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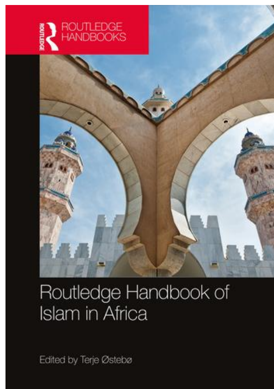

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A historiography of Sub-Saharan African mosques

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5

A HISTORIOGRAPHY OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN MOSQUES

From colonialism to modernity

Cleo Cantone

Nature creates curved lines while humans create straight lines.

Hideki Yukawa, 1907–1981

Introduction

With a continent so vast and cultures so varied, it is impossible to talk of an "African" mosque any more than it is possible to think about "mosque" as a typology of building. Rather, it is more conducive to talk about *masajid* (sing. *Masjid,*[1] place of prostration) and their multifarious forms on the African continent.[2] Variants of this term are found in African regions where Islam is prevalent and long-established: *Miskiti* (Swahili), *jakka* (Wolof), *miserey/misiro* (Manding), *misiri* (Bambara), etc.; the name Jingere Ber in Songhai, for instance, derives from the Arabic al-Jami al-Kabir (Saad 1983, 113). The importance of using vernacular terms lies in underscoring the link or linguistic kinship between a given culture – language, people – and the resultant forms of buildings.[3] This goes some way to explain the sheer variety of building typologies of "African" mosques: there is perhaps a more general tendency in vernacular architecture to veer towards "curved architecture" as opposed to the rectilinear, smooth, flat, "international" style of reinforced concrete – both of which building typologies are widely represented across the continent.

Above and beyond any discourse on tradition or nostalgia for hand-crafted material culture using natural materials, versus modernity, young, emerging architects are now employing more sustainable techniques and making use of locally available materials in recognition of the suitability of "traditional" architecture's cooling properties, thus modifying the prevalent perception in "developing" countries that using traditional materials and techniques is backward and regressive.[4] Furthermore, the creative use of mud[5] has proven to adapt both to rural and to urban environments: adapting earth by means of modern techniques is more expensive and time-consuming than traditional methods but the result is a more durable structure that requires less yearly maintenance (Denyer 1978; Doat 1979). What has received less attention is the intrinsic link between the material, clay – *tin, salsal, sijjil* in Arabic – and Islamic sources,

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namely the Qur'an and hadith. If man is created out of *al-tin*, buildings made of this material become an extension of the body just as Adam is the son of clay, *Ibn al-tin* (Melo da Rosa 2018, 13). Thus, in a sense, clay becomes the default or de facto material of choice for places in which Allah is worshipped – on the contrary, if the requirements of urban modern life predicate the preference for high-rise constructions in concrete, the mosque demands little more than a demarcated space with no monumental pretensions.

This chapter proposes to provide an overview of the diversity of prayer spaces in Sub-Saharan Africa, from reeds to mud-brick architecture, and from baked brick to cement, from rudimentary spaces to contemporary monumental buildings. Also, it aims to give a historiographic perspective on what is still a growing field.[6] Inevitably, due to restrictions of space, such overviews will be reductive but it is hoped that further studies will emerge to fill these gaps; indeed, as René Bravmann wrote:

> While it is still premature to contemplate an in-depth history of African mosques, the antiquity of this architectural form and some of the broad stylistic developments associated with this building can be reconstructed from archaeological evidence and descriptive accounts by early Muslim and later European travelers.
>
> *2000, 512*

Geocultural spheres

In precolonial times the two main spheres of Islamic influence that came into play were the Maghreb for West Africa and the Indian Ocean for East Africa. In colonial times, however, in urban centers in Senegal, for instance, vernacular styles of mosque architecture were replaced by permanent buildings which either directly borrowed from or were inspired by French colonial architecture. These buildings were made of permanent materials such as burnt brick, using atypical features such as the veranda, or even inserted anomalous elements such as a clock integrated in the mosque's minaret. Often outgrown by the number of worshippers frequenting them, these mosques have been the object of multiple extensions and transformations. Yet apart from the early forays of European travelers and later colonial administrators like Paul Marty, few have taken an interest in this aspect of Afro-Muslim material culture.[7] With the advent of independence, local styles began to assert themselves in spite of the influx of funding from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States which contributed both to the construction of Middle Eastern style mosques and to the propagation of a conservative, Wahhabi-imbued, Salafi reformist strand of Islam – forging a neo-Islamic identity not only in sartorial choices but also in building styles.[8]

Sub-Saharan West Africa

Mali's millennial mud mosques

Mali's landmass between 10" and 25" N covers several climatic and vegetation zones, ranging from tropical and humid savannah in the south to the dry savanna to the desert in the north (the Sahara). The Senegal and Niger Rivers originating in the tropical mountains of Guinea flow through Mali: the Senegal briefly crosses its western part, the Niger joins the cities of Bamako in the south, Jenné, Mopti, and Timbuktu in the north. Arabo-Berber nomads called the steppe belt south of the Sahara the Sahel or "edge" of the desert – effectively acting as a belt separating them from the so-called Bilad al-Sudan. Although relatively sparse, trees – mostly

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mangos, African dum, Palmyra palm, and acacia – are used as building materials in addition to various forms of earth: adobe, cob, mud brick, and rammed earth.

