**Mauro Nobili**

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History Department

University of Illinois

**EDUCATION**

University of Naples “L’Orientale,” 2004

Laurea Degree (B.A. & M.A.), concentration in African Studies

University of Naples “L’Orientate,” 2008

Doctor of Philosophy, African Studies

**ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS**

Assistant Professor

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Department of History, 2014 to present

Research Coordinator

University of Cape Town, Tombouctou Manuscripts Project, 2014

Post-Doctoral Fellow

University of Cape Town, Tombouctou Manuscripts Project and Department of Religious Studies, 2012- 2014

Research Fellow

University of Hamburg, Sonderforschungsbereich 950: Manuscript Cultures in Asia Africa and Europe at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures {CSMC), 2011- 2012

**PUBLICATIONS**

Books

*Catalogue des Manuscrits Arabes du Fonds de Gironcourt (Afrique de l'Ouest) de L’institut de France* (Roma: Istituto per l’Oriente «C. A. Nallino», 2013)

Article in Refereed Journals

“‘The Manuscripts that Never Were’: In Search of the *Tārīkh al-Fattāsh* in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana,” with Mohamed Diagayete, *History in Africa* 44 (2017), 309-321.

“Letter on the appearance of the twelfth caliph *(Risāla fī uhūr al-khalīfa al-thānī ‘ashar).* Edition of the Arabic Text with English Translation,” *Afriques,* 7 (2016) [URL: https://journals.openedition.org/afriques/1958].

“A propaganda document in support of the 19th century Caliphate of Ḥamdallāhi: Nūḥ b. al-Ṭāhir al-Fulānī’s ‘Letter on the appearance of the twelfth caliph’ *(Risāla fī ẓuhūr al-khalīfa al-thānī ‘ashar*),” *Afriques* 7 (2016) [URL: [http://joumals.openedition.org/afriques/1922;](http://joumals.openedition.org/afriques/1922%3B) DOI: I 0.4000/afriques.I922].

“A Short Note on Some Historical Accounts from the IFAN Manuscripts,” *History in Africa* 43 (2016): 379-388.

“Towards a new study on the *Tārīkh al-Fattāsh,*”with M. Shahid Mathee, *History in Africa* 42 (2015): 37-73.

“Central Sudanic Arabic Scripts p.2: Barnāwī,” with Andrea Brigaglia, *Islamic Africa* 4/2 (2013): 197-223.

“Manuscript Culture of West Africa,” *Manuscript Culture* 5 (2012-2013): 42-51.

“Back to Saharan Myths: Preliminary Notes on ‘Uqba al-Mustajāb,” *Annual Review of Islam in Africa* 12 (2012): 79-84.

“Arabic Scripts in West African Manuscripts: A Tentative Classification from the de Gironcourt Manuscript Collection,” *Islamic Africa 2/1* (2011): 105-133.

“‘Rediscovering’ the de Gironcourt Manuscript Collection,” *Annual Review of Islam in Africa* 10 (2008-2009): 62-66.

Edited Collections

*The Arts and Crafts of Literacy: Manuscript Cultures in Muslim sub-Saharan Africa,* with Andrea Brigaglia (Berlin-Boston: de Gruyter, 2017).

*Collectanea Islamica*, withNicola Melis (Roma: Aracne, 2012).

Book Contributions

“The Written Word: Islamic Literacy and Arabic Manuscripts in West Africa,” in Kathleen Berzock (ed.) *Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time: Art, Culture, and Exchange Across Medieval Saharan Africa* (Chicago, IL – Princeton NJ Block Museum of Arts, Northwestern University in association with Princeton University Press, 2019): 241-253.

“New Reinventions of the Sahel: Reflections on the *tārkh* Genre in the Timbuktu Historiographical Production, Seventeenth to Twentieth Centuries,” in Toby Green and Benedetta Rossi (eds.), *Landscapes, Sources and Intellectual Projects: Politics, History and the West African Past. Essays in Honour of Paulo Fernando de Moraes Farias* (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2018): 201-219.

“Introduction: African History and Islamic Manuscript Cultures,” in Andrea Brigaglia and Mauro Nobili (eds.), *The Arts and Crafts of Literacy: Manuscript Cultures in Muslim sub-Saharan Africa* (Berlin-Boston; de Gruyter, 2017): 1-24.

“Catalogues of Arabic manuscripts from Africa,” in Alessandro Bausi (General Editor), *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies: An Introduction* (Tredition, Hamburg, 2015): 473-4.

“*Risāla min Maryam bint Fudī ilà al-ibn:* A Brief Contribution to the Study of 19th-century Nigerian Eschatology,” in Nicola Melis and Mauro Nobili (eds.), *Collectanea Islamica* (Roma: Aracne, 2012): 71-86.

