



FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF LAFIA
INAUGURAL LECTURE SERIES NO.19
FACULTY OF ARTS



**Beaming the '*Dark Africa*':
Construction, Deconstruction and
Reconstruction of *Afrabic* Historiography**

Adam Adebayo Sirajudeen, *fniti*
Professor of Arabic Literary Criticism & *Afrabic* Historiography
Department of Arabic Studies,

August 14, 2024



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Dedication

I wish to solemnly and passionately dedicate this work to my late wife Seyidat Khadeejat Adam Sirajudeen, (Nee Denteh-Olayiwola) with whom I have been closely associated since we were solemnly joined together. As a couple we were both looking forward to this day but now, she is no longer physically present with us. Only Allah knows the thought of my heart towards you, your words of encouragements are still fresh in my memory. *Alake, sun re oo!*

اللهم صل على سيدنا محمد الفاتح لما أغلق والخاتم لما سبق ناصر الحق بالحق والهادي إلى صراطك المستقيم صلاة تدخلني مدخل صدق وتخرجني مخرج صدق وتجعل لي لسان الصدق في مقعد صدق عند مليك مقتدر وعلى آله حق قدره ومقداره العظيم.

O Allah, send Your divine blessings upon our master Muhammad; the opener of that which was closed and the seal of all that was before him; the helper of the truth by the Truth and the guide to Your straight path; such blessings (Salāt) that accredit my entry by the gate of truth and likewise my exit by the gate of truth; led by a truthful tongue in a seat of honour near a Sovereign, Perfect in ability; and on his family, according to his exalted rank and capacity.

THE PRESENTER



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Protocol

- The Vice Chancellor, and Chairman,
- The Co-Chairman,
- The Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs,
- The Deputy Vice Chancellor, Administration,
- The Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research and Partnerships,
- The Registrar,
- The University Librarian,
- The Bursar,
- The Chairman, Committee of Deans, Provosts and Directors,
- Dean, Faculty of Arts,
- Deans of other Faculties,
- Directors of Directorates and Centers,
- Professors, Senate Members and Heads of Departments,
- Other Members of the Academic Communities,
- Distinguished Staff and Students, Federal University of Lafia,
- Your Royal Majesties, Highnesses and titled Chiefs,
- My dear wives and children,
- My immediate and distant family members,
- My Colleagues and Friends,
- Other Dignitaries here present,
- Media and Press men and women,
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

The *Omo'ya* Factor

Allah *subhaanahuwataalaa* takes all the glory this day. Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, I stand before you and the august audience as *Omo'ya* (son of Iya) born, raised and nurtured in Iya, a relatively vast neighborhood of a popular yet, remote town, Saki, in Oyo State of Nigeria. Iya derives its name from an ancient grove of baobab trees (known as *Igi Iya* in Yoruba) which defines the dominant floral landscape of Saki. One thing spectacular then (and even now) about Iya is the indigenes' legendary reputation for gallantry, sense of heroism, indomitable spirit and enthusiastic stubbornness in almost all facets of communal life. We grew up to relish the classic epic:

Eni ó'áyà
K'óna'mọIyákan

EwéIyákoròbiewúro!

Whoever is brave enough
Should beat any *Iya*
indigene
He will get to know that
Baobab tree is as bitter as
bitter leaf

This epic craftily represents *omo'ya* (*Iya* indigene) in the metaphor of *ewe'ya* (baobab leaves) laced with the intrinsic traits of non-sense stance. The implication is that anybody who dares to attack an *Iya* indigene will suffer regrettable repercussion. After all, *Iya* is blessed with an all-inclusive assortment of communal feats: the toughest masquerades, the most efficacious Shaykhs (Islamic clerics), the most prominent Pastors, the fiercest witches, the *Igbale* (grove) of traditional worshippers, the 'Id praying ground of Muslim faithful, the Cherubim and Seraphim Temple of the *Aladura* worshippers, the biggest commercial Centre (Owode and Krall markets) etc. Yet, in the chronicle of these peculiar feats, *Iya* has not recorded an academic Professor particularly in the field of Arabic studies. It is however, the will of Allah and divine providence, with a deep sense of humility, Mr. Vice Chancellor, sir, that an academic doyen of *Iya* extraction stands before you this moment to blaze the trail.

I have always been conscious of this humble background, which reminds me of how my little efforts have always been strengthened by Allah's ceaseless grace to achieve astounding success even at the face of seemingly intractable odds, and that charges me to be profoundly thankful to Him at all times. To do so and with that simple background, I hope you will agree with me that I have no trumpet of my own to blow. The trumpet I call mine belongs to Almighty Allah who did provide me the breath, health and wealth to thrive, achieve and excel in my chosen career; and to my teeming teachers, mentors, colleagues and students on whose shoulders I rode to the apogee of academic limelight. I must confess, it is a rare privilege and sheer providence joining the Guild of Professors!

It is in the valorous garb of an *Omo'ya* that I challenge the Eurocentric view of Africa hitherto dubbed the 'Dark Continent' by foremost Western scholars such as Professor Hugh Trover-Roper, Hegel, Seligman, etc. in my inaugural lecture titled “**Beaming the 'Dark Africa': Construction, Deconstruction and Reconstruction of *Afrabic* Historiography**” which is the 19th in the University series and the first in the Department of Arabic Studies. This lecture probably represents the first of its kind in the area of Arabic Studies in Nigeria as far as I know. As one with research interest in Afro-Arabic Literary Criticism and Historiography, *Afrabic Historiography* is my coinage to represent the science of recording history in both ancient Africa and Arabic studies, which have been in existence on the African continent for several millennia before the advent of Eurocentric Historiography. Arabic scholarship in the arts and sciences aided Medieval Europe to free itself from its 'Dark Ages', and regain its intellectual feat lost after the decline of the Greco-Roman empire, which had been thoroughly influenced by Egyptian civilization.

Opening Gambit

The journey of Arabic and Islamic Studies in the Nigerian Higher Education first took off at the University of Ibadan in 1962. It is interesting to note that Arabic Studies in the Universities and other tertiary institutions is more than religious centrality. Like other academic courses in tertiary institutions, Arabic Studies in Higher Education is research based. One may tend to ask, what research about Arabic Studies could be done to justify it as academic subject especially when Nigeria like other West African countries is not an Arabic state? The pioneers of the course in Ibadan were aware of the significant roles of the language not only to Islam but also to the cultural aspects of African Historiography.

Besides, this brings us to a fact that language is the custodian of culture. With Nigeria as one of the most populous African countries of a large Muslims populace, Arabic is one of the living languages in this region whose influence on the culture of these Muslim peoples cannot be understated. Therefore, we might not be far away from the truth when we conclude that Arabic is part of the Nigerian linguistic repertoire and *ipso facto* custodian of its culture

to an appreciable extent. This is in addition to the fact that a particular minority ethnic group in the far North Eastern part of Nigeria; the Shuwa Arabs have Arabic as their *lingua franca*.

With this little opening gambit, it is safer to conclude that Arabic Studies in the Universities is not learning the language (Arabic) as many people would have been made to understand but learning about Arabic. This is because; it is practically difficult to start learning Arabic in the university from the scratch. Average student of Arabic in the university must have had background knowledge of the rudiments of the language before being offered admission to study Arabic. It means that such candidate must have learned Arabic and only come to the university to learn about Arabic. Therefore, learning about Arabic in the higher institutions is more or less learning for research purposes as learning Arabic exclusively for religious purpose could have ended in pre-university education.

This is another pointer to the fact that learning Arabic in the university will offer opportunities for the typology of university primary assignments of teaching/learning, research and community services; as encapsulated in Learning through Research and Development, Character Building, Promoting Town-and-Gown Relationship (what is popularly known as University-Community Relationship. Hence, it affords us the opportunity to work on '*what everybody sees and nobody thinks about*').

Besides, it has been equally observed that the relevance of Arabic to the study of African historiography in many of our universities today has regrettably suffered neglect (Sirajudeen, 2012). In fact, the growth and development of African Historiography owes much exclusively to *African* writings of the earlier centuries. I have been conscious of the invaluable significance of the Arabic writing culture of the Islamicate African authorship embedded in the writings of its scholars. Today apart from the religious orientation of Arabic language and Arabic studies, there are more and more studies and research in the areas of African sociology, anthropology, ethnography, philosophy, politics, economy,

communication, history, culture etc. where both early and present African Arabic literature have tremendously contributed to humanistic and liberal arts studies. This has formed the basis for contemporary studies in Islamicate Africa. Moreover, a considerable number of Nigerian Arabic Manuscripts have archived a great deal of indigenous science and knowledge systems most of which are still lying fallow, begging for academic attention today.

The Choice of Arabic Studies and *Afrabic* Historiography

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, my choice of Arabic as a course of study was somehow coincidental, even as the best graduating student in English Language during my graduation in secondary school. My father (Shaykh Imam Sirajudeen Adeleke Sani) insisted that I must go ahead and study Arabic. To press home his demand, he seized my O' level results and enrolled me in Arabic Junior Secondary School (Irshad Deen Arabic College, Saki). It was there and then my uncle, Dr. Nurudeen Olayiwola Ayinla Balogun whose alias is *Yaa Nur'allah* – then Faculty Member with the University of Lagos, Akoka stepped in and persuaded my dad to release my withheld result with the assurance I could equally study Arabic in the University. It is interesting to note that most of us who studied Arabic then did so because we were sons and daughters of Mallams.

The choice of my area of specialization in the field of Arabic however, was informed by the special interest I had in history particularly during my secondary school days. I had earlier found myself in science class when there was opportunity for us to choose subjects of interest in higher class. However, having observed my weakness in Mathematics, which was the core subject for sciences, I humbly bowed out and joined the Arts' class. I, thus developed special interest in humanistic subjects and liberal arts with particular bias for history.

During my NYSC days at the Ahmadu Bello University, Samaru Zaria, I had the privilege of joining the academic as a young Graduate Assistant. Later, I was appointed as Assistant Lecturer at the Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba after the

completion of my Masters in Arabic Literature. My M.A. dissertation focused on literary appreciation of the poetical production of an illustrious son of Saki, Abdurrahman az-Zakawi, (Sirajudeen, 2002) who has carved a niche for himself in composition of Arabic poetry in Muslim Yorubaland (see *al Zakawiyyaat*, 2020).

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, an inspiration came to me one day while I was reading an article on Nigerian Historiography. My little knowledge of Nigerian history (although through Arabic medium) made me realize that the author of that article had omitted some vital historical information in his work and I contacted him to find out why his work had that lacuna. He didn't mince word as he confessed that the information, he gave in the said research work was all he knew about the subject. It was there and then that I explained to him the availability of historical information on Nigeria, which were embedded in Arabic writings of Muslim scholars but could not be found in his work. This constituted a point of departure from his work from where I took up to research into what Inayatullah described as [t]he original and the main repository of all the religious sciences of Islam, and in the words of Hunwick (1964:10), “the Latin of Africa.”

Besides, I have observed that considerable research in the field of Arabic has, over the years, been in the study of literary appreciation by the Nigerian Arabic scholars. These researches have concentrated mainly on the early works of Nigerian authors especially with a view to drawing attention to the indigenous literary culture. Consequently, the initial research on Arabic in Nigerian universities was on the works of the Arab literati most of which are 'linguistic in orientation' ranging from Classical, Medieval, to Modern. This, of course followed the pattern of the curricula in use then, which were more of Classical Arabic Literature, both academic and non-academic, found amongst learners of Arabic.

Arising from the foregoing, I thought it would be pertinent for me to shift from the much but over-flogged aspects of linguistic studies and literary appreciation to other areas of social and

cultural research. This, I believe, will have more direct impact on common man on the street as the orientation of today's research requires. Thus, I decided to chart a new terrain in the development of Arabic studies in contemporary Nigeria. After all, it has been argued in some quarters that the study of the Arabic literary works has been relatively scarce in comparative studies in spite of their vital importance to the history of world civilization and the development of modern Arabic thoughts.

In the bid to debunk the idea that Africa is a *dark continent* bereft of history particularly during the period when writings seemed unavailable as there was no written culture and technology according to the early European historians, later African historians resorted to the early Arabic writings of *Afrabic* literati and were able to glean the much-needed socio-cultural African historical information embedded therein. This was employed to establish the fact that African has its indigenous technology of writing, the theme and contents of which qualify the continent and its people as having a living history of its own. This singular development in the history of Arabic in Africa and of course various off shoot research there from formed the nucleus of my career studies.

Origin, Growth and Development of Arabic Writing Technology

Languages of the world have provided scholars with a rich field for study and research. Of no less importance are those languages, which have been reduced into writing. This writing system with which languages have been recorded has equally played important part not only in the diffusion of culture but also in the transmission of civilization. A living example of this is found in Arabic language in the case of Africa (Sirajudeen, 2009:11). Language is an instrument of communication. It is also a tool, or a vehicle for communication and interaction between two or more individuals or group. It is the human vocal sound or arbitrary graphic representation of the sound used systematically and conventionally by members of a speech community for purpose of communication.