Colonial authorities deliberately used discourses of preservation and authenticity largely derived from the Universal Exhibitions staged across Europe to glorify French domination of non-European peoples by presiding over the building of one of the most iconic mosques of Africa: the Great Mosque of Jenné.[9] The most commonly used technique – *banco* – the type of earth mixed with water to make bricks or render – used to be a cheap, readily available, and sustainable material but recently the cost of sourcing it has risen exponentially and masons need to travel further in order to source it.[10] Although the cost of fuel is a strong determinant in the corresponding cost of *banco*, there are more complex questions around world heritage, foreign intervention in restoration of these monuments, and the impact on the masons' sense of self-worth (Marchand 2009). The tradition of building in *banco* continues to the present day, both in the larger urban centers and in village mosques,[11] but in cities such techniques face the challenges of modernity with its inevitable, perhaps irrevocable, devouring of traditional materials and techniques.[12]

The styles of *banco* mosques are not easily categorized. Nevertheless, some useful points of departure are the physical environment to which they belong, namely the Sahel and the Savannah. Dorothée Gruner distinguishes between "old Sudanese" and "new Sudanese": the former displays autochthonous Sudanese characteristics based on conical and flat-roofed housing whereas the new Sudanese incorporates North African Islamic elements reflected in Mansa Musa's Djingere Ber mosque with its massive projecting minaret (Gruner cited in Schutyser 2003). In rural mosques of the mid-Niger, the most common layout is an enclosed courtyard (*sahn*) with a covered oratory (*haram*). The roof rests on bulky pillars which divide the oratory into narrow aisles running parallel to *qibla*. A staircase leads from the *sahn* to the flat roof from which the *adhan* is called. This same practice can be found in southern Algeria and Morocco in the *qsur* (sing. *qsar*) mosques and which can ultimately be traced back to Kumbi Saleh in the twelfth century.[13] Exceptionally, the great mosques of Timbuktu and Gao possess minarets reflecting North African influence. What distinguishes the Sahelian mosque is the protrusion in the *qibla* wall marking the presence of the *mihrab* which takes the form of a tower without acting as a minaret, hence the appellation *mihrab*-tower.

Small village mosques (*missirini* in Bambara)[14] either have a small step projecting from the outer enclosure or a stairway leading to the roof to make the call to prayer (the *muezzin* is called "*missiri wéléla*" or the one who makes the call to prayer) (Bazin 1965). On the right as you enter the courtyard are *canaris* or clay vessels used for holding water to perform ablutions, while on the left are those for drinking. Apart from the constituent elements mentioned above, no two mosques are alike, each one is crafted by an assembly of individual hands acting together, as a community. The yearly replastering required to maintain these *banco* mosques bears testimony to the commitment to this millennial tradition and at the same time marks their precarious fate in the face of modernity and the ubiquitous use of cement.

Since premodern times, two urban centers formed a node of trade and intellectual activity: Jenné and Timbuktu.[15] If the former was characterized by its riparian topography and tight urban space concentrated around its principal mosque, the latter "has always been dominated by its mosques" (Saad 1983, 129, 108–120). Jenné was defined by its kingship tradition of Jennekoy, while Timbuktu became a center of Islamic learning under the aegis of its scholars. Of the two cities' mosques, the Jingarey Ber mosque appears to be the largest and oldest earthen monument in Sub-Saharan Africa (Poissonnier 2018, 22–36). Originally built by King Mansa Musa I on his return from the *hajj* in 1325 AD, most of the current structure dates to the sixteenth century and consists of a roughly trapezoidal courtyard surrounded by thick,

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high, buttressed walls, and the prayer hall is formed of arcades resting on quadrangular pillars. The Great Mosque of Jenné, by contrast, is defined by its conical pillars with protruding *toron* or wooden reinforcements used by masons to climb during the yearly replastering.

Less documented but by no means less worthy of scholarly attention are the small, village mosques dotted around the Sahel (Schutyser 2003). Rising above an adobe wall in the heart of a village or lying low on the outskirts, no two of these mosques are alike – each one the creation of a local masons. The three I visited in the immediate vicinity of Djenné are:

- Sheikhu Ahmadu[16] mosque, Koirun Desiru: in conformity with the founder's puritanical zeal, the mosque is simple, verging on the austere; entering through a diminutive courtyard with *canaris* on either side, openings lead into a narrow passage usually reserved for elderly women. Through an arrow-shaped arch you enter the prayer room and face the *mihrab* (externally defined by a shallow rectangular protrusion) which merely consists of a rectangular recess in the *qibla* wall. Outside the entrance to the *sahn* and to its left is a raised platform or *tin-tin* used by the *muezzin* to make the call to prayer. Apart from the raised pinnacle over the main entrance and four corner pinnacles articulating the prayer hall's flat roof, the mosque is free of decoration.
- Woron Gikoy is slightly larger than Sheikhu Ahmadu mosque; here we find the characteristic staircase leading to the rooftop to call the *adhan*.[17] There is also a small inner courtyard with three arrow-pointed arched openings into the prayer hall, and outer pinnacled turrets and façades precede by *toron*.
- Sirinam[18] is more like a town mosque with its impressive *mihrab* tower and coffered façades with regularly paced *toron*. The mosque possesses no forecourt but an inner *sahn,* and on each side of the steps leading up to the entrance are two ledges for sitting on.

