

Beyond Christian perspectives

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REVIEW ARTICLE

Beyond Christian perspectives: new studies of Yoruba Islam and religious coexistence

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Ogunnaike, Oludamini, *Deep Knowledge: ways of knowing in Sufism and Ifa, two West African intellectual traditions*. University Park PA: Penn State University Press (hb US\$149.95 – 978 0 271 08690 3; pb US\$49.95 – 978 0 271 08691 0). 2020, x + 470 pp.

Na’Allah, Abdul-Rasheed, *Yoruba Oral Tradition in Islamic Nigeria: a history of Dàdàkúàdà*. Oxford and New York NY: Routledge (hb £44.969 – 978 0 36726 032 3; pb £16.99 – 978 0 36778 795 0). 2020, xii + 151 pp.

Janson, Marloes, *Crossing Religious Boundaries: Islam, Christianity, and ‘Yoruba religion’ in Lagos, Nigeria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (hb £75 – 978 1 108 83891 7). 2021, xviii + 224 pp.

Introduction

Over the past two decades, the study of interfaith, and especially Muslim–Christian, relations in Africa has attracted a growing number of scholars. The global context of this scholarship includes the return of religion to global salience since the end of the Cold War (Habermas 2010; Casanova 2012) and a renewed interest in the role of religion in modern state formation beyond Europe (cf. Spohn 2003; Eisenstadt 2017; van der Veer 2013). But the books reviewed in this article also illustrate that scholarship on religious coexistence in African societies is strongly influenced by debates that reflect the continent’s specific history and inclusion in wider networks of knowledge production. Specifically, the study of interfaith relations among the roughly 40 million Yoruba speakers based in south-west Nigeria has relied strongly on Christian sources and perspectives. To understand how the books by Ogunnaike, Na’Allah and Janson challenge the conceptual primacy of Christianity, I will first set out the two key debates that have shaped the study of religious coexistence among the Yoruba, and then discuss each book in detail.

African histories of external domination and economic marginalization mean that questions about agency are central to all scholarship on the continent. Foregrounding the cultural impact of Western hegemony, an important strand of scholarship on

African religion since the 1980s has centred on the emergence of modern religious identity as a 'colonization of consciousness' (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991). Thus, an early study of Muslim–Christian relations among the Yoruba suggested that Yoruba speakers were not substantially affected by rising Muslim–Christian conflict elsewhere in Nigeria because British support for traditional rulers had encouraged them to consider shared urban or sub-ethnic identities as more important than religious difference. The hegemonic force of these colonial interventions, inherited by the region's dominant elites, meant that, although Yoruba Muslims and Christians had objectively different social and economic interests, they did not recognize them (Laitin 1986). Scholars of Yoruba history and society were prominent in challenging the external ascription of 'false consciousness' to Africans (cf. Barber 2000: 9), and J. D. Y. Peel (2000) illustrated the agency of early Yoruba missionaries and Christians by drawing on the letters, diary entries and other sources they had produced to argue that the self-determined Yoruba encounter with Christianity had been foundational to the 'making' of the Yoruba nation. In a subsequent study of interfaith relations, Peel (2016) continued to foreground the early Christian sources as representative of the views of contemporary Yoruba speakers. As many sources implied that Yoruba Islam was largely compatible with traditional religion, he therefore focused on the arrival of Christianity as the starting point for interfaith encounter. While Peel illuminated the historical trajectories of mutual borrowing and engagement between Christianity, Islam and traditional religion, he also emphasized the competitive nature of Muslim–Christian relations.

Peel's work has attracted lively debate along two principal axes: first, studies of the small but conceptually interesting 'Chrislam' movements of Lagos explore when and why (some) Yoruba speakers justify the crossing of religious boundaries and illuminate the creativity and effervescence of Yoruba religious engagement in the present (Janson 2016). In a similar vein, the study of everyday engagements by Muslims, Christians and traditionalists in a predominantly Muslim town shows that many Yoruba discourses constitute religious diversity as potentially valuable (Nolte *et al.* 2017). This research emphasizes the need to explore in more detail how Yoruba groups and individuals engage with religious diversity. Second, recent research challenges perceptions of Yoruba Islam as focused primarily on intra-Yoruba exchanges and highlights the importance of Yoruba Muslim engagement with northern Nigerian and global Islamic debates (Aliyu 2019; Balogun 2019; Katz 2019). This research affirms that, like Christianity and, to some degree, traditional religion, Yoruba Islam is also part of international religious networks.

