

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)

Libraries at University of Nebraska-Lincoln

---

2011

# The Prevalence of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Northern Nigeria, Implications for Access, Use, and Enduring Management: A Framework For Research

Musa Abdu Auyo

Bayero University, maauyo@yahoo.com

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

---

Auyo, Musa Abdu, "The Prevalence of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Northern Nigeria, Implications for Access, Use, and Enduring Management: A Framework For Research" (2011). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 459.  
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/459>

## *Library Philosophy and Practice 2011*

ISSN 1522-0222

# The Prevalence of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Northern Nigeria, Implications for Access, Use, and Enduring Management: A Framework For Research

Musa Abdu Auyo

Department of Library and Information Sciences  
Bayero University  
Kano, Nigeria

Ahmed Mohammed

Department of Library and Information Sciences  
Bayero University  
Kano, Nigeria

A paper presented at a National Conference on Exploring Nigeria's Arabic/Ajami Manuscript Resources for Development of New Knowledge, organized by Arewa House and Ford Foundation Office of West Africa Region, Kaduna, Nigeria, 7th-8th May, 2009

## Introduction

Arabic and Ajami manuscripts constitute an important aspect of the intellectual heritage of the peoples of Northern Nigeria. Their value in administration, law, scholasticism, historical construction and cultural preservation cannot be overemphasized. Their subjects matter are diverse which cover Languages and Linguistic, History, Diplomacy, Law, Sociology, Economics, Politics, Education, Literature, Culture, Geography, Architecture, Medicine, Communications, Science, Technology, Epistemology, Philosophy and Logic. (Batiste, 2007 and Saeed 2007). They imbibe a veritable body of knowledge which can be sustainably explored for the benefit of present and future generations of humanity. However, this can only be possible if under conditions of optimum access and use by information seekers which may include Administrators, Politicians, Scholars, Researchers, Members of the Judiciary and even Social Workers. Indicators such as the literature suggest ample abundance of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts in Northern Nigeria. These

manuscripts however, are held at scattered locations and under various, sometimes undeterminable conditions of management and care, which greatly affect access to them and their use as well as enduring management.

In order to ensure access, effective use and management, it is imperative that a study be conducted to determine their prevalence (existence) and the conditions under which they are held, managed and preserved. This paper presents a modest attempt at providing a framework for undertaking the study by highlighting the major elements of the study and its subsequent report.

## Statement of the Problem

Arabic and Ajami manuscripts abound in Northern Nigeria in great amount with actual and potential values for administration, research, teaching/learning, language development, cultural preservation and acquisition of general knowledge. They cover wide range of subject areas including politics, linguistics, law, history, medicine, sciences, culture, technology, architecture, philosophy, spiritualism and logic. Those manuscripts are held, and managed by varied agencies, individuals and families, in scattered and sometimes undetermined locations and conditions.

In order to attain their maximum value, there should be optimum access to them and their effective use by interested groups and individuals such as Administrators, Politicians, Scholars, Researchers, Artists, and Social Workers.

In order to ensure such access and use as well as enduring management, there is the need to first empirically determine their existence (including types, amount, subject coverage, locations and ownership), and conditions of management including preservation. Lack of such empirical knowledge is considered a problem worthy of been addressed.

## Research Questions

The study will be guided by the following research questions.

- What Arabic and Ajami manuscripts exist in northern Nigeria?
- What are their estimated volumes and intellectual contents?
- What are their Forms and ages?
- Where are they been held and by whom?
- Under what conditions are they been held in terms of management?
- Who utilize them and for what purpose(s)?
- To what extent are they accessible and utilized?
- What bibliographical control mechanism can be established in regards to those manuscripts?
- What are the constraints associated with their management, accessibility, and use?
- What measures can be taken to address those constraints?

## Research Objectives

The study will seek to achieve the following objectives

- To determine the existence and nature of Arabic and Ajami manuscript in northern Nigeria
- To determine their volumes and intellectual contents
- To determine their forms and ages
- To determine their custody
- To determine their conditions of management
- To find out who utilize them and under for what purposes

- To establish bibliographic control mechanism of those manuscripts
- To determine the extent of their accessibility and use
- To identify problems associated with their management, accessibility and use
- To propose measures that could address the problems

## Review of Related Literature

Literature will be reviewed under the following sub-headings:

1. Theoretical Framework
2. Historical Generations, Perspectives on the Use of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts.
3. History of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Northern Nigeria.
4. Contemporary State of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Northern Nigeria: Availability, Management, Preservation, Accessibility, and Use.
5. Challenges of Access, Use, and Management of Arabic and Ajami Manuscript in Northern Nigeria.