A style of its own: Senegal's heterogeneous mosques

In the Futa Toro region along the Senegal River are a series of mud mosques: they nevertheless constitute an exception as Senegal is no stranger to cement. Building styles vary from group to group, especially between the Sufi-oriented brotherhoods (*tariqa,* pl. *turuq*) and the reformist anti-Sufi strands of Islam. Numerically the most populous brotherhood, the Tijaniyya became known for its preference for building mosques over entering into conflict under the leadership of al-Hajj Malik Sy (Cantone 2012a; Sylla 2000). Sheikh Ahmadu Bari (Cisse), another of the great leaders and proselytizers of Islam, promoted the building of mosques and *zawiyas* as well as the teaching of the Qur'an even before the spread of the Tijaniyya (Charles 1977; Abun-Nasr 1965). Fundamentally based on the veranda-style house, one of these mosques survives in Tivaouane preserving is external mirador-minaret (Cantone 2012a).

Nor do reformist or Salafi-orientated mosques shy away from adding often redundant minarets – given that the call to prayer is now made via the ubiquitous loudspeaker – in order to call attention to the building. Perhaps the most iconic of Senegal's minarets – one of five belonging to the Great Mosque of Tuba – measures a towering 87 meters and is known as Lamp Fall after the founder's most influential disciple, Sheikh Ibrahima Fall. Owing to the exogenous influences on mosque architecture in colonial and postcolonial Senegal, the presence of first double but not uncommonly quadruple minarets have become ubiquitous in what Michael Gilsenan calls the "flamboyant use of the minaret" (1992, 189).

In other words, the transformation from the functional palisade to the monumental grand mosque with its superfluous domes and minarets plays into the infra-religious rivalry, *campanellismo* or "battles of prestige", bent on spreading a particular denomination of Islam, be

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it a Sufi order or a reformist group. Coupled with financial packages deriving from oil-rich countries, as is the case for the university mosque of Dakar (Mosquée UCAD), the proverbial "proliferation of mosques" has been widely criticized for pandering to the puritanical Salafi strain of Islam. Furthermore, sources of funding are often accompanied by the materials and style originating from the donor: the Great Mosque of Dakar and adjoining Islamic Centre is a case in point of Moroccan craftsmanship (Cantone 2012a; Holod and Khan 1997, 52).

A new phenomenon in contemporary mosques is the often unprecedented integration of women's prayer spaces, particularly within the non-Sufi mosques, as the result of the increasing presence of younger women attending both communal prayer and other Islamic-related activities in the mosque.

The colonial mosques of Saint Louis and Dakar

Situated at the juncture between the Sahara and the savannah, on the mouth of the river Senegal and the Atlantic Ocean, Saint Louis became something of a favorite destination for European seafarers. The French initially settled on the semideserted island of Saint Louis in the seventeenth century due to its mercantile potential and, thanks to its insularity, for its security. Undeterred by the lack of drinking water, the French founded a fort, and the population on the island, which included European military men as well as their numerous domestic slaves, rapidly grew. Following the Congress of Vienna, under Louis XVIII, Senegal ceased to be a market for slaves and its destiny was repurposed to become an agricultural capital and hence a "cleaner" type of colony. This project, however, turned out to be a total failure and by 1831 it was almost entirely abandoned.

The expansion of the city continued unabated, turning Saint Louis from a fort into a trading post or *comptoir*. There was, however, a shortage of construction materials: stone had to be imported from Thiès, Rufisque, and from the River Bakel in the east. Since there was no lime, shells had to be used as mortar.[19] To make up for the paucity of stone, baked bricks were produced in great quantities. Apart from monuments, official buildings, and residential quarters for rich merchants, the vast majority of dwellings were still made of straw and reed. Owing to the risk of fire, these buildings were gradually banned and replaced with *constructions en dur* (buildings in permanent materials).[20]

Henceforth, the colonial administration instituted the *mission civilisatrice* (civilizing mission), sending religious congregationalists to spread the Gospel to the Franco-African population in the first instance (Lorcin 2006). In 1828 a church was built capitalizing on local workforce to make the bricks. Situated on the southern part of the island in the Restoration/neoclassical style with its front porch resting on two square pillars, a church in similar style was subsequently built on the island of Gorée (Camara 1968). Around the same time, the marabouts of Saint Louis demanded a mosque, permission for which was granted by the administration in 1838 on the north side of the island in what can be said to be the beginning of topographical partition. It appears that the Muslims had traced a space to pray in the sand so the administration – evidently puzzled by this custom – offered to help them build a monument worthy of their faith (Sinou 1993, 135).[21] The engineers of the Ponts et Chaussés[22] suggested a plan which consisted in a fanciful neo-Gothic structure topped by a kiosk with an onion-shaped dome. This plan was abandoned and the one finally submitted was not altogether different from that of the church. The mosque was erected between 1844 and 1847. The bell towers were modified by adding blind pointed arches[23]; nevertheless, a bell still occupies the left-hand tower right below the now faded clock: it appears that the governor at the time had mandated the clock to chime with Christian practice.

