oral traditions only.

The treasure that has been accumulated over time is, however, under threat today. Each year, an increasing number of documents deteriorate and become illegible. This common heritage of humanity is thus in danger of being irretrievably lost if firm action is not taken to ensure its future.

Mali is grateful to South Africa for its commitment to preserving the Timbuktu manuscripts. Through this project to conserve the manuscripts of the Ahmed Baba Institute and reconstruct its library, South Africans and Malians are together giving meaning to the concept of African solidarity.

## FOREWORD

PROFESSOR H.C. JATTI BREDEKAMP  
*CEO Iziko Museums of Cape Town, South Africa*

Iziko Museums of Cape Town is pleased to host the exhibition *Timbuktu Script & Scholarship* in collaboration with the national Department of Arts and Culture and the Ahmed Baba Institute for Higher Learning and Islamic Research in Timbuktu, Mali. The exhibition and accompanying catalogue create an opportunity for South Africans to share in the vision of reclaiming the scholarship and written legacy of Africa.

The exhibition arises from the South Africa-Mali Project launched by President Mbeki on Africa Day in 2003. The project aims to ensure the preservation of the Timbuktu manuscripts, by providing training in professional conservation methods and assistance in the construction of a new library to house the collection of the Ahmed Baba Institute in Timbuktu. The manuscripts form a most significant but relatively unknown part of the cultural heritage of Africa. The high point of the manuscript tradition in Timbuktu was reached during the 15th and 16th centuries, though Timbuktu remained an inspirational centre of scholarship until the early 20th century. Written in Arabic script on paper, the manuscripts reveal African scholarship in such areas as theology, law, medicine, astronomy and commerce. Historical research on the manuscripts has provided insight into the value placed by African people on scholarship and learning long before the impact of European colonization. It is in the preservation of this precious record that the National Archives of South Africa is assisting Mali.

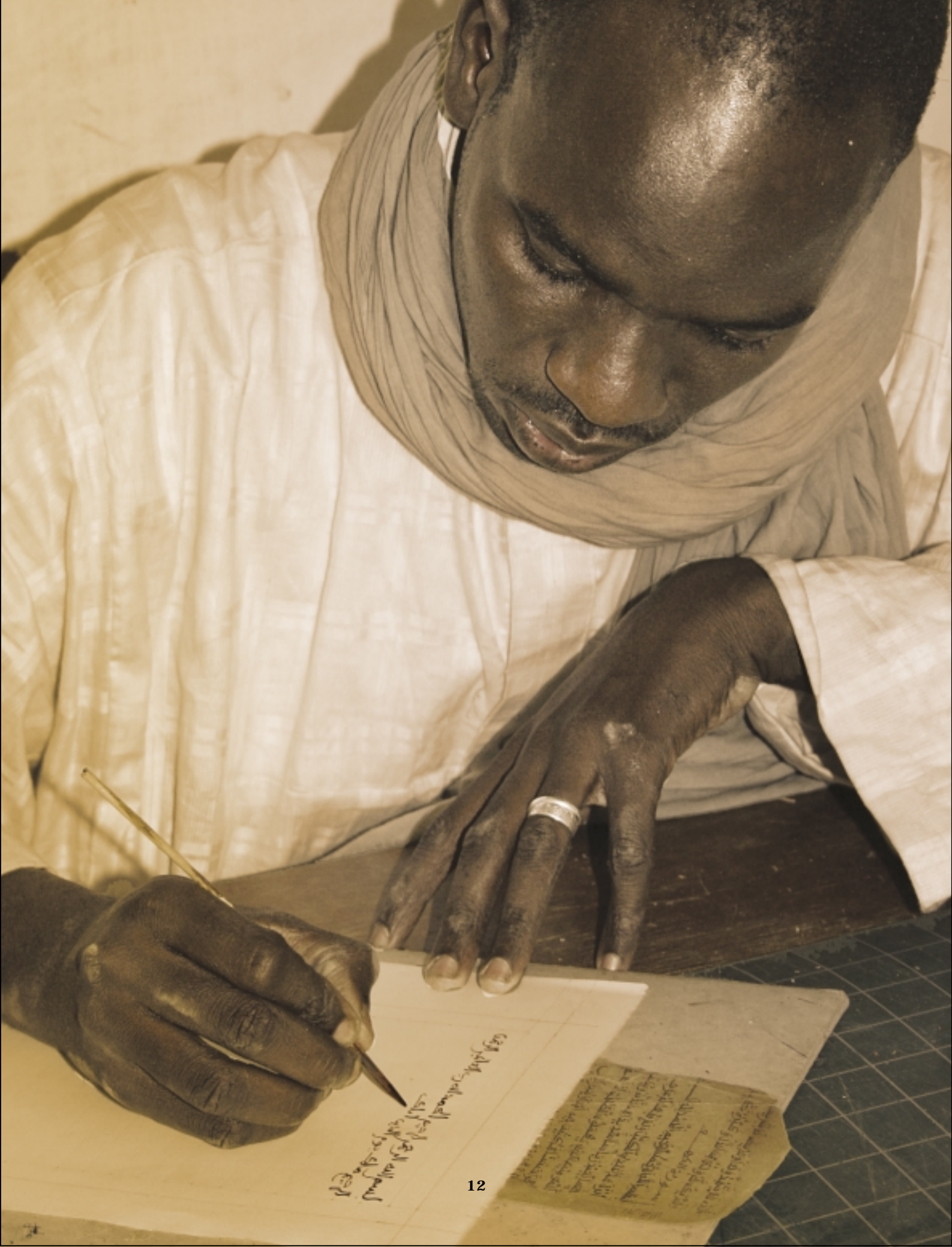
Iziko Museums of Cape Town is honoured to make the manuscripts more widely known in South Africa. The exhibition, *Timbuktu Script & Scholarship*, presents these manuscripts in an African historical and cultural context, while at the same time celebrating their universal aesthetic value as shown in the various styles of calligraphy, tooled leather covers and gilded illuminations that decorate certain manuscripts.



From left to right: Dr Yaya Coulibaly; Professor Jatti Bredekamp (CEO, Iziko Museums of Cape Town); Professor Amadou Touré (Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research); and Dr Graham Dominy (National Archivist).

After its run in Cape Town, the exhibition, curated by the Social History Collections Department of Iziko, will travel to Kimberley, Durban, Bloemfontein, Pretoria and Johannesburg. Care has been taken to balance the conservation needs of the fragile manuscripts with the special opportunity to share them with diverse South African audiences. In bringing *Timbuktu Script & Scholarship* to South Africa we hope that the ancient city of Timbuktu, and its tradition of learning, will become a contemporary inspiration to explore the history and cultural heritage of the African continent.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Department of Arts and Culture for their assistance in bringing the manuscripts to South Africa and, above all, the government of Mali, and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in particular, for releasing their precious heritage and allowing the manuscripts to travel to South Africa.



## INTRODUCTION:

# Travelling Timbuktu books

SHAMIL JEPPIE

*Department of Historical Studies*

*University of Cape Town, South Africa*

This catalogue accompanies an exhibition of 40 manuscripts from the Ahmed Baba Institute, one of several important manuscript libraries in Timbuktu. The aim of the project is to convey a sense of the written culture of the Timbuktu region. Through this modest selection of manuscripts, we hope to give an impression of the complexity and richness of the variety of calligraphic styles, the composition and production of manuscripts, and the practices of reading. The manuscripts, i.e. handwritten books, short tracts, and letters, have travelled from West Africa to the Western Cape and to other centres in South Africa, after a long process of discussion about where and how to exhibit them. Probably the most important aspect of the debate between the various specialists involved was which manuscripts to display. They in fact form but a tiny fraction of a massive corpus of manuscript books and tracts in Timbuktu and it took us a long time to decide on a manageable number to exhibit. An essay by Mary Minicka in this catalogue reflects on some of the conservation issues that had to be taken into consideration. The extremely fragile condition of a great percentage of the Timbuktu manuscripts determined very largely what we were able to exhibit. Great care and restraint had to be exercised so that in the process of transporting and exhibiting the manuscripts, they did not deteriorate further. The conservation question is at the heart of our concerns with Timbuktu for, if we are to understand more fully the 'written worlds' of that region, we will need to have better access to the manuscripts; and this is dependent on their care and conservation. We need to talk and write more about the Timbuktu archives, and to show off some of the fascinating collections, although many of these remain inaccessible to us for purposes of research or for exhibition.

The manuscript books on this exhibition have travelled very far across the length of the continent, in order for us to take pleasure in the long-established African tradition of Islamic scholarship and book production. Since the start of the South Africa-Mali Project on the Timbuktu manuscripts, we have reiterated that we should place the African written record firmly beside the oral traditions of the continent; the latter have for so long been seen as the

*Boubar Sadeck, a Timbuktu calligrapher, copying a document.*



*Street in Timbuktu.*

major means of engaging with the past, while the former was hardly recognized. These travelling books from Timbuktu also remind us to look at the manuscript books as artifacts with aesthetic value and individual histories that need to be grounded in a more general 'history of the book'. One need not be an expert in Islamic Africa or book history to be fascinated by these manuscripts as expressions of both scholarship and the art of the book.

While neither of these remains intact today in West Africa, they have not completely disappeared. There are still traces of both, often in transformed and new configurations of learning and book production; the impact of printing and more recently the advent of the computer having had a major impact on knowledge transmission. The 'printing revolution' arrived in West Africa with French colonial rule in the 19th century and, deep in the interior where Timbuktu is located, only much later. Well into the 20th century local books and tracts continued to be written in indigenous versions of Arabic calligraphy, which West African scholars named after the town or locale in which they were practised. With the importation in the colonial period of industrially-produced paper for administrative use and for schools, this paper also became accessible for copying older manuscripts, originally written on handmade paper. The ready availability of paper meant that texts could be reproduced by hand at a faster rate as their production was not dependent on the vagaries of the paper trade across the Sahara. During the colonial age of print, therefore, the manuscript found another life on mass-produced paper made without the care and skill of the craftsman. In the various archives of Timbuktu we find numerous texts often in beautiful and careful handwriting copied onto ruled sheets, scraps of paper from an old school-book, the ordinary French *bloc*, with a content going back decades, if not centuries earlier.

Today, one can find only one or two scholars in Timbuktu who still write out their works in the Sudanic Arabic script, distinctive of the region, and there are about the same number of persons who could be trusted to act as copyists. The 'age of the manuscript' has encountered the 'age of mechanical reproduction'. As a result of the process of photocopying, a book can now travel or circulate with even greater ease.

It is this question of the circulation of books in the Sahel and Mediterranean that is worth considering. These days Timbuktu's manuscripts travel to Bamako, the capital of Mali, for exhibition and only on a few occasions have they left the country; this extended visit to South Africa being one such rare case. The recent re-discovery of the literary heritage of Timbuktu has attracted many visitors, but the various custodians of the archives have been appropriately cautious and conservative in making their patrimony available for travel. However, the custodians of Timbuktu's literary heritage are keepers of what were once highly mobile objects; the archives there being in fact huge repositories of travelling books. This easy movement had

to be stopped, out of necessity, of course. Yet, in many ways, the manuscripts reflect a tradition of learning in which texts travelled as much as scholars did, extensively and very regularly. Judging by the size of the manuscripts, they were mostly easy to transport. They were circulated between writers, were borrowed, were copied, were preserved and were moved about the town and far beyond, while works authored elsewhere, and sometimes in very distant locations, were brought to Timbuktu. These works on exhibition so distant from their current home have histories of movement inscribed on them through space and time.

We do not have substantial data on each of the 40 items selected. We have sufficient, however, to outline the most basic information: authorship in some cases, dating in other cases, titles in most cases, and of course dimensions, such as size and number of folios. This is information that we have come to assume is significant, but there were different attitudes to such matters in Timbuktu. Anonymity was not a problem for many authors. Individuals as distinctive producers of knowledge, were not valued in the way they are today. Similarly, the date of composition of a work did not always matter. Such data is important to historians today, but in Timbuktu they were of less consequence. There were no annual literary awards, neither was copyright exercised. We have, therefore, limited individual history of the composition, authorship, copying, ownership and circulation of the works. These are general considerations to bear in mind as we look at the material.

The *Tarikh al-Sudan* is a famous chronicle of the Sahel, probably the most famous of all. It was written by 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sādi, a scholar who moved around in the region but lived a part of his life in Timbuktu. The history of the production and circulation of the *Tarikh* is not clear. But we do know that copies were made and circulated in the region. In the 19th century the German

*On the outskirts of Timbuktu.*



traveller Heinrich Barth found a copy in Timbuktu and in the early 20th century Octave Houdas edited one, translated it into French and published the first printed edition, while in 1998 an English translation was prepared by John Hunwick. We have a copy of the *Tarikh* in this exhibition. This kind of grand chronicling of the past was not a frequent practice in the region; there were numerous smaller histories also called *tarikh*, but such large-scale chronicles were exceptions and rightly celebrated as a feat of composition. The history narrated is interesting and important, but equally significant is the fact that the manuscript took a considerable number of sheets of paper – all imported from Europe – to complete it; as well as locally-made ink, and the other basic technologies required for the production of a handwritten book. This *Tarikh* is, therefore, a very significant expression of the written culture of Timbuktu and an important reflection of the uses to which paper and book production were put in the region. Furthermore, it is an example of the inherently collective nature of such literary production. It can be attributed to a single author but we must take into account in turn his sources, oral and textual; the copyists since there is more than one copy of the work; and also bring into the discussion the paper merchants who transported the paper over long distances to the region, the ink producers, and the leather craftsmen who made the enclosures. A book the size of the *Tarikh* was an expensive object. And a perfectly reasonable question to ask is whether its production was supported by the wealthier inhabitants of the town? We know who wrote this work but what do we know about its reception, about its readers, and about how it was read? This is an important issue to which we shall return.

A genre of writing that was highly valued in Timbuktu was what we now call religious prose and poetry. The sacred scripture, *al-Qur'an*, and collections of the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad and other books composed to educate believers and instill in them a profound sense of the divine and pious conduct, are plentiful in the Timbuktu archives. The diversity of titles may not be striking to a specialist in this field, but what is striking is the number of copies of individual texts. Copies of works from within the Maliki school of Islamic law are particularly numerous, such as the *Risala* of Ibn Abi Zayd. There are multiple copies of such works from later periods of classical scholarship, although the Qur'an and canonical collections of *hadith* (traditions or sayings attributed to the Prophet), make a less frequent appearance, according to the available catalogues. This may seem strange but is also understandable. In the case of the Qur'an it is possible that such a great value was placed on its calligraphic reproduction that writing out its 6 000 or so verses was a task not to be taken on easily and cheaply, given its sacred character. So 'The Book' or 'The Reading', as *al-qur'an*, translates, was rarely produced locally. We have two copies in this exhibition and it is clear that they were works in which much was invested. It is also possible that the sacred book was kept alive through its recitation, in part or whole, from memory, for it is a book from which is read every day, and in one month of the Islamic calendar, Ramadan, is read in its entirety; a practice that may be undertaken, individually or collectively, at any other time of the year as well.



A work that was highly valued was a biography of the Prophet Muhammad produced by the 12th century North African scholar, Qadi Iyad. This is not a standard prose biography based on historical sources, but a sacred biography in a poetic metre. It was not meant for silent reading to learn facts about the revered figure of the Prophet, but for recitation to achieve spiritual fulfillment. We have a copy of his *al-Shifa* on exhibition. According to the catalogues of manuscripts in Timbuktu, there are multiple copies of this text in the libraries there. It would appear that after the Qur'an, this was the most widely read, or rather, recited work. But as in the case of the Qur'an, we cannot say with certainty what mode of reading was employed for the *Shifa*: was it aloud and in public, or silently and privately? It would be more appropriate to say that they were recited texts; they were not read or studied, or copied and circulated in the way other books were. Furthermore, they also may not have travelled around as often. The *Shifa* was recited and at some point in the past it became a local convention for the whole work to be 'performed', at least in parts of Timbuktu, during Ramadan. This entailed a reading in which the Arabic original was recited by a scholar and a translation followed, usually in the local Songhay dialect. The congregation would participate with salutations and other exclamations at certain points in the reading and recitation.

Scattered among the Timbuktu manuscripts are texts dealing with astronomy and other scientific subjects. These usually have impressive drawings and are composed in more than one colour. But they are, like most science prose, often very complicated and hard to read. Based on our present knowledge, they appear to be mostly copies of texts originally written outside of West Africa and are often the work of famous mediaeval authors. Related to this are texts on medicine by local and foreign authors. Astronomy and medicine were regarded as legitimate disciplines but far more controversial, and even classified by some scholars as illegitimate, was the practice of astrology and numerology. Yet, often astronomy and astrology were covered in the same text. There were of course practical and religious benefits in writing about science. Astrology had value for an individual and satisfied a curiosity about an individual's past, present and future; but such knowledge, it was argued, could also be put to negative uses. Some scholars therefore prohibited its practice. Finding the correct direction to Mecca – so vital in a community devoted to praying towards of the holy city of Mecca – could be done through recourse to astronomical knowledge. The interesting question is not how these texts arrived in Timbuktu in the first place, but why they were copied, read and circulated there. Finding the correct direction for prayer was but one reason. What the presence of these texts point to, is that members of the literate elite in Timbuktu were concerned with scientific problems sometimes as inherently interesting and also as having practical relevance.

If we were to construct a continuum from 'high' to 'low' and locate the manuscripts on it, then using paper and reed pen to ponder the wonders of nature, or perhaps speculate on the future of a young woman or man, would be on the high end, and an assortment of other tracts would come lower down. Among the latter would be the text, which is partly in the form of a



*The new Ahmed Baba library building under construction.*

didactic poem, discussing the consumption of tobacco. The context is the mid-19th century debate in the state of Masina about the permissibility of consuming tobacco. Other smaller texts address quotidian issues and yet others are polemics between supporters of opposing political positions.

Another genre of writing which combines serious scholarship and weighty problems but also very often quotidian issues, is the *fatwa* genre; and the Timbuktu libraries have a substantial number of these texts. Scholars wrote books and polemics, but also had to work on the worldly matters of the day and become involved with the women and men of the region. The *fatwa* is a legal response or opinion of a respected scholar learned in Islamic law. He responded to all sorts of questions directed to him for a legal resolution. The *fatwas* in the Timbuktu libraries are very largely of local or regional provenance and cover questions of family law and commercial law. These are not items that travelled very far. Thus they give us a good sense of the issues that were important to individuals and families and at certain controversial moments required a legal opinion. Alternative opinions on the issue were often sought. How, in practical terms, was a Timbuktu *fatwa* composed? A *fatwa* text consists of a statement of the problem in fairly succinct terms; personal details are not usually supplied. After this follows a detailed discussion based on well-known legal works and the opinion of the scholar. In writing his *fatwa* the scholar therefore had to bring to the text his record of the oral transmission of the problem presented to him. He then had to consult the various works of which he may or may not have had copies. If he did not own one he would have to visit another scholar to borrow it or a copy, or read it at a colleague's home or in a mosque where he could discuss the problem with learned colleagues. The *fatwa* text is therefore a rich document of local history with multiple texts interpreted and coming together in response to a question. It is unclear whether copies were made of *fatwas*. Was a copy

handed to the various parties involved in the conflict? Did other scholars circulate copies and critique an opinion? It does appear as if *fatwas* were not simply accepted for there are cases in the archives in Timbuktu of different *fatwas* addressing the same problem.

These are but a few notes on the types of works selected for this exhibition. The 40 texts provide us with an opportunity to ask many questions about the history of the book in Africa. Before the age of European colonization, there had been a long history of book production, consumption and circulation in West Africa. These processes were only in some respects reflections of the world of the book in, say, Cairo or Mecca, or nearby Fez; they were also local and regional, a unique expression of the art of the book in West Africa. As mentioned, there remains another interesting set of questions regarding the practices of reading and writing. Was reading silent or collective? Was writing done privately at home or more publicly such as at a mosque? When were the ideal times for reading and writing? Finally, there are questions about the archive and library as presently constituted in Timbuktu, in relation for instance to the ways in which libraries were organized at various points in Timbuktu's manuscript age. The thousands of manuscripts in Timbuktu today help us to imagine another era of scholarship with very different styles of working with books. The manuscripts serve to bring to the fore differences and commonalities relative to our own time, and inspire us to reflect on the world of ideas that circulated in and around Timbuktu.

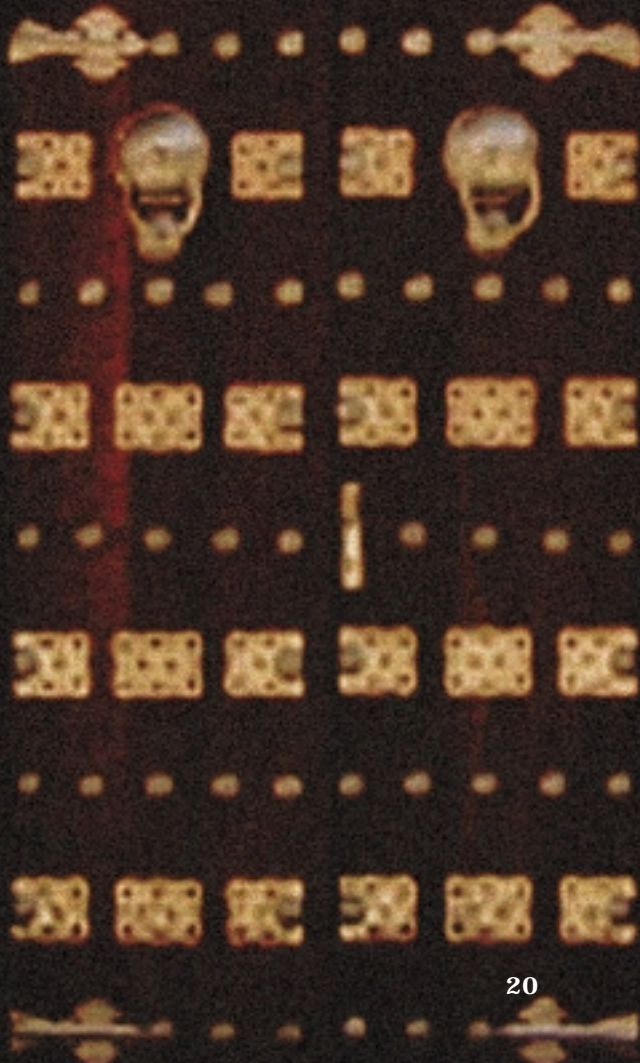
*Panoramic view of Timbuktu.*



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AHMAD BABA OF TIMBUKTU (1556-1627):

# Introduction to his life and works

MAHMOUD ZOUBER

*Former Director of the Ahmed Baba Institute, Timbuktu, Mali*<sup>1</sup>

## His Life

Ahmad Baba was born on the 21st of *dhu al-hijja* 963 / 26 October 1556 in Timbuktu into a family of *qadis* (judges) and scholars. Both his father, Ahmad, and his paternal uncle, Abu Bakr, took charge of his early education, teaching him to read and recite the Qur'an. Growing up in the Timbuktu of the middle of the 16th century, the time of its cultural and intellectual height, meant that Ahmad Baba did not have to travel far to pursue a higher education in the Islamic disciplines. He studied for ten years under Muhammad Baghayogho al-Wangari, with whom he read the classical texts of *tafsir* (exegesis), *fiqh* (law), *hadith* (traditions of the Prophet), *nahw* (grammar), *tawhid* (theology) and *tasawwuf* (mysticism). He completed his education under the tutelage of other great intellectuals of the city, such as the *qadi* al-Aqib b. Muhammad Aqit and Ahmad b. Sa'id.