## Operational Definitions of Research Concepts

Research concepts to be defined operationally for clarity in understanding the study and its report may include

- Prevalence
- Arabic and Ajami manuscripts
- Northern Nigeria
- Access
- Use
- Management
- Preservation

## Methodology

### 1. Research Techniques

- Survey, Descriptive and Content analyses of documents

2. Agencies and persons to be contacted for data on the study should include:

- Kaduna: Arewa House Center for Research and Historical Documentation, Ahmadu Bello University
- Nigerian National Archives, Kaduna
- Kano State History and Culture Bureau, Kano.
- Centre for Islamic Studies, UDUS, Sokoto
- Waziri Junaidu History and Culture Bureau, Sokoto
- Kenneth Dike Library and the Center for Arabic Documentation, Institute of African Studies, Ibadan University, Ibadan
- Bayero University Library, Kano

(Batiste, 2007)

Others may include:

- Libraries of relevant academic faculties and departments in universities

Viz: Ahmadu University,Zaria, Bayero University,Kano, Usmanu Danfodio University,Sokoto, University of Ilorin (UNILORIN), and University of Maiduguri(UNIMAID) with biases in Languages, Islamic studies, History and Law.

- Libraries of special institutes with biases in Languages, Islamic studies, History and Law such as the Arabic Village at Gamboru-Agala in Borno State, Colleges of Islamic and Legal studies at Misau (Bauchi State) and Ilorin, Aminu Kano College of Islamic Legal Studies (Kano State), School of Arabic Studies (SAS), (Kano State) ,
- Qur'anic College, Gadon Kaya, (Kano State), Ado Bayero Qur'anic College (Kano State) etc. others are:
- Prominent Ulamas and their families such as Mal. Dahiru Usman Bauchi, the families of Late Sheik Nasiru Kabara, Mal.Abubakar Mahmud Gumi, Late Alhaji Waziri Junaidu Sokoto, Late Alhaji Garba Abubakar Saidu, etc.
- Prominent Khadis, Magistrates, and Court Registrars
- Traditional rulers and their families.
- Book sellers/Vendors
- Mosques
- Faith-based Organizations (FBOs)
- Individual scholars such as (past and present) teachers of Islamic studies, Arabic, Religion Knowledge, Law, History, etc.

## Instruments for Data Collection

- Interviews
- Questionnaires
- Documentary analysis
- Research assistants may include Arabic and Ajami Translators

## Research Report

### Literature Review

Historical perspectives on the generation and use of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts

- History of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Northern Nigeria
- Contemporary State of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Northern Nigeria; Availability Management, Preservation, Accessibility and Use.
- Challenge of Access, Use, and Management of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Northern Nigeria.

### Choice of Research Technique

- Population of the Study
- Subject for the Study
- Instruments of Data Collection
- Administration of Research Instrument
- Method of Data Analysis

## Presentation and Analysis of Data

- Response Rate
- Availability of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts
- Volume and Subject Coverage of Manuscripts
- Forms Ages of Manuscripts
- Responsibility for Holding and Managing Manuscripts
- Conditions of Management and Preservation of Manuscripts

- Users and Purposes of Using Manuscripts'
- Extent of Accessibility and use of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts
- Problems Associated with Management, Accessibility and use of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts Collections
- Discussion
- Major Findings of the Study
- Conclusion
- Recommendations

## Bibliography

Abdulrazaq, A.B. (2005). *Information Services Delivery in Research and Documentation Agency: A Study of Library and Archival Services of Arewa House, Kaduna*. Unpublished MLS Thesis submitted to the Department of Library and Information Science, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria

Aboye, A.A and Popoola, S.O (1998). Record Management of a Typical State Judiciary in Nigeria in *Gateway Library Journal* 1(2) Kwara NLA p95-104

Adamu, A.U. (2004). *Sunset at Dawn, Darkness at Noon: Reconstructing the Mechanism of Literacy in Indigenous Communities: A Professorial Inaugural Lecture Series no. 7 April*

Adamu,G. (1989). Archives in Nigeria: How to Salvage the Soul of the Nation in *Savanna Journal of the Environmental and Social Sciences* 10(2) Zaria ABU Press LTD p.70-79

Adamu, M. (2005). The Management of Chieftaincy Records in Ghana: An Overview. *Journal of Library, Archives And Information Services* Vol 15(1)

Adamu,Y.M. and Shehu, A. (2006). The State of Kano State Archives Being A Paper Presented at International Conference on Preserving Nigerian Scholarly and Literary Traditions and Manuscripts Heritage organized by Arewa House and American Embassy, March 7th -8th ,Arewa House Kaduna.1-18

Afolabi, M. (1991). Management and Training Archives and Records Managers in Africa *Annual Conference of the Society of Nigeria Archivist* Vol.1 (4)

Arif, Aida S., and Ahmad M. Abu-Hakima. *Descriptive Catalogue Of Arabic Manuscripts In Nigeria* in the Jos Museum and Lugard Hall Library. Kaduna. London, Luza, 1965.

