

Abstract

This essay looks at the relationship between History and Myth in the literature of the grand shaykh of the Qādiri ṭarīqa of West Africa Shaykh al-Mukhtār al-Kuntī (d.1811). It explores the role that “miracles” played in his society and how he dealt with this concept in his literary works. By looking at one of his major works, this study wishes to determine how he combined historical fact with myth and what the underlying reasons were for his approach. While the conclusion suggests that the Shaykh indeed employed myth within his writing it further shows how he used this mechanism to maintain a careful balance between his role as a traditional Islamic scholar and as a leader, thus strengthening his position as the head of the Kunta clan and the Qādirī ṭarīqa.