At the time of the Moroccan conquest of Timbuktu in 1591, Ahmad Baba was in his thirties and was considered the most accomplished scholar of Timbuktu. Respected for his character and teachings, he openly opposed the Moroccan occupation and became the leader of the intellectual opposition to the invaders. Two years after the conquest, in 1593, the Moroccan Sultan Mulay Ahmad al-Mansur, ordered the arrest and exile to Morocco of Ahmad Baba and all the members of his family. His rich library and his possessions were pillaged by the Sultan's soldiers – and a caravan of men, women and children left Timbuktu. Ahmad Baba was placed under house arrest in Marrakech for two years, after which he was released on condition that he remained in the town. He taught grammar, rhetoric, theology and especially *maliki* law at the Jami' al-Shurafa, the main mosque-university of Marrakech, and his teaching attracted several distinguished Moroccan scholars. The Moroccan period (1593-1607) was in fact the most prolific of his literary career; he wrote more than half of his known works during this time, about 29 of a total of 56.

When Mulay Zaydan, the son of al-Mansur, became Sultan, he gave Ahmad Baba permission to return to his country. Ahmed Baba arrived in Timbuktu on the 10th *dhu al-hijja* 1016 / 27 March 1607,



after 14 years of exile. He spent the rest of his life in the city, devoting his time to teaching, writing and to the promulgation of *fatwas*. He died on the 6th *sha'ban* 1036 / 22 April 1627, leaving numerous distinguished disciples behind. Among these were 'Abu al-Abbas al-Maqqari, the imam and *mufti* of the Qarawiyyin mosque in Fez, who was one of his favourite disciples and who played a central role in the propagation of Ahmad Baba's works; 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sādi, Sudanese historian and author of the famous *Tarikh al-Sudan*, which contains numerous references, citations and praise of his master; and the Moroccan historian and poet Ahmad Ibn al-Qadi.

## His Works

Ahmad Baba was a prolific writer, and of his 56 known works 32 are still in existence today. They cover a wide range of topics, from treatises on grammar, theology and *fiqh*, to *fatwas*, as well as summaries of and commentaries on classical Islamic texts. He authored a number of original compositions that demonstrate the brilliance of his thought and place him among the important intellectuals of his day. What follows is a brief introduction to four such works that underline central themes in Ahmad Baba's writing:

### Miraj al-su'ud ila nayl hukm majlab al-sud or al-Kashf wa al-bayan li-asnaf majlub al-Sudan<sup>2</sup>

COMPOSED IN TIMBUKTU ON THE 10TH MUHARRAM 1024 / 9 FEBRUARY 1615

In 1613, Ahmad Baba's fame had spread so widely that he had the honour of being consulted by the scholars of Touat in Algeria about the juridical condition of the enslaved people from the Bilad al-Sudan – the region south of the Sahara stretching from the west coast of Africa to the Red Sea. The people of Touat, alarmed by the continuous traffic of slaves passing through their oasis, wrote to Ahmad Baba to ask his advice. He answered their questions, point by point in his usual methodical way, motivating his opinions by arguments of fact and law, and complementing them with citations from the Qur'an, *hadith*, from famous historians such as Ibn Khaldun and from other well-known scholars.

The first question posed to Ahmad Baba was about the juridical condition of the individuals captured in certain regions of the Bilad al-Sudan, like Bornu, where Islam had become the dominant religion: 'Can one, under the letter of the law, consider oneself as the legitimate owner of these individuals?' (fol. 2a) Ahmad Baba responded that, although the slave markets in the Bilad al-Sudan were supplied through raids by the blacks themselves, this defied the protective laws of the *jihad*, and therefore such commerce was illegal from all points of view.

One should observe here that the scholars from Touat themselves seemed to have forgotten that religious law forbade them to buy such captives, whether they were Muslim or not: the

*Elaborately decorated page from a manuscript in the Ahmed Baba Institute.*

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ  
وَعَلَى مَنْ تَرْضَى خَلْقَهُمْ  
وَتَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِمْ كَمَا تَسَلَّمْتَ عَلَى  
عَلِيٍّ وَآلِ عَلِيٍّ  
وَعَلَى مَنْ تَرْضَى خَلْقَهُمْ  
وَتَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِمْ كَمَا تَسَلَّمْتَ عَلَى  
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عَلِيٍّ وَآلِ عَلِيٍّ  
وَعَلَى مَنْ تَرْضَى خَلْقَهُمْ  
وَتَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِمْ كَمَا تَسَلَّمْتَ عَلَى  
عَلِيٍّ وَآلِ عَلِيٍّ



Muslims, because they were free and nothing could deprive them of their freedom; the non-Muslims, because they had been captured in an irregular war, not undertaken for the greater glory of Islam, and because their enslavement had not been preceded by due legal process.

In further discussion with the Touat scholars, Ahmad Baba first excluded Muslims from the category of slaves, and then excluded those protected by Islam.

Ahmad Baba, a black man himself, and consequently interested in pleading the case of his fellow Africans, judged this to be a good occasion to fight against a prejudice that had terrible consequences for them. On the basis of a tradition considered authentic, the blacks belonged to a 'cursed' race, destined to servitude in the expiation of an 'original sin' that conversion to Islam was barely able to erase. One recalls that, according to the Bible, the prophet Nuh (Noah) had cursed his son Ham, and that the descendants of this disrespectful son were destined to be the slaves of the descendants of Sam (Shem) and of Yafith (Japheth) until the end of time.<sup>3</sup> This legend, which the Qur'an does not mention, despite its numerous borrowings from the Bible, had a curious interpretation by Arab authors. Ibn Ishaq (d. 741), the author of the famous *Sira*, seems to have been the first one to write on the subject.

Ahmad Baba tried to prove the apocryphal character of this tradition. In this respect, he thought it necessary to cite a long passage of the *Muqqadima*, in which Ibn Khaldun recalls the curse of Ham, but Ahmed Baba adds that this is not related to the darkness of the skin of his descendants. He writes, 'There is absolutely no difference between the different human races, whether they come from Ham or another. It is possible that Noah's curse, if it has fallen upon a certain number of Ham's descendants, has not fallen upon all.' (fol. 5a) Here, Ahmad Baba clearly pleads attenuating circumstances, in case the scholars from Touat refused to admit the apocryphal character of the tradition regarding the children of Ham. He writes: 'Supposing that the latter is the father of the people of the Bilad al-Sudan, God is too merciful to make millions atone for the fault of one man.' (fol. 5b)

Finally, regarding the necessity of treating slaves well, Ahmad Baba recalls the tradition that 'Your slaves are your brothers,' adding as follows: 'God orders that slaves must be treated with humanity, whether they are black or not; one must pity their sad luck, and spare them bad treatment, since just the fact of becoming the owner of another person bruises the heart, because servitude is inseparable from the idea of violence and domination, especially when it relates to a slave taken far away from his country'. (fol. 6a) Ahmad Baba continues, 'Are we not all descendants of Adam? ... It is because of this that the Prophet has said: "God the Most High has made you the master of the slave; if he had wanted, he would have made him master over you." The Prophet reminds the master that God has graced him with being admitted among the Muslims, while he has left the slave and his ancestors in the darkness of infidelity, to the point of allowing him to be taken as captive.' (fol. 6a)

One cannot but be struck by how closely questions and answers interrelate in this work. One asks oneself if there had not been a continuous exchange of correspondence between the scholars from Touat and Ahmad Baba. If so, the *Miraj al-suid* would be a summary of a letters exchanged between both parties, and then rewritten for a wider public. This is a simple hypothesis, but it seems otherwise difficult to explain this interrelatedness, unless one supposes that Ahmad Baba was both the author of the questions and the answers. This possibility, however, is refuted by the preamble. Be that as it may, the conclusion which one can draw from this work is that even if Ahmad Baba does not condemn slavery in a categorical manner (which would have been surprising coming from a man who wrote at the beginning of the 17th century), one finds in most of his arguments a certain disapproval of an institution which diminishes human dignity and reduces human beings to the category of things.

### **Kifayat al-muhtaj li-ma'rifat man laysa fi l-Dibaj** <sup>4</sup>

COMPOSED IN MARRAKECH ON THE 1ST *SAFAR* 1012 / 11 JULY 1603

This is Ahmad Baba's most famous work, and we cannot dream of analysing in detail this huge composition. However, since it contains invaluable documents on the cultural history of the Bilad al-Sudan and because of the light it sheds on the state of the Arab literature in the Maghreb and in Spain, we think it important to summarize its structure and give a more exact idea of its contents.

The *Kifaya* is a complement to the *Dibaj al-mudhahhab* (a biographical dictionary of the scholars of the Maliki school) by Burhan al-din Ibn Farhun, a sage from Medina, who died in 805 / 1397. It is organized in alphabetical order, like the *Dibaj* and the *Wafayat al-ayan* of Ibn Khallikan.

Characteristics of the *Kifaya*:

1. It studies the life of the principal scholars of the Maliki school, who lived between 13th -17th centuries CE.
2. In addition to biographical information in the strict sense, the *Kifaya* relates historical events which though not directly related to the scholars studied, occurred during their time.
3. The method followed for the elaboration of the biographical notices is not uniform. For some scholars, Ahmad Baba indicates only their names and dates of death while for others he gives abundant information about their origin, their character, their science, their works, their teachers and disciples.
4. Ahmed Baba explores questions of *fiqh* or *usul* (methodology of law) in certain of the biographical entries.
5. Where the information contained in a biographical note has been found elsewhere, Ahmed Baba takes great care to detail his sources.
6. Finally, the order followed in the listing of the scholars, while alphabetical, is not very rigorous. The names are often classified under the letter to which the initial of each name corresponds.

The *Kifaya* contains 662 biographies including that of Ahmad Baba himself. It constitutes one of the main sources of the bio-bibliography of the Maghreb until the end of the 16th century. It also follows the intellectual trends of the Bilad al-Sudan during the 15th and 16th centuries. In fact, this work describes the schools and 'universities' in the area frequented by a large number of students and its teachers from the Bilad al-Sudan, explaining in Arabic the books adopted for teaching in the big universities of the Maghreb and the Orient; its considerable libraries and works of scholars from the area; its princes and their generosity towards the men of science; and its caravans of pilgrims that passed every year through Timbuktu on the way to Mecca.

Furthermore, the *Kifaya* is a vast and curious compilation of authors who concerned themselves particularly with the Maghreb and Muslim Spain. In this respect, it has the same value as the great works of biographical literature of the time – as much for the utility of the subject as for original interpretations the essence of which it contains. It has sometimes been criticised for the lack of detail in the portrayal of characters by those not very familiar with Muslim authors of the 16th century; however, one cannot but acknowledge the great exactitude of the bio-bibliographical details.

At the end of the *Kifaya*, Ahmad Baba lists the important references for this work, citing a total of 40 titles of which the majority have been lost or are not published. He relates that he interviewed orally many of his contemporaries, from the Bilad al-Sudan and the Maghreb, such as his father and his friend and disciple Muhammad b. Ya'qub al-Marrakushi. (fol. 244a) This is the substance of the *Kifaya al-muhtaj*. It is, clearly, a gallery of the more eminent scholars of the Maliki school who lived in the Maghreb and in Spain up to the time of the author. It is also an almost unique testimony to the knowledge of the cultural history of the Bilad al-Sudan during the 15th and 16th centuries.

### **Jalb al-ni'ma wa-daf' al-niqma bi-mujanabat al-wulat al-zalama<sup>5</sup>**

COMPOSED IN TIMBUKTU ON THE 2ND DHU L-HIJA 997 / 12 OCTOBER 1588

The *Jalb al-ni'ma* is one of the earliest dated works of Ahmad Baba, at least of those that we have and been able to identify. It contains an analytical table which completes the preamble, four chapters and a conclusion.

At the beginning, Ahmad Baba describes the goal of his work: 'It is, to alert myself and to warn my compatriots and peers against frequenting the company of "oppressive rulers" that I have composed this work'. Thus, the central theme of the book is the question of the relationship between power and knowledge.

In the first three chapters, Ahmad Baba, though with no connecting thread, reveals the opinions of the Muslim scholars who, according to him, are not in agreement on this matter. In the fourth chapter the author gives his own opinion, which is of interest, but there is no synthetic view, the questions arranged randomly without explaining the chosen order. The

particular interest of this chapter, however, is found in the lessons Ahmad Baba draws from these relationships, that for him cannot but end in the 'profound schism and irremediable separation' between power and knowledge. The proof is found in the almost permanent dangers experienced by those scholars who play the role of simple courtiers and not of upholders of the religious law. Without doubt, the author is referring to the example of certain scholars, whose ambition was to guide and inspire the politics of the state, and who ended up identifying their interests with those of the princes and kings.

In fact, Ahmad Baba recounts numerous tales and anecdotes in relation to renowned figures tested in their relationships with princes. On the other hand, he recounts stories and anecdotes where the scholars, solicited by princes, refused to give in to their demands. One could wonder why Ahmad Baba had to go back so far in history to find examples of scholars who were the object of brutal repression by those they had agreed to serve, or who despite the pressing demands of princes refused all ties with them. This could have been a sort of 'tactical dissimulation' and a way to avoid the anger of the kings and princes of his time, who did not like scholars questioning the limits of their power:

In this chapter, the hostility of Ahmad Baba towards the princes and his unlimited contempt for scholars who court them becomes apparent. But how could it be otherwise? Ahmad Baba, whose forefathers were persecuted by Sonni 'Ali, and who himself was subject to wholesale persecution by the Moroccan occupation authorities could not but condemn the cruelties and abuse of tyrants.

Ahmad Baba's conclusion summarizes his thoughts in a very frank manner: 'There is, in what we have said, enough proof to convince the scholars and all those who hope for the salvation of their souls and wish to escape peril, to stay away from oppressive rulers.' (fol. 30b) This is, clearly, the opinion of a man who, having been the object of the atrocities of oppressors, was extremely wary of them, and who dreaded power, which according to him, corrupts and easily leads to hell. Nevertheless, Ahmad Baba could make the distinction between good and bad rulers. His 'anti-tyrannical' remarks contain beneath the surface an appeal to meditate on the phrase that his suffering uncle, 'Umar b. Mahmud (*qadi* of Timbuktu, deported at the same time as him), addressed to the Moroccan Sultan al-Mansur: 'You are the oppressor and I the oppressed, soon the oppressor will meet the oppressed in the presence of God, the equitable Judge.'

### **Tuhfat al-fudala' bi-ba'd fada'il al-'ulama'**<sup>6</sup>

COMPOSED AFTER THE 1ST OF SAFAR, 1012 / 11 JULY 1603

The work is organized as follows: a preamble, three chapters and a conclusion (*khatima*). Chapter I is entitled 'The Virtues and Merits of the 'Ulama' and contains numerous Qur'anic verses and *hadiths* proving these merits. Chapter II traces the primacy of 'religious science' (*'ilm*) over 'spiritual practice' (*'ibada*); a great number of *hadiths* and *athars* are cited to support this thesis.

Chapter III is a comparison between the scholars (*ulama*) and the gnostics or 'saints'. Here, in addition to certain *hadiths* and *athars* already cited, are found lengthy developments of the views of the great Muslim scholars. Finally in the conclusion, the personal position of the author with regard to all the points made is elaborated.

Before approaching these points in detail, it is important to underline that the '*ilm*' in question here is above all the sacred science, the science related in one way or the other to the study of the Qur'an, of the Sunna, of the religious law (*fiqh*); in other words, relating to that which must be believed and which must be done to assure one's salvation.

In the first two chapters of the *Tufhat al-fudala'*, which are devoted to the merits of the religious sciences and their preeminence over spiritual practices, Ahmad Baba does not refrain from recounting with real satisfaction numerous Qur'anic texts and *hadith*, where in the eyes of the faithful, the '*ilm*' (religious sciences) and the '*alim*' (scholar) are exalted in concise formulas:

'Say: those who know and those who do not are they of the same rank?' (Qur'an, 39:9). 'Ask those who know if you do not' (Qur'an, 15:43). 'It is thus that the most knowledgeable among the servants of God fear Him' (Qur'an, 35:28). 'Find knowledge even if it be in China.'<sup>7</sup> 'The seeking of knowledge is an obligation on all Muslims.'<sup>8</sup> 'The scholars are the inheritors of the prophets.'<sup>9</sup> 'The ink of the scholar is more valuable than the blood of the martyr', etc.

In the third chapter where Ahmad Baba compares the scholars (*ulama*) with the 'saints-sages' (*al-awliya' al-'arifun bi-llah*), he emphasizes that there exists a great difference of opinion regarding this

*A manuscript in the Ahmed Baba Institute, showing paper damage.*



topic among scholars. (fol. 45a) He shows how each group tries to make their argument, 'For some, the scholars are superior to the saints-sages, while for others, it is the latter who are superior' (fol. 55a) Then he sets out at length the arguments developed by the supporters of each side.

On the one side is the thesis supporting the superiority of the saints-sages, defended by a group of mystical scholars headed by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali. On the other is the opposing thesis in support of the superiority of the scholars, represented by the four founding fathers of the judicial schools, namely Malik, Abu Hanifa, al-Shafi'i and Ahmad b. Hanbal.

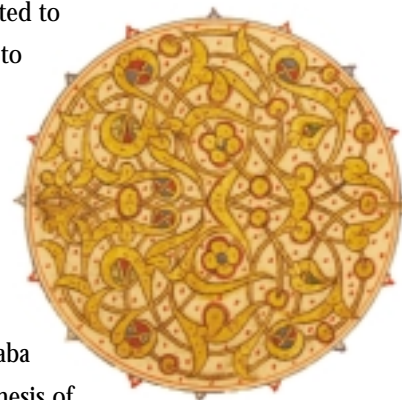
Based on a notion derived from al-Ghazali, the defenders of the first thesis make a distinction between two sorts of sciences, the 'exterior sciences' (*al-'ulum al-zahira*) and the 'interior sciences' (*al-'ulum al-batina*). They note that the majority of the exterior sciences separate one from God's path and impede those who occupy themselves with such study, preventing them from taking an interest in the interior sciences, which embellish the soul with virtues and extirpate all its vices and defects from it. (fol. 56a) According to this belief, it is thus inconceivable to put the gnostics (who are the true holders of the interior sciences) on the same level as the scholars (who are deprived of them), and hence the reason to sustain the supremacy of the former.

According to the defenders of the second thesis, the pre-eminence of the scholars is proven from two points of view. Firstly from the point of view of tradition for, as we have seen above, there are abundant traditions praising the religious sciences and the advantages given to those who study them, and secondly from the 'discursive or speculative' point of view. In this latter regard, they offer three arguments. The first of these is that the study of the religious sciences is both a 'personal obligation' and 'an obligation on the community', while only devoting oneself

to spiritual practice is optional. Secondly, the utility of knowledge is not limited to the person who has it but extends to the community, while 'sanctity' is limited to the person of the saint; the primacy of the religious science can thus be sustained, since a benefit which extends to another is certainly better than that which only profits an individual. Lastly, nobody can doubt the urgent necessity of having scholars who teach the religious sciences and interpret the Law for the community, while it matters little to people whether there are people who devote themselves exclusively to spiritual practices or not.

Finally, in the Conclusion where he reveals his personal position, Ahmad Baba shows a great flexibility of spirit. In fact, while noting his sympathy for the thesis of the supremacy of the scholars, he indicates that the arguments advanced by those opposed to it are not without interest. He underlines, in this regard, that 'those who possess the sciences or knowledge and do not act according to their teachings are only half-obedient, while those who possess it and act in consequence have double the merit.' He concludes: 'We tend towards the idea of the pre-eminence of the scholars, as proven by numerous *hadith* and *athars* as well as numerous traditions going back to the "virtuous ancients". But the scholars meant here are those who prove their piety and devotion and live in conformity with the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunna, and not those who seek to derive from their science the immediate interests or a personal glory.'

Ahmad Baba is an example of a great African intellectual. He acquired his knowledge in Africa, while his fame spread beyond the continent to the rest of the Muslim world. The sophistication of his thought and the prolific nature of his writings contribute to an appreciation of the intense intellectual activity that took place in Africa well before the arrival of the European colonizers.



#### Notes

- 1 This is based on the book by Mahmoud A. Zouber, *Ahmad Baba de Tombouctou (1556-1627), His Life and his Works* (Paris: G.P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1977). Dr Zouber was the first director of the Ahmed Baba Institute. Translated and adapted from the original French by Susana Molins Lliteras. (Ahmed is often rendered Ahmad in English)
- 2 References from manuscript no. 1724, in the General Library, Rabat.
- 3 Book of Genesis, IX: 20-27.
- 4 References from manuscript no. 453, in the Royal Library, Rabat. The manuscript contains 244 pages of medium format, with 21 lines per folio on each side.
- 5 References from manuscript no. K 383, in the General Library, Rabat. This copy is not dated and is composed of 32 folios of medium format.
- 6 References from manuscript no. 5534 (fol. 42b-66b), in the Royal Library, Rabat. The manuscript is undated, and is 225x170mm in dimension, with 23 or 24 lines per folio on each side.
- 7 This *hadith* was told by Nasa'i, *Tahara*, 112; Ahmad, IV, 240, V, 328.
- 8 See Ibn Maja and Bukhari.
- 9 Reported by Bukhari, Abu Dawud, Ibn Maja, Darimi and Ahmad b. Hanbal.





