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Saving Nigeria's Islamic Manuscript Heritage

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SAVING NIGERIA'S ISLAMIC MANUSCRIPT HERITAGE



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This report concerns the research tour I undertook in Northern Nigeria in March 2008 to assess the condition of publicly and privately held Islamic manuscript collections in order to identify preservation and conservation needs. Wesleyan University awarded me a five-week sabbatical to enable me to conduct the survey. My interest in and work with Islamic manuscripts dates to my undergraduate studies in Middle Eastern Anthropology and History at the University of Texas at Austin, and when I interned at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) Library. Whilst Islamic Art Bibliographer at Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. (Antiquarian Oriental and African Booksellers), I trained with Roger deCoverly of the London School of Printing in book arts, with particular emphasis on the conservation of 19th century and Islamic materials.

copying industry existed. This manuscript tradition continues in contemporary Nigerian Qur'anic schools.



Calligraphic practice at Qur'anic school, Maiduguri March 2008

NIGERIA'S ISLAMIC MANUSCRIPT HERITAGE

Nigeria has a rich Islamic manuscript heritage that is in danger of being lost due to lack of preservation and conservation efforts. Islamic manuscripts and historical records, both institutionally and privately owned, are dispersed throughout Nigeria. These manuscripts document the rich intellectual and social history of West Africa and are of interest to scholars working in the fields of history, religion, Arabic grammar, poetry, astrology, mathematics, medicine, folklore, geography, education, logic, cultural studies, art history, archaeology, anthropology and jurisprudence. Over the years numerous catalogues, published by Luzac, Brill and the Al-Furqan Foundation, have listed many of the resources held in public collections. However it is estimated that 80% of Nigeria's Islamic manuscript heritage is still in private collections.

The origin of Arabic manuscripts in Nigeria is traceable to the 9th century contact of Muslim Northern Africa with the Sahelian belt of West Africa through the long established trans-Saharan trade links. With traders came Muslim scholars and intellectuals who not only spread the Islamic faith but also served as aides to indigenous rulers in the area. As a result Arabic manuscripts accumulated over the centuries in various Islamic centers such as Kano and Katsina. In the 19th century Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio and other leaders of the Sokoto Jihad were prolific writers. At all times a manuscript

SEVERITY OF PRESERVATION PROBLEM

The severity and critical nature of the neglect of Africa's intellectual history, and in particular its library and archival materials, is succinctly summed up by Professor Bunmi Alegbeleye, Dean, School of Education, University of Ibadan, in a 1999 report to the 65th IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) General Conference in Bangkok:

"...in unequivocal terms the preservation and conservation scene in Africa is in a dismal state."

In a recent UNESCO project proposal, "National Policy on the Preservation and Conservation of National Documentary Heritage for Nigeria," Dr. Alegbeleye wrote:

"Today, most of our cherished documentary resources are either totally destroyed or in extreme jeopardy. Although, there has been a measure of success in the preservation of the built and natural heritage, there has been no parallel development on a national scale for collections of art, history, literature, information and science housed in our museums, galleries, libraries, archives and associated organizations and private collections held by individuals and corporations."

AREWA HOUSE SYMPOSIUM AND NAMP

The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria funded, and together with the Arewa House, organized an international conference on

Preserving Nigeria's Scholarly and Literary Traditions and Manuscript Heritage held during March 2007. The main goal of the conference was to review and assess the current state of the invaluable manuscript heritage in Nigeria, and to explore how modern technologies could assist in the preservation and conservation of the manuscripts and render them more accessible to researchers, scholars and the wider public.

As a result of the symposium a United States Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation grant was made to Arewa House in order to bring a U.S. conservator to survey Northern Nigerian Islamic manuscript collections and to make recommendations on how best to proceed in order to begin working with Nigerian institutions to facilitate their preservation and conservation.

After my arrival in Nigeria, Arewa House brought together many of the stakeholders involved in the management and preservation of the Islamic manuscript heritage in Nigeria, and *NAMP (Nigeria Arabic Manuscript Project)* was formed in March 2008.