Ati, Ojingu Friday. Place of Weather and Climate in the Preservation of Scholarly and Literary Traditions and Manuscript Heritage. International Conference on Preserving Ahmadu Bello University, Kaduna, Nigeria, March 7th-8th, 2007.

Ayuba, H.K., Aji Y.M., and Msheliza, D.S (2003) *Cultural Dynamics In Resources Use, Conservation and Management Among Rural Communities in Borno State* Maiduguri.- Saline Psycho education services.

Balarabe, A. A. (1990). Preservation and Conservation of Arabic Materials in Nigerian Libraries Archives and Museums A paper presented at the 28t Nigerian Library Association (NLA) Yola

Bivar, A.D.H. The Arabic Calligraphy of Nigeria. *African Language Review*, 7 , 1968: 3-15.

Biver, A.D.H., and Hiskett,m(1961). The Arabic Literature of Nigeria to 1804: A Provisional Account 1 Plates I-V in *Bulletin of school of Oriental and African Studies* xxx 1&2 P104-148

Boyd, J., and Mack, B.B. (1999). The collected works of Nana As mau

Doughter of Usman Danfodio (1793-1804) Ibadan: Sam Bookman Publishers.

Brockelmann, Carl. Geschichte (1943) Der Arabischen Litteratur. 2. Den Supplementenbanden Angrepasste Aufl. Leiden, E.J. Brill, , 2 v.

Enwere, J.C . *Problem of Archival Administration and Record Management in English Speaking West Africa States: The Nigerian Archives*1(1) Ibadan.- Sterling-publishing Consultancy LTD p.1-17

Federal Government of Nigeria Archives Decree (1992) . Lagos Federal Ministry of Information

Freeman-Grenville, G.S. P. (1965). Summary of a report on a conference on Arabic documents, held at the University of Ghana, 26th and 27th February, 1965. In Ibadan, Nigeria. University. Centre of Arabic Documentation. *Research Bulletin*, v. 2, July: 8-39.

Hiskett, M. (1957). Material Relating to the State of Learning Among the Fulani Before Jihad in *Boboas Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies* XIX 3,P 550-578

Hunwick, John O., Roman Leomeier, Hamidu Bobboyi, Razaq Abu Bakre (1995). *Arabic Literature of Africa. Volume 2: The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa.*- Leiden: Brill,

HunwtkJ.O(1964). The Influence of Arabic in West Africa: A Preliminary Historical Survey1 in *Transaction of the Historical Society of Ghana* Vol vii P.24-41

Jimoh, Ismaheel A. The State of Arabic Manuscripts in Nigeria. *International Conference on Preserving Nigeria's Scholarly and Literary Traditions and Arabic Manuscript Heritage*. Arewa House, Ahmadu Bello University, Kaduna, Nigeria, March 7th-8th, 2007.

Kensdale, W.E.N. (1955). The Arabic manuscript collection of the library of the University College of Ibadan, Nigeria. *WALA News*, 2, June: 21-22.

Kensdale, W.E.N. *A Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts Preserved in the University Library. Ibadan, Nigeria*. Ibadan University Library, 1955-1958. 3 v.

Last, D. Murray. Arabic Manuscripts in the National Archives, Kaduna. Ibadan, Nigeria. University. Centre of Arabic Documentation. *Research Bulletin*, 2, July 1966: 1-10.

Mahmud, Khalil. (1964). The Arabic collection of Ibadan University Library. *Libri*, 14, 2,:97-107

Mahmud, Khalil (1983). The Arabic Literary Tradition in Nigeria. *Nigeria Magazine* 145 37-54.

Maidabino, A.A. (2003). *The Management of Information Resources in Public Archives in North Western Zone of Nigeria* MLS Thesis Unpublished Submitted to the Department of Library and Information Science, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria.

Misau, A.Y. (2006). *Management and Use of Local Government Records in Bauchi State of Nigeria* MLS Thesis Unpublished Submitted to the Department of Library and Information Science, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria

Muhammad, Baba Yunus(1995). Hand lists of Islamic Manuscripts: Nigeria, Section 1: *The Nigerian National Archives, Kaduna State*. Edited and annotated by John Hunwick. London, Al Furqan Heritge Foundation, 243 pp.