By the seventh century, little development of writing had taken place among peoples of Arabian Peninsula. Also, certain Paleographic remains (writings on such perishable materials as papyrus) give evidence that the Arabs of the time possessed knowledge of the art of writing (Al-Faruqi, 1986). Unlike some of the related languages (Egyptian, attested by Hieroglyphs from 3,000 BC and Akkadian in 2,400 BC), the earliest Arabic inscriptions are dated as 512 and 568 and there is no abundance of written records until well into Islamic period. The people of Arabia had first contacted writing as it was used in the Mediterranean Empires, primarily Aramaic. At an early period, the speakers of South Arabic in the Sabaean Kingdom of Yemen adopted the early Canaanite alphabet for their own use, with 29 letters without ligatures. Inscriptions in this orthography have been found in various parts of Arabia, and it now serves, after a number of radical changes, as the writing system of Ethiopia.

Arabic Alphabet: *abjad* and Letter Numerals

The ordinary Arabic letters (alphabet) were written from right to left. The 28 letters represented approximately the sounds. This was arranged in *abjad* form. It is instructive to note here that there was no transliteration, which can express exactly the vocalic differences between the seemingly identical phonemes. There was need for improvement as the letters of Arabic alphabet until the early seventh century had been executed separately, as is still common in Hebrew and certain other Semitic scripts. Gradually, rules were established for linking many of the Arabic letters. Besides, diacritical points were introduced especially for identical letters such as :ب:ت:ث:ج:ح:خ:د:ذ:ر:ز:. This innovation was ordered by Al Hajjaj in the eighth century. (Sirajudeen, 2009:12).

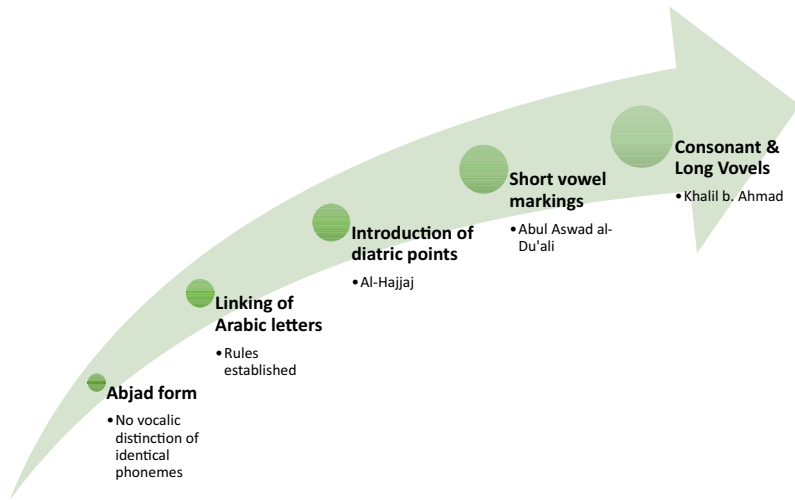


Fig. 1: Chronological Development of Arabic Writing

Probably, it was not a new creation but an elaboration and perfection of earlier practices. Short vowel markings above and below the letters; i.e., *fat-hah*; *dammah* and *Kasrah* respectively were developed to complement the consonants and long vowels. Abu al Aswad al Du'ali (d. 69/688) (Al-Faruqi, 1986) is believed to have invented the system and later supplanted largely by Khalil b. Ahmad (d. 170/786) in the eighth century as we are using it today. Until the turn of this century, the Muslims of West Africa represented, in general, the educated elite, who had possessed for centuries a technological instrument, which these non – Muslim societies were often anxious to share – the technology of writing (Hunwick, 1974: 23).

As noted earlier, Arabic had adopted 28 letters (Phonemes) in the alphabetic system. In the course of its evolution, many letters became extremely similar and a system of diacritical signs (above and below them) has to be devised to distinguish one from another (Hamidullah, 1957: 185). For instance, shapes of letters such as *b* = ب, *t* = ت, *th* = ث, are identical in Arabic apart from their diacritical points. These identical letters were moved up together into the topmost slot for that shape. So, the order of the Arabic alphabet became *a, b, t, th*. It is however, instructive to note that in several ways they still retain the memory of the old Semitic order, i.e., the

name *abjad*, which is also specifically used to refer to the Arabic scripts when talking about languages such as Malay and Hausa that were formerly written in it.

The *abjad* term takes its name from the meaningless 'word' of the mnemonic sequence for the letters of the Arabic alphabet. It is strikingly apposite to note it here that nowadays, Arabic alphabet does not follow the sequence *abjad*, but rather the order *a, b, t, th, j, h, kh, d, ...* unlike the basic shape, which letters of *abjad* without their diacritical points form. This was the old order, which was used before the letters were rearranged and grouped according to their graphic shapes. The *abjad* order is derived from the same source of the Greek, Hebrew, and other alphabet and differs from the current order used in Arabic dictionaries (*Wikipedia*).

Among the many systems of writing devised by man, undoubtedly the most useful and practical is the alphabet in which an attempt is made to record the sound of a word by the use of symbols representing the distinctive sounds or phonemes of a language, (Sirajudeen,2009:194). As one of the many languages of the world converted into writing system, Arabic is made up of sounds represented by symbols called alphabet; thus, adopts alphabetic system of writing. Inscriptions in this orthography have been found in various parts of Arabia and North Africa as well as some parts of Asia and Africa (Sirajudeen, 2009:195).

Arabic letters like the early Semitic alphabet only represented consonantal phonemes because, according to some scholars, Semitic languages have a morphology (linguistics) - morphemic structure, which makes the denotation of vowels redundant or altogether not necessary in most cases. This does not however, indicate that Arabic letters do not assume vowels diacritics optionally (*Wikipedia, abjad*). *Abjad* however, is a type of writing system where there is one symbol per consonantal phoneme, sometime also called a *consonantary*. *Abjad* differs from alphabet for the fact that the letters have separate symbols for vowels. This presupposes that the Semitic alphabet have a common ancestor as the letters have a certain order, which the Greek and the Roman

took over, modifying only the pronunciation in some cases (Sirajudeen,2009:196).

The common origin of this Arabic script has been a matter of considerable debate but it is generally agreed that Egyptian hieroglyphs and the inscriptions carved by Egyptian miners in the Sinai area played an important part. The situation is well stated by Driver (1954: 147), who suggested that the south Semitic and north Semitic alphabet were influenced by the Egyptian hieroglyphs, possibly through a common ancestor and were evolved in the earliest stages in close contact with one another as shown in the initial letter of the sounds. The intermediate link may have been the Sinaitic and probably also some early Canaanite form of the north Semitic alphabet that preceded its branching off into the specific Phoenician and Aramaic, Hebrew, and Moabite alphabet.

Also, it is noted that the *abjad* is quite ancient in so far as the device was not of Arabic origin exclusively but came from earlier written alphabet, perhaps, from Phoenician though the sequence may be as old Ugaritic (Lewis, no date). In any case, it predates the writing down of Arabic as can be seen in the comparison of Hebrew, Greek and Arabic. The Arabic alphabet and the corresponding numerical (gematrical) values known as *abjad* are therefore derived from earlier prototype as shown in the following comparison:

Hebrew	aleph= 1	Beth=2	gimet=3	daleth=4
Greek	alpha =1	Beta=2	gamma=3	delta=4
Arabic	alif= 1	Ba=2	Jim =3	dal = 4

From the foregoing, one can conveniently observe from the first four consonants of Hebrew, Greek, and Arabic alphabet and by implication that they all belong to Semitic family of script. The reason for this emergence of this derivative line is found in the fact that Semitic languages have a kind of morphemic structure, which renders signification of vowels impossible in most cases as noted earlier.

Arabic alphabet and/or *abjad* are still used in some ways. One of them is using them as number just as we use (a), (b), (c), to list things, the same can be done in Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic. Another is in using the Arabic *abjad* in the superstition of *gematria* or numerology where every letter is attributed *gematrical* (numerical) value.

What is significant about various writings of Arabic alphabet/*abjad* is that it allows for a kind of functional literacy at the time Africa was declared 'dark' and devoid of writing system. Arabic *abjad* eventually turned out to have tremendously influenced modern literacy and documentation. Besides, the significance of this writing system is also found in the developed system of keeping count using letters as numerals particularly in mathematical computation (Sirajudeen,2009:193).

Afro-Arabic Writing Technology: (*Ajemi* Writing System)

The word *Ajemi* or *Ajami* (depending on the dialectical pronunciation) is a racial interpretation of non-Arabs as it finds expression in the literary *other*. It has different connotations. It is an adaptation of the Arabic scripts by linguistic community to write non-Arabic languages in order to suit a written communicative demand. *Ajemi* is non-Arab native. In a West African context, “Ajemi” is used in particular to refer to the writing of non-Arabic languages in Arabic characters. Put differently, attempt could be made to indicate for both conceptualizations in order to postulate that the word *Ajemi* has social and literal interpretations. And as noted, the non-literal connotation; originated from the Arabic word *al-ajam*, which refers to non-Arabs. Philips *et al* (2000) see *Ajemi*, as a kind of spurious Arabic in any non-Arab language but in Arabic script. Therefore, *Ajemi* is a modified Arabic Script purposely employed to write non- Arabic language as a result of enormous exposure of native people to Arabic and Islamic literature. Historically, the introduction of the Arabic script to Nigeria as far back as 11th century Batiiste 2007 in Diso (2010) marked the beginning of the *Ajami* as a form of written communication, especially in Northern Nigeria. Islamicate Africa from the medieval period have employed Arabic scripts to write down their indigenous

languages. This is done by either adopting or modifying the original (Arabic) sounds of the letters to suit the local situation, as the case may be.

The choice of language, i.e., the symbolic function and graphic representation of the language as well as its practical application for linguistic and non-linguistic communication is, no doubt a complex issue with far reaching consequences. The development of a particular writing system, in this case usually spans a long period of time, and it can involve changes which, at the time when they are made, may be quite small. These writings of African languages in Arabic scripts had absolved the frontiers of the peripatetic scholars of the disparaging remarks that they were illiterates.

There are good number of ways in which *Ajemi* as a means of literacy has been used. This is not only in knowledge production but also as a writing technology. For effective usage, there is need for standardization and modernization of the language. Since language is the human vocal sound or arbitrary graphic representation of the sound used systematically and conventionally by members of a speech community for purpose of communication as noted earlier, efforts could be made in designing a kind of systematic and conventional phonemes especially those that are not really found in the original Arabic scripts to take care of the letters in the vernacular languages. For example, in some Asiatic languages such as Urdu, Persian, Malay, Turkish, and Kurdish languages that have been using Arabic phonemes as their orthography, there are some modifications to the original Arabic alphabet particularly those letters in these languages, which could not be found in the original Arabic phonemes.

While *Ajemi* is not a *language* in its own right, which must fulfill all the requirements of a national or international language, there is no doubt that the study of *ajemi* writing system has over the decades received elaborate coverage in scholarly literature (Abdulsalam; Muhammad Jimba, 1997; Ogunbiyi, 2003; al Iluri, 1971; Abdur-Razaq Abdullahi, 1985; Abubakar Yusuf, 1989; 1991; 1999 etc). While we may not like to dissipate much energy on reiterating these studies, it should be pointed out that in

modification, which has characterized most of these works, simplification in one area may lead to splitting up the language into divergent forms.

Standardization however, refers to the selection of one variety, which is considered to be 'the best' and is to serve as the room for the speech community. Ferguson (206) refers to standardization as a process of developing a particular language to become more and more widely accepted throughout a given society; thus, emphasizing the fact that, usually, a standard variety emerges gradually. As said earlier, the process of standardizing *Ajemi* has to take some time to come of age. The absence of a standard, however, often appears to be an obstacle for the survival of a language at any rate. This is certainly the case in the Romansch-speaking areas of Switzerland as it happened to Arabic for Yoruba in the early part of nineteenth century.

Language of ض: An Alchemy of Scholastic Eclecticism

Mr. Vice Chancellor, sir, this part forms the second aspect of my presentation. Kindly permit me to first identify some of the essentials of Arabic Studies apart from the other much-known religious -centricity. I will talk on the scholastic eclecticism of Arabic Studies as well as my humble contributions thereto. Hitherto, there has been renewed interest in goals and objectives that focus more on linguistic and cultural research into the national and international heritage. Language is central to the development of any people as it improves their lots. It is at the center of human life. In the interactional capacity, language helps to establish and sustain socio – economic ties among nations. Foreign language learning is now construed as a facilitator of globalization and a strong vehicle of fostering world peace and intercultural understanding in a world of extreme diversities. Language plays an important role in economic development. Language remains an intricate multifunctional phenomenon that, in the main, facilitates human communication. The utilities of foreign language learning transcend the benefit of obtaining an academic qualification for employment.

The emergence of new paradigms for foreign language learning and teaching is now more rapid in the context of contemporary events. The post-September 11 strategies for fighting terrorism, the renewed interest in understanding Arab culture and managing information emanating from the Arab world have accentuated the demand to study Arabic by various peoples of the globe. These developments and the age-long motivations for studying Arabic in Muslim and non-Muslim locales have heightened the need for a more focused attention on mechanisms for achieving greater effectiveness in the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language. The facts which make Arabic a priority language to be studied are compelling. The dynamism of Arabic could be gleaned from the way it is being used as the language of learning culture and intellectual progress. Its responsiveness to time and clime is also manifested in the fact that from 9th to 12th century, there were more philosophical, medical, religious, astronomical and geographical works written in Arabic than any other human tongues (Hitti, 1950).

