

THE NIGERIAN QUR'ANIC MANUSCRIPT PROJECT: RETRIEVING A UNIQUE RESOURCE ON THE KANURI LANGUAGE AND CULTURE.

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"Many African languages have a long written tradition, e.g. Ge'ez, Kiswahili, Hausa, etc." reads the summary of panel 21 of the AEGIS conference "African Manuscripts and Museum Collections in Europe".¹ The list could be extended to include other names familiar to a wider audience, e.g., Fula(ni) (Fulfulde), Manding (Mandenkan, Bambara, Dyula, Mandinka), Wolof, Asante (Akan), Songay. The Kanuri language however, needs some introduction.² This is to a certain extent a historical paradox, because Kanuri was in fact the first African language to be extensively documented in the middle of the 19th century by Sigismund Koelle. In 1854 Koelle published two large volumes on Kanuri grammar and an anthology of oral narratives (1854a, 1854b). Remarkably, four tales from the Koelle's Kanuri anthology found their way into Volume 3 of the 3rd edition of the Grimm Brothers' *Children and Household Tales* (1856).

The history of the Kanuri language is closely related to that of the so-called Kanem-Borno Empire, which originated in the ninth century A.D. to the northeast of Lake Chad. Kanem had been an ancient centre of Islam in the historical Central Sudan since the 13th century or even earlier. The presence of the Islamic faith adopted by the Sayfawa ruling dynasty of Kanem in this early period is recorded by various external and local sources.³ The renowned Islamic poet and scholar Ibrāhīm al-Kānemī (d 1211 or 1212-13) was educated in Kanem which indicates that the Muslim community of that time was active and capable of providing a good education for its members (Hopkins and Levtzion 1981: 163, 260).

In the late 14th century the Kanem rulers (*mais*) and population moved to the Borno province of Kanem on the western edge of Lake Chad. By the end of the 15th century Borno had become the Islamic heir of Kanem in the Lake Chad basin. The city of Gazargamu – established as a capital by Sultan 'Ali b. Dunama (Mai Ali Dunamami) – was the economic, political and religious centre of this powerful empire until its fall in the Fulani jihad in 1808.

¹ The Conference was held on June 29 - July 2, 2005 at the School of Oriental and African Studies and the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, UK.

² Kanuri, a language of the Saharan group within the Nilo-Saharan linguistic phylum, was one of the main languages of Borno. It is spoken by an estimated 4.5 million people in Borno state of Nigeria and in the area around Lake Chad.

³ For external sources see, for example, historical accounts by Al-Bakrī (11th c.), Yaḡūt (12-13th cc.), Ibn Sa'īd al-Maghribī (13th c.), Abū 'l-Fidā' (13-14th cc.), Ibn Khaldūn (14th c.) in Hopkins and Levtzion (1981). Local sources are mainly represented by *Diwan Salatin Borno* (Lange 1977), *mahrāms* (charters of privilege) and *girgams* (genealogical lists) (Palmer 1928, 1936, Lange 1977, Bobboyi 1992).

The 'ulamā' groups ('the scholarly community, scholars', plural of 'ālim 'a scholar') were numerous in ancient Borno and played a significant role as acknowledged by the ruling Sayfawa dynasty (Bobboyi 1992, 1993). For hundreds of years the 'ulamā' were granted written charters of privilege (*mahrams*) which exempted them and their descendents from tax and war service. The *mahrams* were written in Arabic which was also used in the composition of historical and genealogical accounts such as *Diwan salatin Borno* (Lange 1977) and the chronicle of Ahmad b. Fartuwa, dated back to the 16th century (Lange 1987). Together with *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and *tawhīd* (theology) – the standard fields of Islamic study and writing – the Arabic language was a resource for "considerable literary activity in the poetry of eulogy, elegy, satire, and pietism" (Hunwick 1997: 211). However significant Arabic was, Kanuri – the language of Borno – also had a long literary tradition. According to oral sources, writing in Kanuri was the usual practice among the learned people of ancient Borno (Bivar 1960 : 203-204). Apparently diverse manuscripts existed written in Kanuri and its archaic variant ancient Kanembu, the language of Kanem, both languages being written in Arabic script.⁴ These texts covered a range of different genres of which at present we only know the *girgams* (genealogical lists), which were written in Kanuri, in addition to archaic Kanembu commentaries (*tafsīr*) on the Qur'an and translations from various Arabic religious texts. In the case of archaic Kanembu, it was used as glosses to the Arabic text it referred to, while Kanuri texts existed on their own.

