



**HAL**  
open science

## Manding Ajami samples: Mandinka and Bamana

Valentin Vydrin, Gérard Dumestre

► **To cite this version:**

Valentin Vydrin, Gérard Dumestre. Manding Ajami samples: Mandinka and Bamana. Meikal Mumin, Kees Versteegh. *The Arabic script in Africa: Studies in the use of a writing system*, Brill, pp.225-260, 2014, *Studies in Semitic languages and linguistics*, 978-90-04-25679-8. halshs-00948996

**HAL Id: halshs-00948996**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00948996>**

Submitted on 26 Feb 2014

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

## *Manding Ajami samples: Mandinka and Bamana<sup>1</sup>*

*Valentin Vydrin, INALCO, CNRS-LLACAN*

*G rard Dumestre, INALCO, CNRS-LLACAN*

### *1. Introduction*

The Manding Ajami writing tradition is much less mysterious today than it was thirty or forty years ago, when scholarly literature would settle for its passing mentions and practically no single authentic text was available. However, the number of texts published still remains extremely low, and they reflect poorly on the geographical spread of this writing system. We are still at the stage where every new text introduced into scholarly circulation is a discovery: with a high degree of probability, it represents either a new variety of the writing, a new literary genre, or even establishes the use in a new geographical area where the existence of Ajami was hitherto unknown. The texts presented here exemplify this situation.

In the following, texts of the manuscripts will be represented in four columns: the source texts in Manding Ajami, i.e. Arabic-based script orthography, a Roman script transliteration, a Roman script standard transcription, and an English translation.

In the transliteration, we tried our best to remain true to the Ajami text. We had to interpret spellings in order to segment texts into words,

---

<sup>1</sup> The authors would like to thank Charles Riley who volunteered to correct the English texts.

whenever Arabic script (based) graphemes are written disconnected to the left. This applies to the letters 'alif, dāl, ḡāl, rā', zāy, wāw, which are always spelt disconnected to the following letters in Arabic script. Therefore, it is most often impossible to judge whether a word boundary was intended by the author of the manuscript after such a letter or not. In the standard transcription, Bamana text is represented following the official orthography of Bamana language, while dialectal forms are being eliminated<sup>2</sup>. We suppose that they can be easily restored from the transliteration. Although tones are not marked in Arabic based script, lexical tones are marked in the standard transcription, while contextual and grammatical tonal changes (among them, the tonal article<sup>3</sup>) are ignored.

The Mandinka document is a sample of a magical text. Unlike all the other authentic documents published so far, it is authored, most probably, by an ordinary Muslim, rather than a Muslim cleric, for hunt remains a domain far remote from the sphere of pious Marabouts. 'Allāh and Muḥammad are nevertheless mentioned in these texts, and Arabic words are inserted here and there for possibly extra effectiveness, such as e.g. *tamāli* (3:3, 3:4)<sup>4</sup>, and probably also *qalaqa* (2:2). In essence though, the religious core of this text is quite animist.

---

<sup>2</sup> The Ajami writing reflects a dialectal form, different from the Standard Bamana one.

<sup>3</sup> In Bamana, a definite article is represented by a floating low tone following a noun or a noun group. In current transcription practice, it is rarely marked even in texts with tonal notation.

<sup>4</sup> In referencing to the texts, the first number (preceding the colon) represents the number of the text, and the second one (following the colon) represents the line. For the Bamana two-page texts, the figure preceding a slash represents the number of the text, while the second figure (following the slash) represents the page number, and the third figure, following the colon, represents the line.

The other set of texts is the very first sample of the authentic Bamana writing tradition published.<sup>5</sup> They come from San, an ancient commercial center in the southwestern part of Mali, and might represent the earliest piece ever of authentic Bamana literature.

In the following, the texts are reproduced in digitalized form, provided with an exact Roman script transliteration, a normalized transcription (with tones in Mandinka texts following Creissels et al. 1982), and an English translation including comments. Each text is followed by an analysis of the peculiarities of the Ajami variety.

## *2. Mandinka hunter's incantations.*

The incantations were shown to Valentin Vydrin by Abdulay Daafee, who was his host in the Samakun village (Sédhiou region, Senegal) in October 2007. His oral comments were very helpful in decoding and transliterating of the texts. However, certain passages (given in italics in the Roman transcription) remain obscure, and their respective transliterations and translations therefore remain tentative. In particular, personal pronouns of second singular *í* and third plural *ì* differ only in tone, and the context is usually insufficient to opt for one or the other interpretation. In such cases, decisions were taken more or less at random.

Each incantation begins with an Islamic preamble, followed by magic formulae, which sometimes consist of words which are non-existent in

---

<sup>5</sup> The only Bamana texts published so far (Vydrine 1998) were written at the request of Valentin Vydrin. Therefore, they may be considered as evidence for the study of the orthographic tradition of Bamana Ajami, but they do not exemplify its genres.

Mandinka language (at least, they are absent from Mandinka dictionaries and are not recognized by Mandinka speakers as true words). At the end, the objects and substances are mentioned (apparently, those which are necessary for the magic action), followed by the Arabic word اسمه 'ismuhu 'his name'.

## Text 1

	Transliteration	Transcription	Translation
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ	bsmi 'llh	1. Bismi llahi	1. By the name of God
سَلِّعْ	sala'ali	2. Salaḡa li	2. Greetings to
مُحَمَّدٍ	muḡam <sup>2</sup> adi	Muhammadi wa	Mohammed and the
وَالْعَلِيِّ	wa'la'liy <sub>1</sub>	l'ḡali Muhammadi . í	Highest Mohammed.
عِ مُحَمَّدٍ ع	muḡam <sup>2</sup> adi ' nari	nari!	Stop!
نَرِ			
شَبُّ نَرِ	šubu nari mina <sup>n</sup>	3. Sùboo nari !	3. Animal, stop! Old
مِنْ كَبِّ	kay <sub>2</sub> a kutu tu <sup>n</sup> bu	Mìnankaña kòto	male antelope, ruins
كُتُّ تَبِّ	bi' 'i ku <sup>n</sup> tu	túnbuḡ bé í kùntu	will cut you (?).
بِاعِ كُتِّ			
تَبِّ نَكُّ	tu <sup>n</sup> bu ti <sup>n</sup> kun <sub>1</sub> u	4. túnbuḡ t'í kùnunḡ,	4. Ruins won't swallow
فَاكُدَمَا	f <sub>1</sub> a'ku <sup>n</sup> dama'	faakundamaa	you, faakundamaa,
بَاكُدَمَا	ba'ku <sup>n</sup> dama'	baakundamaa.	baakundamaa.
عِ يَشْبُ ع	'i y <sub>2</sub> ašubu 'i	5. í ñáa sùboo , ì	5. Animal is before your
تَدِينَا ع	ta <sup>n</sup> dina' ' saf <sub>1</sub> a' 'i	tàa, díina (jínna?), ì	eyes, take them, bush
سَعَا عِ يَا	y <sub>2</sub> a'	s'à fàa í ñáa.	spirit, they will kill it
			before you.
شَتُّ كَيْدِنَا	šutu kiy <sub>2</sub> itadina' ?	6. Sùboo kèeñeeta ,	6. The animal has fallen
ءِ سَبَلَعِ	saf <sub>1</sub> a' 'i y <sub>2</sub> a'	díina (jínna?), í s'à	asleep, bush spirit, I will
عِي		fàa í ñáa.	kill it before you.
شَتُّ مَسِّ	šubu musu 'ita <sup>n</sup> di ?	7. Sùbu musoo	7. Show me a female
عَدِّءِ نَاءِ	na' ? saf <sub>1</sub> a' tt	yìtandi í ná , í s'à	animal, I'll kill it.
سَعَا تَتِّ		fàa tata	
تَايُو عِنِّ	ti'yuw 'ani <sup>n</sup> mina <sup>n</sup>	8. Tío àníḡ	8. Hair and male
مِنَا كِي	kaya tiyuw ni <sup>n</sup>	mìnankaña, tío níḡ	antelope, hair and the
تِيُو نَابِّ	bu <sup>n</sup> ba <sup>n</sup> sulu	bumbaḡ súloo	root of bumbaḡ.
سَلِّ			
اسْمُهُ مَسِّ	'smh man <sub>1</sub> kara	9. Ismahu mànkara	9. Its name is the horn
كَرِّ بِنِّمِّ	binamu sulawuli <sup>n</sup>	bína mú sùla wùleḡ.	of the mànkara
سَلُّوْلِ			antelope, red monkey.