Afro-Arabic Writings, Indigenous Science and Knowledge Production

Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, at this juncture, I will like to say that, there has been a call for African researchers to seek inspiration from indigenous science, knowledge and innovation systems in order to make headway in resolving the continent's myriads of developmental problems. It has been argued in some quarters that African countries have the potentials to discover herbs, seeds, trees, and even clay with healing properties. In other areas of agriculture, economy, politics, as well as social life, opportunities abound for Africa to develop and consolidate its growth on its indigenous knowledge systems.

Today, in the quest for rediscovery of tradition, the search for the manuscripts, which contain these writings, has been of immense significance to the knowledge of intellectual, social and anthropological life of the African subcontinent. Most of these studies made currently on the Arabic literary traditions of Africa particularly on the ancient manuscripts have left world of early Islamic Science and Metaphysics in which Muslims lived and

thought. This has equally brought into lime-light information concerning the early Afro-Arabic civilization, some of which may not be found in the usual books. It has also presented an outline of what was *known* and generally accepted, but indicating the points at which scholarly debate could continue.

Further research has also been conducted on the efficacy of the knowledge and its relevance to the contemporary intellectual development particularly as a contribution of Arab-Islamic writings of the West African Arabic scholars to global and contemporary multicultural dimensions. It has thus opened a new vista in this aspect of the Islamicate African as it equally opened up a relatively unexplored – not necessarily unfamiliar – aspect of the pre-colonial traditions of the West African Arabic literary traditions. There is no doubt that the *West African Arabic Manuscripts in the processes of knowledge production and transmission with particular attention to the knowledge and epistemologies are buried therein as a new medium for an authentic African voice in socio-cultural expression and scholarship.*

Since the beginning of the first half of the last century, there have been concerted efforts in the study and research on the Arabic manuscripts of Muslim West African authorship. Studies and researches are however, mostly conducted on the much collected and systematically documented Arabic manuscripts of the scholars. Hunwick, (1964: 43) has rightly observed that 'we have not yet full access to many of these books and papers, though a number have generously permitted us to examine their collections and photograph any works of interest.'

Most of the Arabic manuscripts, which deal with indigenous science and its usage, are so much held in awe that could not be easily accessed especially by *outsiders*. It is equally noted that they are more significant than any other works of the type due to its therapeutic tendencies. Hence, while other Arabic manuscripts have been accessed and documented fragmentarily as we could have them, this category is very rare to come by. There is no doubt that there is need to single out these manuscripts for further

research considering the invaluable significant of these manuscripts to the intellectual development of the region.

Arabic writings of the Afro-Arabic scholars are found to be veritable materials serving part of primary sources of African heritage embedded in manuscripts scattered all over African continent, specifically the western part of it and beyond. There are number of Arabic writings to the credit of the scholars, which do not belong to the traditional religious sciences of Islam but have been incorporated therein. Among the literary works of the West African Arabic scholars embedded in manuscripts in the area of mathematical sciences are the ones that relate to horology (*‘Ilm al Mawaaqiit*), astronomy (*al Falak*), astrology (*al Tanjim*), chronogram (*‘Ilm al Hisab*). Others are (*‘Ilm al arsodi li jawwiyyat*) Meteorology and (*‘Ilm al Jabr*) algebra, which are found to be purely mathematical. All these are evident in their commentaries on issues relating to meteorology including their scientific explanations of a number of phenomena of both physical and spiritual significance. These and many more contribute to the intellectual works of the early Nigerian Arab-Islamic scholars.

i. Scientific Works in Nigerian Arabic Writings

In what Hunwick reluctantly categorize as secular in the Arabic writings of the Nigerian authorship, there are some of the literary works of the *‘Ulama’* which do not belong to the traditional religious sciences of Islam but have been incorporated therein as earlier on explained. Such disciplines concern mostly physical, mathematical sciences, logic, and history. Others include medicine and its related branches.

Being classical of Arabic scholarship, the Arabic writings in this part of the world have enjoyed renown for some of these subjects mentioned above and has equally set it apart from other Saharan communities. It is strikingly apposite to draw attention of the readers to some important literary works of the Nigerian *‘Ulama’*, which particularly demonstrate their erudition in the aspects of mathematics, medicine, and animal science etc.

There are a number of Arabic writings to the credit of these scholars in manuscripts on these subjects. However, there are other items though not yet discovered but mention has been made of them or inference, to them in the extant manuscripts. Centre of Arabic Documentation in the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan houses many of these works particularly written by the 19th and 20th Century scholars.

Among the contributions of Nigerian Arabic scholars in the area of mathematical sciences are those that relate to horology (*‘ilm al mawaqit*), astronomy (*al Falak*), astrology (*al Tanjim*), chronogram (*‘ilm al hisab*) and meteorology. Their writings on *‘ilm al hisab*, for example, reveal their erudition in the mathematical sciences as the whole range of methodology in their computation using *‘ilm al hisab* and *al awfaq* is found to be purely mathematical. Also, their extensive use of a particular branch of *hisab* called *‘ilm al jabr* (algebra) is evident in their commentaries of issues relating to meteorology including their scientific explanations of a number of phenomena of both physical and spiritual significance. (Sirajudeen, 2009:214).

For instance, Muhammad Bello, (d. 1837) has to his credit *Kitab al Kafi fi ‘ilm al jabr wal Khawafi* (Sufficient book in the science of Divination and Gnostic knowledge). The book discusses 'magic square' a calculation which led to the formation of these tables was found to be in accordance with the game theory and linear programming. Equally important to mention here is the 19th C. Astronomer – Mathematician, Muhammad b. Muhammad al Katsinawi (d. 1742) whose “*Bahjat al afaq wa idah al labs wal ighlaq fi ‘ilm al Huruf wal awfaaq*” is a compendium text on Arabic chronogram. Muhammad b. Abubakar Mustapha (d.1864) is one of the most celebrated intellectuals of his time who wrote extensively on the area of *‘ilm al jabr* (algebra) and *‘ilm al hisab*. (Arithmetic). His famous books on *‘ilm al jabr* include '*Muddat al dawlah al ‘Uthmaniyyah wamaafiha minal Muluk*'.

It is interesting to make one or two comments about the scholars' concern to the science of astrology and astronomy. While orthodox Islamic law prohibits the learning and disseminating the

knowledge of philosophy and occult sciences such as astrology yet, scholars like Muhammad Bello b. °Uthman b. Foduye and Mallam Abdulkadir Mustapha used °ilm al jabr extensively. It is however, instructive to note that they have tried to defend their actions. Mallam Abdulkadir, for instance, in his oath sworn is quoted thus:

...not to invite any person to what I had studied of sciences of philosophy and ancient sciences. However, I have studied these sciences in correct manner,
Rejecting the misleading aspects involved in it. Yet, I will not teach it to any person so that people would not be misled by it.

Meanwhile, texts such as *Sha'n Najm tala°a fi Safar* (On a Comet which appeared in the Month of Safar, 1241 A.H.) was written by Muhammad Bello on a subject (astrology) he himself had earlier condemned and prohibited according to Islamic law. This is contained in his text '*Tanbih ahl al fuhum°ala wujub ijtinab ahl al Sha°bidhah wanujum*' (Warning Men of understanding against the Occultists and astrologers).

There has been interest of the scholars in, and knowledge about, medicine. Perhaps, the earliest work on this category, according to Hunwick, is a small work on hemorrhoids written by Shaykh Tahir b. Ibrahim al Fallati of Bornu (fl. 1745) in the text titled *Khabar al Basur*. Others on this topic were written by Sultan Muhammad Bello who also wrote on the treatment of intestinal worms in the manuscript titled *al qawl al Manthur fi Bayan Adwiyaf illat al Basur* and also the use of sienna as a purgative. Among other works to his credit is a treatise on diseases of eye, i.e., *Masugh al Lujayn*.

ii. Medical Science in Arabo- Hausa Dialect (Epidemiology)

Literary works of Nigerian Arabic authorship covers a vast range of subjects as mentioned earlier. It is pertinent to highlight an aspect of the contribution of one of these scholars to the areas of medical science (knowledge). The scholar whose work is to be highlighted here is one Alhaji °Umar al Salaghawi. One of his

poems written on the symptoms and treatment of influenza, for instance, catches our attention here as a living example of literary works of Nigerian Arabo-Islamic scholars, which reveals their medical knowledge in the widest sense.

Alhaj ʿUmar Salaghawi was a celebrated Nigerian Arabic /Islamic scholar of the late 19th century. An itinerant scholar, he was in Salagha, Northern Ghana from Kano in Northern Nigeria where he distinguished himself as a prolific writer who had to his credit numbers of literary works. Among his numerous works on Arabic and Islamic sciences, is his poem written on influenza, an epidemic disease. The purpose for which this poem was composed and written, according to Abdul, was probably because of the epidemic of the disease, which broke out sometimes in 1918.

Describing the symptoms of the epidemic influenza, Alhaj ʿUmar Salaghawi says:

قفوا واسمعوا القول فى تنكيوا # رأينا العجائب فى تنكيوا
بدايته وجع رأس شديد # فبعد قليل يلى تنكيوا
وقد قيل أوله مرّ ريق # فعما قريب أتى تنكيوا
وقيل صداع وميد ونبض # وقرقرة بعدها تنكيوا
تراه كصفراء ليس بصفراء # وليس بلا عم بل تنكيوا

1. Stop *ye* and listen to the talk about influenza we have seen wonders in influenza
2. It begins with severe headache and after a while comes influenza
3. Some say that it begins with bitterness of saliva, soon thereafter comes influenza
4. Others say it begins with headache, dizziness and palpitation, and rumbling in the stomach after which comes influenza.
5. You'll think its yellow fever but it's not yellow fever, Nor the sputum but it is influenza.

In what appears to be the title of the poetry, the poet employed the use of a Hausa word, though in Arabic character *Tunkwyau*, which denotes an epidemic influenza in every verse of the poem. What is really fascinating in this literary piece is the use of this particular word (in vernacular) as its rhyme. One may not be too surprised that the poet employed this native tongue (word) using Arabic scripts and even incorporated same successfully into Arabic verse. It has been the characteristic feature of some Afro-Arabic scholars in West Africa. However, a close examination of the usage in the work shows that the poet deliberately employed the word as a matter of style and not as a result of dearth or paucity of appropriate Arabic lexical item.

Displaying his erudition in the medical knowledge of the symptoms of this epidemic-influenza, Alhaj °Umar Salaghawi explained in number of verses of the poem how influenza begins with severe headache, the flowing of bitter saliva in the mouth of the patient, manifestation of other symptoms such as dizziness, palpitation, rumbling in the stomach, in fact the list is endless. The poet further explained how this killer disease defied cure. Hear him asked rhetorically in line 21 of the poem:

سألتكموا يا أناسا فهل # علمتم دواءً على تنكيوا

I ask you O people do you know the cure for influenza?

In a related development, a therapy in one form or another exists in every nomadic society, yet among the Muslim scholars of this region, certain elements of medical knowledge were equally found. Appointed prayer where a mathematical or conventional talisman is considered most effective were prescribed. In some cases, secret scripts, numbers, or signs and the divine text are recited and written and drunk. The form of recitation by invocation is noticeable in the poetry where the poet mentioned nay! invoke the blessing of God via the divinity of the Qur'an against the attack of influenza. The use of letters, secret of numbers and divine texts is another form of this science as we shall see later.

iii. Chronograms and the Secret of Numbers

Arabic, like any other written languages, adopted the alphabetic

system where attempt was made to record the sound of a word by the use of symbols representing a distinctive sounds or phonemes. More than symbols Arabic letters, like any other linguistic alphabet, provide knowledge of some other hidden meaning as found in most literary traditions. Letters of Arabic were assigned to represent numbers as found in the term *abjad*. It is however, instructive to note that this system of assigning numerical values to letters of Arabic is of intrinsic value as it opens vistas to some other knowledge systems such as astrology, astronomy, numerology, divination, charm-writing, chronograms and some others in which case Arabic letters signify specific constellations.

Chronogram is a literary device based on the use of letters for their numerical values. This literary device is found in many literary cultures in Asia and Africa. The ^ˆ*Ulama* of Nigeria in their literary works have tremendously contributed to this knowledge system, which is more or less indigenous. Typical example is the work of an 18th century Kastina Astronomer- Mathematician, Muhammad b. Muhammad in his treatise *Bahjat al afaq*... In this work, the author tried to expound the theory of chronogram in a certain mathematical *hisab* method of calculating the value of letter numerals for a particular purpose mostly commemorating dates and events. This same knowledge of *hisab* has been in use many centuries for the teaching of *Ilm al Mirath* – the Science of Inheritance in Islamic Law. The author of *Bahjat* attempted to explain item of research concerning Arabic letters, regulations and that which is relevant to the different stages- *manazil* of numbers and the signs of the Zodiac. He further expounded the way of deducing the spiritual values of letters according to the different schools with their variations.