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Situated on the Peninsula of Cap Vert or Cabo Verde – the name originally given by the Portuguese – Dakar was occupied by the Sossé and subsequently the Lebu ethnic group who had migrated from Futa Toro in the northeast of Senegal and settled in the area by the eighteenth century. The peninsula consisted of a series of 11 fishing villages whose names survive to this day in the form of *pènc* or districts. Before the Lebu gained independence from the Damel of Cayor, Lat Dior, the peninsula had been the object of transactions between the French government in Saint Louis and the Damel. In 1846 the Catholic Mission arrived as did freed slaves from the United States who had converted to Christianity. This confluence of converts, missionaries, merchants, and, increasingly, inhabitants from Gorée island was concomitant with the French administration's realization that the Cap Vert Peninsula was a far more strategic location from which to govern than their riverine outpost of Saint Louis although it did not officially become the capital of AOF until 1902 (Betts 1985, 196).

By 1858, with the agreement of Faidherbe, land had been bought by the French and construction on the peninsula had already begun. The issue of land ownership, however, was still a contentious one: Émile Pinet-Laprade (governor of Senegal from 1865 to 1869 and successor to Faidherbe) deemed it appropriate for the French masters to occupy uncultivated land, believing that Frances's commercial interests should henceforth be centralized in Dakar – even the museum of St. Louis was transferred there in 1869. The second step was to develop the country's infrastructure: the port of Dakar served the transshipment of goods and the railway between Saint Louis and Dakar would transport groundnut from the interior. Such an enterprise was strongly opposed by Lat Dior, despite the exponential growth of the production of what became Senegal's cash economy. The city extended as far as rue Blanchot, an area that was sparsely populated by indigenous and missionaries as most of the population resided around the Marché Kermel which was animated by commercial outlets and cafés. Colonel Canard outlawed housing made of perishable materials and in 1881, under his successor commander Jacquermart, the railway project linking Dakar and St. Louis was relaunched and completed in 1885. Between 1880 and 1905, the administration had created *villages de liberté* which were built along military lines in order to control the indigenous population, keeping them separate from the expatriate traders in order to avoid a conflict in their respective businesses.

If the infrastructure of Senegal was the administration's priority for logistical and commercial reasons, some attention was also paid to religious buildings. Catholics had hitherto worshipped in a chapel: it was now time to build them a proper church. The then governor Brière assigned the project to the *ministère de la marine* who built the church in 1880; however, its vault was so heavy that it crushed its supporting walls, causing such deep cracks that it had to be demolished in 1905. It was around the same time (c. 1884) that the administration also built a mosque on the intersection of rue Carnot and rue Moussé Diop ex-Blanchot. The circumstances around the mosque's construction are all but clear as little or nothing has survived in the archives and literature. Like the mosque of St. Louis, the architecture of Blanchot remains something of an enigma: both mosques are characterized by double towers flanking a pedimented façade, a pointed-arch portico, and wooden-shuttered windows. Roughly based on the Restoration style, the architect or engineer nevertheless attempted to modify what might have looked like the Church of Saint Louis in La Roche-sur-Yon (1817–1829)[24] in northwestern France with its double bell towers – the left of which bears a clock – and neoclassical pedimented façade. Instead, the pedimented façades of Dakar and St. Louis mosques were receded behind the portico and the arches given a neo-Gothic flavor. Undoubtedly, this unmistakably church-like style exemplifies the transculturation of architects trained in the Beaux-Arts in Paris who applied their skills in far-flung colonies such as Brazil and West Africa (Salgueiro 1997; Rabinow 1989).

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As for the clocks inserted in the towers, they are totally incongruous and at odds with the Islamic practice of making the call to prayer with the human voice. The clock on Blanchot's left side tower goes some way to confirm the mosque's construction date: it was made in Paris by Bernard-Henry Wagner and then the business was taken over by Armand-François Collin and ceded to Château Père et Fils – the name that appears on the clock – in 1884.[25] The erection of clocktowers in British India and French North and West Africa reflects the colonial obsession with order and punctuality contrasting with native people's perceived laziness and lethargy (Metcalfe 2002, 78–80). The subsequent proliferation of mosques built in masonry took off in the 1930s largely with the financial aid of the French administration and increasingly acquiring an aesthetic akin to the neo-Moorish revival popular in Europe at the time.

