

THE ARABIC MANUSCRIPTS IN DANGER TO BONDOUKOU, BOUNA ET MANKONO

CÔTE D'IVOIRE (2016-2017)

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Introduction:

This article arises from the first results of inquiries, within the framework of our project, which we introduced at the end of the year 2015. This research project is supported by the British Library, which launched the operation of inventory of Arabic manuscripts in several regions of Africa. The inquiries of ground, which we thus led, aimed at the Arabic manuscripts in Ivory Coast. This manuscript is about many documents, drafted in Arabic and generally previous to the end of the 19th century.

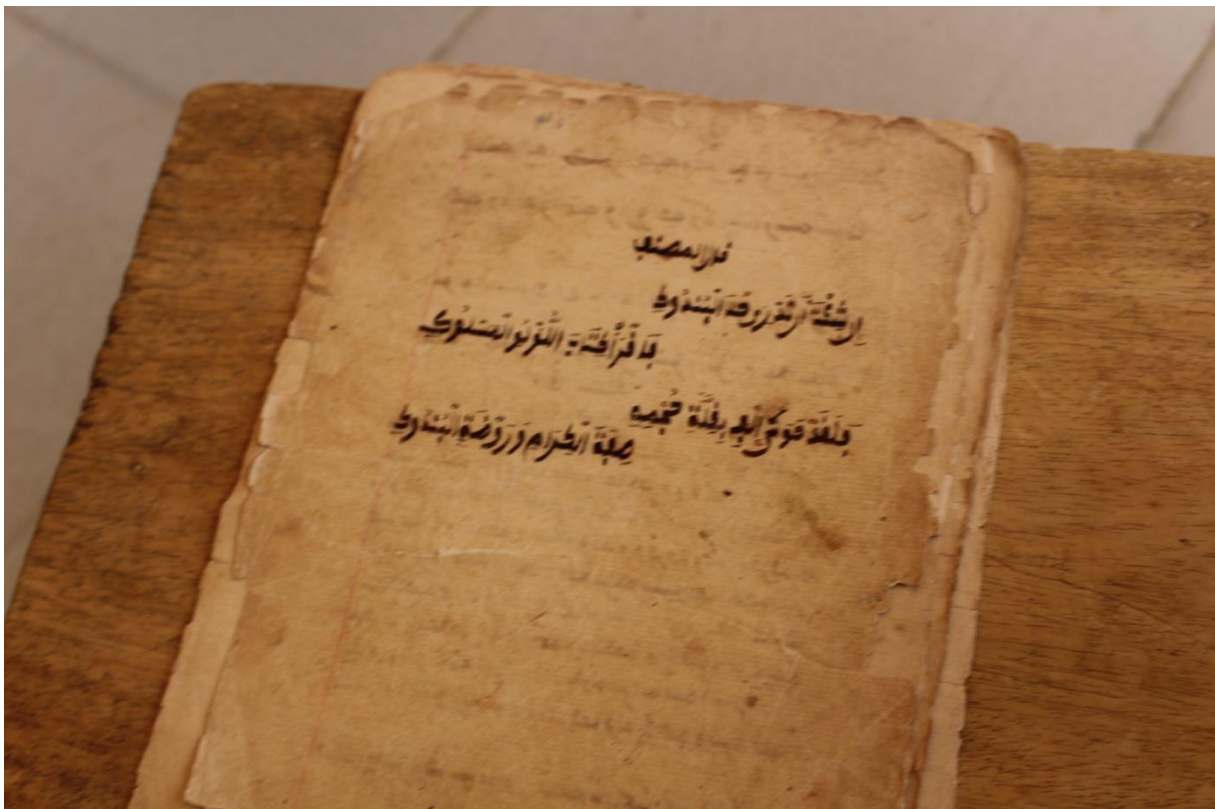
The question of these manuscripts has been by several authors. Although the information on these manuscripts is always less net, several authors¹ indicated that there are manuscripts in Ivory Coast. Among these authors, we can quote Paul Marty². He spoke about native libraries in several localities of the country, which contain manuscripts, and other works in Arabic. In addition, we find Jean-Louis Triaud³ who also talked about two Arab-Islamic libraries in his article in Ivory Coast at the beginning of the XXth century. He specified that it is in the city of Mankono that there are these two libraries restarted between two people under the name of Alimamou Fofana and Saidou Karamoko.