Notwithstanding the existence of a long written tradition, few early Borno manuscripts in Arabic and Kanuri have survived. Two major events at the beginning of the 19th century drastically influenced the Borno writing tradition. First, in 1808, the City of Gazargamu was sacked in the course of the Fulani Jihad. There is evidence that some Qur'anic manuscripts comprising the Arabic and archaic Kanembu commentaries had been plundered as religious booty⁵, while the non-Qur'anic manuscripts or those directly related to the Sayfawa dynasty were most probably destroyed, being considered hostile or non-pious by Jihad leaders. The second event took place in 1814 when the Sayfawa, the ruling Kanem-Borno dynasty, was replaced by Shehu Mohammad el-Kanemī. From that date the documents related to the Sayfawa were officially condemned to such an extent that at the time of the Barth expedition in 1851 it was dangerous to possess the genealogical lists of the displaced dynasty (Lange 1977: 7). It would not be correct, however, to consider that the Borno writing tradition and its school of calligraphy were discontinued with the decline of the Kanem-Borno dynasty – we can see that the tradition remains vital even today. But it inevitably changed following shifts in political organisation and the disappearance of the ruling dynasty.

⁴ Archaic Kanembu should not be confused with modern Kanembu – a group of dialects spoken to the North-East of Lake Chad and constituting, together with Kanuri dialects, the Kanuri language.

⁵ One of the manuscripts under consideration travelled from Borno to the Fulani emirate Gwandu where it has since been handed down in the family of Waziri for many generations (Bivar 1960: 199).

Due to the obliteration and scattering of the documents produced during the Sayfawa dynasty we now lack the knowledge of the Arabic writing tradition used by scholars in Borno before the 19th century. The SOAS collection of the Qur'anic manuscripts helps to fill this historical lacuna.

The SOAS manuscripts have a special status compared with other UK and continental European collections of Kanuri written in Arabic script. These collections are by no means numerous but each is unique, and we now briefly discuss them in order to underline their importance.⁶

UK NATIONAL ARCHIVES: RICHARDSON COLLECTION

The National Archives keeps manuscripts collected by James Richardson, a British traveller, during his two expeditions to Africa between 1848 and 1851. The collection comprises a number of Arabic-script (*Ajami*) texts in Kanuri as well as in other languages of the Central Saharan area such as Tuareg, Tubu, Shuwa Arabic, Hausa, Manga, etc. These texts are mainly vocabularies and short phrases written by Richardson's scribe Yousef Moknee.

Richardson's dispatches to the Foreign Office, now deposited in the National Archives, were collected in two volumes labelled early in the 20th century "F.O. Tripoli no. 77" and "F.O. Tripoli no. 73" (the head office of Richardson's expedition was located in Tripoli). At present these volumes are marked as "F.O. 101/30" and "F.O. 101/26".

Figure 1 (Richardson's Vocabulary, p. 1) presents a Kanuri and Tubu vocabulary "Words in Bornaouee & Tibaoouee", where Bornaouee stands for Borno or Kanuri and Tibaoouee stands for Tubu.

⁶ We refer here to the collections we are familiar with. We do not believe that the list presented here is exhaustive.

Words in Bornuancee
Tibaouce.

هءء كلاء بالبرناوءء والتبءاءوء

Tibaouce, English, Bornuancee.	Tibaouce, English, Bornuancee.
يب Leave (it). يقى	الله God. الله
قن Carry. قوشن	كاهن. كاهن
كلء Boy. تاءه	الله. الله
كلقن Cotton. كلقن	Earth. الله
شمء Ear. هم	Water. الله
عوم Eye. شء	Thunder. الله
قمء Teeth. قمء	Wind. الله
ونى Spit. كن	Gold. الله
كوكىا Fowl. كوكء	Sun. الله
ءءبر Iron. هءى	Moon. الله
شءا Pepper. شءا	Stars. الله

Fig. 1

This collection, together with materials published by a colonial officer Philip Askel Benton in the early 20th century (Benton 1911: I-VI facsimiles), is an example of Kanuri texts commissioned by an outsider. However, Benton's documents (Figure 2) are distinguished by their typical Borno style of calligraphy discussed below.