## Comments

Line 1. The first spelling could be read as  $\text{خَسْبِي}$  |  $\langle \text{hsbiy}_1 \rangle$ . However, such a reading hardly makes any sense. Most probably, it is an ordinary basmala ( $\text{بِسْم}$  |  $\langle \text{bsm} \rangle$ ) written in a fanciful way.

Line 2. Apparently  $\text{سَلَّلِي}$  |  $\langle \text{sala'ali} \rangle$  *sala'ali* is a modified form of  $\text{صَلَّى}$  |  $\langle \text{sl}^2\text{y}_1 \text{ l-i} \rangle$  which might be an abbreviated version of the Arabic language formula  $\text{صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ}$  | *ṣalla 'Allah 'alayhu wa sallam* 'May God bless him and grant him peace'. In the second and third incantations, it is spelled as  $\text{سَلَّلِي}$  |  $\langle \text{salali} \rangle$ .

The word *nari* is absent from all available Mandinka dictionaries. The translation 'stop!' was suggested by Abdulay Daafee.

Line 3. *Koto* may be also interpreted as another word for 'male' (it usually appears in compounds *bàakoto* 'he-goat', *sàakoto* 'ram').

Line 4. *Faakundamaa*, *baakundamaa* are ideophones depicting the antelope's walk.

Lines 5, 6. *jinna* 'bush spirit' is a reading suggested by Abdulay Daafee. The literal reading *díina* 'religion' does not fit the context.

Line 6. *kèeñee* is a word from the respectful vocabulary<sup>6</sup> for 'to sleep'.

Line 7. The final element of the line is transcribed here as *tata*. In fact, it might be a decorative element indicating the end of the magic formula. Cf. a similar element at the end of the San Bamana text 5.

Lines 8 and 9. It seems to be an enumeration of ingredients for the fabrication of a fetish or amulet. It looks like they were written post

---

<sup>6</sup> A special register used for expressing respect. For more information, see Vydrin (2008).

factum, in the blank space, and line 9 was fitted into the left margin of the page.

Line 9. *mànkara* or *mànkari* is an unidentified species of antelope.

## Text 2

	Transliteration	Transcription	Translation
سَلَّى مُحَمَّدٍ وَالْعَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ ذِيَابِ جِبِّ قَلَقِ قَلَقِ جِبِّ مِنْ كَيْ كُنْتُ جِبِّ نَتَعَلِ كُدَسِ اسْمَهُ كَسَلِ نَبِّمِ	salali muḥam <sup>2</sup> adi wa'la'alij <sub>1</sub> muḥam <sup>2</sup> adi ḡi <sup>n</sup> bi <sup>n</sup> ḡi <sup>n</sup> bi <sup>n</sup> ḡi <sup>n</sup> bi <sup>n</sup> q <sub>1</sub> alaraq <sub>1</sub> a q <sub>1</sub> alaraq <sub>1</sub> a ḡi <sup>n</sup> bi <sup>n</sup> mina <sup>n</sup> kaya kutu ḡi <sup>n</sup> bi <sup>n</sup> niti'ala kudasi 'smh kasala ḡa <sup>n</sup> bamu	1. Salali Muhammadi ḡalii Muhammadi. Jimbiḡ jimbiḡ. 2. Jimbiḡ kalaka kalaka jimbiḡ. 3. Mìnaḡ kaña kòto jinbiḡ n'í té à lá 4. kùdasi. Ismuhu kásalaa jàmba mú.	1. Greetings to Mohammed and the Highest Mohammed. <i>Jimbiḡ jimbiḡ.</i> 2. <i>Jimbiḡ kalaka kalaka jimbiḡ.</i> 3. Old male antelope, <i>jimbiḡ.</i> If you don't sing this, 4. be puny. Its name is the leaf of the <i>kasalaa</i> grass.

## Comments

Lines 1-2. *Jimbiḡ kalaka kalaka jimbiḡ* is a magic formula. There is a Mandinka word *jìmbi* 'a headgear with fringes', but it hardly fits this context. *Kalaka* is not a Mandinka word, but might possibly be related to *qalaaq* 'anxiety, insomnia (Arabic)'.  
Line 4. *Kùdasi* is a verb meaning 'to remain underdeveloped', 'to fail to reach normal size' (absent from Creissles et al. 1982).  
*Kásalaa* is an unidentified type of grass, also known as *kàcancároo*.  
Abdulay Daafee commented: *Í s'à buru jàḡ* '(After the incantation is pronounced,) you should rub it'.

## Text 3

	Transliteration	Transcription	Translation
سَلَّى مُحَمَّدٍ وَالْعَلِيِّ مُحَمَّدٍ دَجَّ دَجَّ وَرَكَّ وَرَكَّ كُنْتُ تَمَّالِ سَكَّتْ تَمَّالِ فَبِ تَمَّالِ فَبِ عَبْدًا تَت اسْمِهِ كِسْ مُسَّرْمُ	salali muḥam <sup>2</sup> adi wa'la'al <sup>1</sup> iy muḥam <sup>2</sup> adi dağ <sup>n</sup> dağ <sup>n</sup> warika <sup>n</sup> warika <sup>n</sup> ku <sup>n</sup> tu <sup>n</sup> tama'li sakata <sup>n</sup> tama'li f <sub>1</sub> abi tama'li f <sub>1</sub> ubi 'abada <sup>n</sup> tt ?smih kisi musu ra <sup>n</sup> mu	1. Salali Muhammadi wa-l-ḡali: Muhammadi. 2. Dajij dajij warikaṅ warikaṅ kuntuṅ, 3. tamaali sákatuṅ tamaali fàa bìi. 4. Tamaali fó bìi ábadaṅ. 5. Ismihu kèse mósoṛaṅ mú.	1. Greetings to Mohammed and the Highest Mohammed. 2. Cut <i>dajij dajij warikaṅ warikaṅ</i> , 3. always, that is, always, to kill today. 4. Always, up to this day, forever. 5. Its name is a rubber bullet.

## Comments

Line 2. *dajij dajij warikaṅ warikaṅ* are magic formulae - These are not Mandinka words.

Lines 3, 4. تَمَّالِ | <tama'li> *tamaali* is certainly Arabic *tamalli* 'always' (this word is absent from the everyday Mandinka).

Line 3. سَكَّتْ | <sakatan> *sakatan* was read by Abdulay Daafee as *sókotuṅ* 'that is'. Cf. in Creissels et al. 1982 *sàko*, *sòko* 'surtout, encore plus, à plus fort raison'.

Line 5. *Mósoṛaṅ* is an instrument name from the verb *móso* 'to rub while spitting and pronouncing incantations'. This line denotes the destination of the incantation.

### 3. Grammatological remarks to the Mandinka hunters' incantations



On the grounds of the spelling of the palatal nasal sonant  $n^7$ , these texts would belong to the main Mandinka Ajami variety (cf. Vydrin, this volume):  $n$  < $\tilde{n}$ > is OK represented by ي. Further grammatological characteristics of this document are:

- -s is usually written as  $s\bar{i}n$ , except for one case where it is written as  $\check{s}\bar{i}n$ , i.e. شُبُّ | < $\check{s}ubu$ >  $s\check{u}bu$  'animal, meat'.
- -j (a voiced palatal affricate) is spelled as either ج or ج, with the latter appearing both word-initially and word-finally<sup>8</sup>.
- ع is used as support for any diacritic expressing a vowel, when it is not preceded by a consonant. Furthermore, it also is used for spelling of the palatal oral sonant  $y$ , although there is only one occurrence in the text, i.e. عَتِّدْ | <'ita<sup>n</sup>di>  $y\grave{i}tandi$  1:7 'to show'.
- The nasal syllabic phoneme  $\eta$  (which appears in Mandinka in only two words:  $\eta$  'I',  $\eta$  'we') is written as *hamza*, i.e. ʾ (Which could also be an 'ain, i.e. ع) without any support or vocalic diacritics.
- Letters representing emphatics in the orthography of Arabic are not used, with the only exception of the rather obscure word قَلَقَ | < $q_1alaq_1a$ > (2:2).
- *Nūn*, *qāf* and *fā'* are written in the Mağribī way: In word-final positions, *nūn* has normally (with only one exception) no dot, while *qāf* is always spelled with one dot above, i.e. ق, and *fā'* always with one dot below, i.e. ف.