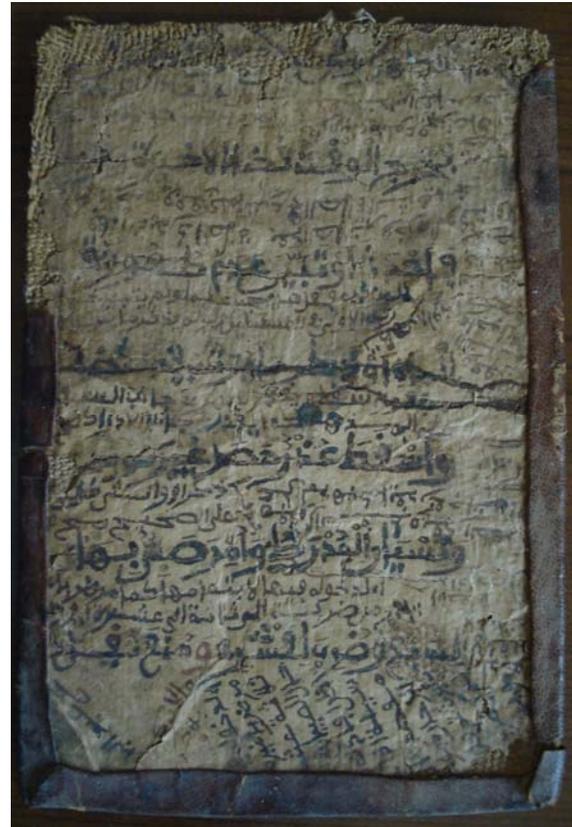
CHARACTERISTICS OF NIGERIAN ISLAMIC MANUSCRIPTS

From the late sixteenth century onwards the paper used in African manuscripts was manufactured in Europe or Turkey. In pre-twentieth century items the leaves are usually single unfolded 40-70 gsm sheets of hand-made laid paper, lightly sized and frequently watermarked and/or countermarked. The paper is soft and frequently has many inclusions. Fibers may be unevenly dispersed through the sheet. The preference was for deep ivory colored paper, considered to be a grade three or four paper in Europe. It is not uncommon to find paper that was "smoked" (hung over a smoky fire) to achieve this color. The leaves are unbound, not sewn together, but loose. None of the manuscripts are on animal skins.

Sometimes the manuscripts are stored between two boards with a belt, in a leather-covered wrapper (*pabgawal*, *pabaawal*) with a pentagonal flap (*lisan*) or in a leather pouch or saddle bag (*gafaka*, *ngafaka* or *bagtar*). *Qur'ans*, or particularly valued manuscripts, sometimes are stored in all three.

The boards can be of camel skin, which is thick,

and rigid, goatskin with the hair still in place, native pasteboard, reused manuscript pages or European packing cartons. The leather used in *pabgawal* and *gafaka* is fine-grained smooth Niger and often exquisitely decorated with blind tooling and sewing.



Manuscript used as a board lining

Many of the manuscripts are comprised of only a few leaves. Larger manuscripts can be made up of paper from a variety of sources, in which case the paper grain may be intermixed, long grain randomly alternating with short grain, causing the paper to cockle and tunnel. In all collections but one the manuscripts were stored flat in order to minimize the detrimental effects caused by this cockling.

Pages are generally neither ruled nor pricked. The text is written with a reed pen (*qalam*) and is primarily maghribi script though occasionally western kufic and sudani is found. The original text is densely written leaving wide margins. Sometimes added notes and commentary completely fill the page leaving no margins. The text is in black or brown ink. A simple mixture of water-soluble finely ground charcoal, gum Arabic and water was widely used. Chapter headings, vowel signs and other spelling symbols might be in orange-red. In *Qur'ans* verse endings might be indicated by yellow

circles, while orange-red and yellow are the dominant colors of illuminated lattice panels, which separate chapters from each other and in circular and semi-circular ornaments (zayyani) used in the margins. The yellow is frequently thickly applied concentrated egg yolk and has a tendency to flake. Ink corrosion was occasionally encountered. Unfortunately *Modibbo Fufore Qur'an* and the spectacular *Chukkunga Qur'an*, the latter with illuminated lattice panels that illustrate a connection with a 13th century Moroccan *Qur'an* now in Munich, have severe ink corrosion.