What is significant about this particular knowledge system and the contribution of the author in the treatise is that, while the various forms of the Arabic letters and their numerals, are common knowledge among the traditional learned men according to Gwarzo, it may be something of a mystery to young modern scholars whose curriculum of studies is devoid of this science. Furthermore, deciphering these letter numerals into the mnemonic words opens vistas for other earlier knowledge systems such as

astrology, astronomy, *al-jabr*, and other mathematical calculations as noted.

iv Aspects of Astrology & Astronomy

Mention has been made of the contribution of the Nigerian Muslim scholars to the areas of natural science such as mathematics and other scientific knowledge, which describes the scholastic eclecticism of the Nigerian Arabic writings. One other aspect of the scientific knowledge in the writings of the Nigerian *‘Ulama* is that of astrology and astronomy. Mention has also been made of some of the related works found in manuscripts particularly in the Center of Arabic Documentation, Institute of African Studies University of Ibadan. Here one of Sultan Muhammad Bello's works is intended to be highlighted *viz: Sha'n Najm Tala^c fi Safar* 1241 A.H. (*tr.* Concerning A Comet which appeared in the Month of Safar) (Ogunbiyi, n.d).

Perusing the preface of the treatise, one quickly understands that the writing was a child of circumstance. The author referred to the situation when a large number of people asked him concerning a particular comet or shooting star which appeared in the lunar month of Safar 1241 A.H. The writing of the treatise thus, was a kind of response to the enquiry from the people. One thing which is worthy of note in this exposition is that the author did not deliberately write on the subject of astrology knowing fully well that the act is not in conformity with Islamic law.

Displaying his erudition in this particular knowledge, Muhammad Bello, it was observed in this work, quoted extensively from various sources most of which were the ancient works on the subject of astronomy and astrology. For instance, he quoted from Aristotle's view on the subject. He equally cited some examples from the traditions of the prophet of Islam concerning the enquiry of the shooting star. It should be noted that the author tried to review the information he got from the various sources he cited and sifted them thereby hesitating not to come out with his own stand point. It was observed that he did not fully accept some of the explanations given by the sources he quoted.

Influence of Arabic on the African Indigenous Languages

The use of Arabic script for African languages created permanence and form for the oral literature, the imperfection of the orthographical adaptation notwithstanding. The tremendous influence of Arabic language on native languages such as Hausa, Fulfulde, Swahili, Kanuri, and Yoruba languages made them have considerably plethora of linguistic borrowing words from Arabic, which were mostly employed in commercial transactions. For example, more than 70% of Swahili language is more of Arabic origin; Hausa has more than 60% vocabularies of Arabic language origin. Scholars refer these borrowings to the geographical locations of the tribes who speak those two languages and their neighborliness like Sudan, Western Sahara and the spread of Islam. It is instructive to note that some of them have chosen substantial number of Arabic scripts for their orthography particularly before the coming of the colonialists in the wake of nineteenth century.

Perhaps, it was part of the influence of Arabic language that the native languages were written in Arabic scripts. The writing of the languages in Arabic scripts started in African languages such as Hausa, Tekrur and Mandinkain West Africa and Swahili and Hausa in East Africa. Besides, the spread of Arabic scripts in Africa has reached such a degree that languages such as Afrikaans and Boer in South Africa were written in Arabic scripts in the beginning of this century by some Asian Muslim from India and Pakistan sub-continent.

Arabic language in Africa became well established as a language of learning and correspondence. It was the language of the educated elites and government for nearly five centuries in Africa. Scribes who were well versed in Arabic language were in high demand by the rulers notably in the old empires of Ghana, Mali, Songhai, and Kanem – Borno. For instance, one of the clear references of such correspondence letter dates back to 11th century.

As noted earlier, Arabic scripts are being used especially among native Africa is in the record of medicinal recipes and incantations.

One finds some Yoruba, Hausa, and Fulani Muslims written native medicinal prescriptions and incantations in vernacular encoded in *ajemi* written by, and for, barely literate Muslim practitioners of local divination. An example is jotting down notes in things they wish to remember and label bottles and other containers of medicinal herbs usually in vernacular with Arabic characters.

Thus, in some homes in Hausaland, inscriptions such as ام-غ-ن - *am-g-n* which transcribed as *maagani* (medicine) is not uncommon. Also in some Yoruba homes, Arabic inscriptions which transcribed as اَبُو اَعْنُو اِبا Agunmuiba (anti malaria preparation), اَبُو اَجْبُو اِيْلِي اَبُو agboile tutu (Anti convulsion concoction) respectively are found. It is commonly found among the people's pieces of short personal correspondence between individual written in vernacular with Arabic scripts (Yahya,1986:32). More examples could be gleaned from Fulfude and Nupe languages written in Arabic Scripts.

It is interesting to note that the use of Arabic scripts for non-Arab language and particularly African indigenous languages, Arabic language was being used by non-Muslims. A close example is found in one Omar Said's translation[copying] of “Lord Prayer”, presumably after his forced conversion (Cf. Parramore 2000: 149 with Qur'anic formulae)

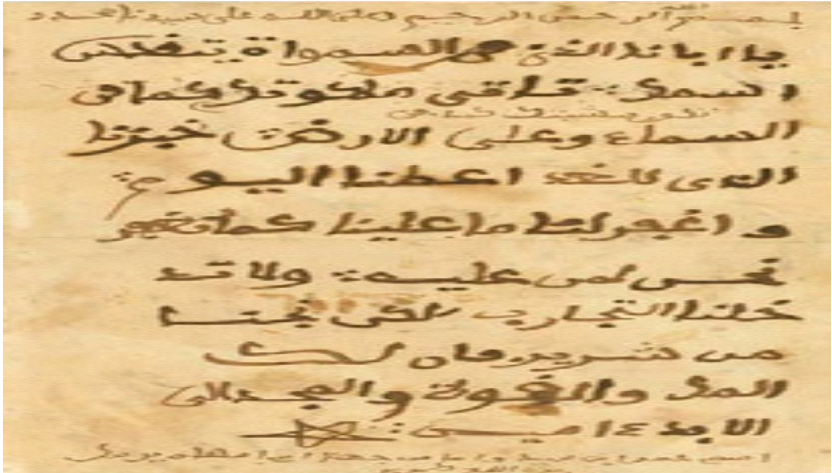
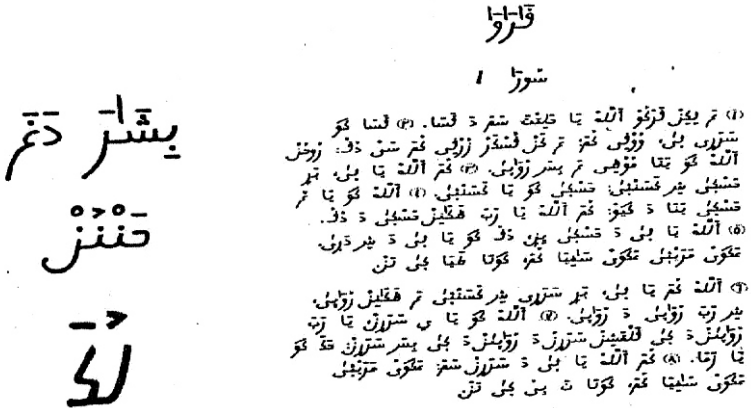


Fig. 2: Omar Said's translation[copying] of “Lord Prayer” (Source: Sanni, 2016)

Another typical example is found in the Bible in Hausa *ajemi* in the following figure:



Daga Hannun Luke (The Gospel of St. Luke)

Farawa – The Book of Genesis

Fig. 3: The Holy Bible in Hausa Ajemi Source: Sanni, (2016)



Fig. 4: Poster in Hausa Ajemi for open air Christian crusade in 1991 (Source: Sanni, 2016),

This is also 19thC Hausa ajami Bible:



Fig. 5: 19thC Hausa ajami Bible. (Source: Sanni, 2014)

Furthermore, there was professional begging display in *ajami*.



Fig. 6: Professional Begging in *ajami*. (Source: Sanni, 2014)

The Eurocentric History of Africa: 'Dark African' Stereotype

Vice Chancellor, Sir, this part is the crux of my lecture. The paradigms of *Afrabic* Historiography. It is one of the curious ironies of history, John Hunwick observed, that in modern times, the Muslim peoples of West Africa have often been labeled by their Christian countrymen as '*backward*', '*uneducated*', and even '*illiterate*'. (Hunwick,1974:24). Perhaps one of the loudest expressions of Eurocentrism is the declaration that African Muslim peoples are backward with particular reference to the term *literacy*. It was on this zero perception and disparaging remark about the Muslim societies in particular, as reflected in the quotation cited above, that concerted efforts have been made by African scholars to examine critically the story of human culture and civilization especially in the African past. It was observed that African Muslim peoples have numerous sciences and knowledge systems. The technology of writing system, for instance, as could be found in Arabic, the scriptural language of Islam, is a typical example of note.

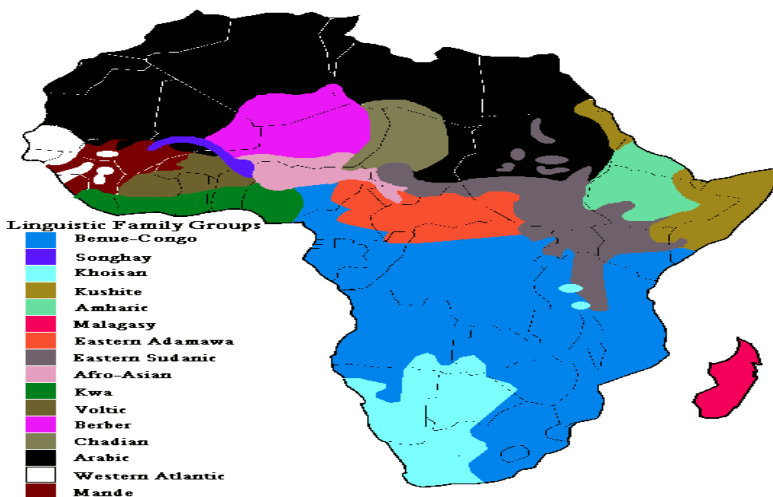


Fig 7: Linguistic family groups. (Source: Sanni, 2016)

Pre-Modern Africa and the Technology of Writing

In spite of the millennia old indigenous writing scripts embedded in Egyptian Medu-netjer (Al-Bishak,2022: xvi), Eurasia has declared Africa as *Dark Continent* for lack of scribal literary tradition. This is just an attempt to deliberately justify colonizing Africa by disparaging the continent. In this case, the earlier writing technology was considered an extinction. But of course, the hieroglyphic writings could not survive documenting socio-cultural history and other similar languages of Nubia. European Dark African stereotype and De-Africanization of History therefore – are product of Eurasia-centric historiography p.21. At the heart of this '*Darkness*' stereotype are – Joseph Conrad and Achebe rejoinder (Al-Bishak,2022:21).

Al Bishak and Amidu Sanni have done a comprehensive work in justifying the African language scripts as capable of documenting African past (Sanni, 2014 & 2016; Al Bishak, 2022). As for Al Bishak, Arabic is, in fact, considered as a colonialist language, which came to supplant the original Hieroglyphic and Phoenician of the ancient Egypt. There has been claim that Arabs and Arabic are not indigenous to Africa (p.16) but racial mix in North Africa. While Arabs are considered colonialists in Africa, the Arabic scribal literary tradition could be attributed to the coming of Islam to the region.

In the wake of the challenge, Arabic was considered as another foreign but colonialist language, which eventually succeeded this abolition of languages scripted. Adoption of Arabic however, by many African languages and its influence on some African languages especially in writing scribal information while other languages are in extinction justifies its being only resorted to in liberating the continent. With multiple invasions of Egypt, Arabic language and culture remained steadfast and survived all odds. Loss of African scribal literary tradition over millennia often by unfavorable climatic conditions or willful damage by colonialists, natural disaster etc. How Arabic succeeded in this was not without its attendant challenges later. Islam brought many Arabs to North Africa making 7 of 22 Arab League to be African, 75% African and 25% Arab origins form the North African Arab derive from racial

mix. This later formed the Afro-Arabic or better still Afrabia and Afrabic; Africanism of Arabic – Africanization of Arabic alphabets and influence on African languages for documentation (Al-Bishak,2022:15).

In East Africa,the Arab invaders, mixed with the indigenous Gurkuyu evolved a hybrid language of Kiswahili- an *Ajemi*?. This made Arabic language wider occupation of African than any other languages and eventually made it more indigenous via the Islamic philosophy of education. The success of Arabic in transcribing the African literary texts made it unique and capable of liberating the disparaging expression by the Eurasia (Al-Bishak,2022:8). Arabic (Asian) writings was said to have developed from the Egyptian hieroglyphs succeeding the local languages.

African scribal tradition began in indigenous African languages of Khemet or Nubia before colonialist held sway when Europe was in darkness in the 15th century Medieval period. It is instructive to mention here that African empires and kingdoms such as Ghana, Songhai, etc. were prosperous during the time Europe was wallowing in darkness; by the 15th century, Timbuktu had had a university.

Prior to European direct contact with black Africa, it was believed that there was little or no art of writing technology. This has made the colonial stereotype of African denied the fact that it was possible to talk of African history let alone its reconstruction of black Africa. This ideology, according to them, was based on the dearth of written documents, which could be referred to in African historical reconstruction. The theory of race and its implication in the sterility of development and the absence of any form of African history dominated the Europeans' view about Africa right down to the colonial era and even beyond in some cases. For instance, in the early part of the 20th century, Professor Seligman was quoted as having postulated the obnoxious Hamitic hypothesis, which states that '...the civilizations of Africa are the civilizations of the Hamites'. Seligman's Hamites are made up of the white race, which by broad definition came to include the Arabs.

