

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910789905203321
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Titolo	Islamization from below [[electronic resource] ] : the making of Muslim communities in rural French Sudan, 1880-1960 // Brian J. Peterson
Pubbl/distr/stampa	New Haven, : Yale University Press, c2011
ISBN	1-280-57137-3 9786613600974 0-300-15273-6
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (336 p.)
Disciplina	297.096623
Soggetti	Islam - Mali - Bougouni (Sikasso) - History Bougouni (Sikasso, Mali) History France Colonies Africa Religion
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. 261-308) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Contents -- Preface -- Acknowledgments -- Abbreviations -- Introduction -- 1. The Wars of Samori -- 2. Reconstructing a Fragmented World -- 3. Slave Emancipation and the Expansion of Islam, 1905-1914 -- 4. Coping with Colonialism -- 5. Transforming the Village -- 6. Migrants and the Dialectics of Conversion, 1930-1960 -- 7. Changes in the Religious Landscape -- Conclusion -- Glossary -- Notes -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	The colonial era in Africa, spanning less than a century, ushered in a more rapid expansion of Islam than at any time during the previous thousand years. In this groundbreaking historical investigation, Brian J. Peterson considers for the first time how and why rural peoples in West Africa "became Muslim" under French colonialism. Peterson rejects conventional interpretations that emphasize the roles of states, jihads, and elites in "converting" people, arguing instead that the expansion of Islam owed its success to the mobility of thousands of rural people who gradually, and usually peacefully, adopted the new religion on their own. Based on extensive fieldwork in villages across southern Mali (formerly French Sudan) and on archival research in West Africa and France, the book draws a detailed new portrait of grassroots, multi-

generational processes of Islamization in French Sudan while also deepening our understanding of the impact and unintended consequences of colonialism.

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