## CONSERVATION IN THE EXTREME:

# Preserving the manuscripts of Timbuktu

MARY MINICKA

*Head of Preservation, Western Cape Archives, Cape Town, South Africa*

Since 2003 I have worked in Timbuktu as part of a team of South African book and document conservators, tasked with assisting in the preservation of manuscripts housed in the Ahmed Baba Institute, or IHERI-AB, in Timbuktu. Describing what it is like to work in Timbuktu defies a quick or easy answer. Generally, Timbuktu is a tough place to work in, for it is a place of extremes – extremes that in time become a kind of normality – and contradictions and exceptions abound there, often where one least expects to find them.

The climate is the first thing you will notice about Timbuktu, and the last thing you will remember. The overwhelming heat is what everybody who goes there will tell you about. The heat in Timbuktu seems to be another kind of heat. You imagine that it is somehow unique to Timbuktu's location on the edge of the Sahara Desert, while knowing that this heat is nothing special for people who live there. Timbuktu's heat slams down on you the moment you step out of the plane, and for the rest of your stay its tangible presence will constantly grind away at you. In spite of the heat, you are unlikely to see any sweat; the climate being so dry, evaporation is instant.

Timbuktu's legendary heat does not mean that one does not experience cold. Winter days start out at a bone-marrow-ripping morning chill that rises to a respectable average of an upper 20 to lower 30 degrees Centigrade by mid-afternoon, quickly reverting to a tooth-enamel-cracking evening chill. I missed my first experience of rain in Timbuktu, assuming that my team-members and colleagues were pulling my leg when they shouted to me to come and see the rain.

Another of the extremes associated with Timbuktu, almost to the point of cliché, is the geographic remoteness of Timbuktu. Even in Mali, Timbuktu is considered today to be a remote place. The four separate flights required (if all goes according plan) to get from Cape Town to Timbuktu make for interesting travel, as our team often has to transport heavy rolls of book-binding cloth,

*A damaged manuscript before receiving conservation attention.*

ADDITIONAL NOTE: This manuscript was not selected for exhibition in South Africa because of its poor condition. In approving manuscripts for exhibition, the conservation team had to be satisfied that manuscripts selected could withstand the rigours of travel to South Africa and subsequent exhibition. This manuscript was felt to be too fragile/damaged to do so. This manuscript still awaits interventive conservation repair. Great care will have to be taken when conserving this manuscript as it has some remaining sewing structure (which are the threads you can see at the manuscript's spine side). The survival of the sewing structure seems to be a rarity in Timbuktu. Due to the arid climate, this part of manuscript is generally lost to damage.

board, glues, repair tissues and pastes – not to mention working tools – and enough clothing, essential ‘padkos’ from home, and other requirements to last us for the length of our stay.

Yet, the remoteness and difficulty in reaching Timbuktu is belied by the vast numbers of historical manuscripts still present in and around Timbuktu (and in the wider West African region). Despite Timbuktu’s apparent remoteness, it was for centuries a place where many scholars lived and visited, accompanied by their personal manuscript collections, and a centre where manuscripts were traded and eagerly exchanged by collectors. It is these manuscripts that are the reason my colleagues, Alexio Motsi of the National Archives in Pretoria (and Timbuktu Manuscripts Conservation Team Leader), Oswald Cupido of the National Library of South Africa (Cape Town), and I regularly travel to Timbuktu.

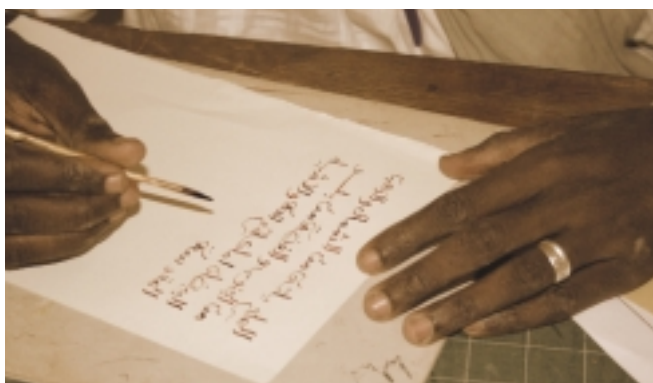
### The manuscripts of Timbuktu

Estimates of the number of manuscripts in Timbuktu vary, most starting at around a million. Other sources estimate that there are around five million manuscripts in Timbuktu and its immediate environs. There are manuscript libraries and private collections that are custodians of reputedly vast collections of manuscripts, yet to be properly catalogued and indexed. Today there are still copyists and calligraphers and, of course, many scholars at work there – an entire manuscript culture with all its adjuncts and auxiliary services.

We speak of the manuscripts in Timbuktu, as distinct from books. Manuscripts, strictly speaking are hand-written texts, no matter when and where they were made. Manuscripts might have been written either by professional scribes or copyists, or by literate owner-scholars. Books on the other hand, are printed texts. In European book history there is the fairly clear dividing line in the history of publishing which occurred with the introduction of the movable-type printing press by Gutenberg in the late 15th century. Islamic book-history took a slightly different trajectory, as manuscripts continued to be the mainstay of publishing until the early 20th century.

Manuscripts also have other attributes. Because of their relative rarity compared to the ever-increasing volumes of mass-produced printed books, and the higher level of hand-crafted work by individual craftspeople involved in making the manuscripts (and their bindings or covers), manuscripts are considered to be unique items. Manuscripts are valued as much for their uniqueness as for their importance as an historical record that can tell us more about how manuscripts were made and used.

The study of the book or manuscript therefore has always been about more than merely the text. Like elsewhere, the way in which the manuscripts of Timbuktu were made, put together and disseminated, has the potential to help scholars understand how ideas were spread. We tend to forget that beautiful old books and manuscripts do not exist simply because medieval monks in France or Islamic scholars had time on their hands and needed a distracting hobby to occupy them during long winter evenings. The many processes and materials required to create



*Boubar Sadeck, Timbuktu calligrapher, writing with a reed pen.*

manuscripts were part of, or were in themselves, a very tangible economic activity from which people derived a living (and in some cases considerable social status), one that linked papermakers, stationers, scribes, scholars, bookbinders, tanners, gilders and farmers in a wide socio-economic network. This

means that the whole manuscript can be placed under scrutiny: leather, paper, textile, decoration – each aspect has the potential to contribute a fuller understanding of the context. Or, invariably, raises yet more questions.

This is, in part, why the manuscripts of Timbuktu are so important. While their content will keep academics busy for decades to come, the manuscripts as objects of material culture can also help us to understand the broader social, aesthetic and economic nature of the manuscript culture of Africa, and specifically of Timbuktu and its environs.

As I hold a Timbuktu manuscript in my hands, I have a powerful sense of the manuscript as an individually-created and unique item; and as I work with a manuscript, an awareness of the presence of the manuscript's creator/s and successive generations of readers is likewise very strong. Each manuscript I have encountered is a unique entity, shaped not only by its individual history of use or abuse, but also by how it was assembled: covers showing multiple repairs and patching; the edges of the paper lining the inside of a manuscript cover cut in decorative patterns at the edges; leather covers with two symmetrical holes that reveal evidence of the teats of the once live female kid-goat; partial handprints and fingerprints of hasty scribes recorded in the ink of the text; texts written on European hand-made paper with watermarks that can be seen when held up to a light source; a succession of neat holes on pages indicating that a manuscript now composed of loose pages were once sewn together; the impressions on the paper made by a *mastara*, or rule guide, that guided the copyist in writing straight and regularly spaced lines of text; marginal notes in different hands and inks of successive generations of reader-scholars... and much more.

One of the great pleasures gained in working with the manuscripts of Timbuktu is an encounter with a long-established manuscript-making tradition. We are only beginning to scratch the surface in our understanding of the manuscripts from a compositional, structural and material point of view. There is so much to learn and to understand about these manuscripts – and to flesh out the history of manuscript production in West Africa. It is both a tremendously exciting challenge and terrifying in its scope at the same time.



*Alexio Motsi from the National Archives of South Africa training staff in Mali in conservation practice.*

## Getting to know the manuscripts of Timbuktu

Whatever professional and personal satisfaction I may experience in engaging directly with manuscripts in Timbuktu, there is a very practical reason for getting to know the manuscripts. As book and document heritage conservators, we need to understand the objects under our care. We must know how they came to be made, what they were made of and how they were used, in order to understand why they came to be damaged and how to repair them, in such a way that impacts as little as possible on the manuscript as a historical artifact, while helping to prolong the life of the manuscript.

The information required goes beyond a basic understanding of the bare components of any given manuscript in Timbuktu: leather, paper and textile. We need to understand how the leather was made; where the paper came from; why certain materials were preferred to others and also learn about the aesthetic choices made in the decoration of the manuscript covers and pages.

Much of this information taps into indigenous knowledge systems of the region. One of the earliest tasks that we set ourselves was to understand the leather-making tradition in Timbuktu, which we have now begun to document. Our initial motivation was that we needed to know if we could use the locally tanned leather for conservation repair work. Being able to use locally produced leather was not only practical in that it hopefully would be simpler and easier to acquire leather; but in this way the work of the Timbuktu Manuscripts Project could also meaningfully support the local economy and artisans. Other investigations may range much further, for example, much of the paper used for the manuscripts originated from Europe. There are several lifetimes' worth of study, investigation and discovery that lie in wait, and the challenge is again both exciting and daunting.

An important part of the Conservation Team's project was to research the manuscripts of Timbuktu in the context of the wider region of West Africa. This acquaintanceship has been an ongoing journey, also with its particular challenges. The amount of literature available on the manuscripts of the region is miniscule when compared to that of other manuscript-making traditions, such as mediaeval Europe which, ironically, created but a fraction of the volume of manuscripts produced by Islamic cultures.

Such information will enable us to make informed and responsible conservation treatment and repair decisions. Contextual understanding of the objects under our care is required from all conservators. These broad ethical principles guide us in formulating an approach to working with unique and often irreplaceable heritage objects. This need to learn has been even more acute in our work in Timbuktu, where we are confronted with a manuscript-making tradition unfamiliar to us, having trained mainly in the conservation of European and American book-binding traditions.

### Ethics of preserving religious objects

Ethical principles that guide conservators' approach to their work demand that conservators consider any given book, manuscript or document as a whole, including its context and history. In Timbuktu the manuscripts are not only heritage items, reflecting the region's particular history and cultural trajectory, but they are also integrally part of its religious history.

Amongst heritage conservators worldwide, there is a lively debate about the implications of working with religious artifacts, no matter what their form, shape or original sacred function is or may have been. There are many aspects to this debate, most of which centre around an understanding that most objects of a religious nature now housed in museums, libraries and archives were not originally envisaged to be divorced from their ritual or religious element, as objects of historical curiosity or beauty. To an extent heritage institutions and heritage conservators are embarking on something of an experiment in attempting to find some sort of balance between the respect accorded to all objects of religious value or origin and the custodial and managerial demands of safeguarding objects of cultural heritage.

Religious beliefs (or the lack of them) are a very intimate and personal part of each human being, exerting a very powerful influence. There are some conservators who question the desirability of even considering the sacred aspect of historical or cultural objects. For some conservators getting caught up in the minutiae around the requirements for the maintenance of a particular religious system's notion of sacredness constitutes little more than an interesting distraction that has the potential to derail a conservator's ability to repair and treat the objects. This aspect of a heritage conservator's work will probably never be satisfactorily resolved to create universally applicable guidelines and, like much else in a conservator's working life, will have to be tackled on an individual case-by-case basis.

## The challenges in preserving Timbuktu's manuscripts

There are many factors that contribute towards the loss of cultural heritage, most of which work together in an interrelated manner over a long period of time to damage or obliterate an object. Through the news media we have become conditioned to equate the loss of cultural heritage with a single cataclysmic event. However, the reality is actually far more mundane. For the most part, it is an incremental process of damage acquired and aggravated over a period of time through a combination of poor environmental and storage conditions, as well as rough and inconsiderate treatment by humans that eventually reduces a book or manuscript to little more than a neat pile of dust.

In Timbuktu, we can reliably say that probably the biggest challenge to the continued survival of the manuscripts is posed by the harsh climate of the region. The high temperatures and lack of sufficient humidity conspire to prematurely age the materials of which the manuscripts in Timbuktu are composed. The fact that many manuscripts have survived is a testament to the quality of many of the materials, as well as to luck and happenstance.

One of the most common results of the effect of the hot and arid climate on the continued survival of Timbuktu's manuscripts is that of 'chipping'. Chipping is the term conservators use to describe a condition where the edges of a page gradually flake away until there is nothing left of the page, and eventually of the manuscript itself. Chipping is a symptom of the desiccation of

*Mary Minicka, conservator from the Western Cape Archives, examining manuscript pages for watermarks.*



the paper and its consequent embrittlement. I work with paper of a similar age in the Western Cape Archives, and the difference is startling: paper in Timbuktu is often so very light and so very brittle, not because it is particularly thin or poorly made, but because there is so little moisture left in the paper.

The hot and arid conditions also at times affect the manuscripts' leather covers to the extent that the covers begin to fail as protective enclosures for the paper and cause actual harm to the paper they are supposed to protect. This factor has forced us to separate a number of manuscripts from their original covers, something not done under ordinary circumstances. Our Malian colleagues at the IHERI-AB have worked closely with us to devise a conservation replacement cover for these particular manuscripts. This conservation replacement cover takes the aesthetic and basic construction associated with Islamic manuscript covers and the distinctive leather working tradition of Timbuktu and merges them with the protection afforded by portfolio folders made to protect the manuscript's contents. The original cover is kept and housed together with the new conservation replacement cover and its contents in a protective box; another of our ethical principles being that we do not discard anything.

After the heat, sand and dust are the most pervasive companions of, and challenges for, Timbuktu's manuscripts. It is everywhere: people live in and around it – it is even in your food. Dust poses an enormous danger to the manuscripts: it scuffs and wears the surface of paper, leather and inks; it causes stains on the paper surface when combined with water; surface dirt on paper also consists of fungal spores that result in mould outbreaks, should climatic conditions be favorable.

But, there are always contradictions in Timbuktu. One of the most noticeable is that just about every manuscript we have either observed or worked with has some sort of evidence of damage incurred from exposure to water: puckering and cockling of leather and paper, tidemarks, water stains, even stains caused by mould. Despite the fact that the manuscripts are in a desert environment, many (if not most) were sufficiently exposed to water somehow, to leave evidence of their encounter.

Insects are frequently-mentioned enemies of books and manuscripts. Many feed directly on the cellulose content of paper, while others merely work their way through manuscripts and books on their way to somewhere else. In Timbuktu, termites wreak unbelievable havoc on the manuscripts, sculpting miniature landscapes inside the pile of a manuscript's pages, leaving little more than piles of dusty insect frass. Termites seem almost to operate by a kind of stealth. Many manuscripts betray outward evidence of the extent of the damage. Looking at a closed manuscript you think everything is fine, until you open it to find the manuscript has almost disappeared, eaten out from the middle.

It seems that just about every condition harmful to the continued survival of manuscripts is present in Timbuktu. I must admit that I spent the first few days of my first trip to Timbuktu in 2003 wanting to run screaming back to Cape Town as the enormity and challenge of the work slowly became apparent.



*Making conservation boxes for manuscripts.*

## The field of heritage conservation

The words conservation, restoration and preservation are used (sometimes interchangeably) to describe the work of heritage conservators.

Restoration is one of the older terms used for conservation and most people are familiar with it because the news media insist on using it when they talk about the work of conservators. Restoration is an attempt to return an object to its original state, trying to recreate what the object might have looked like, however many years or centuries ago it was made. Herein, lies the problem with restoration. Our ideas today of what an historical object should look like could be wrong – and have been. Historical accounts of how manuscripts and books were created are scanty, while the history of the book is a field of interest that has only been around a relatively short while. The other major problem is that restoration lies close to the process of fabrication and forgery; some conservators are so highly skilled that it is easy for the unscrupulous to pass a restored object off as an un-restored object, worth many times more than a restored object. Restoration as a concept and practice in the field of heritage preservation is now largely rejected in favor of conservation.

Conservation and preservation are a little trickier to separate, and definitions largely depend on the author's point of view. Conservation is often described as any and all attempts to halt and prevent further damage or deterioration of any given object. For many conservators who actually work with repairing and treating the object ('bench work'), like myself, this usually means the actual physical treatment and repair of a damaged object. It may be useful to think of



conservation as the necessary maintenance of a collection, similar to that required to keep a building functional and habitable. Any given collection of heritage objects (even a modern library) has a value that can be quantified: the collection cost money to acquire, administer and manage; and, like any resource, it requires ongoing maintenance in order to retain (or grow) that value. Bench conservators have a range of treatment and repair techniques at their disposal, ranging from cleaning of the paper's surface of all dirt and grime with a variety of erasers and soft brushes (dry-cleaning), to the immersion of the paper in various chemical baths in order to wash out or neutralize harmful chemical compounds which will, if unchecked, ultimately cause the paper to disintegrate (aqueous treatments). Another important part of our work is the physical repair of torn paper and the lining of weakened paper, with a variety of specialist European and Japanese repair papers.

The difference between conservation and restoration is that conservation seeks only to repair what is physically present on the conservator's work bench. Conservation does not ever seek to interpret, replace or manufacture the missing parts of an object. Once again, we revert to the ethical principles that guide conservators in their work, viz. respecting the integrity of the object (even if there is little left to repair), and repairing only what is damaged (the principle of minimal intervention).

Conservators are to be found in every discipline, specializing in the conservation of a particular type of heritage object: books, paper, artworks on paper, photographic materials, textiles, furniture, wooden objects, upholstery, sculpture, oil paintings, stone, architecture, archaeology, historical costumes, beadwork, basketry, modern plastics, ceramics, video and new media such as digital records and images, and so on. Some conservators will specialize very narrowly while others, for example those working with paper and books, may work across a broader spectrum.

Preservation encompasses conservation, but often includes more than the physical repair of heritage objects. It looks at the broader management of the conservation process. One of its earlier names was that of conservation management, which I think sums up the concept better than the more currently fashionable term, preservation. The individualized conservation treatment repair of a single object is a costly and time-consuming process requiring specialized skills, materials and equipment. It makes sense for a heritage institution, therefore, to manage the way in which the object is stored, used and exhibited so as to ensure that the minimum amount of damage is incurred, preventing large costs associated with the conservation repair and treatment of a book or document further down the line, as well as ensuring the life of an object for as long as possible.

## Conserving the manuscripts in Timbuktu

As we embarked on the manuscripts project, we understood that the environment was clearly going to be the single most significant threat to the continued survival of the manuscripts in Timbuktu. To an extent, this is nothing unique as climate or environment is usually the single



CONSERVATORS AT WORK: *The technician here is busy brushing the surface sand, dust and grit from a manuscript's pages. He is using a soft bristled artists brush. This is called surface or dry cleaning, and forms an important aspect of the conservation of the manuscripts in Timbuktu.*

most important factor affecting the well-being of any cultural object or artifact anywhere in the world. What is unique in Timbuktu, however, is how extreme the climate is. We therefore had to evaluate carefully the appropriateness of each conservation technique for conditions in Timbuktu.

Manuscripts from earlier conservation endeavours at the IHERI-AB sadly reveal the dangers of an uncritical implementation of otherwise sound conservation strategies and practices. While there is an enormous need for conservation work to be done to safeguard the manuscripts of Timbuktu,

attempts at playing conservator by foreign unqualified 'cultural-aiders' who have clearly not spent time getting to understand the challenges in Timbuktu, nor undergone the necessary training in conservation themselves, have done little beyond creating practical lessons in what not to do.

One of the most startling encounters with inappropriate conservation techniques was the use of white cotton gloves by technicians that we observed on our first visit. The wearing of white cotton gloves while handling art or cultural objects has become something of a stereotypical practice. In spite of this, there are serious reservations amongst conservators working with books and paper on the desirability of wearing white gloves: they rob your hands of the ability to feel and handle fragile articles in a delicate manner; they are very hot to work with for any length of time; they also get dirty, and, if not washed regularly, will simply spread dirt further. Although there are significant exceptions, book and document conservators as a rule prefer to work with bare, clean hands. In Timbuktu the added disadvantage of using white gloves



is that the woven texture of the gloves picks up particles of fine sand, becoming in effect a kind of sandpaper with the potential to scuff and abrade the delicate surface of the paper and inks. Discouraging the use of white gloves in favor of working with bare, clean hands was the first change that we implemented.

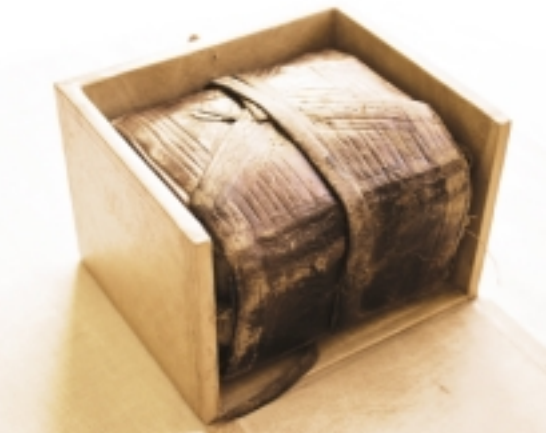
To return to the extremes of the climate of Timbuktu, we felt that it would be important to separate the manuscripts from contact with the largely hostile environment by placing them in protective boxes or portfolios. The use of protective enclosures would both isolate the manuscripts from contact with the hostile environment, while affording the manuscript protection from physical damage by absorbing any future knocks and bangs. Importantly the protective box would also serve as a barrier to dust, insects and moisture. For this reason we chose the sturdiest type of box construction made from the highest quality archival materials; this 'clam-shell' construction completely encloses a manuscript once shut. Each protective box will ultimately form the final layer of a succession of protective layers that will separate the manuscripts from the harsh Timbuktu climate, starting with the outer fabric of the building housing the IHERI-AB collection.