Tuba: spiritual capital of the Murids

Tuba was founded in 1887 as an "autonomous rural community" by the Murid brotherhood, who named the city after the tree of Paradise (from the Arabic *Ṭuba*, Touba in French). Planned around a central square dominated by its multiminareted, mega-mosque and adjacent mausoleums and shrines of the order's leading figures, Tuba embodies the notion of "Islamic city". In other words, Tuba shares with other "saintly cities" or "Marabout republics"[26] in Senegal social, financial, and administrative autonomy based on their Sufi ethos: no smoking or alcohol are allowed in its precincts. Such autonomy equally reflects a sense of independence vis-à-vis the "hegemony of Arab Islam" allowing black Africa to have its own saints, making it easier for Islam to expand well beyond its North African outpost. Thus Ahmadu Bamba, who founded the Murid brotherhood, became an exemplary pious figure known not only for his peaceful resistance against the *colons* but also for not bowing down to the institutional racism of the Mauritanian subsidiary of the Qadiriyya order of which the Murid brotherhood is a branch.

In line with the administration's Muslim policy, which specifically sought to accommodate the *grand marabouts*, the French were keen on making the Sufi orders agents of the state:

> with official titles and subsidies … with frequent visits and aid in the reconstruction of mosques and saints' tombs … with confidence reestablished between the directors of Islam and the European regents, one could begin, with great delicacy, the work of improving Islam and moving it in the direction of our civilisation.
>
> *Quinn and Quinn 2003, 99*

Indeed, in the case of the Manding marabouts of Casamance, the French had encouraged the production of groundnut and in exchange they donated money to build mosques and to make the pilgrimage to Mecca; the *colons,* meanwhile, established their *comptoirs* reaping the rewards of the cash crop.

Despite these material rewards, however, African Sufism became symbolic of Senegalese dignity in the face of European conquest and moreover an African Muslim possessed the additional advantage over his pagan compatriots of belonging to a universal Islamic community or *umma*: on one hand this strengthened Muslim identity and on the other it conceivably acted as a psychological barrier to the expansion of Christianity in the region. The transition from paganism to Islam is manifest in the transformation of pre-Islamic spirits into *jinn* and the transformation of ancient places of worship into *zawiyas* or mosques (O'Brien 1981; Sanneh 1997, 15–13; Cantone 2012a, 51–52). The Great Mosque of Tuba represents not only the Muridiyya's spiritual capital but also its geographical center, embodying the "center of the Murid universe" from which the city's street plan "radiates" (Ross 2006) while acting as a magnetic pole

attracting Murid *talibés* and the political elite alike. It is also one of the earliest modern mosques to be built in Senegal, begun under the leadership of Serigne Mamadu Mustafa (1927–1945) using reinforced concrete and stone foundations. Although labor and finances were taken care of by the Murid community on the back of the peanut trade, the French supplied engineering support (Ross 2006) and the mosque's entire revetment with pink Carrara marble from Italy bears testimony to the Murid builders' eclecticism and ties not only with the Muslim heartlands but also with their extensive diaspora across the Mediterranean.

East Africa and the Horn

From Massawa to Mogadishu

The Red Sea port of Massawa's social fabric is a hybrid of cultures and ethnicities – a bordering zone spanning both Arabian and African climates in what is today Eritrea. Its enviable position gave rise to commercial expansion thanks to the transportation revolution – namely the introduction of the steamship – prompting heightened imperialist designs in the region. Accelerated by the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the movement of people and goods created networks between the Indian subcontinent, the Arabian Peninsula, the Mediterranean, and the African hinterland. As a result, Massawa's architectural style reflects that of the port cities of Jedda and Sawakin using the most readily available material: coral. Prior to the Italian occupation of the mid-1880s, which succeeded Ottoman dominance, the humblest dwellings were still built in wood and reeds – something which the Italian authorities, like the French in Senegal, increasingly disapproved of, therefore transferring hut dwellers to the mainland (Miran 2009).

Despite Islam's long history in Ethiopia, the literature does not reflect what Hussein Ahmed refers to its status as "an integral part" of the region's demography and history. The same goes for the scarcity of studies on Muslim material culture (Ahmed 1992). Though Islam appeared in the Ethio-Eritrean region as early as the seventh century, Christianity has culturally dominated, both historically and historiographically. At times there was a conscious attempt to obscure the region's substantial Islamic presence exemplified by the destruction of mosques and the ban on their construction by Christian emperors in the fourteenth century (Ahmed and Miran 2007). In response, Muslims resorted to worshipping in *zawiya*s (Sufi lodges) instead. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw something of a revival of mosque-building. Under namely Turkish, Egyptian, and Yemeni Arab patronage, many mosques were restored as well as constructed, as in the case of Massawa (Cresti 1990; Miran 2009). The so-called Islamic revival that emerged from the Middle East in the twentieth century and spread to Muslim-majority countries including Africa was partly a response to European colonialism and partly Muslim intellectuals' attempt to reinvigorate the religion itself.