---

<sup>7</sup> In the text, there is not a single word containing a  $p$ , which makes the other diagnostic criterion (see Vydrin, present volume) inapplicable.

<sup>8</sup> In one word  $j$  is probably written using *dāl*, دِنَا | < $dina$ '> (incantation 1, lines 5 and 6). However, we are not sure about the interpretation of this word.

- Only the three standard vocalic diacritics, i.e.  $\bar{\text{a}}$ ,  $\bar{\text{e}}$ , and  $\bar{\text{i}}$ , are used and there are no attempts to differentiate closed and mid vowels.
- 'Alif, wāw, and yā' do not indicate in any way length of vowels. These letters appear mainly at the end of words, sometimes in disagreement with the preceding vocalic diacritic, and always without any visible correlation to vowel length, e.g.  $\text{بَا}$  *bé* 'imperfective marker'. However, such 'fake length' is much less frequent than in some other Mandinka Ajami texts.
- The syllable-final nasal element is usually rendered by *tanwīn*, e.g.  $\text{سُلُولِ}$  | <sulwuli<sup>n</sup>> *sùla wùlen* 'red monkey' (1:9), and rarely by *nūn* as in  $\text{مَنْ كَر}$  | <man kara> *mànkara* 'species of antelope' (1:9).

#### 4. Bamana texts from San

In 1972, during one of his sojourns in Mali, Gérard Dumestre dispatched a friend of his, Almamy Malik Yattara, to the ancient commercial town of San to look for old Bamana manuscripts. Almamy Yattara was a remarkable representative of the Muslim intelligentsia of Mali, and two books were dedicated to him (Yattara & Salvaing 2000; 2003). Being a Muslim cleric, it was much easier for him than for a white man to gain confidence among his coreligionists. A couple of weeks later, Almamy Yattara returned to Bamako with copies of five manuscripts: Bory Bary, the head of one of the Islamic families of San, allowed him (for a modest recompense) to copy by hand texts, which had originally been written by Bary's father, Amadu Bary, in 1911.

Being literate in French, Almamy Yattara provided each manuscript with a brief comment, which yet proved difficult to understand at times. These comments are reproduced here in an English translation, while the French originals are given in footnotes in the author's own orthography. There is also a comment written by Almamy Yattara referring to the entire set of the documents:

The length of this sheet is equal to the origin. I have written them from a white paper, the characters are equal.

The gift for these five documents was 6000 Malian Francs, for I gave 3000 Francs for two initial ones, when I saw that I was too tough, and I did it in order to have more, if any. And for the other three manuscripts I gave 3000 Franc. It is the time of working the farm. Nobody has time. By Almamy Yattara.<sup>9</sup>

Today, 39 years after the manuscripts were copied by Almamy Yattara and exactly 100 years after they were created, we proceed to their publication.

Text 1

Almamy Yattara's comment:

---

<sup>9</sup> The original text:

les longere de sette feille et egal de loriginal. je les estrié de papié Bilansse le karactere et egalla  
le cado de cet 5 dockimen. eté 6000 faran. pissique les 2 prumier je done 3000 F lorssque jevi jessi tro diure et je fai sa pour avar encor si yana. et avec le 3 maniscritre je done 3000 F. ya le travaus de samnp. toule monde nonpa de tan. par Almamy Yattara

The possessor of the document "Karantela Kolomba, the sacred well of San", Bory Bary. Written by his father in Arabic characters in San for him in 1911. The copyist Almamy Malik Yattara in San in 1972.<sup>10</sup>

Page 1

	Transliteration	Transcription	Translation
كِرَنْتِلَا كُلْمَبَا دُكُ بِيَا سُرِيْن	karan <sup>u</sup> tela ku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> m <sup>0</sup> ba'. duk <sub>4</sub> -u beya' su <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> yan <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup>	1. Karantela kòlonba. Dùgu béε y'à sòrɔ yàn	1. Big well of Karantela. When the entire village found it here,
تُمَمِيْن دُكُ سِيْكَرِيْ كُكُلُنْ سُرِيْن مَا كُرُوْ يَا بَا أُوْ بِي كُ كُنْ تَنِيْ دِيْ نِيْلُوْ نَانْ	tumamin <sub>1</sub> <sup>u</sup> . duk <sub>4</sub> -u sik <sub>4</sub> ira kaku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> su <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> yan <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> ma' ku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> w <sup>u</sup> ya' f <sub>1</sub> o 'ʔw yey <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> - ku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> tanay <sub>1</sub> de yey <sub>1</sub> nif <sub>1</sub> ulaw <sup>0</sup> na'na	2. tuma mín , dùgu sìgira kà kòlon sòrɔ yàn. 3. Maa kòrɔw y'à fí ánw yé kó kòlon tàna dè yé ní fúlaw nàna,	2. when the village was founded the well was here. 3. Old people told us that the taboo of the well is: if Fulbe come,
أَكْنَابِيْ كَا لَجِيْ بَر نِيْلُوْ يَا لَجِيْ أَبِيْبِيْ نَا كُنَادِيْرِيْ نُوْ تِيْ . أ بِكْ بَسَا نَا مَسَا	'ʔu kana' yey <sub>1</sub> ka' lağey <sub>1</sub> . br nif <sub>1</sub> ulaw <sup>0</sup> ya' lağey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔa buf <sub>1</sub> iyey <sub>1</sub> na' kuna'diyray <sub>1</sub> niw tey <sub>1</sub> . 'ʔa tik <sub>4</sub> -i bisa' na'ʔ masa'	4. ù kàn 'à yé k 'à lájé. Bàri ní fúlaw y'à lájé à b'ù fíyen	4. they should not see it. But if Fulbe see it, it will blind them,
أَبِيْبِيْ كِرَنْتِلَا كُلْمَبَا تَلَنْكْ بِكْ أَدَلْ سَنُوْ سَنْ نِيْمِكْ تَمْ سِرِيْ مَوْ بِيْتَا مِيْكَ كُوْلْ كُوْ مِيْنْ تَكْ كُ سَنْكِيْرِيْ نِيْتَلَنْكْ مَكْبَا دَلْ جِيْ بِيْسُرْ أُوْ بِيْلْ بِيْ كَاتَلَنْكْ	'ʔa bif <sub>1</sub> iyey <sub>1</sub> . karan <sup>0</sup> tela ku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> m <sup>0</sup> ba' tu <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> n <sup>0</sup> k-e bik-e 'ʔ da la san <sup>u</sup> wu <sub>1</sub> wu <sub>1</sub> san <sub>1</sub> <sup>u</sup> . nimu <sub>1</sub> nik-e tuma seray <sub>1</sub> maw <sup>0</sup> bita' mu <sub>1</sub> nik-e ku <sub>1</sub> w la. ku <sub>1</sub> w. miyn <sub>1</sub> <sup>u</sup> tu <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> -u <sub>1</sub> k-u <sub>1</sub> san <sup>0</sup> keyrey <sub>1</sub> nitulu <sub>1</sub> n <sup>0</sup> k-e mak-e 'ʔa dala ġek <sub>4</sub> -e tesu <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> 'ʔu bif <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> katulu <sub>1</sub> nk <sub>4</sub> -e key <sub>1</sub>	5. n'à kùnnadíyara, n'ò té, à tigi b é sà. Ní à má sà, 6. à b é fíyen. Karantela kòlonba, túlonkε bé ké à dálá 7. sà n ó sà n . Ní mónniketuma séra, màaw b é táa mónni ké 8. kò lá. Kò mín tógɔ kó Sankeeree. 9. Ní túlonk ε má ké à dálá, jéε té sòrɔ. Ù bé fólɔ 10. kà túlonk ε ké	5. if they are lucky, otherwise, they will die. If he does not die, 6. he will become blind. Plays are organized near the big well Karantela 7. every year. When the time of fishing comes, people go to fish 8. to the river. The river whose name is Sankere. 9. If games are not played near it, there will be no fish. First, 10. they play near

<sup>10</sup> The original text:

le détenteur de docimen Karantéla Kolomba le piu sacré de- san. Bory Bary escri par son pere an karactere- arabe a san pour lui, en 1911 a san. le copisste Almamy malick Yattara a san en 1972.