There were other European scholars who shared the same ideology with Seligman that African minds are not productive, but dark and there was no development whatsoever in Africa until the coming of the Europeans into the region. Hence, the conclusion was that there was nothing to record of history in the area because darkness is not a subject of history. Hegel, for instance, was said to have concluded that 'Africa is not a historical continent. Its people are incapable of either development or education, and as they are seen today so they had always been'. This opinion of Hegel represents the pseudo-scientific theories of the Europeans superiority over Africans.

Africans' 'historilessness' stereotype has been an age-long discourse among the early African historiographers in their attempts to reduce African past to writings via a defined historical method. It was this singular understanding that spurred some notable indigenous historical icons particularly in Modern African Historiography to take up the challenge that history could not only be based on written records but the African past could also be reconstructed from oral traditions and archaeological findings. Several African historians have tried to reject in totality the view that Africa had no history before the colonial era and affirm that historical developments and civilizations in pre-colonial Africa were the products of the African genius. Hence, works such as *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta* of Professor Kenneth O. Dike and *The Egba and Her Neighbours* of Professor S. O. Biobaku whose timeless achievement lie more in their ideological and methodological innovativeness than in the accuracy of their detailed factual narrative or interpretation.

The Concept of Historiography

Historiography is etymologically the compilation, writing, and of course making available of the record of past happenings for the purpose of better understanding of the present. Some other writers will like to see historiography as an art (some would say the science) of writing of history particularly because of the techniques required in the practice of writing history. The words *writing* and *record* are prominent in the description given above. It presupposes that in discussing historiography, there must be a

particular record/ writing. Historiography has a lot to do with and indeed inextricable from the writing of history, the practice of methodology and study of the practice of the methodology of history and more importantly the interpretation of history and the study of that interpretation with a view to obtaining the objectivity in historical writings.

Historiography deals with those aspects of making, transmitting and conserving history. Arabic historiography however, is essentially the historiography of Islamic civilization and it is coeval with Islam. Arab, (if we take this term to mean all those who speak Arabic and not merely those living in the Arabian Peninsula) as one of the pioneers of progress had had great interest in historical narratives whose activities have not been limited to their own history but rather shed valuable light on the life of people they came in contact with.

More than collection and edition of historical sources and pieces of evidence put together in a literary form, historiography embraces the craft of writing history. As an art of historical writing, it is the means for communicating in writing what the historians think they know about the past. For instance, while it is practically impossible to put down graphically all what happened in the past as history so also it is not all that happened are required to be written as past events. It however, presupposes that historians have to apply a kind of technique or art in selecting what should be put down as history. This art however, varies from one historian to the other.

Osokoya sees historiography as 'the writing of history'. In a more lucid form, it is 'the art of writing history'. As an historian, for instance, there must be a kind of skill employed consciously or otherwise in selecting and deciding from the multifarious 'facts and 'evidence' available which actually deserves to be written down as history. Here, certain issues come to play: the objectivity, prejudice, lucid presentation, correctness of the fact and evidence, analysis, collection and collation, narration to mention a few (Osokoya, 1996:6). Carr's conception of historiography may mean a kind of scientific approach to history writing, which involves the

collection of evidence, and critically analyzing and or interpreting the evidence without prejudice. (Carr, 1961:21). Historiography, here, is no more than the development of art or science of history writing. It also refers to the corpus of historical accounts as noted earlier.

It is instructive to note here that in this art of historical writing, there was a development, which brought some issues into play. For instance, the idea of accuracy in historical writing, criticism and methodology formed basic features of the Graeco – Roman historiography. While Herodotus, for example, was the first historian to write a comprehensive historical account as well as the first constructive artist in the field of history writing, Thucydides has been acclaimed the first historian to state the 'pragmatic' value of the writing and study of history as his historical account was characterized with more scientific than Herodotus'(Barnes 15). Other dimensions in the study of historiography reveal that the subject is all about exposition of more truth, a more complete account of the past, a greater selection of the subjects undertaken by an historian/historiographer to treat as well as of the individual facts which he requires for its treatment, and a more pleasing external form, an elegant presentation!

Historiography, sometimes, concerns itself with historian reconstructing the events of the distant past from a study of the documents available in the realm of criticism and methodology. This is done with a view to setting forth a historical work which should depend more upon the accuracy of its statement than upon the entertainment furnished by narrative. Perhaps, this lends credence to the alleged pragmatic value of the writing and study of history according to the ancient Greek historian- Thucydides who said “the accurate knowledge of what has happened will be useful, because, according to human probability, similar things will happen again.

Thus, the idea was not only sifting sources but also basing narrative upon accurate documentation, organization and correct interpretation of materials. This requires a thorough understanding of the problems of historical causation, recognizing and treating

remote as well as immediate causes and possession of astuteness in psychological analysis. This defines the ideas of continuity of human life of an intimate logic of things, and of interdependence among nation.

Arabic Historiography

It is rather pertinent to note here that in spite of the vast Arabic literature available, which consists almost exclusively of highly developed and artistically modeled poetry, Arabs did not possess any written history of pre-Islamic times. Nevertheless, pre-Islamic Arab took great pride in their genealogies, which they generally kept in verbal records which on some occasions were even publicly recited. It is unlikely that in pre-Islamic periods, the Arab bothered to remember the main events connected with the life of every ancestor. It is even more probable that any of these genealogies were committed to writing in these times. In a way, this was the early Arab's way of remembering their tribal origins but it had little to do with real history (Sirajudeen, 2006:132).

The pre-Islamic description of the *ayyam-al'Arab* or battle days of the Arab in Arabic poems and genealogical tables at best indicates a line of interest and a narration but provides no idea of history. The so-called *ayyam-al'Arab* described, in detail, campaigns between two or more tribes and the heroic deeds of their leaders, which could be found mostly in the pre-Islamic literary production. The study of geography of the pre-Islamic Arabs and the description of their battle days had their share in imparting knowledge about the technique of narration, though not a very definite idea about history. In the opinion of Lewis, despite the fact that this kind of historiography was to a very high degree mythological, their proximity to life, their interest in the feeling of the masses and their sense of real and possible detail made them suitable as the nucleus of real historiography.

It is true that Arab did produce some poetry; they do not seem to have a word for history. The origin of the word *Ta'rikh*, for instance, which is now generally used for history, is even more difficult to trace. Its root form perhaps came to be used in the Yaman in the pre-Islamic days, but in all probability, it referred to

time, not to history. While the significance of this word has not yet been lost; indeed, the word *tar'ikh* is used more often in the meaning of a date than of history. It is therefore obvious that without a proper word for it, the Arabs could have little conception of history before the advent of Islam. What they had was a few stories of what they considered to be important or interesting events and vague, probably untrue legends of the peoples who had inhabited the old ruins that were scattered in some parts of the peninsula.

A comparison between the output of historical literature by the Muslims before decay set in and the Islamic civilization began to decline, and the histories written during or before that period by other people, will show what great interest was taken by the later Islamic scholars. Their contributions are even more meager traditions on which they raised so glorious an edifice. For instance, while it is true that Greek sciences made a most significant contribution to Islamic culture, the Greek influence in the field of history is difficult to trace. Less classical Greek history that ever reached the Arabs, the Greek and the Latin annalistic literature has been lost and not available to the modern scholar.

The main argument in favor of Byzantine influence is that some historical works written before the known Muslim histories could have been a takeover from the Byzantines. On the other hand, the annalistic form could be a natural development. The argument against the acceptance of the view is that the Byzantines had not mentioned Byzantine authors in spite of the fact that they were fond of mentioning their sources of information.

Origin of Historiography in Islamic Literature

In Islamic Historiography, the case took off from the task of obtaining correct and sound information *Ḥadīth* literature, true historical accuracy requires a consideration of the genesis and cultural setting of a situation as certainly as it does the more formal truth of such facts as are narrated. It is worth mentioning that the major practical value of history resides in the provision of accurate historical facts which might help to guide the administration of public affairs in the present. The same is true of the prophetic

traditions which require that the true divine guidance could only be obtained in sound *aḥādīth* representing the exemplary life of the prophet. Hence, systematic collections of historical sources, formal technique of scholarship as well as looking beyond primitive and superstitious outlook constitute aspect of historiography.

For illustrative purposes, however, and in order to ascertain the efficacy of this method and approach, two Arabic works on Medieval African Historiography, *viz:Infāq al Maysūr* of Muḥammad Bello and *Tārīkh Mai Idrīs Alūmawaghazawātuh* of Ibn Fartuwa were subjected to the mechanism of information validation hereby technically referred to as *Muṣṭalaḥ al Tārīkh*. The outcome revealed significant strengths and weaknesses of the two works. While they both subsist as useful sources of history, various dimensions of inaccurate information were detected in the accounts of the authors. (Sirajudeen, 2023:32).

Evolution of African Historiography: The *Afrabic* Factor

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, with a cursory look at the title of this lecture, what readily puzzles one's mind is the word 'Afrabic.' Afrabic and Afrabia, are two different words carefully coined from the word Africa and Arabic; Africa and Arabia respectively as a concept has been muted based on the idea that 'French had once examined their special relationship with Africa and later came up with the concept of Eurafrica as a basis of special cooperation' as noted by Mazrui (See: Mazrui,1992: 52ff). Drawing from this concept especially for the purpose of this lecture, I have decided to employ same concept of what I describe as *Afrabic* considering the fact that most of the ideas therein fall within the purview of the relationship between Africa and Arabic, which is the area of this study in particular.

The dramatic evolution of Arabic from a tribal dialect to one of the few carriers of world culture, its unique relation to the religion of Islam, and its role in the development of modern Arab nationalism form the basis of this matchless contribution to humanity. Incidentally, many of the most outstanding scholars of Arabic writings like al- Sa'di (b.1596); Mahmud Ka^ct, Ahmad Baba

Timbuctu, Ahmad al-Tazakhti, Makhluḥ al-Bilbali, Dan Marna, Muhammad b. Masanih, al-Masʿudi (c. 950); al-Bakri (1094); al-Idrisi (1154); al-Yaqut (c.1200); AbulFida (1331); al-ʿUmari (1349); Ibn Battuta (1354); Ibn Khaldun (1406) and al-Hassan Al-Wezaz were African Arabs (Sirajudeen, 2007:115). They were the exponents of African writings in Arabic, hence, the momentousness of the caption '*Afrabic*'.

Besides, Africa had had contact with Arabic language prior to the advent of Islam in the continent in the early part of the 7th century. As a consequence, the language had wider circulation among the peoples of Africa and later became the native and official language in some considerable parts of the African sub-continent such as Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Libya, and Tunisia, Mauritania, the Western Sahara and the Sudan. More so, Arabic language could be regarded as a dominant living language in Africa as speakers of Arabic in Africa including non-native speakers constituted one-third of the whole inhabitants of the continent. Perhaps that was the reason why Hunwick described Arabic as *Latin of Africa*.

Generally speaking, sources for history of Africa especially in Arabic were divided into fairly clearly two principal categories: EXTERNAL and INTERNAL (Lewicki 7). The former category consisting of all written sources derived, roughly speaking, from areas situated in the North of Sahara in North Africa as well as in Europe and Asia while the latter are sources, which originated from Africa to the South of the Sahara. Some of these sources derived from the North of Sahara while some others derive from countries lying to the South of the desert. They can thus be classified as the 'external' sources and partly "internal". The latter consists mainly of chronicles, and other historic works of local origin from the 16th to the 19th centuries, being the works of the local authors. (Lewicki,1961:18).

Put differently, while the "External" sources refer to those materials produced by the Arab geographers, travelers, and traders as well as other forms of Arab literature, which were provided by the geographers and historians of the Arabo-Islamic world together with a few first-hand accounts such as those given by

travelers like Ibn Battutah and Leo Africanus. The Internal sources (category) consist of later Arabic writings by the local indigenous literati most of which the European scholars came to develop (Oyeweso, 1988: 9).

It must be added here that some other pieces of information relating to the black Continent were provided not only by the geographers and travelers, but also by the Arab conquerors. Besides, the intellectual centers of the Islamic caliphate began to be reached by information on the areas situated upon the Nile or the Western Sudan, supplied to the Arab conquerors by the Copts or North African Berbers who had long reached those regions.

It is interesting to note here that in discussing the sources of African history, attention has always been drawn to the wealth of Arabic writings as well as local *ta'rikh* by the Arabo-Islamic scholars, whose contributions, though not the only causative factor, but it is certainly one of the most important, pervasive, dynamic, and significant factors that shaped and have continued to shape African history. (Sirajudeen, 2012:61).

However, over the ages, the apostles of Euro-centric idea of 'no document, no history' did not want to consider the Arabic writings of the earliest empires of African Sub – region such as Ghana, Mali, Songhai, and others to be literary epigraphy. It was on this note that Africa was labeled '*Dark Continent*' and its empires 'Pre-literate society'. It is understood however, that a sense could be made in the argument here that while literacy is the ability to read and or write, the epigraphic writings of the scholars though in Arabic language is capable of placing them in literary cycle. Besides, their writings in Arabic scripts have been the exclusive sources of African historical past second only to oral tradition and archaeology. It has tremendously contributed to the development of African historical sources.

Other wealth of sources in African history includes oral tradition, ethnography, archaeology, palaeo-botany and palaeo-zoology, linguistics, etc. as valid for the reconstruction of African history. Incidentally, all these sources are tended to be either ignored or at

least frowned at as not genuine for historical reconstruction. This indicates the scholastic eclecticism of Arabic language and literature in the development of African Historiography.

