

## BOOKS RECEIVED

*Timbuktu and the Songhay empire: Al-Sa<sup>c</sup>dī's Ta<sup>r</sup>īkh al-sūdān down to 1613 & other contemporary documents* by John O. Hunwick. Leiden: E.J. Brill (Islamic History and Civilization: Studies and Texts 27) 1999. lxx, 412 pp. ISBN 90-04-11207-3.

In this volume is a translation of <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sa<sup>c</sup>dī's seventeenth-century chronicle, in thirty chapters dealing with the history of Timbuktu and Jenne, their scholars and the political history of the Songhay empire from the reign of Sunni <sup>c</sup>Alī (1464-92) until 1613. Included are also new translations of Leo Africanus's description of West Africa, some letters of Moroccan diplomacy, al-Ifrānī's account of the Moroccan conquest of Songhay in 1591 and a Spanish account of this expedition.

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*The Exoteric Aḥmad Ibn Idrīs: A Sufi's Critique of the Madhāhib and the Wahhābīs: Four Arabic texts with translation and commentary* by Bernd Radtke, John O'Kane, Knut S. Vikør and R.S. O'Fahey. Leiden: E.J. Brill (Islamic History and Civilization: Studies and Texts 31) 2000. x, 225 pp. ISBN 90-04-11375-4.

This book contains the Arabic text and translation of two works by Aḥmad b. Idrīs, the Moroccan Sufi whose influence has put his mark also on African Sufism. The first is the *Risālat al-radd <sup>c</sup>alā ahl al-ra<sup>y</sup>*, and provides information about his position on *uṣūl al-fiqh*, and in particular the *ijtihād-taqlīd* debate. The second is a transcript by one of his students of a debate that took place between Ibn Idrīs and some Wahhābī scholars in his adopted home town Ṣabyā in Yemen in 1832, *Munāẓarat Aḥmad b.*

*Idrīs maʿa fuqahāʾ Yaman*. Included are also two letters relating to the latter event.

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*The Oasis of Salt: The History of Kawar, a Saharan Centre of Salt Production* by Knut S. Vikør, Bergen: Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (Bergen Studies on the Middle East and Africa 3) 1999. xii, 342 pp. ISBN 1-85065-308-9.

This is a study of the history of the Kawar oasis in the Nigerien Sahara, the half-way post between Tripoli and Lake Chad on the trans-Saharan route. The first part discusses the development and structure of its salt production and the salt trade carried out by the Aïr Tuareg in the nineteenth century. In the second half, the book presents the development of the oasis's regional role in the context of a historical survey of the central Sahara and surrounding states from the time of ʿUqba b. Nāfiʿī (666 AD) to the French arrival in the region in 1906. Annexed are new translations of the relevant medieval Arabic source material on Kawar.