Manuscript with commentary filled margins

COLLECTIONS SURVEYED

Kaduna:

- 1) National Archives of Nigeria
- 2) Arewa House Archives & Museum
- 3) National Museum Kaduna

Zaria:

- 4) Kashim Ibrahim Library
- 5) Northern History Research Scheme, Ahmadu Bello University

Kano:

- 6) Kano History and Cultural Bureau (Gidan Dan Hausa)
- 7) Gidan Mikama Museum
- 8) Bayero University Library – Document Section

Salame:

- 9) Al Torodi Collection (private)

Sokoto:

- 10) Waziri Junaidu Collection (private)
- 11) Center for Islamic Studies – Usmanu Danfodiyo University
- 12) Waziri Junaidu History and Culture Bureau

Katsina:

- 13) Katsina History and Culture Bureau (two private collections lent for the survey)

Maiduguri:

- 14) Borno Museum (National Museum Maiduguri)
- 15) Center for Trans-Saharan Studies, University of Maiduguri

Yola:

- 16) Fombina Palace Museum (National Museum Yola)
- 17) Modibbo Ahmadu Fufore and Modibbo Muhammadu Raji Collections
- 18) Hamidu Alkali/Alkali Hamma Joda Collection (private)

Jos:

- 19) Jos Museum Library

PRESENT CONDITION OF MANUSCRIPT STORAGE

Buildings housing manuscript collections were predominantly of cast concrete or cement block construction, built since the 1960s, with thin walls and flat roofs. The flat roofs all leaked during the rainy season. Two libraries had ceilings that collapsed in the recent past. One collection had windows from mid-wall to ceiling on the east, south and west side of the archives. In the late afternoon the temperature in the archives was greater than the outside temperature because of the greenhouse effect of the windows. Spalling wall and ceiling plaster was common. Many windows had either blinds or cotton curtains but only one repository had window screens. Only one repository had a fire extinguisher and that was of ABC type for electrical fires.

The impact of SAP (Structural Adjustment Program), which has reduced public funding for educational institutions, is apparent. Furnishings and equipment are old, worn and in desperate need of replacement. Buildings need updated electrical supply, new plumbing, paint

and new pitched roofs.



Flat roofs routinely leak during the rainy season

None of the institutional collections had disaster plans even though several curators were aware of the recent disastrous floods that destroyed many manuscript libraries in Tishit, Mauritania.

None of the Islamic manuscript collections surveyed were stored in environmental conditions that will support their long-term preservation. No temperature lower than 25°C was recorded. It was extremely dry with relative humidity varying from 1% to 22%. The manuscripts were uniformly brittle with those at Katsina literally turning to dust if not very carefully handled.

The envelopes, portfolios and boxes used to house the manuscripts were uniformly acidic. There were no sleeves to protect the manuscripts as they were slid in and out of the envelopes resulting in tears, wrinkled pages and folded corners. The manuscripts usually were stored too tightly packed and in bundles with too much weight and pressure. There was generally a lack of air circulation in storage rooms. Foxing, a mold that leaves dark spots on paper, was present in all the collections. Some collections had direct sunlight hitting the manuscripts as at Jos Museum Library.

Damage to the manuscript pages included discoloration, staining, water damage, foxing, dirt, grime from dirty hands or leather oils, ink transfer, cockling, brittleness, tears, insect damage, pages stuck together, significant creases, losses – particularly from belted items, surface deposits of insect frass/droppings. Torn pages were frequently sewn together with thread, a traditional repair technique.

If the manuscripts possessed boards, *pabgawal* or *gafaka*, the manuscripts were always in direct contact with the leather. There was no

barrier paper or board in place. In some instances the manuscripts were so tightly packed in the *gafaka* that the side stitching on the *gafaka* showed strain.

Many scholars lived a nomadic existence and their manuscripts exhibit that fact. Pages are worn away where belts and straps rubbed against the manuscript.



