# **Writing the history of Islamic law in West Africa: Sahelian scholars in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s biographical works**

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Abstract

This article examines[[2]](#footnote-3) the biographies of West African *fuqahāʾ* in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s (d. 1036/1627) *ṭabaqāt* works. Out of the more than seven hundred entries about the life and works of Mālikī *ʿulamāʾ* featured in the works *Nayl al-ibithāj* and *Kifāyat al-muḥtāj*, a peculiar characteristic of the fourteen *tarājim* of scholars of West African origin, is that they belong almost exclusively on scholars from the author’s hometown, Timbuktu, in the same self-centered manner of the so-called Timbuktu Chronicles and refer to intellectual activities carried out basically by members of the powerful Aqīt household, to which the author belonged. This study contextualizes these biographies in the 10th/16th-century West African tradition of Islamic learning and Islamic jurisprudence, as well as in the historical and sociopolitical context in which it took place and situates them in Timbuktu’s 11th/17th-century self-conscious historiographical tradition and in the beginnings of the ideological foundations of *bīḍān* hegemony.

Keywords: Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, history of West Africa, Islam in West Africa, Mālikism, *fiqh*

Shortly before the beginning of West Africa’s historiographical tradition in the 11th/17th-century, the first local African narrative about Islamic scholarship south of the Sahara was included in the work *Nayl al-ibtihāj* through the biographies of scholars from the Sahel (Arabic *sāḥil*, “shore”)[[3]](#footnote-4) featured in it by its author, Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī (d. 1036/1627)[[4]](#footnote-5), one of premodern West Africa’s best known intellectual figures. As a precursor to the interest payed to the *ʿulamāʾ* by the so-called *Timbuktu Chronicles*, al-Saʿdī’s *Tārīkh al-sūdān*[[5]](#footnote-6) and the writings of Ibn al-Mukhtār[[6]](#footnote-7), Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s description of the religious, intellectual and sociopolitical activities of Timbuktu’s scholarly elite during the Songhay Empire’s golden age shares a distinctive approach with these later works, which were written during the period of Saʿdid domination over a great part of the Niger Bend (999/1591–1070/1659)[[7]](#footnote-8): they portray the Timbuktu *fuqahāʾ* as paramount over scholars from other West African locations. In the same way but one step beyond, the biographies of West African *ʿulamāʾ* featured in al-Tinbuktī’s biographical works belong almost exclusively to scholars from the author’s own household, the illustrious and powerful Aqīt clan[[8]](#footnote-9), settled in Timbuktu. This study aims to reflect on the neglection of jurists from other Timbuktu households as well as from other West African locations and relate it to the contexts in which Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s *ṭabaqāt* works were written, the first of them being the author’s personal experience as a prisoner in Marrakech and the building of his intellectual reputation in a foreign land. On the other hand, his strong interest in the sociopolitical role of the *ʿulamāʾ*, and how it could expose a certain *zeitgeist* of self-consciousness among the Timbuktu learned elite, which could derive from the emergence of *bīḍān* hegemony in the region.

This article argues that the selection of West African *fuqahāʾ* in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s biographical dictionaries could have been motivated by the need to publicize the excellency and prestige of the learned tradition from which he descended when he was forced to lead his life as a scholar in a foreign land, a land, Marrakech, in which he was regarded as *sūdānī* and hence inferior. While Arabic sources outside the Sahel use the nisba *al-sūdānī* to refer to persons of black skin color, Sahelian Arabic sources use the term as an ethnic category, meaning descent from non-Berber or non-Arab Sahelian peoples, as opposed to the new ethnic categorization of the *bīḍān*, which derives from the shift in the political hegemony of the region which occurred after the 10th/16th-century. This special categorization allowed that individuals of Berber descent were considered as *sūdān*, that is, black, in the Maghreb, but as *bīḍān* or white in West Africa, as was the case of Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, who never adopted the nisba *al-sūdānī*, but was thus named by Maghrebian and Oriental authors, as well as by European researchers in the colonial period, such as E. Zeys, for instance. It should be noted that non-Sahelian Arabic sources use the term *sūdān* in an ethnic and geographical manner, too, but it is striking that while other African peoples are referred to with ethnonyms, such as the *ḥabasha* or Ethiopians, the *nūbā* or Nubians, as well as the Eastern African peoples referred to as *zanj*, the peoples of the Western Sahel receive a racialized denomination, as shown by J. Cuoq, except for the term Takrūr.[[9]](#footnote-10)

This context could explain why the majority of the biographies of West African *fuqahāʾ* featured in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s biographical works belong to scholars of the Aqīt household, his own, but also why out of the set of fifteen *tarājim[[10]](#footnote-11)*, only one is of non-Berber, *sūdānī* stock. In this sense, the racial prejudice that al-Tinbuktī may have felt against himself in North Africa, had a parallel in how members of prominent Timbuktu households of Berber descent were at this time laying the foundations of their domination over non-Berber populations[[11]](#footnote-12), also in the domain of scholarship. In this sense, whether intentionally or as a mere effect of these ideas, it could be possible that the exclusion of non-Berber West African jurists could aim at depicting Islamic erudition and the knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence, as opposed to devotional practices, as a domain where *bīḍān* scholars would set the pace over other ethnic groups. Nevertheless, it should be noted that only biographies of the Aqīts, with very few exceptions, were included in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s *ṭabaqāt*: other aristocratic lineages of Berber descent from the Timbuktu *jamāʿa*, such as the And-Ag-Muḥammad and the al-Ḥājj[[12]](#footnote-13), were completely neglected. This could be explained by possible rivalries between competing households, especially in the context of Trans-Saharan trade, which could have been determining during al-Tinbuktī’s forced stay in Marrakech and after his return to Timbuktu.

The works *Nayl al-ibtihāj bi-taṭrīẓ al-Dībāj* and *Kifāyat al-muḥtāj li maʿrifat man laysa fī l-Dībāj*[[13]](#footnote-14) were composed during the author’s forced exile in Marrakech during the first years of the 11th/17th-century, although the first one of them could have been already in the process of writing before the Saʿdid invasion of the Songhay Empire[[14]](#footnote-15). These works, which contain over eight hundred biographies of North African, Andalusī, Egyptian and Arabian Mālikī jurists which were not featured in Ibn Farḥūn’s famous *al-Dībāj al-mudhhab*[[15]](#footnote-16),included the bio-bibliographies of fifteen West African *fuqahāʾ* from the 10th/16th-century, the same in both dictionaries, *Nayl* and *Kifāya*, although the author’s autobiography appears as a conclusion only at the last one. The references to West African *ʿulamāʾ* in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s biographical works have been incorporated in later *ṭabaqāt* works, such as al-Bartilī’s *Fatḥ al-shakūr*[[16]](#footnote-17) or Bello’s *Infāq al-maysūr*[[17]](#footnote-18), and other historical sources, such as al-Saʿd’s *Tārīkh al-sūdān*. They have also been thoroughly examined from the 19th-century onwards as a source for the study of the intellectual production of the Western Sahel, from the preliminary works of Cherbonneau, to those of Bivar and Hiskett and especially John O. Hunwick’s[[18]](#footnote-19).

The *tarājim* of West African *fuqahāʾ* are sorted out among the rest of the biographies, following the particular alphabetical order adopted by the author[[19]](#footnote-20). Some of them are extraordinary long and rich in details, such as pious anecdotes and lists of learned, composed and transmitted works, while others are very short mentions without any precise data. The longest, most elaborated biographies, are those of the scholars with whom the author had the closest personal or learning relationship. Overall, the most relevant features for the history of Islamic law in West Africa are the ones that point at the geographic mobility of West African *ʿulamāʾ*, in and outside the Sahel, and the preeminence of Cairo as the main pole of attraction for its learned elite in the 10th/16th-century, despite the previous ascendance of Fez and other Maghrebian locations.

## **The orientation towards an Egyptian tradition**

In what refers to the geographic context that is drawn by this set of biographies, Timbuktu was the place where eight out of the fifteen West African jurists mentioned by Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī in his biographical works either were born or died, had studied or taught or were appointed as qadis. All of these scholars but one were members of the Aqīt household. West of Timbuktu, Walāta[[20]](#footnote-21) is mentioned as the place of origin of two scholars and another three of them belong to the Central Sahel area, in particular to the village of Anuṣamman, close to Takedda[[21]](#footnote-22). South of this area, Kano[[22]](#footnote-23) and Katsina[[23]](#footnote-24) are mentioned only twice. Jenne[[24]](#footnote-25), the birthplace of the only jurist of Manding stock whose biography is featured in al-Tinbuktī’s *ṭabaqāt*, which is the one which belongs to the author’s *shaykh*, Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. Abī Bakr Baghayogho (d. 1002/1594), is omitted by the author along with other considerations about his origin.[[25]](#footnote-26) Within the limits of the Sahel, only Timbuktu and Walāta are referred to as places where West African scholars taught or learnt from others, whereas in Takedda (or Anuṣamman), Kano and Katsina the only activity carried out was teaching. Outside the Sahelian region, two geographical areas are mentioned. The first and closest of them is North Africa: this particular, and unspecific, term (*al-maghrib*) is mentioned as the place of learning for one of thejurists[[26]](#footnote-27). The very few and imprecise mentions to the Maghreb in the biographies of West African scholars included by Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī in his biographical works contrast with the frequent references to the *Mashriq*. Eight out of fifteen scholars spent time learning from oriental masters on the occasion of their pilgrimage to Mecca, and although the specific location where this learning took place is not usually mentioned, all of the masters of West African scholars in the Orient were scholars established in Cairo.

The mobility of West African scholars as portrayed in al-Tinbuktī’s biographies also needs to be considered. What can be observed in what the author lets us know about it is that, as happened in al-Andalus and North Africa, the most prominent scholars acquired their learning within their own also prominent households, and other closely associated lineages of the *khāṣṣa*, and set up for travel *fī ṭalab al-ʿilm* to the major foci of learning of their time, mainly Cairo and Medina. Other scholars, as the author himself, did not learn anywhere outside Timbuktu. On the other hand, in what refers to teaching activities, we can see how some scholars settle in Kano and Katsina, which is interesting from the point of view of the development of Islamic jurisprudence in the area. According to what Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī lets us know, Timbuktu was the main center of learning in West African Islam, at least in the 10th/16th-century. We also see that, according to al-Tinbuktī, scholars from Timbuktu did not (barely) seek knowledge anywhere else within the limits of the Sahel or in North Africa, but in Cairo. This information is diffuse in some biographies, in which the author points out at a scholar’s masters and learned works only superficially, while in other very select cases, the author’s father[[27]](#footnote-28) and his *shaykh*, the information is much more complete.

These geographic considerations reveal important omissions when contextualized with what other previous and contemporary sources declare about the developments of Islamic learning and Islamic law and jurisprudence in the Western Sahel. Whereas al-Tinbuktī’s biographies convey a picture of West African Islamic scholarship that focuses almost strictly around the author’s hometown, Timbuktu, and around the household that he belonged to, the Aqīts, former foci of learning in the area, such as Jenne or Walāta, with which the elite of scholars of Timbuktu had historical intellectual and commercial ties, are only barely mentioned; in the case of Jenne, this city is completely absent from the landscape of West African *fuqahāʾ* drawn by Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī in his biographical works. If we compare this with, for instance, the way in which al-Saʿdī refers to the scholars of Jenne and their ties to the Timbuktu notables (*aʿyān*), this omission becomes quite clear.

When the Friend of God Most High, the jurist *Sīdī* Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt[[28]](#footnote-29), saw Muḥammad Fodigi during his visit to Jenne, he was filled with admiration for his conduct, and praised him on his return to Timbuktu. It was because of this that *Amīr al-muʾminīn* Askya *al-ḥājj* Muḥammad, on his return from pilgrimage, appointed him *qāḍī* of the city of Jenne. He was the first person there to give judgements in disputes in conformity with the *sharīʿa*. Prior to that, people had their disputes settled through agreement by the *khaṭīb*, as is the habit of the *sūdān*, whereas the *bīḍān* litigate before *qāḍī*s. This is how things are customarily done by them to this day.[[29]](#footnote-30)

As can be observed in this citation, as well as more generally in 11th/17th-century Timbuktu historical writings, the commercial and intellectual ties of Timbuktu with Jenne (and Walāta) were very strong. Moreover, it becomes clear from al-Saʿdī’s text that these strong ties between Timbuktu and Jenne brought the most prominent households of both cities together, putting Berber/Ṣanhāja[[30]](#footnote-31) *bīḍān* and non-Berber *sūdān* Islamic jurists in close contact. However, this citation, which shows one of the earliest mentions to this dichotomy, if not the earliest, emphasizes a calculated distance between both traditions, while also quite explicitly underestimates the way in which the non-Berbers practice Islamic law. As will be discussed later in this article, this might be related to the political upheavals of the late 10th/16th-century and the early 11th/17th-century with the decay of the Songhay Empire and the new social and political configuration brought about by the Saʿdid invasion.

In the case of Walāta, which was another of what could be considered as the earlier centers of Islamic learning in the Western Sahel, the relationship to Timbuktu was much closer in terms of distance, but also in what refers to commercial and intellectual ties, since its population, and of course this includes the elite of the *fuqahāʾ* and the merchants, moved from one city to the other[[31]](#footnote-32). As we can read again in al-Saʿdī,

People came there [Timbuktu] from all directions, and over time it became a commercial emporium. The most frequent traders there were the people of Wagadu, followed by others from that general area. The previous center of commerce had been the town of Bīru, to which caravans came from all directions. The cream of scholars and holymen, and the wealthy from every tribe and land settled there – men from Egypt, Awjila, Fezzan, Ghadames, Tuwāt, Darʿa, Tāfilalt, Fez, Sūs, Bīṭu, etc. Little by little, together with representatives of all the branches of the Ṣanhāja, they moved to Timbuktu until they filled it with overflowing. Timbuktu’s growth brought about the ruin of Walāta, for its development, as regards both religion and commerce, came entirely from the west.[[32]](#footnote-33)

The process to which al-Saʿdī refers took place in the 9th/15th-century, but it was momentarily reversed during Sonni ʿAlī’s reign over the Songhay Empire, when, as it is widely known, the Timbuktu notables (*al-aʿyān*) fled the town in order to avoid the new ruler’s persecution due to their collaboration with Tuareg chieftains. That Walāta was their destination shows that the area was out of reach for Songhay forces, but also that there were strong ties between both cities. It is therefore quite striking that only one jurist from Walāta was featured in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s *ṭabaqāt* works. A closer look at the biography of this scholar, Makhlūf al-Balbālī[[33]](#footnote-34), brings up several distinctive characteristics, when compared to the other jurists included by the author in his set of West African jurists.