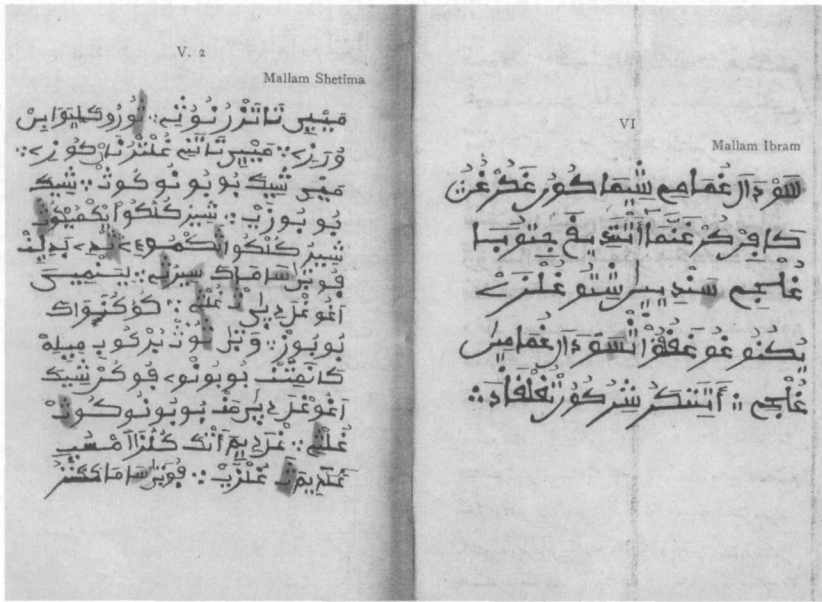


Fig 2

UK. LEEDS UNIVERSITY LIBRARY. ARABIC MANUSCRIPTS COLLECTION

Leeds University Library holds in its Special Collections three Arabic Maghribi manuscripts which contain glosses in archaic Kanembu and Hausa. They are catalogued under reference numbers MS 303, MS 304, and MS 357 in *Catalogue of Oriental Manuscript*, vols. VII and VIII (Macdonald n.d.; Young 1980: 5-6).⁷ Manuscripts MS 303 and MS 304 are probably from the eighteenth century and contain a collection of short pieces on a variety of subjects: literature, law and theology (Ebied and Young, 1976: 111-115). A small part of manuscript MS 357, completed in 1250 HA/1835 CE, contains an unidentified religious text in Arabic with archaic Kanembu annotations next to the Arabic words (Arabic in red ink, Kanembu in black). Archaic Kanembu and Hausa, represented as interlinear annotations in MS 303, MS 304, and as linear annotations in MS 357 have been recently identified by the author who suggests a Borno/Central Sudan provenance for all three manuscripts.

⁷ The manuscripts identification numbers can only be found in this internal Catalogue (not the online Special Collections catalogue).

USA. NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY. HUNWICK COLLECTIONS

A collection of Kanuri MSS in original and microfilm form is deposited in the Department of History, Northwestern University, Evanston. Many of the MSS originate in the Jos Museum (Nigeria) collection (the "Palmer Papers"). The others come from the Centre for Trans-Saharan Studies, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria, and were obtained by Professor John Hunwick of Northwestern University about 35 years ago. These manuscripts combine various genres of the Borno written tradition, but many of them have not yet been catalogued. As an example **Figure 3** shows a page of one of the *girgams* (chronicle of the kings, genealogy). This type of manuscript is available in microfilm only.⁸

