Date of establishment: 1931
Status: National library
Total number of Islamic MSS: 310 (139 Arabic; 26 Chaghatai; 67 Kazakh; 60 Persian; 4 Tatar; 5 Turkish; 9 Uzbek).
Description of collection: No details available.

Unpublished catalogues:
Card catalogues by languages and titles.
Handwritten inventory book.

Valikhanov Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography
Ul. Kurmangazy 29, 480021 Alma-Ata
Status: Academic library
Description of collection: Several hundred documents dating from the 16th–20th centuries in Persian and Turkic (gathered mainly in the shrine of Ahmad Yasavi).

PAVLODAR
Historical Museum
637021 Pavlodar
Total number of Islamic MSS: 6 (Arabic).
Description of collection: No details available.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX


Kazakhstan, p. 695.


Alma-Ata, p. 74; Pavlodar, p. 75.


Bibliography of catalogues and surveys of Arabic MSS. Alma-Ata, p. 224; Pavlodar, p. 225.
INTRODUCTION

A literary Islamic tradition came relatively late to the Swahili world. Though Muslims settled on the East African coast in the early centuries of Islam, there is no evidence for literacy among Swahili-speaking peoples before the 16th century. The earliest known Arabic text related to East Africa, the Kitāb al-Sulūq fil Akhbār Kilwa, is from the middle of the 16th century, while the earliest known Swahili poem, Anshari’s Hamziyya, has been dated to the middle of the 17th century. The earliest known prose texts in Swahili are 18th-century letters in the Archives of Goa.

By the end of the 17th century, literacy was increasing in both Arabic and Swahili, particularly in the Lamu archipelago area. During the 18th century, a strong tradition of Swahili epic verse (Utendi or Utunzi) emerged. The literary tradition has, until modern times, been confined to a small number of scholars, administrators and scribes. Even at its peak in the 19th century, the number of persons and texts involved was far less than in the great centres of Islamic learning.

There is good evidence that the number of Islamic manuscripts extant in Kenya has been steadily declining since the beginning of the 20th century, and is now far less than even some thirty years ago. For example, the originals of many Kenyan manuscripts which were copied and deposited in the University of Dar-es-Salaam Library in the 1960s as a part of the East African Swahili Committee Collection can no longer be traced. (For details of this collection, readers are referred to J.W.T. Allen, The Swahili and Arabic manuscripts and texts in the Library of the University College, Dar-es-Salaam: a catalogue, Leiden: Brill, 1970.)

The decline in the number of Islamic manuscripts can be attributed in large part to the fact that most manuscripts are privately owned by Swahili families and institutions. Many private owners are unaware of the importance of manuscripts: they often do not know what manuscripts they own, nor whether their manuscripts have any special value. Indeed, with the availability of printed texts, many persons now consider manuscripts to have little or no value. As a result, manuscripts are kept haphazardly, often under adverse conditions, and there is little attempt to preserve them. It is not sur-
praising that few manuscripts have survived, and that many of the few that have survived are in a poor state of preservation.

Though most of the manuscripts known to exist in Kenya are of well-known Islamic texts, it should be noted that the manuscripts in Swahili are particular to this part of the world, and represent a unique aspect of the cultural heritage of Islam. Steps are now under way to identify and photograph manuscripts which have special literary, artistic or historical value, and to encourage the owners of manuscripts to deposit them in a library or museum where they can be kept under controlled conditions.

Finally, it should be noted that because of prevailing circumstances, it has not yet been possible to undertake the survey of manuscripts in the Somali-speaking parts of Kenya.

CHUNDAWA-FAZA

Ustadh Abu Bakr ‘Abdi

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 2 (Arabic).
Description of collection: A text of ṭafṣīr, copied at Chundwa in 1233 AH, and a copy of Kitāb al-minhāj.

Sharīf Muḥammad ‘Umar Sabir

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 11 (Arabic).
Description of collection: The collection includes three texts of manṭiq, three of naḥw, and two of fiqh; among the texts of manṭiq is Kitāb ʿIlm al-darujā, copied at Chundwa-Faza in 1162 AH, one of the oldest manuscripts known to exist in the Lamu archipelago.

FAZA

Shaykh Bakari Salimu

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 17 (Arabic).
Description of collection: More than half of the collection consists of manuscript copies of the Qurʾān, all copied at Faza; other texts are of fiqh, naḥw, duʿāʾ and qaṣīda.