Makhlūf b. ʿAlī b. Ṣāliḥ al-Balbālī, the jurist, the erudite, the great traveler. He began to study late in life. One of his first masters in Walāta was the *shaykh* and pious servant of God ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt, my grandfather’s full brother. He taught him the *Risāla*, and when he became aware of his virtues, he encouraged him to dedicate himself to *ʿilm*. So begun his vocation. He stopped being a trader, which was his previous dedication, and headed for the Maghreb, where he learnt from Ibn Ghāzī and others. He was renowned by his outstanding memory: some people say that he memorized al-Bukhārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Then he came back to the *bilād al-sūdān* and traveled to places like Kano or Katsina, where he taught and became engaged in research *(abḥāth)* with al-ʿĀqib al-Anuṣammanī. After that, he taught in Timbuktu and in Marrakech, where he was poisoned. He became ill and went back home (Walāta), where he died after 940/1533.[[34]](#footnote-35)

Makhlūf al-Balbālī, whose only surviving work, up to our present knowledge, was a *fatwà* on slavery[[35]](#footnote-36), was the only scholar among those featured in al-Tinbuktī’s biographical dictionaries who is referred to as having traveled to the Maghreb in order to pursue his learning of Islamic law. This is quite remarkable since, as will be discussed in the next section, both intellectually, through the diffusion and transmission of works of Mālikī jurisprudence­, as well as socially, with the strong presence of North African communities in the Western Sahel, it would be reasonable to assume that there should have been a considerable exchange of scholars between both regions. However, this is not necessarily so, and there is a chance that what we can read in al-Tinbuktī’s *ṭabaqāt* shows a different pattern from the earlier stages of the diffusion of Islamic law in West Africa, in which scholars would have traveled to the Maghreb in order to study, to a new period where scholars learnt within the Sahel, or travelled to Egypt in case of the wealthiest families, something that clearly stands out from the mentions to Egyptian works and masters that can be found in the *tarājim* of the Aqīts and others[[36]](#footnote-37). If this took place with West African masters, as is the case of the Aqīts, again according to Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, or if jurists from relevant North African communities established in Timbuktu[[37]](#footnote-38) took part in the process, is not evident from what the sources reveal, although, as will be shown hereunder, the *Timbuktu Chronicles* reflect a wider ethnic diversity from what al-Tinbuktī’s biographies of West African *ʿulamāʾ* convey. Whatever the case, as has been already mentioned, scholars from other prominent Timbuktu households and from other places of learning of Islamic jurisprudence in West Africa, such as Walāta or Jenne, are neglected in al-Tinbuktī’s biographical works. This underrepresentation of scholars from other parts of the Western Sahel may misrepresent the intellectual ties of scholars from this region with the Maghreb, since the diffusion of Islamic learning in the earlier West African foci and the beginnings of the longstanding non-Berber scholarship that took place in them is very closely related to their connection to North African commercial networks[[38]](#footnote-39). This will be dealt with in the next sections of this article, but before considering how the sociopolitical context may have affected the author for the omission of the actual weight of the Maghrebian tradition in West African Islam, it is necessary to analyze how his detailed description of the Egyptian influence on his colleagues from the Sahel may point at a true shift in their orientation towards the production of Cairene *ʿulamāʾ*.

The description of the connections of the Aqīts with Egyptian scholars throughout the 10th/16th-century completely overshadows any other intellectual ties portrayed in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s biographical dictionaries. These ties must be understood as part of the distinction of the elite of West African *ʿulamāʾ*, in that the pilgrimage to Mecca and the stay in Cairo, during which the learning took place, should not be generalized as a common pattern for regular students due to the great economic resources that it involved. Caution is also necessary in order to calibrate the real impact of this exchange, since, as has been mentioned above, no references to the works that West African scholars learnt in Cairo can be found in their biographies, but only to the names of the scholars that they frequented there. In fact, specific titles occur only in very selected biographies. According to al-Tinbuktī, the Egyptian *ʿulamāʾ* and *fuqahāʾ* who taught West African scholars during their stay in Cairo were scholars of great renown: among them we can find al-Ṣuyūṭī (d. 911/1505)[[39]](#footnote-40), Khālid al-Azharī (d. 905/1499)[[40]](#footnote-41), Burhān al-Dīn al-Qalqashandī (d. 921/1516)[[41]](#footnote-42), Burhān al-Dīn al-Maqdisī (d. 923/1517)[[42]](#footnote-43), *shaykh al-islām* Zakariyyāʾ al-Anṣārī (d. 926/1520)[[43]](#footnote-44) and the brothers Shams al-Dīn and Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Laqānī (d. 935/1528 and 958/1551)[[44]](#footnote-45). For later periods, the author mentions figures such as al-Sakhāwī al-Madanī (d. 960/1553)[[45]](#footnote-46), Muḥammad al-Bakrī (d. 994/1586)[[46]](#footnote-47) or ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Tājurī (d. 999/1590)[[47]](#footnote-48) among the masters of West African *fuqahāʾ* in Cairo, but, as has been mentioned before, without mention to the works that were learnt from them.

The references to the subjects that scholars from the Sahel studied in Cairo are also very rare in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s biographical dictionaries. From al-Tāzakhtī’s biography[[48]](#footnote-49), we learn that, according to al-Tinbuktī, what he studied under *shaykh al-islām* Zakariyyāʾ al-Anṣārī and al-Qalqashandī was *ḥadīth*, and that he studied Khalīl Ibn Isḥāq’s *Mukhtaṣar*[[49]](#footnote-50)and other jurisprudence works from the Laqānī brothers. These two assertions should be paid attention to, because they point at the question of whether or not did Mālikī scholars from West Africa study jurisprudence in Egypt, where the majority of jurists belonged to the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*, but where Mālikīs were active as well.[[50]](#footnote-51) As will be shown, West African scholars studied under Egyptian Mālikī jurists, as the Laqānī brothers, for instance, but they also wrote commentaries on Egyptian *fiqh* works, which would show that they were not exclusively interested in learning *ḥadīth* during their stays in the Egyptian metropole[[51]](#footnote-52). This influence of Egyptian Mālikism, together with a somehow tardive development of Islamic jurisprudence, seems to have had quite a relevant impact in the Sahel, which could probably explain the absolute preeminence of the *Mukhtaṣar* over all other jurisprudence works in West Africa. At least from what al-Tinbuktī declares in his *ṭabaqāt* works, the greater part of the works composed by West African jurists were commentaries on the work of Khalīl b. Isḥāq, as will be shown in the annexed chart.

The information provided by Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī about the works that were learnt, transmitted and composed by the jurists whose biographies he featured in his biographical works, should not be understood as a faithful description of the intellectual milieu of 10th/16th-century West Africa, but contextualized in order to be analyzed critically, bearing in mind that these mentions are circumscribed only to some of the members of the Aqīt household, with meaningful exceptions such as relevant figures from the Takedda area, such as al-ʿĀqib and al-Najīb al-Anuṣammanī[[52]](#footnote-53), and the author’s *shaykh*, Muḥammad Baghayogho. According to al-Tinbuktī’s biographical dictionaries, the interest of jurists from his grandfather’s generation was focused mainly on the transmission and commentary of Maghrebian *fiqh* works, such as Saḥnūn’s *Mudawwana* or Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī’s *Risāla*[[53]](#footnote-54), together with the fundamental work of the Mālikī *madhhab*, the *Muwaṭṭaʾ* of Mālik b. Anas[[54]](#footnote-55). Khalīl b. Isḥāq’s *Mukhtaṣar* also appears in this period, as the only oriental work being transmitted in the Sahel together with Mālik’s *Muwaṭṭaʾ*, according to al-Tinbuktī. Another Maghrebian work, the *Kitāb al-shifāʾ* of ʿIyāḍ b. Mūsā[[55]](#footnote-56), is also among the works transmitted in this period, together with an Andalusī work, Ibn Mālik’s *Alfiyya* on Grammar[[56]](#footnote-57).

In the next generation, that of Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s father, which is that of the author’s direct masters, oriental works other than Khalīl b. Isḥāq’s *Mukhtaṣar* begin to appear, but in what refers to the domain of jurisprudence, they remain not quite as preeminent as Maghrebian works. al-Tinbuktī attributes a “Glose” on a commentary on Khalīl b. Isḥāq’s *Mukhtaṣar* made by the Egyptian *qāḍī-l-quḍāt* al-Taʾtāʾī (d. 940/1533)[[57]](#footnote-58) by his father, Aḥmad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt[[58]](#footnote-59). Another oriental *fiqh* work, the *Mukhtaṣar al-farʿī*, the compendium of Mālikī jurisprudence written by Ibn al-Ḥājib of Alexandria (d. 646/1249)[[59]](#footnote-60), was transmitted to Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī by his *shaykh*, Muḥammad Baghayogho, according to what we can read in this jurist’s biography[[60]](#footnote-61). Two other oriental *fiqh* works were transmitted to al-Tinbuktī by Muḥammad Baghayogho, according to what he declares in this text: Khalīl b. Isḥāq’s *Tawḍīḥ*[[61]](#footnote-62) and Ibn al-Ḥājj’s *Madkhal*[[62]](#footnote-63). Also, the *Uṣūl* of the Egyptian Shāfiʿī jurist and traditionist Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771/1370)[[63]](#footnote-64) is one of the works that Muhammad Baghayogho learnt from Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s father. In the domain of logic, for which the West Africanscholars featured in al-Tinbuktī’s biographical works had a deep interest, something that we can infer from some of the works composed by members of the Aqīt household, we see that al-Tinbuktī’s father was the author of a Commentary on al-Khūnajī’s *Jumal*[[64]](#footnote-65), which was among the works that he transmitted to Muḥammad Baghayogho.

According to Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, his *shaykh* transmitted to him the key works of the Mālikī *madhhab*, which he had learnt with other members of the Aqīt household, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Saʿīd[[65]](#footnote-66), who was Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt’s grandson through a daughter, and al-Tinbuktī’s father. These works were the same that could be observed in the previous generation, the *Muwaṭṭaʾ* of Mālik b. Anas, Saḥnūn’s *Mudawwana*[[66]](#footnote-67), the *Mukhtaṣar* of Khalīl b. Isḥāq, Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī’s *Risāla* or al-Wansharīsī’s *Jāmiʿ al-miʿyār*[[67]](#footnote-68). Andalusī *fiqh* treatises, such as the *Muntaqà*, a Commentary on the *Muwaṭṭaʾ* of Mālik b. Anas made by al-Bājī (d. 474/1081)[[68]](#footnote-69), or Ibn ʿĀṣim’s notarial procedures[[69]](#footnote-70), were also part of the works transmitted to Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī by his *shaykh*. The Andalusī tradition is also present in other domains, like Grammar and versification, with works by Ibn Mālik (d. 672/1274)[[70]](#footnote-71) and al-Khazrajī (d. 617/1220)[[71]](#footnote-72), but especially in the domain of the devotion to the Prophet Muḥammad, with comments to the *Khamsiyyāt* of Ibn Māhib (d. 645/1247) to the *ʿIshrīniyyāt* of al-Fāzazī (d. 627/1230)[[72]](#footnote-73) written by al-Tinbuktī’s father. In this domain, the preeminence of Maghrebian works, such as ʿIyāḍ b. Mūsà’s *Kitāb al-shifāʾ*, as well as the three *ʿAqīda*s by al-Sanūsī (d. 892/1486 or 896/1490)[[73]](#footnote-74), which also inspired another commentary by al-Tinbuktī’s father, can be clearly observed.

The Egyptian works that appear as having been learnt and transmitted in the biographies of West African *ʿulamāʾ* featured in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s *ṭabāqat* coincide to a large extent with the ones that have been at the center of the West African tradition of learning from premodern times, at least from what can be inferred from the findings of the studies that have been carried out on this matter for specific areas, such as the West Saharan tradition[[74]](#footnote-75). This could mean that the eminence of the Egyptian tradition over West African Islamic scholarship, including Islamic law, that can be observed in al-Tinbuktī’s biographical writings may reproduce a real trend in the Sahel for the 11th/17th-century, although this does not necessarily imply that the emphasis made on it by the profuse mentions to Egyptian works and masters, especially in comparison to the absolute neglect of any Maghrebian influence, was not intentional in the sense of highlighting the “Oriental credentials” of the author before his colleagues in the Maghreb, as will be discussed in the last section of the article.

## **The practical exercise of Islamic jurisprudence**

The way in which Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī describes the West African *fuqahāʾ* reveals other interesting features regarding what could be considered as their role as jurists and religious authorities, such as their pious reputation or their political power, which could be considered as partly deriving from religious prestige. In this sense, the mentions to the *grandeur* of the Aqīt household and their highest intellectual level can be understood as manifestations of their symbolic capital, and the omissions of other scholarly households, in- and outside Timbuktu, should be too, in that it reinforces the idea of their paramount position in the West African intellectual landscape. This should be contextualized in the author’s Maghrebian period, as will be analyzed hereunder.