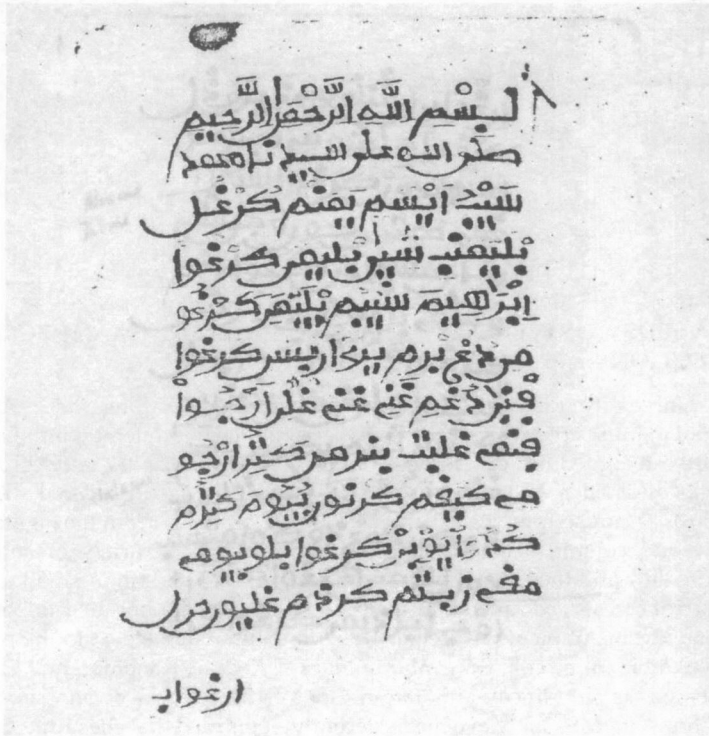


Fig. 3

⁸ Some copies from the Northwestern University collection were kindly given to me by Professor John Hunwick.

One can see a type of genre other than *girgams* in Figure 4. It shows a sample from uncatalogued documents belonging to the same collection. The document supposedly represents the archaic Kanembu commentaries on Arabic words (in red ink). However, at present we do not know which Arabic text it refers to.

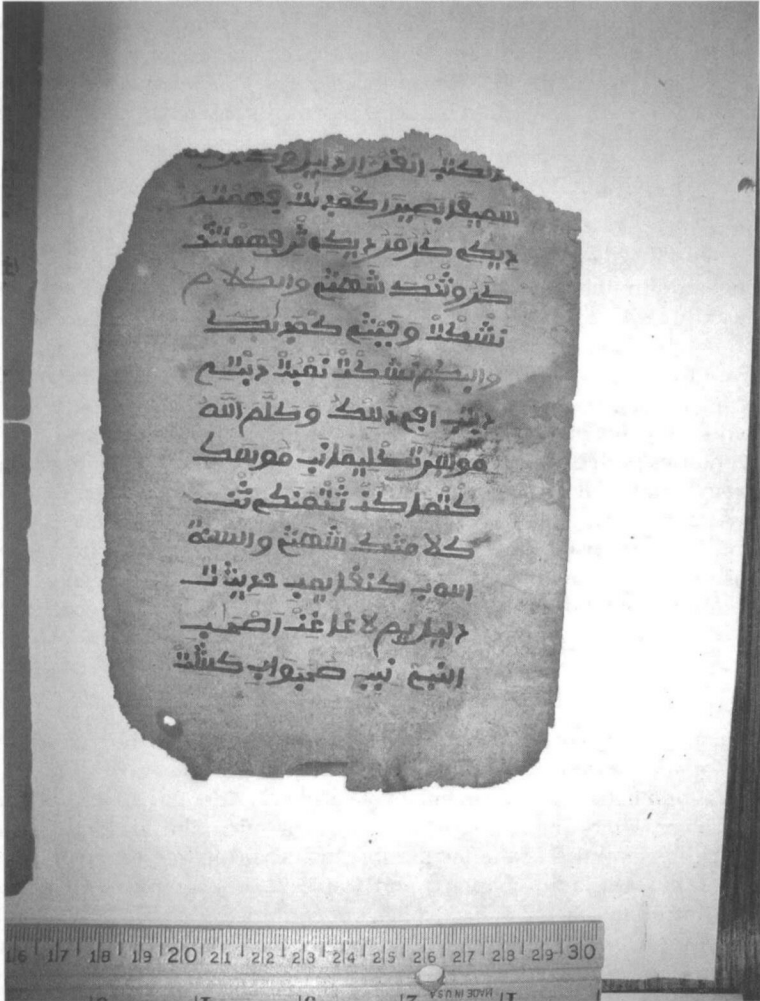


Fig. 4

FRANCE. PARIS. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE

The last document to mention before turning to the SOAS collection has been found in France. This is a Qur'anic manuscript of the 17th century with archaic Kanembu glosses, deposited in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, of which no image is available at the moment. It was first described by F. Déroche (1985: 48) as Arabic and possibly 'African', then identified by N. Dobronravin as Arabic and 'Saharan' (possibly Kanuri), and subsequently analyzed in more detail by the author. Preliminary study of the manuscript revealed that the Kanuri glosses represent specific orthographic conventions distinct from those of the SOAS manuscripts. The Paris manuscript is similar to those of the SOAS collection in that it represents an archaic Kanembu *tafsir* on the Qur'anic text.

