
MSS in Malaya, p. 69.


MALI

by

Baba Yunus Muhammad

1992
UNION CATALOGUES & SURVEYS


This catalogue lists about 3,650 Arabic manuscripts. It gives full details, in Arabic and French, of each manuscript: the name of the author, title, subject, style of script, number of lines, size, date of copying, nature of copy (whether written or photocopied) and number of leaves. All the manuscripts listed in this catalogue are in private collections of individuals in Mali or in the Centre Ahmad Baba, Timbuktu. The catalogue does not state where the listed manuscripts can be located. My surveys have, however, established that 2,174 of them are held at the Centre Ahmad Baba, while the rest are scattered in private collections in the country; but the catalogue does not list all the manuscripts in private hands which I came across during my research. The catalogue lacks author and title indexes. It is not known whether it has been updated since 1987.

Unpublished:
Malian Arabic Manuscript Microfilming Project. Microfilmed collection preserved at the Sterling Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, USA. Handwritten check-lists in situ. [Source: Arabic literature in Africa 1, 1985, p. 17.]

INDIVIDUAL COLLECTIONS

BAMAKO

Imam Bala Kaly

Central Mosque, Place de la République
Status: Private
Conditions of access: By appointment with the owner.
Total number of Islamic MSS: 326 (Arabic).

Description of collection: IMAM BALA KALY is the Chief Imam of Bamako. According to him, he bought some of the MSS from individual collectors, and inherited some from his late parents and teachers. Some 30 manuscripts were donated to him by a visitor from Chad in 1991. He cannot, however, remember exactly when his library was started.

There are some very old manuscripts in this collection, with the oldest dating back to the 13th century. But the majority of the manuscripts were copied in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Some are undated. Important items include the undated Al-Jami' al-ṣaghir min hadith al-bashir al-nadhur by AL-SUYUTI; Al-Risāla fi 'l-fiqh by ANO ZAND AL-QA'RANANI; and the anonymous and undated Shabh al-Durr al-lu'āma fi 'l-ulūm al-Qur'ān.

The numbers of manuscripts dealing with each subject are as follows: poetry (7); fiqh (52); uṣūl (14); theology (30); philosophy (19); logic (43); medicine (26); mathematics (9); Hadith and related subjects (41); Qur'anic sciences (40); grammar (16); agriculture (8); Sufism (11); fatwās (8); and astronomy (2).

The manuscripts are kept in card boxes and stored in a spacious room. They are in good physical condition and neatly preserved.

Published catalogues: 1986. Volume 1 of the Union Catalogue (see above) describes about 83 MSS in this collection.

Jamana Cultural Centre

B. P. 4023

Date of establishment: 1988

Status: Endowment/Trust

Conditions of access: Open to the general public 07.30 – 16.00, Mondays – Fridays.

Total number of Islamic MSS: 400 (Arabic).

Description of collection: This library serves as the reference and research section of the Jamana Cultural Centre, which was founded by President ALPHA UMAR KOUWARÉ. When the library was established in 1988, the need was felt to have Islamic manuscripts on the country’s past on the shelves of the Centre’s library in order to boost its image as a true cultural centre for the Malian people. Between then and now, the Centre has bought manuscripts on various Islamic subjects from individuals in Mali. Efforts are still being made to enrich the collection.

About 125 of the manuscripts in this collection deal with Qur'anic sciences, and there are 40 on history, 5 on astronomy, 96 on fiqh, 50 on theology, 18 on logic, 5 on philosophy, 27 on Hadith, 13 on poetry, 11 on uṣūl, 8 on grammar and 2 on genealogy.

60% of the manuscripts were copied in the 18th century; 20% in the 15th century; 10% in the 16th century; 8% in the 19th and 20th centuries; and 2% are undated.

The collection has some rarities, which include MUHAMMAD BELLO B. FUDI’s Kitāb Majmū‘ an-Nāfis (undated); Al-kashf wa-l-bayān li-ayāf majāl al-Sudan by ABDU AL-BURĀQ; and, copied in 1974 by SIDI ABDI B. ALFATHI and issued the Kitāb al-Tajrid fi kalimat al-Qur'ān by AHMAD B. MUHAMMAD AL-GHARALI.