As we have seen, in West Africa, members of the Aqīt household studied only within their own family in a great majority of cases, according to what al-Tinbuktī declares, although we can infer from other sources, such as al-Saʿdī’s *Tārīkh al-sūdān*, that many other households were part of the intellectual elite of Timbuktu, and that this was an ethnically varied group which included members of the North African as well as Mande and Soninke communities. It seems from what can be read in the *Tārīkh al-sūdān* that, whereas the office of qadi was monopolized by the Ṣanhāja Anda-Ag-Muḥammad and Aqīt lineages, the one of *khaṭīb* or the leadership of prayer (*imām*) was held by members of other ethnic groups, which included Soninke, such as Maḥmūd Darāmī, *khaṭīb* of Timbuktu, who died in Gao in 1000/1591–2[[75]](#footnote-76). Only one jurist outside the Aqīt household is mentioned as having taught members of this household, and this is Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s *shaykh*, Muḥammad Baghayogho, whose family came originally from Jenne[[76]](#footnote-77). Members of the Aqīt household, such as ʿAbd Allāh, Aḥmad and Maḥmūd, sons of ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt, also had intellectual exchanges with al-ʿĀqib al-Anuṣammanī, who, as has been mentioned before, is one of the fundamental figures of Islamic jurisprudence in the Central Sahel. Moreover, references to the relationships of these scholars with jurists from North Africa are also very rare: according to al-Tinbuktī, only two jurists from the Maghreb taught in West Africa, namely Makhlūf b. ʿAlī b. Ṣāliḥ al-Balbālī and the celebrious Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī[[77]](#footnote-78), who was a fundamental figure in the development of Islamic jurisprudence in the Central Sahel. It is also worth to note that al-Balbālī and al-Maghīlī did not, according to al-Tinbuktī, teach the Aqīts. The frugality of the textual corpora available does not allow to conclude whether this intellectual self-sufficiency of the Aqīts was somehow hyperbolized, which could be the case if we consider some of the circumstances in which the biographies of members of this household were composed, or if what al-Tinbuktī narrates about them reflects the lack of reciprocal connections within Timbuktu’s scholarly lineages.

Other aspects related to the practical exercise of Islamic jurisprudence, as is the case of judgeship (*al-qaḍāʾ*), can be observed in what Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī declares about his West African colleagues. According to what al-Tinbuktī affirms in his biographical works, which coincides with the accounts made of it by al-Saʿdi’s *Tārīkh al-sūdān* and the writings of Ibn al-Mukhtār, six out of the fifteen West African scholars included in them were appointed as qadis, although not all of them accepted the appointment. Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt and his sons Muḥammad and al-ʿĀqib were qadis of Timbuktu[[78]](#footnote-79), and the first one was also imam at the Sankore mosque. Muḥammad Aydaḥmad al-Tāzakhtī was qadi of Katsina. Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt and Muḥammad Baghayogho were appointed as qadis, but politely refused to accept it. The piety of these last two scholars is strongly highlighted in their biographies, and their desire to put some distance from the perils that proximity to political power implied from the point of view of religious observance is common among prominent scholars of the premodern Islamic West. As we will see later in this article, avoiding these perils is the subject of one of Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s first treatises, the work *Jalb al-niʿma*[[79]](#footnote-80). However, from what we can read in al-Tinbuktī’s *ṭabaqāt* and contemporary works as the TimbuktuChronicles, this may not be considered as having been usual for the elite of West African Islamic jurisprudence, since references to the utmost piety also coincide with strong mundane power and abundant wealth.

Mentions to religious piety can be found almost exclusively in the biographies of members of the Aqīt family, or in the biographies of scholars with whom the author had a very close relationship, such as Muḥammad Baghayogho. This piety is often linked to ascetics, as in the aforementioned case of Muḥammad Baghayogho, who, according to al-Tinbuktī, spent the whole day teaching and part of the night praying[[80]](#footnote-81). As has been mentioned before, Baghayogho politely refused to be appointed as qadi. Another specific mention to worldly renunciation is made in the biography of Abū Bakr b. Aḥmad b. ʿUmar Aqīt[[81]](#footnote-82), one of the author’s paternal uncle, who went on pilgrimage to Mecca and, upon his return, gathered his family and settled with them in Medina for the rest of his life. He is described as having renounced this world even though he had been given the highest “leadership and power” (*riʾāsa wa-dawla*). His biography includes the only direct mention of Sufism in this set of *tarājim*: al-Tinbuktī declares that Abū Bakr b. Aḥmad b. ʿUmar Aqīt was his first teacher of Arabic, what he taught to him in a very short time and without difficulty, “having transmitted to him his *baraka*”. The author also attributes to him the writing of “short works on Sufism (*taṣawwuf*)”[[82]](#footnote-83). Holiness (*walāya*) is also used to describe one of the author’s ancestors, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt[[83]](#footnote-84), who is also described as being very generous[[84]](#footnote-85). Generosity also appears in the biographies of the author’s father and the author’s *shaykh*, who lent their very valuable books to everyone who asked for them[[85]](#footnote-86), but also in Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt’s biography, where the author affirms that he gave away to people in need the presents and honors that he received from “the sultans”[[86]](#footnote-87). Once again, the relationship to power and wealth appears often, and in different manners. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s paternal uncle Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar Aqīt, qadi of Timbuktu, is said to “have had luck, and all the power and leadership that he could ask for” and to “live well-off”[[87]](#footnote-88).

Muḥammad’s brother al-ʿĀqib b. Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar Aqīt, also qadi of Timbuktu, is described as having obtained “abundant riches”, but also as being firm in his decision to enforce “common good” (*al-khayr*), and that he was much feared, and here it is interesting to point at the opposition of the qadis richness with his care for common good, as if both qualities were incompatible, or so they could be interpreted. According to al-Tinbuktī, qadi al-ʿĀqib was “brave in the important affairs, where others backed down, daring with kings and others, and winning in his conflicts with them, who normally ended up complying with what he considered”. This is emphasized by mentioning that “when al-ʿĀqib saw that something was execrable, he renounced to his appointment and sat by the door of his house, until he was convinced to come back”[[88]](#footnote-89). In the same way as al-ʿĀqib’s, his cousin Aḥmad b. *al-ḥājj* Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Aqīt, Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s father, was also described as being very firm in his determination “against all injustice, even before the powerful”. His relationship with the rulers of Songhay is illustrated in his biography, where the author affirms that “he was hard on the kings and on others. They (kings) always visited him in his own house, always obeyed him. When he fell sick in Gao and other places of his travels, the great sultan Askya Daʾūd visited him every night until he was healed, looking after him and revering his power”. Such an emphatic account highlights the central role of the Aqīt household by suggesting their almost complete independence from political power, although we may assume, as other studies have already pointed out[[89]](#footnote-90), that this was most likely not so, at least during the Songhay Empire’s period of strongest rule over the Niger Bend. This is even more striking in the case of how al-Tinbuktī depicts his father, as being almost venerated by the most powerful West African sovereign while he, as the author himself, was only part of a secondary branch of the Aqīts and did not occupy any relevant posts in Timbuktu or in Songhay administration, and who is not mentioned as a revered figure by any other contemporary source.

## **Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī as a historian of Islamic law in premodern West Africa**

The partial description of 10th/16th-century Islamic jurisprudence in West Africa made by Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī in his biographical works reveals several interesting features, as has been shown in this article, of which its omissions are certainly the most peculiar aspect. In this sense, in order to try to understand the reasons behind the author’s criterion for introducing specific jurists from the Sahel into his biographical dictionary, it is imperative to take into consideration the historical context in which the work *Nayl al-ibtihāj* was started, which is that of the social and political instability in the Niger Bend region due to successional strife in the Songhay Empire on the eve of the Saʿdian invasion. Moreover, al-Tinbuktī’s biographical dictionaries belong to another and very different historical context, which is that in which both works were completed, the author’s period of captivity and later forced residence in Marrakech between the last years of the 10th/16th-century and the beginning of the 11th/17th-century. These two different moments in the author’s life may explain some of the motivations that he may have had for starting a *ṭabaqāt* work, for featuring specific West African jurists into it, and for omitting others.

The disintegration of Songhay authority at the end of the 10th/16th-century may have influenced part of Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s earliest writings, as shows one of his treatises, mentioned before in this article, the work *Jalb al-niʿma*, written against “evil rulers” (*al-wulāt al-ẓalama*). According to Maḥmūd Zouber and Elias N. Saad[[90]](#footnote-91), in this work the author intended to warn himself and others against the dangers of being close to political authority, when this is not rightly exercised, highlighting the moral preeminence and praising the virtues of the *ʿulamāʾ*, upon whom he placed the ultimate capacity to legitimize worldly rulers and to evaluate their action according to the new social order of Islam, of which the *ʿulamāʾ* were indispensable configurators. Even though, according to Zouber and Saad, there is no mention to Songhay rulers in the work *Jalb al-niʿma*, it is probable that the tumultuous political events that were taking place in the Songhay Empire at the time, in which the Sankore *ʿulamāʾ* actively participated[[91]](#footnote-92), did somehow inspire his treatise. This happened at the same time in which Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī started writing the work *Nayl al-ibtihāj*, and while his declared intention for doing this was to provide the background of the Mālikī jurists who were not included in Ibn Farḥūn’s *Dībāj*, or as he put it, “to differentiate the pious from the evil, the cursed from the blessed, to know the just from the nobody, giving each one their value”[[92]](#footnote-93), the inclusion of West African *fuqahāʾ* in this work incardinates the Timbuktu legal tradition into the broader framework of the Mālikī *madhhab*, and more specifically, it situates the Aqīt jurists as part of *pious*, *blessed* and *just* greater category of Mālikī scholars in the whole *umma*, where they would no longer be part of the *nobody*. Moreover, it can be argued that writing a biographical dictionary of jurists could also be a way of highlighting their moral preeminence and their social and political leadership, especially in the context of a significant power gap and shift in the political configuration of the region, as was the collapse of the Songhay Empire.

al-Tinbuktī’s reflections on the role of the *fuqahāʾ* in society should be understood in terms of what has been considered as the process of expansion of the dominion of the *bīḍān*, the Ṣanhāja and Tuareg groups, into the southern areas of the Western Sahel, of which the previously quoted passage of al-Saʿdī’s *Taʾrīkh al-sūdān* might be seen as indicative, a process that is directly related to the regression of Songhay rule over the territory, as well as the southward migration of agricultural peoples due to the desertification of the northern savanna area, as shown by Webb.[[93]](#footnote-94) We could understand these social and political dynamics as an attempt to replace the political leadership of the Songhay elites by the *bīḍān*, not of course by building structures of state, but by reinforcing the social control that they already exercised through their scholarly branches, by the means of defining and enforcing their version of the Islamic social order. Although this may seem unrelated to al-Tinbuktī’s possible reasons to write a biographical dictionary of Mālikī jurists, it does certainly have a relationship to the author’s reflections on the key role of the *ʿulamāʾ* in society, captured in the work *Jalb al-niʿma*, as has been previously mentioned, and in this sense his depiction of the Aqīts in his *ṭabaqāt* works as epitomes of righteousness, piety and, in some cases, just and effective political leadership, may be seen as a complement to what he had expressed in his political treatise: mundane rulers often fail their mission in society, whereas the righteous *ʿulamāʾ*, and especially the Aqīts, their supreme exponent, would certainly accomplish it in a much better way. This brings up the question of the role of the Timbuktu *jamāʿa* in the leadership of the town, which, although it cannot be sufficiently analyzed through the *tarājim* of West African scholars in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s *ṭabaqāt*, mainly due to their briefness, can be contrasted with what can be observed in other contemporary sources. As can be read in the above-mentioned citations from qadi al-ʿĀqib’s biography, one al-Tinbuktī’s longer and more detailed accounts, it would seem that this judge monopolized the leadership of the city and exercised political power in the variable space that Songhay sovereigns left for it, even as hypothetical equals, without further mention of any scholar or notable being of a similar status. This contrasts with the account of al-Saʿdī for the same historical period in his *Tārīkh al-sūdān*, which does often mention the *jamāʿa* and its effective leadership in appointing religious offices, its debates in choosing the right persons for them, and even paying for its salaries. This should be thoroughly analyzed for what it may mean in terms of the relationship of Timbuktu’s notables and Songhay authorities, and their effective control over the city, but it should be noted that, although completely absent from Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s *ṭabaqāt*, it seems that the Timbuktu *jamāʿa* functioned in a similar way as it did in other Saharan enclaves in later historical periods.[[94]](#footnote-95)

It is feasible to look at al-Tinbuktī’s description of West African scholars in his *ṭabaqāt* works as somehow capturing a state of mind of Timbuktu’s highest social layers, in the same way as some years later, and after the deep transformations of the social order brought about by the Saʿdian invasion, would do the *Timbuktu Chronicles* and their message of *rassemblement* of the elites[[95]](#footnote-96). In this sense, from a historiographical perspective, al-Tinbuktī’s biographical dictionaries may be seen as forerunners of al-Saʿdī’s and Ibn al-Mukhtār’s works, and as the embryonic form of the interest for the history of Islam and of Islamic jurisprudence in Timbuktu. All of these works share a common declared intention, which is that of the memory of past times, while they also share a common relevant feature, such as being very self-centered, that is, focusing almost exclusively in the Timbuktu tradition and its jurists. Self-vindication, in that members of the intellectual elites praise these same elites’ intellectual and moral achievements is also a shared characteristic of al-Tinbuktī’s *ṭabaqāt* and the so-called Timbuktu Chronicles, with a slight difference: the biographies of West African jurists in al-Tinbuktī’s works emphasize the merits of only a very reduced part of the *khāṣṣa*, the one with which the author is directly concerned, namely his own household, while the *Timbuktu Chronicles* praise the entire religious elite of the city. In this sense, it could be argued that the so-called *Timbuktu Chronicles* are the result and at the same time show a wave of upsurge of the *bīḍān* households embodied in their religious, legal and intellectual representatives, the *ʿulamāʾ* of Sankore, to which they joined households from other ethnic backgrounds (mainly Soninke), and the new elite of the Arma[[96]](#footnote-97). The description of West African jurists in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s *ṭabaqāt* works should be understood as part of the same ideological background, and as a precursor and probable inspiration in the same historiographical tradition[[97]](#footnote-98). Although the political project of the *Timbuktu Chronicles* for the consolidation of the three elites of this period, the Arma, the Ṣanhāja and the Soninke could not have taken place in previous periods, it could be possible that the same wave of upsurge of the *ʿulamāʾ*, in this case as representatives of the strongest economic power, the Ṣanhāja households, had taken place in the moment of the disintegration of Songhay rule[[98]](#footnote-99). However, Aḥmad Bābā al Tinbuktī’s *ṭabaqāt* seem to share this spirit only partially, in that they focus specifically on the praise for the Aqīts, neglecting other paramount scholars.