THE SOAS COLLECTION

At present Bivar's collection, which is the subject of our research, is deposited in the Special Collections Department of the SOAS library, catalogued under the inventory number MS. 380808.⁹ The photographs of the Borno Qur'anic manuscripts were taken by A. D. H. Bivar in 1958-59 in Northern and North-East Nigeria. The original negative microfilms of these manuscripts are believed to be in the custody of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Nigeria (formerly the Nigerian Department of Antiquities).¹⁰ The collection contains photographic copies of the Qur'anic manuscripts of 16th to 18th centuries with extensive glosses in archaic Kanembu and commentaries (*tafsir*) in Arabic. All manuscripts are believed to have been written in the old Borno capital city Birni Gazargamu. There are four different manuscripts, two of which are extensive (totalling 209 pages in microfilm and photographic form). One of the manuscripts, the "Geidam Qur'an", has been recently expanded to the whole volume (724 pages) by means of digital reproduction made from a Nigerian original. The digital counterpart of the collection will be soon added to the material deposited in the Special Collections of the SOAS library.

The papers and microfilms have been grouped together by reference to the names of the possessors of the originals and have been given individual reference numbers. The documents have also been identified with regard to their content. Every photograph and roll of the microfilm has been given a number (the second figure after the forward slash) in accordance with the order of the Qur'anic chapters and verses (for example, 1/1 denotes manuscript no. 1, page 1). The collection comprises negative photocopies, bromide prints, and a box with five microfilms. The collection was generously

⁹ In 2004, Professor Philip J. Jagger of the Africa Department, SOAS, was awarded an Arts and Humanities Research Council grant of £277,000 to fund a 3-year project studying the SOAS collection. Other members of the research team are Dr Dmitry Bondarev (the author), Dr Abba Isa Tijani, and Dr Daniel Vazquez-Paluch.

¹⁰ We have made every effort to contact the above institution to discuss matters of copyright and the condition of the MSS, but have not been successful.

donated to the Special Collections of the SOAS Library on 18.02.2003 by Professor A. D. H. Bivar.

1. The "Yerima Mustafa Qur'an" or "Gwandu Qur'an" (Figure 5 and Figure 9).



Fig. 5

This manuscript was in possession of Yerima Mustafa, District Head of Geidam. In February-March 1959 Bivar photographed 105 pages of the manuscript. In the early 1960's, these copies entered his collection in microfilm form. From the very beginning of our investigation, this manuscript was the primary source for linguistic analysis since each page of it comprised a considerable number of archaic Kanembu glosses, by far exceeding the

quantity of linguistic data in the other three manuscripts. At present, thanks to the generosity of Waziri of Borno, Yerima Muhtar Mustafa, we have a complete copy of the manuscript in digital form.

The microfilm copy of the manuscript comprises three 35mm rolls (36, 36 and 32 frames) which makes 105 frames in total. There are also three specimen prints from the microfilms.

The microfilm copy is not complete, representing consecutive verses (*aya's*) from the opening *sūra al-fātiḥa* to verse 170 of the third *sūra al-Imran* and the final *sūra's* from 92 to the end of the Qur'an. The content of each microfilm is as follows:

1/4 – Q.1:1 to Q.2:187; 1/5 – Q.2:188 to Q.3:60; 1/6 – Q.92 to Q.114. The glosses in Arabic are random and by no means extensive compared to the archaic Kanembu glosses.