These protective boxes are made by hand, to accommodate the measurements and dimensions of the individual manuscript. I find it very gratifying to see how these boxes have very quickly begun to fulfill their intended purpose by ensuring that the very fine dust that does manage to penetrate the present IHERI-AB building gets no further than the exterior of the protective boxes that now form the majority of the shelved items. The regular and uniform shapes of the boxes, as well as their easily cleaned covering, ensure that the cleaning of the shelves and boxes will be a far easier task in the future.

As indicated, a major impact of the environment on the manuscripts in Timbuktu is that they have acquired a fine layer of sand and grit on the surface of the paper pages and leather covers. One of the most basic and frequently used conservation techniques is that of dry-cleaning which entails the careful removal of this surface dirt with a variety of soft erasers and artist

*QUILTED SUPPORT CUSHION COVER FOR A MANUSCRIPT COVER: This cover is damaged and the decorative studs meant that the cover could not perform its protective function. Thus a conservation replacement cover was made for the pages, and the original cover protected with a quilted support and cover. The two elements of the manuscript are stored together in a protective box.*





brushes. It is painstaking work requiring constant attention, particularly when working with fragile materials. Dry-cleaning forms one of the core conservation treatment activities in Timbuktu. Getting rid of the surface dirt is the first treatment that any manuscript will undergo; it may also be the only one, if no further conservation treatment is required. It is only once a manuscript has been dry-cleaned that it will go on to being boxed or for further repair.

There is much paper that is fragile and damaged, requiring either repair or a supportive lining with specialist gossamer-thin Japanese repair tissue papers. Performing such repairs presents a considerable challenge in Timbuktu. Because the paper is so dry, the slightest moisture from the paste used to 'adhere' the repair tissue to the damaged paper tends to provoke a strong reaction from the paper and ink. With our Malian colleagues we have had to work at devising a suitable modification of the standard repair techniques that mitigate, as far as possible, the potential for an unfavorable reaction by the paper and ink.

Thus, as much as Timbuktu has posed often frightening challenges to us in working as conservators in Timbuktu, I believe the project has succeeded in making better conservators of us all.

## Conclusion

The project in Timbuktu presents us with a valuable opportunity to promote and expand the currently small profession of heritage conservation in Africa. The Timbuktu Manuscripts Project is working with five Malians who have been trained in South Africa in book and document conservation techniques. The training they have received has been supported by our annual field-work trips to Timbuktu to work with our Malian colleagues in understanding not only the conservation requirements of the manuscripts at the IHERI-AB, but also the challenges of conservation work in Timbuktu. We have found this continued interaction to have been one of the most valuable aspects in keeping the Project responsive to the challenges of conserving the manuscripts of Timbuktu.

This conservation continues to expand as our Malian colleagues are training not only other Malians in conservation techniques at other institutions in Timbuktu, but are now travelling throughout the major centres of Mali presenting workshops in conservation.

Working with our Malian colleagues, Mohammed Lamine Traouré, Isawu Hamada Ag Moosa, Garba Traouré, Foussyeni Kouyate and Souleymane Samake, has been a very special aspect of the Timbuktu Manuscripts Project. Fingers crossed that the Timbuktu Manuscripts Project is only the start of wonderful things for the accelerated growth of the conservation of Africa's written heritage, and for the development of the profession across the continent.



## MANUSCRIPT 1

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In this letter Shaykh Ahmad al-Bakkay, a charismatic 19th century political and spiritual leader in Timbuktu, confronts the serious political differences between himself and the ruler of Masina, al-Fallan Ahmed Ahmed. He refers to his Arab lineage and uses arguments from religious writings to support his refusal to pay homage to the Fulani ruler of Masina. In the previous century, however, his grandfather, the great scholar Sidi Mukhtar al-Kunti, had nevertheless accepted the rule of al-Fallan Ahmed Ahmed's grandfather.

This period was marked by a series of jihads, as power struggles were waged between the leaders of the various Muslim polities in West Africa, in particular the Fulani, causing loyalties and allegiances to be contested.

The original letter was written during the second half of the 19th century, but this copy was made in 1920. It is written in Sudani script in black ink, with emphases in red.



الحمد لله الذي جعل في خلقه على سيدنا محمد وآله وصحبه  
وسلم تسليما

الحمد لله عز وجل الذي لا يدخل من اعز ولا يعز من ادخل ولا يبصر من  
هدى ولا يهديه من اضل ايدى ايمه عبده نوحا فلم تضره عدو او اجناب  
بنى عام في جميع اقطار الارض الا سنة الاخمسين عاما وهو يفتخر  
هم ويحرسهم على نفسه وهو وحده بقوله يا فروع ان كان كثير عليكم  
مفاعي وقد كبيرت بك ايتا الله وعلى الله توكلت واجمعوا امركم وشرك  
كاهكم ثم لا يبصر امركم عليكم غمقة ثم افوضوا الي ولا تتظنون فلم  
يضره بشيء ولا يناله كيدهم بسوء الا اذى باللسان والعمال الايباليه  
الاغبيار رجال وبقي بعدهم وهلكوا قبله ونجى وعندهم وبادوا وبادوا  
ثم ايدى عبده ابراهيم على سكان اهل الارض نصرود وقومه فلم  
ياله كيدا وبغير كيد وكما راي انه لا قدرة له عليه وعلم انه لا حول له  
اليه شغل نفسه وغيره عنه بالاختطاب للنار احوال اولاد ابراهيم  
منهم الا الله تعالى وحده وكفى ولولا الله لاخذوا اخذ افرانه لا يعيش  
يومين الا ابراهيم يقاتل عنه ولا قبيلة تدفع دونه ولم يكن منه بعيد  
الدار ولا خفي المكان **بارك الله** ان يظهر لوليه نبيه كرامة كرامة  
ومعجزة بامه تكون له عز اوربعة وجلالة وتطون له عدوه تارة وتغيب  
ووضيعة ومهلكة بشهاده اذلة الجميع راي عيسى ولولا ان الله تعالى اراد  
لذلك كرامة له لم يقدروا على ان يمي موتهم في النار وان قتله او ضربوه  
او حبسوه وهو معذبهم بينهم ايسر من خذوه بالمنيبيو الى النار على ما فيه  
من الشفقة والرحمة ثم ايدى عبده وكليمه موسى على عدوه في حور ملك  
مصر بعد ما طأه قبل ميلاده وطلب قتله وهو حمل ورضيع بعثته فكلوبه  
منه وضلت حيلته عنه فاخرجه الله تعالى في بيته في داره بيده يبره  
لا يهلكه ويحفظه لا يشك فيه تحرق منه تارة تحرقوا ويتحنن عليه اخرى تحنن  
يقرب له انه عدوه المهلكة ويتحنن عليه لاي اليه تعالى القبر على  
موسى محبة منه فيبراه عدوه مرة فيبراه اقبضه مرة ثم بعد ذلك ابراهيم

على الجميع

بصالح



MANUSCRIPT 86

This copy of an 18th century manuscript entitled *The Key to the Wings of Desire on the Knowledge of Arithmetic* is based on an earlier version written in the form of a didactic poem. It is a treatise on arithmetic and its application, primarily in calculating the shares of heirs when executing a deceased person's estate.

Written in Suqi script, it opens with the rendering of profuse praises of God and salutations on Prophet Muhammad.







MANUSCRIPT 165

**A** *I-shifa bi ta'arif huquq al-Mustafa* or *The Rights of the Prophet*, as this work is known, describes the life of Prophet Muhammad in detail, describing his high moral qualities, miracles and marvels. It includes a genealogy of the Prophet going back 21 generations. Highly admired in the Muslim world, many commentaries have been written about it. It is even considered to have protective powers for the owner and his household. The author was a prominent scholar in the Maliki school of thought that is dominant in North and West Africa.

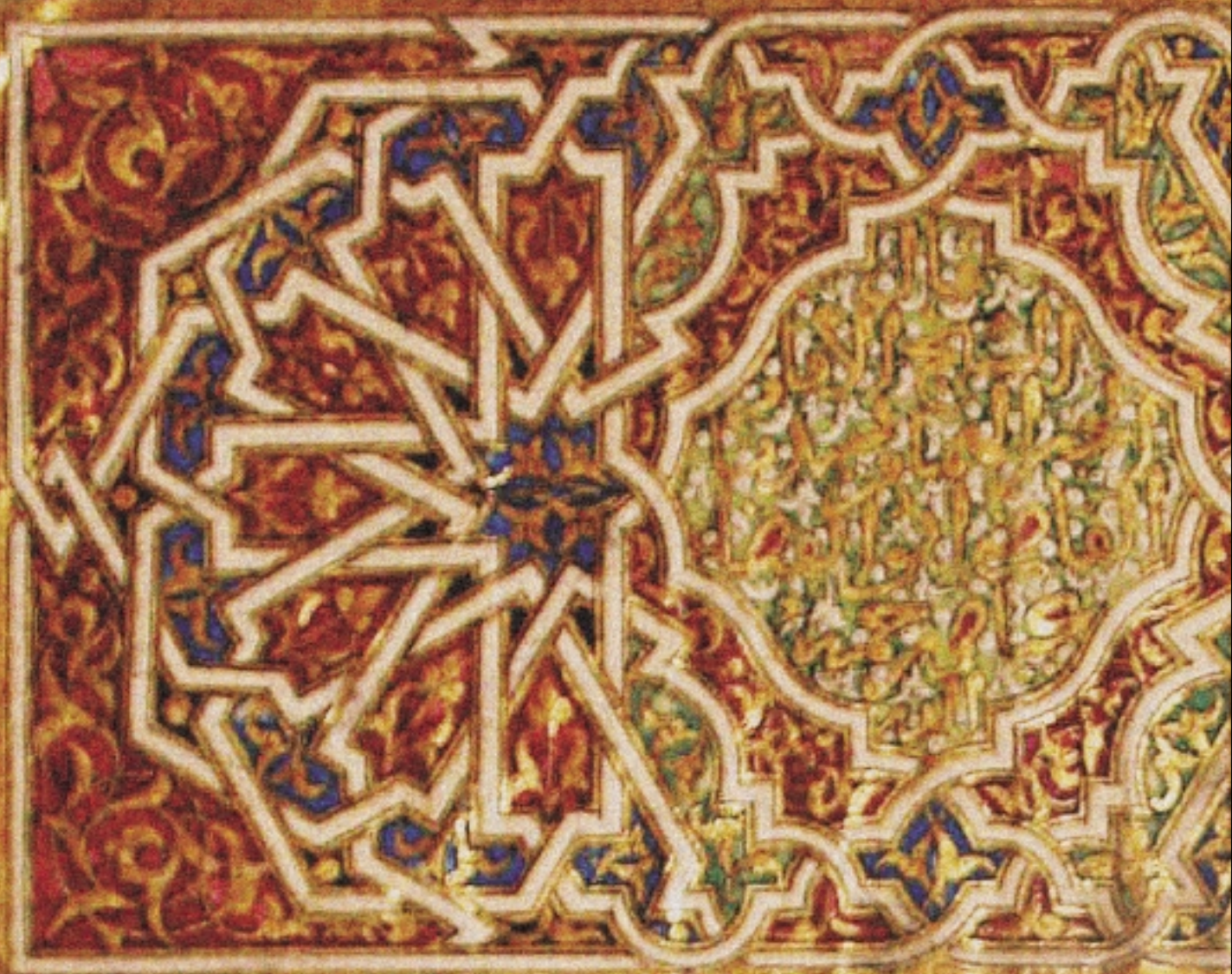
This copy of a 12th century work has been made especially beautiful in order to reflect the glory of the subject. Decorated with gold illumination and written in Maghribi script, the praises of the Prophet are written in red. Some words in the text are explained in the marginal notes.

Apparently purchased in Timbuktu for the equivalent of 24 grams of gold, it originated in Morocco, and was probably commissioned by a wealthy person.





صلی اللہ علی سیدنا ومرتوانا محمد ووالدہ وحبیبہ علیہم السلام



بیتنا سیدنا ومرتوانا محمد ووالدہ وحبیبہ علیہم السلام  
فی قصبہ لہ انظارہم لا تخفوا وومملاہ وانماہر تقدہ سلا  
وعلمناہ وانسغ علی اوردیاریہ نعمائناہ وبعث پیغمبرنا  
سلاہ واورکامہم محقدا ومانشیہ وانرعیہم غفلا وجملا  
والعمر یفینا وعرزماہ واشدہم ہم زافقہ وزحملاہ زکالارہما

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

عِبَادُ اللَّهِ  
أَبْنَاءُ اللَّهِ  
مُؤْتَسِقُونَ  
وَأَرْضَاهُمْ



# الحمد لله الذي

لَيْسَ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمَلَكُوتِ وَهُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ  
لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْبَصَرُ وَلَا حِزَابٌ لَّهُ عَرْشٌ مُجِيدٌ  
يَرْبُّهُ يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ الْكَوْكَبُ عُرْشُهُ وَجَدَّ  
وَأَوْزَارُهُمْ هَالِكًا

مثلت اليه ظل بعنى  
وفي آية والكسيع م  
لا يخيبنا

والتاء

عمر سین فا و مرکان **محمی** و کالد و صبر ستم



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
صلوات



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
مِنْ عَمَلِ سَيِّدِنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَجَمِيعِ



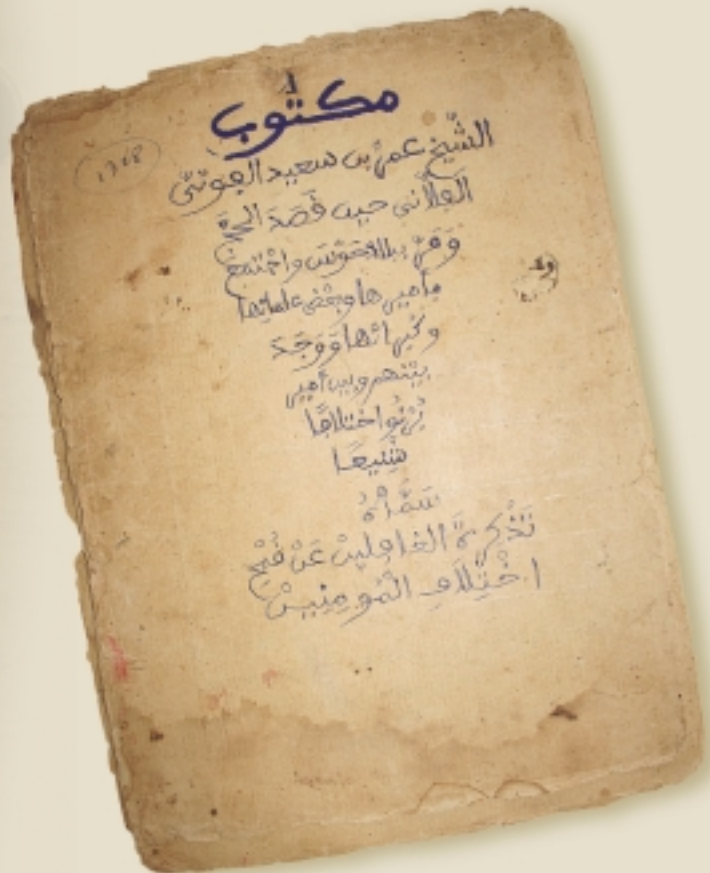


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



This manuscript, an admonition to heedless believers regarding the repugnancy of their differences, was written by 'Umar bin Said, also known as al-Hajj 'Umar. While on a pilgrimage to Mecca, he encountered the warring Muslim rulers of Bornu and Hausaland. To encourage their reconciliation, he wrote this document drawing on historic cases of reconciliation between contending Muslim parties. He advanced the precept that promotion of the greater good will prevail over the advancement of selfish political interest.

Al-Hajj 'Umar, both mystic and warrior, was the founder of the Tukulor state. He launched a jihad against those he considered non-believers in the mid-19th century and succeeded in capturing Timbuktu in 1863.



فصده وتوصله وارخصه من بغامر الامتار ومهما جعلته حقة  
وانا المعتد به والشاكر عليه ثم انه عن الكتاب وختمه وسلمه الى الوكيل وانعذه الوكيل  
الى عبد الله جعفر الى اشجع بما حور وانصر الرجل وقاله اي الامير اللذيذة كرتهم الك تختار  
بفقال الرجل العطاء اب الي قام له عبد الله بمائتي الف درهم وعشرة افراس عربية  
خمسة منها بالمر اكب المحلاة وخمسة بالجملا وعشرين تختار الثياب وعشرة من  
المماليك ركاب الخيول وما يليه بذلك من الجواهر الملوثة وسيرة حبة رقة مامونة الى  
بغداد فلما وصل الى اهله فهدى باي يحيى بن خالد وطلب التفر فدخل الحاجب الى يحيى وقال يا  
مولاي بالباب رجل ظالم الحشمة جميل المبرة حسن الجلال كثير العلم فاذره في الدخول  
فدخل عليه وقبل الارض بيديه وقال يحيى ما عرفك فقال اني الرجل الذي كنت ميتا مرجور الزمان  
وعدت الحدتار وانشرتني واجييتني انا الذي حملت الكتاب المزور عنك الى عبد الله بن مالك  
وقال وما الذي جعل بك وايشي اعطاك ووهبك فقال من بركة ظلك وكرمك وهمتك  
وجعلك اعطاني ونولني واغنانني وقد حملت جميع عطيتي وهما هي ببابك والامر اليك  
والحكم في يديك **فقال** يحيى صنعك معي اكثر من صنعك بك **ولك على الهبة العظيمة**  
واليد الجسيمة اذ بدلت المعد اوة التي بيننا وبين ذلك الرجل المحتشم بالمدافعة وانت  
كنت الصيب في ذلك وانا هب لك من المال مثل ما وهبك ثم امر له بمثل ما اعطاه عبد الله  
ذكر الغفر الى هذه الحكاية في التبر المسبوك ثم قال وانما اوردنا هذه الحكاية ليعلم  
مريفا كتابنا هذا ان الانسار اذا كانت همته عالية لا يضيع ابدا كمالا يضيع ذلك  
الرجل ولو كان خسيب الطبع لا لتجا الى دنى وتغلب على الناس لكنه لما كانت له همة  
سامية تهو وراقدم وخامر مع رجل محتشم كريم الاخلاق وظاهر الاعراب فهو من ذلك  
التهور الى مراده وفتحا غرضه **وانتم** الى الرجل الكريم المحتشم **والذي**  
سعه همتها كيف عاملاه وبما اذا ابلاه ولم يرباي من وقتها عفوتته وعزابه  
ونازير كتها ماله به وتخلص من شدة زمانه وضايقتة واجلت من شرك محتته وعاد  
ذ انعمة نسبية ورتبة عليا انتهي الحمد لله على التمام والفضل والملاة والسلام  
على من جعل ختام الانبياء وله حسنى الختام

The *Tārīkh al-Sūdān* is a chronicle of the Sahel, the semi-desert region south of the Sahara. It was originally written in the 17th century by 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sa'di, a scholar and imam of the Sankore mosque in Timbuktu. The writer narrates the origins and history of Timbuktu, and describes the social order of the town. His account of the history of the Songhay state that flourished during the early 16th century until it was overthrown by a Moroccan invasion in 1591 includes commentary on the moral decline of the Songhay rulers. The work also gives biographies of the scholars and saints of Timbuktu.

Little is known about the writer of this important historical work (*Tārīkh*), except that he was of Songhay origin and an important official in local government.



العفراء الشوح النور كانوا ائمة بيضا هي دولة اهل على  
 وفي كتابه مزج دولة التوارق واخر الائمة منقطع بيضا  
 العفوية الفاضل كتاب موسى مكث في الائمة اربعين سنة  
 لم يستتب ولو في صلاة واحدة لاجل صحة البدن التي رزق  
 الله تعالى بها وسبل على سبب تلمه الصحة فقال احسبها  
 من ثلاثة اشياء ما ثبت في الهوى ولو لينة واحدة في الحصول  
 الاربعة كلها وما ثبت لينة واحدة الا ودهنت جسمي  
 وبعد العجز استعملت بالماء السمور وما خرجت للصلاة  
 الصبح فله الا بعد العكور هكذا سمعته من والده ومن  
 العفوية احمد رحمه الله تعالى ولا يقض بين الناس الا في حقه  
 شترج بنى وراءه اراه من حقه المشرف ينصب المفضلة  
 تحت شجرة كبيرة كانت يشارك يومئذ وهو من علماء  
 الشوح ان الله نير حلوا اليه واسر لتعلم العمل هي دولة اهل  
 على بامر السلطان احمد الحلج موسى فخلقه في الائمة  
 والله اعلم جنة جنة اهل والدي العفوية الرباط الجبر العابد  
 سيرت محمد بن الله البلبالي وصور الله اعلم او البلبان  
 صلى بالناسير تلمه المسجد هي واخر دولة التوارق وهي اوابل  
 دولة ستر على حسا الى تنبكت صحبة العفوية الامام  
 الفاضل كتاب موسى لما رجع من فارس مع اخوانه

سير











وَشَاعَرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ اسْفَاةُ الْحَمِيَّةِ  
 وَتَحْرِيقُونَ (بِالْبَيْتِ) مِرَّةً وَيَا لَيْتَنِي  
 كَلَّا عَلَيْنَا وَأَعْتَمِي مَا يَغْتَمِي  
 مَرَقًا هَوَاتِنًا هَا  
 أَنْصَبُ بِوَعْرِ الْفَلْبَانِ حَيْثُ أَيْضًا  
 أَهْبَهُ رَأْيِي خَالَ الْعِلْمِ وَأَحْرَامِ  
 كَمْ حَسِبْنَا وَرَقْمًا مَعَ عَزْرِ  
 نَجَاءَ نَرِي وَحَقَّ الزُّكْرُ اعْتَفَرُ  
 وَهَبْ تَقْلَمُ وَالَّتِي كَتَمْتِ  
 أَيْضًا مَهْدًا أَنْصَبُ مَسْرًا وَحَمِي  
 وَخَصْرُ بِالْتَّعْلِيمِ وَالْأَعْلَامِ مَا  
 وَفِي رَهْبَةٍ وَأَلَامِي رَقَبٌ فَرَا لِي مَا

MANUSCRIPT 786

The manuscript is a copy of one of the most famous didactic poems in the Islamic world. Known as the *Alfiyah ibn Malik*, it consists of a thousand couplets that explain the rules of Arabic syntax and morphology. The work covers all aspects of vocabulary, and has to be memorised by students of Arabic in West Africa. Until they have done so, they cannot be considered to have mastered the language.