فَلْ كُنْ دَ لَ كَسْرُ كَا كَيْبَا وُ كَجِي مُنِكِيوُ بِيكُ سَنْكِرَ لَ وَ تُمْ تَلْنَكُ مَنْكِرَ بِي أَي كُنْ دَ لَ وَ يَكُنْ بِكْ مَنِكِي يِرْ لَ. سَنْكِرَ لَ. وُ بِي سَنْوُ سَنْ نِدُكُ مَا بِلَ سَمِي نِي	f <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> da la. kasu <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> ka' k <sub>4</sub> iyeya' wu <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> mu <sub>1</sub> nik <sub>4</sub> ebaw <sup>0</sup> biğik <sub>4</sub> -i san <sup>0</sup> keyre la wu <sub>1</sub> tuma tulu <sub>1</sub> n <sup>0</sup> k <sub>4</sub> -e min <sup>0</sup> keyra yen <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> 'ʔy <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> da la. wu <sub>1</sub> y <sub>3</sub> u <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> u <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> bik-e mu <sub>1</sub> nikey <sub>1</sub> yu <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> la. sankey <sub>1</sub> r la. wu <sub>1</sub> yey <sub>1</sub> sanwu <sub>1</sub> wu <sub>1</sub> san <sub>1</sub> . niduk <sub>4</sub> -u ma' bila sumay <sub>1</sub> by <sub>3</sub> ey <sub>1</sub>	fólkòlkò dálá, kà sòrkà jànya 11. wòk ɔ̀fè mónnikεbaaw bé jìgin Sankeere la . Wò tùma túlonε 12. mín k'éra yèn à yé (?) kòlkò dálá. Wò jògòkò bé ké mónnikεyòrkò lá. 13. Sankeere la . Wò yé sà n' ó sà n' . Ní dùgu m 'à bìla , sùman bé jè,	the well, then they move away 11. then the fishers descend to Sankere. At that time the game 12. that is played there ...? near the well. The same thing is done at the fishing place, 13. near Sankere. It happens every year. If the village does not abandon it (the rite), food will be abundant, 14. the harvest will be good, the peace will advance. If the village abandons it, food 15. will be scarce, diseases will get ahead, there will be a war in the country, rulers 16. will die, children will fall ill, fire will wreak havoc.
سُرْ بِي سَبِنَ لَ هِيرِي بِتَا يَا نِدُكُ يَا بِلَ سَمِ	su <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> bik-e sene la. heyrey <sub>1</sub> bita' ya'. niduk <sub>4</sub> -u ya' bila suman <sub>1</sub> -	14. sòrkò bé ké sène lá, héré bé táa jà. Ní dùgu y'à bìla, sùman	14. the harvest will be good, the peace will advance. If the village abandons it, food
بِكَلِيَا بِنَا بِنَا يَا كَلِيكُ جَمْنَا كُنْ مَسَاوُ	bk <sub>4</sub> leya' bana' bita' ya' kelebik-e ġamana' ku <sub>1</sub> nu <sub>1</sub> masa'w <sup>0</sup>	15. bé gèleya, bàna b'é táa jà, kèε bé ké jàmana kónkò, màsaw	15. will be scarce, diseases will get ahead, there will be a war in the country, rulers
بِسَا دِمَسُو بِينَا تَسْمَا بِنْتَلِكُ يَرُو لَ	bisa' dimis'aw <sup>0</sup> bibana' tasuma' bity <sub>3</sub> lik-e yu <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> w <sup>0</sup> la	16. bé sà, dénmisεnw bé bàna, tásuma b'é tìjɛli ké yòrkòw lá.	16. will die, children will fall ill, fire will wreak havoc.

Page 2

كُنْ دُكَلُو دَ بَا دَ دُنُو تَا يِرْ دُنْ	ku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> duk <sub>4</sub> ulew <sup>0</sup> de b' du <sub>1</sub> . dunaw <sup>0</sup> t' yu <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> du <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup>	1. Kòlkò, dùgulenw dè b 'à dón. Dúnanw t 'à yòrkò dón, 2. fòo dugulenw . Dùgulenw ye Taraworew yé , Teeraw yé móriw yé. 3. Ní dénw wólola Taraworew lá , ù bé táa n'à yé yèn k'à fò kòlkò yé	1. Natives know the well. Foreigners don't know its whereabouts, 2. only natives do. Natives are Traore, and Tera are Muslims. 3. When Traore children are born, they bring the child there and say to the well:
فُو دُكَلُو دُكَلُو يَتَرَاوُ يِرُو بِي تَيْرَاوُ يَمْرُو بِي نِدُو وُلَا تَرَاوُ رُو لَ أ بِنَا نَا بِي كَابُ كُنْ بِي كَرَنْتَلُ كَلْمَبَا أ نِسُ إِدِي دُكَلْبِي إِدِي	f <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> w duk <sub>4</sub> ulew <sup>0</sup> . duk <sub>4</sub> ulew <sup>0</sup> yetarawu <sub>1</sub> rew <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> tey <sup>a</sup> raw <sup>0</sup> yemu <sub>1</sub> riw <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> nidew <sup>0</sup> wu <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> 'a tarawu <sub>1</sub> rew <sup>0</sup> la. 'ʔu bita' na' yeyen <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> ka' f <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> karan <sup>0</sup> tela ku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> m <sup>0</sup> ba' 'ʔa nisu 'ʔie de yey <sub>1</sub> duk <sub>4</sub> ulen <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔie de yey <sub>1</sub> dunaw <sup>0</sup>	4. "Karantela kòlkònba, á ní sú! É dè yé dùgulen yé, é dè yé dúnanw	4. "Karantela, the Big Well, good evening! You are the native, it is you

بِبِي دُنُو جَتِيكِي دُنُنْ سُرُلْ دُنُنْ مُسْدَانْ وَلِمَا بِنْتْ نَانْ.	ḡatik <sub>4</sub> iyey <sub>1</sub> dunan <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> su <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> la. dunan <sub>1</sub> mus- <sup>2</sup> u na'na. walima' den <sup>0</sup> te na'na	5. jàtigi yé, dúnan sòrɔla. Dúnanmuso nàna, wálima dénc ε nàna".	5. who hosts strangers, there is a stranger. A foreign woman has come, or a man has come".
أَبَا كُنْكَفْ بِلْ كُنْ دَالْ سَبِي سَبَا تَلْبِي أَنْكُرْنِي بَابْ أَنْ. وَرْدَكْ أ بِلْبِنْ كَبُو بِلْ كَرَى كَسْبَكْنَا بِي	'ʔu ba' kulu <sub>1</sub> n <sup>0</sup> k <sub>4</sub> uelu <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> da' la siyey <sub>1</sub> saba' tilebif <sub>1</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔaniku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> n <sup>0</sup> f <sub>1</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> ba' f <sub>1</sub> a 'ʔani. wu <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> duk <sub>4</sub> -u. 'ʔu bilaban <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> . kadew <sup>0</sup> bila ku <sub>1</sub> ray <sub>1</sub> kasek <sub>4</sub> ina' yey <sub>1</sub>	6. Ù b 'à kòlonkòlon k òlon dálá sì γε sàba tilebin f è àní kóɔɔn fè, 7. bá fàn àní wòrodugu. Ù b é lábán kà dénw bìla kó lá kà sègin n'à yé	6. They roll the child near the well thrice on the western side and on the eastern side, 7. in the north and in the south. When they finish, they put the child on their back and bring him back
سَكُنْ نِيدَنْكُوْدِ سِرَى كُنْ نِيْرِبْ سَكُنْ	su <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> niden <sup>0</sup> kuwdi seray <sub>1</sub> kulu <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> niyu <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> bibu <sub>1</sub> su <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> u <sub>1</sub> la	8. só kóɔɔ. Ní dén kùndi séra , kòlon níɔɔɔ bé bó sògo lá	8. home. When the time of baptism comes, a share of the well is taken from the meat
نُورْ لْ نِيْدِكْ كُرْ سَبْ وَ بِيْدْ كُنْنَا سَبِي دَكْ لِيْلَا	niwu <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> la nidek <sub>4</sub> -e kuru saba wu <sub>1</sub> bedi ku <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> n <sup>2</sup> a' suf <sub>1</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> du <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> -u <sub>1</sub> lil'a	9. ní wòro lá ní dèγε kùru sàba , wò bé dí kòlon ná sú fè dògoli lá	9. and from the cola nuts, and three lumps of dough, this is given to the well by night secretly
مَا تَبِنَمَا بِي دَكْ تَلْمَا بِي وَتُمَى أ بَانَ.	ma' tibenima' yey <sub>1</sub> duk <sub>4</sub> -u tilama' f <sub>1</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> wu <sub>1</sub> tumay <sub>1</sub> . 'ʔa ba'n <sub>1</sub> a.	10. màa té bèn ní màa yé dùgutilama fè, wò tùmá. À bánna.	10. by midnight, at the time when one meets nobody. It is the end.