2. The "Shetima Kawo Qur'an" (Figure 6)

This Qur'an was in the possession of Shetima Kawo of Maiduguri (*Shetima* is an honorary traditional Kanuri title given to a learned Islamic scholar), and the manuscript was shown to Bivar in February-March 1959 by the owner. It is represented by 36 negative prints and two microfilms in 35mm rolls with 32 and 36 frames respectively, which makes 104 pages in total. Most of the frames are of good resolution, and the prints comprise consecutive pages from *sūra al-fātiḥa* to Q.2:235 and a page of Q.93-Q.94. The content of the microfilms is: 2/37 – consecutive pages from Q.2:176 to Q.3:36; 2/38 – random pages from Q.3:36 to Q.110:2. The pages of 2ShK manuscript contain very many Arabic glosses taken from various *tafsīrs* (yet to be identified), while the number of the archaic Kanembu glosses is relatively small.

3. The "Imam Ibrahim Qur'an" (Figure 7)

This Qur'an was shown to Bivar by Imam Ibrahim, Imam Juma Maiduguri (the head of the Muslim community of Maiduguri) in November 1959. Apart from the vernacular glosses the manuscript carried an abridged Arabic commentary, the *jamī' aḥkām al-qur'ān* of al-Qurṭubī, and a colophon with the date of completion of this commentary – 1st Jumadi II, 1080 H, equivalent to 26th October, A.D. 1669. This manuscript is now available in photographic copies of only four pages, three of which were published by Bivar (1960: 199-205). The prints provide *sūra al-fātiḥa*, two initial pages of *sūra al-baqara* and the last page of the manuscript with the colophon carrying the date.



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

4. The “Malam Muhammadu Qur’an” or Gwandu Qur’an (Figure 8).

This manuscript was in possession of Malam Muhammadu, the Waziri of Gwandu – a traditional Hausa-speaking emirate. (Gwandu city was one of the two capitals (together with Sokoto) of the Fulani empire following the 1804-12 jihad).

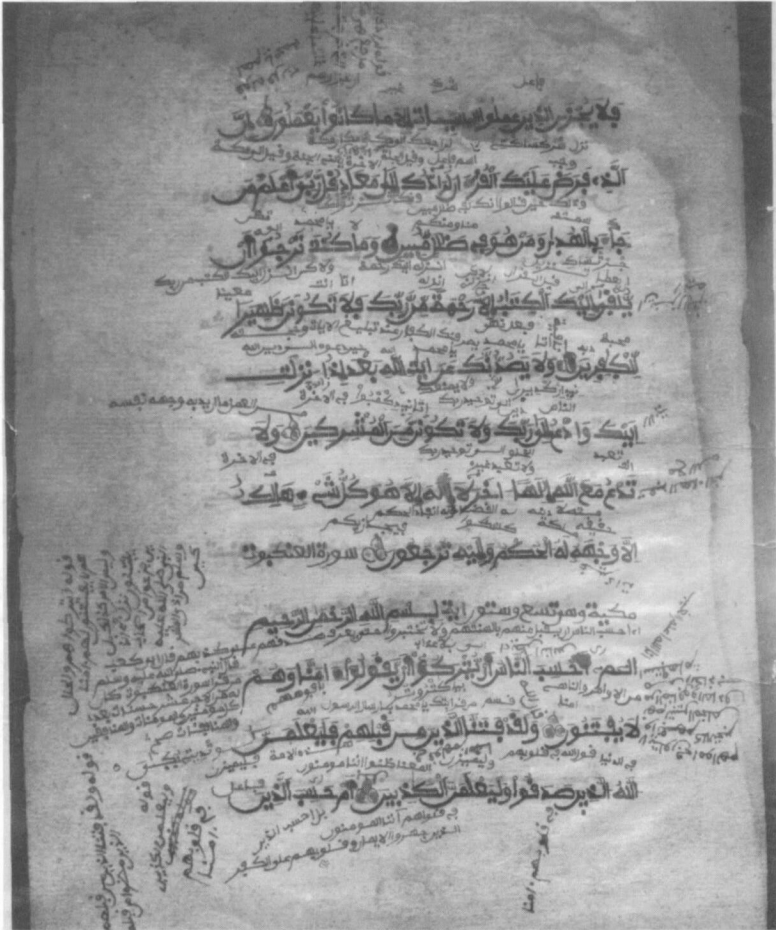


Fig. 8

In January-February 1958, Professor Bivar on behalf of the Federal Department of Antiquities made photographs of the entire volume at Birnin Kebbi. This copy, most probably plundered at the time of destruction of Birni Gazargamu, travelled a considerable distance from Borno to Gwandu. At the moment there are only two pages available in the SOAS collection, each page containing a few archaic Kanembu glosses. The Arabic commentaries on the Qur'anic text are on the contrary extensive, a feature typical for other SOAS Borno Qur'ans except for the "Gwandu Qur'an".