 The vindication of the Timbuktu *ʿulamāʾ* in the aftermath of the debacle created by the Saʿdid invasion of the Songhay Empire could also be understood as a way of claiming their socio-political role in the West African region, of bringing up the recognition of their moral and intellectual excellence, which could open their possibilities and their disciples’ to occupy different religious and administrative positions in the area, and would mean considerable power and wealth, as happened in previous times in the cases of the most powerful members of the Aqīt household, according to their biographies in al-Tinbuktī’s *ṭabaqāt*, as was previously mentioned. In this sense, and as has been previously brought up[[99]](#footnote-100), the *fuqahāʾ* from the Ṣanhāja, and more specifically the Aqīts, used to get involved in political tensions, such as the widely known confrontation with Sonni ʿAlī, and also their support of several governors of the Western provinces of the Songhay Empire who participated in the struggles for the Imperial throne. This political involvement was unique to the religious branches of the Ṣanhāja and was not shared by scholars of Soninke or North African origin. This is shown by the fact that only the Aqīts had to flee Timbuktu at the time of Sonni ʿAlī’s rise to power, as well as by the fact that only the Aqīts were deported to Marrakech as a punishment to their opposition to the Saʿdid occupation of Timbuktu. It could be possible that the political role played by members of the Aqīt household, and not only their moral or intellectual preeminence, influenced al-Tinbuktī’s thought and was one of the possible motivations behind some of his early writings, including the work *Nayl al-ibtihāj*. Praise for the religious and moral, as well as intellectual characteristics of the *fuqahāʾ* from his household, or, as in the case of the *Timbuktu Chronicles*, of Timbuktu, could serve the purpose of distinguishing the scholarship of this city from that of other places of Islamic learning in West Africa. Emphasis on the righteousness of the Aqīts and the holiness of Timbuktu can be seen as two similar ways of highlighting the superiority of the *fuqahāʾ* from this city over others, and therefore intend to favor their careers in the region over those of scholars from other towns, with the consequential economic and political implications that this might have had. Thus, the powerful image of the *city of scholars*, could have worked as a convincing slogan in the interest of the economic and political interests of the Timbuktu *khāṣṣa*, of which the elite of the *ʿulamāʾ* were part. The social tradition built by the Timbuktu *ʿulamāʾ*, which resulted in the city’s fame as a *city of scholars* has been considerably debated[[100]](#footnote-101), but the textual evidence available does not allow to conclude that this feature was specific of Timbuktu, and references in other contemporary sources to the participation of the *ʿulamāʾ* in the administrative and political affairs in other locations, such as Jenne, could point at similar social traditions elsewhere in the Western Sahel. Also, the fact that the sources remain almost absolutely silent about the relationship of the scholars with the members of their households who must have provided them with the economic support which allowed them to devote themselves to scholarship, strengthens this image. It should be noted that the only mention to the economic occupations of the West African jurists in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s biographical works takes place in the biography of Makhlūf al-Balbālī, who was also the only jurist whom the author describes as having studied in the Maghreb[[101]](#footnote-102).

There is, however, another historical context for Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s *tạbaqāt*, as has been mentioned before, for both works were finished during the author’s period of displacement in Marrakech. The Maghreb and its intellectual influence in the development of Islamic law in West Africa constitute the other most striking absence in what we can read about this region in al-Tinbuktī’s biographical dictionaries. In the first place, because the greater part of both works is dedicated mainly to the biographies of Maghrebian Mālikī jurists, and because many of their sources are of Maghrebian and Andalusī origin[[102]](#footnote-103). Regardless of this, the biographies of West African jurists in al-Tinbuktī’s *ṭabaqāt* works omit almost any mention to the intellectual ties of the Western Sahel with North Africa, as they also avoid to mention how the key works of North African Mālikī jurisprudence, such as Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī’s *Risāla* or al-Wansharīsī’s *Miʿyār*, for instance, were transmitted to the members of the Aqīt household. A closer look at other parts of these works rapidly shows a strong North African heritage in the education of West African scholars. In the biography of ʿAbd Allāh b. Aḥmad al-Zammūrī[[103]](#footnote-104), we see that this scholar settled in Walāta during the period in which the Sankore *ʿulamāʾ* had taken refuge there from Sonni ʿAlī’s persecution. He transmitted the *Kitāb al-shifāʾ* of ʿIyāḍ b. Mūsà to al-Mukhtār al-Naḥwī b. Anda-Ag-Muḥammad, one of the West African scholars mentioned in the biographies of the Aqīts featured in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s biographical works[[104]](#footnote-105). He, in turn, taught it to his descendants, who became reputed eulogists well into the 11th/17th-century[[105]](#footnote-106), and also to al-Tinbuktī’s grandfather, Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt[[106]](#footnote-107). But there is no mention of this transmission chain in their biographies in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s *ṭabaqāt*.

 Omissions such as the above mentioned remain quite eloquent, although it should be taken into consideration that scholarly and commercial networks changed with time, and that the fact that al-Tinbuktī’s biographies of West African *ʿulamāʾ* focus on jurists from the 10th/16th-century may be the reason behind a partial description of the trans-regional relations of jurists from both sides of the Sahara desert, or that they reflect a change of trend that may put a focus on other domains, such as logic and its doctrinal use following al-Sanūsī’s influence[[107]](#footnote-108). But it could also be possible that, given that Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī accomplished the works *Nayl al-ibtihāj* and its abridgement during his forced stay in Marrakech, he may have intended that his picture of the intellectual and legal landscape of West Africa would in a way serve as his academic and social credentials in a foreign land, where his aristocratic pedigree was not really known. In this sense, he could have joined these omissions with a stronger emphasis on the links of the Aqīts with Egyptian scholarship, something that could somehow enhance his curriculum over that of his Maghrebian colleagues. Moreover, it is also possible that his omission of other scholarly lineages in Timbuktu, which are very present in the Timbuktu Chronicles, may have also sought to reinforce his very own role as an intellectual and legal intermediary, due to his informal acting as *muftī*, between the Western Sahel and North Africa, but also as a commercial one, since the elite of the *ʿulamāʾ* controlled the rulings in trade-related litigations. This particular detail also points at the author’s involvement with North African Sufism, especially with the *zāwiya* of the Nāṣiriyya brotherhood in Tamgrout[[108]](#footnote-109), and shows to what point he could have assimilated the relationship of piety and devotion and the legitimation of power in early Modern Morocco[[109]](#footnote-110), and put it in practice in commercial settings, of which his legal opinions on slavery are the most eloquent embodiment.

## **Conclusions**

The unique description of West African scholarship in Islamic law which can be observed in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s biographical works responds at the same time to the author’s concern with the history of the *ʿulamāʾ*, especially of the jurists of the Mālikī *madhhab*, as well as to his interest for their role in society. His own role as a jurist may well be part of these reflections that he started to write about before the turn of the 11th/17th-century, and that he continued to pursue for almost one decade, forerunning the development of historical writing in West Africa, which was, in turn, as well so deeply linked to the sociopolitical aspirations of the elite of scholars of the region. al-Tinbuktī’s biographical works, long cherished by scholarship on the intellectual history of West Africa by their unquestionable value, need to be understood as part of what we could define as the *zeitgeist* of the rise and fall of the Songhay Empire and of the religious elite that was one of its fundamental pillars through the Islamic legitimization of the rulers, but especially through the definition of what was rightly Islamic in the new society that sprung from Songhay domination, with Islamic law as the main instrument for it. A role that scholars tried to reinforce in the debacle that followed the disintegration of Songhay authority by the Saʿdian conquest and that was partially obstructed by the new elite of the Arma.

Even though he was far from being a key actor in the political affairs of his time, unlike the famous qadis of the Aqīt household, Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī was an essential figure in the consolidation of the social order brought about by the wave of Mālikism spread south- and eastwards in the Saharo-Sahelian space by the Almoravid movement. His self-consciousness as an *ʿālim*, revealed by al-Tinbuktī’s biographical writings, can also be observed through a contextualized reading of other treatises of his authorship, such as the above-mentioned *Jalb al-niʿma*, or by others such as *Tuḥfat al-fuḍalāʾ bi-baʿḍ faḍāʾil al-ʿulamāʾ*, where the opposition of religious knowledge and Sufi devotion is explicitly discussed. Further analysis of these works is necessary in order to analyze al-Tinbuktī’s conception of the political leadership of the *ʿulamāʾ* and their stance towards devotional practices outside the ones that started to be set up by the scholarly elites of Timbuktu at the 10th/16th-century, which could somehow compete with the influence of religious prestige obtained through scholarship of Islamic law. How this opposition was related to the beginning of *bīḍān* hegemony in the Western Sahel, of which al-Tinbuktī’s *tarājim* bear witness, remains an open question of paramount interest.

The first moment of al-Tinbuktī’s project of biographical writing, which corresponds to the author’s earliest writings, explains the clear aim to incardinate the Ṣanhāja scholarly tradition of *fiqh* from Timbuktu into the broader framework of the Mālikī *madhhab*, and reflects the state of mind that emanated from the city’s economic, sociopolitical and intellectual prevalence in the Western Sahel in the eve of the Saʿdian invasion. However, the works *Nayl al-ibtihāj* and *Kifāyat al-muḥtāj*, culminated afterthe author’s deportation to Marrakech, his experience of captivity and exile and the loss of his social privileged status, must also be contextualized through this radical change in the author’s life, since his experience in the Maghreb clearly affected his self-concept as a scholar, and the fall of the Aqīt household eventually must have forced him to find some source of revenue. al-Tinbuktī’s mature writings witness his dedication as an informal *muftī*, before and after he departed from Marrakech to return to Timbuktu, a somehow professional activity that remains quite unclear, but that can lead to argue that, at this stage, including the biographies of scholars from his own family, and presenting them as the only Sahelian *ʿulamāʾ* who merited to be featured in his *ṭabaqāt*, could have constituted a way to reinforce his prestige for al-Tinbuktī and thence to promote his career as a legal partner in the context of trade with the Sahel, of which he turned to be a reference, as shown by the diffusion of *fatāwā* such as the abovementioned *Miʿrāj al-ṣuʿūḍ*.

## **ANNEX**

Teachers, works taught, and writings by West African scholars in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s *ṭabaqāt*[[110]](#footnote-111)