## Text 2

Almamy Yattara's comment:

The possessor of the document "Janaba koli" is the same Bory Bary, inherited from his father who wrote (it) in order to teach religion to the Bamana people. The copyist Almamy Malik Yattara.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The original text:

le detantere de docimen de janaba koli le meme Bory Bary airite a son pere que escri pour - ensenge les Banbara en religion. le copissite Almamy malick Yattara.

	Transliteration	Transcription	Translation
نَبِيَّ جَنَابِ كَوْلِيَّ جَنَابِ كَوْلِ بِكْأَ بَكْنَ جِي سَنِيَّالِنَبِيَّ بِقْلُ كْ إِكْرُلُ كَوْلِ إِتْبِكُ فِلُ كَوْلِ كَأَ إِدَا مُكْرُ	nin <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> ģn'b kwliyey <sub>1</sub> ġana'ba ku <sub>1</sub> wli bik <sub>4</sub> -e 'ʔa bik-e ni ġiy sanya'lenyey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi bif <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> k-a 'ʔi ku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> la ku <sub>1</sub> w ka' 'ʔi tek-e f <sub>1</sub> ila ku <sub>1</sub> w ka' 'ʔi d' muk <sub>4</sub> uri	1. Nìn yé jànaba kòli yé. 2. Jànaba kòli b é ké, à b é ké ní jí sáníyalen yé . Í b é fólɔ kà 3. í kórɔla kò kà í téɛɛ fila kò kà í dá múguri	1. These are the ablutions. 2. The ablutions are performed with clean water. First of all, 3. wash your lower parts and your both hands, rinse your mouth,
كَأَ إِئْنُ كَوْلِ كْ إِئْيَا كَوْلِ كْ إِئْلُ فِلُ كَوْلِ كُنْكَلُ مَسَا إِئْلُ مَسَا كْ إِسْبُ كَوْلِ وَأْتَمُ إِئْيَا كَوْلِ دَمِينِ إِبْقُلُ نَكْنَكْلِيَّ كَأَ كَوْلِ سَبِ سَبِ كْ إِفِكْبِلُ كَوْلِ كِنِيَّ بِلْقِيَّ كَأَ نَمْبِلُ	ka' 'ʔi nun <sup>0</sup> ku <sub>1</sub> w k-i 'ʔi y <sub>4</sub> eda' ku <sub>1</sub> w k-i 'ʔi bu <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> ila ku <sub>1</sub> w k-i 'ʔi kun <sup>0</sup> k <sub>4</sub> u <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> masa' k-i 'ʔi tulu <sub>1</sub> masa' k-i 'ʔi sen <sup>0</sup> ku <sub>1</sub> w wu <sub>1</sub> tuma 'ʔi bina' ku <sub>1</sub> wli dmine 'ʔi bif <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> ni kun <sup>0</sup> k <sub>4</sub> ulu <sub>1</sub> yey <sub>1</sub> ka' kuw siy <sub>4</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> saba k-a 'ʔi f <sub>1</sub> an <sup>0</sup> kele ku <sub>1</sub> w kiny <sub>1</sub> bulu <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> ka' numabu <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> w ka' laġey <sub>1</sub> niġiy <sub>1</sub> sera 'ʔa bela 'ʔi biġiy <sub>1</sub> lase 'ʔi k- tu <sub>1</sub> wn <sup>4</sup> ' ka' ġiyk-i 'ʔi ġuw kunaw <sup>0</sup> ma' 'ʔi biġiy <sub>1</sub> lase 'ʔi ka' ka'na'. ka' ġik <sub>4</sub> -i 'ʔi bara ku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> ma' 'ʔi kaġan <sup>0</sup> tu <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi yere l'a 'ʔi kana' sey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi keya' la ni'ʔi bulu <sub>1</sub> yey <sub>1</sub> wu <sub>1</sub> tuma w ku <sub>1</sub> wli kele 'ʔ biywasa seliġiy <sub>1</sub> la. wu <sub>1</sub> de	4. kà í nún kò k 'í ɲéda kò k'í bólo 5. fila kò k 'í kùnkolo màsá <sup>12</sup> k'í túlo màsá 6. k'í sèn kò . Wò tùma í b éná kòli dámìnɛ. 7. Í b é fólɔ ní kùnkolo yé k 'à kò sìɲɛ sàba 8. k'í fàn kélen kò kínibolo f è, kà númabolo 9. kò k 'à lájé ní jí séra à b éé lá. Í b é jí lásé 10. í kòton ná kà jí ké í jùkunanw mà . Í b é jí lásé 11. í kó à ká nà kà jìgin í bàrak ɔɔ mà, í ká jàntó í yèɛ lá 12. í kàná sé í kèya lá ní í bólo yé. Wò tùma wò kòli 13. kélen, à b 'í wàsa séliji lá . Wò	4. wash your nose, wash your face, wash both of your 5. hands, scrape your head and your ears, 6. wash your feet. Then begin your ablutions. 7. Start with your head and wash it thrice, 8. wash one side with your right hand, whash your left 9. hand and examine if water has reached everywhere. Bring water 10. to the lower part of your back, pour water on your buttocks. Make it in a way 11. that the water may reach the lower belly, take care of 12. not touching your private parts with your hand. Then the ablutions 13. are performed, the ablution water
إِكَا كَانَا كَأَ جَكْ إِيرُ كْرُ مَا إِكْجَنْتُ إِ پر لا إِكْنَا سِي إِ كِيَالُ نَا بِلْقِيَّ وَأْتَمُ وَ كَوْلِ كِبَلُ أْبِيَّوَسَ سَبْلِيَّ ل. وَ	'ʔi ka' ka'na'. ka' ġik <sub>4</sub> -i 'ʔi bara ku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> ma' 'ʔi kaġan <sup>0</sup> tu <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi yere l'a 'ʔi kana' sey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi keya' la ni'ʔi bulu <sub>1</sub> yey <sub>1</sub> wu <sub>1</sub> tuma w ku <sub>1</sub> wli kele 'ʔ biywasa seliġiy <sub>1</sub> la. wu <sub>1</sub> de	11. í kó à ká nà kà jìgin í bàrak ɔɔ mà, í ká jàntó í yèɛ lá 12. í kàná sé í kèya lá ní í bólo yé. Wò tùma wò kòli 13. kélen, à b 'í wàsa séliji lá . Wò	11. that the water may reach the lower belly, take care of 12. not touching your private parts with your hand. Then the ablutions 13. are performed, the ablution water

<sup>12</sup> A form inexistent in Standard Bamana, which might be Maninka in origin.

