

THE MANUSCRIPTS OF TIMBUKTU: ARMED CONFLICT
AND THE PRESERVATION OF MEMORY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT MĀNOA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

MAY 2014

By

Valancy Rasmussen

Thesis Committee:

Andrew Wertheimer, Chairperson
Rebecca Knuth
Tamara Albertini

Keywords: Timbuktu, West Africa, Preservation, Manuscripts, Cultural Heritage, Islamic Civilization

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the events surrounding the rescue of manuscripts from Timbuktu in 2012/2013. It also explores the significance of these materials, which include works from a variety of disciplines including law, theology, history, science and mathematics and that date from the 12th to the 20th century. Timbuktu was once a prominent center of scholarship and its manuscripts represent a confluence of peoples and cultures, with works from throughout the Islamic world including those produced by the city's own scholars. They are part of the extraordinary, yet little known, history of Africa's documentary heritage.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I. Timbuktu: Commencement, Conflict, and Meaning.....	5
II. Manuscript Heritage, Response and Responsibility.....	7

CHAPTER TWO: THE TIMBUKTU MANUSCRIPTS: A CONVERGENCE OF PEOPLES, TRADE ROUTES, SCHOLARS AND SAINTS

I. Islam, Commerce, and the Quest for Knowledge.....	10
II. History and Development of the City.....	12
III. Characteristics of the Manuscripts.....	18
IV. Details of the Manuscripts.....	20

CHAPTER THREE: KEEPING THE SOULD ALIVE: COLONIALISM, IDEOLOGY, AND THE RESCUE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

I. French Colonization and the Post-Colonial Condition.....	31
II. “[A] curse on our world”: Exploitation, Islamist Violence, and the Invasion of Timbuktu.....	34
III. Cars, Carts, and Canoes: the Extraordinary Adventure of 100,000 Books.....	36

CHAPTER FOUR:
THE ASSAULT ON SAINTS: RESPONSE AND RESPONSIBILITY

I. Sufi Heritage and the Islamist Imaginary.....	41
II. The Politics of Preservation: Memory, Ethics and the Future to Come...	46
III. Eurocentric Imaginaries and the Making of History.....	51

CHAPTER FIVE:
CONCLUSION

I. What Would Have Been: History, Politics and Promise.....	54
II. Invocation.....	55
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	56

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

I. *Timbuktu: Commencement, Conflict, and Meaning*

There have been many devastating losses to cultural heritage materials during wars and other armed conflicts. There also have been materials that were saved from destruction. Librarians, archivists, curators and other staff, as well as community members, seeing priceless materials in danger have acted to save them. There is much written about what has been lost during armed conflicts and the tragic loss to memory. This history is important; it is necessary to know what is happening and what we have lost. It is also essential to understand that people can take action to save cultural treasures.

Timbuktu was once a prominent center of scholarship. In the mid 16th century the ‘university’ had 25,000 students, which was about one quarter of the population. These manuscripts represent a confluence of peoples and cultures, works from throughout the Islamic world, especially North Africa and Andalusia, and the works produced by local scholars. They are part of the extraordinary, yet little known, history of Africa’s documentary heritage. They can help scholars speak to the silences in the historic record regarding Africa and return this history to memory for the people of Timbuktu and the region.

The recent events in Timbuktu connects to other cases of cultural heritage destruction that remain little known in the West or other parts of the world. These manuscripts, as well as the shrines and mosques in Timbuktu, were under attack by the Islamist rebels due to conflicting understandings they have about Islam. Fundamentally,

the Islamists do not accept Sufi Islamic religious views. The attacks in Timbuktu are part of a larger assault against Sufi cultural heritage going on in North Africa as well as in other regions. It is ironic that some of the manuscripts the Islamists sought to destroy are religious texts that exhibit a more open, flexible Islam, one that fuses traditions and adds to our understanding of the plurality of Islam.

The Tuareg rebel groups responsible for the destruction and violence in Timbuktu are not representative of Tuareg peoples in general. These groups are fueled by an ideological commitment to Wahhabiyya Islam, a fundamentalist sect originating in Saudi Arabia. The Tuareg have history that intertwines with the history of Timbuktu. They have a history of scholarship and some of Timbuktu's manuscripts were written by Tuareg scholars. The Tuareg speak a language called Tamasheq and have their own writing called Tifanagh that originates from the Phoenician alphabet.

There are manuscripts that are written in Tifanagh. There are also manuscripts that are written in Ajami, Arabic scripts used to write non-Arabic languages. There are Ajami manuscripts that write some West African languages, including Fulfulde (Fulani), Songhay and Hausa. The Ajami manuscripts are, primarily, locally produced and some of them record the oral histories of these groups. They are especially important works as Ajami is rarely used to write West African languages today; after colonization Roman scripts began replacing it.

Many of the manuscripts contain marginalia. These texts are more than just literary heritage, more than works of history, science, mathematics, law, grammar, poetry, theology, and medicine- this would be significant in and of itself- but these materials are interactions between readers and texts through time. Marginalia in the texts

give information on how the people viewed these works and many of these notes are signed and dated. The manuscripts have both shaped the people of Timbuktu and been shaped by them, over hundreds of years as they were passed down through generations. These families were, in essence, keeping archives, adding commentary to manuscripts, adding documents and books to the collection. These archives are family histories as well as being repositories of social memory.

II. *Manuscript Heritage, Response and Responsibility*

I will explore the events surrounding the rescue of manuscripts from Timbuktu in 2012/2013. How were these manuscripts saved and who was responsible? What were the motivations of those involved in their rescue? What is the meaning of these materials to the people of Timbuktu and to broader communities? What is the importance of these manuscripts? I will focus on collections from two institutions, the Ahmed Baba Institute and the Mamma Haidara Library.

We also have to consider the secondary dangers to the materials that survive and are rescued. What happens with materials that are saved but then held in locations where they are at risk? What is the role of the international community? Conflict and post-conflict policies for international assistance and cooperation need to be strengthened and related laws enforced. Do cultural heritage professionals have a responsibility beyond their own collections? Do we have a responsibility for others?

I will be viewing these events and their meaning from a postmodern perspective and particularly a Derridean ethics that connects memory to justice, an affirmation of the other, and that insists upon our “responsibility for tomorrow” (Derrida, *Archive Fever*).

“No justice... seems possible or thinkable without some responsibility beyond all living present, within that which disjoins the living present, before the ghosts of those who are not yet born or who are already dead...” (Derrida, *Specters of Marx*).

There is very little written on the Timbuktu manuscripts within archives/library science literature. There is also very little from any discipline that includes the recent threat and the movement of manuscripts to Bamako. There are two sources that discuss the recent rescue events, “Reacting to Timbuktu” (*Information Development*) and “The exile of a library- what happened to the Timbuktu Manuscripts?” (*News in Conservation*). “A Precious History Preserved” (*Chronicle of Higher Education*) contains some details on the rescue events as well as on preservation efforts. A recent article from 2011, “The economics and politics of international preservation collaborations: a Malian case study” (*Archival Science*), discusses problems and issues involved with the ongoing preservation work in Timbuktu.

There is also some material from custodians of private collections. In the 2008 book *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, Ismaël Diadié Haidara, custodian of Fondo Ka’ti, has written, “The private libraries of Timbuktu”. “The state of manuscripts in Mali and efforts to preserve them”, written by Abdel Kader Haidara, custodian of the Mamma Haidara Library is also in *The Meanings of Timbuktu*. In *Timbuktu Script & Scholarship*, from 2008, Mahmoud Zouber, former director of the Ahmed Baba Institute has written, “Ahmad Baba of Timbuktu (1556-1627) Introduction to His Life and Works”.

The two works mentioned above, *The Meanings of Timbuktu* and *Timbuktu Script and Scholarship* are primarily on the history of the manuscripts and give details about their composition. There are two other recent works on the history of the manuscripts that

give details about particular works and authors, *The Hidden Treasures of Timbuktu*, 2008, and *Les Manuscrits de Tombouctou*, 2012. *The Hidden Treasures of Timbuktu* presents information about the history of Timbuktu, the importance of the trans-Saharan trade routes to its development as well as information about the various peoples living in the region. It includes an essay by Mohamed Gallah Dicko, director of the Ahmed Baba Institute, on “Mali’s Manuscript Traditions”. *Les Manuscrits de Tombouctou*, gives some historical analysis that includes discussion of the cultural complexity of the region. It also discusses the problem of colonial, Eurocentric narratives that contribute to the myth that Africa has no written history. It includes an essay by Mahmoud Zouber, (former director of the Ahmed Baba Institute) on the written heritage of Mali.

CHAPTER 2:

THE TIMBUKTU MANUSCRIPTS: A CONVERGENCE OF PEOPLES, TRADE ROUTES, SCHOLARS AND SAINTS

I. *Islam, Commerce, and the Quest for Knowledge*

“He who pursues the road of knowledge God will direct to the road of Paradise.”

“Seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim man and woman.”

-from the Hadith.¹

Life in Islamic communities required a literate population both for business reasons as well as being an essential component of Muslim faith. Islamic tradition, the Hadith and the Qur'an call upon Muslims to read and to seek knowledge. The very first transcribed word of the Qur'an is “Read!” From the same chapter, a few verses down, reading, writing and knowledge are attributed to God: “Read! And the Lord is most bountiful; He who taught (the use of) the pen; taught the human being that which he knew not.”² And from the beginning, Muslims pursued innovations in science and mathematics, in order to more accurately follow decrees of their religion. A desire to determine more precise prayer times and the exact location of Mecca resulted in the

¹ The Hadith are sayings, from the oral tradition, that are attributed to the Prophet Mohammed.

See: Abu Dawud, Book 019, Hadith Number 3634,

<http://www.hadithcollection.com/abudawud/251->

[Abu%20Dawud%20Book%2019.%20Knowledge/17618-abu-dawud-book-019-hadith-number-3634.html?highlight=WyJrbm93bGVkZ2UiLCJwYXJhZGlzZSJd](http://www.hadithcollection.com/abudawud/251-Abu%20Dawud%20Book%2019.%20Knowledge/17618-abu-dawud-book-019-hadith-number-3634.html?highlight=WyJrbm93bGVkZ2UiLCJwYXJhZGlzZSJd) (accessed 3 April 2014).

These are as seen in: Howard R. Turner's, *Science in Medieval Islam: an illustrated introduction* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 11, 17.

² *Qur'an* 96:1, 96: 3-5, based on Yusuf Ali version, as seen in, Ghislaine Lydon, “A Thirst for Knowledge: Arabic Literacy, Writing Paper and Saharan Bibliophiles in the Southwestern Sahara”, in *The Trans-Saharan Book Trade: Manuscript Culture, Arabic Literacy and Intellectual History in Muslim Africa*, ed. Graziano Krätli and Ghislaine Lydon (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 36-37.

development of algorithms and instruments for these purposes. Muslim scientists developed functions of trigonometry for the purpose of determining precise prayer times. There are manuscripts in Timbuktu that relate to these concepts.³

The other main influence for acquiring knowledge and writing was commerce. There is much documentation, in Timbuktu, that relates to commercial activities. There are also works of science relating to stars and constellations, used for the purposes of navigation through the Sahara. Being able to navigate the desert was essential for the leaders of the caravans that brought merchandise along the trans-Saharan trade routes.⁴

The Sahara, from the Arabic word *as-Sahrā'*, means literally, 'the desert'. It is the largest desert in the world, covering 3,500,000 square miles (9,000,000 square kilometers). Rather than a barrier, the Sahara was a gateway to the world bringing east to west, connecting the Mediterranean, Middle East, India and China. It was seen as a 'sea' and the southern and northern edges are called the Sahel, from the Arabic word, *Sāhil* meaning shore.⁵ Those navigating this desert-sea are comparable to mariners in their need to acquire specialized knowledge for navigation. These caravaners also need knowledge of weather patterns; they need to be able to see potential problems in advance, to avoid sand storms. They also need to be able to plan the quickest and most efficient route through the vast desert. "Like their seafaring counterparts, they plotted their course based only on a few fixed reference points. They also relied on predictable astral positioning, possessing fine knowledge of astronomy so as to navigate with the constellations."⁶

³ Abraham Curtis, "Stars of the Sahara," *New Scientist* 195, no. 2617 (2007): 41.