The poem was written by Ibn Malik, a 13th century scholar who lived in Egypt. This copy of the manuscript dates to 1861, and is written in Sahrawi script in black ink, with red used to emphasize the particular grammatical rule. The main text is in a central block, with explanatory notes added on the sides.





هذا الذي كان قنطرة بلجة جماعة من مسيحيين  
اتناهم يكن بيننا وبين كل امر من امره  
ولهم يحس ولا يكون في قمتنا قتال امر  
والاقتنه والارض ارضه بملكه ضامن انوار  
كان في قلوبنا اذ ابنته امره اهلها لاله  
وانه اوجهه فخر اوله علمه اعلم يعرفين  
وبين امره من الامم الا كتاب الله وسنة  
عليه وسالوا في امره الامم اليهم اول  
والارقياء والاعمال على من قريش بهما  
فلا علموا انه ما كان ولا يكون ومات  
ولما بعث في قلوبنا ولاه نيل قنطرة  
او قنطرة او من العجة او من اعلا كل قنطرة  
تلك البلاد واحمدى من باؤف قصره رآه  
بيننا وبين جميع تلك ولوقد اراه  
ابراهيم وصبره اذ لم تنفع منارحة بيننا  
كان ارضه وصورة جلده اى كان الامم كل كذا  
هو حبه الى الله ورسوله ليجوز  
من بين كماله نلهم معاصرونا لاسبعه

MANUSCRIPT 940

**A**l-Hajj 'Umar, the renowned Fulani jihad leader, addresses the people of the Fulani state of Masina, informing them that he has no quarrel with them but only with their leader Ahmad Lobbo al-Masini. Al-Hajj 'Umar wanted the Masina leader to pay allegiance to him as the new ruler. The latter refused as he regarded himself as the legitimate Muslim ruler.



1

الآن نحن نذكر في واصلنا تروينا ويقولون نحن على أيضا فينا  
اليوم منون حتى يحضرك فينا شيخ بيننا ثم لا يجد وأبو الحسن  
حي كما هو في حيت ويسلمنا تسليمنا وان شاء ان يكون من النافعين  
الخاصين الذين وضعهم مولانا وصداقنا اياها يعلموا ابا وعلماهم  
يقولون نحن وبقولنا امننا بالله وبالرسول وامننا ثم يتولى  
ويبقى من بعد ذلك وما اوليك يا مومنين اذ ادعوا الى الله  
ورسوله ليحكم بينكم اذ ابريوا منه مع ضوا واما يد لهم الحق  
ياتوا اليهم من غير ان يملواهم في امر الرضا ابو الحسن فيكون  
ان يحق الله عليهم ورسوله بالاوليك هم الكلمون في رغب  
في ان يكونوا مومنين العاجزين بالجنة الذين وصفتهم  
مولانا وحضرتنا في حنا وامننا يقولون انما كان قول الذين  
اذ ادعوا الى الله ورسوله ليحكم بينهم ان يقولوا سمعنا وامننا  
واوليك هم العاجزون وهم يفتقر الله ورسوله ويخش الله ويتقوه  
والاوليك هم العاجزون وامننا مثل امر مولانا مع اوليك في حنا  
امر الامر بين اهلنا مع حنا وقضائنا وامننا ثابت  
النفس مومنيننا بالحق الله ورسوله وفهم واصل  
محبينا اليهم مع حنا وعلمنا بنا لتكون ركننا وركبتنا حنا  
بين يدي القاضين بانفسنا ليس غير والافضل بنا به حنا  
ولا عنده ولو علموا بين غيرنا وشقنا او حنا لانه ما كان  
بيكنا ويريحنا من قومه لامن اعلمنا ولا اخواننا والابن معهم

ولا

The subject of this manuscript is scholastic theology. The author makes reference to differing views among Muslim scholars on fundamental theological issues such as the interpretation of God's actions.

Although the work was written before 1416 by Muhammad bin Abi Bakr bin 'Abd al-Aziz bin Jama'a, long before Timbuktu became a centre of scholarship, it continued to be used as a classic text in Muslim education in West Africa for many centuries.



الحق ان افضل الصحابة هو ابو بكر وهو الخليفة بعده بالحول والعار وورثه وفضل علي  
 عثمان بن عفان النوري عالى ووه والنوري حقا كان خيرا من الكثر ارق صف الفتن والى ان يرضى  
 هذا على الاغيار من الاتي افضل ابوبكر وعم عثمان وعلي خيرا من الاضحة من اهل الحق  
 اختاروا من عثمان والحق ما تقدم ذكره من جوار ان يقال خليفته رسول الله بل خلائق وامايه  
 خليفته الله بقبه من ذهب والحق الجواز في ابي بكر رضي الله عنه انه كان ينهى عن ايراد  
 والصدقة رجحان باسمع علي بن ابي طالب رضي الله عنه في فضل علي بن ابي طالب  
 وفي كفة علي من اهل البيت او هو الامس التوفيق ولم يلعن من يذبحه موت سوى المختار  
 في الاخر عا من ذهب اهل السنة انه لا يجوز لعن الفاطم والعباس وانه ذهب عنهم المسمى  
 الجواز وقال بعض اشياخ من اعيان الجوز اخذت له معينا بل في وجهه تسمية هذه الخلائق تسمى  
 علي ان من تكب الكبير من اهل البيت او لا ومن ذهب اهل السنة لا يزكوي ومن ذهب الجواز  
 ومن ذهب المعتزلة من اهل البيت وايان المقلد من معتزلي خلائق الفاضلة والسادة والخليفة  
 من ذهب الاشعري والفاضي ان ايمان المقلد عنهم معتن خلائق الفاضلة والسادة والخليفة  
 في نيب التخليد في قبول الغير بلاد ليل وما عند الله عقل نعمتنا في الحيا والاسرار والاعمال  
 الجصل بوجوب العمرة عليه مع العقل قبل بعثة الاسا عند خلائق المعتزلة والخليفة نيب  
 الجصل ضد العلم وخدم مع في المعلوم علي ما هو به وخدم الجصل مع في المعلوم علي خلائق  
 ما هو به وما ايمان شخص حار باس بقبول لعن الامتثال ايمان الكافر اذا اراد موضع  
 في المثار غير مقبول وقوية العاصي في تلك الحالة مقبولة وان قلت ما العرفي قلت ان حساب  
 حكم الايمان تكتنه والايان حدم تصديق النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم في كل ما علم صحبه  
 من العرفي بالرضي ورضي عليه وما جعل خيرا في حساب من الايمان مع في الموضع من اختلاف  
 العلم ان ارضها ان حنيفية لاند خلائق التي اعلمت المسألة ليكني والله اعلم ولا يقضي  
 بكم وارتداد في بفس او بقتل واخذت من ذهب اهل السنة المسمى علي الكوفي الاثني والاربعين  
 يكون من تد اومند ذهب الجوار ان انه اذ لم يتبين في جرد لاد ما الكوفي ويعد خلائق الكوفي ومن ذهب  
 المعتزلة انه يخرج من لاد الايمان ولا يدخل في الكوفي جماع الاضحة الالف وهو اعم من الغيب  
 والنسفة والعمري اعم من اكون على الايمان او غيرهم ومن ينفرد ارتداد بعد ذلك وبهم  
 الكوفي من غير اعتقاد يصح في حق من انفسه ما ينوء بعد مدة الكوفي كفي انه رضي  
 به والرضي بالكوفي كفي واجم الكوفي من غير اعتقاد بفس ارضه با اعتقاد اختلف  
 في المنتزعة والكوفي من غير اعتقاد والاشعري بقبول الكوفي بقبول الكوفي بقبول الكوفي بقبول الكوفي  
 جلا كفي انجاء والاشعري بقبول الكوفي بقبول الكوفي بقبول الكوفي بقبول الكوفي بقبول الكوفي  
 بلقبنة الكوفي في تلك الحالة لا بعد بكم وما المعدوم من بيتا وشي في لقبه الله لا حنة  
 يعني الصلال اشتمل هذه البيت على قاعه نبي الاولى ان الله تعالى هادى المعدوم اولاهم  
 ذهب الخيفية الشافعي ومن ذهب المعتزلة الاولى وعين االمكون الكيشي مع التطوير ختم  
 اهل السنة الاشارة ومن ذهب السنة ان التطوير غير المكون اذ السبب غير المسبب ومن ذهب المعتزلي  
 الا كتمال من ذهب اهل السنة ان التطوير الابعاد والمكون الموجود من الاذهان كور هو  
 لانه انها شئ واحد تنبيه التطوير الابعاد والمكون الموجود من الاذهان كور هو  
 جزء بلا وهو الكوفي بيا من خال من ذهب السنة ثبوت الجزاء العا لا يتجنى في خلائق للعباسية

علي ع

الاسلم

العلم

انفعا

في الاموال وهي العبادات هل خلائق منسحق الايمان والي ومن ذهب الشافعي  
 انها تمل من قلب

بعد

بقول

ع

حو

اهل ع

The use of tobacco for smoking is discussed in this work that is partly in the form of a didactic poem. It is known that the 19th century Fulani rulers of the state of Masina took a very harsh stance against tobacco. While scholars debated the use of tobacco and differed in their interpretation of the scriptures and law, this poem concludes that tobacco is an intoxicant and its use should therefore be prohibited.

It was written probably sometime between 1835 and 1852, and is in fine Sudani script.



لكي يبيعهما بقل تعقيفا  
 حنات فتتاح دفيق الشئ  
 زوجة الشيكى خووفه  
 وراها فترتكتها حفيه  
 لخيشها وهم لها ناهون  
 خيشته مسمومة دسيسه  
 حرامه ويل لصي حلالها  
 لباسر مستعملها اخيشي  
 هز الزند صححه وييسه  
 عرضة الرصا كريد  
 مضيج ما قال هز العالم  
 فرقيل عنه في الحواز باجر  
 توسعا بعا في تلك المرة  
 تحريصه الشح لزوج البهم  
 ما فاه منذر على العباد  
 سبيلهم ووهواه فترت  
 غير الله وحسن عون  
 والصلاح على من لا  
 يعرره واميني



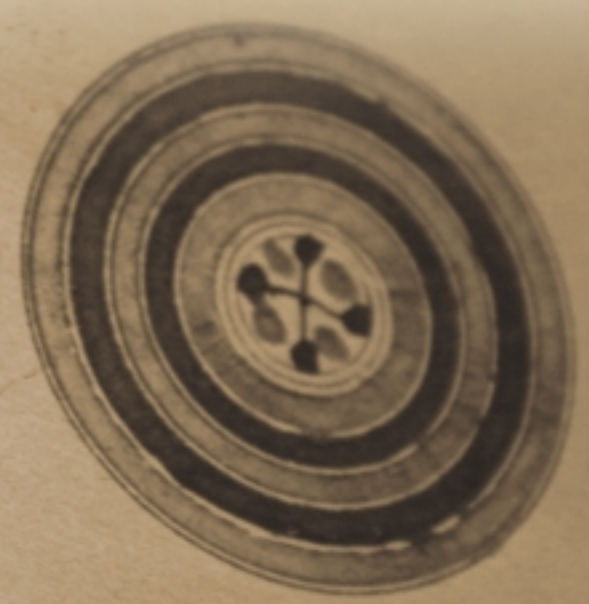
ونهى شيخنا كبري نعم بئنا للمهترة وكفى به قبيحا  
 والله انه لذوا جنتها على ارا وامر يبي العباد  
 يسمى سنة النبي المصطفى اما ما كفى امانا وهو  
 من لم يجرع ما نهاه الشيخ وهو لو جري بئنا من قطع  
 خليفة الرسول احرالولة وقال عن امر النبي  
 وشيخنا صحر ارامى رواه لوج رينا المصنفون  
 نخر ينها حفا بلا بهتان هذا الزم اصح في البيبا  
 والشيخ عثمان امير المؤمنين قال بنجر يجر على القول المبي  
 واختلفوا في بيعها وهل يجوز للمكتسب مالها ولا يجوز  
 وقال بعضهم فلا يجوز والبعض فالوا انه يجوز  
 واكى الجواز ليس بديل والنهى اقوى وجوازه دليل  
 باصاح واعتبر بما ذكرنا في شأنها صحتها ما اتركنا  
 وشك في نخر ينها وهو جمل وخالف الله وخالف الرسول  
 بكل ونشرفها له من الشيكى حقا واور ميبى  
 لا بد لا بد له والكذاب بالتار والكذاب ذات لهب  
 ولعنة الله على الكذاب وبل لكذاب والنياب  
 ايضا ولا بد له بالبخل وكل علة يدون البخل  
 بالبخل جمرة من النيران فرقال له الرسول ذو الامان  
 بما الهدت عملها النجات سنرذ اصحت به الروايات

بكل ورد فقها ترفيد  
 باسوق كذاب جودا  
 والله لا يهن به كمول  
 كتبت انا انشفها كت  
 اما رايك مارا الرارو  
 شجرة ملعونة خديس  
 والشيخ ابراهيم قال  
 وقال بعض اهل العلم  
 في اشبه مكانه حيث  
 ايضا وقال انه مبي  
 ومن بها امتنع عمل هو  
 وشيخنا الصخر نجل الح  
 اجازها لهم لا جاشرة  
 فرتع ما فررتنه في النك  
 ثع الصلاة للغير الهام  
 والله وحبه ومنه سل  
 تمت  
 والله  
 بنر

MANUSCRIPT 1515

One of the most beautiful manuscripts on the exhibition, this is an ornate 18th century copy of the first chapter of the Qur'an, al-Fatiha (The Opening), and the last two chapters, al-Falaq (Daybreak) and al-Nās (People). The manuscript is protected by an ornamented leather cover.

It is written in Hausawi, a variant of western or Maghribi Arabic script. The Hausa-speaking Muslims were found mostly in the area of the Sokoto Caliphate in northern Nigeria. It is probable that this special Qur'an was taken to Timbuktu from there.



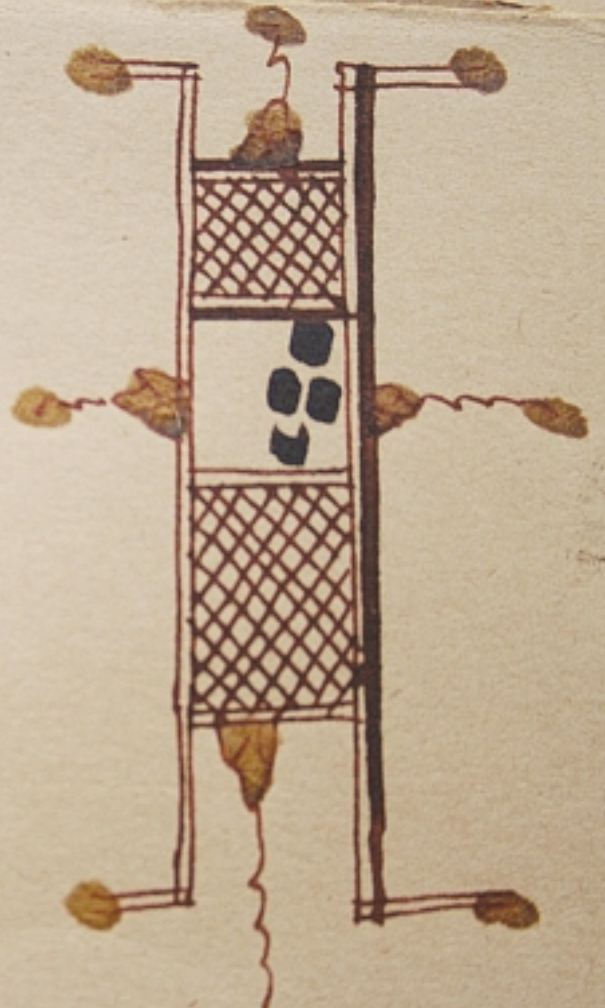
السورة طائفة المتكبرين في يوم القيمة

ايات باسم الله الرحمن الرحيم  
الحمد لله رب العالمين الرحمن  
الرحيم ملك يوم القيمة  
كان قبا و اياك نستعين  
اهدنا الصراط المستقيم  
الذي انزلنا على عبدك  
محمد النبي الامين  
ولا اله الا انت سبحانك  
انا اعوذ بك من الهم والحزن





فَإِذَا نَزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَاتَّخَذَ  
عَذَابًا لِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ  
عَلَى مَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ  
فَإِذَا نَزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَاتَّخَذَ  
عَذَابًا لِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ



عَلَى مَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ  
فَإِذَا نَزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَاتَّخَذَ  
عَذَابًا لِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ  
فَإِذَا نَزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَاتَّخَذَ  
عَذَابًا لِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

MANUSCRIPT 1759

**S***harh Mukhtasar Khalil bin Ishaq al-Misri*, is a 17th century commentary by Abu 'Abd Allah Fara on a 14th century work that is regarded as the standard text of Maliki substantive law. This voluminous manuscript is concerned with the application of the law with regard to ritual aspects of the practice of religion, such as prayer, marriage, alms-giving, ritual cleansing, penal code, jihad, dietary laws and fasting.

This copy is in Sudani script, and its 816 pages are enclosed in a tooled leather cover that has suffered insect damage over time.



الجماعة هي من هو تكوون الجماعة **الجماعة** من تكوون الجماعة  
مالك وفان ابن الفاسم اليه **الجماعة** من الضم والجمع الخوف ومن الصفة **الجماعة**  
**الجماعة** وللجماعة **الجماعة** من ارضي بها وهو جماعة الامام ونزك القول  
والوفاء بالامار والثناء عنه **الجماعة** والايثار واحدة من اثار وهو على  
فسيح من غير وفرض **الجماعة** فليعتبر **الجماعة** اناسا في **الجماعة** و**الجماعة** و**الجماعة**  
ستتبع الامام ويجوز العهدة **الجماعة** فوم على ما سنبني عليه **الجماعة** باب **الجماعة**  
الجماعة **الجماعة** في هذه الاربعة يكون فرض **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة**  
في شرح الجلاد وضابط **الجماعة** انه انما اجوه **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة**  
المسلمين سبقك **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة**  
ويكون لهم فرض على الامام انما انزل **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة**  
عليهم فان عجزوا **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة**  
الامام **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة**  
والذي فرض **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة**  
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بعضا وفيه عكس **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة**  
انه منسوب **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة**  
وهو **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة** **الجماعة**  
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الجماعة

This manuscript on scholastic theology is written in Ottoman Turkish in eastern Arabic script, while most Timbuktu manuscripts are written in western Arabic script. It was probably brought to Timbuktu by a pilgrim or trader. Its presence in Timbuktu shows that manuscripts travelled great distances across the Mediterranean and its African hinterland. It is also indicative of attempts to link places as distant as Timbuktu to the centre of the Ottoman Empire in Istanbul, especially during the 19th century when the ailing Empire was seeking to strengthen its presence in the furthest reaches of the Muslim world following the loss of its territories in the Balkans.