دېي جناب كولپي	yey <sub>1</sub> ġn'b ku <sub>1</sub> wliyey <sub>1</sub>	dè yé jànakoli yé	has sufficed you. These are the religious ablutions
مَنْفُورَ اللَّهِ سِرَايَ لَ	min <sup>u</sup> f <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> wra sira'y <sub>1</sub> la	'Il <sup>2a</sup> h 14. mín f óra Ála síra lá.	14. that were mentioned in God's way.
اللَّهُ مَا أَنْ بِمَنَّا ع اميين.	'Il <sup>2a</sup> h ma' demena' 'myn <sub>1</sub> .	'ʔn <sub>1</sub> <sup>u</sup> 15. Ála má án dèmena. Àmiina.	15. May God help us. Amen!

### Text 3

Almamy Yattara's comment:

The possessor of the document "Kalan bidamine ni alatogo ye", Bory Bary, inherited from his father, the same Madou Bari, who wrote (it) in order to teach the Bamana people. The copyist Almamy Malik Yattara in San in 1972.<sup>13</sup>

### Page 1

	Transliteration	Transcription	Translation
كَلَنْ بَدَمِينِ نِ اللَّهُ تَكْبِي أَنْ صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَيْرَ لَا مِينِ تَكْدَ محمد هني نكس با ك. أ ك سلاميا	kalan <sup>u</sup> bidamine ni 'Il <sup>2a</sup> h tu <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> u <sub>1</sub> yey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔn <sub>1</sub> šalila 'Il <sup>2a</sup> h tiyra la' miyn <sub>1</sub> <sup>u</sup> tu <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> -u <sub>1</sub> k-u <sub>1</sub> mħmd hin ey <sub>1</sub> nikisi bi'ʔ k-a. 'ʔa k-u <sub>1</sub> sila'meya'	1. Kàlan bé dàmìnɛ ní Ála t ógo yé àní sálila Ála círa lá 2. mín t ógo kó Muhammad, híɛ ní kísi b é à kàn . À kó sìlamɛya	1. Learning begins with the name of God and greeting to the Messenger of God 2. whose name is Muhammad, he is merciful and he is the Saviour. Besides, Islam
سَمَاسِنِ بِي دُورُ بِي كَسِرِيكْ تَيِّبَتِ مَسْ مَكْ فُو نِمَسْ	sama'sen <sub>1</sub> <sup>u</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> duwru yey <sub>1</sub> kasereyak-e tiy <sub>3</sub> batu masa mak-e f <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> w nimasa	3. sàmasen yé dúuru yé : kà sèereya k é tìɛbaato màsa máke <sup>14</sup> 4. fó ní màsa kélen	3. has its five buttresses: to witness the verity of the King Lord: 4. say that Lord is

<sup>13</sup> The original text:

le detantere de locimen kalan bidamine ni alatogo ye Bory Bary airite a son pere le meme Amadou Bari que eciri pour ensenge le Bambara. le copiste - Almamy malick yattara. a san en 1972

<sup>14</sup> The syntax of this phrase is not clear.



كَلْبِي مِينِي الله محمد فِي الله ك تِيْدِنْدُ كَأ جَعْن سَلِ لَا اَنْ سَنِيَا كَسْنُ سُنْكَو لَ كَا زَكَا بُو.	kelen <sup>u</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> miyn <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> 'Il <sup>2a</sup> h mħmd f <sub>1</sub> anay <sub>1</sub> 'Il <sup>2a</sup> h k-a tiyden <sup>0</sup> du <sub>1</sub> ka'ʔi ġiġan <sup>1</sup> <sup>u</sup> sali la' 'ʔani saniya' kasun <sup>1</sup> <sup>0</sup> sun <sup>0</sup> kalu <sub>1</sub> w la ka' zaka' bu <sub>1</sub> w.	yé mín yé Ála , Muhamadu fána Ála kà cíden dòn;	one, and it is God, and Muhammad is the Prophet of God;
كَهِيْكَ نِسْبَا بِي نِنْدُوْر نُنْ دِي سِلَامِيَا بِي نِمَا بِي نُنْ دُنْ كَا بَارَا كِيْر سِلَامِيَا بِي بَقِيَا يُمْنِيَا يُمْنِيَا اَك الله نَتِيْكَبِيَا مُحَمَّد تِيْتِيْكَبِيَا اِكَا مَلِكُو	kahiġik-e niseba' yey <sub>1</sub> nin <sup>0</sup> duwru, nunun <sup>1</sup> <sup>0</sup> de yey <sub>1</sub> sil'meya' yey <sub>1</sub> nima' yey <sub>1</sub> ninun <sup>1</sup> <sup>u</sup> du <sub>1</sub> n <sup>1</sup> <sup>0</sup> ka' ba'ra. 'ʔ keyra sila'mayey <sub>1</sub> . y <sub>3</sub> uman <sup>0</sup> ya'.	6. kà híji k é n'í sé b'à yé . Nìn dúuru , nìnnu dè yé sìlamεya yé. 7. Ní màa yé nìnnu dón k'à báara , à kéra sìlama yé . Nùmanya.	6. to make hadj if you can. These five (duties), it is the Islam. 7. If a person knows these (duties) and performs them, he is a Muslim. Goodness.
تِيْتِيْكَبِيَا اَلْجِن تِيْتِيْكَبِيَا كَأ جَهَنَّم تِيْتِيْكَبِيَا فَيَا كَأ اَلْكِيَوْم	tiy <sub>3</sub> tk <sub>4</sub> iyay <sub>1</sub> ka' 'ʔal <sup>0</sup> ġan <sup>2</sup> a tiy <sub>3</sub> tk <sub>4</sub> iyay <sub>1</sub> ka' ġah <sup>2</sup> an <sup>2</sup> ama tiy <sub>3</sub> tk <sub>4</sub> iya' f <sub>1</sub> anay <sub>1</sub> ka' 'ʔal <sup>0</sup> kiyaw <sup>0</sup> ma	9. tìŋetigiya, kà àlijana tìŋetigiya kà jàhanama tìŋetigiya fána kà álikiyama	9. angels, the truth of Paradise, and also the truth of Hell, the truth
دُوْت تِيْتِيْكَبِيَا وُدِيْمَا ك سِلَامَا يُمْنِيَا سِلَامَا اَبُو كَلِ الله لَا وَكَلِ يُمْنِيَا وَكَلِ دِي بِي نِمَا بِيْمِن سِرْ اَكَا بِنِ الله دِيَا دِيْمَا نِمَا مِيْن سِرْ اِكَا دُ الله دِيْمَا	du <sub>1</sub> wu <sub>1</sub> tiy <sub>3</sub> tk <sub>4</sub> iyay <sub>1</sub> wu <sub>1</sub> de bima' ke sila'ma' y <sub>3</sub> uman <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> . sila'ma' 'ʔabiwakali 'Il <sup>2a</sup> h la'. wakali y <sub>3</sub> umunyey <sub>1</sub> . wakali de yey <sub>1</sub> nima' yemin <sup>1</sup> <sup>0</sup> su <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> 'a ka' du <sub>1</sub> en <sub>1</sub> 'Il <sup>a</sup> h de ya' diyama' nima' miyn <sup>1</sup> <sup>0</sup> su <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi k' du <sub>1</sub> 'Il <sup>a</sup> h de ma'	10. dón wò tìŋetigiya, wò dè bé màa k é sìlamε nùman yé. Sìlamε 11. à bé wàkali Álla lá. Wàkali nùman yé. Wàkali dè yé: ní màa yé mín sòrɔ, 12. à k'à dón, Ála dè y 'à d 'í mà ; n'í má mín s òrɔ, í k'à dón, Ála dè m'à	10. of the Doomsday, it is what makes one a good Muslim. A Muslim, 11. he relies on God. To rely, it means: whatever one receives, 12. he knows that it is God who has given it to him; whatever you do not receive, you know that it is God who
دِيْمِي نَا بِنْنَا اِكَا دُ الله دِي يَا سِيْمِي نَا سَارَ الله دِيَا سِيْمِي	diymay <sub>1</sub> ni'ʔi banana' 'ʔi ka' du <sub>1</sub> 'Il <sup>a</sup> h de ya' siymay <sub>1</sub> ni'ʔi sa'ra 'Il <sup>a</sup> h de y' seymay <sub>1</sub>	13. d'í mà . Ní í bànaná í k 'à d ón Ála dè y 'à s 'í mà , n'í sàra, Ála dè y 'à sé é mà.	13. hasn't given it to you. If you have fallen ill, you know that it is God who has sent it to you, if you