Engaging with the transformation of religion since the 1980s, another important debate in the study of African religion centres on the concurrent rise of Pentecostal Christianity and Reformist Islam. While the suggestion that the two traditions might be considered 'mirror images' (Larkin and Meyer 2006) has since been revised, many scholars have recognized that ongoing religious competition facilitates the emergence of shared concepts and practices, which might be explored in the context of urban 'co-production' (Dilger 2013) or a 'religious field' (Janson and Meyer 2016). In the context of Yoruba religion, these conceptualizations recognize both the long history of mutual borrowing and exchange emphasized by Peel (2016) and their close engagement in everyday life (Soares 2006). However, where scholars of African religion have focused on the impact of religion on the public sphere and the state, they have naturally concentrated on the religion that dominated political discourse in

their specific contexts. Across West Africa, Reformist Islam has transformed politics and society in predominantly Muslim areas (Loimeier 1997; Masquelier 2001; 2009), just as Pentecostal beliefs, aesthetics and dispositions have transformed contemporary popular culture in largely Christian areas (see especially Meyer 2004; 2010; Kalu 2008; 2010). In the religiously mixed Yoruba region, Pentecostal Christianity has played a politically important role, first for Yoruba opposition to military rule during the 1990s (Marshall 2009; Wariboko 2014), and later for the Obasanjo and Jonathan presidencies in Nigeria (Obadare 2018). Especially in studies of the political and spiritual critiques of Islam within Pentecostal discourse, religious analysis has often elided historical patterns of religious 'co-production'. This area of research has not yet attracted significant debate but is addressed in this review.

All three books reviewed below contribute to the study of religious coexistence among the Yoruba by offering new insights into the study of Yoruba and West African Islam and traditional religion, with Janson's book also exploring other religious groups against the backdrop of Lagos's dominant Pentecostal culture. Engaging with debates in philosophy, history and anthropology respectively, each book relies on different methodologies and engages with different disciplinary concerns. This is especially true for the first two books in this review, by Ogunnaike and Na'Allah, which engage with questions about the nature of knowledge and the unique oral culture of the Islamic Yoruba town of Ilorin, respectively. I therefore discuss each book first in terms of its own ambitions before drawing out its contribution to debates about interfaith relations among the Yoruba, and to the other books. A final section discusses areas for future research that emerge from the books' shared emphasis on the asymmetry of interfaith boundaries between Islam and traditional religion, and the co-production of prayer practices by Muslims and Christians.

Islam and traditional practice as different forms of knowledge

Oludamini Ogunnaike's *Deep Knowledge: ways of knowing in Sufism and Ifa, two West African intellectual traditions* is the first major work to explore the relationship between Sufi Islam and *Ifá*, the most widely studied Yoruba system of divination. Ogunnaike illustrates the importance of considering the relationship between the two religions on their own terms. The book's first two sections focus on the distinct ideas and practices that Tijani Muslims (pp. 31–192) and *Ifá* diviners (pp. 195–320) mobilize in search of truth, and Ogunnaike draws on a respectful engagement with practitioners to demonstrate the breadth of debate and differential experience within each tradition. By validating the perspectives rooted in knowledge of Sufi Islam and *Ifá*, Ogunnaike expands the Western-derived academic concepts that often serve as the starting point for the study of the continent (pp. 15–16). The originality of his book therefore lies both in his recognition of African forms of knowledge as valid sources of conceptual thinking and in his careful demonstration of how intellectual resources rooted in the continent can challenge and expand academic debates about knowledge and philosophy.

In the third section of the book, Ogunnaike explores the different perspectives each religion has on the other (pp. 323–50) before offering a comparative assessment of his own (pp. 351–96). Although the conceptual and practical traditions of Sufi Islam and *Ifá* are substantially different, they share a strong emphasis on the personal and

embodied aspects of knowledge. Both constitute the individual as an actively knowing subject, and thus conceive of knowledge as transformative at a personal level. The shared focus on these two traditions of knowledge as a source of personal change, Ogunnaike suggests, resonates with traditions in Western antiquity that understand philosophy as a holistic way of life that has nevertheless been marginalized in the academic pursuit of knowledge (pp. 394–6). Rather than illustrating how his African case studies might challenge or add to existing philosophical debates, Ogunnaike offers an entirely more ambitious interpretation: expanding the concept of philosophy itself, he constitutes Western traditions of thought as a peculiarity within a much broader philosophical tradition, which includes Greek philosophy as well as African systems of knowledge (p. 396).