⁴ Eric Ross, "A Historical Geography of the Trans-Saharan Trade," in *The Trans-Saharan Book Trade: Manuscript Culture, Arabic Literacy and Intellectual History in Muslim Africa*, 11.

⁵ Eric Ross, 1-3, 11.

⁶ Ghislaine Lydon, "Writing trans-Saharan history: Methods, sources and interpretations across the African divide," *Journal of North African Studies* 10, no. 3-4 (2005): 305.

The location of Timbuktu was essential to its formation and development into a center of trade and scholarship. It is the northernmost city of the Niger Bend and just to the South of Azawad. The Niger Bend is the most northern portion of the Niger River, the place where it bends around North and West. This northern bend allows for cities to exist closer to the edge of the desert. The Niger has been compared to the Nile for its importance; it produces floodplains seasonally that allow for abundant agriculture. Timbuktu is not directly off the river but has its own port at Kabara.⁷

II. *History and Development of the City*

Timbuktu began as a seasonal outpost of nomadic people. The legend is that the city was named for a slave woman named Buktu who had a well in that location; *tin buktu* means well of Buktu in Tamasheq. It was founded, around 1100 CE, by a Tuareg group referred to as Maghsharan.⁸ This name probably originates from the Tamasheq word *imashagan* which means ‘free people’ or ‘nobles’. The Tuareg call themselves Kel Tamasheq, which means ‘people of the Tamasheq language’. Tamasheq is a Berber language, stemming from the Afro-Asiatic language group.⁹ The relationship between the

⁷ Elias N. Saad, *Social history of Timbuktu: the role of Muslim scholars and notables 1400-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 5-6.

⁸ From one of the histories of Timbuktu, the *Ta'rikh al Sūdān*, in John O. Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay empire: Al-Sa'di's Ta'rikh al-sudan down to 1613 and other contemporary documents* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 29.

⁹ Luísa Pereira et al., “Linking the sub-Saharan and West Eurasian gene pools: maternal and paternal heritage of the Tuareg nomads from the African Sahel,” *European Journal of Human Genetics* 18, (2010): 915. The Tuareg appear not to have any Semitic roots, which may come as a surprise to many that see North Africa as being Arabic. Berber groups seem to have significant genetic variation from the Tuareg, although they also may have no Semitic markers. The information in this analysis suggests that the Tuareg have been in the Saharan region much longer than previously thought and were likely inhabitants of the green Sahara, more than 6,000 years ago.

Tuareg and the Berber¹⁰ is uncertain, as well as their relationship with other nomadic peoples of the region (such as the Sanhaja and the Kounta).¹¹

The origins of many groups in this region are obscure. There has been much movement, in and out of the region, by various peoples through time. There have been invasions from other areas, as well as much mixing, intermarriage and merging of groups. There are some peoples mentioned in the histories that no longer exist as distinct entities in the modern day (Sanhaja, Arma).¹² The Kounta, a nomadic group, who like the Tuareg are from the Azawad region, were seen as a distinct group beginning in the 16th century.¹³

Some of the other peoples of Timbuktu are connected to the main historical periods. The Soninke, from ancient Ghana, settled in the early period when that empire exercised some control over the region. The Malinke came during the rule of the empire of Mali. The Songhay, from the Songhay empire, would have lasting influence that is seen to the modern day. Songhay is spoken by most people in Timbuktu, even those not

¹⁰ I find the use of these terms Tuareg and Berber to be problematic as they are not the names used by the people themselves, those names being, Kel Tamasheq for the Tuareg, as noted, and Amazigh for the Berber. There is some debate on the precise origin and meaning of both Tuareg and Berber but they are used in both news sources and in all scholarly sources I viewed from social science, humanities and science. This includes the French sources, which use Touareg and Berbère.

¹¹ Some authors have suggested that the Sanhaja may have founded Timbuktu and that they perhaps later became incorporated into Tuareg. John O. Hunwick and Alida Jay Boye, *The Hidden Treasures of Timbuktu: Rediscovering Africa's Literary Culture* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2008), 35, 38. It is probable that the Sanhaja and the Tuareg are related, both are said to be of Berber origin. It has been suggested that the Tuareg are a subgroup of the Sanhaja. Part of the problem is due to writers using different names to describe the same people and not always understanding distinctions between groups and subgroups. Richard L. Smith, "What Happened to the Ancient Libyans? Chasing Sources Across the Sahara from Herodotus to Ibn Khaldun", *Journal of World History* 14, no. 4 (Dec., 2003): 459-500.

¹² Saad, *Social History of Timbuktu*, 8-9, 27-28. Saad refers to this group as 'Ruma' as does the author of his primary source, Al-Sa'di, however most modern authors refer to these Moroccan soldiers and their descendants as Arma.

¹³ Hunwick, *The Hidden Treasures of Timbuktu*, 57.

ethnically Songhay. There are also the Fulani of Massina, a nomadic group and the Bambara of Segou. Another group, the Hassaniyya Arabs had a hierarchical population, as did the Tuareg, that included slaves.¹⁴ Al-Sa'di, in his *Ta'rikh al-Sūdān*, states that the rulers of Timbuktu were, the Malians, the 'Maghsharen' Tuaregs, Sunni Ali and the Askiyas of the Songhay empire, and the Moroccans.¹⁵

Timbuktu was under the rule of the empire of Mali from around 1325.¹⁶ The ruler of Mali, Mansa Mūsā, upon returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324 stopped in Timbuktu. He was impressed by the city and had a mosque built there. His travels to Mecca and back were said to be extravagant. While in Cairo, so much gold was spent that it caused some disruption to the Egyptian economy.¹⁷ This trip, in part, helped put Timbuktu on the map, literally. The story was told in two works, one by al-'Umarī, in 1345 and another in 1355 by Ibn Battuta, and they spread knowledge of Timbuktu to the greater Islamic world and to Europe.¹⁸ A world map, called the "Catalan Atlas" that includes Timbuktu is produced in 1375 by Abraham Cresques; it is the earliest known to include the city.¹⁹ Cresques had certainly heard about Mansa Mūsā's gold as well as having some knowledge of trans-Saharan trade and of the Tuareg. The map includes depictions of monarchs from various kingdoms. Mali's emperor is depicted sitting on a

¹⁴ Hunwick, *The Hidden Treasures of Timbuktu*, 39-40. The Bela people were traditionally the slaves of the Tuareg. The woman from the story of Timbuktu's founding was likely Bela, although this is not usually mentioned and few details are usually given about the slave or servile groups.

¹⁵ Al-Sa'di, *Ta'rikh al-Sūdān*, in Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay empire*, 30-31.

¹⁶ Saad, *Social History of Timbuktu*, 11.

¹⁷ Hunwick, *The Hidden Treasures of Timbuktu*, 51.

¹⁸ Ross, *The Trans-Saharan Book Trade*, 20-21.

¹⁹ Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay empire*, Ivi. Abraham Cresques was a Jewish cartographer from Majorca. He appears to have used sources from Jewish traders as well as Islamic sources. He includes an image of a caravan of Jewish silk traders on their way to China. Labelle Prussin, "Judaic Threads in the West African Tapestry: No More Forever?," *The Art Bulletin* 88, no. 2 (June 2006): 329-330.

throne, wearing a golden crown and holding a scepter and gold pieces. Cresques describes him as, “the noblest and richest king in all the land.” There is also an image of a Tuareg man, wearing a veil and riding a camel.²⁰

In 1468 Timbuktu is conquered by Sonni Ali of the Songhay empire. Songhay rule begins harshly for the residents of the city, especially its scholars. Sonni Ali has manuscripts burned and kills some scholars, forcing others to flee. The suppression of scholars and scholarship under Sonni Ali would turn completely around when the Askiyas take power in 1493.²¹ It is from this time (under the Askiyas) that the first works of local scholarship were produced in Timbuktu. This period is known as Timbuktu’s golden age, many works were being produced in the city as well as in other cities in the region, Gao, Djenné and Walata.²²

In 1591 the Moroccans conquered Timbuktu, and the books and the scholars were again under attack. Libraries were looted and scholars were arrested. Many of these scholars were later taken to Morocco, along with their manuscripts, where they would spend many years. The entire Aqit family, a well-known scholarly family, was taken to Morocco; none of them except for Ahmed Baba, would ever return home.²³ Family collections were taken from the Aqits and the An-Agh-Muhammeds and other well know families of scholars. Ahmed Baba’s collection alone contained around 1600 volumes in 1593. Some of these manuscripts are still in Moroccan collections.^{24 25} That the

²⁰ Nathaniel Harris, *Mapping the World: Maps and their History* (San Diego: Thunder Bay Press, 2002), 48-53. The original ‘Catalan Atlas’ is in the Bibliothèque National de France. Timbuktu is on page 7 of the atlas. [ark:/12148/btv1b55002481n](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:5:1-63868-p0071-9)

²¹ Hunwick, *The Hidden Treasures of Timbuktu*, 53, 82-83.

²² Mahmoud Abdou Zouber, “Sur le patrimoine écrit au Mali,” in *Les Manuscrits de Tombouctou*, Jean-Michel Dijan, (Paris: J-C Lattès, 2012): 143.

²³ Hunwick, *The Hidden Treasures of Timbuktu*, 84.

²⁴ Saad, *Social History of Timbuktu*, 137.

Moroccans were not content to steal the products of scholarship but also the producers was a testament to the reputation of Timbuktu's scholars, even as it was an extraordinary tragedy for the city.

Ahmed Baba (1556-1627) was a prolific and influential scholar. There are 32 extant works out of 56 he is known to have written. He produced work from varying disciplines including, grammar, jurisprudence and theology.²⁶ His work contains valuable information about the history and culture of Timbuktu and the region. His work, *Nayl al-Ibtinaj bi Tatriz al-Dibaj*, written in 1596, provides some information about the intellectual history of West Africa. He discusses texts used by students in the region and provides biographical details of the scholars.²⁷

Ahmed Baba did some teaching while in Morocco. The scholar 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Jazūli received his *ijāza* (teaching certificate) from Ahmed Baba via correspondence after his return to Timbuktu. *Ijāzas* were granted to students by the particular scholar with whom they studied. They certified expertise for particular works or subjects. *Ijāzas* from respected, well-known scholars were highly sought after.²⁸

Much of the information known about the history of Timbuktu, including the account of Ahmed Baba and other scholars being held in captivity in Morocco, is found in two important locally produced histories, the *Ta'rīkh al-fattāsh* and the *Ta'rīkh al-Sūdān*, both from the mid-seventeenth century. The authors of these ta'rikhs use many of

²⁵ Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay empire*, Ixi.

²⁶ Mahmoud Zouber, "Ahmed Baba of Timbuktu (1556-1627): Introduction to his life and works," in *Timbuktu: Script & Scholarship*, ed. Lalou Meltzer, Lindsay Hooper and Gerald Kinghardt (Cape Town: Tombouctou Manuscripts Project/Iziko, 2008), 21-23.

²⁷ Zouber, "Sur le patrimoine écrit au Mali," 143.

²⁸ Saad, *Social History of Timbuktu*, 61-67. There are *ijāzas* represented in Timbuktu collections.

the written sources they had available to them, as well as using oral history sources.²⁹ The *Ta'rikh al-fattāsh* (Chronicle of the researcher), was primarily written by Mahmūd Ka'ti, who died in 1593. He died before finishing it, however, it was completed by his grandsons in 1665. Mahmūd Ka'ti was a jurist who had a large family collection, part of which, originated with an ancestor from Andalusia. This work was primarily concerned with the history of West Africa and the Songhay empire prior to the Moroccan conquest.³⁰

'Abd al-Rahmān al-Sa'di was the imam at Timbuktu's Sankoré Mosque.³¹ His work, the *Ta'rikh al-Sūdān* was completed in 1655. The chronicle gives details about the rise of the Songhay empire and the end of their rule after the Moroccan invasion. It also provides information on scholars and scholarship in Timbuktu.³²

Overall there was a decline in scholarship in the years following the Moroccan invasion. However, in the 18th and 19th centuries there was some recovery of the intellectual traditions of Timbuktu. The Kounta and Kel al-Sūq (a Tuareg group) played an important part of this revival. A single Kounta family produced over 500 volumes, of various genres, including, theology, history, jurisprudence and poetry.³³

A highly influential scholar of this period was Shaykh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti (1729-1811). Al-Mukhtar was born in Arawan, in the Azawad, north of Timbuktu. He studied under Tuareg scholars from the Kel al-Sūq as well as the Kel Hourma groups and

²⁹ Paulo F. de Moraes Farias, "Intellectual innovation and reinvention of the Sahel: the seventeenth-century Timbuktu chronicles," in *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, ed. Shamil Jeppie and Souleymane Bachir Diagne (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2008), 95-96.