The manuscripts are in perfect condition. A few, however, have lost their bindings. They are neatly arranged, kept on metal bookshelves and housed in a spacious study room. An attendant cleans the shelves and the collection almost every day.

Published catalogues: 1986 – 87. Only about 15 of the manuscripts in this collection are listed in the Union Catalogue (see above).

Unpublished catalogues: The centre maintains a card catalogue which lists all of its collection.

Maḥad al-Hanafiya al-Islāmiya

Rue 1737, Banankabougou

Date of establishment: 1985

Status: Trust

Conditions of access: Open to the public all day throughout the week, 16.00 – 19.00.

Total number of Islamic MSS: 68 (Arabic).

Description of collection: All the manuscripts in this collection were donated by individuals when the library was established in 1985 as a reference section of the Institute, which was set up with financial assistance from the Kuwaiti government.

The collection is of Islamic texts, with 33 on Qur'anic sciences, 26 on Hadith, 7 on fiqh and 2 on theology. The majority of the MSS are undated. The few dated ones were either copied or authored in the 19th and 20th centuries. The oldest manuscript in the collection

The collection is well preserved and arranged on wooden shelves in a small room, which serves as the library of the mosque, otherwise known as the Institute.

It is not known whether this collection is catalogued or not.

**DJENNÉ**

Sheikh Mahmoud Lamine

c/o B.P. 14

*Date of establishment:* 1953

*Status:* Private

*Conditions of access:* By permission of the owner.

*Total number of Islamic MSS:* 36 (Arabic).

*Description of collection:* Two-thirds of the manuscripts in this collection were inherited from the owner’s father, Ḥājj Lamine, who died about a decade ago. He also bought some from Malian sources. Subjects covered by the MSS are as follows: philosophy (5), history (5), adab (10), uṣūl (13), medicine (2) and mathematics (1).

All the manuscripts contain 19th-century texts, including *Inšāf al-maṣāṣūr fī tārikh bilād al-Takrīr* by Muḥammad Bello b. Fūrū, dated 1842, and the commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, entitled *Dīr al-falāḥ bi-sharh gharat al-ṣahāb* by Al-Muḥāfṣin Muḥammad Dīkūrī, undated. These two are the most noteworthy MSS in the collection, because of their lucid style of presentation and the beautiful artistic designs on their back-page covers.

The manuscripts are safely kept in the owner’s living room. According to him, they take him out of the portmanteau, in which they are kept locked, only when he wants to refer to them or to lend them out to serious scholars for copying.

*Published catalogues:* 1987. Volume 2 of the Union Catalogue (see above) lists almost all of the manuscripts in this collection.

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**Sanusi Zawiya**

c/o Chief Imam, Central Mosque

*Status:* Zawiya library (trust)

*Description of collection:* Believed to possess hundreds of Islamic manuscripts in Arabic and probably also Hausa and Fulbe. No information about the manuscripts is readily available to this compiler. However, detailed information can be obtained by contacting the Chief Imam of the Central Mosque of the city.

**KAYES**

Muhammad Mahmoud al-Bakay

c/o Khayyir Muhammad, Auto Gare de Kayes

*Date of establishment:* 1969

*Status:* Private

*Conditions of access:* By permission of the late owner’s family.

*Total number of Islamic MSS:* 329 (Arabic).

*Description of collection:* This collection is the creation of Sheikh Ahmadu Jénne who died about 1990. The collection was inherited by his elder son, Mahmoudou. Though he cannot explain how his father acquired the MSS, he lamented that most of them have been lost to researchers who have taken them on loan. It is the largest collection in the town and its surroundings.

The MSS cover such Islamic subjects as *Ḥadīth* (22), poetry (13), history (35), philosophy (50), uṣūl (70), Qur’ān (65), *ṣaḥīḥa* (20) and medicine (36).