“Islam: a Plurality of Historical and Linguistic Experiences,” in Nicola Melis and Mauro Nobili, Nicola Melis and Mauro Nobili (eds.), *Collectanea Islamica* (Roma: Aracne, 2012): 1-13.

“Ecriture et transmission du savoir islamique au Mali: le cas du *Ṣaḥrāwī*,” in Elisa Pelizzeri and Omar Sylla (eds.), *Dynamiques de transmission du savoir islamique au Mali* (Paris - Torino: Harmattan, 2012): 35-68.

Book Reviews

*Muslims beyond the Arab World,* Fallou Ngom, (New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 2016), *Islamic Africa* 8 (217): 231-241.

*In the City of the Marabouts: Islamic Culture in West Africa,* Geert Mommersteeg (Waveland Press, Long Grove, 2012), *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 82/3 (2014): 869-874.

*L’inspiration de l’etemel: Eloge de Shekou Amadou, fondateur de l 'empire peul du Macina. Par Muḥammad b. ‘Alī Pereejo,* Bohas, Georges, Abderrahim Saguer, Bernard Salvaing (Grandvaux, Brinon-sur-Sauldre, 2011), *Islamic Africa* 4/2 (2013): 256-259.

*The Trans-Saharan Book Trade: Manuscript Culture, Arabic Literacy and Intellectual History in Muslim Africa,* Graziano Kratli & Ghislaine Lydon (Brill, Leiden - Boston, 2011), *Oriente Moderno* 93/1 (2013): 324-330.

*L’Islam in Etiopia. Bilanci e prospettive (special issue of Civiltà del Mediterraneo 16-17 [Dec 2009 – Jun 2010]),* Alessandro Gori and Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti, *Oriente Moderno* 90/2 (2010): 569-574.

Bulletins, Reports or Conference Proceedings

“Manuscript Cultures of West Africa. Part 2: A survey of scholarly production dedicated to local collections of manuscripts,” *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies Newsletter* 3 (Jan 2012): 11-17.

“Manuscript cultures of West Africa. Part 1: The disqualification of a heritage,” *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies Newsletter* 2 (July 2011): 21-24.

“Bookishness in the Sokoto Caliphate and the Arabic Documents Relating to the jihādī Literary Production in the de Gironcourt Collection of Arabic Manuscripts," in Sergio Baldi and Hafizu Miko Yakasai (eds.), *Proceedings of the 3rd international Conference on Hausa Studies: African and European Perspectives (Napoli 5th-7th July 2010)* (Napoli: Universita degli Studi di Napoli « L'Orientale», Dipartimento Studi e Ricerche su Africa e Paesi Arabi, 2011): 241-255.

Works in Progress

*Sultan, Caliph, And Renewer Of The Faith: Aḥmad Lobbo, the Tārīkh al-fattāsh and the Making of an Islamic State in Nineteenth-Century West Africa*, accepted by Cambridge University Press, Series African Studies

Edition and translation of the *Tārīkh Ibn al-Mukhtār* and of the *Tārīkh al-fattāsh*, proposal for publication submitted to the *Fontes Historiae Africanae*, published by the British Academy and Oxford University Press.

*A Handbook of West African Arabic Script Styles and their Historical Significance*, unfinished manuscript

## PRESENTATIONS

Invited Lectures

“Towards a Handbook of West African Arabic Script Styles: Between Paleography and History,” Indiana University, Bloomington, March 2019.

“Between Nigeria, Timbuktu, and the Middle East: An Exploration of West African Script Styles and their Implications for Historical Analysis,” Kwara State University, Nigeria, January 2019.

“Back to West African Script Styles: A Taxonomy and Provisional Implications for Historical Analysis,” Boston University, Program in Scripture and the Arts, February 2018.

“The *Tārīkh al-fattāsh* and the *Tiirlkh Ibn al-Mukhtār.* Two West African Chronicles,” Northwestern University, Institute for the Study of lslamic Thought in Africa, May 2015.

“Towards a new study of the so-called *Tārīkh al-fattāsh*,” Columbia University,

Middle East, South Asia, and African Studies, lfriqiya Series, April 2015.

“Re-discovering the de Gironcourt Collection of West African Arabic Manuscripts,” Institut Français Afrique du Sud, Johannesburg, August 2013.

“A Taxonomy of West African Arabic Script Styles and Its Implications for Historical Analysis,” Le Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris June 2013.

“How Do You Make a Library? Two Styles of Collecting in and Around Timbuktu” (with Shami] Jeppie), SciencePo, Centre de Recherches Intenationales, June 2013.

“From History to Mystery: A Recent English Translation of a 19th century Timbuktu Chronicle,” University of Johannesburg, Department of History, March 2012.