³⁰ Jean-Michel Dijan, *Les Manuscrits de Tombouctou*, 54-55.

³¹ *Script and Scholarship*, 60. A copy of this work is at the Ahmed Baba Institute, manuscript no. 681.

³² Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay empire*, xxii.

³³ Zouber, "Sur le patrimoine écrit au Mali," 144.

moved to Timbuktu to study under a Sufi scholar there. He was to become a well-known Sufi scholar himself and is one of Timbuktu's most revered saints.³⁴

III. *Characteristics of the Manuscripts*

The manuscripts are primarily written in Arabic and use a variety of different scripts. There are some manuscripts written in African languages using Arabic script; this is called *ajami*. *Ajami* originates from the Arabic term that means, 'non-Arab'. It was used originally to refer to Persian.³⁵ There are *ajami* manuscripts from Timbuktu in Tamasheq, Songhay, Hausa and Fulfulde. There are also documents in Tifinagh.^{36 37}

There are various types of Arabic scripts used in the manuscripts found in Timbuktu. The particular script used can provide some evidence for provenance, at least broadly. A common script in the region is Maghrebi; it is the main North African script. Maghrebi has sub-scripts from various regions including Andalusi and Sudani, both of which are found among the Timbuktu materials.³⁸ Another type, originating in West Africa has been called Sahrawi (Saharan) and is the most common script found in Timbuktu. The Saharan script could be seen as a distinct script from the 18th century.³⁹

³⁴ Yahya Ould el-Bara, "The life of Shaykh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti," in *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, 197-199.

³⁵ Tom Verde, "From Africa In Ajami", Saudi Aramco World 62, no. 5 (September/October 2011) <http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/201105/from.africa.in.ajami.htm> (accessed October 13, 2013).

³⁶ Hunwick, *The Hidden Treasures of Timbuktu*, 95-97.

³⁷ The Tuareg appear to have been the first people in the region to have a written language. Their writing system Tifinagh was probably used since the end of the Neolithic. Zouber, "Sur le patrimoine écrit au Mali," 142.

³⁸ Sheila S. Blair, "Arabic Calligraphy in West Africa", in *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, 61.

³⁹ Designation of scripts is not entirely clear, there are differences in opinion on origins and precise locations and other details relating to scripts. Said Ennahid, "Information and Communication Technologies for the Preservation and Valorization of Manuscript Collections In

Another form seen in the Timbuktu documents is Suqi, it is another style connected to local scholarship. There are also various Eastern scripts as many manuscripts were brought from elsewhere in the Islamic world.⁴⁰

The manuscripts are primarily written on paper. There was no local production of paper in West Africa; this was a factor in the high cost of the manuscripts.⁴¹ Some of the paper has origins in other parts of the Islamic world, although, primarily it is of European origin.⁴² The manuscripts are comprised of loose, single-page sheets that are usually placed in a leather binding. This binding was then placed inside a leather satchel. The bindings and satchels were produced locally and made for portability as well as for protection.⁴³

Some of the manuscripts contain colophons. There are colophons dating to the 15th century in locally produced manuscripts. Not many manuscripts contain colophons,

Morocco," in *The Trans-Saharan Book Trade*, 270-272, and Blair, "Arabic Calligraphy in West Africa", 70-71.

⁴⁰ Mohamed Gallah Dicko, "Institut des Hautes Etudes et de Recherches Islamiques Ahmed Baba (IHERIAB) ex. Centre Ahmed Baba," in *Chemins du Savoir: Les manuscrits arabique et a'jami dans la région Soudano-Sahélienne*, (Rabat: Institute Des Etudes Africaines, 2006), 26-27. Mohamed Gallah Dicko is the current director of the Ahmed Baba Institute. An Eastern script found in Timbuktu collections is *Naskh*, which is the primary script found in Egypt, Syria and surrounding areas. Library of Congress, "Islamic Manuscripts from Mali: Timbuktu- an Islamic Cultural Center," <http://international.loc.gov/intldl/malihtml/islam.html> (accessed 11 February 2014).

⁴¹ Lydon, "A Thirst for Knowledge: Arabic Literacy, Writing Paper and Saharan Bibliophiles in the Southwestern Sahara," 51. There are few manuscripts from West Africa produced on vellum. The vellum manuscripts from the area were typically made from gazelle skins and called *riqq al-ghazāla*, in Arabic.

⁴² Jonathan M. Bloom, "Paper in Sudanic Africa," in *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, 50-54. There was early production of paper in Islamic cities such as, Fez (Morocco) and Cairo. After the 14th century most of the paper in the region was imported from Europe, especially France and Italy. Europeans learned paper making from Muslims and then created methods to expand production thus lowering costs. Many paper producers used watermarks and this is how the paper used in the manuscripts has been traced to particular cities and manufacturers.

⁴³ Lydon, "A Thirst for Knowledge: Arabic Literacy, Writing Paper and Saharan Bibliophiles in the Southwestern Sahara," 62. West African leather bindings were even imported to Europe via Morocco.

however, many do contain various types of marginal notes, some of which provide information about their provenance. One manuscript, from the Fondo Ka'ti, provides details of the purchase, stating that the manuscript was bought in Tuwat in 1467.⁴⁴ There are marginal notes that relate to the text itself, notes that are comments on earlier annotations and notes that do not relate to the material in any way. Some, of this latter type of annotation, provide information about the history of a region or city and others give information on family events such as marriages, births, and deaths. Ismaël Diadié Haïdara, who has analyzed marginal notes found in manuscripts in his collection (Fondo Ka'ti), has made distinctions between types of notes. He refers to the explanatory notation, those notes relating to the text, as glosses (*des glosses*) while other notes, those that “are characterized by their independence from the text” are marginalia.⁴⁵

There are marginalia in the collection relating to historical events, legal issues, and natural science. There are marginalia that record weather and astronomical phenomenon as well as other observances. A copy of the *Ta'rikh al-Fattash* records natural phenomenon such as rains, winds, as well as a meteorite shower. Many of these marginal notes are signed and dated. The dated notes in the collection range from 1468 through to the 19th century.⁴⁶

IV. *Details of the Manuscripts*

The manuscripts are on a great diversity of subjects, and span from the 11th to the 20th century. They originate from all over the region and from as far away as Andalusia

⁴⁴ Blair, “Arabic Calligraphy in West Africa,” 64-69. Tuwat is a Saharan oasis north of Timbuktu in what is now Algeria.

⁴⁵ Ismaël Diadié Haïdara, “Marginalia,” in *Chemins du Savoir*, 58. “les marginalia se caractérisent par leur indépendance du texte”.

⁴⁶ Ismaël Diadié Haïdara, “Marginalia,” 58-60.

and Iraq. Many were copied locally from manuscripts written elsewhere. There were also many others written in Timbuktu by local scholars. There are manuscripts on grammar, rhetoric, logic, theology, astronomy, astrology, physics, mathematics, botany, medicine, pharmacology, prosody, jurisprudence, history and philosophy. There are many copies of the Qur'an as well as religious commentaries. There are also commercial documents, including, contracts and bills of sale. Some manuscripts contain sales information inside that have details that include, date, name of seller and/or buyer and the price paid.⁴⁷

Memorization is an important part of Islamic learning. Many instructional works were produced in verse. There are many such works of didactic poetry, from various disciplines, including mathematics and science. Writing in verse assisted with memorization and once the material was memorized, it could be recited to aid the learning of others. This was especially important for members of nomadic groups who could teach and learn while walking. It was essential for the educated to share their knowledge.⁴⁸

Many medieval scholars wrote treatises dealing with multiple subjects. There are many such works among the Timbuktu manuscripts as well as works of general interest; some give advice, some relate to philosophy, traditional medicine, religious issues, and scholars and scholarship. Ahmed Baba's *Tuhfat al-Fudala' bi-ba'd fada'il al-ulama'* (The Gift of the Noble Ones Regarding Some of the Virtues of the Scholars), written in 1603, is primarily a religious work. He cites many hadiths, including, the well-known saying, "The ink of the scholar is more valuable than the blood of the martyr." He

⁴⁷ Hunwick, *The Hidden Treasures of Timbuktu*, 93.

⁴⁸ Lydon, "Thirst for Knowledge: Arabic Literacy, Writing Paper and Saharan Bibliophiles in the Southwestern Sahara," 41.

discusses the importance of scholars and scholarship and cites hadiths that pertain to knowledge.⁴⁹

Mu'awana al-ikhwan fi mubshara al-niswan (Advising Men on Sexual Engagement with their Women), manuscript 5292 (Ahmed Baba Institute), gives details on some traditional healing practices as well as use of aphrodisiacs. It gives advice on treating physical ailments, as well as proscriptions relating to love. It also presents advice to husbands on how to ensure that a wife will have good orgasms and that she will always love him. It also suggests reciting particular verses from the Qur'an in order to prevent erectile dysfunction and have good sex.⁵⁰

A curious work, titled, *Fadl al-kilab 'ala akthar mimman yalbas al-thiyab* (The Preference of Dogs Above Most Who Wear Clothes) discusses characteristics and virtues of dogs. The author states that dogs are friendly and that this can be seen in the movements they make. Dogs seek love and are devoted and loyal animals.⁵¹

There are also some novels that have been discovered. There are thirty known to be in the Mamma Haidara Collection. One recently discovered, an Alexander romance, contains legendary stories about Alexander the Great. These novels were written in many places, in various languages from around the 3rd century until the 16th century.⁵² A

⁴⁹ Zouber, "Ahmed Baba of Timbuktu (1556-1627): Introduction to his life and works," 28-29.

⁵⁰ Aslam Farouk-Alli and Mohamed Shaid Mathee, "The Tombouctou Manuscript Project: social history approaches," in *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, 183.

⁵¹ Mahamane Mahamoudou, "The works of Shaykh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti," in *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, 226-227. This is the only reference to this manuscript I have found. Author and date are unknown.

⁵² Olivia Snaiji, "Saving and Translating Timbuktu's Ancient Libraries," *Publishing Perspectives*, March 1, 2013, <http://publishingperspectives.com/2013/03/saving-and-translating-timbuktus-ancient-libraries/> (accessed 6 January 2014).

manuscript from Mamma Haidara is titled, *Kitab qissat dhu al-garnayn* (The Story of ‘dhu al-garnayn’ or Alexander the Great).⁵³

There are many manuscripts on jurisprudence (*Fiqh* in Arabic) and other legal documents in Timbuktu collections. There are texts relating to the Maliki school, the dominant legal theory used in West Africa. There are also many collections of legal opinions. *Fatwas* and *Nazilas* are legal opinions given by jurists; they contain a variety of cases that give details about the society at the time.⁵⁴

An important subject, represented in this group of material, is slavery and the slave trade. Timbuktu, being a center of trade and the vital point on the trans-Saharan trade route had slaves pass through as well as sold there. There are *fatwa* relating to slavery, documents giving legal advice, as well as certificates of manumission. These documents provide great insight into how people in Timbuktu viewed slavery, the differences in opinion, and the Islamic context of slavery and the slave trade.

Ahmed Baba’s *Mi’raj al-su’ud ila nayl hukm majlab al- sud*, written in 1615, is a work on slavery and the slave trade.⁵⁵ It was written as legal advice for a group from Tuwat (Algeria) who were in conflict with slave traders. In the course of responding to their concerns he presents arguments regarding how slaves should be treated and in what

⁵³ Library of Congress, “Islamic Manuscripts from Mali,” <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.amed/aftmh.tam025> (accessed 28 December 2013).

⁵⁴ *Fatwa* are opinions given on a particular subject, for which there has already been a ruling made. *Nazila* are opinions on a new situation, something that is without precedent and requires a legal response.

Mohamed Hamady, “Études des recueils de *fatwa* et de *nazila* manuscrits datant du XIX Siècle,” in *Les Manuscrits de Tombouctou*, 60. Most literature and documentation on Timbuktu materials refer generally to ‘fatwa’ and don’t distinguish between these types of legal opinions.