جَنِي اللهُ دِ يَا دِ نِسْجِي يَأْدَمِ دِنِ سُرْلَ أَنَا سَجِي نَا دِسْرِي أَنَا سَجْنَا كُفْنَا نَا سَكْنَا بَارَ أَنَا سَجِي نَا تَسِنَكْ أَنَا سَجْنَا مِيئِي سِنَكْرَ أَنَا سَجْنَا مِيئِي جَوْلَا نَا سَجْنَا مِيئِي سَكِيلَ أَنَا سَكْ وَ تَمَّ مَا كَأ اللهُ دُنِ نَكْبِي بِئِي بَنُكِي وَ بِمَكْ	ḡiy <sub>3</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> 'll <sup>2a</sup> h de y' da nisek <sub>4</sub> yey <sub>1</sub> ni'ʔadama den <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> su <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> la 'ʔ na' sek <sub>4</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> n' deseray <sub>1</sub> 'ana' sek <sub>4</sub> -e na' ku <sub>1</sub> qu <sub>1</sub> na' 'ʔ n' sek <sub>4</sub> e na' f <sub>1</sub> a'ra 'ʔ na' sek <sub>4</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> na' tisinu <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> -u <sub>1</sub> 'ʔ n' sek <sub>4</sub> -e n' meynay <sub>1</sub> sinu <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> u <sub>1</sub> ra ' n' sek <sub>4</sub> -e n' meyn <sub>1</sub> a ḡu <sub>1</sub> wlila' 'ʔ n' sek <sub>4</sub> -e n' meyn <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> sik <sub>4</sub> ilila 'ʔ na' sek <sub>4</sub> e wu <sub>1</sub> tuma ma' ka' 'll <sup>2a</sup> h du <sub>1</sub> n <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> nik <sub>4</sub> -ub yey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔani ban <sup>0</sup> k <sub>4</sub> eyeyw bimu <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> -u <sub>1</sub>	14. Δίηε, Άλα δέ y'á dá ní s ègen yé. Ní ádamaden s òrɔla, à ná sègen. 15. N'à d έςερα, à ná s ègen. N'à kógrɔ, à ná sègen. N'à fàara , à ná sègen. N'à tí sìncɔɔ, 16. à ná sègen. N'à μέενα sìncɔɔ lá, à ná s ègen. N'à μέενα j̀li lá, à ná sègen. N'à μέέν(na) 17. sìgili lá , à ná sègen. Wò t̀uma màa ká Άλα d ún ní kó βέε (?) yé, àní bángε yé (?), wò bέ mòɔɔ	die, it is God who has sent it to you. 14. The world, God has created it with sufferings. If a human being is born, he will suffer. 15. If he fails, he will suffer. When he arrives to maturity, he will suffer. If he is killed, he will suffer. If he is not asleep, 16. he will suffer. If he sleeps too long he will suffer. If he stands too long, he will suffer. If he 17. sits too long, he will suffer. So, man should know that God is everything, he is Creator (?), he
و دِ بِمَكْ كيس الله ما أن كسيرى أبان	wu <sub>1</sub> de bimu <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> -u <sub>1</sub> kisi 'll <sup>2a</sup> h ma' 'ʔan <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> kisiray <sub>1</sub> 'ʔ ba'na	1. wò dè b é mòɔɔ kisi. Άλα má án kísira. 2. Ά bánnα.	1. he saves man. May God save us. 2. It is the end.

Page 2

#### Text 4

Almamy Yattara's comment:

The possessor of the medical document for hernia that is named "kookily foura". The same Bory Bary. Written by his father Amadou Bary, a Muslim cleric. The copyist Almamy Malik Yattara in 1972 in San.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The original text:

	Transliteration	Transcription	Translation
نِيَّيْ فُرْ كُمَيَّيْ كُوكِيلِ فُرْ فُرْ مِينْ بْ كُوكِيلِ فُرْ بْ كُوكِيلِ - نَا بِنْنَا أْبِكْ بَرَكُرْ دِيمِي	niyey <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> ura kumayey <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> w kili f <sub>1</sub> ura f <sub>1</sub> ura miyn <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> be ku <sub>1</sub> w kili f <sub>1</sub> ura k-e. ku <sub>1</sub> w kili - na' banana' 'ʔ bik-e baraku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> dimiyey <sub>1</sub>	1. Nìn yé fúra kúma y é, kókili fúra. 2. Fúra mín b é kókili fúrak é. Kókili, 3. n'à b ànana , à bé ké bàrakɔɔdimi yé.	1. These are words of a medicine, a testicle (hernia) medicine. 2. A medicine which heals testicles. Testicles, 3. if there is a disease, it manifests itself as an ache of the lower belly.
و فُرْ كْ سُو إِب كُوكِيلِ مُوكَا	wu <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> urak-e suk <sub>4</sub> uw 'ʔi'e bi k <sub>4</sub> uwkun <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> muwk <sub>4</sub> a <sup>n</sup>	4. Wò fúrak ε súgu: é b é gòkun <sup>16</sup> mùgan	4. Here is a means to treat it: get twenty- one beans of the wonderbean plant (Canavalia ensiformis),
أَنْ كِيلِ بُو إِ بُو تَبْ كَا مُوكَسْبْ و تَمَّ إِبَاوْرْ إِب تَمِيْتْ كَكْ دُونِي	'ʔani kele bu <sub>1</sub> w 'ʔi bu <sub>1</sub> w tu <sub>1</sub> bi ka' mu <sub>1</sub> w ku <sub>1</sub> su <sub>1</sub> be wu <sub>1</sub> tuma 'ʔi ba' wu <sub>1</sub> ru 'ʔi bi tum <sup>0</sup> butu ku <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> -u <sub>1</sub> du <sub>1</sub> wniy <sub>1</sub>	5. àní kélen b ó, í b'ò tóbi k 'à m ò kóεβε. 6. Wò tuma í b 'à wóɔ, í b é Tumbutu kògɔ dóɔni	5. boil them till they are very well cooked. 6. Then peel them, put a little salt of Tombuktu
كَالْ فَآكْ تَمِيَّيْ إِبَا سِيَّيْ سَكُونُو كَآ دَنُكْ	ka' la f <sub>1</sub> a' k- timiyay <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi b' siyy <sub>1</sub> su <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> nu <sub>1</sub> w ka' datuk <sub>4</sub> -u	7. k'à lá f 'à ká tímiya. Í b' à sù sò kónɔ k' à dátúgu	7. to make it mild. Put it in the house and close it
كَآ سُو فَيِّي دَنُكْ أَدَالْ نَدُكْ كِيَّارْ إِبُوتْ كَا دَنْ فَآكِي كَنْ بَرَا فَآ نَجِيَّيْ بَالْ إِبُو مِينْ. نِيَّيْ نَكِيلِنْ سُرْ إِبَا فَكْ كَآ كِيلِ بُو كَآ دَنْ كَا هَبْرْ أَكْوْ تَمِيَّيْ إِ بِيَجْنُو إِ	ka' su <sub>1</sub> w f <sub>1</sub> anay <sub>1</sub> datuk <sub>4</sub> -u 'ʔ da' la niduk <sub>4</sub> -u k <sub>4</sub> iya'ra 'ʔi bu <sub>1</sub> wta ka' dun <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> f <sub>1</sub> a'kiy <sub>1</sub> ku <sub>1</sub> nu <sub>1</sub> bara f <sub>1</sub> a' niǰiy <sub>1</sub> ba' la 'ʔi bw miyn <sub>1</sub> . niyey <sub>1</sub> n <sup>0</sup> k <sub>4</sub> eleni su <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi ba' f <sub>1</sub> ak <sub>4</sub> -a ka' kili bu <sub>1</sub> w ka' dun <sub>1</sub> <sup>0</sup> ka' haera 'ʔ k-a wu <sub>1</sub> tumay <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi biyǰan <sup>0</sup> tu <sub>1</sub> w 'ʔi yerae	8. kà só fána dátúgu à dá lá . Ní dùgu jéra 9. í b'ò tà k 'à dún f' à k' í kónɔbara fá. Ní jí b' à lá 10. í b 'ò mìn . N'í yé ngèlennin sòɔ í b' à fàga k' à kílì bó 11. k' à dún kà héra à kàn . Wò tuma í b 'í jàntó í	8. and also close the door of the house. At dawn, 9. take it and eat it so that it fills your belly. If there is a juice, 10 drink it. If you can get a ground squirrel, kill it, take its testicles 11. and eat them, and be reassured with it. Then abstain

le detantere de docimen medicalman pour le héri conapele kookili foura. le meme Bory Bary - eciri par son pere Amadou Bay marabou. le kopisste Almamy malick Yattara. a 1972 a san.

