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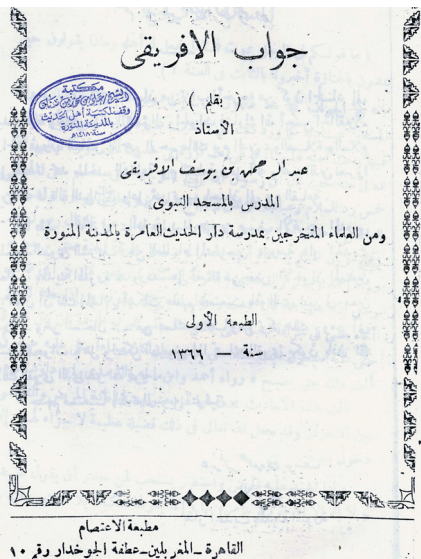
From West Africa to Arabia. West African *ulama* in Mecca and Medina (19th and 20th century)

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This research project traces the biographies and travel routes of the West African *ulama* during the nineteenth and twentieth century. Having left their home countries as pilgrims to escape the colonial conquest, these *ulama* finally settled in Mecca and Medina. Of particular interest is their contribution to the *wahhabi da'wa* (mission) in Arabia and the Islamic world, above all in West Africa.

The project focuses on the religious practices of *jihad*, *hijra*, and *hajj* in the historical context of colonialism, Pan Islam and nationalism. The project promises to shed light on a long-neglected chapter of African colonial history. At the same time, it will contribute to the history of Islamic diasporas. Geographically, the project centres on Saudi Arabia, Sudan and a number of West African countries, particularly Northern Nigeria, Mali and Mauritania.



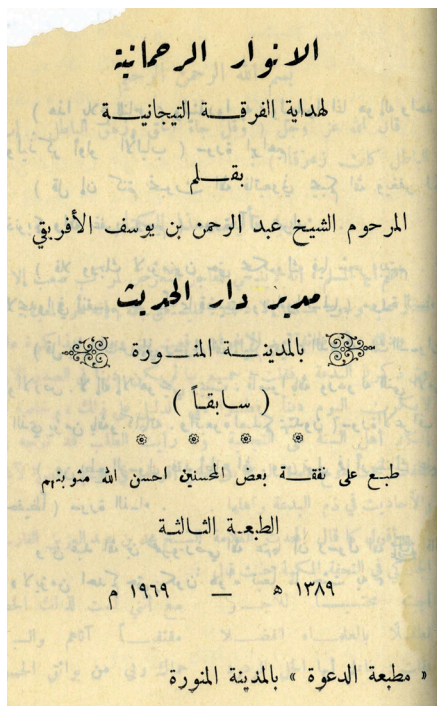
Jawab al 'ifriqi [The Response of al-Ifriqi]

Discourses and Practices of Legitimation in the Age of Reform – the Azhar, the Church, the Army and Egyptian Expansionism, 1822-1882

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This project investigates the legitimizing role of the Islamic religious establishment in the reform of the Egyptian army and the novel wars it waged during the nineteenth century. It looks at how the scholarly production of Azhar *ulama* (chronicles and legal advice) and its concomitant socio-professional practices affected and were in turn affected by the new policies of a centralizing and expanding state. The project pursues its reappraisal of Egyptian modernization by complementing its study of Azhari scholars with that of army preachers (*wu'âz*). While *ulama* contributed the bulk of ideological legitimation, the army preachers provided the moral conditions for success on the battlefield. As Muhammad 'Ali appears to have conscripted Coptic soldiers as early as the mid-1830s, the investigation of the religious establishment will be enlarged to include the Coptic Patriarchate. How did the latter view these developments and did they lead to the institution of Christian army chaplains? Having pioneered the first standing army of the Ottoman polity (1822), Muhammad 'Ali (1805-1849) also abolished, some twenty years before the Sultan, the *per capita* tax imposed on the *dhimmî-s* (*jizya*), allowing non-Muslims to be conscripted in the midst of his war against the titular head of Islam (the Syrian Campaign). What do the newly discovered soldier petitions (*'ardhâlât*) tell us of the identity of the soldier or the scribe, of the language used to contest state law, and at large, of representations of a "just" order of things?



Al Ifriqi Livre: The divine Light which will rescue the Tijaniyya sufi brotherhood



"La Prise de Saint-Jean d' Acre par les troupes égyptiennes" [The capture of Acre by Egyptian troops], by Jules Cordier, bas relief on the pedestal of the statue of Ibrahim Pasha in Cairo