Ogunnaike's commitment to analysing Tijani and *Ifá* discourses in their own right is, in many ways, the starting point of this review, because it illuminates the historical relationship between Islam and *Ifá* divination in a way that differs significantly from Christian and missionary perceptions. While the presence of Muslims in the region dates back at least to the early sixteenth century, very few Yoruba speakers converted until the nineteenth century. When the number of converts began to rise, the fact that Muslims and non-Muslims often lived close together undoubtedly contributed to Christian perceptions of compatibility. Yet, as Ogunnaike's discussion of *Ifá* perspectives on Islam suggests, the *Ifá* corpus offers two opposing views on the historical relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. On the one hand, key divination practices suggest that, as the guide to all religious practices, *Ifá* can advise on Islam in the same manner as it advises on other traditional forms of worship. On the other hand, important traditions within *Ifá* emphasize that Islam is clearly separate, and 'split off', from it (pp. 328–31).

This double representation of the relationship between Islam and *Ifá* indicates two separate dynamics that arise from different conceptualizations of these religions. *Ifá*'s engagement with Islam as one more religion of potential relevance to its diviners and their clients points to the ability of traditional practices to be inclusive. As the value of *Ifá* lies in its ability to navigate a highly diverse spiritual universe, its incorporation of Islam as an originally external religion does not come from a position of weakness or need; rather, it illustrates the all-encompassing power of its divinatory practices over other spiritual practices – including Islam. This was possible because, unlike many members of traditional religions, West African Muslims shared key Islamic stories and wisdom freely with non-believers. As a result, Islamic political and spiritual repertoires became a creative resource for non-Muslims. But as non-Muslims were not bound by Islamic tradition, they often engaged with Islam in unorthodox ways (Moraes Farias 1990; 2015).

The fact that traditional representations of Islam were not always recognized by Muslims themselves is seen in the second representation of Islam as separate and clearly distinct from the *Ifá* corpus. Certainly, many of Ogunnaike's Muslim interlocutors 'inwardly' consider *Ifá* as a form of truth similar to Islam. However, only a small number of Muslims think of *Ifá* as an 'outwardly' appropriate practice for themselves (pp. 337–50). This suggests that, while many Muslims are prepared to recognize non-Islamic practices, they are not prepared to compromise the corporate identity of Islam.

Oral traditional art and engagement with Islam

Abdul-Rasheed Na'Allah's volume, *Yoruba Oral Tradition in Islamic Nigeria: a history of Dàdàkùàdá*, helps us understand the relationship between Islam and traditional practice in more detail. Na'Allah's interest focuses on *Dàdàkùàdá*, a performative genre of chanting and singing that is deeply rooted in Ilorin, the most important Islamic Yoruba city. An Oyo war camp in the eighteenth century, the city's commitment to Islam attracted large numbers of Muslim warriors and citizens. This enabled Ilorin to play a major role in Oyo's collapse and to emerge as one of its regional successor states. Widely respected as a seat of Islamic learning, Islamic knowledge and practices emanating from Ilorin were central to Yoruba conversion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By focusing on the history and debates that surround *Dàdàkùàdá*, a non-Islamic genre, Na'Allah documents the ongoing pattern of engagement between traditional and Islamic perspectives.

After introducing the reader to Ilorin and its hinterland, Na'Allah offers an overview of the rich landscape of Islamic and traditional oral genres practised in Ilorin. Many popular traditional art forms, including *Dàdàkùàdá*, have been transformed by removing aspects that might be identified as un-Islamic (pp. 16–20). Moreover, the pre-Islamic origins of *Dàdàkùàdá* have been the subject of significant debate: in 1985, Na'Allah was told by *Dàdàkùàdá* artist Jaigbade Alao that the genre emerged from chants performed for the traditional *Égun* masquerade, with which it shares many structural similarities. However, since 1987, Alao and other *Dàdàkùàdá* performers have insisted that the origins of their genre lie in traditional forms that are not associated with traditional religion (pp. 25–30). Debates about *Dàdàkùàdá*'s origins are directly linked to the fact that the genre has been heavily criticized by Islamic leaders (pp. 39–40, 44–7). As *Dàdàkùàdá* is typically performed at weddings and naming ceremonies, it is associated with powerful moral and ethical messages that uplift and enlighten its audiences. However, the artistic complexity and sophistication of *Dàdàkùàdá* derive from the ability to weave together different forms of text. During a *Dàdàkùàdá* performance, the lead performer, supported by a second-in-command, chants praise poems for often famous individuals; these are interwoven with songs, proverbs or recitations that address relevant social, political, moral or religious issues. An interlocutor, who is part of the group, conveys audience wishes and encourages participation. Parallel to the vocal chanting, drummers imitate the tonal sequences of Yoruba speech either to support the singer's message or to complement it by evoking related proverbs, sayings or other chunks of text.

