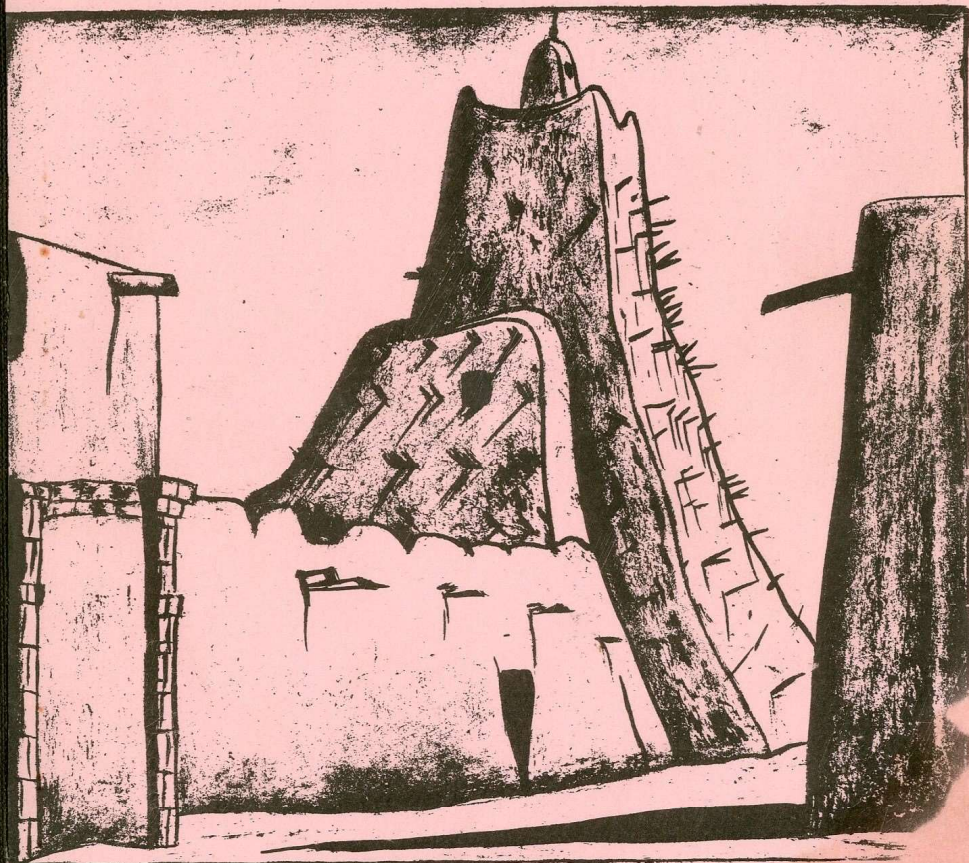


Centre de Documentation
et de Recherches "Ahmed Baba
(CEDRAB) TOMBOUCTOU

Revue Semestrielle

SANKORE

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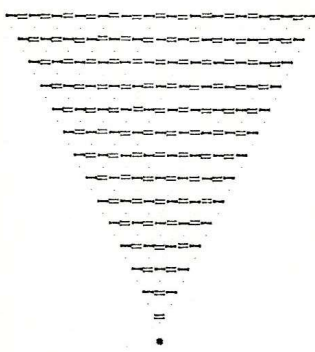
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AHMED BABA DOCUMENTATION AND
RESEARCH CENTER, TIMBUKTU

This item is dealing mainly with a short and complete view about AHMED BABA Center : its past, its objectives and structure.

Following the recommendations of the International committee Experts' meeting August September 1966 related to "GENERAL and scientific African History Pre the UNESCO'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY, in its fourteenth Session has adopted the Reso- tion n° 3 324 dedicated to African Culture Studies.

In order to practice that resolution, the UNESCO Experts' meeting held in TIM from November the thirteenth to December the seventh 1967 has suggested the cre- tion of a Documentation and Research Center that will cover the following are-

- Western Sudanic and Sahel countries : Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Tchad.
- North Africa countries sharing the Sahara Desert with West Africa i. e. Algeria, Morocco.

In January 1970, our government has received with great interest this welcome suggestion by approving the Act 12 allowing the opening of AHMED BABA Documen- tation Center.

Since 1972, UNESCO has made strong investment in equipping the Center. In addi- tion financial support given by Kuwait in 1973 has helped in the realisation of the first building complex.

From 1973 to 1986 AHMED BABA Center was considered as an office of Research un- der the control of the National Research Department in Bamako. Then, in 1977 the Center became functional, when an executive Director was appointed. Nowadays, the Center is a National public service that is supposed to be nearly transfor- med to a huge Islamic Research Center covering the whole West Africa and lead by Islamic conference organization.

The Timbuktu 1967 UNESCO Experts' Meeting has already pointed out some main obje- tives among which :

- Organizing prospection, grouping and collecting old manuscripts by using the microfilm system.
- Making a reliable classification of Documents by cataloging them.
- Keeping and preserving manuscripts according to recommended scientific skills
- Revitalizing Manuscripts' content by publishing them.
- Propagation African Culture through Manuscripts written by our bright Scholars
- Making a steady and strong progress in teaching and spreading Arabic and isla- mic culture.
- Making the Center to be an Institute of Cultural exchange between Mali and oth- er countries interested and involved in discovering more deeply African Culture and its Civilisation.

1. AHMED BABA : he was a great scholar who lived from 1556 to 1627. For more de- tails about him, please refer to Dr. Mahmoud A. ZOUHER' thesis : AHMED BABA DE ROMBOUCTOU, VIE ET OUVRE SORB ANNE 1977 FRANCS.