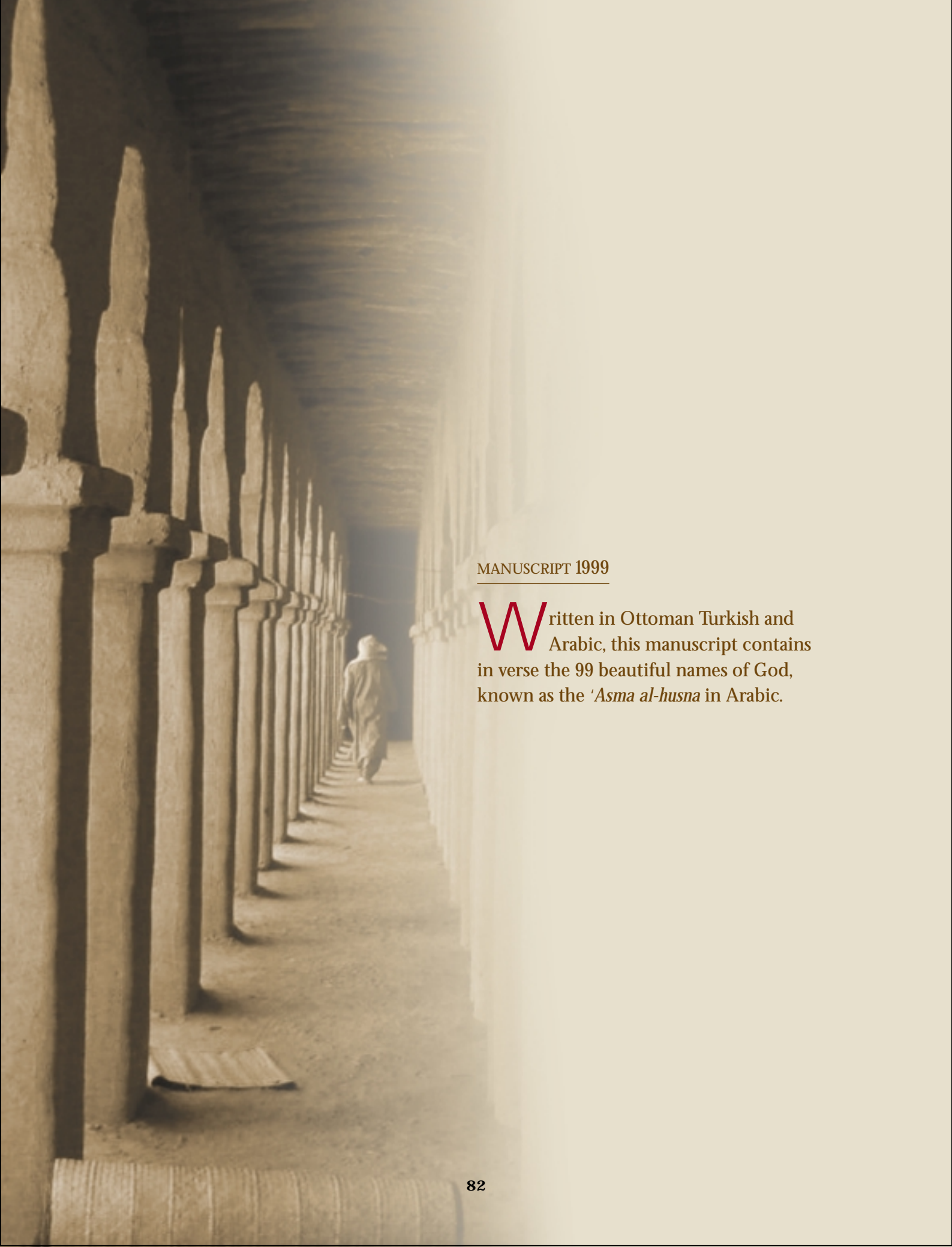


قره مانند قدم بصدقه معلوم کوز اوله که دنیا لرحم سرور خندان اولمشوز در  
انش الله تعالی بوندله بوپردخی طرف حقیر انمزی دعا دله فراموش و خاطر شریفله  
اخراج تپه سراسر اسید علیه افندیند سلعای افندی <sup>۲۶۳</sup>

**بیوردی بوسیاقنامه تحریر و بدنه ارسال اولنور**

شریعت شعار سلفکه قضاستنا ساکن فلاذ اوغلو قلاذ قضای افندی ذید  
فضله قدوة الاماثل والافان اقران قضا: مذکورده اعیان ذید قدره انشا اولنور که  
مصطفی خیلانم کسندک غناک حضور یمزه عرض حاله ایدوب مرکز من  
کور کسندک قضا کوز ساکنندیند فلاذ ابنز فلاذ نام کسندده موجب تشکر  
ایلا کز بوز طفال غرو شواله جو حقیق اولوب طلب ایلد دکلم ادا کسند  
نقل ایلدوب طرفزه اعلام اولمشوز مرعی مذکور یکج اولنور تحصیل سبز عوشر  
عله کوروب احقاق حق اولوق با بنده بیوردی تحریر و بیشتر التماس انکی افا  
لریوز دلا قدوة الاماثل والافان ابراهیم ذید قدره بیشتر تعینی و ارسال اولمشوز  
وصولت کز کور که طرفزه اعلام اولندخی وجه اوزر سکیز بوز طفال غرو شمش منبوی  
حقی اولدیندی شرعلا ابداء اظهرا اولدقنا مرقوم بیشتر معرفتی و طابطی معرفت تحصیل  
اندیردوب طرفزه غلبردن احتراز و اجتناب اندیردکم موجب بیوردی

ایلا عامل و فانیل و رضی اولد سز <sup>۲۶۴</sup> الحاج  
المکاتب علی افندی  
تت هذا لکتاب بعون الله الملك  
الوقهاب غفر الله له لصاحبه  
و کلتبه بونی یزدیم اولوق معارج  
اوقیان یازنه دعا قلمق ایچونه  
صاحب مالک علی افندی  
تاریخ ۶



MANUSCRIPT 1999

Written in Ottoman Turkish and Arabic, this manuscript contains in verse the 99 beautiful names of God, known as the *'Asma al-husna* in Arabic.

فَحَوْضُوفِيهِ حِفْظًا وَاعْتِقَادًا  
بِسْ أَيْلِكَ اعْتِقَادِي لِي حِفْظًا  
وَكُونُوا عَوْنًا هَذَا الْعَبْدُ دَهْرًا  
دَفِي بَرْدَمِ بُوَعْبِدِهِ تَهْرًا أَيْلِكَ  
تَعَلَّ اللَّهُ بِعَفْوِهِ بِفَضْلِ  
أَوْلَائِكَ عَفْوِيهِ فَضِيلُهُ رَحْمَانًا  
وَإِنِّي دَهْرًا أَدْعُو كُنْهُ وَسَيِّ  
دُعَائِي بِمَدَامَا شَوْلُ كَسْمِ كُنْ  
قَوْلًا فَيُضَعُ كَرِيْمَانًا عَفْوًا كَثْرًا

تَسَالُوا جَنَسِي اصْنَا فِي الْمَنَالِ  
لِي هَتِي بَوْلُهُ سِرْ دَرُؤُومَنَانِي  
بِيذِكْرِ الْخَيْرِ فِي حَالِ ابْتِهَالِ  
دُعَاءِ خَيْرِهِ دَرُؤُومَنَانِي  
وَيُعْطِيهِ السَّمَادَةَ فِي الْمَالِ  
أَوْلَهُ خَيْرٌ سَفَادَتُهُ مَالِي  
لِي بِالْخَيْرِ يَوْمًا قَدْ غَالِي  
بِكَا بَرَكَةِ دُعَائِي أَوْلَهُ مَقَالِي  
أَكَا طَهْمِ نَاظِمِهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِ حَالِي

عَبَّ الْكُتَابُ بِعَوْنِ اللَّهِ  
بِوَقْفِي يَارِزِيمِ يَادَكَارِ أَوْلِيَّيْهِ  
الْحَطَّ بَاتِقِي وَالرَّفَاقِي  
نَهْ حَالِمِ وَأُونَامِ يَرْمُقِ حَضُورِهِ  
تَارِيحِ جَنَسِي وَسُتُونِ وَمَاتِيهِ  
كَبَّ الْعَمَلِ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَالْبُحُورِ

الْمَلِكِ الْوَهَّابِ  
أَوْقِفِي يَارِزِيمِ دُعَائِي حَقِيقِي  
الْعَبْدِ طَاهِرِ وَالرَّبِّ عَافِي  
كَمَالِ أَهْلِ نَظَرِ قَدِيمِ حَضُورِهِ  
وَالْفِ  
وَالصَّمْعِ عَرَسِ أَحْمَدِ

MANUSCRIPT 2145

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This is a copy of the famous essay known as *The Obligations of Princes* that contains the political reflections of Muhammad Abd al-Karim al-Maghili, a renowned 15th century scholar from Algeria. Al-Maghili was instrumental in bringing Islam, formerly the religion of the urban elite, to ordinary farmers and nomads of the region. He was also known for his controversial views and actions concerning religious minorities. In this work, he sets out a guide to good governance, defining the duties and responsibilities of a ruler.

It is written in Suqi script, and is protected by a fine leather cover.







MANUSCRIPT 2163

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In this very early Arabic work on astronomy, written before 1009, geometrical tables illustrate the position of the stars and moon, as well as the changing positions of the constellations and the moon. The author is Egyptian, and it is written in eastern Arabic script.



MANUSCRIPT 2309

A manuscript containing extracts in verse from the famous 11th century work on medicine by Ibn Sina, who is also known as Avicenna in the western world. This famous scholar of Persian origin was from the Bukhara region of Central Asia. The work is encyclopaedic in that it covers all the medical knowledge that was available from ancient sources at this time, as well as Ibn Sina's own advances in the fields of contagious diseases and the link between psychological and physical health. This copy contains his guide to healthy living, and advice for the treatment of various medical issues from broken bones to cleaning teeth.

The script is eastern Arabic, written on paper that may be of Islamic manufacture. The tooled leather cover was probably made in Timbuktu.





وَيُضَعَفُ لِإِعْصَابٍ مِنْ فِرَاطِ اللَّيْلِ وَبِهِرْمِ الْحَسَمِ وَمِنْ بَازِ الْهَرَمِ

وَلَا يَغْرُوكَ إِفْرَاطُ الدَّرَجَةِ فَلَيْسَ لِلْإِفْرَاطِ مِنْهَا مَنْفَعَةٌ

فَدُمْنَا لِجِسْمِ نَحَائِطِ كَالْقَذَا وَلَا يَهَيُّ الْجِسْمُ شَالِغًا

الْحَامِسُ مِنْهَا وَهُوَ الْاسْتِفْرَاحُ

٣٩

# وَالْإِسْتِفْرَاحُ

وَالْجِسْمُ مَخْتِاجٌ إِلَى اسْتِفْرَاحٍ مِنْ شَبَابِ الْأَعْضَاءِ لِلدَّمِ

فَالْقُصْدُ وَالذَّوَابِ فِي الرَّبِيعِ النَّاسِ فِيهِ غَايَةُ الْمُنْفَعِ

وَالْفِي تَسْتَعْمَلُ الْمُعْصِفُ وَتُخْرَجُ السُّوْفَى فِي الْخُرْفِ

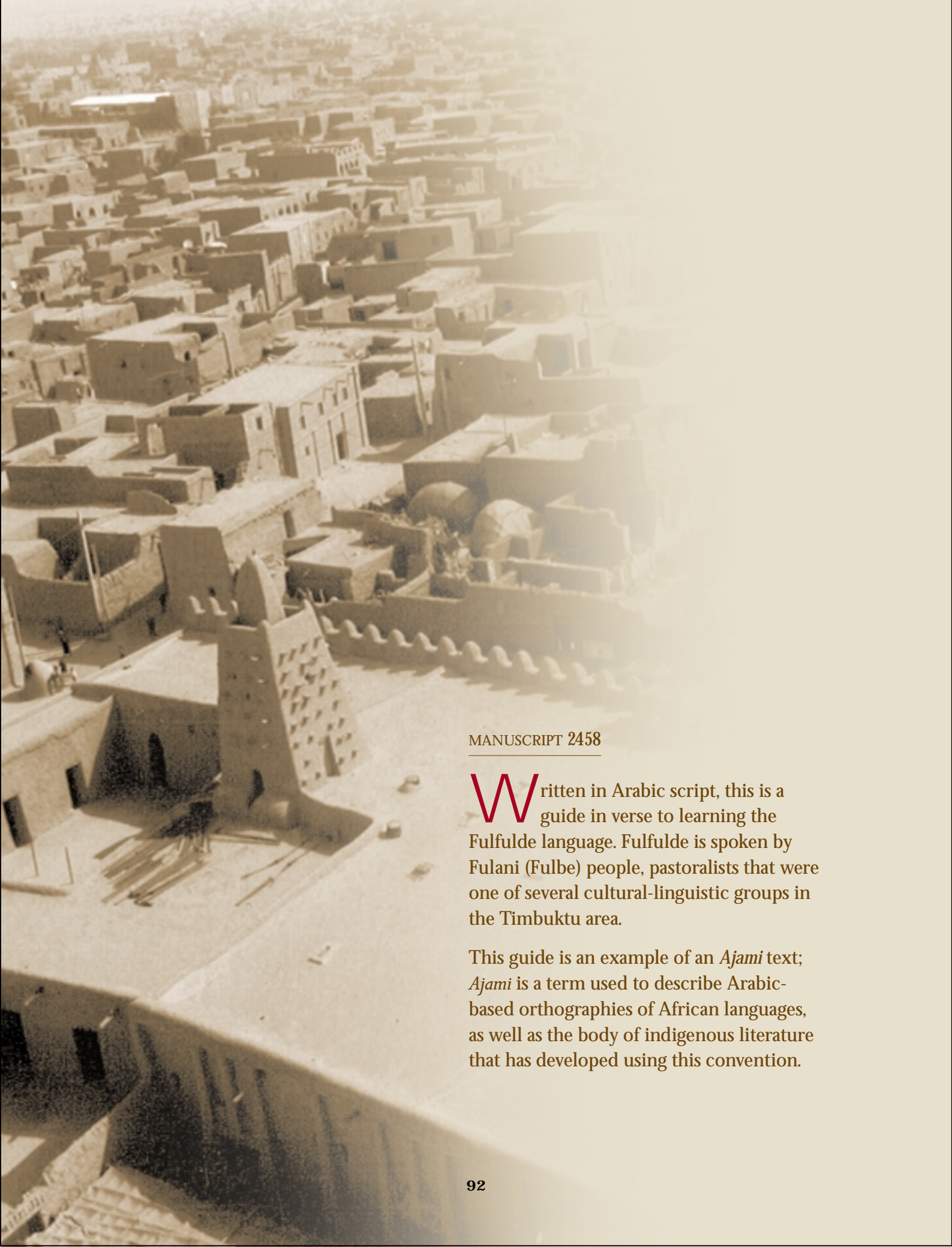
فَعَرَّزُوا اسْتَعْمَلُوا السُّوَاكَ تَنْظِفُ الْأَسَانُ وَالْإِحْيَاكَ



MANUSCRIPT 2399

**E**ntitled *Begging the Help of God in extinguishing some of the Innovations that have been ignited and reviving those dying Acts of the Prophetic Sunna*, this work condemns common heresies and unseemly personal behaviour in the Sahel region. These include raising the voice when praising or praying to God, spitting, blowing of noses in public, and the placing of shoes in the mosque. It also condemns the proliferation of mosques in a single village, and visits of women to the cemeteries.

لم يؤخذ الا واحد او اثنين التهويط التخليه وان احدى التهويط الجمع  
التي تطلق اسم الله او اسم نبيه من الحاصل ان جميع الاذان لا يبيح  
الجهلاء للمؤذنين الجاهل مع هذه الشروط مع انهم وان كانوا علماء بالتر  
افضل واوبى واكثر المؤذنين من اذوا على عذمانه وكانوا ينتقون ذلك  
التقوان وخافوا ان يؤذنتهم الوقت ولم يسعهم الجميع ان اذنوا واحدا  
بحد واحد ومضى منهم من كان اولي فان استنوا واوبى فانهم يؤذنون جماعة  
بالشروط المتقدمة تنبيه اعلم ايها المؤذن انه قد مضت  
عامة المؤذنين على السنة انه اذ الاذان ان يؤذنا عملا الحسنة تنحلي  
او كلاما مرجحنا انه يرض به انه يريد ان يؤذنا في بعض الاذان يشترط في  
الاذان هذا هو مؤذنا واحد وكيف بالجماعة انكس باذنته في المدخل  
وهو مواضع الاذان الثلاثة المنار وهو البناء المدور وهو سطح المسجد  
وتربيعه بدعة وتعليقه بدعة ممنوعة لوجوه وانقرها في المدخل  
لكل الاذان على المنار شانه لانه محدث ولم يكن من اجرامه مضى  
وقال بعض ائمة مسجد واسر الاعظم لا يصح المنار الا من شانه بيت  
فراعه وان تغذر المنار على سطح المسجد وهو الموضع الشانه فيؤذن  
فيه الشان كالشيخ ان امره ان يكتشف على احد جانبيه فيعلم باربه  
وهو الثالث فيؤذن فيه الشان ايضا واما الاذان في المسجد  
فهي ممنوعة لوجوه وانقر في المدخل الا ان يكون للجمع بين  
الصلوات في ذلك جانبا في جوفه واما الاقامة فلا تنبذ في الاذان  
المسجد والسنة ان الله صعد الامام على القبر ان يكون المؤذن على  
المنار كذلك في عهد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وابكر وعم  
وصدر ما خلافة عثمان رضي الله عنهم اجمعين وكان المؤذنون



MANUSCRIPT 2458

Written in Arabic script, this is a guide in verse to learning the Fulfulde language. Fulfulde is spoken by Fulani (Fulbe) people, pastoralists that were one of several cultural-linguistic groups in the Timbuktu area.

This guide is an example of an *Ajami* text; *Ajami* is a term used to describe Arabic-based orthographies of African languages, as well as the body of indigenous literature that has developed using this convention.

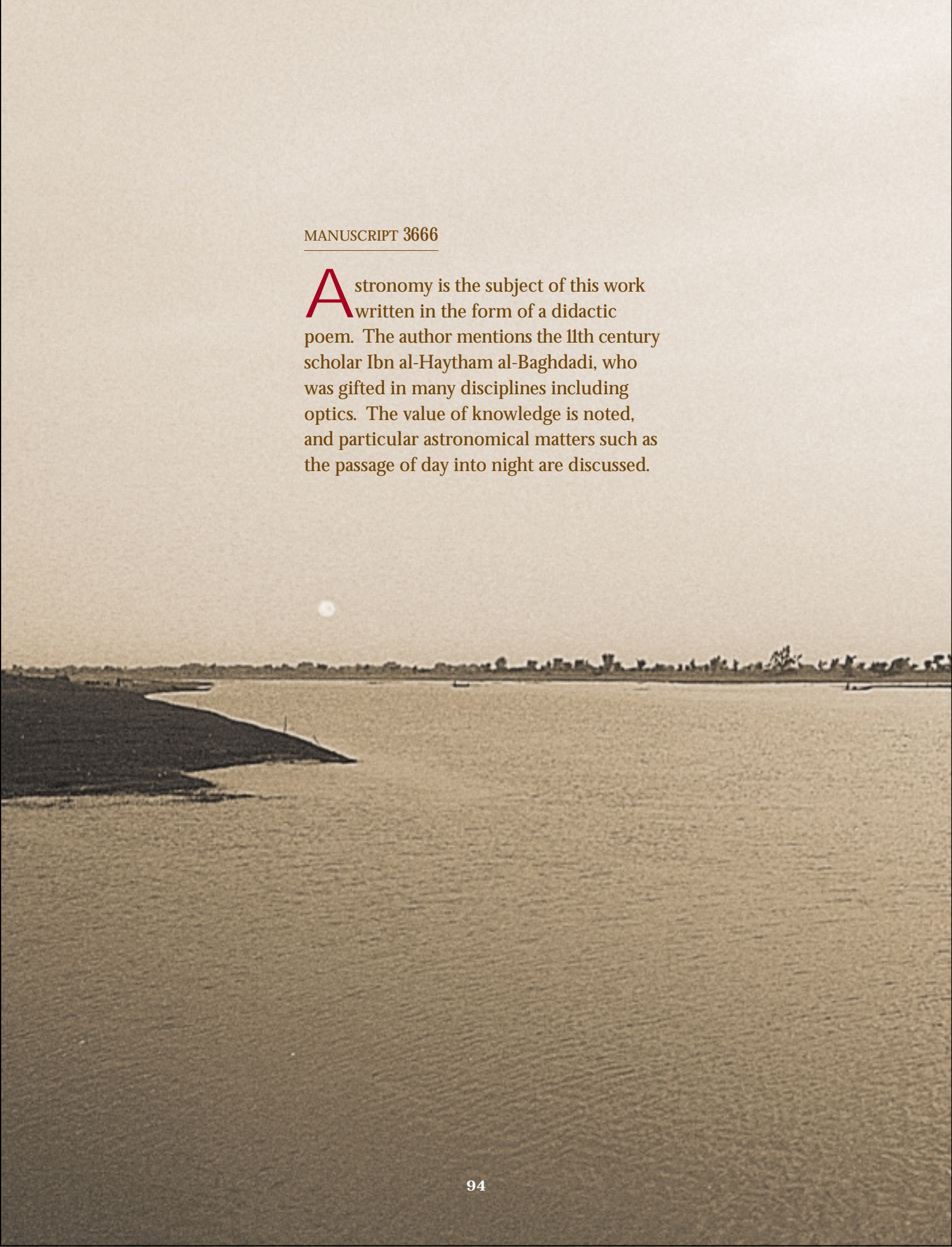
الحمد لله على ما جمعنا و افضل الامور و المسك  
 على النبي صلى الله عليه و آله و سلم و على من تبعه  
 ما اختلفت السنة العباد بحكمة العباد للمراد  
 و بعد ما فقدنا البيان لنفهم ما نقوله فحلا  
 اهل جود و افقرنا و اعلمنا و اعلمنا  
 كسح برادع لبر عليه انرا سمع ايه الاما ديب  
 انديم الماء ووزن عاللا يبر اشرب بيم كل طيبا حلا  
 و اوكه مبر الجباد و في خيل امر انت بر باد  
 و لب لسكير و الدهم له و احراة تدعى لدهم دب  
 و السيد كما قد اضر بر صحت و عشرة تر كل منته و تصدق  
 و البير حم بيلو النهار و الاثر المعروف يدعى ما  
 و المجر جل كسيد و البير صنف و الراضر هور و افرا جند  
 و الارض تيسر و السهل كسر و بوظة عند كمر صدف  
 و البري في و البحار عادي و النار بيته و المذاب ثلثي  
 و الكافور نيار و البخور ريد و الشمس نافع و النجوم كود  
 و السر يبع د مغل البسار و زنة عندهم هو الانسار  
 و لغز عندهم هو الاسلام و شو شرب الحرف هو الا بحال  
 الشو: سمان و البرد اشارة و الكفتب بقد و التفتاب د قلاتر  
 الكزبرج كذا يتواتر و الاخر عندهم و الشواب

يد و اقلية انسلان

MANUSCRIPT 3666

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**A**stronomy is the subject of this work written in the form of a didactic poem. The author mentions the 11th century scholar Ibn al-Haytham al-Baghdadi, who was gifted in many disciplines including optics. The value of knowledge is noted, and particular astronomical matters such as the passage of day into night are discussed.



