



# **Muslims beyond the Arab World: The Odyssey of Ajami and the Muridiyya (AAR Religion, Culture, and History)**

*Fallou Ngom*

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*Muslims beyond the Arab World* explores the vibrant tradition of writing African languages using the modified Arabic script ('Ajami) alongside the rise of the Muridiyya Sufi order in Senegal. The book demonstrates how the development of the 'Ajami literary tradition is entwined with the flourishing of the Muridiyya into one of sub-Saharan Africa's most powerful and dynamic Sufi organizations. It offers a close reading of the rich hagiographic and didactic written, recited, and chanted 'Ajami texts of the Muridiyya, works largely unknown to scholars. The texts describe the life and Sufi odyssey of the order's founder, Shaykh Ahmadu Bamba Mbakke (1853-1927), his conflicts with local rulers and Muslim clerics and the French colonial administration, and the traditions and teachings he championed that permanently shaped the identity and behaviors of his followers.

Fallou Ngom evaluates prevailing representations of the Muridiyya movement and offers alternative perspectives. He demonstrates how the Murids used their written, recited, and chanted 'Ajami materials as an effective mass communication tool in conveying to the masses Bamba's poignant odyssey, doctrine, the virtues he stood for and cultivated among his followers-self-esteem, self-reliance, strong faith, work ethic, pursuit of excellence, determination, nonviolence, and optimism in the face of adversity-without the knowledge of the French colonial administration and many academics. *Muslims beyond the Arab World* argues that this is the source of the resilience, appeal, and expansion of Muridiyya, which has fascinated observers since its inception in 1883.

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