1. **ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Takrūrī**[[111]](#footnote-112), the earliest scholar mentioned in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s *ṭabaqāt,* an 8th/14th-century scholar. The reference is short and does not include any mention to his masters, students or works composed.
2. **ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt** b. ʿUmar b. ʿAlī b. Yaḥyà al-Ṣanhājī al-Massūfī(d. 929/1522–3)[[112]](#footnote-113), the author’s great-uncle, described as saint (*wālī*) by him. He is said to have taught in Walāta, without further detail.
3. **Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Muḥammad al-Tāzakhtī**, known as Aydaḥmad(d. 937/1531)[[113]](#footnote-114). According to the author, he traveled to several locations in the Sahel, such as Takedda or Katsina, where he was appointed as qadi, and joined Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt on his pilgrimage to Mecca.
	1. Learnt from: Burhān al-Dīn al-Qalqashandī, Burhān al-Dīn al-Maqdisī, *shaykh al-islām* Zakariyyāʾ al-Anṣārī and the brothers Shams al-Dīn and Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Laqānī.
	2. Composed works: *Taqāyīd wa-ṭurar ʿalà Mukhtaṣar Khalīl* (*Annotations* to Khalīl b. Isḥāq’s *Mukhtaṣar*).
4. **Makhlūf b. ʿAlī b. Ṣāliḥ al-Balbālī** (d. 940/1533)[[114]](#footnote-115) from Walāta, who learnt in the Maghreb and was a teacher in different West African towns.
	1. Learnt from: Ibn Ghāzī[[115]](#footnote-116).
5. ***al-Ḥājj* Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt** b. ʿUmar b. ʿAlī b. Yaḥyà b. Judāla al-Ṣanhājī al-Tinbuktī(d. 943/1536)[[116]](#footnote-117), Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s paternal grandfather, who also taught in several locations within West Africa.
	1. Learnt from: And-Agh-Muḥammad al-Kabīr[[117]](#footnote-118) and al-Mukhtār al-Naḥwī[[118]](#footnote-119), his maternal grandfather and uncle respectively, as well as al-Ṣuyūṭī and Khālid al-Azharī (d. 905/1499)[[119]](#footnote-120).
	2. Transmitted works: Saḥnūn’s *Mudawwana*, ʿIyāḍ b. Mūsà’s *Shifāʾ*.
	3. Composed works: *Dawāwīn* (*Recopilations*), *Fawāʾid* (*Anecdotes*) and *Taʿlīqāt* (*Commentaries*).
6. **Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt** b. ʿUmar b. ʿAlī b. Yaḥyà al-Ṣanhājī al-Massūfī al-Tinbuktī(d. 955/1548)[[120]](#footnote-121), qadi of Timbuktu, described by the author as a precursor of the study of Khalīl b. Isḥāq’s *Mukhtaṣar* in the Sahel.
	1. Learnt from: Burhān al-Dīn al-Qalqashandī, Burhān al-Dīn al-Maqdisī, *shaykh al-islām* Zakariyyāʾ al-Anṣārī and the brothers Shams al-Dīn and Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Laqānī.
	2. Transmitted works: Saḥnūn’s *Mudawwana*, Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī’s *Risāla*, Khalīl b. Isḥāq’s *Mukhtaṣar*, Ibn Mālik’s *Alfiyya*, *al-Salālijiyya[[121]](#footnote-122)*.
	3. Composed works: *Sharḥ ʿalà Mukhtaṣar Khalīl* (Commentary to Khalīl b. Isḥāq’s *Mukhtaṣar*, in two volumes).
7. **al-ʿĀqib b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anuṣammanī** al-Massūfī (d. after 950/1543)[[122]](#footnote-123), a jurist from Agadez, established at the village of Anuṣamman, near Takedda, and considered as one of the precursors of Islamic jurisprudence in the Central Sahel.
8. Learnt from: al-Maghīlī, al-Ṣuyūṭī and Khālid al-Azharī.
9. Composed works: *Taʿlīq ʿalà qawl Khalīl “wa-khuṣṣisat niyyat al-ḥālif”* (Commentary on a passage of Khalīl b. Isḥāq’s *Mukhtaṣar* which says “the intention of an oath must be specific”), *Juzʾ fī wujūb al-jumaʿa fī qaryat Anuṣamman* (Work on the compulsoriness of Friday prayer at the village of Anuṣamman); *Masāʾil* works: *al-Jawāb al-majdūd ʿan asʾilat al-qādī Muḥạmmad b. Maḥmūd* (*New reply to the questions of cadi* *Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd*)*, Ajwibat al-faqīr fi asʾilat al-amīr* (*Replies of the humble (jurist) to the questions of the prince*, legal opinion originated by Askya Muḥammad I’s requirement)[[123]](#footnote-124).
10. **Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt** b. ʿUmar b. ʿAlī b. Yaḥyà al-Ṣanhājī (d. 973/1565)[[124]](#footnote-125), qadi of Timbuktu, paternal cousin of the author’s father.
	1. Composed works: *Taʿlīq ʿalà Rajaz al-Maghīlī fī l-manṭiq* (*Commentary* on al-Maghīlī’s *Rajaz*[[125]](#footnote-126) on logic)[[126]](#footnote-127).
11. **Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Saʿīd** (d. 976/1568)[[127]](#footnote-128), who was a grandson of Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar Aqīt’s through one of his daughters, one of Timbuktu’s most relevant scholars.
	1. Learnt from: Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt.
	2. Transmitted works: Saḥnūn’s *Mudawwana*, Mālik’s *Muwaṭṭaʾ*, Khalīl b. Isḥāq’s *Mukhtaṣar.*
12. Composed works: *Mustadrakāt fī l-fiqh* (*Jurisprudence corrections*), *Ḥāshiya laṭīfa ʿalà Khalīl* (*Agreeable glose* on Khalīl, based in the work *al-Bayān wa-l-taḥṣīl)*[[128]](#footnote-129).
13. **al-ʿĀqib b. Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt** b. ʿUmar b. ʿAlī b. Yaḥyà al-Ṣanhājī (d. 991/1583)[[129]](#footnote-130), qadi of Timbuktu, another paternal cousin of the author’s father.
	1. Learnt from: Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Laqānī, Muḥammad al-Bakrī.
14. **Abū Bakr b. Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt** (d. 991/1583)[[130]](#footnote-131), the author’s paternal uncle.
	1. Composed works: *Muʿīn al-ḍuʿafāʾ fī l-qināʿa* (*Help for weaks of patience*)[[131]](#footnote-132).
15. **Aḥmad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt** b. ʿUmar b. ʿAlī b. Yaḥyà (d. 991/1583)[[132]](#footnote-133), the author’s father.
	1. Learnt from: Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt, Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Laqānī, al-Sakhāwī al-Madanī, Muḥammad al-Bakrī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Tājurī.
16. Transmitted works: al-Bukhārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ,* Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ,* ʿIyāḍ b. Mūsà’s *Shifāʾ.*
17. Composed works: *Sharḥ takhmīs Ibn Māhib li-ʿIshrīniyyāt al-Fazazī* (Explanation of Ibn Māhib’s *Khamsiyyāt* to al-Fazazī’s *ʿIshrīniyyāt*, *Imnāḥ al-ahbāb min Mināḥ al-Wahhāb* (*Rendereing of the Treasures of the* Gifts of the Generous, al-Maghīlī’s *rajaz* poem on logic), *Hāshiya ʿalà Sharḥ al-Tatāʾī ʿalà Mukhtaṣar Khalīl* (*Gloss to al-Tatāʾī’s* Explanation *on Khalīl Ibn Isḥāq’s* Mukhtaṣar), *Sharḥ ʿalà Jumal al-Khūnajī* (*Explanation* on al-Khūnajī’s *Jumal*), *Sharḥ ʿalà al-Ṣugrà* (*Commentary* on al-Sanūsī’s *al-ʿAqīdat al-ṣugrà*), *Sharḥ ʿalà al-Qurṭubiyya* (*Commentary* on al-Qurṭubī’s *Urjūzat al-wildān*)[[133]](#footnote-134).
18. **Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. Abī Bakr al-Wankarī al-Tinbuktī, known as Baghayogho** (d. 1002/1594)[[134]](#footnote-135), the only jurist of Mandé stock in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s biographical works, whose family moved to Timbuktu from Jenne, where Maḥmūd b. Abī Bakr Baghayogho had been appointed qadi by Askya Isḥāq.
	1. Learnt from: Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Saʿīd, Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Laqānī, Muḥammad al-Bakrī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Tājurī.
19. Transmitted works: Ibn al-Ḥājib’s *Farāʾi­ʿ,* Mālik’s *Muwaṭṭaʾ,* Ibn Mālik’s *Taṣḥīl, a*l-Bajjī’s *Muntaqà,* Saḥnūn’s *Mudawwana*, with al-Ḥasan al-Zarwīlī’s *Explanation*[[135]](#footnote-136)*,* al-ʿIrāqī’s *Alfiyya*[[136]](#footnote-137) with its author’s *Explanation*, al-Qazwīnī’s *Talkhīṣ al-miftāḥ,* al-Saʿad’s *Commentary* to Khalīl b. Isḥāq’s *Mukhtaṣar,* al-Sanūsī’s *al-ʿAqīda*.
20. Composed works: *Bayān mā fī Sharḥ al-Tatāʾī mina-l-ṣaḥw naqlan wa-taḥrīran* (Exposure of the transmission mistakes of al-Tatāʾī’s *Explanation*), *Fatāwī* (*Fatwà*s), *al-Hadāyà fī jamʿ wa-naẓm mubaṭṭilāt al-ṣalāt* (*Gifts that recopilate and organize the occasions in which prayer is invalid*), *Ḥadīth tanbīh al-gāfilīn wa-tanẓīm al-akhbār wa-badīʿ al-athār* (*Ḥadīth that warns those who err, that organizes the news and brings up marvels in the vestiges,* Ibn ʿAbbās’ *ḥadīth* collection), *Taʿlīq wa-ṭurar* (*Commentay* and *Notes*, on mistakes found on Explanations of Khalīl b. Isḥāq’s *Mukhtaṣar*, which also included al-Taʾtāʾī’s *Great Explanations*.
21. **al-Najīb b. Muḥammad Shams al-Dīn al-Takiddāwī al-Anuṣammanī** (d. after 1012/1603)[[137]](#footnote-138), a jurist from Takedda, who settled at the near village of Anuṣamman, one of the key authors of the premodern Central Sahel.
	1. Composed works: *al-Ṭarīqat al-muṭlà ilà al-waṣīlat al-ʿuẓmà* (*The path that brings to the Great Union*), also known as *Uns al-muḥibbīn fi Sharḥ manāqib al-mursalīn* (*Way of those who love to explain the Works of the Messengers*), *Taʿlīq ʿalà l-Muʿjizāt al-kubrà* (*Commentary of the* Great Miracles, by al-Ṣuyūṭī[[138]](#footnote-139)), *Sharḥ ṣaghīr ʿalà l-Mukhtaṣar* (*Minor Commentary* of Khalīl b. Isḥāq’s *Mukhtaṣar* in two volumes), *Sharḥ kabīr ʿalà l-Mukhtaṣar* (*Great Commentary* of Khalīl b. Isḥāq’s *Mukhtaṣar* in four volumes), *Commentary* on Ibn Māhib’s *Takhmīs* (versified amplification) of al-Fāzāzī’s *ʿIshrīniyyāt.*
1. This article is part of the results of the Research Group (GIF) MASYG (University of Alcalá, UAH) and the Research Sub-Project “Transits and Migrations in North Africa: Diachronic Analysis of the Population and its Environment (DIANA)” (PID2021-122872NB-C22; P.I.: H. de Felipe, University of Alcalá), which, together with the Research Sub-Project “Transformations in Maghrebian Space through a Historic Perspective (TRAMAGHIS)” (PID2021-122872NB-C21; P.I.: M.Á. Manzano, IEMYRhd, University of Salamanca), is integrated in the Coordinated Research Project “Transits and Transformations in Maghrebian Space and Population (MAGNA II)” (MICIN/AEI/10.13039/501100011033 y FEDER Una manera de hacer Europa) (Coord.: M.Á. Manzano). The author wishes to thank Kaj Öhrnberg, Helena de Felipe and Xavier Ballestín, as well as the five anonymous reviewers of this article, for their thorough revision and insightful comments. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. This study revises a previous publication on Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s intellectual environment, which was part of the author’s doctoral dissertation. See Marta García Novo, “Ulemas mālikíes del *bilād al-sūdān* en la obra biográfica de Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī (963/1556–1036/1627)”, in *Biografías magrebíes: Identidades y grupos religiosos, sociales y políticos en el Magreb medieval*, Estudios Onomástico-Biográficos de al-Andalus, XVII, ed. Mohamed Meouak (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2012), 417–82. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. As it is widely known, premodern Arabic sources refer to the Sahelian region as *bilād al-sūdān*, “the land of the blacks”. About the use of the expression and the geographical area that it has historically designated, see J.-L. Triaud and A.S. Kaye, “Sūdān”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* Second Edition, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 24 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\_islam\_COM\_1103>. The toponym *al-takrūr*, although used in a similar way, refers specifically to the westernmost part of the Sahel, see ʿUmar Al-Naqar, “Takrūr, The History of a Name”, *Journal of African History* 9 (1969), 365–74. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Mahmoud Abdou Zouber, M., *Aḥmad Bābā de Tombouctou (1556/1627): sa vie et son œuvre* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1977). John O. Hunwick, “A New Source for the Biography of Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī (1556–1627)”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 27:3 (1964), 568; idem, “Further Light on Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī”, *Research Bulletin, Centre of Arabic Documentation* 1, 2 (1966), 19–31. See also John O. Hunwick (comp.), *The Writings of Western Sudanic Africa* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2003), 17–31; Ḥassan Sadki, *Makhṭūṭāt Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī fī l-khazāʾin al-maghribiyya* (Rabat: Institut des Études Africaines, 1996). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Saʿdī, *Tārīkh al-sūdān*. Arabic text and French translation by Octave Houdas (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1900). English translation in John O. Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire. al-Saʿdī’s* Taʾrīkh al-sūdān *down to 1613 and Other Contemporary Documents* (Leiden: Brill, 1999). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Which, according to M. Nobili and S. Mathee, were the core of the nineteenth-century work known as *Tārīkh al-fattāsh*. See Mauro Nobili, M. and Mohamed Shahid Mathee, “Towards a New Study of the So-Called *Tārīkh al-Fattāsh*”, *History in Africa* 42 (2015), 37–73, and Mauro Nobili, *Sultan, Caliph and Renewer of the Faith: Aḥmad Lobbo, the* Tārīkh al-fattāsh *and the Making of an Islamic State in West Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). See also John O. Hunwick, “Studies in the *Tārīkh al-fattāsh* I: Its Authors and Textual History”, *Research Bulletin – Centre of Arabic Documentation* 5 (1969), 57–65; Nehemia Levtzion, “A Seventeenth-Century Chronicle by Ibn al-Mukhtār: A Critical Study of *Ta’rīkh al-fattāsh*”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 34:3 (1971), 571–93; and John O. Hunwick, “Studies in the *Ta’rīkh al-fattāsh* II: An Alleged Charter of Privilege Issued by Askiya *al-Ḥājj* Muḥammad to the Descendants of Mori Hawgāro”, *Sudanic Africa* 3 (1992), 133–48. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. See Michel Abitbol, *Tombouctou et les Arma* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1979). Also John O. Hunwick, “Aḥmad Bābā and the Moroccan Invasion of the Sudan (1591)”, *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 2:3 (1962), 311–28; Henri de Castries, “La conquête du Soudan par Moulaye Ahmed el-Mansôur”, *Hespéris* 3 (1923), 438–88; Georges Pianel, “Les préliminaires de la conquête du Soudan par Moulaye Ahmed el-Mansôur, d’après trois documents inédits”, *Hespéris* 40 (1953), 185–97; Mercedes García-Arenal, *Aḥmad al-Manṣūr. The Beginnings of Modern Morocco* (London: Oneworld, 2009), 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Marta G. Novo, “The Aqīt household: professional mobility of a Berber learned elite in premodern West Africa”, in *Professional Mobility in Islamic Societies (700-1750): New Concepts and Approaches*, ed. Mohamed El-Merheb and Mehdi Berriah (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 52-76. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Joseph M. Cuoq, *Recueil des sources arabes concernant l’Afrique Occidentale du VIIIe au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1975), 2-9*.* About racial prejudice in premodern Morocco see Chouki El Hamel, *Black Morocco: A History of Slavery, Race and Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 109-111. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. The complete list of Sahelian *fuqahāʾ* featured in Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s biographical dictionaries, along with details of their intellectual, religious and sociopolitical activities, can be found in the Annex of this article. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Bruce Hall, *A History of Race in Muslim West Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 55–68; James L. A. Webb, *Desert Frontier: Ecological and Economic Change Along the Western Sahel, 1600–1850* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. About these households seeElias Saad, *Social History of Timbuktu:* *The Role of Muslim Scholars and Notables, 1400–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 44-45, 48-49. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl al-ibtihāj bi-taṭrīz al-Dībāj*, ed. M. ʿAmar (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfat al-Dīniyya, 2004, 2 vols.); ed. ʿA. H. al-Harrāma (Tripoli (Lybia): Kulliyyat al-Daʿwat al-Islāmiyya, 2000); ed. on the margins of the *Dībāj* of Ibn Farḥūn (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Maʿāhid, 1932; see below, footnote 15). By the same author, *Kifāyat al-muḥtāj li-maʿrifat man laysa fī l-Dībāj*, intr. and ed. M. Mutīʿ, Rabat: Wizārat al-Awqāf wa-l-Shuʾūn al-Islāmiyya, 2000, 2 vols; ed. ʿA. ʿUmar, Cairo: al-Maktabat al-Thaqāfiyya wa-l-Dīniyya, 2004, 2 vols. Both works will in the following be referred to as “Aḥmad Bābā’s biographical works”, “Aḥmad Bābā’s biographical dictionaries” or “Aḥmad Bābā’s *ṭabaqāt*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Zouber, *Aḥmad Bābā*, 13–14, 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī al-Yaʿmarī Ibn Farḥūn (d. 799/1397), *al-Dībāj al-mudhhab fī maʿrifat aʿyān ʿulamāʾ al-madhhab*, op, cit. See Mohamed Fadel, “Ibn Farḥūn”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Third Edition, ed. K. Fleet, G. Krämer, D. Matringe, J. Nawas, E. Rowson. Consulted online on 16 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\_ei3\_COM\_30773>. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr b. Ṣiddīq al-Walātī al-Bartilī (d. 1805), *Fatḥ al-shakūr li-maʿrifat aʿyān ʿulamāʾ al-Takrūr*, ed. M. I. al-Kattānī, M. Ḥajjī, (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1981); French translation in Chouki El Hamel, *La vie intellectuelle islamique dans le Sahel Ouest-Africain* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Muḥammad Bello (d. 1837), *Infāq al-maysūr fī taʾrīkh bilād Takrūr* (Rabat: Institut des Études Africaines, 1996). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. Auguste Cherbonneau, *Essai sur la littérature arabe au Soudan* *d’après le Takmilet-ed-dibadje d’Ahmed Baba, le Tombouctien* (Constantine-Paris: Abadie, A. Leleux, 1861); Adrian D.H. Bivar and Mervyn Hiskett, “The Arabic literature of Nigeria to 1804: a provisional account”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 25:3 (1962), 104-48; Hunwick, *The Writings*. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. This order follows the letters of the aliphate only in the initial of the given name. For a description of the work see Abdeljelil Temimi, “L’ouvrage "Nayl al-ibtihadj" d'Ahmad Baba de Tombouctou: une encyclopedie de biographies maghrebines”, *Revue Maghrebine de Documentation* 3 (1985), 143–46. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Walāta or Oualata is a Saharan town of present-day Mauritania’s region of Hodh (Ḥawḍ), historically one of the main enclaves of Trans-Saharan trade, see “Walāta”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 16 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7839>. See also Rainer Oßwald, *Die Handelstädte der Westsahara. Die Handelsstädte der Westsahara : die Entwicklung der arabisch-maurischen Kultur von Shinqīṭ, Wadān, Tishīṭ und Walāta* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1986). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. The toponym Takedda refers to several locations in the North-Central Sahel, in present-day Niger. See John O. Hunwick, “Takidda”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* Second Edition, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 16 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\_islam\_SIM\_7340>. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Kano is one of present-day Nigeria’s Federal States. About the history of the Hausa Emirate of the same name, see Murray Last, “Kano”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Third Edition, ed. K. Fleet, G. Krämer, D. Matringe, J. Nawas, E. Rowson. Consulted online on 16 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\_ei3\_COM\_32985>. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. In the medieval sources, the toponym Katsina refers to several locations in present-day Nigeria. See John Ralph Willis, “Katsina”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 16 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\_islam\_SIM\_4029>. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Jenne (Djenné) is located in the flood area of the Niger river, in present-day Mali. For its history, see Geert Mommersteeg, “Djenné”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Third Edition, ed. K. Fleet, G. Krämer, D. Matringe, J. Nawas, E. Rowson. Consulted online on 24 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\_ei3\_COM\_24987> [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. See Annex, biography #13. The lack of mentions to Baghayogho’s geographical origin is meaningful, as will be shown later, in that this scholar was responsible of a large part of Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s education in the Islamic sciences, according to al-Tinbuktī himself, and it is quite unlikely that the latter ignored his *shaykh*’s family and educational background. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. No other North African locations are mentioned, except if we take into account the *nisba* of Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Muḥammad Aydaḥmad al-Tāzakhtī (d. 937/1531), whose possible origin is not referred to by other means. See Annex, biography #3. Tāzakht is a locality of the Sūs valley, in the South of present-day Morocco. See Évariste Lévi-Provençal, and Claude Lefébure, “al-Sūs al-Aḳṣā”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 16 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\_islam\_COM\_1127>. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. Aḥmad b. *al-ḥājj* Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. Muhammad Aqīt (d. 991/1583), Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s father. See Annex, biography #12. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt (d. 955/1548), Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s great uncle. See Annex, biography #6. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. al-Saʿdī, *Taʾrīkh al-sūdān*, ed. Houdas, 18; English translation by Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire*, 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. On the history of Ṣanhāja/Massūfa Islamic scholarship and jurisprudence in Timbuktu and its links with the Saharan towns of Wadān and Tishīt, in present-day Mauritania, see Harry T. Norris, “Ṣanhāja Scholars of Timbuctoo”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 30:3 (1967), 634–40. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. About the learned elites of this Saharan enclave, see Timothy Cleaveland, “Timbuktu and Walāta: Lineages and Higher Education”, in *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, ed. Shamil Jeppie and Souleymane Bachir Diagne (Cape Town: HSRC, 2008), 77–93. And from the same author, *Becoming Walāta: A History of Saharan Formation and Transformation* (Portsmouth (NH): Heinemann, 2002). Also Rainer Oβwald, *Schichtengesellschaft und islamisches Recht. Die* zawāyā *und Krieger der Westsahara im Spiegel von Rechtsgutachten des 16.–19. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. al-Saʿdī, *Taʾrīkh al-sūdān*, ed. Houdas, 21; English translation by Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire*, 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. Makhlūf b. ʿAlī b. Ṣāliḥ al-Balbālī (d. after 940/1533). See Annex, biography #4. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl*, ed. al-Harrāma, 608. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. This *fatwà* was included in J.O. Hunwick’s and F. Ḥarrāq’s edition of al-Tinbuktī’slegal opinions on slavery, see Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Miʿrāj al-ṣuʿūd. Aḥmad Bābā’s Replies on slavery*, ed. and English translation by Hunwick, J.O. and Ḥarrāq, F. (Rabat: Institute of African Studies, 2000), 95 (Arabic text), 11 (English translation). [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. The influence of Egyptian scholarship has also been brought up by studies such as B. Hall’s and C. Stewart’s. See Bruce Hall and Charles Stewart, “The Historical *Core Curriculum* and the Book Market in Islamic West Africa”, in *The Trans-Saharan Book Trade: Manuscript Culture, Arabic Literacy and Intellectual History in Muslim Africa* ed. Graziano Krätli and Ghislaine Lydon (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 109-74. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. There are several references to the relations of the Sankore *ʿulamāʾ* and the Tuwātī community established in Timbuktu in the *Taʾrīkh al-sūdān*. See al-Saʿdī, *Taʾrīkh al-sūdān*, ed. Houdas, 59–60; English translation by Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire*, 84–85, for the high esteem devoted to scholars from this community by Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt. Also, see Élise Voguet, “Tlemcen-Touat-Tombouctou: un réseau transsaharien de difussion du Mālikisme (fin VIII/XIVème–XI/XVIIème siècles”, *Revue des Mondes Musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, 141 (2017), 259–79. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. Ivor Wilks, “The Transmission of Islamic learning in the Western Sudan”, in *Literacy in Traditional Societies* ed. Jack Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 162–97, especially 165–171 (“2. Education in the Dyula Towns”). Andreas E. Massing, “The Wangara, an Old Soninke Diaspora in West Africa?”, *Cahiers d’Études* Africaines 158 (2000), 281–308, and idem “Baghayogho: A Soninke Muslim Diaspora in the Mande World”, *Cahiers d’Études Africaines* 176:4 (2004), 887–922. Also, Lanneh Sanneh, *The Jakhanke* (London: International African Institute, 1979). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
39. The Egyptian polygraph Abū l-Faḍl ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr b. Muḥammad Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (Cairo, 849/1445–911/1505), see Elizabeth M. Sartain, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī: Biography and Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973). [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
40. Khālid b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Bakr al-Azharī, famous Egyptian grammarian and Shāfiʿī jurist, see al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ* (Beirut: *s.d*., Maktabat al-ḥayāt) III, 171–72; al-Gazzī, *al-Kawākib al-sāʾira fī aʿyān al-miʾa al-ʿāshira* (Beirut: The American University Press, 1945–1958), I, 188; ʿUmar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam al-muʾallifīn: Tarājim muṣannifī l-kutub al-ʿarabiyya* (Damascus: al-Maktabat al-ʿarabiyya, 1957–1961), IV, 96; Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur.* *Zweite, den Supplementbänden angepaßte Auflage*, I-II (Leiden: Brill, 1943-49), supplementary vols. I-III (Leiden: Brill, 1937-42) *(GAL; GAL S)*; II 34-35, S II 22-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
41. Burhān al-Dīn al-Qalqashandī, Egyptian traditionist and jurist, chief qadi of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*. See al-Gazzī, *Kawākib*, I, 108; Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam*, I, 61; Brockelmann, *GAL* II, 94; *GAL S* II, 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
42. Burhān al-Dīn al-Maqdisī, Palestinian *muftī*, Shāfiʿī jurist and poet who settled in Cairo. See al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ*, I, 134–6; al-Gazzī, *Kawākib*, I, 108; Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam*, I, 88; Brockelmann, *GAL* II 23, *GAL S* II 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
43. Zayn al-Dīn Zakariyyāʾ b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Anṣārī al-Sumakī al-Azharī, known as Zakariyyā’ al-Anṣārī, Egyptian jurist, chief qadi of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*. See Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam*, IV, 182; Brockelmann, *GAL* II 122–24, GAL S II (1938), 117–18. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
44. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Laqānī, Egyptian Mālikī jurist, see Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl*, ed. al-Harrāma, #718, 586. His brother Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Laqānī was also a Mālikī *muftī* and jurist, see Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl*, ed. al-Harrāma, #725, 590. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
45. ʿAbd al-Muṭīʿ Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī al-Madanī (d. 960/1553), author of a *Tafsīr* and a *History* of Medina. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl*, ed. al-Harrāma, #356, 287. Not to be mistaken with the famous prosopographer and traditionist, author of *al-Ḍawʿ al-lāmiʿ*. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
46. Abū l-Makārim Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Bakrī, Egyptian Shāfiʿī jurist, Ashʿarī theologist, Sufi and poet, see al-Gazzī, *Kawākib*, II, 136–7; al-Nabuhānī, *Jāmiʿ karamāt al-awliyāʾ*, Beirut: 1988, I, 303–5; Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam*, XI, 281; Muṣṭafà b. ʿAbd Allāh Ḥajjī Khalīfa*, Kashf al-ẓunūn ʿan asāmī l-kutub wa-l-funūn*, ed. G. Flügel (Leipzig: Bentley, 1835–52), 27, 336, 376, 672, 889, 1028, 1798, 2030, 2031. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
47. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Tājurī, Maghrebian astronomer who settled in Cairo. See Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam*, V, 131; Brockelmann, *GAL* II 469, *GAL* S II 485. Also, Mercè Comes Maymó and Mònica Rius Piniés, “Circulaciò de coneixements per la Mediterrània: entre Orient i Occident”, in *Actes de la VIII Trobada d’Història de la Ciència y de la Tècnica. Mallorca, 18, 19, 20 i 21 de novembre de 2004* (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d’Història de la Ciència i de la Tècnica, 2006,409–18). [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
48. See Annex, biography #3*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
49. Khalīl Ibn Isḥāq b. Mūsā b. Sh̲uʿayb, Abū l-Mawadda Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn, Ibn al-Jundī (d. ca. 776/1374), Egyptian jurist, one of the main figures of the Mālikī *madhhab*. See Mohamed Ben Cheneb, “K̲h̲alīl b. Isḥāḳ”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 16 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\_islam\_SIM\_4162>. About his most famous work, the *Mukhtaṣar fī l-furūʿ*, see Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* (Leiden: Brill, 1949), II, 101-103; S II (1938), 96-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
50. See Carl F. Petry, “Educational Institutions as Depicted in the Biographical Literature of Mamluk Cairo: The Debate over Prestige and Venue”, *Medieval Prosopography* 23 (2002), 101-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
51. For this traditional standpoint, see Nehemia Levtzion, “Mamluk Egypt and Takrūr”, in *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization in Honour of Professor David Ayalon*, ed. Moshe Sharon (Jerusalem: Cana, Leiden: Brill, 1986), 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
52. al-ʿĀqib al-Anuṣammanī, mentioned above, and al-Najīb b. Muḥammad b. Shams al-Dīn al-Takdawī al-Kanāwī al-Anuṣammanī (d. after 1012/1603). See Annex, biography #7. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
53. *al-Risāla fī l-fiqh*, one of the main works of the Mālikī *madhhab*, by ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī (d. 386/996), see Hady Roger Idrīs, “Ibn Abī Zayd”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* Second Edition, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 24 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\_islam\_COM\_1103>. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
54. Mālik b. Anas al-Aṣbaḥī (d. 179/796), the “imam of Medina”, eponym of the Mālikī *madhhab*. His *Muwaṭṭaʾ* is one of the fundamental works of this legal school, see Joseph Schacht, “Mālik b. Anas”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* Second Edition, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 24 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\_islam\_COM\_1103>. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