All four manuscripts belong to a calligraphic tradition of Borno court hand which originates from the *Ifrīqī* style – an offshoot of Kufic script or, more

precisely, of the heavy and angular Maghribī script. A detailed palaeographic description of the manuscripts in the SOAS collection may be found in Bondarev (2006a) while a study of the origin of the Borno Court Hand was undertaken by Bivar (1960, 1968).

The four manuscripts differ in their individual calligraphy. The lettering of the Yerima Mustafa Qur'an (henceforth 1YM) and Imam Ibrahim Qur'an (henceforth 3ImI) presents a smooth "rounded" style in contrast to the Shetima Kawo Qur'an (henceforth 2ShK) and Malam Muhammadu Qur'an (henceforth 4MM), which is more angular. There is also a slight difference between 1YM and 3ImI, in that the former appears to have been produced by a more professional and confident scribe. 2ShK is remarkable not only for its more angular style, but also for its near perfect calligraphy. In contrast to the Arabic commentaries (which are especially extensive in 2ShK, 3ImI, and 4MM), the Kanuri glosses in all the manuscripts are fully vocalized. In all four copies, the glosses appear both interlineally and marginally; and some of them are written upside down.

With regard to the hand of the Kanembu glosses, as opposed to the hand of the primary (Qur'an) text, the first thing to be mentioned is that the glossing hand of 2ShK is extremely close to that of the Qur'an text. (See Figure 6). Whether this similarity is the result of the same hand or of a strong calligraphic tradition has yet to be established.

The glosses in 1YM are most probably written in a hand¹¹ other than the hand of the primary text; but the former is very similar to the latter in style throughout the 91 initial pages (to the aya 170 of the 3rd sura), as one can see in Figure 5.

The glossing hand of the last pages is, however, markedly distinct from both the primary text and the glossing hand(s) of the initial pages. This, for instance, is characterized by the much extended teeth of the letter *ṣīn*. (Figure 9).

Manuscript 3ImI, especially its first page, contains extensive glosses in a number of different hands (Figure 7). Since this Qur'anic copy only consists of four pages, it is very difficult to analyse either its palaeographic or linguistic properties. The same holds true regarding manuscript 4MM, which comprises only two pages.

In the course of the first phase of the Nigerian Qur'anic Manuscripts Project, which involved an intensive study of the SOAS collection and a field trip to Nigeria, different important questions have been answered covering a range of interdisciplinary subjects from palaeography, sociolinguistics and linguistics, to African history, Islamic and Qur'anic studies.

Preliminary comparison of the palaeographic and orthographic features of the

¹¹ Strictly speaking in a number of very similar hands.

Kanuri glosses used in manuscripts 1YM and 2ShK has clarified many issues concerning the ancient Borno writing tradition. We can now assert that the Borno calligraphy styles were not homogeneous. Spelling conventions were not unified either. But within a single calligraphic style (in our case observed in two different manuscripts) orthography is to a large degree consistent. In 1YM, for instance, there is a regular graphic encoding (representation) of the nouns and modifies **gothō** 'all', **thū** 'name', **thuron** 'inside', **thlm** 'black', personal pronouns **hū** 'I', **nī** 'you', **tī** 'he/she', **handī** 'we', **nadī** 'you (pl.)', **tandī** 'they'; possessive pronouns **-ni** 'my', **-nm** 'your', **-jī** 'his/her', **-jī** 'their'; postpositional case-marking morphemes **-ka** (direct object marker), **-ro** (indirect object marker), **-halan** (associative+locative marker), **-kami** (partitive marker), **-kan** (ablative marker), etc.

2ShK represents the same level of standardization, but it differs remarkably from the spelling conventions of 1YM. For example, the grapheme <th> does not occur in 2ShK as it does in 1YM. Instead, the grapheme <s> is used in the corresponding lexemes: **siki** (2ShK) – **thīgī** (1YM) 'there is', **sah** (2ShK) – **tha** (1YM) 'they say', **srakō** (2ShK) – **thragō** (1YM) 'he wants', **satalkī** (2ShK) – **thutulūgī** (1YM) 'he took out'.