Tightly packed leather *gafaka* and *pabgawal* lined with acidic strawboard in direct contact with manuscripts

Original manuscripts, late 1960s wet process photocopies with vinegar syndrome and late 60s-early 70s photographs with a pronounced curl were stored together in the same portfolio or box even though each format has different storage requirements.

Handling of the manuscripts was uniformly rough. Use instruction is not given to readers. Use of biros, ball point pen, is allowed. Manuscripts are often left in piles on researchers' desks or in carrels.



Manuscripts left on a researcher's carrel by an open window

Manuscripts were often paginated in biro. In many instances the initial pagination was incorrect and had been blotted out with biro and paginated a second and even a third time.

The majority of the repositories had wood shelving although wood-eating termites *macrotermes bellicosus* are common in Northern Nigeria. There is an active beetle infestation, possibly *dermestes maculatus*, in the Jos Museum Library Collection. Some storage rooms had carpet but none of the collections had vacuum cleaners. One carpet had an active infestation of varied carpet beetle *anthrenus verbasci*.

The majority of the collections are extremely dusty. There was 2mm of harmattan dust on the manuscripts in the Jos Collection.

Fans and air conditioning units were used only when staff or researchers were in a room, if they were functional, which was frequently not the case. Photocopiers were usually not available onsite. Instead the manuscript repositories rely on nearby commercial photocopy centers, which requires transporting manuscripts off site.

Staff uniformly expressed the need for more training. Manuscript cataloguing, conservation and computer maintenance were subjects frequently mentioned. Only the National Archives Kaduna and the NHRS-Zaria expressed the need for additional staff.

There are no paper or book conservators in Northern Nigeria and no active paper conservation laboratories even though both Fombina Palace (National Museum Yola) and National Museum Jos are staffed by trained object conservators (L'Instituto Centrale per il Restauro – Roma).

At Waziri Junaidu History and Culture Bureau, Sokoto, there is a room called the "conservation lab" empty except for a shelf of twenty year old bottles of evaporated chemicals and some carpet remnants. The "bindery" at the National Archives in Kaduna is a museum of broken fifty year old equipment with work tables so worn their surfaces are concave and splintery.

Security was uneven. The security at some collections, such as that at Trans-Saharan Centre, University of Maiduguri, was very good. At the other extreme was the Jos Museum Collection where the Islamic manuscripts are stored in open, glass fronted presses in a general research library. Sunlight hits the glass fronted presses heating up the collection. According to Hunwick this collection has not had

a curator since 1995 and the lack shows. Volume 1 of the *Yunfa Qur'an* could not be found nor several other highly desirable documents.

The Nigerian electrical supply is frustratingly inconsistent and sometimes nonexistent. Internet bandwidth is expensive, slow and unreliable. It took 1 minute and 45 seconds to connect to the Library of Congress web site and twenty minutes to download a twenty page document – after three attempts.

SIZE OF COLLECTIONS

Except for the National Archives Kaduna these are small collections. The National Archives Kaduna is presently on 120 tightly packed one meter shelves (though properly shelved it would take 260 shelves). All of the other collections surveyed measure approximately 62 linear meters in total.



Islamic manuscript storage - National Archives Kaduna

If all the collections were consolidated into one location they could easily be stored in an 8 x 5 x 4 meter room on 12 double faced shelving sections, each section comprised of 10 shelves spaced 25 cm apart, with the base shelf 25 cm from the floor.

IMPACT OF NORTHERN NIGERIA WEATHER AND CLIMATE ON MANUSCRIPT PRESERVATION

Any program aimed at preserving manuscripts must consider the weather and climate of the region where the manuscripts are kept. Northern Nigeria is in the sudano-sahelian savannah zone with alternating wet and dry seasons. Rainfall in this region is less than 100cm per year. May to October is considered the rainy season with rainfall very high between July and August. The sudano-sahelian zone has an environmental temperature that is above 20°C almost throughout the entire year and a relative humidity that is very low, about 20%, during the dry season and very high, about 80%, during the rainy season.

