In the years after the war many people sought the "return" of land. Local chiefs claimed overlapping spaces, and people who were expelled from given places insisted that their claims took priority over those of others who had been "resettled" there. Definitions of "squatters" and "foreigners" were in the eye of the beholder, embedded in Mutirikwi's complicated and entangled pasts. In this context, Fontein argues, the "returns" of the 2000s look less like a rupture than a continued quest for long-sought futures.

Remaking Mutirikwi is a marked departure from the literature on dams in Africa, which tends to frame histories of dam building as declensionist tales of environmental degradation, human suffering, and permanently alienated landscapes. By contrast, in the landscape of Mutirikwi—Zimbabwe's second-largest lake, created when the Mutirikwi River was dammed in 1960—heroic, modernist futures are derailed by the vagaries of both the physical environment and human action. The reservoir's ultimate contours surprise even the engineers, flooding a lodge that was meant to anchor the new Rhodesian playground. Some of those who lose land to the rising lake rejoice at the higher fertility of the land they are resettled on. And always, pasts that appear obliterated at one moment reemerge later to animate claims to the future. In *Remaking Mutirikwi,* landscape is not an infinitely malleable concept. Both the environment and human imagination impose limits on what can be imagined, claimed, and acted out: "The material presence (and absence) of the past makes the politics of the present, and indeed of the future, possible in the first place" (6).

Fontein engages deeply with literatures on landscape, water, and power, precolonial and colonial political history, political ecology, Zimbabwe's liberation war and independence, and much more. The very entanglement of multiple imagined futures and multiple reimagined pasts, each iteration shaping the others, means the book's stories, like its arguments, are complex. But it is richly researched—Fontein's interviews are remarkable—and thoughtfully argued. A careful reading will yield rewards for anyone interested in environmental history, political ecology, histories of settler colonialism, and postcolonial state making.

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RELIGION

Ousmane Oumar Kane. *Beyond Timbuktu: An Intellectual History of Muslim West Africa*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016. ix + 282 pp. Note on Transliteration. Notes. Glossary. Acknowledgments. Index. $39.95. Cloth. ISBN: 978-0-674-05082-2.

Lamin Sanneh. *Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist Tradition of West African Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. Acknowledgments. Introduction. Timeline. Glossary. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xviii + 358 pp. $34.95. Cloth. ISBN: 978-0-19-935161-9.

During the months when Timbuktu was under Islamist rule and the centuries-old shrines of its patron saints were hammered down, the fear that its "manuscripts" would be also destroyed and lost was widely expressed. The "Timbuktu manuscripts" became a commonly used phrase in the press as international opinion came to realize that there were indeed centuries-old texts kept in that legendary city which bore testimony of a tradition of written erudition in West Africa in need of protection. "*Written* erudition" is not an unnecessarily tautological expression, as the notion that sub-Saharan Africa is the continent of orality is the premise, still largely unquestioned, upon which colonial and postcolonial literature on African societies and cultures has been built. As a consequence, the existence of an African *library* made of books and manuscripts that were studied, taught, and written by local clerics was ignored and obscured: a division of labor was established according to which "Orientalists" would study Islam in "Oriental" societies and cultures while "Africanists" could pay little to no attention to Islamic scholarship and education in their studies of cultures and societies south of the Sahara. Against that view, or rather beyond it, two excellent books converge in bringing to light the history of written erudition in West Africa, a region historically known in Arab chronicles as Bilād as-Sudān (or simply Sudan), "the land of the Black people": Ousmane Kane's *Beyond Timbuktu* and Lamin Saneeh's *Beyond Jihad*.

In *Beyond Timbuktu* Kane argues convincingly that the study of the literary tradition that developed in West Africa in Arabic language, but also in local languages using the Arabic script (a literature known as *ajami*), is necessary not only in order to reconstitute the different aspects of the intellectual history of the region, but also to shed light on current issues facing modern West African nation-states, such as the development of a dual system of education at all the different levels, or the rise of Islamic associational life and the challenges it poses to secularism, or even militarized Islamist militancy of the Boko Haram type.

As an epigraph to the first chapter of his book, Kane quotes a well-known passage from Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* in which the philosopher declares that sub-Saharan Africa, which he calls "Africa proper," is a self-enclosed land, cut off from the routes of exchange and scholarship, and therefore undeveloped and wrapped in the "dark mantle" of an eternal night of the spirit. What the current development of "Timbuktu studies" manifests (meaning here the study of African literature in Arabic, or using the Arabic script) is precisely that the Sudan, contrary to such a view of the "black continent," was an integral part of the larger world of Islam: that the Sahara was not a wall between two worlds but a space crossed

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by multiple routes by which all sorts of goods and merchandises, but also Muslim students and scholars, traveled back and forth. The expansion of Islam in the Sudan starting with the Almoravid period in the eleventh century meant the development of a tradition of teaching and writing in the different disciplines that had been constituted during centuries in the Muslim world as Islamic sciences. That tradition was carried on through the influence of certain ethnic groups who became "messengers of Islam" such as the Sanhaja Berbers, the Djula, the Zawaya, the Fulbe, and the Wolof. This development was generally a slow process. It became tumultuous at the time of the nineteenth-century jihads, and a phase of accelerated Islamization occurred during the colonial period—an apparent paradox.

The book evokes the political history of Islamization but focuses on its intellectual significance, providing rich information about the curriculum in the many institutions of Islamic learning that multiplied throughout the West African region. Timbuktu may be the most famous of them and the symbol of the tradition of higher learning in the Sudan, but many others exist with numerous manuscripts that have not yet been made available to the larger public.