The fact that most of the MSS are undated suggests that the late owner might have done most of the copying himself or assigned it to his students. One of his sons stated that he personally copied no fewer than 10 manuscripts for his father when he was alive. The dated ones were copied in the 19th and 20th centuries. There are some rarities in the collection, including *Al-fawā'id al-maḥiṣūr fī sharh al-maṣāṣūr* by Abū Hishām al-Anṣārī, dated 1917; *Ijmāʿ al-Qays al-Kīnūl* by Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad, dated 1916; and *Kitāb al-Fīlīḥ* by Al-Baḥṣānī Abū Zayd ‘Aṣr al-Raʾīḥān, undated. These are quite unique, not only for their artistic value but for their contents and style of presentation.

The MSS are kept on locally made wooden shelves in the late
owner's living room. A few have torn back-covers and worm-eaten leaves, but the rest are in perfect condition. Occasional dusting is done by the late owner's grandchildren.

Published catalogues:
1981. Volume 1 of the Union Catalogue (see above) covers about 100 MSS in this collection.

KOUTIALA
Habib b. Lantouni

Opposite Central Market
Date of establishment: 1985
Status: Private
Conditions of access: By permission of the owner, and only accessible to researchers and students.

Total number of Islamic MSS: 800 (Arabic).
Description of collection: This library was started when some 50 MSS were donated to the owner by his teacher. Some 400 MSS were donated to the collection by individuals through appeals. Over the years, the owner has enriched the collection with 350 MSS purchased from local and international sources.

120 of the MSS are on medicine, 215 on grammar, 300 on fiqh, 73 on history and 92 on poetry. This collection has two rare manuscripts, namely: Al-tawhīd al-laṣf by Ḥasan Ahmad Mājīmūd, dated 1392; and the undated Miṣūb al-faṣīḥa by Māwālīy Aḥmad b. Bābir.

Over 500 of the manuscripts were copied in the 19th and 20th centuries, while the rest are undated. The manuscripts have excellent bindings and are of fair artistic quality.

The manuscripts are well preserved in a wooden book container in the owner's private sitting room. About 20 of them have torn covers and stained pages.

Published catalogues:
1986–87. Volumes 1 and 2 of the Union Catalogue (see above) cover about 200 of the MSS in this collection.

Sheikh Malik Coulibaly

B.P. 13
Date of establishment: 1965

Status: Private
Conditions of access: None.
Total number of Islamic MSS: 100 (Arabic).
Description of collection: The manuscripts in this collection were purchased from Malian sources some decades ago. About 27 of them deal with fiqh; there are 20 on preaching, 12 on medicine, 32 on grammar, and 9 on the Holy Qurān. Almost all are 19th-century copies, though some are undated. There are rarities in this collection, including the undated 3-volume exegesis of the Holy Qurān, Al-tawhīd al-laṣf fi ma‘ānī ‘l-tanzīl by Ḥāzin al-Khāzin.

Although the MSS are well preserved in the prayer room of the owner in which they are housed, the deteriorated condition of the building itself exposes the MSS to unnecessary hazards.

Published catalogues:
1987. Volume 2 of the Union Catalogue (see above) lists 50 of the MSS in this collection.

MOPTI
Sheikh Salih bin Yousouf bin Hassan

c/o Masjid al-Jami'a
Date of establishment: 1982
Status: Private
Conditions of access: None.
Total number of Islamic MSS: 45 (Arabic; Hausa).
Description of collection: Sheikh Salih established the library in 1982 when he returned from Sokoto, Nigeria, where he had lived for almost two decades, studying Islamic religious knowledge. He himself had copied some of the MSS from his colleagues and teachers, and purchased some from itinerant scholars.

21 of the MSS are on tawhid, 18 on jihād, 1 on Sūrat Yāsin and its secrets, 3 on Hadīth and 2 on mathematics. Only 4 of the manuscripts are dated. The rest are both anonymous and undated. Almost all the manuscripts contain very common texts, known to all students of Islamic knowledge in West Africa.