A thorough knowledge of the origin of historical traditions of Kanem – Borno, for instance, is an essential part of the Nigerian Arabic Literary history. The then ruling dynasty (*Sayfuwa*), which was established very early, was first converted to Islam in the early days of Islam. Kanem was one of the first states that were known to the outside world as identified by the earlier geographers and historians. (Sirajudeen, 2012:184).

While Arabic language and Islamic religion have been admitted as having contributed substantially to world civilization and culture, the inseparable nexus between literature (Ar. *Adab*) and history has been a subject of discussion amongst some contemporary scholars of Arabic Historiography. There have been the tripartite functions of literature (education, history and entertainment). Hence, considerable works on Kanem -Borno like many other Arabic writings are more of historical in orientation.

Here, we examine the historical information embedded in the Arabic writings of the Kanem- Borno Muslim literati, which constituted the nucleus of the literary history of the region. I have argued it elsewhere that while the Kanem- Borno Muslim scholars in their Arabic writings did not intentionally write their works primarily for historical documentation, yet element of historical information could be gleaned there from. This formed the genesis of Arabic Historiography of the region. The fact that history is synonymous with writings, the literary works of the Arabic scholars are considered as historical. It might be difficult to speak of African Historiography without mentioning the contributions of Arabic writings of the African Muslim scholars.

It needs to be stressed here that despite the fact that these literati wrote their works primarily for religious proselytization, there were some of the Arab travelers whose economic ability and curiosity spurred them into writing reports of their experiences in these regions. It happened much later that these reports as well as

the Arabic literature of the scholars constituted the historical information about the region. There is no gainsaying the fact that the Arabic writings cover a wide range of information concerning nations, economic data, social life, international trade as well as merchant routes, religious beliefs and customs, and cosmographies (Lewicki, 1961:8). All these later formed the beginnings of the Arabic Historiography of Africa. The Arabic writings of the African Muslim scholars later indicated a tremendous significance of the Arabic writings to the reconstruction of African history particularly to the south of Sahara with reference to Kanem–Borno.

It is pertinent to note that the bulk of the Arabic writings which are considered the basic sources of history of the discussed territory from the 8th to the 15th centuries belong to the external sources which are not different from the works related entirely to the countries or peoples of Kanem-Borno areas. It is however, helpful to note that Kanem-Borno was known to the Arab geographers and travelers as early as 9th century or even earlier. The ruling dynasty was probably converted to Islam at the end of the 11th century.

With the educational philosophy of Islam, coupled with the influence of Arabic language on the people, local events and histories began to be documented in the Arabic language. Ibn Hawqal (961 AD), for instance, mentioned that he saw a debit note made out against a Sijilmasa merchant resident in Awdaghast for the sum of 42,000 *Dinars*, written in Arabic (Hunwick, 1964:24). It is instructive to mention here that at times, these events and histories were also documented in the native languages though in Arabic scripts. Writings such as *Girgam*, and *Ajami* are examples. Thus, the writings of these Muslim scholars in the earliest centuries of Islamic West African empires such as Mali, Songhay, Ghana, Kanem -Borno, and Hausa provided the intellectual basis for the development of historiography not only Nigerian history but Africa at large.

Active research into Africa's past particularly in the post-independence years in Nigeria was spearheaded by the Ibadan and Zaria Schools of African History. It was the Arabic writings which

served as pathfinders for the scholars whose constant references to the work indicate their recognition, respect and administration for these “pioneers”. This research potential embedded in Arabic language has spurred not only Nigerians but also non-Nigerian explorers, and historians to conduct further research into the Arabic work of Nigerian provenance which gave rise to the later Nigerian historiography.

It is also pertinent to note here that the bulk of the records which, according to a distinguished historian and first Nigerian Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ibadan, Professor K.O. Dike, 'form the raw materials of research work in the field of West African Islamic studies and African history are in Arabic and are still in manuscript form in many libraries and collections in the possession of local authorities, private individuals, Universities and archives in Africa, Europe, and the United States awaiting utilization by scholars competent in Arabic language (Ogunbiyi, 2006;12). Arabic learning, in continuum, enhances functional literacy which is the bedrock of national development. Indeed, *Afrabic* Historiography was however, formulated in the Arabic language in Africa.

It was that part of the influence of Arabic on the native tongues that African Arab, for instance, transmitted the Arabic culture while local languages were written in Arabic scripts. For instance, languages such as Hausa, Fulfude, and Swahili were written originally in *Maghribi* style of Arabic scripts. Other African languages which enjoyed such writing style include *Tekrur*, *Mandinka*, *Afrikaan* and Boer.

***Afrabic* Writings as Sources of African Historiography**

Unlike before when history was synonymous with writing, the more common conception of the subject today is that history is based on evidence. This evidence can only be found in the sources or rather, the sources of history are the evidence. It is believed that if there is evidence, there can be history. Sources (which Professor Barraclough referred to as 'imperfect and fragmentary evidence) in historiography are considered basic ingredients in the historiographical activities. This is because; historiographers

collect and compile historical facts therein for further interpretation and reconstruction of history.

Generally speaking, sources in African Historiography are narrowed down to oral traditions, written records, and archaeology. These sources are generally categorized as primary, secondary, and at times tertiary sources in history. These historical sources are found today in archives where they are collected, treated, and preserved for further works on historical reconstruction. Some other historical materials could also be found in Museums and Monuments where they are housed and protected for further preparation for reconstruction and possibly publication of the findings for history.

Most of the sources found either in Archives and Museums are primary ones, which are specifically original and are therefore more meaningful in the process of using it for historical activity. Among the primary sources are materials such as manuscript materials, legal cases and reports, treatises and diplomatic dispatches, chronicles, memoirs, diaries, radio tapes and television tapes, artifacts, paintings, sculptures, architecture, and tape-recordings of oral history, etc.

Historians take these sources and engage same by converting them into a coherent, intelligible secondary source, whereby wider public, journalist, interested layman, idly curious ones, etc. who, desirous of getting some information on a particular historical topic, and not having time to consult, let alone search for, the primary sources, will rely on this secondary account. Hence, primary sources constitute major aspects of the historiographical activities. This is because; no historian could be regarded as fully trained and fully competent to interpret the past to others if he had not himself worked in primary source materials.

Considerable Arabic literary writings both in prose and verse were produced by scholars on various subjects that cut across their religious disciplinary boundaries such as history, and medicine, apart from the traditional themes of Islamic sciences. A distinct consciousness of history is perceptible in these literary works as

several of the writings are of historical value, thus gave rise to the development of historiographical tradition in Africa particularly when there seemed not to be written records.

It is pertinent to note that the corpus of literary works in Arabic later became the primary source of early African historiography. It contained valuable materials for the reconstruction of the societies such as Kanem - Borno, its political and social history were mentioned which were made of the king's list as well as Hausa States of which Kano chronicle was the most informative. The Arabic sources are of tremendous significance to the early history of Africa particularly as it covered a period roughly between the 8th and 15th centuries. The Arabic literary heritage on the travelogues of the itinerant Arab Geographers was later regarded as first-hand material for African historical reconstruction.

It is incontrovertible that Arabic language has left invaluable mark in freezing historical tradition supplementing oral tradition as the prime source of world history. The remark made by the famous German historian, Leopold Von Ranke is apposite here as he observed that leaving aside Latin, Arabic is the most important of all the world languages for purposes of universal history. In a related development, as observed by Agboola (1999:99), during the period of Islamic domination of the world in the 7th c., Africans of Arab origin in north Africa traveled all over the world in the course of their historical studies and wrote useful historical geographies, which were noted in oral tradition. African Arabo-Islamic historiographers such as Mas'udi (c. 950 C. E.), al Bakri; (1029-1094), al Idrisi (1154 C.E), al Yaqut (C. 1200 C.E), AbulFida (1273-1331), al 'Umari, (1301-1349)' Ibn Battutah (1325-1354), Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), and al-Hassan b. Muhammad al-Wezaz al Fasi, (Leo Africanus) (1494-1552) all wrote comprehensive history not only of the African continent but also about some other Muslim world then. Their works have been very important in universal history.

It has to be pointed out here that while most of these scholars except Ibn Khaldun, can hardly be considered as African historiographers in the real sense of the term due to some technical

reasons; yet, Africa is highly indebted to the Arabic language for serving as the earliest vehicle for vast literature and for keeping African historical records. Also, there are some of the Arabic writings of the period, which were primarily meant for religious proselytization but replete with some perceptible consciousness of history which later served as materials for historical reconstructions.

The inception of literacy in Arabic scripts and the custom of authorship in Arabic language in West Africa sub-regions date back to the period long before the coming of the *Murabit* i.e., Almoravid movement in the later part of the 11th century. There were fragmentary inscriptions of Arabic language found in towns such as old Ghana, Tekrur, Silla, etc. The inscriptions of Gao, for instance, shows the cogent evidence of ready communication in Arabic language between Andalusia and Niger region around the year 1100 (Bivar & Hiskett, 1962:21) and of the coherent of the *Murabit* state, which then included the former and at least adjoined the latter. Ibn Hawqal claimed to have physically seen a debit note made out in Arabic against a Sijilmasa (Hunwick,1964:24) merchant resident in Awdaghast.

Authors	Works
Al – Maqrizi	<i>KitabIstibsar; 'al Mawa'izwal-iftibar bi dhikr al Khuttatwal -athar; al-Ilmambil-akhbar man bi 'ard al Khabashah min muluk al -Islam; al-suluk li ma'rifatdawl al-muluk; and al -dhahb al -masbuk fi dhikr man hajj min al - Khulafa' wal-muluk</i>
Al – Qalqashandi	<i>Subh al - c'sha</i>
Al – °Umari	<i>Masalik al-Absar fi Mamalik al-Amsar; al Ta°arifbil-Mustali al-Asharif</i>
Ibn Fartuwa	<i>Tarikh Al- Mai Idris Alooma</i>
Muhammad al Idrisi	<i>Maghrib wal 'ard al-Sudan waMisrwal - 'Andalus; Nuzhah al - mushtaq fi dhikr al- amsarwal-aqtarwal-buldanwal-juzrwal-mada'inwal-aafaq</i>
Al Bakri	<i>al-Maghrib fi dhikr biladifriyyawal-Maghrib</i>
Al Ya °qubi	<i>Tarikh al-Ya °qubi</i>
Ibn Battuta	<i>Tuhfat al-Nazar fi Ghara'ib al-amsarwa'aja'ib al-asfar</i>
Ahmad Baba Timbuctu	<i>Nayl al 'ibtihaj bi tatriz al-Dibaj; al Dhayl</i>
°Abd-Rahman al-Sa°di	<i>Tarikh al-Sudan;Hadrat al – Dawlah and Bast al ardh fi tuhwa al °ard</i>
Mahmud Ka°t	<i>Tarikh al-Fattash</i>
Masafarmah b. °Uthman	<i>Diwan Salatin Kanem; Maharim</i>
Muhammad b. Masanih	<i>Azhar al Ruba fi Akhbar Bilad al-Yurba</i>

Fig. 1: Afro-Arabic Historical Writings

Al Maqrizi however, has a number of historical epigraphy to his credit. Apart from the one mentioned earlier, works such as '*al Mawa'izwal-iftibar bi dhikr al Khuttatwal-athar; al-Ilmambil-akhbar man bi 'ard al Khabashah min muluk al-Islam* basically on history of Islam in East Africa – Ethiopia, *al-suluk li ma'rifatdawl al-muluk*, on economic history of Kanem Bornu and *al-dhahb al-masbuk fi dhikr man hajj min al- Khulafa' wal-*

muluk, which was travelogue of the first to perform pilgrimage among the Tekrur rulers – Mansa Musa are among his historical works (Al-Dikko, 1998:19).

The Arabic manuscripts of al – °Umari include *Masalik al-Absar fi Mamalik al-Amsar* found in *Dar elKotob*, Egypt with number 559 and microfilmed as historical documentation. Also to his credit is the book *al Ta°rifbil-Mustali al-Asharif*, which discussed the genealogy of Kanem Bornu Judges and their religious schools of law (Maliki), while texts such as *Maghrib wal 'ard al-Sudan wa Misr wal- 'Andalus* were written by one Muhammad al Idrisi which was part of a book titled “*Nuzhah al- mushtaq fi dhikr al-amsarwal-aqtarwal-buldanwal-juzrwal-mada'inwal-aafaq*” which discussed the history of the Central African rulers.

Among al Bakri's writings on history are *al-Maghrib fi dhikr bilad ifriqiyya wal-Maghrib* which narrated the inception of Arab (Umayyad Clan) in Kanem land while a work titled *Tarikh al-Ya°qubi* was written by al Ya°qubi, which discussed the rulers and their military campaigns. Scholars like Ibn Battuta have texts such as *Tuhfat al-Nazar fi Ghara'ib al-amsarwa°aja'ib al-asfar* which constitute comprehensive historical works of his travelogue particularly in his 3rd trip of Africa in places like River Nile and Lake Chad (Al-Dikko, 1998: 20).