Kane refers to the African scholars writing in Arabic or in Ajami (the Arabic language used for writing African languages) as "non-Europhone intellectuals" and emphasizes that the Islamic system of education has never stopped producing them. "Arabophones" who studied in Quranic schools and may have pursued higher education in Arab countries such as Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, or Saudi Arabia are therefore a social force that the postcolonial states have to recognize and whose demands they have to heed. Those demands concern their fair share of the jobs that seem reserved to those educated as "Europhones" and, more generally, their place in the public square. This would mean not only a greater role of the Arabic language, but also of indigenous idioms since Arabophones have a long and strong tradition of producing translations into African languages and making them languages of science and literary creation. These demands also constitute a real pressure to change the secular nature of the state. And when the last chapter of *Beyond Timbuktu* declares the "Arabophones triumphant" (before the epilogue, which ends on the call for a system of education that will bridge the divide between Europhones and Arabophones), the significance of that "triumph" is certainly an open question.

The subtitle of *Beyond Jihad*, "The Pacifist Tradition in West African Islam," summarizes the purpose of Lamin Sanneh's book: to highlight the role played by a centuries-old tradition of patient work by West African clerics to win the hearts and minds of the peoples of the Sudan to the Muslim faith through persuasion, while developing a solid scholarship and an excellent system of education in the Islamic sciences. Those clerics did not just happen to spread Islam by peaceful means; they upheld a consciously, decidedly pacifist philosophy of what it means to appropriate and develop Islam in West African societies. They believed that

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"compulsion" is incompatible with the significance of the Islamic faith as consent to God and that jihad would achieve very little toward the spread of Islam, while often turning the initial zeal for religion into appetite for power and domination.

One important aspect of the book is the discussion of the hypothesis, often considered a fact, that the penetration of Islam in Africa south of Sahara was a consequence of the destruction by the Almoravids—the Berbers who ruled Morocco and southern Spain in the eleventh century—of the empire of Ghana. That account, which Sanneh proves to be a highly unfounded hypothesis, plays into the narrative of Islam as a "religion of the sword" that wins people through jihad. The book shows that the people of the Sudan, in the words of Uthman Dan Fodio (quoting Timbuktu's most famous scholar, Ahmad Baba), "accepted Islam without being conquered by anybody" (53).

While history is often the history of warlords and conquerors, the history of Islamic Africa is that of scholars and traders who with patient work developed important clerical centers of learning. Thus Sanneh invites us to follow the history of the "people of Diankha" (or Jankha), the Jakhanke who upheld throughout West Africa, from Senegal to Kano, what is called in the book "the Suwarian tradition," named after al-Hajj Salim Suware, the almost mythical ancestor who lived in the twelfth or thirteenth century and who appears as the prototype of the pacifist cleric who believes in the force of persuasion and education to spread the message of Islam. It is worth noticing here that the Suwarian tradition is not Sufism and does not convey another version of the simplistic view that the tolerant, peace-loving, "good" Muslims are the Sufis, in opposition to the "bad" literalists or fundamentalists. Suware and those who followed his pacifist tradition simply believed in the work of learning and education, which made no room for the use of violence. Thus, through dispersion and resettlement, the Jakhanke clerics created throughout the centuries different centers of learning modeled upon Diankha, the center developed by their ancestor Suware.

Beyond Jihad does not ignore the different outbreaks of jihad in West Africa and reminds the reader that submitting the "pagans" to the rule of Islam and combating those deemed to be the enemies of the faith is a path always present in the minds of clerics who can be (and have been) tempted to turn themselves into warlords *ad majorem Dei gloriam*. But the lesson of the Jakhanke upholders of the pacifist tradition of Islam has always been that much more could be achieved through learning and education than through the mixed results of jihads, not just those launched to convert the "pagans," but also those fought against colonial rule. That is the reason that the Jakhanke disowned and condemned them, even when they were led by fellow Jakhanke clerics. It is not that they did not acknowledge that war for the religion (strictly defined by rules) is always a possibility. It is that they believed the greater force, that of time, to favor their work. Lamin Sanneh's history of the development of Islam in Africa as an intellectual and a spiritual tradition is meant to prove them right.

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Editors' note: See also Cheikh Babou's review of Lamin Sanneh's *Beyond Jihad* in this issue.

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Beyond Jihad is a welcome addition to the growing scholarship on the history of Islam in Africa. At a time when discourses about Islam in the popular media and some academic circles increasingly focus on religious intolerance and violence, Lamine Sanneh's book is a refreshing and timely intervention that explores the long history of peaceful expansion of Islam across West Africa. The book challenges established narratives that construe "jihad of the sword" as the most significant instrument of conversion and vehicle of reform in West African Islam and emphasizes the agency of teachers, quietist clerics, traders, and Sufi saints. In this view conversion is achieved through shared knowledge, high morals, ethical behavior, and peaceful accommodation rather than coercion. By shifting the emphasis from violence to education as the foundational basis for conversion, Sanneh is able to write sub-Saharan Africa and Africans into the global narrative of the expansion of Islam, erasing the boundaries between core and periphery, folk and orthodox Islam, and emphasizing the role of local agents of Islamization, drawing both from universal Islamic ethos and local experiences. From this perspective, West Africans cease to be mere imitators of ideas and models crafted elsewhere and become innovators who consciously reshaped Islam to accommodate local circumstances. According to Sanneh, Islam was successful in sub-Saharan Africa not because it was forced on people, but precisely because it was made African by African Muslims who negotiated its adaptation to a variety of contexts across time and space without injuring its integrity.

Sanneh's reconstruction of the history of Islam in West Africa focuses specifically on the experience of the Jakhanke, a diaspora of Muslim clerics that originated from the Mali Empire. The book is composed of fourteen chapters divided into three parts. The first part deals mostly with historical developments beyond West Africa and the implications of