Since then, few works were dedicated to these manuscripts. By leading this search, several questions can be put forward: their states and the localities where they are. The answers of these questions maybe a question of authentication from inquiries and from checks, to determine the current states of these documents. Thus, these questions required an in-depth research to give the exact situation of these manuscripts.

This article made an assessment of our first inquiries of ground, through the presentation of the work plan; it is collected site by site, by specifying the state of manuscripts and what has been done.

This search began on August 4, 2016, with inquiries on three sites: Gontougo, Bounkani and Beré, these regions are considered the pole of departure of the Islam in current Ivory Coast. Our investigation allowed us the discovery of the families, which possess Arabic manuscripts until now.

In Bondoukou and his neighborhood, we were able to assess manuscripts belonging to different families. In the region of Gontogo we listed five libraries of manuscripts, one with Ouattara family held by Mahama ⁴Ouattara grandson of Mahama Ouattara.



In this library there are 22 manuscripts of various domains were recorded and tidied up in shirts and boxes of archives while waiting for to make the boxes of sustainable preservation.

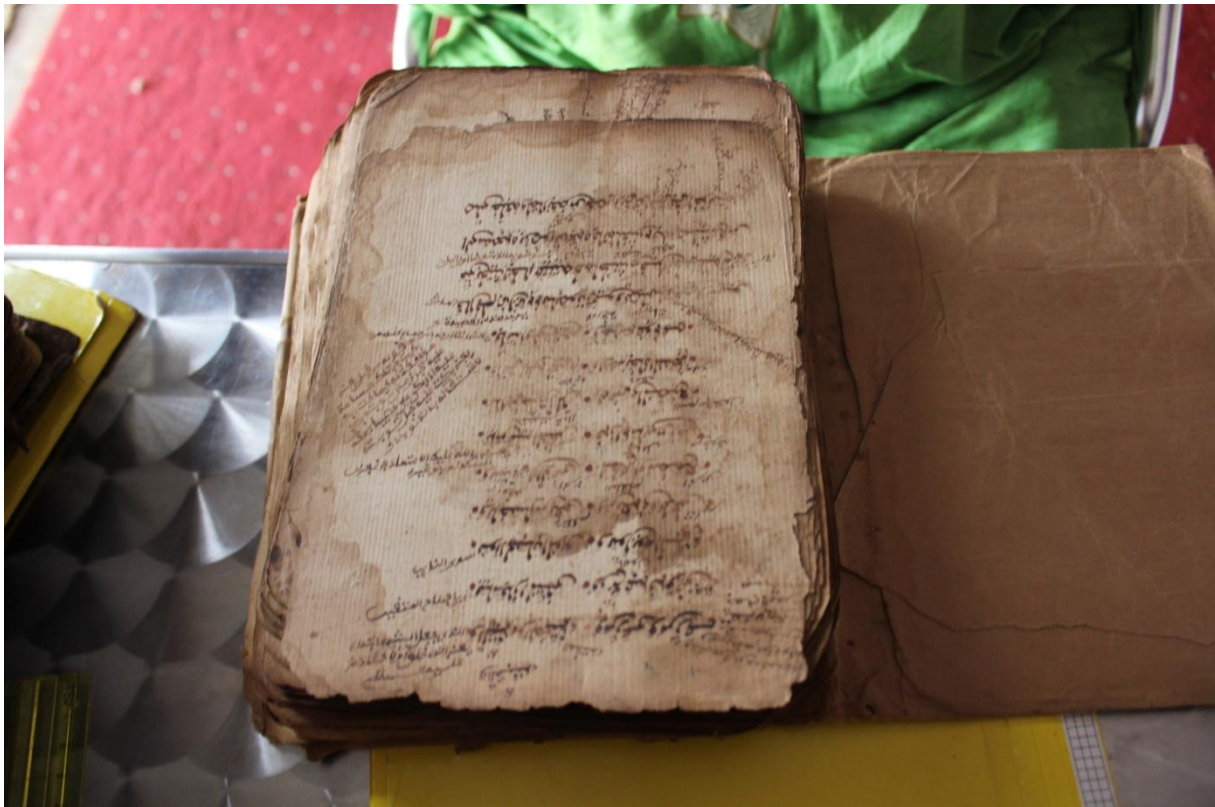
History, poetry, invocation, the exegesis of saints Coran, the Arabic grammar and the invocations. He indicated that Mahama Ouattara wrote

himself certain number of document, such as the book "spitz el maslouk fi tàrik Bondoukou" who spoke about the history of Bondoukou and composition of its tribe.