The potential openness to a wide range of texts means that *Dàdàkùàdá* artists have responded to the religious criticism of their art form by including Islamic elements, most importantly through the recitation of Qur'anic verses at the start of, and during, a performance. In order to do so correctly, several artists have employed Qur'anic teachers who advise both on the recitation and on the moral messages associated with different verses. Some artists also include songs that imitate the Islamic *Wákà* genre, which focuses on praise for the Prophet Muhammad. At the same time, most *Dàdàkùàdá* artists have cut aspects of their performance that could be criticized as non-Islamic – from drinking alcohol to using crude or explicit terms to criticize those who behave badly. But the inclusion of Islamic ethics and texts into *Dàdàkùàdá* performance has not appeased all critics: several Islamic scholars see

the inclusion of Qur'anic verses in *Dàdàkúàdà* songs as a form of desecration of the holy texts. While this form of engagement has led to an Islamization of *Dàdàkúàdà*, with some artists drawing on their growing knowledge of Islam to offer ethical advice on decisions in their mosques and neighbourhood, it does not change the status of *Dàdàkúàdà* as an art form that is recognized, both explicitly and implicitly, as traditional (pp. 42–7).

The contemporary Muslim criticism of *Dàdàkúàdà* reflects the heightened opposition of both Muslims and Christians to traditional practice since the 1980s and cannot be projected into the past. However, the resemblance to the double relationship between *Ifá* and Islam described by Ogunnaike is striking: although *Dàdàkúàdà* artists have included aspects of Islamic practice as well as Islamic texts, Ilorin's Islamic critics of *Dàdàkúàdà* continue to draw a clear ('outward') boundary between Islam and traditional practice. While this appropriation of Islam reflects the potential implications of Islamic criticism for the reputations and livelihoods of *Dàdàkúàdà* performers, it also expands the moral and ethical reach of the genre in a manner that resembles the mobilization of Islam in *Ifá*. The apparent compatibility between the two religions in traditional performances illustrates the misleading nature of comments on the 'Yorubacization' of Islam in the region, including by Muslim scholars (Laitin 1986: 41; Danmole 2008). Ostensibly mixed religious practices did not so much document the syncretization of Islam as show the expansion and self-assertion of Yoruba traditional practices through the inclusion of Islamic ideas and practices. These dynamics explain why nineteenth-century Christian and missionary sources – and even observers today – might form the impression that the boundary between Islam and traditional practice is fluid. However, they also illustrate that this perspective privileges the traditional engagement with Islam over Muslim perspectives on traditional practice.

New perspectives on religious expansion and creativity

The question of religious boundaries is also at the heart of Marloes Janson's *Crossing Religious Boundaries: Islam, Christianity, and 'Yoruba religion' in Lagos, Nigeria*. The book's framing around several fascinating case studies emphasizes the value of exploring interfaith relations not as a form of syncretism, but through the concept of assemblage. As the non-Christian groups discussed in the book engage differently with the powerful messages and dominant practices of Pentecostalism, the openness of this concept is central to Janson's description of Lagos's religious multiplicity. However, Janson's discussion of Muslim concerns and groups also suggests that the notion of intertextuality enables us to think in more detail about the specific forms of assemblage encouraged, or accepted, by different religions.

The book's first case study is 'Chrislam', an umbrella term for different groups whose leaders emphasize the compatibility between Islam and Christianity (pp. 58–89). All three groups discussed by Janson were founded by Muslims after receiving dreams or visions. In the two groups that remain active, worshippers read the Bible and the Qur'an, and they combine practices derived from Islam and Christianity. In addition, they participate in seemingly new practices – such as pilgrimage to a mountain in Ogun State or regular running around a replica of the Kaaba – both of which resonate with Muslim and Christian practices more broadly. Worshippers are

disproportionally young and female, and often expect that combining practices from both dominant religions will double their chances of spiritual success. However, the fact that several worshippers, usually also from Muslim backgrounds, told Janson that they do not publicly, or even privately, admit their membership illustrates a wider ambivalence about the transgression of religious boundaries within Chrislam.