⁵⁵ In English it has been called ‘Ahmed Baba answers a Moroccan’s questions about slavery’ and simply ‘The Law of Slavery’. Library of Congress, “Islamic Manuscripts from Mali,” <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.amed/aftmh.tam006> (accessed 28 December 2013).

contexts slaves may be taken. It serves to reinforce how the slave trade and slavery must be regulated and restricted under Islamic law.⁵⁶

In this document, Ahmed Baba, reminds them that Muslims are not allowed to be held as slaves,⁵⁷ neither are those who are protected groups under Islam. He also speaks out against racial prejudice and racist myths, of the time, arising from religious sources. He states:

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 an owner of another person bruised 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.

For Ahmed Baba it is not only an issue of law but of human empathy and the natural desire for freedom.⁵⁸

There are various manumission documents, one in the Mamma Haidara, is listed as ‘Certificate of emancipation for female slave’.⁵⁹ These documents served as

⁵⁶ Zouber, “Ahmed Baba of Timbuktu (1556-1627): Introduction to his life and works,” 23-25.

⁵⁷ Many sources imply that this was the general policy in Timbuktu and the region. Although there was some differences in opinion on this issue, including debate around whether it was justified in the case where a slave became Muslim after enslavement, this view may have changed in later centuries. There is documentary evidence from the 19th century (over two hundred years after Ahmed Baba was writing) that there were Muslim slaves in Timbuktu. See, Bruce S. Hall, “How Slaves Used Islam: The Letters Of Enslaved Muslim Commercial Agents In The Nineteenth-Century Niger Bend And Central Sahara,” *Journal of African History* 52 (2011): 279-297. There were also some Muslim slaves brought to the United States from West Africa. A Muslim slave named Omar Ibn Said wrote an autobiography in Arabic that was translated and published in 1831. See, Documenting the American South, “Omar ibn Said, African Muslim Enslaved in the Carolinas,” <http://docsouth.unc.edu/highlights/omarsaid.html> (accessed 23 January 2014).

⁵⁸ Zouber, “Ahmed Baba of Timbuktu (1556-1627): Introduction to his life and works,” 25. Ahmed Baba, himself a black man, was responding in part to religious myths relating to Ham (a son of Noah) that support racial hierarchies. He rejects these views and reminds them of the apocryphal nature of these stories.

confirmation of the freed status of the individual. It has clear marks where it had been folded. It was probably carried with her all her life.⁶⁰

Khalil ibn Ishaq, a fourteenth-century scholar from Cairo, wrote a highly influential Maliki law text, the *Mukhtasar*, which was used throughout the region. Many commentaries were written on it, including, *Sharh Mukhtasar Khalil bin Ishaq al-Misri* by Abu ‘Abd Allah Fara in the 17th century. It gives details on many aspects of law and religious practice, including, prayer, dietary laws, marriage and alms-giving.⁶¹ Another law text, written as a didactic poem, by Abu al-Fadl ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Rafa’ī, was derived from Ibn Rushd’s 12th century work.⁶² Ibn Rushd, better known in the West as Averroës, was a polymath from Andalusia.

There are many known fatwas in various collections. One of these, manuscript 4743 (Ahmed Baba Institute) relates to divorce. It was written on a case where a woman sought a divorce from her husband. The issue in the case is called *zihar*, in Arabic, and most cases of this type were brought by husbands against their wives.⁶³

As stated above, study of the sciences and mathematics had both practical commercial purposes as well as religious ones. Although the study of astronomy was done for practical reasons it was also done in order to practice astrology. It is for this

⁵⁹ Library of Congress, “Islamic Manuscripts from Mali”, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.amed/aftmh.tam023> (accessed 18 December 2013).

⁶⁰ Hunwick, *The Hidden Treasures of Timbuktu*, 47.

⁶¹ Script and Scholarship, 78. *Sharh Mukhtasar Khalil bin Ishaq al-Misri* is manuscript 1759 at the Ahmed Baba Institute.

⁶² Timbuktu Manuscripts, “A verse rendering of a legal text,” <http://www.aluka.org/action/showMetadata?doi=10.5555/AL.CH.DOCUMENT.TIMMAN06004> (accessed 24 January 2014).

⁶³ Farouk-Alli and Mathee, “The Tombouctou Manuscripts Project: social history approaches,” 184-185.

reason that many texts of astronomy also contain astrology, and sometimes other esoteric arts.

Kashf al-Ghummah fi Nafa al-Ummah (The Important Stars Among the Multitude of the Heavens) was written by Nasir al-Din Abu Al-Abbas Ahmad ibn al-Hajj al-Amin al-Tawathi al-Ghalawi in 1733. This text was used to train students in astronomy. It discussed the movement of stars as well as other aspects of astronomy. It also contained elements of astrology such as instruction on casting horoscopes.⁶⁴

There are treatises on optics, a branch of physics. Manuscript 4056 (Ahmed Baba Institute) provides details on the properties of light. Another, manuscript 3666, is a didactic poem on astronomy that refers to Ibn al-Hatham al-Baghdadi, an 11th century polymath who did groundbreaking work in optics.⁶⁵ Another work, written as a didactic poem, is the 18th century mathematics text, titled, *The Key to the Wings of Desire on the Knowledge of Arithmetic*.⁶⁶

Manuscript 2163 (Ahmed Baba Institute) is a work by the well-known Egyptian Astronomer Ibn Yunus. It was written in the 10th century and contains tables listing positions of various celestial bodies. His calculations are scientifically accurate.⁶⁷

The well-known Timbuktu scholar, Shaykh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kabir al-Kunti, wrote a particularly intriguing work, that includes astronomical and astrological information. This work, titled, *Lubb al-albab fi haqa'iq al-Sunna wa al-kitab* (The core of all cores regarding the prophetic tradition and the book) discusses ideas about celestial

⁶⁴ Library of Congress, "Islamic Manuscripts from Mali," <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.amed/aftmh.tam001> (accessed 18 December 2013).

⁶⁵ *Script and Scholarship*, 94.

⁶⁶ *Script and Scholarship*, 48-49.

⁶⁷ *Script and Scholarship*, 86-87.

bodies including what is written about them in the Torah. He also discusses ideas about weather phenomena as well as the existence of jinn.⁶⁸

The lofty tower in the elucidation of the Ghazalian triangle is a commentary on a 12th century work by the well-known Sufi scholar Abu Hamid al-Ghazali. It includes ideas about geomancy, as well as astrology and numerology. There are other works in Timbuktu collections on geomancy as well as other forms of divination.⁶⁹ *Sharh 'ala nazm al-muthallath lil-Ghazali wa nazm Nuh b. al-Tahir al-Fulani* (Explanation of the works of al-Ghazali) is another commentary, this one by Suleymān ibn Ahmed. It also discusses another commentary of al-Ghazali's work, written by the Timbuktu scholar, Nuh ibn al-Tahir al-Fulani. It is a work of astronomy and astrology.⁷⁰

Timbuktu has religious materials that are locally produced as well as those that come from various parts of the Islamic world. There are works of theology, including commentaries, and various types of Sufi works, and poetry, as well as copies of the Qur'an. Sufism is the mystical branch of Islam. Sufism is very important among West African Muslims. People in Timbuktu began to join Sufi orders or *tariqa* in the 15th century. There are some characteristics of Sufism that are different from mainstream Sunni Islam. Sufism has various *tariqa*, also called brotherhoods, to which a Sufi belongs. Sufism has saints as well as some of their own religious practices.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Mahamoudou, "The works of Shaykh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti," 219-220. Jinn, (jinnī singular, or genie) are supernatural creatures of pre-Islamic Arabian origin. It is written in the Qu'ran that the jinn were created prior to the creation of human beings. "And indeed, We created man from sounding clay of altered black smooth mud. And the jinn, We created aforetime from the smokeless flame of fire." (15:26-27) <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/304033/jinni> and <http://quran.com/15>

⁶⁹ Script and Scholarship, 128.

⁷⁰ In the Mamma Haidara Library, produced in 1800. Library of Congress, "Islamic Manuscripts from Mali," <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.amed/aftmh.tam033> (accessed 18 December 2013).

⁷¹ Yahya Ould el-Bara, "The life of Shaykh Sidi al-Muhktar al-Kunti," 194-195.

An early 19th century manuscript on the Qādirīya Sufi order was written by a well-known West African scholar, ‘Uthmān b. Fawdi, better known as Usman dan Fodio. It gives genealogical information about the order’s founder as well as other details.⁷² Manuscript 4011 (Ahmed Baba Institute) is a religious poem. It is written in Hassanni, a local Arabic dialect that incorporates some Tamasheq words.⁷³

Al-Shifa bi ta’arif huqiq al-Mustafa (The Rights of the Prophet), was written by a Maliki scholar in the 12th century. This is an elaborately illuminated copy, written in Maghribi script, and produced in Morocco.⁷⁴ Manuscript 1998 is a work of theology written in Ottoman Turkish *ajami*. Manuscript 1999, *Asma al-husna*, is a religious poem containing the “99 beautiful names of God”. It is written in both Ottoman Turkish and Arabic.⁷⁵

There are many copies of the Qur’an, of varying styles, both locally produced and from elsewhere in the Islamic world. Qur’ans are often the most elaborately decorated of manuscripts. In Timbuktu, there are a variety of calligraphic styles used and some that are specific to West Africa. There is a 12th century Qur’an, on vellum, from Ceuta, Morocco in the Fondo Ka’ti.⁷⁶ Another Qur’an, also from Fondo Ka’ti and produced in 1423, contains some marginal notation in Turkish on the final page along with the colophon.⁷⁷

There are also many documents relating to commercial and political activity, some of which is correspondence. A letter written by the local scholar, Shaykh al-Bakkay

⁷² Aluka, “Timbuktu Manuscripts,” <http://www.aluka.org/action/showMetadata?doi=10.5555/AL.CH.DOCUMENT.TIMMAN086> (accessed 27 January 2014).

⁷³ *Script and Scholarship*, 102.

⁷⁴ *Script and Scholarship*, 50.

⁷⁵ Both at the Ahmed Baba Institute. *Script and Scholarship*, 80-82.

⁷⁶ Ismaël Diadié Haïdara, “Marginalia,” 58.

⁷⁷ Hunwick, *The Hidden Treasures of Timbuktu*, 144.

al-Kunti, in 1853, is addressed to the Sultan of Masina; it asks him not to execute the German explorer Heinrich Barth. At the time, non-Muslims were forbidden from entering the city. The letter states that it would be against Islamic law to execute him. He writes: “He is a human being, and he has not made war against us.” Barth would come under al-Bakkay’s protection and would eventually return to Europe.⁷⁸

Risalah ila al-Qaba’il al-Mutaqatilin (Letter to the Warring Tribes) was written by Shaykh Sidi al-Muhktar al-Kabir al-Kunti. He is attempting to get the tribes involved to reconcile and live in peace. He quotes from the Qur’an to support his argument.⁷⁹

Sullam al-Atful fi Buyu al-Ajal (The protection of Individuals in Commercial Transactions) is a didactic poem on various laws of commerce.⁸⁰ It gives information about the obligations of those involved in commercial activity, including details on sales, the loaning of money and contracts. Two intriguing letters, which probably relate to trade, contain scripts other than Arabic. One, a document from the Ahmed Baba Institute, is written in Arabic and has Hebrew marginal and interlinear notation. Another, a letter from the Mamma Haidara Library, is written in Tifinagh.⁸¹

These manuscripts are examples of the richness and great diversity of the materials seen in Timbuktu. These are a small part of those currently collected, which constitutes a small part of the total that exist in Timbuktu. It has been estimated that those known to be in collections represent less than a quarter of the total number that exist in

⁷⁸ In the Mamma Haidara Library. Joshua Hammer, “The Treasures of Timbuktu,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, December 2006, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/making-a-difference/the-treasures-of-timbuktu-138566090/?all> (accessed 28 January 2014).

⁷⁹ In the Mamma Haidara Library. Library of Congress, “Islamic Manuscripts from Mali,” <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.amed/aftmh.tam018> (accessed 18 December 2013).

⁸⁰ In the Mamma Haidara Library. Library of Congress, “Islamic Manuscripts from Mali,” <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.amed/aftmh.tam004> (accessed 18 December 2013).