Selected Conference Presentations

African Studies Association, Annual Meeting 2018, Atlanta. Title: “Teaching the Timbuktu Chronicles.” 29 Nov – 1 Dec 2018.

African Studies Association - UK, Biennial Meeting 2018, University of Birmingham. Title: “From *La Chronique du Cercheur* to the *Tārīkh Ibn al-Mukhtār* and the *Tārīkh al-fattāsh*.” 11-13 September 2018.

Conference: “The Caliphate of Hamdallahi: A History from Within.” Title: “Nūḥ b. al-Ṭāhir, the ‘Real’ Author of the *Tārīkh al-fattāsh*.” University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign, 6-7 April 2018.

European Conference on African Studies 2017, Basel. Title: “Ḥamdallāhi, a City in Praise of God,” 29 Jun – 1 Jul 2017.

African Studies Association, Annual Meeting 2016, Washington DC. Title: “Architects of the Caliphate: Aḥmad Lobbo and Nūḥ b. al-Ṭāhir.” 2 December 2016.

Conference: “Global Timbuktu.” Titles: 1) “The Complicated History of a Timbuktu Chronicle (the *Tārīkh al-fattāsh)*”*;* 2) “Timbuktu and the Islamic Written Heritage in Africa.” Rutgers University, 24-25 March 2017.

Conference: “Texts, Knowledge, and Practice: The Meaning of Scholarship in Muslim Africa.” Title: “A Nineteenth-Century Political Project: Nūḥ b. al-Ṭāhir 's *Tārīkh al-fattāsh*.” HarvardDivinity School. 17-18 February 2017.

Conference: “Sacred Word: Changing Meanings in Textual Cultures of lslamic Africa. A Symposium Dedicated to the Memory of Professor John 0. Hunwick (1936-2015).” Title: “From the Primitive City of Timbuctoo to the Hidden Treasures of Timbuktu: The Legacy of the John 0. Hunwick.” Northwestern University, 21-22 April 2016.

Conference: “Landscapes, Sources, and Intellectual Projects in African History: Symposium in honour of Dr. Paulo Fernando de Moraes Farias.” Title: “New reinventions of the Sahel: Reflections on the *tārīkh* genre in the Timbuktu historiographical production, l7-20 centuries.” University of Birmingham, 12-14 November 2015.

Conference: “African State-Formation and Bureaucracy in Comparative Perspective.” Title: “Construction of legitimization in the Masina state (1818-62) and the *Tārīkh al-fattāsh* ‘project’.” University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. 16-18 September 2013.

Conference: “The arts and crafts of literacy: Manuscript cultures in Muslim sub­ Saharan Africa.” Title: “A taxonomy of West African Arabic script styles and its implications for historical analysis.” University of Cape Town, 5-6September 2013.

European Conference on African Studies 2013, Lisbon. Title: “Nūh b. al-Tahir's *Risāla fī ẓuhūr al-khalīfa al-thānī ‘ashar:* Construction of legitimization in the Masina Caliphate (1818-62).” 27-30 June 2013.

Conference: “3ème Journée d’études *Series Catalogorum.* Codex and Text: The use of codicology, paleography and illumination for textual studies.” Title: “Towards a description of Arabic West African Script Styles.” University of Naples “L’Orientale,” 6-7 December 2012.

AW Mellon Foundation Seminar - *Tombouctou* Manuscripts Project: “Manuscript culture in the Niger Bend.” Title: “A taxonomy of West African Arabic script styles (1750-1950): A work in progress.” University of Cape Town, 24 October 2012.

Conference: “Tripoli, port de mer, port de désert.” Title: “Tripoli, Britain and Timbuktu. A Letter Concerning the ‘affaire-Barth’.” Université Paris 1 Pantheon­ Sorbonne, 25-26 November 2011.

Conference: “Studi Italiani sull'Africa a 50 anni dall'indipendenza.” Title: “Catalogare per conservare. Quale approccio per i manoscritti arabi e *‘ajami* dell'Africa Occidentale,” University of Naples “L’Orientale,” 30 Sep-2 Oct 2010.

Conference: “3rd International conference on Hausa Studies - African and European Perspectives.” Title: “Bookishness in the Sokoto Caliphate and the Arabic documents relating to *the jihādī* literary production in the de Gironcourt collection of African Manuscripts.” University of Naples “L’Orientale,” 4-7 July 2010.

Conference: “1ere Journée d'études *Series Catalogorum.* Problèmes de catalogage des manuscrits orientaux.” Title: “Cataloguing the de Gironcourt African manuscripts.” Le Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Paris, 6-7 November 2009.

## GRANTS

2019-2020, Discovery Partners Institute, University of Illinois System, with Teresa Barnes and Laila Hussein Mustafa, $ 15.000.

2018-2021, National Endowment for Humanities, Scholarly Editions and Translations, $149,000.