The Arabic writings of the other scholars who wrote the history of their places in Arabic include Ahmad Baba Timbuctu (d. 1607). He has many Arabic Islamic literatures to his credit wherein his *Nayl al 'ibtihaj bi tatriz al-Dibaj* was famous as a bibliographical dictionary completed in Morocco in 1596. Also, he authored *al Dhayl* where he narrated stories of Western and Central Sudan to which Henry Barth remarked that the work was one of the great authorities in the reconstruction of modern human history as he had recorded what was unknown to us before (Al-Dikko, 1998:20).

Historians like °Abd-Rahman al-Sa°di (b.1596) wrote, “*Tarikh al-Sudan* which contains a historical account of the political, social, economic and intellectual activities in the Sudanic kingdoms. Other crops of Arabic writings of the African empires include a

prolific work on African history titled *Tarikh al-Fattash* written by Mahmud Ka^ct. The work was said to have been completed later by his grandsons in 1665 (Khani, 1984: 17). The work was a survey of political and literary activities in some parts of Western Sudan.

Another historical epigraphy worthy of mention here is the *Diwan Salatin Kanem* written by one Shaykh Masafarmah b. ^cUthman that is more of an anthology of epistolography and names of rulers. Also, he wrote a historical text titled *Maharim* i.e. grants to some notable ^c*Ulama'* by the *Mais* of Kanem as well as some notes on the political organization of the empire (Al-Dikko, 1998:22). The European historians and geographers later translated these writings into English.

Considerable Arabic writings in African sub-regions ranging from chronicle, letters, *Maharim*- patent and grants of privileges given by *Mais* (Kings) to certain learned or noble families and their descendants formed the first example of local use of Arabic language in some African societies. A substantial number of these Arabic writings were later translated and or depended on by the European historians in the reconstruction of African history.

Literary works such as *Azhar al Ruba fi Akhbar Bilad al-Yurba* basically on the history of Islam in Yorubaland by one Muhammad b. Masanih (d. 1667) were said to have been a juristic response to Muslim jurists in Yorubaland. Other works like *Ta^crif fiima yajib^c alal-Muluk* written by Muhammad b. ^cAbd al Karim Maghili were more of politico – religious treatises than history. Also, *Ahkamahl al Zimmah*, *Misbah al-awah fi usul al-falah*, *waraqat fi 'a^cmaal al yawm wallaylah* etc. are works on various subjects other than history. However, element of historical information could be gleaned from the works (Sirajudeen, 2005:25).

Some other works in this class include the popular text of al Qalqashandi's *Subh al 'a^csha* - an encyclopedia in the art of literary composition with particular reference to epistolography and chancery prose. This text and others mentioned above are however, relevant materials to historical perspectives as it mentioned therein some historical epistolary writings in the later

parts of the 14th century Islamic history of Borno (Qalqashandi, 1913:345). These and some other relevant texts were primarily written for other subjects but have a distinct perception of history in them. They were later employed for such accordingly and served as source materials for history.

At various stages of African history, the Arabo-Islamic scholars have been playing a very important role in the political administration of the area. And as said earlier, most of these scholars were not only close to the then rulers of the empires but were also in high demand as scribes, advisers, assistants and particularly for religious cum intellectual guidance. Thus, the literary works of the scholars as reliable primary sources of history were not only important but also significant (Yahya, 2000: 41).

As pointed out earlier, the '*Ulama*' in their service to the society took up teaching Islamic sciences in Arabic language. Thus, in old Ghana, Mali, Songhai empires as well as Kanem – Borno, Islam was established from early times. Centers of teaching Arabic flourished well in these African kingdoms. Scholars like al- Sa'di (b.1596); Mahmud Ka^ct, Ahmad baba Timbuctu, Ahmad al-Tazakhti, Makhlu^f al – Bilbali, Dan Marna, Muhammad b. Masanih etc. are some of the notable '*Ulama* who were very versed in Arabic language and left trove of Arabic literature capable of reconstructing African history. Agboola mentioned some other African Islamic historiographers such as al –Mas^cudi (c. 950); al –Bakri (1094); al – Idrisi (1154); al Yaqut (c.1200); AbulFida (1331); al – ^cUmari (1349); Ibn Battuta (1354); Ibn Khaldun (1406) and al- Hassan Al – Wezaz (Agboola, 1999:101).

The writings of these scholars provided the intellectual basis for future scholars not only in Africa but also beyond. The scholars were encouraged, assisted in using Arabic language in state correspondence, writing of political books and pamphlets, treatises and advice to the rulers, compilation of biographical literature, writing histories, ethnography, sociology and education. By the 14th century, Arabic literacy flourished in places like Timbuktu and Walata. It should be noted that the Muslim rulers of these empires not only encouraged but also assisted in

establishment of learning centers among their subjects. Many scholars were sent to places like Egypt, Fez, etc. for the purpose of learning. For example, Sankore mosque was transferred to a large learning center that rivaled some old Islamic centers like Al – Azhar, Fez, and Qayrawan.

European historians like Hiskette, Palmer, Barth, Last, Smith, etc. came to realize the essence of Arabic documentations left by the African Arabic scholars particularly in history. They exploited the rare opportunity of available materials to unravel the African past. These scholars studied Arabic language in order to assist them in having access to historical materials frozen in Arabic language and scripts. This particularly helped them tremendously to produce what could be regarded as Afrocentric approach to African history.

Consequently, several historical works in Arabic were translated, annotated and edited in the process. For example, *Tarikh Mai Idris Aloomo* was translated into English in London 1926. Also, *al Dhayl*, which discussed the history of Western Sudan was translated by Anglo – German Orientalist Barth (Al-Dikko, 1998: 21). Palmer also translated some *Maharim* into English in his “Bornu Sahara” as he did in his Sudanese Memoirs (*ibid.*). Commenting on the prominent position of Arabic in the history of Sokoto caliphate in particular and African in general, Last (1967: 227) maintains that:

The fullest history of the fifty years of the 19th century is those written in Arabic. For later period, it is the Arabic sources again...that provides the datafor the Sokoto administration ...without recourse to Arabic sources, in relation to the oral tradition, owing to poverty of published texts or translation.

Hunwick, citing The Late Professor Dike position on the tremendous role played by Arabic language to disprove Africa as a dark continent records that; “as historian myself, I have taken keen interest in this development for it's through the aid of these African

languages in Arabic scripts, that the scholars will be aided in his task of unlocking the secrets of African Past..." (Hunwick, 1964:31).

The survival of written historical documents in Arabic scripts, before the inception of the European scholars in the shore of Africa has tremendously contributed to the development of African historiography. The availability of historical epigraphy in whatever language could be justified as a form of literary documents. Over and against the Eurocentric idea of 'no document, no history', the availability of document, even in Arabic scripts which were later used by translating them into English, is capable of exonerating Africa as a literate society even before the coming of the Europeans (Sirajudeen, 2005:34)

Challenges of the *African* Literary Writings on Africa

No doubt, that there are quite a number of works on the writings of the Afro-Arabic literati particularly for the purpose of the historical traditions embedded in the Arabic writings. Our study of the previous but related literature on the analysis and critical appraisal of the Medieval Afro - Arabic writings that related to the history of Africa shows that, in spite of the invaluable significance of these writings to the history of the area, there are limitations. These limitations, which appeared in their multidimensional perspectives allow for a kind of doubt particularly for historians using the information. It is also noted that the perspectives from which individual scholars studied these writings varies from one researcher to the other. It is thus discovered that all the research works cited on these materials were only expressing their dissatisfaction on the lack of authenticity and reliability of these Arabic writings, which are capable of serving as raw materials for the history of the region.

However, there has been relatively critical appraisal of these Arabic sources for the history of Africa. Much of the historical studies merely identified that there are limitations in the source materials especially the Arabic ones. Consequently, the African research students particularly those who are not conversant with the Arabic language or the problems of Arabic sources, are prone

to distrusting this category of sources. This has made thorough research into it an exclusive work of Arabists. None has specifically dwelt on the historiographical study of these sources, particularly with a view to obtaining authentic information therefrom (Sirajudeen, 2012: 67).

Many scholars who have attempted to extract information from the texts of Arab geographers and travelers, have generally not examined the relative importance of each of the authors within the Arab geographical tradition, nor have they properly considered the relationship of the authors to one another. They have thus often treated the Arab texts as a block of materials from which information might be extracted about the area for any period before the European age. It is true that the Arab geographers and historians helped tremendously to penetrate the African past a little, but a little. This is because they were mostly interested in African trade and commerce. They list names of many peoples and villages; but of the life of those they saw they tell us only a little. Hence, sources being limited in this way to the Arab historians and writers have tended to bias historians to regarding the materials with caution.

Lewicki (1961:7) noted that the information from these writers came partly as a result of their personal observations and not their practical experiences or eye – witness. The implication of this is that substantial parts of their information are but collections by the authors comprising various travelers, seamen, merchants, etc. who must have visited the areas whose history is narrated. Besides, it is noted that in most cases, reference may not be made of these informants in the works of the geographers and historians and where it is made, they are mostly anonymous. It presupposes that only a portion of those sources has an original character, while the majority of the information on the African countries and its peoples are no more than recasts of older relations or compilations of different sources and epochs.

Historiographers have relied on these geographical writings even in establishing the antiquity of origins of some traditions of origin. Abdullahi Smith's pioneer research, for instance, on the

reconstruction of the intellectual history of the Nigerian peoples dwelt on the interpretation of the traditions of origin of the Sayfuwa of Kanem – Borno. In what Smith considered fragmentary and tentative contribution to the study of tradition of origin of one of the longest dynasties so far in the Central Sudan, he started by casting doubt on the authenticity of the Sayfuwa being of Himyarite origin. While disagreeing with the inductive methods of the Western scholarship particularly the position taken by late Sir Richmond Palmer who attributed these traditions 'to old Borno court's desire for a Yemenite pedigree and imaginary sojourn of their ancestors in Arabia.' Smith depended, solely on the information about the Sayfuwa descendants from the popular hero Sayf b. DhiYazan, according to Arab geographer such as al Bakri writing in the mid11th century. He equally cited other Arab travelers like IbnSa'id al – Maghribi (writing in the 13th century), AbulFida (early 14th C.), al 'Umari (mid-14th C.), and al – Maqrizi (early 15th C.).

It is interesting to note that apart from some writers who equally express their optimism in getting over with this problem, there has never been any attempt, as far as we know, to see how one can extract authentic and reliable historical materials from the Arabic writings of the Muslim scholars of African region. It is our contentions here that while these materials are tainted with unreliable elements, they nonetheless still contain substance of truth, which can only be obtained through a critical study. It should be noted that while some of these works have contributed to our knowledge of that period and have helped to preserve valuable historical materials, which would otherwise have been lost, many of them were characterized by lack of originality. This is because, having been copied and assembled without any serious attempt to evaluate the materials, and often without acknowledgement of the sources of these materials.

In a study conducted by Sirajudeen (2012), some relevant source materials in the Arabic literary heritage of Africa were identified and some subjected to thorough study with a view to sifting them critically thereby establishing their authenticity and credibility. In this case, the critical analytical approach was employed, which

dwells on studying some manuscripts and examines critically the methods of historical documentation. Also, the styles, structure, and themes in these Arabic writings were studied; while the theoretical framework of criticizing *Hadith* literature (*Mustalah al-Hadith*), which had hitherto given birth to the idea of *Mustalah al-Tarikh* was employed. It was also found that most of the literary writings belonging to the period beginning from the fall of Baghdad in 1259 C.E. to the inception of Napoleonic invasion in Egypt in 1798 are generally characterized by imitation and compilation, which were not scrutinized. A number of scholars during this period produced dictionaries, local and universal histories and commentaries. More so, these Arabic writings lack originality as they are copied and assembled without any serious attempt to evaluate them, and often without acknowledgement of the sources (Sirajudeen, 2012: 76).

It was observed that not all the authors had their aim to impart geographical or ethnographic knowledge while those who had such pretensions were just repeating copiously from the older references. It was also noted that most of the Arab geographers and travelers accounts are not firsthand information. Many of them were mere armchair encyclopedists from where only a handful of truly firsthand account of Sub – Saharan Africa could be gleaned. Most of the information from these writers came partly as a result of their personal observations and not their practical experiences or eye – witness (Sirajudeen, 2010:90).

Again, the fact that the primary objects of the Arab geographers' writings was the response to the needs of the Muslim rulers who were interested in acquiring information such as would assist them in handling commercial and political relations within the vast area in which Islam had established itself must have accounted for the characteristic features of their writings. The implication of this is that substantial part of their information is but collections by authors comprising various travelers, seamen, merchants who must have visited the areas whose history is narrated (Sirajudeen, 2012: 12). It presupposes that only a portion of those sources has an original character, while the majority of the information on the African countries and its peoples are no more than recasts of older relations or compilations of different sources and epochs.

Afrabic Historiography: The Nigerian Context

A thorough knowledge of the origin of historical traditions of Kanem-Borno, for instance, is an essential part of the Nigerian Arabic Literary history. The then ruling dynasty (*Sayfuwa*), which was established very early, was first converted to Islam in the early days of Islam. Kanem was one of the first states that were known to the outside world as identified by the earlier geographers and historians (Sirajudeen, 2012:75). In spite of the tremendous significance of the Arabic writings to the reconstruction of early African history with particular reference to Kanem-Borno, historiographers have observed some limitations embedded in these literary works, which constitute a kind of problem of authenticity of the writings. Of relevance are the Arabic Historical Texts of *Infāq al Maysūr* and *Tārīkh Mai Idrīs Alūma waghazawātuh*.