⁸¹ Few details have been recorded about these documents. Hunwick, *The Hidden Treasures of Timbuktu*, 92-93, 96-97.

the city. There are various estimates given, with 300,000 being the most noted. There are currently close to 50,000 in the largest collections. Many of these have not been cataloged; there are still many discoveries yet to be made.⁸²

⁸² Total numbers for Timbuktu and surrounding areas, Tombouctou Manuscripts Project, “Timbuktu’s History,” <http://www.tombouctoumanuscripts.org/about/history/> Numbers of manuscripts in library collections, “Manuscript Libraries,” <http://www.tombouctoumanuscripts.org/libraries/> (accessed 28 January 2014).

CHAPTER 3:

KEEPING THE SOUL ALIVE: COLONIALISM, IDEOLOGY, AND THE RESCUE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

I. French Colonialism and the Post-Colonial Condition

The Islamist groups that invaded Timbuktu in 2012 and occupied until January 2013, destroyed around 3,000 manuscripts as well as 11 mausoleums. Bruno Maïga, Mali's minister of culture, stated that this destruction of cultural heritage was an attack on "what keeps the soul alive."⁸³ Although the loss was a tragedy, it could have been significantly more devastating. What was saved far outnumbered what was lost. The threat to Timbuktu's cultural heritage, however, has not passed. To understand the current threat to the manuscripts and other cultural heritage in Mali, it is necessary to appreciate the roots of the conflict, the confluence of forces that led to the Tuareg rebellion and the invasion of Timbuktu. These forces include the colonial, geopolitical, environmental and ideological.

The French invaded Timbuktu in 1894. The colonial forces had been in the region for years prior to their arrival there and had already taken control of nearby cities. Timbuktu's residents would have known the danger they were facing and certainly had heard stories of what was taking place in the region. They would have heard, for instance, of the looting of manuscripts in Ségou, including the theft of the library of Umar Tal by

⁸³ RFI, "Unesco agrees 5.6 million-euro plan to save Mali's cultural treasures," 19 February 2013, <http://www.english.rfi.fr/africa/20130219-unesco-agrees-75-million-dollar-plan-save-mali-s-cultural-treasures> (accessed 18 February 2014).

Colonel Archinard in 1890.⁸⁴ This collection is currently in the Bibliothèque National de France in Paris.⁸⁵

It was the occupation by the French that sent Timbuktu's manuscripts into hiding. Hearing reports of the looting occurring elsewhere in the region, the city's residents sought to secure their treasures. Some built walls over entryways, creating hidden rooms to keep the manuscripts in, others buried them under their homes; some even buried them under desert sands or in caves. The fear of looting goes back to the time of the Moroccan invasion, it persisted, being passed down generation after generation. It has been referred to as, "une phobie des pillages."⁸⁶

French colonization led to significant changes to the traditional ways of being and cultural understandings of West Africa, changes which continue to have impact today. The French colonial education system mandated education for all but using a Eurocentric model, it only taught children to read and write in French. The French led an assault on the traditional educational structures and eliminated Arabic as the language of learning in Timbuktu. The carving up of Africa by the French (as well as other European colonizers) and subsequent construction of states has led to much conflict throughout Africa, including Mali. The formation of the state of Mali as well as the states of Algeria, Libya and Niger are all part of the current political crisis in Timbuktu and Northern Mali.

As with other states constructed by Europeans, the borders of these new nations were arbitrarily defined, constituted without any regard for history or cultural understanding. They were constructed simply based on European interests. Tuareg

⁸⁴ Dijan, *Les Manuscrits de Tombouctou*, 27-28.

⁸⁵ It has been referred to as bibliothèque de 'Umarienne de Ségou and also fonds Archinard. An inventory lists over 500 works from this library found at the BnF.
<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1301519/f3.image>

⁸⁶ Timbuktu researcher Saad Traoré quoted in Dijan, *Les Manuscrits de Tombouctou*, 132.

groups, as well as other nomadic peoples, have traditional homelands in the Sahara that now cross through the borders of these new states. The first Tuareg uprising was in 1963, three years after Mali became independent. It was short lived but the 1970s and 1980s brought severe droughts that devastated the communities of the Sahel. State corruption prevented aid that was to go to Tuareg groups from ever reaching them. Tuareg peoples were discriminated against by governments and prevented from entering their lands. They began to express the sentiment that they were being ‘re-colonized.’⁸⁷

The Tuareg have also had to struggle against mining operations and corporate control of parts of their lands, including being denied access to areas they need to move through. Great wealth is being generated at their expense and yet they must struggle to survive.⁸⁸ They also face the destruction of their own ancient cultural heritage, the rock art and Tifinagh inscriptions located throughout the Sahara. These have been vandalized and looted by tourists, mining employees, military contractors and soldiers.⁸⁹ After growing frustration, a new rebellion broke out in 1990 and there would be eruptions of violence throughout the 1990s.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Baz Lecocq, “Unemployed Intellectuals in the Sahara: The Teshumara Nationalist Movement and the Revolutions in Tuareg Society,” *IRSH* 49, (2004): 89-90.

⁸⁸ Hélène Claudot-Hawad, “La ‘question touarègue’: quels enjeux?,” in *La guerre au Mali. Comprendre la crise au Sahel et au Sahara: enjeux et zones d’ombre*, ed. M. Galy and B. Badie (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 2013), 9-12.

⁸⁹ Jeremy Keenan, “Looting the Sahara: The material, intellectual and social implications of the destruction of cultural heritage,” *The Journal of North African Studies* 10, no. 3-4 (2005): 473-483.

⁹⁰ Lecocq, “Unemployed Intellectuals in the Sahara,” 90.

II. “[A] curse on our world”⁹¹: *Exploitation, Islamist Violence, and the Invasion of Timbuktu*

Problems continued from 2000 to 2012 and the government of Mali seemed to have little interest in finding solutions and actually exacerbated the violence. There are attacks against Tuareg and Arab civilians by Mali’s military forces. Mali’s army was accused by the UN High Commission for Human Rights of racially motivated attacks.⁹² There has also been increasing conflict due to mining operations. This is a problem that involves multinational corporations with oil and uranium mining operations in Tuareg lands. The states involved include, the US, France, Canada and China. It also includes those other states whose borders now dissect Azawad, Niger and Algeria.⁹³

The MNLA (National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad) was founded in 2011, a merger between other groups, it has roots in the 1963 Tuareg rebellion. It is a secular group calling for the right to self-determination.⁹⁴ They want to control their own land and have asked that the state cancel all its mining contracts in the Azawad. The government of Mali would not give them any kind of response.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Hussein Cisse, a resident of Timbuktu, in discussing the Islamists, states: “they have no respect for tradition, no respect for learning. They are a curse on our world.” in Kim Sengupta, “Mali’s religious scholars cunningly save ancient Islamic manuscripts from Salafist fighters in Timbuktu,” *The Independent*, 6 February 2013, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/malis-religious-scholars-cunningly-save-ancient-islamic-manuscripts-from-salafist-fighters-in-timbuktu-8483952.html> (accessed 24 February 2014).

⁹² Andy Morgan, “Mali’s Tuareg people retain dream of independence amid persecution,” *The Guardian*, 3 April 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/03/mali-tuareg-independence-persecution> (accessed 24 February 2014).

⁹³ Claudot-Hawad, “La ‘question touarègue’: quels enjeux?,” 18.

⁹⁴ May Ying Welsh, “Making sense of Mali’s armed groups,” *Al Jazeera*, 17 January 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/01/20131139522812326.html> (accessed 18 October 2013).

⁹⁵ Claudot-Hawad, “La ‘question touarègue’: quels enjeux?,” 14.

Islamist ideology did not enter into the Azawad region until the 1990s. In 1995 a Pakistani Muslim group, Tablighi Jam'at, began proselytizing in Mali. This group was invited to Kidal by Iyad Ag Ghali, who would later found Ansar al-Dine.⁹⁶ Ansar al-Dine is an Islamist militia that includes Tuareg and Arab members. The militia works with other groups, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). These groups want to institute Sharia law, or rather their interpretation of Sharia law, in West Africa.⁹⁷ Iyad Ag Ghali was formerly a leader in the Tuareg independence movement and many feel that his alignment with the Islamist extremists is a betrayal of the independence movement as well as a betrayal of Tuareg culture.⁹⁸

There is confusion, evident in the media, between the groups seeking self-determination and those with a violent Islamist agenda. Some of this is the result of intentional conflation of the aims of these groups by the government of Mali.⁹⁹ It was the MNLA who took control of the North in April 2012, after the March coup occurred in Bamako, and declared independence of Azawad. In June 2012, however, the MNLA was

⁹⁶ Andy Morgan, "What do the Tuareg want?," *Al Jazeera*, 9 January 2014, <http://m.aljazeera.com/story/20141913923498438> (accessed 24 February 2014).

⁹⁷ Welsh, "Making sense of Mali's armed groups," *Al Jazeera*, 17 January 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/01/20131139522812326.html> (accessed 18 October 2013).

⁹⁸ Morgan, "Mali's Tuareg people retain dream of independence amid persecution," *The Guardian*, 3 April 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/03/mali-tuareg-independence-persecution> (accessed 24 February 2014).

⁹⁹ Morgan, "What do the Tuareg want?," *Al Jazeera*, 9 January 2014, <http://m.aljazeera.com/story/20141913923498438> (accessed 24 February 2014).

deposed by the Islamists, Ansar al-Dine, MUJAO, and AQIM. This fundamentally changed the nature and purpose of the occupation of Timbuktu.¹⁰⁰

III. *Cars, Carts, and Canoes: the Extraordinary Adventure of 100,000 Books*

During the Islamist occupation, Timbuktu existed in a state of lawlessness. Islamist soldiers, without legal consultation or authority, began to arbitrarily punish residents based on unpredictable individual views of Sharia law. They flogged people in the streets as well as engaging in acts of vandalization and the looting of property.¹⁰¹ Schools were shut down, at least partly due to the teaching of girls and boys together.¹⁰²

There was concern for the manuscripts early on and plans were made to ensure their safety. Ahmed Baba Institute officials, along with Dr. Abdel Kader Haidara, director of Mamma Haidara, and other guardians of large family collections, decided to split up these collections and hide them around Timbuktu in family homes. In July, after the Islamists begin destroying Sufi shrines, they decide that the threat was so serious that the manuscripts needed to be removed from the city. These library directors and caretakers realized that they needed thousands of metal containers in order to get the manuscripts safely out. Haidara, with the consent of the families involved, acquired the needed

¹⁰⁰ Jadaliyya Reports, "Mali: Security, Dialogue, and Meaningful Reform," *Jadaliyya*, 17 April 2013, http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/11259/mali_security-dialogue-and-meaningful-reform (accessed 24 February 2014).

¹⁰¹ Kamakshi Ayyar, "Timbuktu's ancient manuscripts to get a new digital existence," *The Guardian*, 20 September 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/20/mali-timbuktu-manuscripts-preserve> (accessed 24 February 2014).

¹⁰² Kate Forbes, "How a Timbuktu calligrapher saved family manuscripts," *BBC News Magazine*, 3 June 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-22732903> (accessed 18 October 2013).

funding for the operation from the Prince Claus Foundation, in the Netherlands, as well as the German Foreign Office.¹⁰³

Among the first items smuggled out of the city were hard drives from the Ahmed Baba Institute. These hard drives contain thousands of digitized copies of manuscripts from the collection.¹⁰⁴ The metal cases reached Timbuktu and residents worked for months getting tens of thousands of manuscripts out of the city. The metal boxes had to reach Bamako, some 600 miles away. From June to October 2012 around 25,000 manuscripts from Ahmed Baba alone were sent to Bamako.¹⁰⁵

Dr. Haidara stated: “It was very risky. We evacuated the manuscripts in cars, carts and canoes.”¹⁰⁶ Some manuscripts left the city in carts pulled by donkeys 10 miles to the Niger River. From there they were taken to Bamako by boat.¹⁰⁷ Some of the manuscripts that left the city by car, were taken by German embassy staff to the capital. The embassy staff brought a total of 4,000 manuscripts safely out of Timbuktu and acquired archival

¹⁰³ Naveena Kottoor, “How Timbuktu’s manuscripts were smuggled to safety,” *BBC News Magazine*, 3 June 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-22704960> (accessed 18 February 2014).

¹⁰⁴ Sarah Laskow, “The smuggled hard drives of Timbuktu,” *The Boston Globe*, 17 February 2014, <http://www.bostonglobe.com/business/2013/02/17/the-smuggled-hard-drives-timbuktu/rCyv0QL1FdLLkw4tjv6hDO/story.html> (accessed 18 February 2014).