*Northern History Research Scheme (Project). First Interim Report* (1966). Zaria, 55 p.

- Saeed, A.G. (2007). *Literary works of Alhaji Garba Abubakar Saidu: An Amateur, Humble, and Versatile Scholar.* - Kano: AJ Publishers.
- Shehu, H. (2007). *The Management of Records in Agencies of National Archives of Nigeria.* MLS Thesis Unpublished Submitted to the Department of Library and Information Science, Bayero University, Kano-Nigeria
- Sifawa, Abdullahi. (2007). *Arabic Manuscripts Collection, Cataloguing and Preservation: the Sokoto Experience. International Conference on Preserving Nigeria's Scholarly and Literary Traditions and Arabic Manuscript Heritage.* Arewa House, Ahmadu Bello University, Kaduna, Nigeria, March 7th-8th,
- Umar, Muhammad A. *Legal Framework for the Protection of Arabic Manuscripts and Cultural Property Heritage in Nigeria. International Conference on Preserving Nigeria's Scholarly and Literary Traditions and Arabic Manuscript Heritage.* Arewa House, Ahmadu Bello University, Kaduna, Nigeria, March 7th-8th, 2007.
- Usman, M.T. (2007). Continuity and Change in the Literary Tradition of the Sokoto Caliphate. *International Conference on Preserving Nigeria's Scholarly and Literary Traditions and Arabic Manuscript Heritage.* Arewa House, Ahmadu Bello University, Kaduna, Nigeria, March 7th-8th,
- Vajda, G. (1953). *Index General des Manuscrits Arabes Musulmans de la Bibliotheque Nationale De Paris.* Paris, Editions Du Centre national de la Recherche Scientifique, . 743 p.
- Whitting, C.E. J. The Unprinted Indigenous Literature of Northern Nigeria. *Royal Asiatic Society Journal.* Pt.1/2, 1943: p. 23-26.
- Roper, G. (1993) (Ed). *World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts Volume II.* Edited by. Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation. London, . 724 p.
- Yahaya, I.Y. (1988) *Hausa A Rubuce: Tarihin Rebuke Rubuce Cikin Hausa.* - Zaria Gaskiya Tafi Kobo
- Yahaya, I.Y. (1965): Arabic Source Material and Historiography in Sokoto Since 1864: An Outline. *Research Bulletin [Centre of Arabic Documentation]* 1.3 1-7.
- Yahaya, I.Y. (1959). Arabic documents of Northern Nigeria.: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and Africa Studies*, 22, pt.2,: 324-349. illus.
- Yahaya, I.Y. and Hiskett, M. (1962). The Arabic Literature of Nigeria to 1804: A Provisional Account. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 25, 104-48.
- Yahaya, I.Y. Arabic Literature of Arabic: a progress report. *Sudanic Africa*, 6, 1995: 170-182.
- Yahaya, I.Y. (2005) Arabic Literature of Arabic: Project and Publication. *Northwestern University Program of African Studies: Working Paper Series:* 54 p.
- Yahaya, I.Y. (1962). *Tarikh al-Adab al-'Arabi* [History of Arabic Literature] Transl. By 'Abd al-Halim al-Najjar. Cairo, Dar al-Ma'arif,
- Yahaya, I.Y. (1965). Arabic Source Material and Historiography in Sokoto to 1864: An Outline. *Research Bulletin [Centre of Arabic Documentation]* 1.2 3-19.
- Yahaya, I.Y. (1956). Field notes on the Arabic literature of the Western Sudan. *Royal Asiatic Society. Journal*, 1955, pt. 3/4: 162-168; 1956, pt.1/2: 78-80; 1958, pt. 1/2: 53-57.
- Yahaya, I.Y. (1967). National Archives Kaduna: Manuscripts of West African



Authorship. Ibadan, Nigeria. University. Centre of Arabic Documentation.  
*Research Bulletin*, 3, January: 1-15.

Yahaya, I.Y. (1965). Northern Nigeria Manuscript Books in Ahmadu Bello  
University: a report. *JHSN*, 8, July: 4-7.

## References

Saeed, A.G. (2007). *Literary works of Alhaji Garba Abubakar Saidu: An  
Amateur, Humble, and Versatile Scholar.*- Kano: AJ Publishers

Batiste, A.D. (2007). Report of a tour to Northern Nigeria March 3-19 2007 on  
the State of Arabic Manuscripts Collection in Nigeria. available at  
<http://www.loc.gov/rr/amed/afs/NigerianSurveyTour2007/NigerianSurveyTour.html>

LPP HOME

CONTENTS

CONTACT US