The MSS are not well kept, as they are exposed to light in the owner’s study and prayer room, alongside volumes of printed Arabic books. The MSS are dusty and some are covered with cobwebs. The owner promised to follow the advice of the compiler in order to
safeguard the collection. It is not known whether it has been
catalogued or not.

Younous Hamaye

B.P. 005
Date of establishment: 1962
Conditions of access: By appointment with the owner.
Total number of Islamic MSS: 93 (Arabic).
Description of collection: The MSS in the collection were purchased
from various sources in the Tuareg regions of Timbuktu and
Agadez. The owner, himself a calligrapher, copied some as an act
of piety. 28 of the manuscripts in the collection are onṣūlī, 16 on
the Holy Qur’ān, 11 on Ḥadīth, 15 on fiqh, 18 on medicine, 1 on
astronomy and 4 on jihād. All the manuscripts were copied in the 19th
century, with only two dating back to the 13th century. The
manuscripts are arranged in a large animal-hide bag to protect them
from dust, bookworms and spiders. They all appear to be in perfect
physical condition. They are housed in the moderately spacious
study room of the owner. Among the rare manuscripts in the collec-
tion are: Kifāyat al-Qur’ān bi ṣīlah fī ṣīlah al-Qur’ān by ʻAbd Allāh
b. Muḥammad b. Fūḥ dated 1822; and Al-qasīd bi-kifāyat al-taufīq fī
al-tauḥīd by Al-Wā’kārī ʻAbd Allāh Bābā Jinnī b. Yūsuf, dated
1353.
Published catalogues: 1986. The Union Catalogue (see above) mentions 75 MSS in this
collection.

NIORO

Alpha Ahmad Kunti

B.P. 89
Date of establishment: 1968
Status: Private
Conditions of access: By appointment with the owner.
Total number of Islamic MSS: 102 (Arabic).
Description of collection: This library was established when the collec-
tion was bequeathed to the present owner by his late father, Malamī
Kunti, following his death in 1967. Malamī Kunti is said to have
brought the MSS from Morocco to Nioro about 30 years ago. How
he acquired the manuscripts in Morocco is unknown to his children.
The manuscripts deal with a variety of subjects, including Ḥadīth
(1), taṣfīr (1), medicine (20), methodology (11), mysticism (14),
fatūs (25) and fiqh (30). About 29 of the manuscripts in this collec-
tion date back to the 11th and 14th centuries, while the rest were
copied in the 19th century. Two of the manuscripts contain fine
Islamic calligraphy. Rare texts include Risālat al-ṣalāḥ al-bahān al-
mukāshifīn bi-arṣīr al-dhālī, anonymous, dated 1835; and Durar al-
manṣūzama fi tadmir al-dunyā ʿl-muqabbilā by Al-Fulānī Yūsuf b.
Ṣaḥī, undated.
Almost 24% of the manuscripts in the collection are not in good
condition. Most of them have torn pages and covers, and some have
become stained. They are kept in locally made book containers in
a spacious room.
Published catalogues: 1987. Volume 2 of the Union Catalogue (see above) covers about
80 of the MSS in this collection.

SAN

Abdul Qadir Ali

c/o Masjid al-Jami’ā
Date of establishment: 1985
Status: Private
Conditions of access: By permission of the owner.
Total number of Islamic MSS: 38 (Arabic; Fulbe).
Description of collection: The manuscripts in this collection were
bought during the owner’s days as a student in Northern Nigeria.
15 of the MSS are on ʿaṣārī, 10 on fiqh, 3 on agriculture, 6 on
poetry, 3 on ṣūlī and 1 on Sufism. They were copied in the 18th cen-
tury, although 5 of them are undated and anonymous. All the
manuscripts are of rare artistic merit. The undated Al-ḍurar al-ṣulṭān
al-kifāyat al-qarīb al-farḍaṣ by Khureṣī Ṣaḥī al-Wulī Yary; and Al-manṣūr
al-maktabāt al-ṣūlī al-madrabah bi ʿĀrā B. Qasim are of significance
for their rarity. The MSS are kept on a large wooden table in the
owner’s study room, and they are perfectly catalogued.

