## Contents

List of Figures  
List of Maps  
List of Tables  
Acknowledgments  
Notes on Orthography and Other Conventions  
Transliteration  
Toponyms  
Names of People  
Dates  
Translations  
References to Manuscripts  

### Introduction
- The Caliphate of Hamdallāhī  
- The Islamic Revolutions in West Africa  
- Old and New Approaches to Islamic Revolutions  
- From the Colonial Library to the Islamic Library of West Africa  
- The Case of Ḥamdallāhī and Its Archive  
- Outline of the Book

### Part I A Nineteenth-Century Chronicle in Support of the Caliphate of Hamdallāhī: Nuḥ b. al-Ṭāhir’s *Tārikh al-fattāsh*
1. A Century of Scholarship  
2. Félix Dubois and the “ Phantom Book of the Sudan”  
3. *La chronique du chercheur*  
4. *Tārikh al-fattāsh* Studies  
5. Authorship  
6. Textual History and Interpolations  
7. Title and Second Appendix
Deconstructing La chronique du chercheur 71

2 The Tārīkh al-fattāsh: A Nineteenth-Century Chronicle 77
A Draft of a Nineteenth-Century Chronicle 78
The Life and Times of Nūh b. al-ṬāHIR 84
Nūh b. al-ṬāHIR’s Writings 89
The Chronicle of the “Son of al-Mukhtar” 94
Askiyā Muhammad, the Putative Ancestor of Ahmad Lobbo 99
A Triple-Layered Legitimacy 107
Sultan: The Apogee of West African Royal Tradition 107
The Twelfth Caliph 109
Renewer of the Faith 111
An Apocryphal Ascription 114

Part II: A Contested Space of Competing Claims: The Middle Niger, 1810s–1840s 123

3 The Emergence of Clerical Rule in the Middle Niger 127
The Middle Niger at the Dawn of Ḥamdallāhī: Warrior Elites and Muslim Scholars 128
The Emergence of a Regional Leader 133
The Kitāb al-Idṭira"r 137
Sources of Authority 141
The Resistance of the Old Fulani Elites 149

4 Ahmad Lobbo, Timbuktu, and the Kunta 154
Expansionism in the North 155
Early Connections with the Kunta 160
Smoking, Chewing, and Sniffling Tobacco 162
Mediating between Ḥamdallāhī and the Rebels 164
A Breakdown 168
The Leadership of al-Mukhtar al-Saghīr 170
Ahmad al-Bakkāy and Ḥamdallāhī 176

5 Fluctuating Diplomacy: Ḥamdallāhī and Sokoto 182
The Early Years: Before Noukouma 183
From Allegiance to Tension (1817–1821): 1. The Abu Bakr Atiku Manuscript 186
From Allegiance to Tension (1817–1821): 2. The Maktūb fi radd masā’il ‘an Ahmad Lobbo 189
The Intermediate Period: Ḥamdallāhī and Sokoto Reconciled (1821–1838) 193
Later Years: Tensions Reemerge (1838–1845) 195
## Contents

**Part III  The Circulation and Reception of the Tārīkh al-fattāsh, 1840s–2010s**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The Tārīkh al-fattāsh at Work</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Letter on the Appearance of the Twelfth Caliph</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ḥamdallāhī’s Administration and Literacy</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Sokoto Answer to Ḥamdallāhī’s Claims</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distant Echoes of the Debate</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prophecies and the Eschaton</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Decay of the Tārīkh al-fattāsh Project</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Resurgence of the Tārīkh al-fattāsh as La chronique du chercheur</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>History Writing as Political Projects</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Africa and the Islamic Discursive Tradition</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Islamic West Africa as a Mosaic of Literacy-Aware Societies</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Index**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>