A batch of newly acquired manuscripts at the Mamma Haidara Library in Timbuktu.

Pages 102–3 A manuscript copy of the Tarikh al-sulam in the collection of the Ahmed Baba Institute. Completed in 1655 by Abd al-Rahman al-Sadi, this ‘History of the Blacks’ recounts events in the Middle Niger region from the founding of Timbuktu in c. 1100 to the decades that followed the Moroccan occupation in 1591, focusing in particular on the Songhay Empire from the mid-15th century until 1591, and the Pashalik of the Arma of Timbuktu from that date down to 1655.

Previous pages The Dala’il al-Khayrat in distinctive Hausa-style calligraphy, from the Ahmed Baba Institute. This devotional work written in Morocco in the 14th century by Imam al-Jazuli is among the most popular of its genre, and is still read across Muslim West Africa today.
O P P O S I T E  A N D  A B O V E  Manuscript from the Mamma Haidara Library showing the famous circles of al-Khalil ibn Ahmad, a philologist who died in Basra, Iraq, in the late 8th century. Al-Khalil is credited with founding the science of prosody, the study of poetic metre and the art of versification. Since all poetic metres in traditional Arabic poetry are composed of a sequence of either one long and two short, or a short and a long syllable, al-Khalil showed that it is possible to depict them in groups arranged in a circle, with each metre starting at a different point. This device was often repeated by other scholars. The reading and writing of poetry was an important element of the culture of Timbuktu, where one finds verses of devotion to the Prophet Muhammad, adoration of a woman or a man, and even poems about tea. Often poetry was written upon a death and read at the funeral. Works on grammar and law were recast in verse to facilitate learning.
لا يمكنني قراءة النص العربي من الصورة. إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مساعدة أخرى، فأرجو أن تزودني بالنص الأصلي أو الأ 自动生成 للمساعدة.