¹⁰⁵ Mark Tran, “Mali’s rescued manuscripts must go back to Timbuktu, say custodians,” *The Guardian*, 1 October 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/oct/01/mali-manuscripts-timbuktu> (accessed 18 February 2014).

¹⁰⁶ Kottoor, “How Timbuktu’s manuscripts were smuggled to safety,” *BBC News Magazine*, 3 June 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-22704960> The quote above inspired my section 3 subheading.

¹⁰⁷ Matt Trevithick and Daniel Seckman, “A Precious History Preserved,” *Chronicle of Higher Education* 59, no. 35 (10 May 2013): A29.

storage boxes for them. Some of the manuscripts that were smuggled out by car were hidden under crates of fruit and vegetables.¹⁰⁸

There were also individuals that sent out their own manuscript libraries. Boubacar Sidiki, a calligrapher in the city, was able to leave Timbuktu by bus with his manuscript library. The Islamists searched passengers leaving the city but Sidiki noticed that the drivers were not searched. His neighbor was a bus driver and agreed to hide the box in the driver's cab. His collection of 80 manuscripts, the earliest dating to the 13th century, made it to the capital unscathed.¹⁰⁹

It was an extraordinary feat involving countless residents, as well as those from outside the city and outside Mali, moving boxes of manuscripts from various locations, passing boxes from one person to another, smuggling them out of the city. The exact number is uncertain with manuscripts coming from various repositories, private collections and individuals, but it is likely over 100,000 volumes.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Der Spiegel, "Smuggled Out: Most Timbuktu Manuscripts Saved from Attacks," 25 February 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/majority-of-timbuktu-manuscripts-were-smuggled-to-safety-a-885408.html> (accessed 24 February 2014).

¹⁰⁹ Forbes, "How a Timbuktu calligrapher saved family manuscripts," BBC News Magazine, 3 June 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-22732903> (accessed 18 October 2013).

¹¹⁰ The total number of manuscripts that have been taken out of the city and currently reside in Bamako is uncertain. Many of the news articles report the number as 300,000, even though this is the most cited figure for the total number that exist in the city, many of which remain with families. Stephanie Diakité, who worked with Abdel Kader Haidara during the rescue and afterwards, stated at one point that 75,000 manuscripts had left the city with more on the way. The same article gives a figure of 350,000 for the manuscripts in Bamako. It could be that some of these are from other parts of Mali. Joshua Hammer, "The Race to Save Mali's Priceless Artifacts," *Smithsonian Magazine*, January 2014, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/Race-Save-Mali-Artifacts-180947965/?no-ist> (accessed 15 March 2014). In posts made on May 29 and May 30 2013 by Diakité, the number 300,000 is given in reference to preservation; it is uncertain if she means this is the number in Bamako. She does say 95% of the manuscripts were evacuated, some by families. It is unclear, however, if this 95% is in reference to the known collections of Timbuktu or the estimated total of 300,000. Reddit, IAMA, "We are Abdel Kader and Stephanie Diakité..." <http://bestofama.com/amas/1faiis> (accessed 15 March 2014). Abdel Kader Haidara has given the figure 101,820 for manuscripts in the known collections. Abdul Kader Haidara,

The French military forces entered Timbuktu in January 2013. The French, along with Malian army troops, drove out the Islamists towards the end of January, as the Islamist militants retreated they torched the Ahmed Baba Institute.¹¹¹ It was almost entirely destroyed. Some manuscripts were burned in the fire, others were burned intentionally prior to this; piles of empty cases were found, cases that once held manuscripts.¹¹² Fortunately, the vast majority of the Ahmed Baba Institute's collection was by this time already in Bamako.

The political climate in the North remains too uncertain to return Timbuktu's manuscript heritage. And the Ahmed Baba Institute has yet to be rebuilt. In March of 2013, Islamist groups, once more, invaded Timbuktu and were again driven out by the French.¹¹³ In September there was a suicide attack on the city's Djingareyber Mosque. The attack killed civilians and soldiers as well as causing damage to the 16th century mosque, a UNESCO world heritage site.¹¹⁴

In November, two French RFI journalists were killed in the North. They were taken by Islamists and executed, after having interviewed members of the MNLA. The MNLA pledged to work with authorities to find those responsible. It was discovered that

"The state of the manuscripts in Mali and efforts to preserve them," in *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, 266. This seems the more likely meaning.

¹¹¹ RFI, "Islamists burned priceless manuscripts as French-led troops surround Timbuktu," 28 January 2013, <http://www.english.rfi.fr/africa/20130128-islamists-burn-priceless-manuscripts-french-led-troops-surround-timbuktu> (accessed 3 March 2014).

¹¹² UNESCO documentation from their evaluation trip to Timbuktu in June 2013. MINUSMA, UN Mission to Mali, "Mission de l'UNESCO à Tombouctou," <http://www.flickr.com/photos/minusma/sets/72157634067197462/with/9014835961/> (accessed 3 March 2014).

¹¹³ Trevithick and Seckman, "A Precious History Preserved," A30.

¹¹⁴ UNESCO, "UNESCO Director-General deplores suicide attack near Djingareyber Mosque in Timbuktu," 30 September 2013, http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/la_directrice_generale_de_lunesco_irina_bokova_deplore_lattentat_suicide_du_28_septembre_a_proximite_de_la_mosquee_de_djingareyber_a_tombouctou_inscrite_sur_la_liste_du_patrimoine_mondial/#.UxUVMNxgrLQ (accessed 3 March 2014).

they were members of the Islamist group, AQIM.¹¹⁵ Even with the instability, the French were still committed to remove much of their force from 3,200 to 1,000 troops by the beginning of 2014. As the French withdraw MINUSMA forces are to take their place. The plan calls for about 12,000 MINUSMA troops. The Netherlands pledged to send 380 troops and combat helicopters to assist MINUSMA.¹¹⁶

It appears that Islamist groups are returning to areas in Northern Mali. There are families fleeing from areas, including Kidal, where there is a visible Islamist presence. There have been 12 MNLA members killed recently by Islamist militants. MINUSMA has about 6,000 troops in Mali, as of February 2014.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ RFI, “RFI journalists killed due to oil leak, French investigator,” 14 November 2013, <http://www.english.rfi.fr/africa/20131114-rfi-journalists-killed-due-kidnappers-vehicle-oil-leak-french-investigator> and Al Jazeera, “Rebel groups in northern Mali agree to unite,” 5 November 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2013/11/rebel-groups-northern-mali-agree-unite-201311423413112694.html> (3 March 2014).

¹¹⁶ Al Jazeera, “France says won’t delay Mali troop withdrawal,” 6 November 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2013/11/france-says-won-delay-mali-troop-withdrawal-2013115233256834737.html> (3 March 2014).

¹¹⁷ Jacques Follorou, “un an après ‘Serval’, les djihadistes sont de retour au Mali,” *Le Monde*, 27 February 2014, http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2014/02/27/un-an-apres-serval-les-djihadistes-sont-de-retour-au-mali_4374596_3212.html?xtmc=tombouctou&xtcr=1 (accessed 3 March 2014).

CHAPTER 4:

THE ASSAULT ON SAINTS: RESPONSE AND RESPONSIBILITY

I. *Sufi Heritage and the Islamist Imaginary*

Timbuktu defies our expectations and does not fit into simple categories. It is not a monolithic place but one of great ethnic and linguistic diversity. It is a small city surrounded by desert landscapes; the surface of which belies its complex history of international trade and scholarship and the conflicts resulting from the desire by others to control its strategic location and the products of this trade, the gold, the salt, and the books. The modern desire to control land and resources is part of the complexity involved in the current crisis in the city. Its heritage and diversity are both under attack. Post-colonial racial/ethnic antagonisms persist and have become violent. At the same time (and perhaps interrelated) Wahhabiyya doctrine infused with militancy threatens Sufi Islamic heritage in the region.

The complex circumstances behind the recent invasions into Timbuktu and the subsequent threat to its cultural heritage must be addressed if stability is to return to the city and to the region. The manuscripts will remain in Bamako until that stability returns. In Bamako the manuscripts face a different kind of threat while the residents of Timbuktu are cut off from this heritage.

Sufi cultural heritage has increasingly been under attack in recent years. Thirty-four Sufi shrines have been attacked in Tunisia and twenty-five in Egypt since 2011.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Emily O'Dell, "Slaying Saints and Torching Texts," *Jadaliyya*, 1 February 2013, <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/9915/slaying-saints-and-torching-texts> (accessed 10 March 2014).

Dozens of sites have been attacked in Libya including mosques and libraries.¹¹⁹ These attacks represent an assault on difference, on intellectual traditions and the plurality of Islam.

The Islamist's appeal to tradition is fraudulent, their behavior is essentially anti-Islamic. Islamist groups call themselves 'Salafi' but other Muslims, including religious authorities, deny them this term. Some use "Salafi" or "Salafists" in quotes to express doubt about its validity. A fatwa was issued against the Islamist extremists responsible for attacks on Sufi mausoleums in North Africa, in 2011. The fatwa response clearly states that destroying any part of a mausoleum is an act of desecration and prohibited by Islam. The request speaks of the "growing ideology" and those who "claim that the building of graves and mausoleums for the pious and saints is disbelief and misguidance."¹²⁰

In 2013, the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) strongly condemned the violence and destruction committed by 'extremists' in Timbuktu. The statement was a response to the burning of the Ahmed Baba Institute on January 28th. The OIC statement explicitly denies the Islamist militants claim that their actions come from "the pristine

¹¹⁹ UN News Centre, "UN independent experts condemn destruction of Sufi religious sites in Libya," <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42838#.UyJfgtxgrLQ> (accessed 13 March 2014).

¹²⁰ Egyptian Fatwa Institute, Al-Azhar fatwa department, "Al-Azhar Fatwa on Desecration of Graves," 24 October 2011, Tombouctou Manuscript Project database, http://www.tombouctoumanuscripts.org/db/entry/al-azhar_fatwa_on_desecration_of_graves/ (accessed 10 March 2014). Egypt's fatwa authority, *Dar Al-Ifta Al-Missriyyah*, issues verdicts on questions received from all over the Islamic world. It is an institute of Islamic jurisprudence comprised of a council of scholars that is overseen by the Grand Mufti of Egypt. Regarding their research and writing of fatawa: "The aim is to keep pace with the continuous developments of the times in all of its aspects that lead to diversity in the fatawa and unprecedented circumstances." Dar Al-Ifta Al-Missriyyah, <http://eng.dar-alifta.org/foriegn/Module.aspx?Name=aboutdar> (10 March 2014).

Islamic religion.” They are implying that these groups are not legitimately Salafi. The statement also refers to the manuscripts as, “a treasure for the entire Islamic Ummah.”¹²¹

Islamist ideology is based on simplistic renderings of Islamic religious texts, in order to stem intellectual activity and control and manipulate societies. These Islamists conflate religion and theology. “Religion and religious knowledge are collapsed: the interpretation of religion is religion.” The effect is to prevent debate entirely. This conflation is essentially anti-Islamic, as it assumes, “that theologians- like God- are capable of producing sacred and thus immutable knowledge.”¹²² These fundamentalist groups, in actuality, disregard traditional Islamic thought and practice. They ignore the legacy of Islam and imply that all of Islamic history from the beginning until the modern era, have produced only distortions of Islam. And they insist on an absolute exclusivity to the truth.¹²³

The Wahhabiyya Islamist ideology is foreign to the people of Timbuktu; it contrasts starkly with traditional West African Muslim belief as well as with the city’s strong history of legal scholarship and application of Islamic law. The Islamists’ rejection of legal practice (insisting on a limited understanding of sharī‘a alone) constitutes an extreme revision of traditional culture. Islamic jurisprudence has two components, sharī‘a

¹²¹ Organization of Islamic Cooperation, OIC Documents, “OIC Secretary-General Strongly Condemns Burning of Islamic Manuscripts Library in Timbuktu, Northern Mali,” 29 February 2013, http://www.oic-oci.org/oicv2/topic/?t_id=8339&ref=3361&lan=en&x_key=mali (accessed 19 February 2014). The OIC is an inter-governmental organization comprised of 57 member states. It was founded in 1970.