A temperature above 20°C and relative humidity above 70% are optimal conditions for mold growth. Mold is a destructive fungi that can eat paper materials. In some forms such as foxing it can leave dark stains on the paper. It is possible for molds to grow in environments with significantly lower ambient relative humidity and temperature because it is the humidity and temperature of the objects themselves that support mold growth. Paper is highly hygroscopic. During times of high humidity it absorbs water from the atmosphere and only slowly dries out during times of low humidity. High heat and humidity also encourage insect infestation and also increase the rate of paper deterioration by accelerating acid hydrolysis, which precipitates acid into paper. Acid hydrolysis results in embrittlement and fading inks.

Both basic science and actual experience agree that temperature and relative humidity are the primary controlling factors in chemical decay, mechanical damage and deterioration of paper-based collections. The ink commonly used in Nigerian Islamic manuscripts has a tendency to smudge in humid environments or even when handled with sweaty hands. The best method of preserving documents written in carbon ink is to ensure they are stored in a dry environment.

During March 2008 the ambient temperature in the collections varied between 28°C-49°C with ambient relative humidity varying between 1%-38%. Katsina had the highest temperature and lowest humidity while Yola on the Benue River had the highest humidity.

Primacy must be given to securing well-ventilated storage with consistent temperatures 20°C +/-2°C and relative humidity 50% +/-5%. Rapid fluctuations of temperature and humidity must be avoided such as that caused by turning on and off fans and air conditioning units.

In addition the air should be filtered to exclude dust and other particles, acidic and oxidizing gases. The ubiquitous harmattan dust is filled with the microscopic silica shells of algae called diatoms. These silica shells make harmattan dust particularly abrasive and destructive to manuscript materials.



Harmattan at ABU, Zaria

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STOREROOMS AND SHELVING

The ideal conditions for storage are storerooms dark as tombs. Light is an important factor especially the ultraviolet part of the daylight spectrum, which contains high-energy radiations that can cause bleaching. Light can also act as a catalyst speeding up chemical process such as acid hydrolysis, the precipitation of acid in paper. Sunlight and fluorescent tube light are more harmful than incandescent light. They are rich in ultra-violet rays and therefore harmful to paper as well as to certain inks and colors.

There needs to be uniformly good air circulation in the storerooms, augmented during periods of high humidity. Direct current wall mounted variable speed fans powered by a single solar panel would aid in discouraging possible mold growth. Thick walls would aid in keeping storerooms cool and dampen rapid fluctuations in temperature and humidity. There should be pitched roofs with deep overhangs allowing for rain runoff well away from the walls of the

building. Windows high on the wall near the ceiling that could be opened in emergencies to aid in air circulation are desirable.

Shelving units should be metal with powder coatings. The National Archives Kaduna has an ideal shelving arrangement which should be emulated. The shelving ranges are perpendicular to the exterior walls. There is no shelving along exterior walls. Aisles are wide enough so that boxes can be removed without tilting the boxes.

The shelves themselves should be spaced no more than 25cm apart. Ideally shelves should be adjustable. Over time collections can be added to, moved or rearranged and this often necessitates adjusting the shelves. The shelves must be deep enough to completely support any item placed on them. At 25cm three boxes could be stored horizontally one on top the other. Each box should be no more than 6cm deep internally. This arrangement would allow for an empty 6-7cm above the three stacked boxes for air circulation.

Box storage would minimize handling and the harmful effects of invasive harmattan dust. Each box should be no more than two thirds full to allow for air circulation within the box. The bottom shelf should be 25cm from the floor aiding in air circulation and ease of cleaning the floor underneath the shelves.

Any and all carpets should be removed from storerooms. Carpets harbor dust and debris that attract beetle infestations. The floor should be smooth tile or painted cement for ease in cleaning.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENCLOSURES

All Islamic manuscripts and manuscript photographs must be stored flat.

The majority of manuscript enclosures are presently acidic envelopes with shelf mark and cataloging information written on the envelope exterior. As an inexpensive, temporary measure a simple single fold folder can be made from Nigerian made acid-free 100 gsm paper. This type of paper is readily available in Nigerian paper markets. The manuscript could be inserted in the folder and the folder then slipped into the existing labeled envelope. 100 gsm paper is sufficient to stop acid migration from acidic envelopes to manuscripts. The

additional folder will also provide manuscript support.