Sufi brotherhoods were particularly influential in this movement and *tariqas* like the Qadiriyya were revitalized, whereas others like the Shadiliyya, Ahmadiyya, Sammaniyya, Tijaniyya, and Khatmiyya were introduced to Massawa attracting new followers and contributing to the multiplication of small, denominational mosques.[27] But whereas the established *tariqas* were lineage and family-based, the newer orders were more centered on the *tariqa*'s founders. Along with Egypt's imperialist expansion of the 1820s, manifest in a series of public works and urban modernization, came a wave of Islamic diffusion amongst Tigre-speaking societies (Miran 2009, 168).

In 1910, Massawa possessed no less than 60 mosques in addition to those which were saints' tombs (*darih*), shrines, visitation sites (*mazar*), and celebration sites (*hawliyya*). The sacred nature of Massawa is perhaps best embodied in the Ras Medr mosque, an open-air *musalla* believed to

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be the original landing place of the Prophet's companions. The prayer esplanade is marked by a stone *mihrab* flanked by a *minbar* which bears a strong resemblance to what Cresti describes as a "minaret in the form of a *minbar*" or simply "minareto-minbar" found in the Ottoman mosque of Sheikh Hamed-Ali (Cresti 1990), thus suggesting a much later date. Ethiopia's trade links with Egypt, Ottoman Turkey, the Indian Ocean, and Portugal account for the multiple influences in the style of mosques. Despite Massawa's secondary importance for the Ottoman powerhouse, the Turkish legacy visible in mosques particularly in the coastal zone of the Horn is perhaps the most enduring (Ahmed and Miran 2007; Insoll 2003).

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw a revival of mosque construction, under three spheres of influence: Turkish, Egyptian, and Yemeni; the Italian occupation; and the postwar period. One of the tactics of Ottoman control was to build mosques or restore existing ones affiliated with the Hanafi school of thought they favored. Using a similar strategy, during the Italian occupation, the Fascist regime attempted to win over Muslim sympathy by instituting a pro-Muslim policy and building, financing, and restoring mosques in the Ethio-Eritrean region (Trimingham 1952, 137; Ahmed and Miran 2007). Thus, the main mosque of Asmara was renovated by the Italians in 1937 who also funded the Friday mosque of Keren in 1896 and many more (Ahmed and Miran 2007). Even the British Military Administration contributed to the building of Friday mosques in Addi Kala (1943) and Qarora (1948). The period after 1974 saw something of a mosque-building boom owing to the liberalization of religious policies and the influx of external Islamic philanthropic organizations or anonymous wealthy individuals: Asmara and Addis Ababa being the greatest recipients, but provincial towns and rural areas were no less provisioned with new places of worship in the Amhara, Afar, Oromia regions. In the early twenty-first century numerous mosques were constructed with Saudi funds, not only in Massawa but also in Sanafe, Mandarara, and Addi Kala.

On Harari mosques, few studies have been made aside from unpublished theses (Ahmed 1992, 21). Ethiopian journalist Abdulfatah Abdallah has recently produced two volumes on the mosques of Addis Ababa for which an English translation is keenly awaited.[28] In the twentieth century, Yemeni communities were established in Addis Ababa and prominent figures like *Sayyid* Abdallah al-Bar, the first imam of al-Nur Mosque, constructed the mosque with the aid of funds from his Yemeni Arab compatriots.[29]

The minaret in East and West Africa

The single, circular-shafted minaret found in the Horn of Africa contrasts with the square, often doubled shafts found in West Africa. Nevertheless, such minarets were rare before the nineteenth century: the so-called staircase minaret was predominant unless the call to prayer was simply made from the roof of the mosque (Bloom 2018). The tapering cylindrical minaret prevalent in the rural mosques of Harar (e.g., the Argobba mosque with its projecting sticks) is possibly related to the pillar tomb usually made of coral bricks and found from southern Somalia to Tanzania from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, which may in turn originate from pre-Islamic funerary markers with phallic origins (Insoll 2003, 180). Even the Ottoman mosques of the Ethio-Eritrean region stick to the single minaret – a clear indication of the provincial nature of their East African outpost – contrasting with the multiple minarets in the imperial capital's minarets in Istanbul.

In Sub-Saharan West Africa, the minaret is largely absent from precolonial mosques but uniquely, the *mihrab* is marked both by its projection from the *qibla* wall and from the roof forming what is best described as a *mihrab* tower. The mosque of Katsina in northern Nigeria, however, presents an exception: its minaret known as Gobarau is three-tiered and tapering.

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Allegedly dating to the reign of Sarin Muhammadu Korau in the fifteenth century, the tower was later encased by a lower enclosure and may have functioned as a watchtower. The strong influence of the Maghreb meant minarets in the earliest Muslim settlements at Koumbi Saleh and Tegdaoust were square; nevertheless, their tapering form may well derive from pre-Islamic towers of Benin and Yoruba houses (Denyer 1978, 163). Once Islam spread to the savanna region up to and including Jenné-Timbuktu, Sudanic influences came into play giving rise to the stepped tower minaret as at the mosque tomb of Askia Muhammad in Gao and the dramatically tapering tower of the Sankore mosque in Timbuktu, both of which are heavily pierced with *toron* or wooden stakes.