LAMU

Saʿīd ʿAli

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 1 (Swahili).
Description of collection: An original treatise on navigation by Muḥammad Abū Bakr al-Bakrī al-Kujumwā of Lamu, written in the hand of the author.

Sayyid Ahmad ʿAlwy Badawy

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 1 (Arabic).
Description of collection: One of the oldest known extant manuscripts of fiqh in the Lamu archipelago, copied at Lamu in 1184 AH.

Shaykh ʿAbdallah Bakthir

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 3 (2 Arabic; 1 Swahili).
Description of collection: The collection comprises one text of naḥw, a copy of Muḥammad al-Būṣṭārī’s Al-Hamzīyya and an original epic poem in Swahili, Utendi wa Yaḥkub.

Twalib Mbarak Hady

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 4 (Arabic).
Description of collection: One manuscript each of khaṣba, naḥw, ṣarf and ṭafṣīr.

Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAlī Khatib

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 6 (Arabic).
Description of collection: The collection includes two copies of Tāhārakā, and a manuscript containing several khatūbas pronounced at Lamu for the ‘Id and other celebrations.

‘Abdallah Muhammad ‘Uthman Lami

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 1 (Arabic and Swahili).
Description of collection: The manuscript contains two distinct works, Kitāb al-Witrīja in Arabic and a poem (Uandū) in Swahili, both copied at Lamu in 1255 AH.

Lamu Museum

P.O. Box 48, Lamu
Status: Public museum
Total number of Islamic MSS: 25 (Arabic).
Description of collection: The collection consists mainly of texts of the Qurʾān (fifteen manuscripts), together with various texts of fiqh, naḥw and duʿāʾ.

Sharif ‘Alwy Husni Jamal il-Layl

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 11 (Swahili).
Description of collection: One of the largest known private collections of Swahili manuscripts. Nine of them contain epic poems, including the Uandū wa Musaana Khadija na Sayyidnati ‘Aisha and the Uandū wa qarnayn; of the other two, one contains popular Swahili poetry and the other, Tarikh ya Pate, Suya na Lamu, is a history of the Lamu archipelago.

Shaykh Muhammad ‘Umar Khatib al-Ma’awwy

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 1 (Arabic).
Description of collection: The manuscript is entitled Musḥbat al-‘rāḥ, being a text on naḥs wa-ṣarf, copied at Lamu in 1267 AH.

Muhammad ‘Abdallah Mzee

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 4 (3 Arabic; 1 Arabic with Swahili translation).
Description of collection: The collection comprises manuscripts of qasīda, tawhīd and duʿāʾ, and includes a copy of Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Warrāq’s Tāhārakā with a Swahili translation.

Shaykh ‘Umar ‘Ali Mzee

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 1 (Arabic).
Description of collection: A single copy of al-Ghazālī’s Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn, copied in Lamu in 1254 AH.

N’nalalo Mosque

Status: Mosque library (waqf)
Total number of Islamic MSS: 9 (Arabic).
Description of collection: The collection comprises two copies of the Qurʾān, four copies of Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muhhammad ibn Abū Bakr al-Baghdādī’s Witrīja fi madhḫ khayr al-bayrâ, and individual manuscripts on tawhīd, fiqh and naḥw.

Raskop Mosque

Status: Mosque library (waqf)
Total number of Islamic MSS: 6 (Arabic).
Description of collection: The collection comprises six copies of al-Baghdādī’s Witrīja fi madhḫ khayr al-bayrâ; one of the six manuscripts contains the text of Tāhārakā in addition to Witrīja.

Rawda Mosque

Status: Mosque library (waqf)
Total number of Islamic MSS: 23 (Arabic).
Description of collection: Most of the collection (fifteen manuscripts)
consists of various texts on fiqh; in addition the collection includes two copies of the Qur'an, four texts of nahw, two texts of tasfir, and one qamis, being the only manuscript copy of a qamis known to exist in the Lamu archipelago.

Riyada Mosque

Status: Mosque library (waqf)
Total number of Islamic MSS: 75 (Arabic).
Description of collection: The collection, the largest known to exist in Kenya, is kept in the Library of the Riyada Mosque College of Lamu; in addition to 12 manuscripts of the Qur'an, it includes 17 texts of fiqh, a variety of texts of nahw (7), du'aa (6), qaṣida (6), tasawwuf (5), sa'af (3), wasiyah (3), nasab (3), masail (2) and ḥarīkh (2), and individual manuscripts of madhī, kunūba, shajara, sharh, alfāz, shārīf, ḥadith and tawāṣīl.