The reasons that led to the banning of the third Chrislam group illuminate this ambivalence: unlike the leaders of the first two groups, Jamiu Yusuf was trained as a Tijani scholar, and was thus able to justify his religious vision in the form of an apparently scholarly discourse that contested key aspects of Islamic orthopraxy (pp. 82–6). Janson's suggestion that this was the key reason why Muslim leaders challenged Yusuf in court confirms Ogunnaike's and Na'Allah's arguments about Yoruba Islam. While most Muslims accept the inclusion of Islamic practices in non-Islamic contexts that are clearly distinguished as such, they strongly oppose the inclusion of non-Islamic features into explicitly Islamic discourse.

Janson's next chapter shows how this pattern is reflected in the inclusion of apparently new practices by the *Nasrul-Lahi-il Fathi* Society of Nigeria (NASFAT; pp. 90–123). Distinguished by spectacular prayer gatherings or *asalatu*, which take place on Sunday mornings in competition with Pentecostal services, and by monthly overnight prayer events or *tahajjud*, which resemble Christian vigil nights, NASFAT emerged in conscious response to the growing attraction of Pentecostal services among Muslim youth. Janson explains the adoption of these forms and practices through Webb Keane's (2004) use of entextualization theory to explain the ability of Christian practice to change and evolve. Mobilizing the literary concept of intertextuality, Keane explains that parts, or chunks, of religious texts can be detached from one environment in order to be included, or re-entextualized, in another. For example, while the Sermon on the Mount addresses Jesus' followers in the form of a coherent text, individual parts of it can be repurposed to form the focus of silent meditation or a prayer. In this new context, the same chunk of text fulfils a different function (Keane 2004: 439–40; *Crossing Religious Boundaries*, p. 113). In a similar manner, Janson suggests, the inclusion of *asalatu* services and *tahajjud* prayers into Islamic worship takes Pentecostal chunks of practice and imbues them with an Islamic form or function (pp. 118–21).

While Janson does not explain this process of 'Islamization' in detail, it is helpful to refer to one of Ogunnaike's arguments, which states that Muslims can embrace all practices that are sanctioned by the Qur'an or a hadith (p. 326, 429, *passim*). Both NASFAT's Sunday events and its vigils constitute voluntary prayers, which are permitted in addition to compulsory prayers. Nonetheless, some Muslims are concerned about the similarity of *asalatu* services to church services. However, *tahajjud* prayers are a more integral part of Islam. This suggests that, even as NASFAT's inclusion of practices popularized by Pentecostalism arises from competition with Christianity, it is circumscribed by Islam's own 'discursive tradition' (Asad 2009). This in turn suggests that incorporation – or entextualization – in different religions does not reflect a single cultural or religious dynamic, but rather is driven by the different conventions and traditions that distinguish each individual religion or religious tradition.

In the subsequent chapter, Janson examines the *Ijo Orunmila*, a community that draws on Christian and Pentecostal practices to celebrate *Ifá* and other forms

of traditional religion, to illuminating the value of inclusion for different sections of the Lagosian population (pp. 124–53). As in Chrislam, more women than men attend *Ijo Orunmila* services, and several worshippers explain their participation as a reflection of their ‘liberal’ Muslim or Christian identities (p. 137). This suggests that, like Chrislam, the *Ijo Orunmila* serves a constituency whose members seek spiritual support by mobilizing different forms of access to the divine. The Grail Movement and Eckankar, discussed in the next chapter, attract an altogether wealthier clientele and encourage members to act in a calm and detached manner that is clearly distinct from Pentecostalism. However, women are well represented here too. Moreover, both groups allow their followers to adopt a perspective that enables them to navigate a multitude of religions as well as ostensibly secular knowledge. While these organizations attract a relatively small following compared with Islam and Christianity, their shared attitude towards religious alterity illustrates the enduring local appeal of inclusion as a spiritual strategy.

Future areas of research

The different approaches by Ogunnaike, Na’Allah and Janson raise broader questions about the historical trajectories of Yoruba traditional practice, Islam and other religions, as well as about the appropriate methodologies for studying them.