¹²² Tamara Albertini, “The Seductiveness of Certainty: the Destruction of Islam’s Intellectual Legacy by the Fundamentalists,” *Philosophy East and West* 53, no. 4 (October 2003): 456-457.

¹²³ Vincent J. Cornell, “Practical Sufism: an Akbarian Basis for a Liberal Theology of Difference,” *Journal of Islamic Law and Culture* 9, no. 2 (fall/winter 2004): 107.

and fiqh. Sharī‘a stems from scripture and fiqh is the interpretation of this law; this system is how the general principles can be applied in particular circumstances.¹²⁴

Islamist ideology is incompatible with traditional Tuareg culture specifically, with their history of independence, Sufi Islamic heritage and their intellectual contribution to the region. There are many Tuareg who speak out against the Islamists. One man discussing the Islamists desire to impose their ideology on them, states that it is incomprehensible and that, “It doesn’t resemble us at all. It’s like putting hot pepper in milk.” Another Tuareg man, an MNLA soldier, discussing the Islamists and particularly the leader of Ansar al-Dine, Iyad Ag Ghaly, states, “He’s ruined the image of the Tuareg. He’s ruined our culture. He’s ruined everything.”¹²⁵

Sufism represents an Islam that is varied and presents multiple perspectives. The sacred texts are to be interpreted. Sufi theology itself offers a resounding critique of Islamist ideology. Al-Ghazali wrote about the five levels of interpretation that the Qur’ān and Hadīth are subject to. Al-Ghazali’s method leaves open possibility, it does not allow interpretation to become fixed and thereby allows alternative views to be expressed.¹²⁶

The great Sufi scholar Ibn ‘Arabi states that God is unknowable. “This unknowable entity, which is the source of all effects and actions but cannot be described by any of them, Ibn ‘Arabi refers to as the Divine Essence (dhat Allah) or sometimes the Real (al-haqq).” If the Divine is unknowable than it cannot be confined by human interpretation. Ibn ‘Arabi criticized those who tried to enclose the Real, limiting

¹²⁴ Albertini, “The Seductiveness of Certainty: the Destruction of Islam’s Intellectual Legacy by the Fundamentalists,” 459.

¹²⁵ Andy Morgan, “Mali’s Tuareg people retain dream of independence amid persecution,” *The Guardian*, 3 April 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/03/mali-tuareg-independence-persecution> (accessed 24 February 2014).

¹²⁶ Cornell, “Practical Sufism: an Akbarian Basis for a Liberal Theology of Difference,” 110.

possibility for their own interests. He implied that it was not usually done out of religious piety but a will-to-power.¹²⁷

Timbuktu's Sufi shrines are explicit, visible signs of religious difference while the manuscripts are the intellectual documentation of that belief system and heritage. The outward manifestations of Sufi belief and the manuscripts represent diverse and pluralistic understandings of Islam. They are then direct threats to the confining and controlling imaginary of Islam held by the extremists.

The Islamist militants' attack on Timbuktu's heritage is in some ways comparable to the Taliban's attack on the cultural heritage of Afghanistan. The Taliban destroyed Islamic cultural heritage materials, manuscripts, paintings and other artifacts. It was Muslims destroying the heritage of other Muslims. It would have included, what was arguably, their own heritage as well. They attempted to destroy Persian material particularly; they also targeted other non-Pashtun language materials. The destruction of the Hakim Nasser Khosrow Cultural Center library, in Kabul, was a tragedy beyond comprehension.¹²⁸ Around 55,000 volumes were lost.¹²⁹

Tuareg Islamist groups are attacking heritage of other Muslims, it includes, however, materials which constitute their own heritage. It is perhaps easier to understand, to some degree, extremists attacking that which is other to them, the cultural heritage of groups and peoples to which they don't belong but destroying your own heritage (or

¹²⁷ Ian Almond, *Sufism and Deconstruction: A comparative study of Derrida and Ibn 'Arabi*, (London: Routledge, 2004), 14-19.

¹²⁸ Rebecca Knuth, *Burning Books and Leveling Libraries: Extremist Violence and Cultural Destruction*, (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2006), 147-148.

¹²⁹ Edgardo Civallero, "When Memory Turns to Ash," *Information for Social Change* 25, (summer 2007): 9.

perhaps denying it belongs to you) takes some powerful ideological control and desperate circumstances.

It is important to consider the context in which some Tuareg people have come to embrace Islamist extremism. “Individuals aggrieved by debilitating or alienating social circumstances may embrace extreme ideas and identities and, in their thrall, engage in acts of violence that they believe will achieve desirable goals beyond benefit only to themselves.”¹³⁰ Extremist ideologies gain power over people by taking advantage of desperate circumstances. Religion is positioned as the solution to their problems, it is presented as “an all-purpose solution to social woe.”¹³¹ As stated in chapter 3, Tuareg groups were suffering from environmental crises, marginalization by governments and multinational corporations as well as violent assaults by the Malian army.

“Books, of course, are part record, part artifact, and part symbol of forces or ideas that are taken by extremists to be dangerous or oppressive.”¹³² For Islamist ideologues, Timbuktu’s heritage (the books as well as the shrines) represent possibility, difference, and multiple perspectives on religious belief and the interpretation of religious texts. It is a contradiction to the singular truth they wish to impose.

II. *The Politics of Preservation: Memory, Ethics and the Future to Come*

Most residents of Timbuktu were enthusiastic about the arrival of the French and their subsequent removal of the Islamist occupation. Some questioned the motivations of the French. Ismael Diadié (custodian of Fondo Ka’ti) has stated, “There are no good

¹³⁰ Knuth, *Burning Books and Leveling Libraries: Extremist Violence and Cultural Destruction*, 7.

¹³¹ Knuth, 24.

¹³² Knuth, 14.

Samaritans in international relations. There are always interests of every type.” He spoke of his fear for Mali’s future, due in part to its volatile resources. The future of Mali, “is going to be the future of any state that has oil, natural gas and uranium, which is to say, an uncertain future”.¹³³

The role of France in the ongoing conflict is problematic for many reasons. Mali has only been independent for around 50 years. The colonization of Timbuktu by France is what led to the manuscripts being kept hidden for so long. The imposition of the French colonial education system has had a devastating effect on cultural heritage and memory. What then should France’s response be? What is their responsibility?

What is the responsibility of other states and international organizations? The preservation of Timbuktu’s cultural heritage will take the commitment of many. UNESCO has already begun to assist Mali with reconstruction of the Sufi shrines damaged during the occupation. This work is being financed by UNESCO and Mali although contributions have been received from Bahrain, Andorra, Croatia and Mauritius. MINUSMA is providing logistical support.¹³⁴

The preservation of the manuscripts and the return of those collections currently in Bamako will take a greater effort. Preservation is “not just a technical or managerial activity; it is a social, political, and cultural activity as well.”¹³⁵ This is especially true in the case of Timbuktu. There seems to be a lack of political will to create the needed

¹³³ Ginés Donaire, “Guarding the legacy of Al-Andalus,” *El País*, 26 February 2013, http://elpais.com/elpais/2013/02/26/inenglish/1361889596_399092.html (accessed 14 March 2014).

¹³⁴ UNESCO, “Reconstruction of World Heritage mausoleums starts in Timbuktu (Mali),” 14 March 2014, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/in-focus-articles/reconstruction-of-world-heritage-mausoleums-starts-in-timbuktu-mali/> (accessed 15 March 2014).

¹³⁵ Michèle Valerie Cloonan, “The Moral Imperative to Preserve,” *Library Trends* 55, no. 3 (winter 2002): 747.

stability in the region. The discrimination against the north's nomadic groups and the acts of violence being committed against them by the Malian army needs to end. Mali requires a strong, responsible government (something they have always lacked) and leaders committed to stability. This will require addressing the real issues involved in the north, issues that have been overshadowed by ideological 'war on terror' narratives. The Tuareg have legitimate grievances that must be addressed in order to move forward.¹³⁶

The Timbuktu manuscripts are still in danger. The manuscripts currently in Bamako are suffering the effects of the high humidity, a very different environment from the dry north. Abdel Kader Haidara, the director of the Mamma Haidara Library, now oversees these libraries in exile, which come from 40 Timbuktu collections. He is ready for them to be returned to Timbuktu- as soon as their facilities are prepared to take them.¹³⁷

There was ongoing work to preserve this heritage even prior to the invasion by Islamist militants in 2012. There were various groups involved in efforts to preserve and digitize these collections. Support for digitization efforts has come from UNESCO, South Africa, Norway, Luxembourg and France among others. In all around 30,000 manuscripts have been digitized. It is a very expensive process. Many of the manuscripts are written

¹³⁶ Imad Mesdoua, "Mali: Why the Hardest Part is Yet to Come," *Jadaliyya*, 21 February 2013, http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/10304/mali_why-the-hardest-part-is-yet-to-come (accessed 15 March 2014).

¹³⁷ Joshua Hammer, "The Race to Save Mali's Priceless Artifacts," *Smithsonian Magazine*, January 2014, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/Race-Save-Mali-Artifacts-180947965/?no-ist> (accessed 15 March 2014).

with ferrous inks; these inks are volatile and can ignite under certain conditions. A “cold circuit photo digitization” process must be used to ensure that the inks don’t ignite.¹³⁸

Efforts have been made to collect and digitize manuscripts held by families. Some have entrusted their manuscripts to the Ahmed Baba Institute, others are too fearful of letting their treasures out of their homes even temporarily to digitize them.¹³⁹ Mahmoud Zouber, the former director of the Institute, thinks that they should use mobile units for digitization as well.¹⁴⁰ If they had portable digitization equipment staff could digitize family documents at people’s homes. This is already being done in Djenné by the British Library.¹⁴¹

The Ahmed Baba Institute will have to be rebuilt and destroyed digitization equipment replaced. The facility was only built in 2008 and cost an estimated 26 million dollars. It was funded by South Africa. There will need to be further support from a variety of sources to rebuild the facility and to sustain these collections into the future. UNESCO funds many cultural heritage projects in the world. It can be problematic though in that the funding is project based. It can work well for reconstruction work and building facilities. The Institute will require more long term funding for regular maintenance and to keep the digitization going.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Sarah Laskow, “The smuggled hard drives of Timbuktu,” *The Boston Globe*, 17 February 2013, <http://www.bostonglobe.com/business/2013/02/17/the-smuggled-hard-drives-timbuktu/rCyv0QL1FdLLkw4tjv6hDO/story.html> (accessed 15 March 2014).

¹³⁹ Archie L. Dick, “Reacting to Timbuktu,” *Information Development* 29, no. 2 (2013): 105.

¹⁴⁰ Zouber, “Sur le patrimoine écrit au Mali,” 145.

¹⁴¹ Blue Shield, Association of National Committees of the Blue Shield (ANCBS), “Mission Report- Civil-Military Assessment for Malian Heritage,” 23 January 2014, 8, http://www.blueshield.at/mali_2014/mission_report_mali.pdf (accessed 23 February 2014).

¹⁴² Lorraine Dong, “The economics and politics of international preservation collaborations: a Malian case study,” *Archival Science* 12, (2012): 273, 280.

There are also structural and technological issues involved. The electricity is inconsistent which is damaging to the long-term preservation of paper. Manuscripts should be kept in a stable, climate-controlled, environment; fluctuations in temperature and humidity can lead to mold and cause other types of damage. The Institute has had many problems due to power outages. A report from 2010 showed that the Institute's staff had to choose between using the computers or running the air conditioning, when there was little electricity available.¹⁴³

The manuscripts themselves need to be preserved, the materials that constitute them, paper, inks, and leather, provide information about the culture of the time. The manuscripts are objects of material culture. Is there something in a manuscript that cannot be transferred to a digital copy? Mary Minicka, a preservation expert who has worked with Timbuktu materials has stated, "As I hold a Timbuktu manuscript in my hands, I have a powerful sense of the manuscript as an individually-created and unique item." The uniqueness of each manuscript is shaped by many factors including, various kinds of repairs, patches, decoration, covers, marginalia and notes in different hands, watermarks, and mistakes such as inked fingerprints.¹⁴⁴

The greatest threat to the manuscripts is the slow process of deterioration, so much cultural heritage is lost this way rather than in an act of destruction or cataclysm.¹⁴⁵ Restoring and preserving these materials is expensive and will take the continued support of many groups and professionals. Working with international groups and institutions can present challenges. Although funding is essential, often the groups involved have their

¹⁴³ Dong, "The economics and politics of international preservation collaborations: a Malian case study," 272.