Malamí Kunti is said to have

NIORO
Published catalogues:
1986. See Volume 1 of the Union Catalogue (details above) for 23 of the MSS in this collection.

Alhaji Issah Ankaiba

B.P. 33
Date of establishment: 1970
Status: Private
Conditions of access: By appointment with the owner.
Total number of Islamic MSS: 186 (Arabic).

Description of collection: According to the owner, he inherited about 100 MSS from his late father, who was a famous scholar in the area. After the death of his father, he himself purchased some from several sources within Mali. The manuscripts in this collection are on a variety of subjects: philosophy (61), grammar (15), fiqh (50), education (16), Qur’ān (18), logic (23) and astronomy (3). They date from the 11th century to the 20th century. The manuscripts are well preserved, but some have damaged covers and torn pages. According to the owner, the damage was caused by a heavy rainstorm some years ago.

Rare manuscripts in this collection include the undated Kitāb al-taṣāyyūr wa-l-tashil li-ma‘rifat ahkām al-tanzil by Ibrāhīm Sulaymān Muhammad Yahu; Al-kawsak al-sāyi‘ wa-l-ṣiqd al marzūm by Ḥāmid b. Muhammad b. Ḥamūdūn, dated 1712, and the anonymous Sharh al-Kawsak al-sāyi‘ fi na‘mam janār al-nasīmūn, dated 1472. Some of the manuscripts are of high artistic value, with fine bindings.

Published catalogues:
1987. Volume 2 of the Union Catalogue (see above) mentions quite a number of manuscripts from this collection.

SÉGOU

Sheikh Abdullahi Mahi

c/o Sabou Nyoumann
B.P. 22
Status: Trust
Conditions of access: Open to students and researchers.
Total number of Islamic MSS: 446 (Arabic).

Description of collection: Sheikh Abdullahi Mahi, a renowned Sufi Islamic scholar, who died some two years ago, assembled this collection, which is said to have been bequeathed to the Musulm umma of Ségou in his last will. It is not known how he acquired the MSS, but it can be assumed that they were obtained both in Mali and elsewhere, given the late scholar’s extensive journeys to West African and Middle Eastern countries during his lifetime. According to his khulafa, no effort has been made to enlarge the collection since his death.

55 of the MSS in this beautiful collection are on history; 17 contain poetry, 8 are on mathematics, 100 are on Sufism, 69 are on fiqh, 3 are on education, 30 are on medicine, 41 are on logic, 25 are on Ḥadīth, 38 are on Qur’ānic science, 20 are on usūl, 15 are on diplomatic correspondence, 10 are fatwas, 5 are on genealogy, and 10 are on theology. There are some significant texts, including the undated and anonymous Nasab al-Shaykh Muhammad al-Bakrī; Kitāb al-Rahma wa-l-ṣifah wa-l-ḥikma; Kitāb al-Manhaj al-muhīn ‘alā dar al-arba‘īn by Al-Lakhmī Abū Ḥafṣ Umar b. ‘Alī; and Al-ja‘far ‘al-ṣifah wa-l-na‘īfah al-kāfira by Mukhtar Kuntā. The majority of the MSS in this collection are undated; the few dated ones are of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Five manuscripts in this collection have fine Islamic bindings.

The manuscripts are arranged on small wooden bookshelves according to subject-matter. They are all in perfect condition.

Published catalogues:
1986–87. The Union Catalogue, volumes 1 and 2 (see above), includes 246 of the MSS in this collection.

Sheikh Sa‘ād Touré

Ma‘had Sabīl al-Falāb
Date of establishment: 1979
Status: Private
Conditions of access: Limited to the owner’s students and serious researchers.
Total number of Islamic MSS: 705 (Arabic).

Description of collection: The manuscripts were collected by the owner during his sojourns in West African countries. He personally copied some from his teachers in Timbuktu, Agadez and Sokoto. The collection covers a wide range of subjects: fiqh (356), Ḥadīth (10),
poetry (13), sermons (48), theology (170), Sufism (58) and mysticism (50).