Manuscripts should be removed from leather *gafaka* since the oils and acids in the leather can migrate to the manuscripts. *Gafaka* should then be lightly filled with crumpled soft paper so that the *gafaka* will keep its shape and boxed.

Removal and reinsertion of the manuscripts into *gafaka* can be extremely damaging. If it is necessary to keep manuscripts between their belted boards or in their *pabgawal*, soft flexible 100 gsm paper should be inserted between the leather and the manuscript.

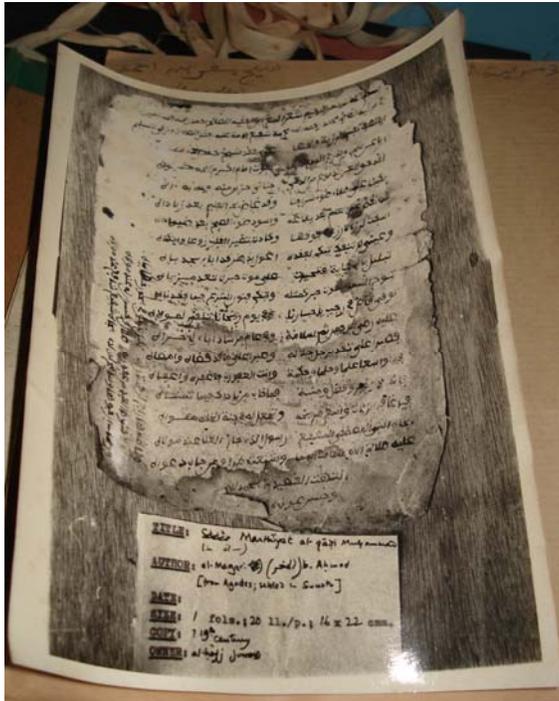
All manuscripts and *gafaka* should be boxed like those at the National Archives Kaduna. Boxes can be more easily dusted than envelopes or open portfolios. They support thin manuscripts and minimize handling. The best boxes would be custom-made from acid-free "E" flute corrugated board. Since this board does not currently appear to be available in Nigeria the creative approach used by the Waziri Junaidu History and Culture Bureau-Sokoto could be adopted. They have boxes made in the market from packing cartons. The packing cartons are turned outside in so that the exterior is plain, making any labeling more legible. Interestingly all of the tested photocopy paper cartons were made from acid-free corrugated board. These would be ideal stock and were free on request.

If manuscripts have been placed between two sheets of glass without a mount, the manuscripts should be removed, the glass thoroughly cleaned with plain water, dried thoroughly with a lint free cloth, the cleaned manuscript placed between the two pieces of glass, and the edges of the glass sealed with a permanent tape. An open glass sandwich creates a microclimate where manuscript can undergo accelerated acid-hydrolysis and oxidation. These chemical reactions can result in the manuscript permanently adhering to the glass and the paper edges breaking down.

Photographs of manuscripts should be stored under slight pressure in order to reduce their curl. If left as is they will eventually curl into a tube, resulting in emulsion crazing and cracking when the photograph is flattened.

Photocopies with vinegar syndrome need to be photocopied onto acid-free paper. The print in VS photocopies fades. Some are already so

faded they can only be read with difficulty. The VS photocopies should be discarded. If it is not possible to copy them they should be segregated well away from original manuscripts and manuscript photographs because they are off-gassing acetic acid.



Photograph with pronounced curl

Floor waxes that contain solvents should be avoided.

No smoking should be allowed in the building, near exterior intake-vents nor outside windows. Smoking is a health hazard and can be a fire hazard.



Results of poor housekeeping

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOUSEKEEPING

It is absolutely essential that manuscript collections be kept dust free, food and drink free and very clean. Dust acts as an incubator for mold and concentrates acidic precipitates which can pit paper. If necessary repositories should follow the example of the National Archives Kaduna which requires even senior staff to dust. Cotton dusters are available at every street corner but they usually spread dust rather than remove it. *Dust Bunny* type dusting cloths hold the dust and can be washed and reused indefinitely. They justify their purchase price many times over.