Up until independence, the square minaret has dominated western Africa while the cylindrical shaft prevails in eastern Africa. Assuming that the minaret has a fundamentally symbolic value, its multifarious manifestations across the Muslim world pay tribute to the creative possibilities of concrete and cross-cultural references afforded by travel and the professionalization of architects. In this regard, on the African continent as well as across the Muslim world, there has been an increasing proliferation of minarets: double, quadruple, and even quintuple as in the Great Mosque of Tuba whose beacon, the central Lamp Fall minaret, measures a towering 87 meters; nevertheless, the form of the Tuba minarets are hexagonal making a clear reference to Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt. Even in contemporary mosques with Wahhabi inclinations minarets are added regardless of their connotations of *bida* (innovation) purely to emphasize the mosque's prestige in the neighborhood.

Cementification, transposition, and transformation of modernity

In addition to the symbolic clout of the minaret, building a mega-mosque in the capital is another way of marking one's presence. The Murids had long planned to embark on such a project in Dakar. Naming it after Paradise itself, Massalikul Jinaan was inaugurated in September 2019 and cost an eye-watering $33 million. Following the quintuplet minaret and Carrara marble facings of Touba, the mosque occupies a vast, entirely paved area or "esplanade" devoid of the slightest reminder of greenery usually associated with Islamic depictions of Paradise. Like the Great Mosque of Dakar, the interiors are the work of Moroccan craftsmen thus continuing a long legacy of religious and economic relations between the two countries.

Given Africa's climatic conditions, worshippers increasingly expect air conditioning, nylon carpets, and high-quality audio equipment for the call to prayer. Such "mod cons" go hand in hand with modernization, urbanization, and the influx of funds from outside of Africa. Indeed, the mosque as a place solely for prayer and Islamic learning has given way to a more open and flexible use of space and it is only a question of time before mosques in North and West Africa, just as "secular-Islamic" countries like Turkey, will welcome everyone, regardless of their gender, or whether they are Muslims or not. Reflecting the mosque's original purpose as a multifunctional space, they welcome families on day trips seeking not just a place to perform designated acts of worship but also a place for children to play and to rest in its cool interior. The modern mosque now acts as a *public space* for not exclusively religious functions.[30]

Furthermore, the face of the mosque is changing: concrete affords the possibility of accommodating worshippers on more than one floor but the intrinsic nature of the material means that it is ill-suited to hot, dry climates and such environments need cooling by artificial means. Solutions are at hand as an emerging generation of Western-trained, African architects are taking the helm and proving that there are sustainable *and* modern solutions to housing, schools, and public buildings. Burkinabe architect Diébédo Francis Kéré has recently designed the Centre de l'Architecture en Terre in Mopti, Mali, as part of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture project

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which included the restoration of the mosque. Kéré's building not only responds to the region's climate by using stabilized earth blocks and barrel vaults as buffers between the interior and the exterior, but the horizontal, single-story layout avoids intruding upon the town's skyline and, most importantly, not causing obstruction to the view of the mosque.[31] The future of the mosque in Africa must be to go green.

Notes

1 See *Encyclopedia Islam*, New Edition, Vol. 6, 1989, 644 and for mosques in East and West Africa, 703–707.

2 Topographically, the continent's Islamic presence is usually subdivided into various geocultural spheres of influence: North Africa (spanning Morocco to Libya; Egypt "belongs" to the Middle East); Sub-Saharan western and central Africa (Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Niger, northern Nigeria, northern Ghana, Benin, Cameroon, Chad), East Africa or the Horn (Kenya, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Somalia, Somaliland, Sudan, etc.). Minority Muslim communities are of course found elsewhere: Eritrea and Ethiopia, Uganda, South Africa, etc. For reasons of space, this chapter will focus on Sub-Saharan Africa but reference will be made to the region's spiritual and cultural connections with neighboring regions.

3 I touch on this in *Making and Remaking Mosques in Senegal* (2012a, 5, 50–53). See also Pradines (2018, 3).

4 See E. Golden (2018, 267, 268). Golden describes an interesting case study of the 1960s Yaama mosque in Niamey by a local mason using local techniques but showing influence from northern Nigeria and the Maghreb with its imposing, tapering quadruple corner minaret towers.

5 The most common building technique in West Africa, mud is defined as earth extracted directly from the ground and mixed with water and other ingredients to make blocks or *adobe* which are sun dried and used in layers for building walls. British-born Indian architect Laurie Baker (1917–2007) advocated and built extensively using the various earthen techniques he describes in his writings. See www.eartharchitecture.org/uploads/mud_english.pdf (accessed April 5, 2021).

6 Monographs on mosque typologies in Africa are still rare. On the archaeology of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa, see Insoll (2003). Elsewhere theses and articles include Stevens (1968); Dmochowski (1990); Gouilly (1965).