MALINDI

Shaykh ‘Abdallah Muhammad Shaykh

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 1 (Arabic).
Description of collection: The manuscript is an original copy of Kitāb manā’ū al-bahārīy by the late Shaykh Al-Amin Al-Mazru’i, Chief Qadi of Kenya, in the hand of the author.

MAMBRUI

Sayyid Muhammad Sharif Sa‘id al-Baydī

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 17 (Arabic).
Description of collection: The collection comprises five texts of madhī, five texts of kunūba, three texts of tabārik, as well as various texts of du'aa and qaṣīda, and one dealing with khatm al-Qur'an.

MOMBASA

Anwar Mzee Ahmad

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 1 (Arabic).
Description of collection: One of the oldest extant manuscripts of the Qur'an known to have been copied in the Lamu archipelago, copied at Mathe in 1221 AH.

Fort Jesus Museum

P.O. Box 82412, Mombasa
Status: Public museum
Total number of Islamic MSS: 19 (Arabic).
Description of collection: In addition to one copy of the Qur'an, the collection includes four texts of qaṣīda and three each of du'aa and fa'il, as well as various texts of fiqh, mirāth, nahw, ḥadīth and dhikr.

‘Abdur Rahman al-Hatimy

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 11 (Arabic).
Description of collection: Nine of the manuscripts are from Barawa (Somalia); included among them are two texts on morphology, Muthallath Qur'an and Sharh Lamiyat al-afāil.

Fahmy Mharak Hinawi

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 4 (Arabic).
Description of collection: The collection comprises four copies of the Qur'an, all written at Siyu (Lamu archipelago).

Sharif Khitamy

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 4 (Arabic).
Description of collection: Three of the manuscripts originate from Lamu; one copy of Al-muruq, and other texts of qasida, du'sa and falak.

Sayyid Hasan Muhammad

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 2 (Arabic).
Description of collection: Two copies of the Qur'an, both written at Lamu.

Sharif 'Abdur Rahman 'Alwy Saqqaf

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 4 (Arabic).
Description of collection: The collection comprises two copies of Kitâb at-Tabawuy by Al-Šâri'f bi-Allâh Shaikh 'Ali bin Nafi' al-Mazru'i and two historical texts, Târikh al-Mazari'ah and Târikh Mumbasa.

Thabit Mukhtar Thabit

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 2 (Arabic).
Description of collection: Both manuscripts deal with sihr.

Muhammad Twaha

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 3 (Arabic).
Description of collection: The collection includes two texts by Darwisu jum'a 'Umar al-Mahruq: Kitâb fi 'ilm al-funûn min al-mûnîth and Al-dala'il 'alâ 'l-lawzâm wa 'l-wwasâ'il.

NAIROBI

Ismail Rahimtulla Library

PO Box 40333, Nairobi
Status: Public library

Kenya National Archives

PO Box 49210, Nairobi
Status: Public archives
Total number of Islamic MSS: 7 (Swahili).
Description of collection: The manuscripts, all in Swahili (in Arabic script) are part of the JOHN WILLIAMSON Collection; five of the manuscripts are works of MUHAMMAD ABU BAKR AL-BAKRI KIJUMWA of Lamu.

PATE

Rahama Faruq

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 1 (Arabic).
Description of collection: A copy of Mawlid sharaf al-an'am, copied at Pate.

SIYU

Mwanja Mosque

Status: Mosque library (suafq)
Total number of Islamic MSS: 1 (Arabic).
Description of collection: A copy of Kitâb witrîya fi 'l-madhî, copied at Siyu.
Muhammad Shaykh Nabhany

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 1 (Arabic).
Description of collection: A copy of Kitāb uṣūlīya fi 'l-madhī, copied at Pate.

Sayyid ʿUmar ʿAbdallah Saggaf

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 3 (Arabic).
Description of collection: Three copies of Kitāb uṣūlīya fi 'l-madhī, all copied at Barawa (Somalia).

Nasir Sayyid ʿUmar ʿAbdallah Saggaf

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 19 (Arabic).
Description of collection: The collection comprises nine Qurʾāns, all copied at Siyu, and ten copies of Kitāb uṣūlīya fi 'l-madhī.

KUWAIT

by

Elham al-Mufti

1992