

## ISLAMIC STUDIES IN JAPAN

*Bibliography of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies In Japan 1868-1988*. Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, The Toyo Bunko (ISBN 4-89656-334-4), 1992, 787+xxvi pp.

Japanese scholarship is capable of producing important, original insights, although it is largely confined to publications in Japanese. Most scholars outside Japan who read Japanese are, of course, concerned primarily with Japanese studies. Therefore access to Japanese materials in Middle Eastern, African and other regional studies is difficult at best.

This bibliography is a bilingual classified (but not annotated) listing of Japanese scholarship concerning the Middle East. It will be of interest to scholars of Middle Eastern Studies in general. All items have been double checked with the famous Japanese attention to detail, and over 15,000 items of scholarship, more than 99% of which are available to researchers in publicly accessible libraries and research institutes in Japan have been included.

The organisation is topical, with major sections subdivided according to various criteria. Major sections include General Works, Religion and Thought ('Oriental' Philosophy being still considered 'thought' rather than 'philosophy' by the conservative dons of Japan's academic establishment), Law, Ecology and Geography, History, Politics and International Relations (Post-World War II), Economy and Industry (also Post-World War II), Languages and Literature, Science and Technology, the Arts, Folklore and Ethnology, Society and Sociology, Japan and the Middle East, and Academic Trends.

John E. Philips

## ISLAMIC MANUSCRIPTS IN THE WORLD

*World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts. Volume 1.* General Editor: Geoffrey Roper. London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1992, xvii + 569 pp. (available through E.J. Brill: Gld. 250.00/\$143.00).

The present work is the first of three volumes offering a country-by-country survey of collections of Islamic manuscripts. The first volume goes from Afghanistan to Iran with the omission of Algeria, Chad, China and Ethiopia. Surveys of these countries are promised in the third volume. The country surveys generally describe the location (library, mosque, etc), the number of MSS, their condition with usually a few comments on older or calligraphically outstanding items

The Introduction explains that Islamic Africa is poorly represented:

Sub-Saharan Africa still remains a problem for us since there are not many sources for consultation to identify local scholars. Available information about Islamic manuscripts is extremely scarce, or non-existent. Because of the size of many African countries and poor transport facilities, movement within these not always, and neither is access to privately owned collections of Islamic manuscripts in outlying areas. There has been a reluctance amongst scholars in this area to undertake the survey.

Apart from the latter remark which seems a little surprising, the quotation accurately describes the situation in Africa. The following note looks at the volume from the perspective of *Sudanic Africa* readers.

Volume 1 includes four African countries, Benin (surveyed by Amidu Sanni), Cameroon (by Peter Chateh), Egypt (by a committee from the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya) and Ghana (by B.A.R. Braimah). Benin (p. 84) comprises a brief description of two private collections – Ahmadou Idrees of Cotonou (13 MSS) and Mohidou A. Gafar of Porto Novo (17 MSS). Most of the Cameroon survey (pp. 145-6) is devoted to the Bibliothèqu du ‘Mfon-Mom’, Sultan of Foumban’s Library, a library created

with UNESCO assistance in 1985 and containing 84 MSS in the Bamoum language (of which there is a catalogue, Ghomsi Emmanuel *et al.*, *Catalogue Trilingue du Fonds Documentaire du plais de 'Mfon-Mom' à Foumban*, Yaoundé: Institut des sciences humaines, 1984, 50 pp.). The survey of Egypt (pp. 201-36) is useful in that it lists catalogues and handlists that have appeared in recent years. There is a tantalizing reference to the private library of Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn Badr at Sohag (Balāṣfūra) which is said to contain an autograph of Part VI of *al-Mughrib fī ḥilā 'l-Maghrib* by Ibn Sa'īd al-Maghribī. In addition to the well known collection of MSS housed at the Institute of African Studies at Legon, the Ghana survey notes 16 privately-owned MSS in Accra.

MSS of African provenance crop up elsewhere in the volume; a few MSS are noted at the Koninklijke Museum voor Midden-Afrika at Tervuren (Belgium) – these are most probably correspondence in Arabic exchanged between the advancing Congo Free State forces and local rulers and Mahdist officials in southwestern Sudan between 1896-98. The well known Arabic documents arising from the Black slave rebellion of 1835 (described by Vincent Monteil and others) of Brazil are noted (pp. 113-4) with the comment that they are in poor condition. Likewise, the Ashanti material in Denmark is noted (p. 194). Under France, there is one collection that may have escaped the notice of interested Africanists at the Musée National des Arts Africains et Océaniens (previously, Musée de la France d'Outre-Mer; Musée du Louvre) whose library apparently contains 32 MSS (30 Arabic, 2 Malagasy) from sub-Saharan Africa). Finally, under Germany, the two 'valuable, but undated, wooden boards from West Africa (Cameroon)' are presumably writing boards (Ar. *lawh*).

A general criticism of the volume is the tendency throughout to equate antiquity with importance, e.g. under Kassel (Germany) some MSS are described as, 'rather late (after 16th century) and not important for Islamic studies'; later in the same notice it appears that some of these MSS were brought to Kassel as war booty from Tunisia in 1686. 'After 16th century' will, of course, include the overwhelming bulk of African Islamic MSS. Nevertheless, all such research tools are to be

welcomed, even if the price of this one means that few African scholars will see it and be stimulated to fill in the gaps rightly lamented upon in the Introduction.

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#### BOOKS RECEIVED

*The Human Commodity. Perspectives on the Trans-Saharan Slave Trade.* Edited by Elizabeth Savage. London: Frank Cass, 1992, 279 pp.

This is a collection of papers from a workshop on long-distance trade in slaves across the Sahara and the Black Sea in the nineteenth century, held in Bellagio, Italy, in 1988. The volume, concentrating on the southern of these two trade connections, both tries to redress the concentration on the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and to put slave trade in a wider historical and social context. Among the many topics covered in the volume are slaves and slave trade in the context of the Mediterranean (J.O. Hunwick and Daniel Schroeter), of salt trade (A. McDougall), women in Hausaland (B.B. Mack), the *jihād* (A. Mahadi), military slavery in the Sudan (G. Prunier and D.H. Johnson) as well as surveys of the trade in west and east (R.A. Austen, M. Klein, J. Wright and R.O. Collins). A 23-page bibliography by J.G. Miller rounds off the volume.

*Les pays du Tchad dans la tourmente, 1880-1903* by Jean-Claude Zeltner. Paris: Harmattan, 1988, 285 pp.

Père Zeltner in this survey, describes the Lake Chad-Waday region in last two decades of the last century as the prey of three great regional powers: The Mahdi of Sudan, the Sanūsīyya of the north, and the adventurer Rābiḥ b. Faḍl Allāh. For this, he has utilized two new sets of sources, the French dispatches from the region, and the Sanūsī correspondence, recently published by Jean Louis Triaud (see *SAJHS*, 1, 100-1). The study covers the period from the first Sanūsī contacts to the region, until the French troops arrived and defeated the indigenous forces.

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