2018-2019, Endangered Archives Program, EAP1101, with Jimba Mashood (Kwara State University, Nigeria), $25,640.

2016, West African Research Association Residency (to host Dr. Mohamed Diagayete, Institut des hautes etudes et de recherches islamiques Ahmed Baba, Timbuktu), $3,000 plus ticket and visas for the guest.

## AWARDS AND HONORS

University of Illinois, Lincoln Excellence for Assistant Professor Scholar for the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, 2018-2019 to 2019-2020.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Center for Advanced Studies, 2018-2019.

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, George S. & Gladys W. Queen Award for Excellence in Teaching History, 2017-2018.

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, “List of excellent teachers,” 2017 (Spring).

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, “List of excellent teachers,” 2016 (Spring).

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, Humanities Released Time Program, Fall 2016.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Research Board Award, 2015.

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, “List of excellent teachers,” 2014 (Fall).

University of Cape Town, A.W. Mellon Young Scholars Award, 2013.

## AREAS OF CONCENTRATION

West African History.

Muslim Societies in Africa.

Arabic Manuscripts.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Peer-review/referee for Journal: *Islamic Africa* (2014, 2016).

Peer-review/referee for Journal: *Journal of African History* (2016).

Peer-review/referee for Press: Routledge (2017).

Elected member of the Council of the International African Institute, 2018-2020.

Member of the editorial board of the Journal: *Islamic Africa.* 2014 – present.

## CAMPUS SERVICE

Committee member of the Center for African Studies

## DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE

Chair of the Library Liaison committee (AY 2016-2017; 2017-2018, 2018-2019).

Member of the committee for the Swain Prize (2016).

Library Liaison committee member (AY 2015-2016).

Editorial Board of History@Illinois (AY 2015/2016; 2016-2017; 2017-2018, 2018-2019).

Department Secretary (AY 2014/2015).

## PUBLIC SERVICE

“The Timbuktu Manuscripts Today: The Current State of the Malian Manuscript Heritage*,*”Center for African Studies, Brown Bag lecture, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 6 February 2019.

“Towards a Re-Evaluating of the Islamic Literary Heritage in Africa,” Central Illinois Mosque & Islamic Center, Black History Month Talks, 17 February 2017.

“Towards a new study of the Timbuktu chronicle *Tārīkh al-fattāsh,*”Center for South Asia and Middle Eastern Studies & Center for African Studies, Brown Bag lecture, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 8 December 2014.

“Debates about ‘Centre’ and ‘Periphery’ in Islamic cultures: Reflections from the study of West African Script Styles,” University of Cape Town, Department of Religious Studies Lunch Seminar series, 8 August 2012.

“West African Manuscript Tradition: A Still Uncharted Heritage,” University of Hamburg, The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC), *Sondeforsclwngsbereich 950:* Manuscript Cultures in Asia Africa and Europe, 12 January 2012.

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

HIST 101 History Now!

HIST 110 History of Africa

HIST 200 Introduction to Historical Interpretation

HIST 213 African Muslim Cultures

HIST 495 Honors Research and Writing

HIST 498 Research and Writing Seminar

HIST 510 Problems in African History

HIST 597 Reading Course

## SUPERVISION OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Rosemary G. Admiral, History (2016) – member of the committee.

Casandra A. Osei, History (2018) – member of the preliminary defense committee.

## OTHER EXPERIENCE

January 2019, EAP1101 sponsored visit to the Ilorin Center for Manuscript Studies with the task of consulting with the local team on practices of cataloguing of Arabic manuscripts, Kwara State University (Nigeria).

Fall 2018, proposal for Hist 111 - African History to 1800.

Fall 2018, Collaboration in the proposal for Hist 112 - African History since 1800.

November 2018, Organizer of a panel called “Teaching Pre-1800 African History, Panel 3: Introducing Students to Arabic Chronicles from Sub-Saharan Africa” at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association in Atlanta.

September 2018, Organizer of a 4-panel stream called “Muslim Intellectuals in Africa” at the biennial meeting of the African Studies Association – UK at the University of Birmingham.

April 2018, Organizer of the International Conference: “The Caliphate of Hamdallahi: A History from Within.” University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

August 2017, Organizer of the Title 6 funded Workshop: “Working with African Arabic Script Manuscripts.” Northwestern University.

Fall 2017, Collaboration in the successful proposal for His 101 - History Now!

Spring 2017, Successful proposal for Hist 213 - African Muslim Cultures.

October 2015, Workshop: “Paroles de sagesse.” Bibliothèque Nationale, Bamako (Mali).

September 2013, Organizer of the International Conference: “The Arts and Crafts of Literacy: Manuscript Cultures in Muslim Sub-Saharan Africa.” University of Cape Town.

## MEMBERSHIPS

African Studies Association

Islamic Africa Study Group