Food and drink should never be allowed in processing, storage or research areas. Crumbs and soft drink spills attract rodents and insects.

Outside doors and windows should be weather stripped and kept closed. If a strip of paper waves in the breeze when it is held up to a crack, the seal is not tight.

Floors should be kept dust free with thorough, frequent, careful damp, not wet, mopping.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCHER and STAFF TRAINING

Although it is vital to make manuscripts available for research and display it should only be in controlled conditions with low light, constant temperature levels and continuous supervision. When researchers are looking for specific facts they are often only dimly aware of the physical characteristics of the materials they use. An important task for staff is to raise researchers' awareness of proper handling techniques.

Staff and researchers must have clean dry hands when handling manuscripts. Two hands must be used to support manuscripts with care not to bend, crease or tear them. Nothing should ever be drug over the surface of a manuscript such as a caftan sleeve or a veil. *Malams* may not be used to such strictures but if surrounded by posters advertising the ill effects of improper handling they might be more cooperative.

A preservation booklet, flyer, bookmark or

poster with some basic rules – yes pencils, yes clean dry hands, yes sound off mobile phones, no pens or highlighters, no sharp implements, no food, drink, bottled water, sweets or gum - can be helpful. All new employees should get a copy of the flyer or booklet with an explanation of why the procedures are important. An annual refresher for all staff would be a good idea. One of the main goals of curators and directors should be to create a feeling amongst all the staff that they are guardians of something important and that each person's job is crucial to the preservation and smooth functioning of the collection.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSERVATION

We must accept manuscripts as we receive them from past generations. To a certain extent damage and wear reflect their history. The task of conservation is to make items stable enough to allow safe handling and study, repairing only where absolutely necessary. The most important principles of modern conservation are that any treatments should preserve an object while maintaining its historical integrity. All treatments should be reversible in case they prove unhelpful or inappropriate in the long term.

Northern Nigeria needs at least one trained paper conservator and a well equipped conservation laboratory. A conservator trained in both paper and book conservation would be even more useful (see Appendix 1 for internet resource listing educational opportunities in conservation and preservation training). A trained conservator can train others. Libraries, archives, history and culture bureaus have large quantities of bound materials that also need preservation and conservation. Because of long distances and difficulty of travel, a staffed conservation laboratory in Sokoto, one in Kaduna and a third in the east would be ideal. Minimally the laboratories should contain a HEPA hood or flexible air exhaust system, a variable speed control HEPA vacuum cleaner, a hot-air pen and a complete range of tools, repair papers, boards and adhesives, a large bed screw press and adjustable worktables and chairs.

Because of the potential for severe insect and mold problems no wheat starch or flour paste should be used on Nigerian Islamic manuscripts. Methyl Cellulose is a stable, well tested adhesive that neither attracts pests nor

supports mold growth. PVA adhesives are suitable for box making since they dry quickly and are stronger than methyl cellulose.

Book cloths filled with starch should also be excluded because starch attracts insects. A wide range of suitable acrylic-filled book cloths is available.

INSECT INFESTATION TREATMENT

The Jos Museum Collection has a destructive, heavy insect infestation and should be placed in an anoxic environment without delay. This is a preferable means for non-toxic insect eradication.

IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

NAMP should

- focus on prevention and maintenance as a cost effective and sustainable strategy for management and conservation
- give priority to simple, incremental solutions to problems that can be easily implemented within an existing framework
- create awareness and respect for international conservation norms
- involve local communities in planning and protecting cultural heritage resources
- strive for governmental and popular awareness and support of cultural heritage as a vital, useful, element within the variety of social and cultural contexts found in Nigeria
- give serious consideration to consolidating these manuscript collections.

The federal government of Nigeria and state governments should increase their support for these collections. Obtaining outside support and funding will be difficult unless they do so. The 50th Anniversary of Nigeria's independence could be used as an occasion for a renewed emphasis and support of cultural heritage.