For example, while all three authors highlight the capacity of traditional practices to include bits of other religions, they do so within very different timescales and by relying on different methodologies. Janson’s study of the *Ijo Orunmila* illustrates the value of a historical approach to Yoruba tradition in the context of modernization and Christianization, but somewhat overstates the historicity of *Ifá*, which certainly existed before large-scale conversion to Islam and Christianity (pp. 146–7). Na’Allah’s references to changing stories about the origins of *Dàdàkúàdà* illustrate that, in the absence of written sources, familiarity with the ‘field’ and interviews alone are not always enough to reconstruct past practices. By contrast, Ogunnaike’s focus on *Ifá*’s extra-historical truth means that he offers no conclusive view on its putative history (p. 227). However, his reflection on the different representations of Islam within the divination corpus shows that valuable historical insights can be gained by studying oral texts in detail. It is important that these insights were not extracted directly from the text, but that they emerged from Ogunnaike’s commitment to understanding *Ifá* narratives first in the context of *Ifá*’s own conventions. This means that predominantly oral sources can make a valuable contribution to future research into the history of Yoruba religion. However, if they are mobilized, their claims must be examined in the context of the broader conventions of knowledge and social engagement they address.

The different representations of Islam within the reviewed books highlight the historical heterogeneity of Yoruba Muslim practice. Whereas Ogunnaike’s discussion of the Tijaniyya illuminates only one important Islamic tradition in the region, Na’Allah and Janson both highlight the diversity of Islamic life. Reflecting on the predominantly Muslim character of Ilorin, Na’Allah suggests that Islamic debate is driven by disagreements between scholars about local practices, such as *Dàdàkúàdà*. Because *Dàdàkúàdà* has an origin in traditional verbal arts, Islamic debates about it illustrate the ongoing importance of boundary making. In an ongoing discursive

process, the criticism of Islamic scholars encourages the inclusion of more clearly Islamic texts or practices into *Dàdàkúàdá* performances, which are nevertheless also potentially subject to criticism (p. 45). Yet the fact that many Muslims patronize *Dàdàkúàdá* despite such criticism illustrates that individual decisions in relation to everyday social practices and forms of consumption contribute significantly to the heterogeneity of Islamic views and practices. By contrast, Janson describes the introduction of new Islamic groups, such as NASFAT, by Islamic businessmen and civic leaders. Moreover, her focus is on the incorporation of new practices into Islam rather than the adoption of Islam into another form of practice, which is at least partly linked to the perceived vulnerability of Islam (in Christian-dominated Lagos) to Pentecostalism. To capture the complex social dynamics and varied forms of leadership in Yoruba Islam, future research will need to cover a wide range of localities. Future work ought also to engage more closely with Muslim-authored texts and sources, which often explore local concerns through understandings of global and regional Islamic discourse.

Finally, by exploring shared prayer practices, Janson encourages reflection on both Islam and Christianity. As Peel noted, *tahajjud* meetings inspired the first Christian night vigils in African-led churches during the Christian revival of the high colonial period (Peel 2016: 176–7). In a similar vein, Yoruba Muslims have a long tradition of mobilizing prayer in warfare (cf. Nolte 2018: 105). This suggests that Muslim and Christian groups incorporated prayer practices across the religious boundary at different junctures in time. Future research might explore what this form of co-production means for the relationship between Muslims and Christians, but also for each tradition on its own – and for groups within those traditions. Returning to debates about the role of interpersonal relations in religious engagement, such research might also explore who is involved in this process of co-production: all books reviewed here comment on gender, and to a lesser degree on age and class, and I hope that future research will explore the roles of socially distinct groups in the co-creation of prayer and other widely shared practices. But as neither Yoruba Islam nor Yoruba Christianity can be considered solely in the context of local debates and exchanges, a closer engagement with religious co-production would also need to consider Muslim and Christian debates about prayer, perhaps along with more broadly shared ideas about the night as a suitable time for engaging with the spiritual. Such research is likely to reveal new insights into both Christianity and Islam.

Conclusion

Overall, the focus on relations between Muslims and their religious others in the books reviewed here offers a conscious exploration of Yoruba religious history and practice beyond Christian sources. The overall thrust of the missionary archive, which paints traditional religion and Islam as compatible, is misleading. As both *Dàdàkúàdá* practice and the *Ijo Orunmila* illustrate, many forms of apparent compatibility between traditional practice and monotheist religion reflect the traditional perspective, but not the Muslim or Christian one. This means that interfaith relations are not driven by a single cultural or religious dynamic but reflect the different ways in which individual religions conceive of their own truths and boundaries.

The fact that these insights emerge from an interdisciplinary reading suggests that religious coexistence is most productively researched through a broader range of debates and methodologies than usually mobilized within a single disciplinary tradition. Future research on Yoruba religion needs to complement Christian-authored sources and concepts by engaging critically with oral texts and Muslim-authored work. An examination of all sources in relation to the conventions of their production, which may be deeply local or include regional and global faith networks, will open up new perspectives not only on Yoruba Islam and traditional practice, but also on Christianity itself.

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