7 Ross' (2006) consolidates knowledge about Touba and its Mourid mosque. The present author's *Making and Remaking Mosques in Senegal* (2012a) is a monograph dedicated to the mosques of Senegal (excluding Casamance).

8 Neo-Islamic is a concept used in the context of an Islamic architecture compatible with modernity but in touch with tradition. See AlAraby (1996, 140).

9 See www.nytimes.com/2012/04/19/arts/design/the-great-mosque-in-djenne-mali.html (accessed August 30, 2019).

10 See Alex D. Smith's article in *The Guardian* www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/mar/27/timbuktu-djinguereber-mosque-history-cities-buildings (accessed August 5, 2019).

11 See Schutyser (2003) and https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.archnet.org/system/publications/contents/2837/original/DPT0365.pdf?1384768009 (accessed September 5, 2019).

12 As Rolando Melo da Rosa (2018, 19) argues, there may be an argument for mosques to be constructed from adobe given the "Qur'anic emphasis on the *clayness* of Adam" and the *unbakedness* of the bricks used to build the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. See also Pradines (2018, 19).

13 See Cresti and Amadeo (1988, 163) and M. Arena and P. Raffa, "Draa Valley: Tighremt and Igherm, Morocco" in *Earthen Architecture*, p. 73. On Kumbi Saleh, https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01454893/document accessed September 5, 2019).

14 For pictures of village mosques in Mali, see www.sebastianschutyser.com/engels/banco-01.html (accessed August 5, 2019).

15 For the Sudan in West Africa, commodities like gold, pepper, and slaves originated in the forest zones and were traded across the Sahara in exchange for salt, silver, copper, cloth, and beads from the northern edge of the desert.

16 A nineteenth-century scholar of Fulbe origin, Shekhu Ahmadu initiated a jihad against the Fulbe leaders of Massina as well as the ulama of Jenné.

17 This device can be found in local domestic architecture as well as in the mosques of Futa Toro. See Cantone (2012a, Chapter 1).
18 The names of both these mosques were provided by master mason Boubacar Kouromansé who drove me on his moped in April 2001. I have not managed to locate either of them on a map so any spelling inaccuracy is entirely my own.
19 This practice was introduced by the French in the Saloum Islands where shells are found in abundance. See Lafont (1938).
20 In 1786 in Saint Louis, perishable houses were set on fire apparently in retaliation for the banishment of a marabout. Asking the French authorities for assistance, the dispossessed were told they would receive it only if they were to rebuild their houses using bricks (Magnieu de Prat 1875, 404–409, quoted in G.E. Brooks 2003, 279).
21 According to Robinson (1988, 419), the Muslims of St. Louis "wanted a mosque, and had constructed one in the northern part of the island with the acquiescence of the colonial government". Robinson places this event after the appointment of Faidherbe as governor in 1854 which is far too late, and he does not provide any evidence to confirm it was the local population who asked the French to build the mosque but they certainly would have contributed to the labor. See also Cantone (2012a, 126).
22 Conceived in the mid-eighteenth century, the Ecole des Ponts et Chaussées consisted of a body of engineers who thenceforth not only took over land development from architects but also had a profound impact on the organization of space. Trained in the Metropole, these engineers were sent to France's colonies for a minimum period of six years.
23 This neo-Gothic detail commonly used in Protestant church architecture occurs in South Africa. See Cantone (2012b, 101–104).
24 À l'origine, le plan de l'église était basilical (rectangulaire). En 1824, le poids de la charpente en chêne de la foret de Grasla menaçait d'éventrer l'église. Les ingénieurs durent construire en urgence 24 contreforts et deux chapelles latérales, donnant à l'église un plan extérieur en forme de croix latine. See Chevillon (2016).
25 See www.horloge-edifice.fr/Horlogers/Collin_Armand_Francois.htm (accessed March 18, 2019).
26 The Layenne in Yoff, Dakar, the Tijanis in Tivaouane and Kaolack and the Takhikao (Wolof, "one-storey house") quartier in Thiès.
27 Most mosques built in the early twentieth century in Massawa belonged to the Khatmiyya brotherhood.
28 See review by Kemal Abdulwehab, "Abdulfätah Abdällah, 2008–2010, the History of Addis Ababa Mosques, Vol. 1 et 2", www.persee.fr/doc/ethio_0066-2127_2011_num_26_1_1446 (accessed May 16, 2019).
29 For more details, see Samson A. Bezabeh, "Yemeni Families in the Early History of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia ca.1900–1950", *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 204/2011, mis en ligne le 06 janvier 2014, http://journals.openedition.org/etudesafricaines/16891 (accessed May 17, 2019).
30 Restrictions do not only apply to non-Muslims. In West Africa, the majority of "traditional" mosques are not accessible to women who have to be past the age of the menopause, and even then, they have a separate space to pray in. In the Great Mosque of Touba, where there is a section for women, only older women are allowed inside. This was the case in 2000–2001. See Cantone (2012a, Chapter 5).
31 See www.kere-architecture.com/projects/centre-de-larchitecture-en-terre/ (accessed June 9, 2019).

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