It is possible that spelling systems of 1YM and 2ShK used in archaic Kanembu were influenced by different Kanuri/Kanembu dialects (contemporaneous to and) spoken by the scribes.

With regard to the linguistic features of the vernacular language used for the Qur'anic commentaries, it has been discovered that this is an archaic form of Kanembu, a group of dialects spoken east of Lake Chad and linguistically classified as an eastern subdivision within the dialect continuum of the Kanuri language. Historically, Kanuri emerged as the language of Borno during the gradual population shift of the former Kanembu speakers from the Kanem area to Borno in the 13th-15th centuries. Over time, Kanuri and Kanembu dialects have undergone significant change from that early period, but are still mutually intelligible. Archaic Kanembu as used in the Borno Qur'ans is, however, considerably distinct from modern Kanuri and Kanembu dialects, and unintelligible to modern speakers because of the many archaic features in its phonology, morphosyntax, and lexicon.

The analysis of archaic Kanembu resulted in establishing grapheme-phoneme correspondences for the majority of letters. Also, an archaic postpositional system has been reconstructed, together with other morphosyntactic and lexical reconstructions (Bondarev 2006b; 2006c).

Linguistic, palaeographic, and historical evidence proves that the origin of the Qur'anic commentaries in archaic Kanembu goes back to the period long before the establishment of the Borno capital Birni Gazargamu (1480), even longer before the time when the manuscripts were created (16th to 18th centuries). It is unlikely that this archaic form of Kanembu, restricted to commentaries on religious Arabic texts, was a spoken language of the ancient

people of Borno. Archaic Kanembu gradually developed into a highly 'technical' language functioning specifically as a translation tool for Qur'anic studies (Bobbyoi 1992: 58, Imam 2004: 98, Bondarev 2006c). As has been found in the course of the Project field trip to Maiduguri, the capital of the modern Borno State, Nigeria, archaic Kanembu is still being used by local Islamic scholars as a language for translating religious, and even secular, Arabic texts. However, this language, locally known as *Tarjumo*,¹² has undergone considerable phonological and morphosyntactic change. *Tarjumo* is nevertheless structurally close to the archaic Kanembu used in the Borno Qur'anic manuscripts and almost as unintelligible to modern Kanuri and Kanembu speakers as archaic Kanembu is.



Fig. 9

¹² It is also called *Turjiman* or *Turjiman Kanembu*. These terms, which bear the concept of "interpretation", reflect the function of this specific language as an explanatory medium applied to the Qur'an and exegetic literature. Kanuri word *turjimân* 'interpreting' originates from Arabic *turjumân* 'interpreter', a noun derivation from the verb *tarjama* 'to translate, interpret'.

There are also some important findings in the field of Islamic and Qur'anic studies.¹³ We were able to identify different Arabic *tafsirs* endorsed on margins of 1YM, 2ShK, and 3ImI. The *tafsirs* so far identified are *al-Tashil li 'Ulüm al-Tanzil* of Ibn Juzzay al-Kalbi, *al-Jalälayn*; *al-Jämi' li-Ahkäm al-Qur'an* of al-Qurtubî; *Jämi' al-Bayän fi Tafsir Äy al-Qur'an* of Ibn Jarir al-Tabari; *Bahr al-'Ulüm* of Abü 'l-Layth al-Samarqandi; *al-Kashf wa 'l-Bayän 'an Tafsir al-Qur'an* of Ahmad b. Ibrahim al-Tha'labi al-Nisäburi; *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim* of Ibn Kathir al-Dimashqi; *al-Wajiz fi Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Aziz*, of al-Wahidî. Diversity of *tafsirs* used by ancient Borno scholars is remarkable if compared to the modern tradition which mostly makes use of *tafsir al-Jalälayn*. Further research in this direction may produce answers to many interesting questions on the early development of Qur'anic studies in Kanem-Borno.

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¹³The study of the Arabic endorsements in the manuscripts is being undertaken by Daniel Vazquez-Paluch, our research assistant in the Islamic/Qur'anic field.

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