

ARABIC LITERATURE OF AFRICA
A MULTI-VOLUME WORK OF REFERENCE

John O. Hunwick and R.S. O'Fahey announce a joint project in collaboration with a number of other scholars, for the publication of a six-volume work under the general title *Arabic Literature of Africa*. The volumes will be published by E.J. Brill of Leiden and the first of the projected series has already appeared (December 1993). The entire series will be under the joint general editorship of Hunwick and O'Fahey and each of them will be primary editor for specific volumes.

The project will fill a major gap in our knowledge of the intellectual and religious history of the African Islamic world. It is essentially a continuation of the work of other distinguished scholars, notably Carl Brockelmann in his *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur* (2 vols. and a three volume supplement, Leiden 1937-49) and Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden 1967-, in progress). In as much as Brockelmann had scarcely four pages on writers of Africa outside the Maghreb and Egypt, and Sezgin, after ten volumes, is still dealing with the first five centuries of Islam, the new work, which focuses precisely on the area south of the Maghreb and Egypt and chronologically on the 10/16th-14/20th centuries, will complement the vast labours of these scholars of the Germanic tradition.

O'Fahey has just published the first volume of the series, on the writings of Eastern Sudanic Africa down to c. 1900, in collaboration with Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Abū Salīm, Albrecht Hofheinz, Yaḥyā Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, Berndt Radtke and Knut S. Vikør. It deals with authors living in the area of the present Republic of the Sudan and their writings, as well as the writings of the the Idrīsiyya tradition both within the Sudan and outside it (chapter 6) and the Sanūsiyya tradition (chapter 7), which belongs wholly outside the Sudan. O'Fahey will also edit a volume on Eastern Sudanic Africa since 1900 and another on Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa and Eastern Africa.

Hunwick's responsibility will be for three volumes: one on Central Sudanic Africa (the area between Lake Chad and the Middle Niger), one on Western Sudanic Africa (the area between the Middle Niger and the Atlantic Ocean), and a volume on the Western Sahara (Mauritania and the Algerian and Malian Sahara). His first volume (volume II of *Arabic Literature of Africa*) is in preparation now and is expected to go to press at the end of 1994. Overall, the editors hope to publish one volume approximately every year until the work is complete around the end of the decade.

The general pattern for the lay-out of volumes in the series is as follows. First, there is an implicit chronological framework. Second, the material will be divided along either regional, tribal/family or sectarian lines, depending on the area and period. Volume I, for example, has twelve chapters as follows: (1) The Sudanese Nile Valley before 1820, (2) Chronicles and Related Materials, (3) The Writings of the Turkiyya, (4) Popular Poetry, (5) The Sammāniyya Tradition, (6) The Idrisiyya Tradition, (7) The Sanūsiyya Tradition, (8) The Khatmiyya Tradition, (9) The Writings of Ismā'īl al-Walī and his Descendants, (10) The Writings of the Majādhīb, (11) The Hindiyya, Qādiriyya, Sa'ādiyya and Tijāniyya, (12) The Writings of the Mahdiyya. In volume II Hunwick and his collaborators will first deal with the region as a whole before 1800, followed by chapters on each of the three great *jihād* leaders of the early 19th century (°Uthmān b. Muḥammad Fūdī, °Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad Fūdī and Muḥammad Bello), then with the following regions in the 19th and 20th centuries: Sokoto after the *jihād*, Kano, Katsina, Borno, Zaria, Central Nigeria (Bauchi, Jos, Yola, Nupe) and Yorubaland. Within each chapter writers will be grouped according to their family, *ṭarīqa*, or teaching affiliation and also (so far as is possible) chronologically. Although it is not possible at this stage to write an analytical history of Islamic thought in the region, given the fact that the vast bulk of these writings are unpublished, the arrangement of material in our volumes will provide a framework for such a task.

Each writer will be presented as an 'entry' consisting of two parts: the first biographical and the second a bibliography of that

scholar's writings. The biographical portion will consist of the fullest known names of the writer and his/her dates of birth and death where known, an indication of the sources from which material for the biography has been taken and a brief account of the writer's life stressing teachers and pupils, travels, religious and political offices held, literary activities. Dates will be given according to both the Islamic and European calendars. Each work by an author will have a numbered entry which will contain as many of the following elements as possible:

- (a) Full title, including any variant wordings or alternative titles. For poems the first line will be given, where known.
- (b) Date of composition.
- (c) Brief indication of the subject matter.
- (d) If the work is a commentary on another work or a treatment (e.g. versification of it) an indication of what that work is and a reference for it in Brockelmann's *Geschichte* or other standard reference.
- (e) Reference to any published analysis or discussion of the work.
- (f) A list of manuscript copies of the work preserved in public collections.
- (g) Reference to any published editions (including local 'market' editions).
- (h) Reference to translations, full or partial (but not odd paragraphs).
- (i) If the information on a title is derived only from a literary source, an indication of that source.

Finally, although the work is concerned primarily with what was written in the Arabic language, an attempt will be made to give information on certain writings in African languages that form part of the Islamic tradition. Hunwick's two volumes on West Africa will give what coverage is possible in the present state of knowledge of the Hausa, Fulfulde or Wolof writings of authors who wrote mainly in Arabic. O'Fahey, in his volume on Eastern Africa, will include material in Swahili forming part of the Islamic tradition.

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