## Contents

*List of maps and figures*  
page ix

*Acknowledgments*  
xi

*Note on orthographic conventions*  
xiii

*Abbreviations used in references*  
xv

### Introduction

- Implicit knowledge and the colonial episode  
4
- Traditions, repertoires, and sources  
11
- Structure of the argument  
22

### Part One: “The Suffering of Our Father”: Story and Context

1. **Sufism and Status in the Western Sudan**  
   - The Western Sudanic tradition  
   32
   - The Middle Senegal Valley: colonial intervention and the reconfiguration of authority  
   45
   - Conclusions  
   59

2. **Making a Revival: Yacouba Sylla and His Followers**  
   - Kaédi, Nioro, and the light of a new reform  
   62
   - Yacouba Sylla  
   71
   - Revival  
   74
   - Conclusions  
   82

3. **Making a Community: The “Yacoubists” from 1930 to 2001**  
   - A prison community  
   83
   - Fodie Sylla and the end of militancy  
   89
   - Consolidating the community  
   93
   - Return to activism  
   99
   - From history to myth  
   110
   - Conclusions  
   116
### Part Two: “I Will Prove to You That What I Say Is True”: Knowledge and Colonial Rule

4. **Ghosts and the Grain of the Archives**
   - The grain of the archives: Islam, knowledge, and control
   - Ghostwriters in the archives: religious competition and borrowed knowledge in the colonial library
   - Myths of Yacouba, myths of empire

5. **History in the Zâwiya: Redemptive Traditions**
   - Synecdoche and Sufism: Yacouba Sylla, tilmîdh shaykh hamahu'llâh
   - A community of suffering
   - God’s work: the zâwiya, the plantation, and the nation
   - Conclusions

### Part Three: “What Did He Give You?”: Interpretation

6. **Lost Origins: Women and Spiritual Equality**
   - Women as participants
   - Mahr, adulthood, and honor
   - The vision of Fatima
   - Struggles for control

7. **The Spiritual Economy of Emancipation**
   - Defining slavery and abolition
   - Paths to personhood
   - Conclusions

8. **The Gift of Work: Devotion, Hierarchy, and Labor**
   - Work’s gifts
   - The gift of history
   - Conclusions

9. **“To Never Shed Blood”: Yacouba, Houphouët, and Côte d’Ivoire**
   - Defining free labor
   - Giving and moral tutelage
   - Moral geography
   - Conclusions

**Gifts of the Past**

**Glossary**

**Note on References**

**Index**

**Books in This Series**