

Muslim communities, the responses by Muslim clerics calling for jihads to the issue of enslavement, and the underrepresentation of Muslims in the Atlantic slave trade.

What makes *Jihad in West Africa During the Age of Revolutions* a tour de force is the vivid, expositive analysis. The richness and extraordinary appeal of the work emerges from the liveliness of the narrative, which include biographical sketches and a very careful rendering of both the unity and fragmentation of the region. Following in the footsteps of Eugene Genovese, Lovejoy convincingly proves that jihads, like ‘slave revolts, like so much else, cannot be understood outside the context of a developing world history within which the politics, economics, and ideology of Europe, Africa, the Americas, and Asia as well, had become inseparable.’¹⁴ The book will certainly affirm itself as a milestone in the renewal of interpretations of jihads and of the age of revolutions in global history.

MAMADOU DIOUF
Columbia University

AN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY OF MUSLIM WEST AFRICA

Beyond Timbuktu: An Intellectual History of Muslim West Africa.

By Ousmane Oumar Kane.

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016. Pp. 296. \$39.95, hardback (ISBN: 9780674050822).

doi:10.1017/S0021853718001056

Key Words: West Africa, Mali, Islam, intellectual.

Timbuktu is a paradox. In the West, the name still evokes the very edge of the known world, making it literally synonymous with the *periphery*. Yet it has long been a false *center* for European discourse on Africa and Islamic scholarship. This contradictory positioning of Timbuktu’s scholarly tradition — simultaneously in the middle and at the margins — marks it as both irrelevant and exceptional. Ousmane Kane makes a signal reassessment of Timbuktu’s exceptionalism by painting a portrait of the broader African Islamic scholarly networks of which Timbuktu was but one key node.

This book both expands and refines core arguments that Kane made in his fine earlier study, *Non-Europhone Intellectuals* (2012). It also synthesizes key conclusions from a career of primary research on Islamic thought in Africa. Drawing on a wealth of published scholarship, Kane’s research approach and methods engage with — and contribute to — political science, anthropology, history, religious studies, and the ‘orientalist’ philological tradition of Islamic studies. In *Beyond Timbuktu*, Kane sheds interdisciplinary light on more than 1,000 years of scholarship, which I define as both schooling and intellectual production.

¹⁴ E. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1979), xx.

The need for this book is dire. One of the profound effects of reading this work is that it reveals just how uncomfortably Islamic scholarship in Africa sits in the historical imagination of the global West. In spite of the great antiquity and sophistication of textual traditions in many parts of Africa, orality is so linked to the continent that ‘African libraries’ are nearly an oxymoron. Only when reports suggested their destruction by violent extremists in 2013 did most non-specialists in North America and Europe even learn of the existence of these centuries-old manuscript libraries in Timbuktu. Many had heard the town’s name, but surely few could have quickly found it on a map, and far fewer still might even guess as to the languages written in these threatened books, much less their contents. Twenty-first century geopolitics thus accentuated the tendency to portray Timbuktu as both exotic and exceptional.

The exceptionality began centuries ago when Timbuktu figured on one of the earliest European maps of Africa, a Catalan Atlas from 1375 produced for the king of Spain. The town of ‘Tenbuch’ sat next to a portrait of the Emperor of Mali, resplendent, seated on a golden throne, with a staff of gold, a crown of gold, holding an orb of gold. Before colonization, before the slave trade, before Europe had even become Europe, Timbuktu drew attention from across the Mediterranean. Eyes were lured to this West African center of commerce, a trading center near the sources of most of the gold then in circulation in Europe. Almost two centuries later, Leo Africanus’s *Description of Africa* reinforced Timbuktu’s merchant appeal and made its bookishness known to readers of European languages.

Yet as Kane reminds us, bookishness was (and remains) widespread in Islamic West Africa. In his prologue, he recounts that in the 1820s Baron Roger, Governor of French Senegal — then only a few coastal *entrepôts* along a small part of the West African coast — wrote that in the broader region there were more Africans who were literate in Arabic than French peasants literate in French.

Chapter One, ‘Timbuktu studies’ is a fine-grained analysis, but not necessarily easily accessible, and so this chapter is thus perhaps best suited to specialists. In Chapters Two through Six, Kane delivers on the book’s subtitle, *An Intellectual History of Muslim West Africa*. He traces the sources of the region’s scholarly tradition, detailing how it has shaped economy, polity, and society. In successive chapters, Kane treats these interrelated themes, moving through different eras of West African history: from the age of empire which made West African wealth known to the world, to the establishment of a West African clerisy and curriculum, and on to questions of slavery and colonialism. In an approachable style, Kane blends history and historiography in a way that should help introduce undergraduate students to the historiography of Islam in Africa.

Chapters Seven through Nine analyze the contemporary intellectual moment in Islamic West Africa. Or, to put it slightly differently, they elaborate the political economy of Islamic knowledge in West Africa. These chapters contain far more original research and less historical synthesis than the first part of the book. Among many highlights in the second half of the book, the fine research and thoughtful analysis of recently founded Islamic universities in Africa is particularly notable.

But the best parts of this book are its introduction and conclusion. Throughout *Beyond Timbuktu*, some of the most striking passages come when Kane quotes discourses from within the Tijaniyya Sufi order at length or intimates his own experience in the scholarly

circles he details in the book. For the most part, however, these incursions are illustrative more than substantive. In the prologue of *Beyond Timbuktu*, Kane's personal experience and the broader world of West African Tijani thought stand at the heart of the analysis. In this way it is reminiscent of — and might be read alongside — another outstanding reflective essay, the prologue of Ousman Kobo's *Unveiling Modernity in Twentieth-Century West African Islamic Reforms* (2012).

In the conclusion, Kane focuses on the lively scholarly community in Medina-Baye Kaolack, the epicenter of the branch of the Tijaniyya founded by Kane's own maternal grandfather, Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse (1901–1975). Niasse was one of the most prolific and accomplished scholars of the twentieth century in any language, and he created what may well be today the world's largest single Sufi movement. The Tijani circles of instruction initiated by Shaykh Ibrahim were, in fact, Ousmane Kane's first teachers. Teachers in these spaces not only taught Kane Arabic, the Qur'an, and the religious sciences, but also the Hausa language, and other African languages written with the Arabic script.

We need more emic perspectives such as those presented in *Beyond Timbuktu*. For three decades, Kane has produced analytical scholarly works befitting his training and professional positions at elite academic institutions in France and the United States. But as *Beyond Timbuktu's* warm and thoughtful prologue teaches us, those sites played a secondary role in Kane's intellectual formation. The foundations of Kane's training were laid in Senegal by the teachings of his father and his mother. Indeed, Kane's mother, Cheikha Marieme Niasse, is one of the most important female scholars of the past century; she runs one of the most famous and respected schools for Qur'an memorization. Her teachings — and those of women and men like her — offer important insights on belief and faith practice that academic scholars of Africanist and Islamic studies sorely need. Ousmane Kane's ability to *think with and through* African and Islamic literatures and ontologies — rather than merely characterizing them for Western audiences — is what makes *Beyond Timbuktu* truly special.

RUDOLPH WARE III
University of Michigan

THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY

The British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1838–1956: A History.

By James Heartfield.

New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. v + 486. \$65.00, hardback (ISBN 9780190491673).

doi:10.1017/S0021853718001068

Key Words: Slavery, abolition, colonial, decolonization, regional.

This is a history of what the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society did and how its leadership represented the organization's activities through its main publication, the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*. It is a book written from the perspective of the Anti-Slavery