¹⁴⁴ Mary Minicka, "Conservation in the Extreme: Preserving the manuscripts of Timbuktu," in *Script and Scholarship*, 35.

¹⁴⁵ Minicka, "Conservation in the Extreme: Preserving the manuscripts of Timbuktu," 38.

own interests for the materials and have objectives that differ from those of the local institutions. There is a focus on digitization and a seeming lack of awareness that the materials must be secure and stabilized in order for them to be digitized. The work being done now is to ensure that the manuscripts survive. Stephanie Diakit , with the Libraries in Exile, has stated, “This is survival work- a lot less sexy for their ‘sustainable development’ objectives. Every organization involved in development has its own agenda and its own way of working.”¹⁴⁶

An online fundraiser sponsored by the Libraries in Exile raised about \$70,000 by July of 2013. These funds were important to meet the immediate needs of the manuscripts in exile in Bamako. The fundraising involved people from all over the world. These funds have been used to buy basic archival supplies, manuscript envelopes and storage boxes as well as silica inserts.¹⁴⁷ Diakit  commenting on this project, stated: “We believe that the scholarship is part of world heritage and that as many people as possible across the world should access it. This is one of the main reasons we feel so good about crowd funding- it enables many, many people to become stakeholders in the corpus.”¹⁴⁸

III. Eurocentric Imaginaries and the Making of History

Africa is often left out of world historical discourses. Egypt is often present but positioned in such a way so as to tie it to Greek and Roman civilizations while disconnecting it from the rest of Africa, even closely related civilizations such as Kush.

¹⁴⁶ Stephanie Diakit , “We are Abdel Kader and Stephanie Diakit  and we are trying to save 300,000 ancient manuscripts and books from imminent destruction from the libraries of Timbuktu. Ask us anything!” from post on 30 May 2013, <http://bestofama.com/amas/1faiis> (accessed 15 March 2014).

¹⁴⁷ Timbuktu Libraries in Exile, <http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/timbuktu-libraries-in-exile> (accessed 15 March 2014).

¹⁴⁸ Diakit , “We are Abdel Kader and Stephanie Diakit ...” from post on 29 May 2013.

[I]t is the gold-land compressed within itself- the land of childhood, which lying beyond the day of self of self-conscious history, is enveloped in the dark mantle of night...At this point we leave Africa, not to mention it again. For it is no historical part of the world; it has no movement or development to exhibit.¹⁴⁹

This attitude is not confined to the nineteenth century. In 1963, the British historian Hugh Trevor-Roper stated: “Perhaps in the future, there will be some African history to teach. But at the present there is none, or very little; there is only the history of Europeans in Africa. The rest is darkness...and darkness is not a subject of history.”¹⁵⁰ The idea that Africa is without written history is widely understood to be the case even today. The manuscripts are documentary evidence that can be used to demonstrate “that Africa was very much occupied both physically and intellectually, before European colonists arrived.”¹⁵¹

There are many silences relating to these collections and what they represent- including the connection of some of these works to the larger Islamic world and its history. Derrida refers to the “suffering of memory” that occurs, in various ways, when peoples, histories, voices are left out or excluded. This happens not only through acts of suppression and violence but also through ignorance and neglect, as well as the influence of power and the bias toward the dominant ideologies of culture.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, (Kitchener, Can.: Batoche books, 2001), 109,117.

¹⁵⁰ Dong, “The economics and politics of international preservation collaborations: a Malian case study,” 275.

¹⁵¹ Dong, 276. Colonialist discourse makes reference to parts of Africa, such as Senegal and Mali, being unoccupied. This is a fairly common colonial model that uses notions of terra nullius or ‘empty land’ as a justification for colonization. It has been employed all over the world including in the United States.

¹⁵² Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 19-20.

Manuscripts from Andalusia, the Middle East and North Africa connect Timbuktu to the larger Islamic world and its heritage. There are still silences regarding Islamic Civilization and its essential contributions to the development of the European Renaissance. Recovery of these materials, their preservation and future research can diminish some of the many silences in world history.

What materials will be available to scholars in the future? What will be preserved and made available? What may be lost to the world and which silences may never be undone? What histories may be written in the future to come? These questions have an importance that extends far beyond Timbuktu and West Africa and suggest why it is imperative that international groups and professionals in cultural heritage fields, including archivists, librarians, and conservation and preservation experts, support the survival of these manuscripts. As Derrida states, the issue of a comprehensive, representative archive doesn't relate merely to questions of the past but of questions of the future to come: "It is a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow."¹⁵³

These collections constitute an important part of the social memory of Timbuktu. "The manuscripts carry the collective memory of our ancestors, proof of their identity, their thoughts, and a summery of their experiences."¹⁵⁴ They are incredibly important to those that keep them as well as to the community as a whole. This is evident in recent actions taken by the residents of the city to safeguard their heritage as well as throughout history.

¹⁵³ Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, 36.

¹⁵⁴ Abdul Kader Haidara, "The state of the manuscripts in Mali and efforts to preserve them," 265.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

I. *What Would Have Been: History, Politics and Promise*

These manuscripts are historical evidence for Islamic civilization as well as African written heritage, both are, in various ways, disregarded or rendered invisible. The story of Africa's written heritage is only just beginning to be told. There are pieces from various fields, history, archaeology, and astronomy among others. There is much more to be told. There is much still unknown; there are many manuscripts waiting to be uncovered, waiting to be conserved, catalogued, digitized and translated. What works may be discovered in the near future? Will perhaps some works, known of but thought lost forever be found among the treasures of Timbuktu? Will there be material found that fundamentally changes our knowledge of history? There is so much possibility.

What might it mean for the people of Timbuktu to have a greater connection to their heritage? How might gaining understanding about Sufi Islamic understandings from the past help the present? There are many known works of Sufi scholarship that can be explored and there are likely others yet unknown.

There is other documentary heritage, far older than Timbuktu's that also needs to be preserved. This is the Tifinagh inscriptions and rock art of the Sahara. It is possible that their fates are intertwined. The preservation and survival of both require political solutions that include a secure and stable Tuareg people that have greater control over their own lands. A greater investment in heritage preservation and education- one that includes Tuareg and other nomadic peoples would have long-term positive effects for Timbuktu and the Sahel. The government of Mali needs to compromise with the secular

Tuareg groups and allow for the establishment of some sort of autonomy for Azawad. They could then work together to weaken Islamist ideology and the power of such groups in the region.

International groups and organizations should help ensure these goals, which are necessary for the long-term survival of the manuscripts and other cultural heritage in the region. It will take the assistance and support of many to address the political, economic and preservation issues involved. It took a movement of peoples, cultures and ideas to build this legacy and it will take the same to sustain and safeguard it for generations to come.

II. *Invocation*

What makes something worthy of remembrance? “How does the present choose the past by which the future will ‘know itself?’”¹⁵⁵ What is at stake if some of this knowledge is lost? These manuscripts are the treasured heritage of the people of Timbuktu and part of the intellectual tradition West Africa. They are of primary importance to these people but also hold incredible value for the greater world.

Timbuktu’s manuscripts can be used to critique what is known about the world, how it is ordered, our understanding of history and of civilizations. Their very existence, interrogates dominant ideologies and beliefs of Western culture, while at the same moment, engenders wonder for the tenacity of their caretakers, through the generations, who kept them safe. Let us all do what we are able to ensure these treasures in exile return home.

¹⁵⁵ Terry Cook, “Remembering the Future: Appraisal of Records and the Role of Archivists in Constructing Social Memory,” in *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory*, ed. Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 169.

Bibliography

- Albertini, Tamara. "The Seductiveness of Certainty: The Destruction of Islam's Intellectual Legacy by the Fundamentalists". *Philosophy East and West* 53, no. 4 (October 2003): 455-470.
- Almond, Ian. *Sufism and Deconstruction A comparative study of Derrida and Ibn 'Arabi*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Blouin, Francis X. Jr. and William G. Rosenberg eds. *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006.
- Chemins du savoir: les manuscrits Arabes et a'jami dans la region Soudano-Sahelienne: colloque international, 13-17 Juin 2005, Rabat*. Rabat: Institut Des Etudes Africaines, 2006.
- Civallero, Edgardo. "When Memory Turns into Ashes...Memoricide During the XX Century". *Information for Social Change* 25, (summer 2007): 7-22.
- Cloonan, Michele V. "The Moral Imperative to Preserve". *Library Trends* 55, no. 3 (winter 2007): 746-755.
- Cornell, Vincent. "Practical Sufism An Akbarian Foundation for a Liberal Theology of Difference". *Journal of Islamic Law and Culture* 9, no. 2 (fall/winter 2004): 103-126.
- Curtis, Abraham. "Stars of the Sahara". *New Scientist* 195, no. 2617 (2007): 39-41.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- *Spectres of Marx*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Dick, Archie L. "Reacting to Timbuktu". *Information Development* 29, no. 2 (2013): 104-105.
- Dijan, Jean-Michel. *Les Manuscrits de Tombouctou*. Paris: J-C Lattès, 2012.
- Dong, Lorraine. "The economics and politics of international preservation collaboration: a Malian case study". *Archival Science* 12 (2012): 267-285.
- Fischer, Michael M. J. "Islam: The Odd Civilization Out?" *New Perspectives Quarterly* 19, no. 1. (winter 2002): 62-71.
- Galy M. and B. Badie eds. *La guerre au Mali. Comprendre la crise au Sahel et au Sahara: enjeux et zones d'ombre*. Paris: Editions La Découverte, 2013.
- Harris, Nathaniel. *Mapping the World: Maps and their History*. San Diego: Thunder Bay Press, 2002.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *The Philosophy of History*. Kitchener, Can.: Batoche Books, 2001.
- Hunwick, John O. *The Hidden Treasures of Timbuktu*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2008.

- *Timbuktu and the Songhay empire: Al-Sa'di's Ta'rikh al-sudan down to 1613 and other contemporary documents*. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

IIC. "The exile of a library- what happened to the Timbuktu manuscripts?". *News in Conservation* 36 (June 2013): 1-2.

Jeppie, Shamil, and Souleymane Bachir Diagne eds. *The Meanings of Timbuktu*. Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2008.

Keenan, Jeremy. "Looting the Sahara: The material, intellectual and social implications of the destruction of cultural heritage". *The Journal of North African Studies* 10, no. 3-4. (2005): 471-489.

Knuth, Rebecca. *Burning Books and Leveling Libraries: Extremist Violence and Cultural Destruction*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2006.

Krätli, Graziano and Ghislaine Lydon eds. *The Trans-Saharan Book Trade: Manuscript Culture, Arabic Literacy and Intellectual History in Muslim Africa*. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Lecocq, Baz. "Unemployed Intellectuals in the Sahara: The Teshumara Nationalist Movement and the Revolutions in Tuareg Society". *IRSH* 49 (2004): 87-109.

Lydon, Ghislaine. "Writing trans-Saharan history: Methods, sources and interpretations across the African divide". *Journal of North African Studies* 10, no. 3-4 (2005): 293-324.

Meltzer, Lalou, Lindsay Hooper and Gerald Kinghardt eds. *Timbuktu: Script & Scholarship*. Cape Town: Tombouctou Manuscripts Project/Iziko, 2008.

O'Dell, Emily. "Slaying Saints and Torching Texts". *Jadaliyya*. 1 February 2013.

Owens, Brian M. "The Safeguarding of Memory: The Divine Function of the Librarian and Archivist". *Library and Archival Security* 18, no. 1 (2003): 9-41.

Pereira, Luísa et al. "Linking the sub-Saharan and West Eurasian gen pools: maternal and paternal heritage of the Tuareg nomads from the African Sahel". *European Journal of Human Genetics* 18 (2010): 915-923.

Saad, Elias N. *Social History of Timbuktu: the role of Muslim scholars and notables 1400 - 1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Trevithick, Matt, and Daniel Seckman. "A Precious History Preserved". *Chronicle of Higher Education* 59, no. 35 (May 10 2013): A28-A30.

Turner, Howard R. *Science in Medieval Islam: an illustrated introduction*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997.

Verde, Tom. "From Africa in Ajami". *Saudi Aramco World* 62, no. 5 (September/October 2011)
<http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/201105/from.africa.in.ajami.htm>