A critical study of the local Arabic writings, which contain information on the historical traditions of Kanem – Borno indicates a kind of emotional inclination to the people they were writing about. The work of Ibn Fartuwa and Bello, for instance, indicate strong bias and prejudice in their reports. Such a bias engenders inaccurate historical information as rightly pointed out by Ibn Khaldun. It is equally important to note that the manuscripts used in the work of Fartuwa seem to be comparatively recent date, and whether the older copies from which they were derived are preserved is less certain. There is total absence of chronology in the writing (Sirajudeen,2010:89).

The only available text of *Infāq al Maysur* depended upon are the edition of C.E.J. Whitting, London, 1951 or an edition privately printed in Cairo, 1964. Neither edition makes any pretense to being critical and in both the gross inaccuracies abound. However, it is pertinent to note that some of the writers are giving firsthand information except that the timing of their writing such was not almost immediately, which also gave room for forgetfulness (Sirajudeen,2010:85). It is true however, that both Ibn Fartuwa and Bello's systematic approach show a kind of historiographical perspective, which makes the texts in question to be reliable references to some extent. Attempt is made to avoid story telling

method, thus excluding myths and legends. This has divorced the works from epic prose and a definite theme is selected for historical enterprise. The works especially *Infaq* seem to have reconstructed the available materials and accounts in the realm of criticism and methodology with a view to setting forth a historical work, which should depend upon accuracy rather than upon the entertainment furnished by narrative (Sirajudeen,2010:88).

Prospects of Arabic and Afrabic

In the fall of 2010, an international colloquium was organized by the department of Arabic & Islamic Studies, KSU with a particular focus on the challenges of the 21st century in West African Sub-region. Participants *inter alia* agreed that scientific research have proved that Arabic Studies is full of un-tapped resources capable of providing strategies to face all challenges of humanity at all times. It was also noted that Department of Arabic Studies in Nigerian Universities should come up with strategies aimed at maximizing students' intake to enhance the production of more researchers who would join the existing ones to facilitate intellectual pursuits in the rich resources of the twin disciplines.

Besides, stakeholders in Arabic Studies should, through research and other means, expand the frontiers of knowledge by proffering solutions to contemporary challenges especially those posed by globalization and digital technology. Strategies must equally be evolved for making Arabic Studies attractive to prospective students. The mounting of interdisciplinary degree programs in any of the disciplines in combination with another discipline in the arts and humanities will be extremely useful.

Moreover, the issue of inadequate experts to handle the teaching of Arabic Studies at all levels of education should be adequately addressed. Capacity building initiatives aimed at producing more experts and retraining of existing specialists should be strengthened. Teachers of Arabic Studies must be active in all aspects of the school system and the society at large in a way that people begin to acknowledge the relevance and importance of the subject.

Ogunbiyi (1987 inaugural lecture) noted that 'while there is little hope of repeating the Ibadan experiment, the Muslims who are now scholars – and there are several of them in the north and in the south, will need to redefine their goals and objectives so as to focus more on linguistic and cultural research into the national and international heritage.

It is however, instructive to state here that there has been a significant revival of interest in the learning and usage of Arabic in post-independent Nigeria. Arabic for instance, has been enjoying international status. With the current waves of globalization and free market economy, there has been a necessity for competence in foreign language like Arabic not only for academic purposes but also for communication and other specific purposes.

It is thus observed that there is dire need for improvement on the curriculum input such that prospective candidates are well trained in Arabic for specific areas such as Arabic & Communication, Arabic & International Studies, Arabic for Specific Purposes, Arabic for Commercial Purpose, Arabic for Business Purposes, Arabic for Occupational Purposes etc. could be of an immense importance here taking advantage of the current normative practice of interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches for functional Arabic. All this and many others are index to the fact that academic curriculum in Arabic today requires inclusion of learning and teaching the language for these specific purposes in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Islamic scholarship has taken Arabic as its vehicle for communication, other 'secular' subjects such as mathematics, medicine, animal science, astronomy, astrology, numerology etc. most of which are evidence of Egyptian influence on Arabic are written in Arabic. The lecture has highlighted some aspects of the scientific knowledge as exemplified in the literary works of the African *‘Ulama* most of which are still in manuscripts except some few that have been published. There are some other works on these treated subjects which are found in the works of the contemporary scholars. This includes contributions on the concepts of

universality of scientific knowledge. There have been the aspirations of contemporary stakeholders towards producing the likes of Muslim Philosopher like IbnSīnā, IbnRushd, Al Fārābī, Al Ghazzālī, Al Aqād, Al Rāfīee most of who did not see the four walls of the university but were able to contribute to human development from their learning of Arabic sciences during their times.

It is also understood from the foregoing that some other information relating to the African continent was provided not only by the geographers and travelers, but also by the Arab conquerors. Besides, the intellectual centers of the Islamic caliphate began to be reached by information on the areas situated upon the Nile or the Western Sudan, supplied to the Arab conquerors by the Copts or North African Berbers who had long reached those regions.

The significance of Arabic writings as prime sources of African history is real as traditions of people were written down for onward transmission to the following generation. It should be noted that *the Prolegomena* of Ibn Khaldun, for example, until recently had little influence and was not recognized. In short, early African Arabic epigraphies were more than mere mention of religious texts, Islamic sciences and propagation however included a compilation of writings on jurisprudence, politics, and law. They are in addition to that all mentioned above, sources of indigenous African markers of events, which were valuable for socio-political and economic gains. These African Arabic scholars have tremendously contributed to the Arabic historiography of Africa through their various writings such as letters, chronicles, grants, memoirs etc...their efforts in bequeathing trove of literary works were not only significant to religion – Islam but also in the socio – political and intellectual history of African sub- regions. These ancient and archival writings follow the oral traditions in the reconstruction of African history.

Recommendations

In the light of the above, the following recommendations are made:

- There is need for collaborative efforts with archives and museums particularly where the Arabic manuscripts are housed and collection of such materials in other countries as those found in the United States, Germany, and Tombouctou, Mali for further research.
- Efforts should be made to identify *Afrabic* manuscripts that relate to indigenous science and knowledge systems especially those that belong to African Arabic scholars.
- There should be conscious effort to preserve these manuscripts guides and catalogues via e-documentation and dissemination to academic institutions, research centers among others for further research in the area.
- There is need to develop a curriculum on (Arabic Language & Literature; Arabic & Global Communication and Arabic & International Studies, Arabic for Specific Purposes, etc.) particularly at the postgraduate level to encourage the study of *Afrabic* manuscripts for contemporary research outputs.
- It is expedient to establish a Center for Translation and Interpretation Studies (CTIS) and African Arabic Manuscripts Collection at the FULafia Central Library.
- For security purpose, the services of the Arabic scholars are highly needed in interpreting the information contained in the treatises for study and application.
- There is need to establish Centre for the Study of *Ajami* Writings (CSAW) to cater for Standard *Ajami* Orthography (SAO) for knowledge production and mainstreaming the *Ajami* phonemes into the contemporary Information and Communication Technology (ICT).
- Arabic manuscripts are indispensable source material to the expanded knowledge of an all-inclusive African culture. There is also need for establishing a Center of Afro-Arabic Indigenous Science and Knowledge Systems (Afro-Arabic Manuscriptology).
- Researchers can explore the uncharted terrains or aspects of indigenous science in Afro- Arabic writing traditions

and identify the materials thereof with a view to supplementing the existing manuscripts with more materials (manuscripts) particularly in this relatively *new* area (indigenous Science and knowledge systems). They can thus showcase the contributions of the scholars on the concepts of universality of indigenous science and its application for further laboratory research (as the case may be).

I am done!

Thank you for listening! God bless you...*Bāarakallahu Fīkum*

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Adam Adebayo Sirajudeen was born on Friday 5th June, 1970 to Imaam Alhaj Sirajudeen Adeleke Sanni of Agara Olu family, Saki Oyo State. Growing up in a deeply religious environment, he received his early Qur'an education under the tutelage of one Sheikh Abdur Rahman Olopoenyan, who was a close associate of his father before being enrolled in 1975 at Madrasat Ashrafa-deen, an Arabic Islamic Primary School. Little Adam was educated at Nawair ud Deen Primary School, Saki. He proceeded to Saki Parapo Community Grammar School, Saki for his Secondary School education. During this period, Adam combined between the Western Education with Islamiyya at the Irshad Deen Junior Arabic School, Saki where he graduated shortly before obtaining WASC in 1986. He proceeded to the Universities of Ilorin; where he had his B. A. (Hons.) in 1995. After his compulsory NYSC as Graduate Assistant with the Department of Education, he was appointed as Assistant Lecturer in Islamics at Jamat College of Education, Kaduna. He later enrolled for his Masters in Arabic with the Department of Nigerian & African Languages, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria 1998. Sometimes in February, 1999 got appointment into the position of Confidential Secretary to the Director, Egyptian Cultural Centre, Kano. He continued with Master's degree in Arabic Studies with specialization in Arabic Literary Criticism in Ahmadu Bello University, Samaru Zaria 2002.

After his Masters he joined the services of the Prince Abubakar Audu University as an Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Arabic Language & Literature, 2003 where he rose to the rank of Associate Professor in 2015. He thereafter obtained his Doctoral degree in Arabic with specialization in *Afrabic* Historiography and Literary Criticism from the Department of Religion & Philosophy, University of Jos in 2012. In 2016, he transferred his service to Federal University of Kashere where he rose to the full rank of Professor with specialty in Literary Criticism & Afrabic

Historiography. As a seasoned academic, he has taught and supervised numerous undergraduate and postgraduate students. He has equally examined Postgraduate Diploma, Masters and PhD students in the twin disciplines of Arabic and Islamic studies from Nigerian universities and universities in Malaysia and Magreb. He has equally assessed professorial candidates.

He has won TETFund Research Grants, Travel and Research Grants to the United States, Libya, South Africa, Kenya, Malaysia, Ghana and Mauritania. He is a member of various professional associations such as African Consortium for Law and Religion Studies, (ACLARS); International Association of Arabic Teachers (IAAT), London, International Union of Arabic Departments, Dubai. Fellow, Nigerian Institute of Translators and Interpreters, NITI; Association of Translation Studies in Nigeria ATSiN; Academic Society of Arabic Language & Literature in Nigeria ASALLIN; Nigerian Teachers of Arabic & Islamic Studies NATAIS; Lagos Studies Association LSA; Global Association for MSMEs & SDG Research in Developing Countries. He is a member of Editorial Board/Reviewer of various academic journals.

Sirajudeen's projects and publications, which majorly focus on Arabic and Arabic studies, Arabic Literary Criticism, Afro-Arabic Historiography, Afro-Arabic Manuscripts, Translation have offered a radical challenge to the existing researches. He also has interest in Socio-Cultural Studies and Peace & Conflict Studies. His scholarly works include: *The Dynamics of Afro-Arabic Cultural Resurgence in the Shadow of Civilization*; *Islamic-Oriented University in Nigeria: Triumphs and Travails*, in the book *Muslim Institutions of Higher Education in Postcolonial Africa*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016; *Towards an Understanding of Islamic Private Universities in Africa* (co-authored) in the book *Routledge Studies in Marketing Understanding the Higher Education Market in Africa*, (Routledge, Taylor & Francis, London, 2020); *Religious Mechanism Response to Covid-19 Pandemic: A Comparative Analysis of the Spiritual Methods by Christians and Muslims in Nigeria*; A Publication of African Consortium for Law & Religion Studies... Sustainable

Infrastructure and Challenges of Innovation Driven Higher Education in Developing Countries; From *Mustalah al Hadith* to *Mustalah al Ta'rikh*: Transmission and Contents Criticism in *Afrabic* Historiography and host of others in Arabic.

Administrative engagements include Head, Department of Languages, Federal University of Kashere, Dean, Faculty of Humanities, Management & Social Sciences, Federal University of Kashere, Member, Senate Representative on Council, Senate Representative on Council on the Selection Board for the appointment of Principal and Senior Officers of the University, Academic Planning & Development Committee, Member, Students' Welfare Committee, Senate Representative on the Disciplinary Committee, Member, Advisory Board for Entrepreneurship Development Centre, Faculty Representative at the Senate, Member, Governing Council Search Team for the Appointment of Vice Chancellor, Federal University of Kashere. Here in the Federal University of Lafia, he has been Member, Central Strategic Committee, Chairman, Anti-Corruption & Transparency Committee, Director, Research & Creative Thoughts.

In the area of Community Service, Adam Adebayo Sirajudeen has been Chairman, Governing Council, Nashiru Deen Arabic Islamic School, Saki, Chairman, Governing Council, Sulaiman Aminat College of Arabic & Islamic Studies, Ayegunle Gbede, Kogi State, National President, University of Ilorin Arabic Alumni Association, National Headquarters University of Ilorin, Chair, Planning & Implementation Committee, Proposed Al Falaq University, Saki. (A Subsidiary of Saki Muslim Community), Chairman, Governing Council, Bright College of Health, Management Science and Technology, Nasarawa Eggon among others. He is Director/ CEO Al Manara Islamic Foundation, Saki-Nigeria. At present, he teaches and engages in research in the Department of Arabic Studies, Federal University of Lafia-Nigeria. Adam is happily married to Nimatullahi Adunola, Khadeejah Olabimpe (late) and Hamdalat Iyabode with lovely kids.

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