2. The state of these manuscripts in Bondoukou city.

Indeed, the conditions of their preservation were not good by the fact that they were exposed to the humidity, to the insects and even to the fire because they have no protective measure.

Most of these manuscripts are exposed at risk of humidity and insects, regarded the condition of their preservation. It is important to specify that the owner of this library a young person is ready for any possible proposal for the good protection of document and to put them at the disposal of the researchers.



3. How manuscripts are inventoried in Bondoukou

In the village of BANAKAGNI TOMORA, we listed 46 manuscripts in the library of Oustaz Souleymane Kamagaté. This library is held by the grandson Souleymane Kamagaté who bears the name of his grandfather to whom he was attributed the name of the library. The state of the

documents in this library are in good one compared to many others⁵. Because he grants a particular interest to this document. Most of this document are readable and cleaned (readable and appropriate, legible). We gave him an additional support for the good interview of documents in classifying documents in shirts and boxes of archives to allow the air to circulate to avoid a possible achievement of humidity and ruin. Said Kamagaté Souleymane⁶: «to be ready to put his documents in the service of sciences and look for it»

In the village of GBANGBO, we were able to list also a single library, which is the one of El Hadj Youssouf Ouattara. The one who is responsible for this current library is called El Hadj Abdoulaye Ouattara.⁷ He is with collaborators like Ouattara Alipha Oumar and Ouattara Okman both teach at the Medersa primary school of the village called "Medersa tahzibislama" as well as Ouattara Tah. All his collaborators helped us to assess the manuscripts. In all 8 manuscripts. Ouattara Youssouf showed its satisfaction by saying that he is very happy and very telling of this initiative and that they are at our service⁸ for everything concerning the interview and safe guard of manuscripts to protect the experiences of their ancestor. Loukman said that he is ready to help us as a local assistance⁹.

In the village of TALAHINI SOUKOURA, there is Sheik Saïd Badredin's library which belongs to Sheik Saïd Ouattara which is the main Imam of the village one of the big collaborator of scholar Mahama Ouattara (Badridine) who settled in this village by leaving the city of Bondoukou. In this village is the grave of Mahama Badredin, maintained by this last Sheik Saïd Ouattara) his library contains 11 manuscripts. Most are in good condition because the owner is a brave, dynamic and very open old man.



In the middle: Sheik Saïd Ouattara and to his right Dr Moussa Konaté, to his left Oustaz Loukman Ouattara,

Finally, in BANAKAGNI SOKRA, there is a library of karamogo Souleymane Kamagaté in which there is only a single manuscript but in good state.

In all, we were able to inventory in the region of Gontogo 5 libraris and 88 manuscripts as below indicated:

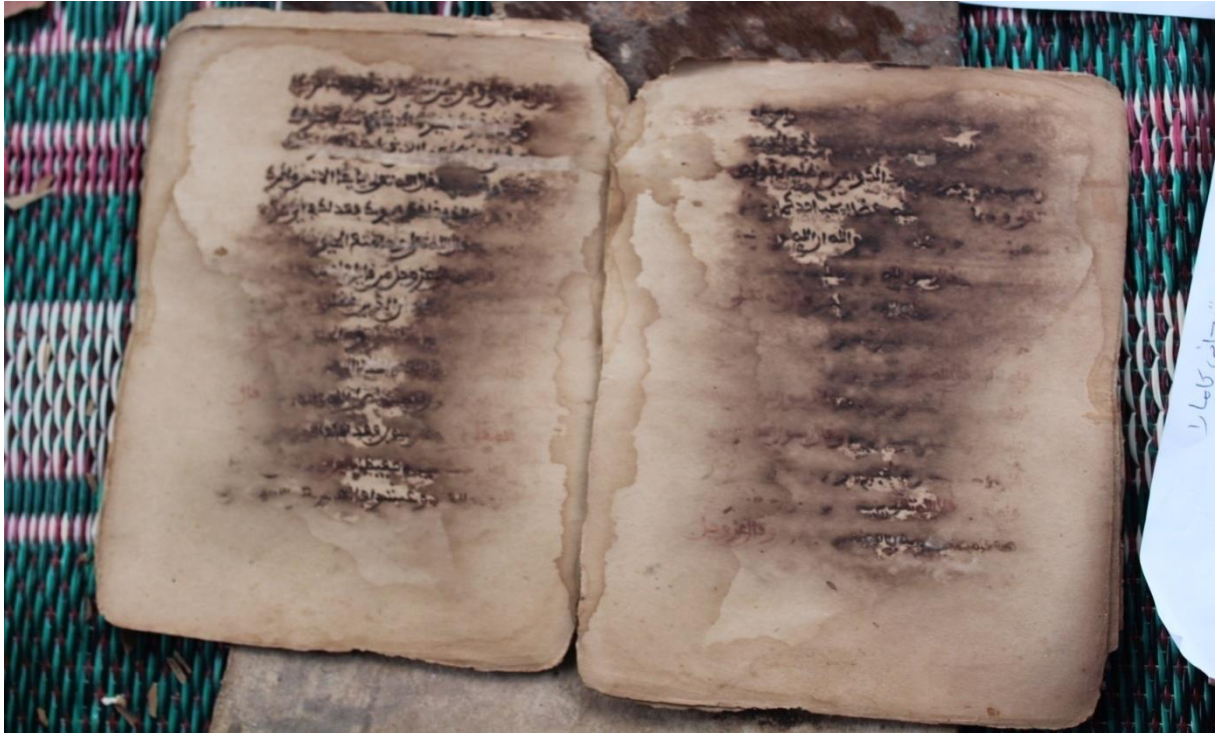
	city	Library	Numberofmanuscripts
01	Bondoukou ville	Badre dine	22
02	BanakagniTomora	Oustaz Souleymane Kamagaté	46
03	Gbangbo	El Hadj Youssouf Ouattara	8
04	TalahiniSokoura	Cheick Said Badri dine	11
05	BanakagniSokoura	Karamogo Souleymane Kamagaté	1
Nombre total de manuscrits :			88

III. The collection of the information in the region of Bounkani (BOUNA)
From 14 till 18 August 2016 and from 21 till 26 September 2016, we went to Bouna distant from 196 km fromBondoukou to assess manuscripts of the following families: Diabagaté, Haïdara, Camara and Cissé.

1. Comment on manuscripts inventoried in Bouna the library of Halakat El Hadj Tidjani Camara consists of several documents among which some are dated while others are not. Said's library includes more than 146 manuscripts.



The majority of this documentation speaks about Islamic jurisprudence, about dogma, about history, about astronomy, exegesis of Saint Coran, biography of the prophet, Mystic Islamic and about poetry etc... This library bears the name of defers grandfather El Hadj Tidjani Camara, this treasure is managed by a group which consults itself before taking anything decision, among this group there are those who belong to Bouna on the spot and the other one are in Abidjan for the reason of function such as Mori Moussa Camara and Loukman Camara. She was managed 7 years ago by Imam Kangouté Mohamed of the district Camarasso this one died seven times ago. After his death Local responsibility was confided to Kangouté Mohamad Madani, this one is the imam of the district of kamagassoin Bouna and primary school teacher of Bouna university graduate's Medina of Saudi Arabic. He teaches French-Arabic Primary school in Bouna¹⁰. This library is the richest and the biggest in number at the level of Bouna. But the state of preservation are deplorable because it had no standard of protection it was also abandoned and less interest what makes most of the documents in degradable state because of humidity and of rusts.



As for the library of Soulihou Haïdara, it includes 46 manuscripts inherited from his grandparents. This library is inherited by its elder grandfather and his father who considered it as the Sherifs of Bouna (notable) which occupied the function of the imamat of the neighborhood of kardioulasso of Bouna¹¹. This library is not protected for manuscripts.

The library of Kassoum Diabagaté, the current main Imam of the mosque of the district karidioulasso, underwent a disaster. According to its words, most of the documents were ravaged in a fire at his older brother Bakari Diabagaté in the ring road of Bouna. It buried there nearly 20 years ago¹². Today, there are only 6 documents which were saved among which the Coran wrote by his uncle Bema Baye Diabagaté.

The library of Imam Ishaka Cissé comes in the second position in wealth to Bouna from that of El Hadj Tidjani Camara because it contains 60 manuscripts. Most are in good condition, but this library was not saved by the loss of documents. Indeed, Mr. youssouf Cissé¹³ indicated that he buried boxes of documents on behalf of his grandfather. This library consists of 5 Cissé family who decided to share the manuscripts in a

single place for the profit of each the first person in charge of it¹⁴. Ibrahim Cissé he is the grandson of Imam Ishaka Cissé whose library bears its name which was the Imam Head teacher of Bouna. There is at least two centuries.