An active insect infestation endangers the Jos Museum Collection, an important cultural heritage resource

SALAME

Salame, a village northeast of present day Sokoto, is of a type like Degel, also a village near Sokoto that was the home of Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio. Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio's heritage, his ideas and his Islamic ideology continue to influence moral, political and intellectual attitudes to this day. Salame is a scholarly cantonment that has managed to maintain its traditions and library collections for nearly two centuries, continuing to attract contemporary scholars from West Africa and beyond. The Al Torodi Collection in Salame, comprised of both printed and manuscript works, is in danger of being dispersed. There should be a concerted effort to preserve this ancient collection of manuscripts and printed works.

ESSENTIAL RESOURCES AND ESSENTIAL CATALOGING

Each repository should have paper copies of the following books:

Baloffet, N. and Hille, J. *Preservation and Conservation for Libraries and Archives*.

Chicago: American Library Association, 2005.

Hunwick, J. et al. *Arabic Literature of Africa II*. Leiden: Brill, 1995.

First, do no Harm: A Register of Standards, Codes of Practice, Guidelines, Recommendations and Similar Works relating to Preservation and Conservation in Library and Archives. 2005 (see Appendix 1)

There should be a concerted effort to exchange copies of existing manuscript lists. This would aid in each repository's ability to more easily complete its own cataloging.

Northern History Research Scheme, Ahmadu Bello University, in particular, needs to complete the cataloging of its photograph and microfilm holdings. NHRS was the repository for photographic and microfilm duplicates taken during the major collecting efforts of the late 1960s when privately held manuscripts were copied and the originals then returned to their owners. There is every reason to believe that there are duplicates at NHRS of Hunwick's "lost" Ibadan microfilms.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project began at the request of John Campbell, U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria 2004-2007, and would not have been possible without the enthusiastic support of the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria and in particular, Henry Mendelsohn.

I would like to thank the custodians of these collections for their generous and warm welcome. It was a privilege to have access to such treasures.

The Arewa House, Centre for Historical Documentation and Research, Ahmadu Bello University, was responsible for scheduling and travel arrangements. During the survey I was accompanied by Malam Musa Mohammed or Salisu Bela of Arewa House. Dr. Mahmoud Hamman is the current Director of Arewa House, a premier cultural institution located in Kaduna.

APPENDIX 1 - INTERNET RESOURCES

Library of Congress Report

*Survey Tour to Northern Nigeria March 3-16,
2007 The State of Arabic Manuscript Collections
In Nigeria* – Angel D. Batiste

www.loc.gov/rr/amed/afs/NigerianSurveyTour2007/NigerianSurveyTour.html

*First, do no Harm: A Register of Standards,
Codes of Practice, Guidelines, Recommendations
and Similar Works relating to Preservation and
Conservation in Library and Archives*

www.ifla.org/VII/s19/pubs/first-do-no-harm.pdf

Conservation Supplies

www.gaylord.com and
www.universityproducts.com

Educational Opportunities in
Conservation/Preservation Training

palimpsest.stanford.edu/bytopic/education/

Foundation Grants for Preservation in Libraries,
Archives and Museums

www.loc.gov/preserv/foundtn-grants.html

Endangered Archives supported by Arcadia

www.bl.uk/about/policies/endangeredarch

Kanuri Studies Association

www.kanuri.net/related_projects2.php?aID=37

ALUKA African Cultural Heritage Sites and
Landscapes – Overview & Site Selection Criteria

www.aluka.org/page/content/heritage.jsp

West African Manuscripts Database (formerly
known as AAMS)

<http://westafricanmanuscripts.org>

Princeton University Islamic Manuscripts
Collection – Digital Collections

[diglib.princeton.edu/xquery?_xq=getCollection&
_xsl=collection&_pid=islamic](http://diglib.princeton.edu/xquery?_xq=getCollection&_xsl=collection&_pid=islamic)

Arabic MS from West Africa: Herskovits Library
Collection – Northwestern University

<http://digital.library.northwestern.edu/arbms/>