كتاب المشايخ المفيد  
 ابو عبد الله محمد بن احمد  
 بن هبة الخزاز  
 الله تعلم ورضي  
 عنه ونفعنا  
 الدين كن  
 امين

(1) اياك يا كافي لم التفت • وانت ليه من يشغلنا التفت •  
 لفتنا ليه انه متوسل • بلحقت فالهوا • وفرتنا التفت •  
 بلحقتنا عزنا يا كافي • وكلنا في سبنا التفت • وانزلنا التفت •  
 فحوتنا بلحقتنا التفت • والفتنا انه • لكافي لفتنا لفتنا دايم التفت •





وَاللَّزُومُ فِي مَوَازِينِ الشَّرْحِ تَحْقِيقُهُ مَعَ صَلَاتِهِ فِي الْجَمْعِ

وَالثَّلَاثَةُ حَبِّ الشَّيْخِ وَالْمَجْلِدِيَّةُ يَدْرُغُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ صِدْقُ الشَّيْخِ

مَعَ نَفْعِ رَابِعٍ لِقَامِنُوا مَكِّيَ الْأَلَمِ خَلَامِيَّةً وَأَحْسِنُوا

وَلَا تُفْلِمُوا عَوَالِمَ الْحَلِّ أَحَدٍ لَا سِبْمَا الْأَخْوَانَ سِدِّ مَسْرُوعِي

تِلْكَ إِحْتِرَاقُ مَعِيَ الشَّيْخِ نَسَبِي بِصَلِّ شَرِّهِ وَالصَّحْدِ سَبْعَةٌ

لِصِدْقِهِ نَمَطُ الشَّرِّ بِالنَّفْسِ كَوْنُهُ فِي الْجَمْعِ نَدَا سِبْمَا

فَصْرَةٌ بِإِدْرَافِهِ لِعَلْمِنَا تَرْكُ الْعُلُوقِ وَالْيَوْمِ سَانِدًا

بِصَلِّ شَرِّهِ فِي الْهَوْلِ وَاحِدٌ وَشَرْطُ الشُّبُوتِ سِتَّةٌ وَالْوَاوُ لِلشُّبُوتِ فِي الْأَوَّلِ

فِي لَدَّ حَوْلِ الْأَحْذَمِيِّ مَسْلُوسٍ زَيْلًا رَجُلًا وَقَالَتْ لَهُ الدَّوَامُ

بِعَدَمِ الْأَوْرَادِ وَالثَّلَاثَةُ رَابِعٌ أَوْ رَابِعٌ لَمْ يَنْهَاقُوا خَلَامِيَّةً

لَمْ يَعْجَبُوا ذَوِي الْأَذْيَانِ وَالشَّرْطُ بِإِيَّاهُ تَرْكُ وَاحِدٍ آخِرٌ وَجَدِي سَبْعَةٌ

مَعِيَ الشَّيْخِ

في خمسة اطلع بهم من المصنوع الحاد  
خير الانواع وغلى، وابناهما وجامهما  
وكتبت اسجلها منيلا لهما

وخسة اجدتهم اولوا الكواكب الس  
الغلب ادر سير الزن لدا من ابا الدراهم  
وابر مشيتن تجلسه مع الغلوب الناه  
والشاذ في قلميزه ذوالمنفات الغاد  
والحلمن من نعبس ذوالجمال هلاهم  
وابر سلها الجن وال ذوالمعال اللانم  
بجاصهم يارنيل جربا بحس الخا  
بغ ذنوب كلسه ورافع ديون الكا  
بغى لوالد كل ما به ذرايتا من الزنوب الغا

والشكر لمر والعباد، ونولا، والحركه الزن هربنا لهذا  
وصل الله على سيدنا محمد وآله وصحبه وسلم في غر هذا التاليف  
عاما رجة وعشش يرومائه والعب  
تمه وكل جميع الديوان محمد الله تعالى وحسره  
وواعيون اغ هذا التسمية بوج النسبتة بعد  
الرا بوج العشر و مر ذوال العفوة الحرام  
ثما وثلا ثير وما شير والعب  
عربنا الله خير، ووفانا خير، ايس  
الصح غير لكانته وما لكه  
وفاربه وناض، ولواله رحمة  
بيح احمير  
عقله

MANUSCRIPT 3856

**E**ntitled *The joyous Companion of those whom I met of the Maghribi Men of Letters*, this manuscript describes a hundred major literary figures from the Maghrib, or north-west Africa, and their works. The writer has gathered all manner of information about them, including anecdotes, gossip, their works of science and their complaints. The art of the pen, including the value of literature and the aesthetics of calligraphy, is celebrated.

The original was written in the early 18th century, but this copy was made in 1822.





MANUSCRIPT 3874

**M**uhammad bin Ismail al-Bhukari, the 9th century Central Asian author of this work entitled *al-Jami al-Sahih*, was a renowned scholar of hadith or prophetic tradition. This compilation of traditions is considered the most authentic, and this copy shows extensive marginalia, an indication that readers of this famous classic added their own commentaries. Written in Sahrawi script on paper and on one leather page, the manuscript is protected in a finely tooled leather cover, and includes a *mastara*. This is a device consisting of lines of string on a leather base, which was used by calligraphers to copy in straight lines.



افرا باسم ربك الذي خلقك والانس من علو افرا اورك الاطرح  
الذي علم بالفلم الرجوع بعمار رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يرفق  
هو انه قد دخل على خريجة بنت خويلد فقال ملوني من ملون فرملوه  
حتى ذهب عنه الزرع فقال خريجة واخي بها اخبر لعد حشيت على  
نجسي فقالت خريجة كلا والله ما يخزيك الله ابر انك لتصل الرجوع  
وتحمل الكل وتكسب المعروف وتغني الضيق وتغني عن نواب الخو  
فانسلت به خريجة حتى اتت به ورقة بن نوفل بن عبد العزى  
ابن عم خريجة وكان امرا انتص به الجاهلية وكان يكتب الكتاب  
العجمي اني يكتب من الانجيل بالعجمي اذينة ما شاء الله ان يكتب وكان  
شيخا عيسى فدعاه فقال له خريجة يا ابن عم اشبع من ابن اخيك  
فقال له ورقة يا ابن اخي ما اذ اترى واخبره رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم  
حي ما اراي فقال له ورقة بعد الناموس الذي نزل الله على موسى باليتني  
فيبتا جزعا يا ليتني اكون حيا اذ يخ جع قومك فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه  
وسلم او تخي جري نعم قال نعم ثم يات رجل فكم بمثل ما جئت به الا عودين  
وان يدركني يومك انهم كتمتم اموزرا اتم له ينسب ورقة ان قومي  
وقتر الوحي قال بن شهاب واخبرني ابو سلمة بن عبد الرحمن ان جاني  
ابن عمو الله الانصارو قال وهو يجرد عن قتي الوحي فقال حديثه  
بيننا انا امشي اذ سمعت صوتا من السماء جرفت بصي فاجاء الملك  
الذي جاء في بحراء جالس على كفي بين السماء والارض فربعت منه وجعت

فلن

MANUSCRIPT 4011

This is a poem of supplication to God, seeking the intercession of the Prophet.

It is written in Hassani, a local Arabic dialect that incorporates words in Tamasheq, the language of the Tuareg. It is in Sudani calligraphic script.



Handwritten text in Sudani calligraphic script on aged, yellowed paper. The text is dense and covers most of the page, written in a cursive style. It appears to be a continuation of the poem mentioned in the text above.

غيره ان بعد انه وز اعين ان  
نقر الشطرانعوج النقية  
سألزمين تمشقاز البطان  
ونظر تخيرت اقام وبينه  
ونقود لاقية اذ بن الهية ان  
وتفديم التاخير انوا سية  
باش الى جات اول التقطان  
تبع سمع تنقطر وبينه  
من زين وتغوج الكحلان  
يا غيرة زين اتوا لية  
اعل ساس ازقان قتان  
اح ليل الى مقلوم بيه  
وعن

الله ٧١٥ الاله الاكم بعينه

لا	لا	لا
لا	لا	لا
لا	لا	لا

الله ٧١٥ الاله الاكم بعينه

الله ٧١٥ الاله الاكم بعينه

٧	٥	١
١	٥	١
١	١	١

الله ٧١٥ الاله الاكم بعينه

MANUSCRIPT 4056

**T**his work is a scientific treatise on optics, a branch of physics that describes the behaviour and properties of light and the interaction of light with matter. The writer outlines five premises for aspects of visualization, detailing arguments for each.

It is written in Suqi script, but the date and writer are unknown.





يعينها خط الاتصال وهذا اشكل المثلث **واما** الا نظما عتة فقالوا القوا بالاشعاع  
باطل لوجوه اكو كان الابصار مخروج الشعاع من البصر الى المصير بلا قبة هذا  
الشعاع الخارج ان كان عرضا فهو محال اذ لا يخرج عرض من جسم الى جسم  
اخر وان كان جسما كان في بصر انسان جسم يبلغ مقدار ان يلاقى نصف  
كرة العالم وينبسط عليها ولان هذا الجسم الخارج من البصر اما ان يبقى بعد خروجه  
من البصر متصلا به فكان هذا الجسم اعظم بكثير من نصف كرة العالم اولم يتبقه  
فلم يناد مذكره الى البصر لا تقطاعه عن البصر حينئذ وهذا مثله يدفع العقول  
ومنفعة الابواب **و** ايضا فهذا الشعاع الخارج من العين لا تخلو في حركته  
اما ان تكون طبيعة فكانت الى بعض الجهات دون بعض اذ الحركة الطبيعية  
تكون الى جهة واحدة فوجب ان لا يري شي الا في جهة واحدة او اذ ارادته احتياكا  
فكان لنا مع التمدق ان تقبضه اليها فلا تري به شاس لو كان الاحساس عما يشبه  
الشعاع لكان المقدار يدرك كما هو قارب ام بعد فانها لا تتفاوت قرب المقدار  
ام بعد فانها لا تتفاوت كما تري البعيد اصغروا القرب اعظم لا يقال ولو  
كان الاحساس بالانطباع لما كان الا بعد يري اصغرا ايضا بل اما ان لا يري  
او يري كما هو لان صورة الاعد اما ان انطبعت في العين وهو البعد فوجب ان  
ييري الاعد كما هو وهو البعد لخصول صورته وكون الاحساس بانطباع الصورة  
اولم ينطبع فوجب ان لا ييري الاعد وهو البعد لعدم الانطباع لانا نقول  
امثلث المتساوي الساقين مهما كان قاعدته ارفع واعد كانت الزاوية  
التي يحيط بها كما قاة اصغروا مهما كانت تلك الزاوية اصغرا كان القوس الذي  
يوتر تلك الزاوية اصغروا وهذا من المسلمات الاقلدية والحال في التي  
مهما كان محله اصغرا كان اصغروا الا لانطباع الاعظم في الاصغر وهو محال  
فهما كان المقدار البعد كان القوس الذي ينطبع فيه صورته من الرطوبة  
الجليدية اصغرا فيكون الشخ اصغرا لكن المرآى الحقيقية هو هذا الشعاع فهو  
اذ تري اصغروا بتبينه هذا المثلث الهندسي لكن الرطوبة الجليدية دائر  
طرح **ح** حول **هـ** وليكن **د** مقدارين متساويين واعد هما **د**



ولكن



الفوق لانهم خرجوا من هذا الخد من كل العالم كما هو المناسب اعتبارا للابعد  
عنه وكذا في تسميتهما بالذرة والخصبة كما استفيد عليه وكذا في تابع  
صاحب التسمية به بل في جميع ما ذكره

**النقاطات والافاق في تقاطع**

**بسر القوس** في الخط على ما اعتبر الجمهور  
وهذا بعرض الارض من حساب المسافة  
بالنسبة الى ان اقامت عند يكون نصف  
خط الحامل واسمها بغير البصر والافاق  
في التفرقة كما في واسمها بينهما في الخارج



لا عند الجمهور لا البحر للابعد والمغرب عندهم يعتبر في اسما الى كل العالم  
فما ملوا على الاول ان يعتبر الابعاد في اسما الى كل العالم كما لا يخفى على من  
وقوي على الغرض الباعث لتخصيل هذه الالاماع والافاق في بعض المصنفين  
عند الخد ما ان يفتتح في التسمية بغير التفرقة والدار التي تسمى على من  
ان العالم بغيره كما ان التفرقة عند حيث كان بغير بعرض الارض من عرض  
العالم واسمها بغير البعد والافاق عند في التفرقة كما في الخارج ولم  
يلتفت الى تغيير التقاطع حسب غيره من كل التفرقة بعرضه عن كل العالم  
وقال الجمهور انما يعتبر كذلك لذلك فان قيل بل ان من ذلك التغيير  
منه دليل من النقاطات بحسب الاوقات فيتنوع صيها المفاد

التفرقة فلتا اختلافي المفاد بل ان على من ذهب الجمهور الى  
والخصبة في كل ان بل لا يخرج الخد بنفسه العلم  
السبعين وان تحس عليك تصور



MANUSCRIPT 4142

This *fatwa* or legal opinion is about a woman who complains about frequent abuse from her husband. In addition, the husband wants her to travel to an unsafe faraway land. The *fatwa* considers the case in the light of the precept that any harm must be prevented, and that therefore the woman's father is entitled to forbid her to travel and that she should not accompany her husband.

تجيبه الا حكاية ومثله للشمس خبيث كذا وكذا العلامات  
الحضاب بقدر الكمال واجداد واعمال واجداد مما نحن بصدده ثم كونا  
خروف الا كماله فليكن خبره مراراد، وثابة ابن مجلدة عمل خليل  
بعرار عليه عمل المرونة وملاحة التقيير الكبير قال قال  
المصنف قال ابن الحاجب واحدا السبعين بها وان كرهت  
ما نصه وهذا بشرط ان يكون ما مونا عليها وان يكون البلد  
التي ساير اليها ما مونا ووقعنا عليه في التوضيح  
لذا ذلك ونسبه للجلاب وكعبه فخره في ارضه وحوار على ابن  
الحاجب في شرح هذا المحل ايضا وسمع القريبي من اراد  
الخروج بل امراته لموضع زرع انه ارضه وابتا امراته نظير  
لصاحبه واحسانه اليها ان يسيروا ان يخرج به علمه بل علمها  
شك الحين قال وهو محمول على ما يجب بوجبه له الخروج  
بها حتى يعلم ضلابة هذا كما ظهر في ارضه السطور  
فلنفس انه يجوز يشترطه اذا كان ما مونا محسنا لغيره  
ولم يتقدم منه لا تشك بضره وبشرط امن الطريبي  
والموضع بشرط جري الا حكاية الشمس عينه عليه وحيثها  
انتم كلامه والله الموفق وفي نوازله ابو احمد  
الغلاوي يسأل اجوابه يشتمل كلام الملاحظ الا ووالثان  
وتبريد بآية فيما لم تتغير له فيلوه وهو اللهاق بالخبر  
ونصه ولسيل ابن هلال المحزن في زوج امراته واراد الى جبل  
بها الى بلده ارضه له ذالدا ولا في جوابه ارسلنا

محسنا

MANUSCRIPT 4527

**T**his legal document details the execution of a deceased estate. It contains a probate inventory that includes books, garments, prayer beads, a sword and house. These items are evaluated in the presence of Muslim witnesses according to rules set out in the Qur'an.

The document dates to 1917, and is written in Sudani script.



الحمد لله وكبير وعلى الله عظيم ما لا ينسى بعداه  
٤٥

ولما توفيت ابيه بكرب بن محمد بن الامين رحمه الله  
تعلم وحضر جماعة من المسلمين به تفويج تركته  
وتقسيمه بين ورثاها وبيع وبيع ابو بكر بن عرفان  
ويذا بن بن بديا ومحمود بن سعيد وعلي بن محمد  
بن نير والامل بن سعيد وندي بن الفاضل القشيري  
احمد بن بابا بن سعيد ابي العباس بن ابي انبارك  
بن الانصار والطويق بن شيخ من سيد بن  
بابا بن انبارك يوم الجمعة اول يوم المحرم  
رمضان سنة ٤٠٠ لا تسر الى بعد الهجرة النبوية

اول ما فرغنا تويينها بالونف

ثم مؤونة انا بن بديا او كسر وتك

ثم التظليل دلايل الخيرة الاله بديا ليس

ثم كند وفيها بديا ليس

ثم السيف بثلاثة ريال

ثم التسبيع كعشي

ثم دارسكنا له بمائة وخمسون ريال

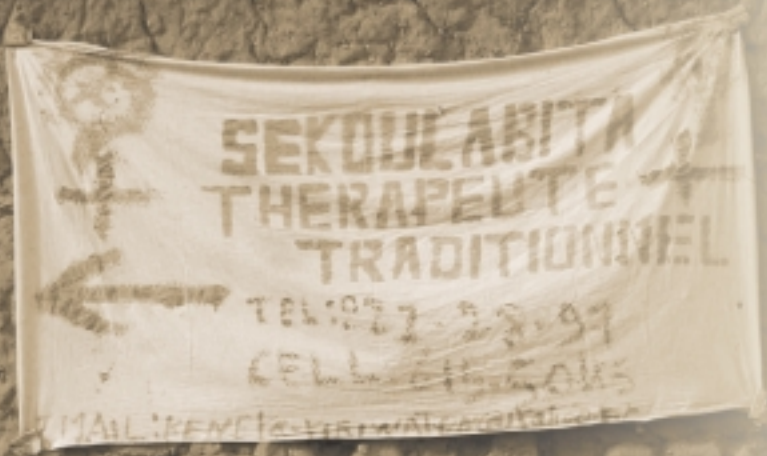
MANUSCRIPT 4849

This document is unusual in that it is written on dressed hide rather than paper, and has an intriguing little plait at one corner. It deals with Islamic etiquette and includes Qur'anic verses that contain exhortations to do good deeds. The Arabic script is used for writing a local African language, known as *Ajami*, using the Sudani calligraphic style.





بفتحوا فوجدوا لهم الفتح واستبدعوا  
وقال لكل جبار عنيد نصر من الله وفتح قريب  
ويبشر الله المؤمنين انما فتحنا لك فتحا مبينا  
ليفتح لك الله ما تشاء من ههنا نيك وما تاتى  
ويتم نعمته عليك ويهديك صراطا  
مستقيما ونصر من الله نصرا عزيزا  
وعند ربنا ما لا يعلمها الا هو  
ويعلم ما في البحر والبر وما تسفك  
مدورفة الا يعلمها ولا حبة من قلائد الارض  
ولا رقب ولا يابس الا نكتب بين يديها  
التي يريد امنوا هل اذ لكم على تجارة تخرجكم  
من عند اب اليمر تؤمنون بالله ورسوله  
وتجاهدوا في سبيل الله باموالكم  
وانفسكم في الكرم خير لكم ان كنتم  
تعملون وتجارتهم تفتنهم فاستأذناهم  
فهم سائس ترضونهم ان يذبحوا  
من الله ورسوله وجاهدوا في سبيله



MANUSCRIPT 5235

**M**uhammad Abdullah bin 'Umar is the author of this work on astrology. The manuscript is a commentary on the didactic poem of the famous 16th century Moroccan scholar al-Fasi, in which are discussed three stars, two of which are in such close proximity that they appear as one star.

It is written in Sahrawi script; the date of the copy is not known.



MANUSCRIPT 5292

The greater part of this manuscript deals with issues of sexual intimacy. It discusses the value of certain animals, such as cocks and goats, in treating sexual problems. Other general medical matters and the treatment of diseases such as eye infections, headaches, infertility, forgetfulness, as well as on social customs such as how to discipline a disobedient wife, are also described.

This is a 20th century copy, in Sahrawi script.



العكوف

احد والعود تبي ولا حول ولا قوة الا بالله العلي العظيم سبع  
 مرات وتشر به سبع ليل متواليات وانها تحمد ياذن الله  
 تعالى **ومم فم** لفرجاء كج رسول انى اخره ليلة الجمعة  
 نصب اليد ثلاثين مرة وقال في اخرها يا رب انت حسب  
 على ولا نبي ولا نبي الا انت اعكوف قلبه على مال اليه كل الصل  
**ومم فم** الر كتب ان لنام اليد لتخرج التاس من الكلمات  
 الى النور ياذن ربيع الى صراط العزيز الحميد على الطاء الفراج  
 اربعين مرة ورشد في ذلك الملك صيكان مجلسه الذي تجلس  
 فيه وانتهى العجايب من طاعة العبيته ان كان امير  
 او فاضلا **ومم فم** اها اربعين مرة على ماء ويضع به  
 كعلا او ياكله او يكعمه لمن يريد فانه يبرى العجايب <sup>بفعل ذاك</sup>  
 العصاحة والخفة في نفسه او من اكله ثلاثة ايام  
 من كل جمعة انتهى المجموع المبارك بحمد الله

انتهى على يد محمد عبد الله بن  
 احمد بن ابي الاعراب  
 نسبه لنفسه  
 في عام ١٣٩١  
 هجرية

عدد النسخة ل  
 ٥٢٧

MANUSCRIPT 5520

A single page letter, from the famous body of correspondence between Ahmad bin-'Isa al-Bakayyi and 'Abd-al-Rahman, this describes a commercial transaction involving female and boy slaves, and other merchandise including salt. There is also an outline of weights and measures.

It dates from the late 19th century, and is written in Maghribi script.