55. *al-Shifāʾ bi-taʿrīf ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafà*, by ʿIyāḍ b. Mūsà al-Yaḥsūbī al-Sabtī (d. 544/1149), one of the main figures of North African Mālikism, see Brockelmann, *GAL* I 455-456, *GAL* S I 630-32. The *Shifāʾ* was one of the key works that described and helped to invigorate the practices of devotion of the Prophet Muḥammad. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
56. *Rajaz* poem on Grammar, written by Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Jayyānī, known as Ibn Mālik (d. 672/1274). Brockelmann, *GAL* I 359-63, *GAL* S I 521-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
57. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Tatāʾī (d. 940/1536), Egypt’s Mālikī *qāḍī-l-quḍāt*. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl*, ed. al-Harrāma, #720, 588. He was the author of a Commentary on Khalīl b. Isḥāq’s *Mukhtaṣar*, Brockelmann, *GAL* II 411, GAL S II 435. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
58. Aḥmad b. *al-ḥājj* Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt, Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s father, see Annex, biography #12. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
59. This is the *Mukhtaṣar fī l-furūʿ*, also known as *Jāmiʿ al-ummahāt* or *Mukhtaṣar al-farʿī*, Ibn al-Hājib’s compendium on Mālikī jurisprudence. Brockelmann, *GAL* I 367-73, *GAL* S I 531-39. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
60. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl*, ed. al-Harrāma, #736, 603; *Kifāya*, ed. Muṭīʿ, II, 240. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
61. *al-Tawḍīḥ*, Khalīl b. Isḥāq’ Commentary to the work *al-Mukhtaṣar al-farʿī*, by Ibn al-Hājib (*v.* *supra*). Brockelmann, *GAL* I 373, *GAL* S I 538. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
62. Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-ʿAbdarī al-Fāsī, Mālikī jurist born in Cairo in 737/1336. The mentioned work is *al-Madkhal al-sharʿī al-sharīf*, see Brockelmann, *GAL* II 101, 326; *GAL* S II 95. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
63. Abū Naṣr Tāj al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Ibn ʿAlī al-Subkī, Egyptian jurist and traditionist, *qāḍī l-quḍāt* of the Shāfiʿī legal school. The work is his widely known work on *uṣūl al-fiqh*, the *Jāmiʿ al-jawāmiʿ*, see Brockelmann, *GAL* II 108–10, *GAL* S II 105-07. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
64. A work on logic by the jurist and philosopher Afḍal al-Dīn al-Khūnajī (d. 646/1248), who was also a qadi in Cairo. Khaled El-Rouayheb, “al-Khūnajī, Afḍal al-Dīn”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Third Edition, ed. K. Fleet, G. Krämer, D. Matringe, J. Nawas, E. Rowson. Consulted online on 09 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\_ei3\_COM\_24187>. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
65. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Saʿīd (d. 976/1568). See Annex, biography #9. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
66. *al-Mudawwanat al-kubrà*, the chief work by the North African jurist Abū Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Salām b. Saʿīd al-Tanūkhī, known as Saḥnūn (d. 160/777–240/855), see Mohamed Talbi, “Saḥnūn”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* Second Edition, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 24 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\_islam\_COM\_1103>. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
67. *Jāmiʿ al-miʿyār al-mugrib ʿan fatāwī ʿulamāʾ Ifrīqiya wa-l-Andalus wa-l-Maghrib*, by Aḥmad al-Wansharīsī (d. 914/1508). See Francisco Vidal Castro, “Aḥmad al-Wansharīsī (m. 914/1508). Principales aspectos de su vida”, *al-Qanṭara* 21/2 (1992), 315–52 and idem “Las obras de Aḥmad al-Wansharīsī (m. 914/1508): Inventario analítico”, *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes,* 3 (1992), 73–112. Also Vincent Lagardère, *Histoire et société en occident musulman au Moyen âge. Analyse du* Miʿyār *d'al-Wanšarīsī* (Madrid : Casa de Velázquez, 1995). [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
68. Sulaymān b. Khalaf al-Bajjī’s (d. 474/1081) Commentary on Malik’s *Muwaṭṭaʾ*. Brockelmann, *GAL* I 534, *GAL* S I 743-44. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
69. *Tuḥfat al-ḥukkām fī nukat al-ʿuqūd wa-l-aḥkām*, by Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. ʿĀṣim (d. 829/1426), Mālikī jurist from Granada. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl*, ed. al-Harrāma, #592, 483; Brockelmann, *GAL* II 341, *GAL* S II 375. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
70. *V. supra*, footnote 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
71. *al-Rāmizāt al-shāfiya fī ʿilm al-ʿarūḍ wa-l-qāfiya*, by ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUthmān al-Khazrajī (d. 613/1216). Brockelmann, *GAL* I 391, *GAL* S I 553. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
72. This is the adaptation by Ibn Māhib, a sufi and ascetic from Almería (d. 645/1247, see F.N. Velázquez Basanta, “Ibn Māhib, Abū Bakr”, in *Biblioteca de al-Andalus VI*, ed. Jorge Lirola Delgado, (Almería: Fundación Ibn Tufayl de Estudios Árabes, 2009), #748, from the ʿ*Ishrīniyyāt* of Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Yakhlaftan al-Fāzazī (d. 627/1230), a poem on the devotion of the Prophet Muḥammad by this Sufi and poet from Cordoba. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl*, ed. al-Harrāma, #281, 239. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
73. Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Sanūsī al-Tilimsānī (d. 892/1486 or 896/1490), one of the main figures of North African Sufism, eponym of the Sanūsiyya Sufi Brotherhood. Author of several dogmatic treatises (ʿ*Aqīda*, pl. *ʿAqāʾid*), known as *Kubrā* (Great), *Wusṭā* (Middle) and *Ṣugrā* (Minor). Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl*, ed. al-Harrāma, #696, 572. See Gunhild Graf, “*ʿIlm al-kalām* in Mauretanien anhand maurischer Kommentare zur *Iḍāʾat ad-duǧunna fī iʿtiqād ahl as-sunna* von al-Maqqarī (st. 1041/1632)”, *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 72:3 (2018), 751-94. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
74. See Hall, Stewart, “The historic “core curriculum””, and Charles Stewart, “Southern Saharan Scholarship and the *bilād al-sūdān*”, *Journal of African History* 17/1 (1976), 73-93. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
75. See al-Saʿdī, *Tāʾrīkh al-sūdān*, ed. Houdas, 111, 141, 151, 210; English translation by Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire*, 156, 191, 202, 259. The final chapters of al-Saʿdī’s work include quite abundant references to non-Berber scholars who occupied this kind of posts in Timbuktu and elsewhere. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
76. Muḥammad Baghayogho’s father, Maḥmūd, served as qadi in this city. See al-Saʿdī, *Tāʾrīkh al-sūdān*, ed. Houdas, 96–97; English translation by Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire,* 137–38. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
77. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī (d. 911/1505), jurist, exegete, traditionist, theologist and expert in logic from the city of Tlemcen, in the Northeast of present-day Algeria. See Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl*, ed. al-Harrāma, #701, 576–79; Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam*, X, 191; Brockelmann, *GAL* S II 363; ʿAbd-al-ʿazīz ʿAbd-allah Batran, “A Contribution to the Biography of Shaikh Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd-al-Karīm Ibn Muḥammad (ʿUmar-AʿMar) al-Maghīlī, al-Tilimsānī”, *Journal of African History*, XIV/3 (1973), 381–94. Also, John O. Hunwick, *Sharīʿa in Songhay: The Replies of al-Maghīlī to the Questions of Askya al-Ḥājj Muḥammad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Ulrich Rebstock, “Ein magribinischer Gelehrter im Sudan: Muḥammad b. Abdalkarīm al-Maġīlī al-Tilimsānī”, *Boletín de la Asociación Española de Orientalistas*, 14 (1978), 111-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
78. The biography of ʿUmar b. Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt (d. 1003/1594), who was qadi of Timbuktu at the time of the Saʿdian invasion, and was deported along with Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī to Marrakech, where he died, was not featured by al-Tinbuktī in any of his *ṭabaqāt* works. See al-Saʿdī, *Taʾrīkh al-sūdān*, 212, English translation in Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire*, 261. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
79. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbutkī, *Jalb al-niʿma wa-dafʿ al-niqma bi-mujānabat al-wulāt al-ẓalama (Obtaining good and paying revenge by avoiding evil rulers)*, ed. J.M. al-Zīrīqī: 2017; ed. M. b. ʿAzūz, Casablanca/Beirut: Markaz al-Tūrāth al-Thaqāfī al-Maghribī, Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2011. About this work see Zouber, *Aḥmad Bābā*, 156–62. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
80. See Annex, biography #13*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
81. Abū Bakr b. Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt (d. 991/1583). See Annex, biography #11. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
82. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl*, ed. al-Harrāma, #156, 151; *Kifāya*, ed. Muṭīʿ, I, #137, 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
83. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt b. ʿUmar b. Yaḥyà al-Ṣanhājī al-Massūfī (d. 929/1523). See Annex, biography #2. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
84. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl*, ed. al-Harrāma, #267, 235; *Kifāya*, ed. Muṭīʿ, I, #226, 255. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
85. For Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s father, see Annex, biography #12; for his *shaykh*, Muḥammad Baghayogho, see Annex, biography #13*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
86. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl*, ed. al-Harrāma, #746, 607–08; *Kifāya*, ed. Muṭīʿ, II, #655, 254–46. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
87. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl*, ed. al-Harrāma, #730, 597–98; *Kifāya*, ed. Muṭīʿ, II, #641, 234. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
88. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl*, ed. al-Harrāma, #144, 141–42; also *Kifāya*, ed. Muṭīʿ, I, #94, 137–39. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
89. Michael A. Gomez, “Timbuktu under Imperial Songhay: A Reconsideration of Autonomy”, *Journal of African History* 31/1 (1990), 5–24. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
90. Zouber, *Aḥmad Bābā*, 89;Saad, *Social history*, 152. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
91. E. Saad discusses the possibility that the treatise *Jalb al-niʿma* would have been inspired by the rebellion of Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq against Askya al-Ḥājj, in which the Timbuktu notables took al-Ṣādiq’s side, who failed in his attempt. However, he does not see any specific relationship between Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s views and the circumstances surrounding Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq’s coup. See Saad, *Social history*, 152–154. al-Ṣādiq’s rebellion is described in al-Saʿdī, *Tārīkh al-sūdān*, 121–24; English translation in Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire*, 168–71. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
92. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl*, ed. al-Harrāma, 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
93. About the intellectual constructions of race that accompanied this process, see Hall, *A History of race*, and Webb, *Desert Frontier*. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
94. On al-Saʿdī’s account, *v. supra*, footnote 75. About the *jamāʿa* in Saharan communities see Ismail Warscheid, “Those Who Represent the Sovereign in his Absence’: Muslim Scholarship and the Question of Legal Authority in the Pre-Modern Sahara (Southern Algeria, Mauritania, Mali), 1750–1850”, in *Islamic Scholarship in West Africa: New Directions and Global Contexts*, ed. Ousmane Kane (Martelsham: Boydell & Brewer, 2021), 121-35. As suggested by E. Saad, “the phenomenon of a collective leadership which is signified by the term *jamāʿa* was always a factor of prime import in the organization of the city”. See Saad, *Social history*, 125. I thank the anonymous reviewer who suggested to incorporate the concept of *jamāʿa* in Saharan communities as described by I. Warscheid into the analysis. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
95. Paulo F. De Moraes Farias, “Intellectual Innovation and Reinvention of the Sahel: The Seventeenth-Century Timbuktu Chronicles”, in *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, ed. Shamil Jeppie and Souleymane Bachir Diagne (Cape Town: HSRC, 2008), 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
96. The Arma were the descendants of the leaders of the Saʿdian expedition, see “Arma” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* Second Edition, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 17 November 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\_islam\_COM\_1103>. Also, see Abitbol, *Tombouctou et les Arma.* [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
97. De Moraes Farias situates the birth of the Timbuktu historiographical tradition with the chronicles of al-Saʿdī and Ibn al-Mukhtār, while I. D. Musa considers that Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s *Nayl* and in some way his opinions on slavery are part of this tradition. See I. D Musa “The rise of Muslim Sudanic Historiography in the *bilād al-sūdān*: a tentative analysis”, in *Studia Arabica et Islamica: Festschrift for Iḥsān ʿAbbās on his Sixtieth birthday*, ed. Wadad Al-Qadi (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1981), 362. De Moraes Farias’ idea of the historical writings of 11th/17th-century Timbuktu as a genre of its own is further developed by Mauro Nobili, “New Reinventions of the Sahel: Reflections on the *Taʾrīẖ* Genre in the Timbuktu Historiographical Tradition, Seventeenth to Twentieth Centuries”, in *Landscapes, Sources and Intellectual Projects of the West African Past: Essays in Honor of Paulo Fernando de Moraes Farias*, ed. Toby Green and Benedetta Rossi (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2018), 201–19. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
98. De Moraes Farias, “Intellectual innovation”. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
99. Nehemia Levtzion, “Islam in West African Politics: Accomodation and Tension Between the *ʿulamāʾ* and Political Authorities”, *Cahiers d’Études Africaines* 18/71 (1978), 338–40, 341, 344. Saad, *Social History of Timbuktu*, 48–49, 54–55. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
100. Saad, *Social History of Timbuktu*, 14, 225–233. For more recent contributions to this debate, see Charles Stewart, “Calibrating the scholarship of Timbuktu”, and Bruce Hall, “Rethinking the place of Timbuktu in the Intellectual History of Muslim West Africa”, in *Landscapes, Sources and Intellectual Projects of the West African Past: Essays in Honor of Paulo Fernando de Moraes Farias*, ed. Toby Green and Benedetta Rossi (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2018), 220–38 and 239–58 respectively. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
101. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl,* ed. al-Harrāma, #747, 608; *Kifāya,* ed. Muṭīʿ, II, #656, 246. There is another reference to the economic activities of a scholar in the biography of ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt, one of the author’s great-uncles, who lived in Walāta at the end of the 9th/16th-century. This jurist had a slave who was authorized to trade (*maʾdhūn bi-l-tijāra*), and sold milk on his behalf, see Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl,* ed. al-Harrāma, #267, 235; *Kifāya,* ed. Muṭīʿ, I, #226, 255. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
102. The major source of the *Nayl* and the *Kifāya*, however, is the work *Tawshīḥ al-Dībāj wa-ḥilyat al-ibtihāj*, by Muḥammad b. Yaḥyà b. ʿUmar Badr al-Dīn al-Qarāfī (d. 1009/1601), Egyptian Mālikī jurist and qadi. See Fernando R. Mediano, “Estudios de las fuentes del *Nayl al-ibtihāŷ* de Aḥmad Bābā e índices de los personajes biografiados en él”, in *Estudios onomástico-biográficos de al-Andalus*, III, ed. María Luisa Ávila (Granada: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Escuela de Estudios Árabes, 1990), 159–55, especially 78–79. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
103. ʿAbd Allāh b. Saʿīd b. Yaḥyà b. Muʿāwiya b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Zammūrī (d. after 888/1484), a disciple of Ibn al Qawrī, see Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Kifāya,* ed. Muṭīʿ, I, #225, vol. I, 254-55. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
104. John O. Hunwick, “Fez and West Africa in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: Scholarly and Sharifian networks”, in *Fès et l’Afrique. Relations économiques, culturelles et spirituelles*, s.e. (Rabat: Publications de l’Institut des Études Africaines, 1995), 61–63. About the transmission of the *Shifāʾ* to the descendants of al-Mukhtār al-Naḥwī see Ulrich Rebstock, *Maurische Literaturgeschichte* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2001), 36, #102. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
105. See al-Saʿdī, *Tārīkh al-sūdān*, 28–29. English translation in Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire*, 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
106. For the biography of Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī’s grandfather, Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt, see Annex, biography #5. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
107. About the diffusion and popularity of al-Sanūsī’s works in the Sahel, see Dorrit Van Dalen, *Doubt, Scholarship and Society in 17th-Century Central Sudanic Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 90, 109–19. Also, Graf, “*ʿIlm al-kalām* in Mauretanien”. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
108. Tamgrout is a location in the Darʿa valley, in the South-East of present-day Morocco. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī spent some time in it on his way back to Timbuktu in 1016/1607–8 and issued several legal opinions on trade-related matters, including the *Replies* to al-Īsī, edited and translated by J.O. Hunwick and F. Harrāq. See Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Miʿrāj al-ṣuʿūḍ*, 78–91, 41–53 (English translation). Yūsuf al-Īsī was, according to J.O. Hunwick, the copyist of a manuscript that he acquired in Marrakech, and that included several fragments related to the Nāṣiriyya, and most significantly, a prayer from this brotherhood. See Mss. Hunwick 535–45, Africana Library, Northwestern University. Also, Hunwick, J.O., “Aḥmad Bābā on slavery”, 132. The Nāṣiriyya brotherhood was the largest economic organization in 11th/17th-century Morocco, and controlled Trans-Saharan commercial routes, especially from the West African coast (present-day Senegal and Mauritania), and from inner territories in West Africa. See David Gutelius, “The Path is Easy and the Benefits Large: the Nāṣiriyya, Social Networks and Economic Change in Morocco, 1640–1830”, *Journal of African Studies* 43 (2002), 27–49. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
109. David S. Powers, *Law, Society and Culture in the Maghrib, 1300–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Vincent Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998). [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
110. References to non-West African scholars and works can be found in the text of the article. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
111. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl,* ed. al-Harrāma, #326, 275; *Kifāya,* ed. Muṭīʿ, I, #276, 292–293; Rebstock, *Maurische Literaturgeschichte*, 14, #45. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
112. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl,* ed. al-Harrāma, #267, 235; *Kifāya,* ed. Muṭīʿ, I, #226, 255; Rebstock, *Maurische Literaturgeschichte*, 12, #37. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
113. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl,* ed. al-Harrāma, #719, 587; *Kifāya,* ed. Muṭīʿ, II, #631, 222–23. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
114. Makhlūf b. ʿAlī b. Ṣāliḥ al-Balbālī (d. 940/1533), a jurist from Walāta who lived and taught in several Sahelian locations, see Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl,* ed. al-Harrāma, #747, 608; *Kifāya,* ed. Muṭīʿ, II, #656, 24. Rebstock, *Maurische Literaturgeschichte*, 14, #43 “al-Bilbālī”, also “Makhlūf b. ʿAlī b. Ṣāliḥ al-Balbālī”, in *Arabic Literature of Africa Online*, General Editors John O. Hunwick, Rex S. O’Fahey. Consulted online on 16 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2405-4453\_alao\_COM\_ALA\_20001\_1\_4>; Cherbonneau, *Essai*, 7; Bivar and Hiskett, “The Arabic Literature of Nigeria”, 110–1. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
115. Ibn Ghāzī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-ʿUt̲h̲mānī (d. 919/1513), a jurist and polygraph from Meknès, see John F.P Hopkins, “Ibn G̲h̲āzī”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 16 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\_islam\_SIM\_3172>. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
116. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl,* ed. al-Harrāma, #135, 137–138; *Kifāya,* ed. Muṭīʿ, I, #86, 132–33; Rebstock, *Maurische Literaturgeschichte*, 15, #46. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
117. Rebstock, *Maurische Literaturgeschichte*, 7, #26. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
118. Rebstock, *Maurische Literaturgeschichte*, 12, #35. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
119. Khālid b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Bakr al-Azharī, famous Egyptian Grammarian and Shāfiʿī jurist, see al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ*, III, 171–72; Gazzī, *Kawākib*, I, 188; Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam*, IV, 96; Brockelmann, *GAL* II, 34-35, *GAL* S II, 22-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
120. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl,* ed. al-Harrāma, #746, 607–08; *Kifāya,* ed. Muṭīʿ, II, #655, 245–246; Rebstock, *Maurische Literaturgeschichte*, 15-16, #48. Also, Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Makhlūf, *Shajarat al-nūr al-zakiyya* *fī ṭabaqāt al-mālikiyya* (Cairo: 1930), 1043; Hunwick, *The Writings of Western Sudanic Africa*, 13-14; Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam*, XII, 85; Cherbonneau, *Essai*, 14–16. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
121. Probably the ʿ*Aqīda* of ʿUthmān b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿIsà al-Salālijī (d. 547/1178). See Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam,* VI, 259. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
122. al-ʿĀqib b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anuṣammanī, a jurist from the locality of Anuṣamman, in the vicinity of Takedda (North of present-day Niger), who played a key role in the diffusion of Islamic scholarship in the Central Sahel. See Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl,* ed. al-Harrāma, #458, 353; *Kifāya,* ed. Muṭīʿ, I, #392, 377; Rebstock, *Maurische Literaturgeschichte*, 17, #50; Bivar and Hiskett, “The Arabic Literature of Nigeria”, 111; “al-ʿĀqib b. Muḥammad al-Anuṣammanī al-Masūfī”, in *Arabic Literature of Africa Online*, General Editors John O. Hunwick, Rex S. O’Fahey. Consulted online on 16 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2405-4453\_alao\_COM\_ALA\_20001\_1\_6>; John O. Hunwick, “al-ʿĀqib al-Anuṣammanī’s Replies to the Questions of Askya al-Ḥājj Muḥammad: The Surviving Fragment”, *Sudanic Africa*, II (1991), 139–63. About al-ʿĀqib al-Anuṣammanī’s relationship with al-Maghīlī, see Rebstock, “Ein magribinischer Gelehrter im Sudan”, 117. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
123. These two works have been preserved, see “al-ʿĀqib b. Muḥammad al-Anuṣammanī al-Masūfī”, in *Arabic Literature of Africa Online*, and Hunwick, “al-ʿĀqib al-Anuṣammanī’s replies”, *op. cit*. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
124. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl,* ed. al-Harrāma, #730, 597-98; *Kifāya,* ed. Muṭīʿ, II, #641, 234; Cherbonneau, M., *Essai*, 19–20; “Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt”, in *Arabic Literature of Africa Online*, General Editors John O. Hunwick, Rex S. O’Fahey. Consulted online on 16 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2405-4453\_alao\_COM\_ALA\_40001\_2\_2>. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
125. This didactic poem bears the title *Mināḥ al-Wahhāb fī radd al-fikr ʿalà l-sawāb* (*The gifts of the Generous for the refutation of thought by sane judgement*). Manuscript copies are preserved in Nigerian, Nigerine and French (BNF) libraries. See “Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī al-Tilimsānī”, in *Arabic Literature of Africa Online*, General Editors J.O. Hunwick, R.S. O’Fahey. Consulted online on 16 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2405-4453\_alao\_COM\_ALA\_20001\_1\_3>. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
126. “Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt”, in *Arabic Literature of Africa Online*. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
127. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl,* ed. al-Harrāma, #145, 142–43; *Kifāya,* ed. Muṭīʿ, I, #95, 139; Rebstock, *Maurische Literaturgeschichte*, 19, #61; Cherbonneau, *Essai*, 21; also see “Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Saʿīd”, in *Arabic Literature of Africa Online*, General Editors John O. Hunwick, Rex S. O’Fahey. Consulted online on 16 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2405-4453\_alao\_COM\_ALA\_40001\_2\_3>. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
128. *al-Bayān wa-l-taḥṣīl wa-l-sharḥ wa-l-tawjīh wa-l-taʿlīl fī masāʾil al-mustakhraja*, by Abū-l-Walīd Ibn Rushd, Averroes’ grandfather (m. 520/1126) (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1984). Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl,* ed. al-Harrāma, #145, 143; *Kifāya,* ed. Muṭīʿ, I, #95, 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
129. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl,* ed. al-Harrāma, #459, 353–54; *Kifāya,* ed. Muṭīʿ, I, #393, 377–78. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
130. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl,* ed. al-Harrāma, #156, 151; *Kifāya,* ed. Muṭīʿ, I, #137, 181; Cherbonneau, *Essai*, 24–5; “Abū Bakr b. al-Ḥājj Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt”, in *Arabic Literature of Africa Online*, General Editors John O. Hunwick, Rex S. O’Fahey. Consulted online on 16 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2405-4453\_alao\_COM\_AL\_40001\_2\_4>. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
131. A work on Sufism, see “Abū Bakr b. al-Ḥājj Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt”, in *Arabic Literature of Africa Online*. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
132. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl,* ed. al-Harrāma, #144, 141–2; *Kifāya,* ed. Muṭīʿ, I, #94, 137–39; al-Bartaylī, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr b. Ṣiddīq al-Walātī (d. 1805), *Fatḥ al-shakūr*, ed. M. I. al-Kattānī, M. Ḥajjī, VI, 29–30; Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam*, II, 33; Rebstock, *Maurische Literaturgeschichte*, 21, #73; Cherbonneau, *Essai*, 21–24. Also see “Aḥmad b. al-Ḥājj Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt”, in *Arabic Literature of Africa Online*, General Editors John O. Hunwick, Rex S. O’Fahey. Consulted online on 16 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2405-4453\_alao\_COM\_ALA\_40001\_2\_5>. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
133. *Urjūzat al-wildān*, is a poem on *ʿibādāt* in the Mālikī *madhhab*, also known as *al-Muqaddimat al-qurṭubiyya*, by the jurist Yaḥyà b. ʿUmar al-Qurṭubī al-Azdī (d. 567/1171–2). Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam*, XIII, #216; Brockelmann, *GAL* I 551, *GAL* S I 763. About the works of Aḥmad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt, see “Aḥmad b. al-Ḥājj Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Aqīt”, in *Arabic Literature of Africa Online*. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
134. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl,* ed. al-Harrāma, #736, 600–3; *Kifāya,* ed. Muṭīʿ, II, #646, 237–40; al-Qādirī, *Nashr al-mathānī*, ed. M. Ḥajjī and A. Tawfīq (Rabat: al-Jamaʿiyyat al-Maghribiyya li-l-Taʾlīf, 1986), IV, 40; al-Muḥibbī, *Khulāṣat al-athar fī aʿyān al-qarn al-ḥādī ʿashar*, Beirut: Dār Ṣāḍir, 1966, IV, 211–12; al-Baghdādī, *Hādiyat al-ʿārifīn, asmāʾ al-muʾallifīn wa-āthār al-muṣannifīn*, ed. R. Bilge and M. K. Inal (Istanbul: Wikālat al-maʿārif, 1951–1955), II, 260; al-Baghdādī, *Īḍāḥ al-maknūn fī l-dhayl ʿalà kashf al-ẓunūn ʿan asāmī l-kutub wa-l-funūn*, ed. S. Yaltakaya (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1992), II, 697; Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam*, XI, 315. Cherbonneau, *Essai*, 25–31; see also Hunwick, “Further light on Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī”, 22–25, and idem “A Contribution to the Study of Islamic Teaching Traditions in West Africa: The Career of Muḥammad Baghayogho, 930/1523–4”, *Islam et Sociétés au Sud du Sahara* (1990), 149–62. Also, see “Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. Abī Bakr al-Wangarī”, in *Arabic Literature of Africa Online*, General Editors John O. Hunwick, Rex S. O’Fahey. Consulted online on 16 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2405-4453\_alao\_COM\_ALA\_40001\_3\_1>. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
135. I have not been able to locate this author, mentioned in the *Kifāya*, see Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Kifāya,* ed. Muṭīʿ, II, #646, 240. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
136. Didactic versification of ʿ*Ulūm al-ḥadīth* by Ibn Ṣalāḥ (d. 643/1245), written by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ḥusayn al-ʿIrāqī (d. 806/1404). Brockelmann, *GAL* II 77-78, *GAL* S II 69-70. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
137. Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī, *Nayl,* ed. al-Harrāma, #757, 616; *Kifāya,* ed. Muṭīʿ, II, #665, 256; al-Muḥibbī, *Khulāṣat al-athar*, IV, 448. See also Bivar and Hiskett, “The Arabic Literature of Nigeria”, 113; Harry T. Norris, *The Tuaregs: Their Islamic Legacy and its Diffusion in the Sahel* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips,1975), 38, and of the same author, *Sufi mystics of the Niger desert* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 16–17, 19 (n 15). Also, “al-Najīb b. Muḥammad Shams al-Dīn al-Takiddāwī al-Anuṣammanī”, in *Arabic Literature of Africa Online*, General Editors John O. Hunwick, Rex S. O’Fahey. Consulted online on 16 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2405-4453\_alao\_COM\_ALA\_20001\_1\_8> [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
138. *al-Muʿjizāt wa-l-khaṣāʾiṣ al-nabawiyya* (*The Prophet’s miracles and particularities*), see Brockelmann, *GAL* II 184, *GAL* S II 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)