2. The state of the handwritten manuscripts inventoried in Bouna
As regards Oustaz Kalid Camara's library, we were not able to assess because of the very advanced state of degradation of manuscripts. The time spent in the shelf without being used was right of their preservation.

Imam Camara Abdou Razak of the main mosque indicated that several manuscripts were buried for various reasons¹⁵.

	Department	Library	Number of manuscripts
01	Bouna	halakat el Hadjtidjani Camara	146
02	Bouna	SoulihouHaidara	46
03	Bouna	KassoumDiabagaté	6
04	Bouna	Imam IshakaCissé	60
TOTAL :			258



From 12 till 28 November 2016, we went to Mankono with a local guide in this particular case Gaoussou Karamoko to inventory the manuscripts of the others mentioned cities, after two days of negotiation, certain religious authorities included the legitimacy of our initiative agreed to make us discover their manuscripts. At beginning with Imam Mamadou Fofana of main mosque of Mankono. But, latter he specified that we shall have access to certain document only¹⁶.

The city of Mankono being part of former Islamic cities in Ivory Coast consists of ulemas' various families among which Fofana, Karamogo and Haidara who possess each one manuscripts. If certain families agreed to collaborate by allowing us to assess their manuscripts, others on the other hand showed themselves hesitating, but most agreed to open us their suitcases to documents.

We hold that most of these manuscripts are kept in deplorable conditions to be able to resist the bad weather as we are going to indicate it in the image taken for that purpose. Besides, these manuscripts are often confided to people who do not master the contents. If some people think

that manuscripts are sacred, and for it, it is necessary to take care, others on the other hand find no interest there, and prefer to confide them or to give to people who have little interest in it or bury them purely and simply, as it was the case of Fofana Sinaly confirmed having buried such a numerous document due his state of degradation by humidity¹⁷.

	Department	Library	Number of manuscripts
01	Mankono	El Hadj Mamadou Fofana	18
02	Mankono	Ali Imam Karamogo	16
03	Mankono	Ahmad Fofana dit Maboundoudé	80
04	Mankono	Cheikh Gaoussouba1-2	60
05	Mankono	Mouhamad Fofana Kombadé	8
06	Mankono	bibliothèque Fofana Sinaly	43
07	Mankono	Lossinaflanikaramoko 1	29
08	Mankono	Lossinaflanikaramoko 2	143
09	Mankono	Aboubakary Sidiki Fofana	10
10	Mankono	Massaranga	35
11	Mankono	Karamogo Ousmane	19
		Nombre total de manuscrits :	461

This board and the other precedents sum up the different areas visited as well as libraries and inventoried manuscripts.

The summary table reveals a total of 807 manuscripts listed in three (03) visited regions. At the moment, a number of recommendations must be made to mitigate the problems of preservation raised during the various missions in these regions.

CONCLUSION:

The question of manuscripts in Ivory Coast raised several questions concerning the manuscripts: their existence, their states. This study can highlight the questions concerning the state and the existence of manuscripts in the country, it also specifies premises and people in possession of these manuscripts in nowadays.

Our study gives characteristic details to manuscripts, their physical states, their conditions of preservation, and their formats. All this information will be published in a catalog to provide them with the researchers and all those who are interested or who defend the case of manuscripts all over the world and particularly in Ivory Coast.

This article which comes at the end of a research project of manuscripts in the Ivory Coast puts forward to inquire on the existence of manuscripts; to lead a plea with the holders of manuscripts so that they made discover their heritage by letting them know that manuscripts represent an immense cultural heritage, consequently they must be kept only by people who measure their importance.

Indeed this work allowed us at first, to make a sorting of documents then attribute them a number of preservation. Secondly, they must be put in archival boxes to avoid the state of humidity and guaranteed protection. It is urgent to plan a premises with acceptable conveniences of preservation to tidy up all the listed manuscripts there, which constitute a documentation center for knowledge. In the big digitisation project of manuscripts in Ivory Coast must be and up in the coming years in order to ensure an eternal documents saving.

Finally, we end this work by thanking ARCADIA structure who has accepted to finance this PILOT PROJECT by the help of the BRITISH LIBRARY.

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