ظلام ما بعد الحمد البشير

الحمد لله وحده

وظاهر ما دمع مما ذكره خليفه

زلمع ما انشئ بينا من الرصيراع واذ لا انشئ بينا من  
ولوا سويل عني كما ان حلال الطبخ ثمانية وقطوع طبل  
ثم انشئ بينا في سنة ارحلال الخيل صوم ثمانية متاقلا

ثم صبغة عني رطل من قحجيا كالت صوم اربعة

ثم ثمانية ارحلال الطبخ ونحوه صوم ثمانية

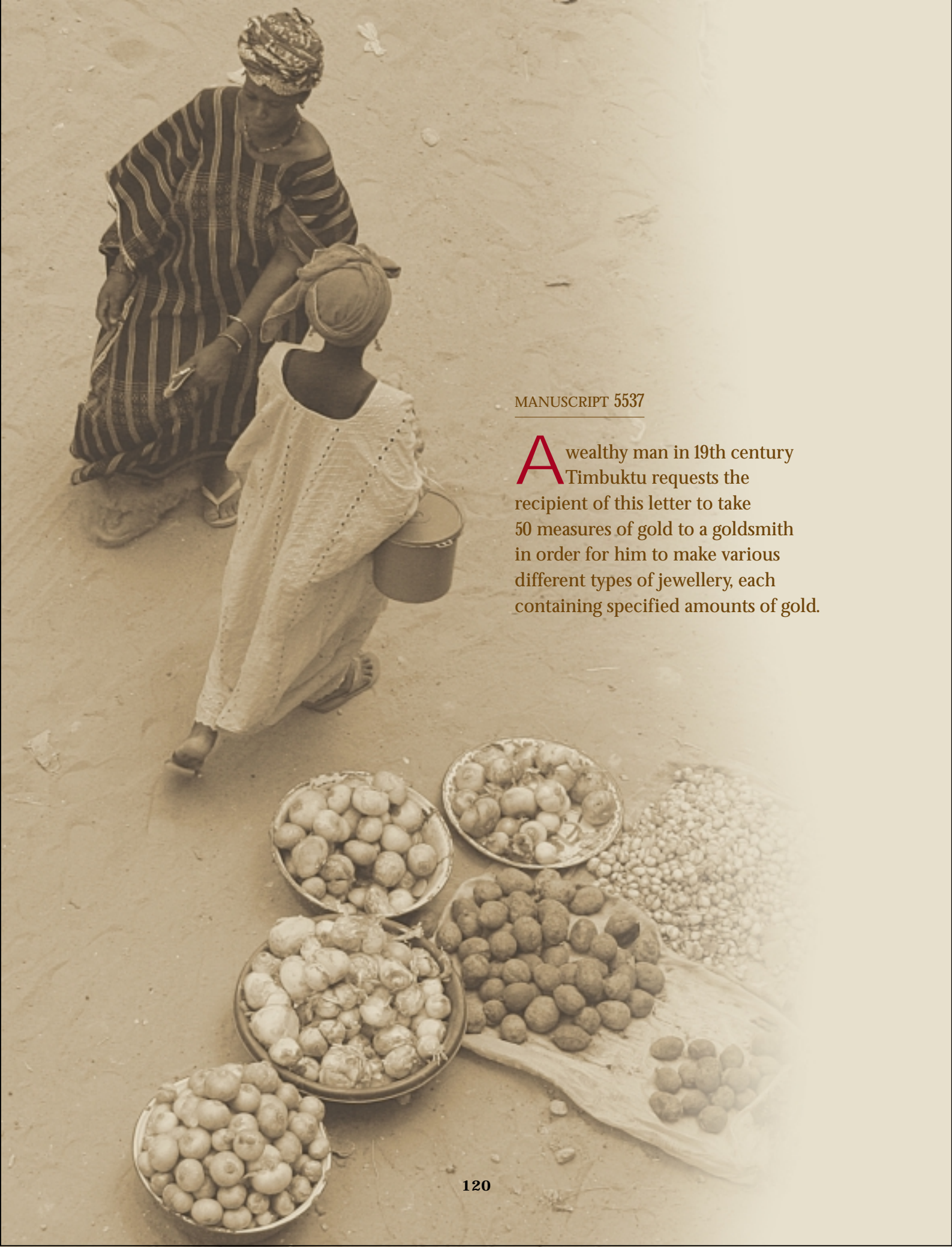
ثم ستة الطبخ افعام انشئ بينا صوم  
اربعة متاقيل وادبعنا ما الحمد الا لخم من  
صوم ثلاثة متاقيل

ثم انشئ بينا رطل من الماعظ ثمانية او اقل  
الحمار ثمانية متاقيل ثم دبعل ثمانية متاقلا  
ثم انشئ طبا واصل اذ من ارحلال صوم ثمانية وربع خمسة

ثم انشئ بينا ثمانية او اقل من الصالح  
بصوم اربعة متاقيل للاوقية تحجب  
في الاوقية الواحدة وستة وربعين

الف

دفعه الحمد البشير الودع طاقير الودع  
والابن عيسر العبير الزكيات في الرار  
انشئ الحمد البشير بمانية الف في بعض  
النجيب الزكيات لا يصعب العسر فيصوا  
اربابا الى يوم الالف انشئ في مقوا عشر الودع



MANUSCRIPT 5537

**A** wealthy man in 19th century Timbuktu requests the recipient of this letter to take 50 measures of gold to a goldsmith in order for him to make various different types of jewellery, each containing specified amounts of gold.



المحرلة وحسوة وصر اليعقوبين كالحجوة واله وعجم وراغضلا

وصيت المغنلار ربيع الحاج على عيون البليبا الكرم ارضنا البليبا  
المرحوم عبيد بن احمد الشعواني وكان وحكاه الله ريفنا على حين  
ان شوا الله لنتكبت قديمي تصنع لنا خمير منغال فوهما صنع  
عشره متاخير الحبيب المتوغير منغال وعشره متاخير الحبيب  
وثلاثة فلبيات متنوعة غير منغال وعشره متاخير منغال  
وعشره متاخير شركات وعشره متاخير اجمليات وحملت  
الجميع خمير منغال ذهبا فنجيب مصنوع للابن ابدا الى الجليله مبيد  
وثلاثة فلبيات في ازارات انفسه ودر اعداد ودر  
جود ودر ارضها رطل خمير ودر حنة والاب كود وافت منظر الله  
نقص ابد لنا منفع والساع والحقيل في افه ودر سونه ودر لندا على  
كود الحجة العلاب من ربيع ودر الساع



MANUSCRIPT 5800

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**W**ritten in the 19th century on handmade paper of European origin, this correspondence concerns the movements of an elderly woman slave and the writer's daughter, and also sends a request for something small and useful to be sent to the writer. It includes enquiries after the health of mutual acquaintances and sends greetings.

البحر بالبحر واما الواسع كل يوم يقولون يا توفيق  
ليعملوا لنا المبلغ ولم ياتوا ومنى اتوفا قتيلا اتم  
وما ارسلت مع اعقابهم سويدي قد بلغنا كلنا ولا تقضي  
اجروا الدير والفرقتنا شيب ومسلما عليك  
ايها الكويته محمد بن خا (كثيرا) وعلى منى وسيل  
منى على محمد بن خا واما دار الدير وحسب  
الاشياء يا توفيق مع مولاي عبد الله ولا تنسنا قديما  
واما ربنا كنت اهل اروان قد فاض واالي عنق بين  
من شجبان وقرى جوابا لقصاح جبار سكر له

قصر ان شاء الله بدير الدير  
ابننا احمد بن محمد بن خا  
خبرنا احمد بن محمد بن خا

والصلاة

**A** A treatise on geomancy, or divination through interpretation of markings on the ground, written by Abd Allah Muhammad al-Zanati. Al-Zanati was famous for his writing on the subject of divination by means of lines in the sand. In this work, known as *Kitab fi 'ilm al-Raml*, the interpretation is specifically applied to military matters such as knowledge of who will be victorious and who will be vanquished when two armies meet, knowledge of what the victorious army will gain, knowing the camping place of the enemy army and its advance, and whether the advancing army will return in good shape. It can also be used to know whether the war will take place on home ground, and what the future of the army after the war will be, as well as the condition of the wounded and sick.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ صَلَّی اللّٰهُ  
عَلٰی سَیِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَرَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ  
تَسْلِمًا قَالَ الرَّنَاتِي رَحِمَهُ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ  
فَاِذَا زُرْتُمُوهُ فَاِذَا رَاكُمْ عَلٰی سُرِّيْهِمْ فَيَسْأَلُ  
كَيْفَ يَضْرِبُ الرَّمْلَ بِسَبَابِ مَسْئَلَةٍ  
الْحَيْثُ خَرَجَ اَيُّوَجِعُ يَجِدُ النَّصْرَ عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِ  
اَمْ لَا اَخْرَجَ الْاَوَّلُ وَالْحَامِسُ وَتَامًا  
وَرَابِعٌ عَشْرٌ شَكْلًا وَمَرَّ شَكْلًا  
شَكْلًا وَجَعَلَهُ شَكْلًا ثُمَّ خَرَجَ شَكْلًا  
الثَّامِسُ وَالْحَامِسُ عَشْرًا وَسَبْعًا وَسِتًّا  
عَشْرًا وَخَرَجَ شَكْلًا وَمَرَّ شَكْلًا  
شَكْلًا وَجَعَلَهُ شَكْلًا وَجَمَعَ شَكْلًا  
وَاحِدًا كَمَا نَسَبِي يَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ عَلَى الْقَدَمِ  
وَجَدَ الْعَمْدَ كَثِيرًا وَكَانَ كَثِيرًا لَمْ يَجِدْ  
نَحْرًا يَهْرَبُ رَأْيًا كَمَا جَاءَ اِنْ كَانَتْ شَكْلًا  
لَا خَيْرَ فِيمَا سَبَرَ اصْبِرْ  
لَقَهْرًا وَشَهْرًا يَكُوْنُ الْخَيْرُ اِنْ  
كَانَ شَكْلًا يَمْنَعُ مَرِيْعًا

MANUSCRIPT 8855

A page of commercial correspondence concerning the sale of copies of the Qur'an and other books. Written in 1926, it attests to the ongoing importance of the trade in books in Timbuktu.



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم  
وقط الله على سيدنا محمد

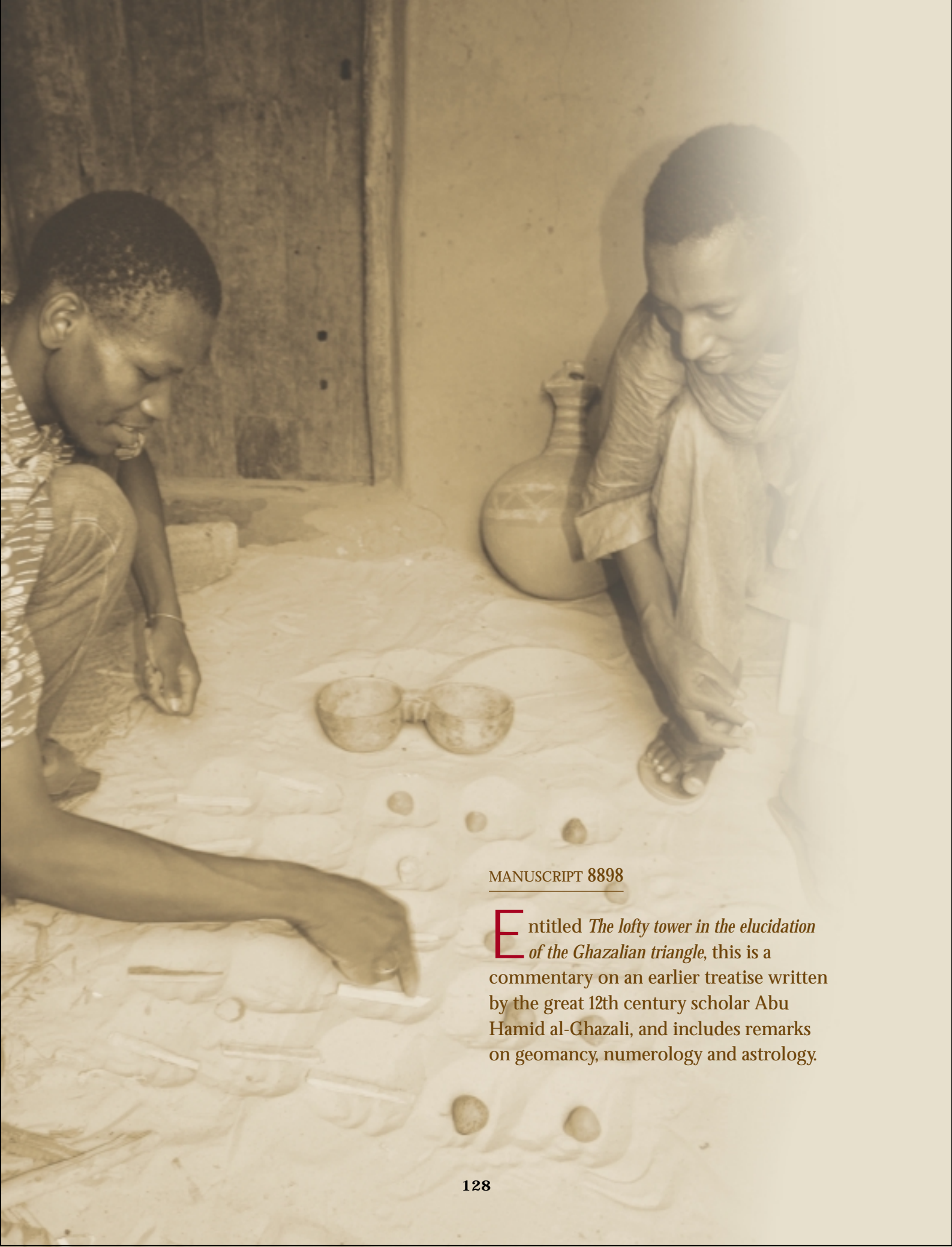
السلام  
1926 / اكتوبر 29

مر 1912

27

السلام من ايها الكاتب المني حقا اذ انا بعد  
بعد السلام اعلم اني ارسلت لك رخصت تاريخ  
وقد بينت لك ملكا منه وما لك انما  
وما تفتن له به فوسيلة لك اذالك  
والبراهة التي فيها وحيثه حيا والى  
وارسلت لنا عشرة من اجزا خمسة  
يكون ابريخيتا وخمسة فيز ابريخيتا  
بسرعة المصاحف الخ، ارسلت تربيعة  
اليوم واعلم ان آخر ما ارسلت ما الكتب انا  
ثلاثة نسخ ما شرح المعاني والاربعين وكتبوا  
رعا الكتب ان كنت ناسيه اعلم به وقد تمتم  
يكون عند الناس تسئل عن ولا اذرة علي بيده  
حتى تمنع فاقصع والسلام وان كنت فاذر علي انا  
ناخذ لنا عشرة بيصايات ما ازراها عن اجد ارسل  
وتضمنه بيديك مع تصد المصاحف واياها

السلام  
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم



MANUSCRIPT 8898

**E**ntitled *The lofty tower in the elucidation of the Ghazalian triangle*, this is a commentary on an earlier treatise written by the great 12th century scholar Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, and includes remarks on geomancy, numerology and astrology.



بيت الكرمي وهو البيت الشيعي ثم  
 في عليه واحرا واجتله في بيت النار العكس  
 الا لا ثم هكنا الى واخر البيوت بيت  
 العرش وهو البيت الا على نبي ان كان  
 في العرش كسر فير على جملتنا حرو  
 الاسم او الية فير الكسر طمانا حسيب  
 عود اسم الله او الية وعود اسم الفلأب  
 والكلمة والم اعرفي جودنا عانيا  
 واذا فمنا ذلك ثلثة افسل يعونا

2

بيت الله الرضا الذي هو على سبيل حروف  
 وفيه تسليبا طال الغير الذي الراجح غير من ذلك  
 في صفة سبيلنا في بنه في الغاصب في بيانا ما اشكل  
 اشكل في ثلثة الشيخ الغزالي رضى الله عليه على ايدي  
 الا في الجود المشهور اعلم الثلث والجملة ان ابيات  
 في ذلك بيت اسع يحيا به الا ولا من يدعي الذي يسيو  
 والثلثة للثرو والثلثة الفل والم ابع التراب والثلث  
 الغيب والسادس الهوى والسابع الصود والثلث  
 الهوى والتاسع العرش فير تيمنا حتى تيبا اجد  
 هو زح على بيوتنا فاذا اردت تعبير الا بالجملة

1

في ابي اسع عود في بيت العرش في  
 طر عود في بيت المال في ثلثة بيتا الغيب  
 تزلينا فير ثم الغصود تميم ثم اذا اردت  
 العمل به في ابي اسع فير تيمنا ان تيبا بال  
 لبيسلة مرة والاسنغبار مائة مرة ثم  
 العلاء على رسول الله صلى الله عليه  
 وسلم مائة لبيس الامرن وسعيريد والنجي  
 طلم يبريغ وهذا انا عبد القوي يسيو  
 يري في ثلثة ابي اسع هذا هو وبلغه عليه

5

الوقي كز لما ثم انتم الرعوة او الفصح  
 ثم تغفل السر النهوى بحرنا في علم  
 واما في بيعة الزكي في ثلثة باختلاف  
 الحوايج وذلك ان اردت البرزخ في ابي اسع  
 عود في بيت الكرمي في ابي اسع  
 مائة واخرى عشرة تاذر الية فير  
 ثم تاذر في ابي اسع عود في بيت النار  
 اذ اظان في مائة وثلثها وثلثين صورة  
 هكذا رسمه انا في ثلثين فير وهو

4

مخرج الحاصل في بيت ثلثة الغزالي للغير  
 سليمان بن احمد الفاضل نور الله قبره والفاضل  
 علي بن برزخ اميبا تيمنا

ن	عرش	ت
لوم	فطب	فلم
س	طرس	س

الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلوة  
 والسلام على نبي المرسلين

7

في بيتي لغزلة للشيء في يكون سلا  
 قولاه رجم اغليو ما يد اعلم من شام  
 نعيم ايو ص خيرم فانيم في يوم نهشت  
 بر غلات بين الامور واشهد السر والحقا  
 وكز لما نرا ابراهيم ملكوت السموات  
 والارض وليكون مع الوقيتيا واعلم  
 يا حسان لهذا الخاتم مع المناجيع والنزير انت  
 المشعرة بيما هذا العلم ما لا غير  
 حشنا زعموا ان به حله لا في حاشا الغزالي

6

MANUSCRIPT 13954

**M**ost very large manuscripts deal with law or theology; and this thick volume is a treatise on Islamic jurisprudence. Amongst the subjects dealt with are the meanings and interpretations of jihad or holy war, and the consequences of enslavement. The status of children born of slaves is discussed in one section.

The manuscript has a fine red leather cover made from dressed kidskin that still shows the teats of the animal.



... والله وحده وسلم تسليما

ثم نشور ونصه الله في الفصح منه **باب** في الجهاد **باب** في الجهاد **باب** في الجهاد

فيه حكم الجهاد وبطوره ووجوه **باب** في الجهاد **باب** في الجهاد **باب** في الجهاد  
في ذكرها في الشرح الكبير **باب** في الجهاد **باب** في الجهاد **باب** في الجهاد  
الجهاد بالنفس وهو الذي اراد الله به من الجهاد بالاضحية واما جهاد النفس  
على عاقله اهل الفقه حيث يقولون بالجهاد ان الجهاد في النفس والجهاد في  
والشماعية الفقه بالجهاد ان اعتبار ابا نهضانية على الكافر لا بغيره  
**باب** في الجهاد **باب** في الجهاد **باب** في الجهاد **باب** في الجهاد

في الجهاد **باب** في الجهاد **باب** في الجهاد **باب** في الجهاد  
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في الجهاد **باب** في الجهاد **باب** في الجهاد **باب** في الجهاد  
في الجهاد **باب** في الجهاد **باب** في الجهاد **باب** في الجهاد

المذهب

MANUSCRIPT 16077

**T**his very small copy of the Qur'an is enclosed in a leather manuscript cover with a long leather tie, within a leather manuscript satchel, and both are protected by a new leather box made by a contemporary Tuareg leather worker at the Ahmed Baba Institute. It is an example of the conservation work and training being undertaken by the Timbuktu Manuscripts Project.

The text of the Qur'an is written on both hand-made and machine-made European paper, and in different scripts. The Qur'an was probably copied in West Africa about 100 years ago.



يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلَوْ أَنفَعَهُمْ إِيَّاهُ فَتَلَمَّذُوا  
أَنفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ  
لَوْ جَاءَ وَاللَّهُ تَوَّابٌ حَلِيمٌ  
فَلَا وَرَهْكَ بِكَ لَأَيُّ مَنُورٍ حَقِيقٍ  
لَا يَمُوكَ فِي مَا شَرِبْتُمْ  
تَمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ حَرْبًا  
مِمَّا فَهِتُوا وَيَسْلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ  
وَلَوْ أَنفَعَهُمْ إِيَّاهُ فَتَلَمَّذُوا  
أَنفُسَهُمْ إِيَّاهُ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دَرَجَاتِهِمْ

سورة التوبة

**E**ntitled *On the Merits of the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions*, this manuscript on theology discusses the four outstanding companions of the Prophet. It also describes the character of the Prophet, and so doing teaches moral values to his followers.

Apparently incomplete and disordered, it is written on hand-made European paper in both Sudani and Sahrawi script.





الحمد لله الرحمن الرحيم صلى الله عليه وسلم...

محمد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وشرف وكرم  
تم مختلف اهل العلم بالانساب واخبار وسائر العلم

عن عبد الله بن عبد المطلب...  
عن ابي بصير عن ابي بصير عن ابي بصير...  
عن ابي بصير عن ابي بصير عن ابي بصير...  
عن ابي بصير عن ابي بصير عن ابي بصير...  
عن ابي بصير عن ابي بصير عن ابي بصير...

صحيح البخاري الطبري المفسر  
احاديث عن اصحاب النبي  
وزايد بن اسلم جليل  
ابن علي بن ابي طالب  
عليكم وعلى الكتاب بعد فراغ  
له حوت الارواق منه  
انا تلتها وبلغت حمار فخطها  
ويارب يا رزاقنا يا ارحم الراحمين

الحمد لله الرحمن الرحيم

قوله لعن الله من اخرج الغني فقنايه ولعن الله من اهدى البني لغيره  
وكما يفعل ذلك الامانيق في الحج والعنى لعنهم واهل الغني لغيره  
سمى في السماء عدو الله ومعدوا النبي لا تقبلوا دعواته

ما يذنب الضيوف خمسة ضيف الله وضيف النبي  
ضرب الله عليه وضيف نفسه وضيف الدنيا وضيف الشيطان  
واما ضيف الله فهو العالم واما ضيف النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فهو طاب  
العلم واما ضيف نفسه فالموت واما ضيف الدنيا فالمسكن  
واما ضيف الشيطان فالكلام والله اعلم

قوله صلى الله عليه وسلم ان اول الله من اهل نفسه ولا  
يتبع لموس ان يذل نفسه ووالد اعلى سرعة  
اوجه ووالد ايمان تكبر على غير اهل نفسه ومن  
فعد ووضعه غير مجلسه اهل نفسه ومن نكاح  
على بنته اهل نفسه اهل نفسه ومن دخل على بيت  
نجمه ما حبه اهل نفسه ومن وعدت ملكا و  
الجاعة اهل نفسه ومن كذب من عدوه مالا  
اهل نفسه ومن طلب الناس الجنيل اهل نفسه

وقال شيخنا ابو العباس احمد بن حنبل في الحديث  
عن خاتم النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم في قوله  
من غاب عن الناس لم يغيبوا عنه... ولم يزل بين  
من غاب عن الناس لم يغيبوا عنه... ولم يزل بين

ولله در الغافل...  
... خلافة الناس غيراؤ...  
... كيف يغفوا عن شعور...

عن ابي بصير عن ابي بصير عن ابي بصير...  
عن ابي بصير عن ابي بصير عن ابي بصير...  
عن ابي بصير عن ابي بصير عن ابي بصير...

صحيح البخاري الطبري المفسر  
احاديث عن اصحاب النبي  
وزايد بن اسلم جليل  
ابن علي بن ابي طالب  
عليكم وعلى الكتاب بعد فراغ  
له حوت الارواق منه  
انا تلتها وبلغت حمار فخطها  
ويارب يا رزاقنا يا ارحم الراحمين