About 63% of the MSS in the collection were copied between the 16th and 19th centuries, 15% in the 19th century and 20% in the 20th century. Only a few are of artistic significance. There are, however, a number of rarities which include the undated Kitâb Mautid Insân al-Kamâl by Ya'qub al-Tahâwî; Tadhkira al-

The manuscripts are preserved on compact wooden shelves. They are, however, dusty and infested by bookworms.

Published catalogues:
1986–87. Volumes 1 & 2 of the Union Catalogue (see above) list about 250 MSS of this collection.

SIKASSO
Sheikh Abdullahie Ahmar

C/o Masjid al-Jami'î

Date of establishment: 1976

Status: Private

Conditions of access: None.

Total number of Islamic MSS: 70 (Arabic; Fulbe).

Description of collection: The owner purchased some of the MSS in Djenne in the course of his studies, and some were donated to him by his students. 15 of the manuscripts are works on philosophy, 6 are fatwas, 9 are on tawhid, 25 are khatâba, 11 are on Haddith, 2 are on the Holy Qur'an and 2 are on medicine. The majority of the manuscripts in this collection were either written or copied in the 18th century, while the rest were copied in the 19th and 20th centuries. They are safely preserved in a small study room on a wooden table, and are in good condition. According to the owner, occasional dusting of the MSS is done by his students and children. The two works on the Holy Qur'an, copied in 1758 and 1792 by Alî Hâydar and Sîdî Mûki'târ respectively, are of rare artistic and calligraphic quality.

Published catalogues:
1986. Volume One of the Union Catalogue (see above) lists 8 MSS in this collection.

TIMBUKTU
Centre Ahmad Baba de Tombouctou

B.P. 141

Date of establishment: 1970

Status: Public research library

Conditions of access: Accessible only to students, researchers and visitors from foreign institutions.

Total number of Islamic MSS: 2,174 (Arabic).

Description of collection: This collection is the largest and best organised in the country. Most of the MSS in the collection were purchased from individuals during the Centre's survey of MSS in Mali over the years. It has also received MSS in the form of donations from individuals, organisations and institutions; and it holds microfilms of MSS from private collections whose owners were unwilling to give them away. It appears that almost all the collections of the country are represented in this way.

The Centre's collection has MSS ranging from the 11th to 20th centuries, including hundreds of rare and undated MSS. The rarities include the anonymous Sharh Mukhtasar Khâtîb, copied by 'Abd al-Rahmân b. Allâh, dated 1794; Tarîkh al-fatâwâ fi akhâr al-
hâlân wa-l-jâyâr wa-l-khâsîr al-nâs, undated, by Ka'tî Mahmûd b. Al-Mutawakkil; Sharh Iqûtâ al-dajjâna, undated, by Al-Fâlî b. Al-Awâmi; Kitâb al-Fahîm âl-jâliha al-bukhâra 'alâ 'l-shamâlî al-
-Muhammâdiya, undated, by Muhammâd b. Al-Qâsim; Dîyâ al-
-hâkîkâmî by 'Abd Allâh b. Fûdî, copied by Muhammâd b. Zârîq, Asqâîbî, undated; Kitâb Rahmat al-umma fi 'l-khâliqâl al-a'îma by Al-
-Uthmânî Muhammâd, dated 1087.

The manuscripts are arranged according to subject-matter in card boxes, stored on glass-fronted wooden and metal shelves. They are housed in a spacious room. The majority of the collection is in perfect physical condition, but there are a few damaged MSS.

The distribution of subject-matter is as follows: fatwas 150; fiqh 200; theology 165; Sufism 273; Haddith 196; Qur'an and related subjects 230; mysticism 70; logic 228; grammar 180; jihad 36; medicine 50; astronomy 94; history 96; poetry 89; usul 27; mathematics 25; sermons 65.

Published catalogues:
1986–87. See Union Catalogues section above.

Report of an exhibition of 100 MSS belonging to the Centre Ahmad Baba in Timbuktu.

*Unpublished catalogues:*

A card catalogue prepared some years back describes about 200 MSS in this collection.

**BIBLIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX**

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