The new structure of the Center is provided by the law 89-86 adopted by our national Assembly during its Session of August the 8th 1989. Since, the Center is defined as a National public Center under the direct rule of the ministry of Culture. Indeed, the Center is headed by a National Executive Director and his Adjunct. In addition the Center is composed of two main Departments :

- Documentation, Research, and Publishing Department.
- The conservation and classification Department.

Newadays, UNESCO'S Recommendations had been acted and so far the Center has collected close to 10 000 old manuscripts dealing with both social and natural sciences. Among them 6 000 are already stored ranging with local chronicles, huge collections of literary religious treatises, poems and so on.

The Center is having a Laboratory, located at the main entrance of the Center, the "dark Room" is one of the prestigious places of the Center, where microfilm are being done, processed then stored; So far ten percent of accessioned Manuscripts have already been microfilmed.

AHMED BABA Center is offering a large conference Center that is supposed to receive three hundred seats. It is the biggest and the best one in the area, and most of conferences, Seminars initiated either by N.G.O.S. or public Services and even International ones, are being hold there.

In addition, the Center is having four classrooms for teaching and training opportunities. Each room may contain an average of 30 students.

In terms of housing facilities, the Center is presenting three single rooms for visiting Researchers' attached and a three-bedroom bungalow where a large size of visitors may stay for a short time period.

In the purpose of promoting and rehabilitating African history and culture AHMED BABA Center is publishing a historical journal called "SANKORE". In addition, our staff is welcoming visitors, professionals, Historians, and other bright scholars interested in discovering more deeply the contents of the Manuscripts.

From 1978 to 1993 a total number of 1 263 persons had visited the Center. Meanwhile, bright Scholars, Researchers and professionals had worked on Doctoral thesis, Research papers and translation matters. Follow is a complete listing of Research topics and their authors :

- Hurwick O. JOHN, History Dept, 1571 Western Avenue, Evanston, IL. 60201,
North Western Illinois University,
"English translation of the Tamikh Es-Soudan"
- Hale THOMAS, African literature Dept, Pennsylvania State University, University Park P.A. 16802, "Griots in the Senegay Society"
- Houssein Salah MOHAMED, Lecturer Banoral University, KANO "The teaching of Grammar in TIMBUKTU."
- Christophe Biendi, BAT 13 Valplan 13013 Marseille, "The Senegay Empire".
- Mohamed HANTHA, W. Adrar, Algeria, "Social And Economic Studies of Kunta during the 19e S."

- Trofaul THIERRY, 8 Rue des Pensées 87 700 Aix en Vienne, "History of the Sahel".
- Bugaje Uthman MOHAMED, Islamic Center P.O.B. 984 Zaria Nigeria "Islam and tradition in West Africa".
- Barry Ibrahîm, ISH Bamako, "The Toucouler Kingdom of Bandiagara".
- KANE Mamadou, Tunisia, "Islam in Soudanic Africa".
- TOURE Alhousseïni, 30 Rue de Gossard, Reuon, France, "Timbuktu, the main dates of Mali".
- CASSIE Mehanod, Amnongo, "Relations hips between Gao and Ghadames".
- Cleaveland, Timothy Dale; N.W.U., "Social History of Walata During the 19c S.".
- SYLLA, Eric, N.W.U., Evanston, IL. 60208, "Traditional Medicine In Mali".
- TANAPO Mana, P.O.B. 236 Rabat Morocco, "Relation ships between Morocco and Mali through the Malakismo".

Since its creation AHMED BABA Center has been doing steady progress in the process of keeping and strengthening relation ships with other cultural Centers, African History Departments, which aims to promote African Culture and History. Among them we may maintain :

- Le Centre National pour la Recherche Scientifique et Technologique au Mali (CNRS) Coordinating Research Institutions in Mali, Bamako.
- L'Institut Africain d'Afrique Noire (IFAN), in Dakar, Senegal.
- Le Centre d'Etudes Linguistiques et Historiques par La Tradition Orale (CELHO) in Niamey, Niger.
- L'Institut de Recherche Scientifique (IRS), Nouakchott, Mauritanie.
- Center for transaharian Studies, Maiduguri, Nigeria.
- History Department of North western Illinois University, Evanston, USA.
- African, American Institute, Ny.
- Western Illinois University, Macomb, Ill. USA.
- Islamic Scientific Education Conference Organization, ISESCO, Rabat, Morocco.
- Islamic Conference Organization IGO, Djedda, Saudi Arabia.
- Arabic League Education Science and Culture Organization, ALESCO.
- Le Centre de Recherches sur l'Histoire, l'Art et La Culture Islamique, Istanbul Turquie.
- Département des Etudes Africaines, Université Mohamed V, Rabat, Maroc.
- Centre de Recherche Islamique de Sebha, Libya,
- Centre des Manuscrits al-Maghili Adrar, Algérie,
- Foundation Al-Furqan, Grande Bretagne,
- Centre des Manuscrits, Université de Zaria, Nigéria
- Ecole des Etudes Orientales et Africaines, Université de Londres,
- Université de l'Etat du Michigan, Département des Etudes Africaines et Orientales.

Since its establishment, the center had been receiving substantial financial and equipment support from the UNESCO, the Islamic Conference Organization, Saudi Arabia, the ISESCO, the ALESKO, and the Koweit Government. Nearly, the center's activities will be extended to the whole west African countries, with the realization of the Islamic Regional Institute leaded by the Islamic Conference Organization.

Ali Ould SIMI

Chercheur au Centre Ahmed BABA

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- Journal Sankoré N°1 1985 CEDRAB.