<sup>16</sup> It could be also *nkòkun* 'head of a species of locust', although the following context makes this interpretation less probable.

لَ ِبِرْ مُوسُو ِبِي فَا َكْسِي ِتَل مَكْ ِنُوكْنَا َو تَمَّ َا اِكْبِيْرِي فِرِي َايْكَ َا تُكْ َتُكْ ُو نَي فَا َكَا َدَفَا َنَا دَفَاْرَا ِنَا نَعْبِي َالله ُكُو	la muws <sup>2</sup> u <sub>1</sub> w <sup>0</sup> f <sub>1</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> u' kasey <sub>1</sub> tile muk <sub>4</sub> - a y <sub>3</sub> u <sub>1</sub> wk <sub>4</sub> u <sub>1</sub> n <sup>2</sup> a' wu <sub>1</sub> tuma ' 'ʔi keneyaray <sub>1</sub> . f <sub>1</sub> uray <sub>1</sub> 'ʔabik-e ka' tuk <sub>4</sub> -u tuk <sub>4</sub> -u y <sub>3</sub> u <sub>1</sub> w nay <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> a' ka' daf <sub>1</sub> a' na' daf <sub>1</sub> a'ra 'ʔi na' naf <sub>1</sub> ayey <sub>1</sub> 'Il <sup>2a</sup> h ku <sub>1</sub> w	yèɛ lá mùsow fè from women 12. fó à ká sé tìle mùgan ɲògɔn ná . Wò tuma 13. ík éneyara. Fúra, à b é ké kà tùgu-tùgu ɲóɔɔn ná 14. f'à ká dáfá . N'à dáfára , í n 'à nàfa yé. Álakò	12. about twenty days. then 13. you will be healed. The medicines follow each other 14. till it is completed. When it is completed, you will see its benefit. Provided that 15. the medicine be applied according to the instructions and with a reason. We shall benefit from it 16. if Lord agrees, for God.
فِرْ َكْ ِنِكْلَن بِي ِنِي ِير بِي. َأْمِيَا َنَبَا سُر	f <sub>1</sub> ura kak-e nikalan <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> niy <sub>1</sub> yiri yey <sub>1</sub> . 'ʔam <sup>0</sup> ba' naf <sub>1</sub> a' su <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub>	15. fúra ká k é ní kàlan yé ní yíri yé. Án b'à nàfa sòɔɔ,	15. the medicine be applied according to the instructions and with a reason. We shall benefit from it
نِي َمَسَا. سُوْنِي مِيْنِي َالله بِي.	niy <sub>1</sub> masa'. su <sub>1</sub> wnay <sub>1</sub> miyn <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> 'Il <sup>2a</sup> h yey <sub>1</sub> .	16. ní Mása s ònna mín yé Ála yé.	16. if Lord agrees, for God.

## Text 5

Almamy Yattara's comment:

The possessor of the document "cilissi foura" is again Bory Bary. Found in the belongings of his father Amadou Bary, a Muslim cleric. Copied by Almamy Malik Yattara in 1972 in San.<sup>17</sup>

	Transliteration	Transcription	Translation
نِيْنِي َكِلِسِي فُوْرِي ِبِي بَانَانَا إِمْنَا َبْنَا	nin <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> kilis-i fuwra yey <sub>1</sub> nimu <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> -u <sub>1</sub> banana' 'ʔi mana' bana'	1. Nìn yé kílisifura yé. Ní m ògɔ bàna, 2. í mána bàna	1. This it a medicine for magic spell. If a person falls ill, 2. if you see that

<sup>17</sup> The original text:

le detantere de dociman de cilissi foura. tougoure Bory Barty tourve danles afer de son pere - Amadou Bary le marabou. copié par Almamy malick yattara a san en 1972 a san

كَلْبَلِينَ بِى مُكْجَى اِبَا بَلْمِن كَآ نَبِيْدِ پِر مَآ وُ پِرِنِ تَكْ كْ كُنْجَى	k4eleyalen <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> mu <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> u <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi ba' bulu <sub>1</sub> mine ka' y <sub>3</sub> es-i yiri ma' wu <sub>1</sub> yirin <sup>0</sup> tu <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> -u <sub>1</sub> k-u <sub>1</sub> kun <sup>0</sup> ʔey <sub>1</sub>	gèleyalen yé m ɔgɔ fè, í b'à bólo mìnɛ 3. k'à nésín yíri mà, wò yírinin t ɔgɔ kó kùnjɛ.	the person is seriously ill, take him by the hand 3. and direct him to the plant whose name is <i>kunjɛ</i> (Guiera senegalensis shrub).
اِبَا فُ پِر مَآ پِرَبَا كُنْجَى اِد بى پِر كُر بى پِر كُر د بِنَا كُر فِر كَى بِنَبَاتِنِ ا سِرَى مَآ كُر وُ بَل ا مَسَى كَا بِنَا كُر فِر كَى كَا كُنْجَا كُنْجَى.	'ʔi ba' f <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> yiri ma' yiriba' kun <sup>0</sup> ʔey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔie de yey <sub>1</sub> yiri ku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> yey <sub>1</sub> yiri ku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> de bibana' ku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> urakaey <sub>1</sub> . banaba'tu <sub>1</sub> ni <sup>n</sup> 'ʔa seray <sub>1</sub> ma' ku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> w <sup>0</sup> bela 'ʔu masey <sub>1</sub> ka' bana' ku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> urakey <sub>1</sub> ka' keneya' kun <sup>0</sup> ʔey <sub>1</sub> .	4. í b 'à f ɔ yíri mà yíriba kùnj ɛ. É dè yé yíri kòɔ yé, yíri 5. kòɔ dè b é bàna kòɔ fúraké. Bànabaatɔ, ní à séra màa kòɔw bée lá 6. ù má sé kà bàna kòɔ fúraké k'à kénya. Kùnjɛ	4. You say about the plant, <i>kunjɛ</i> big tree. You have seen a big tree, it is an old 5. tree that heals old disease. A sick person, if it was a question of any old person, 6. they could not treat old diseases and heal them. <i>Kunjɛ</i> ,
مُيِبِلِ نَيْرِ بى مِينِ بَا كُ لُولِ تَلْبِيلِ نِكْرَنْبَى بَل نِبَابِ بَل نُورْدُكُ بَل بى و تَمِ اِ بِبْجَى ذُونَى و تَمِ اِ بُلْكَرِ قَانْبَى اِبُو مَرِ اِ بِنَبَا بى اِ كَسُو اِبَا نَبِ بِنَبَاتِ بَا مِ كَا كَا مِ كَا كَا فُو سِنْبِكِ	m <sup>0</sup> biydeli nif <sub>1</sub> ura yey <sub>1</sub> miyn <sup>0</sup> bi'ʔi k-a buluw <sup>0</sup> la tilebebulu niku <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> n <sup>0</sup> f <sub>1</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> bulu niba'f <sub>1</sub> a bulu niwu <sub>1</sub> ru <sub>1</sub> duk <sub>4</sub> -u bulu yey <sub>1</sub> wu <sub>1</sub> tuma 'ʔi byǵu <sub>1</sub> y <sub>1</sub> du <sub>1</sub> wu <sub>1</sub> niy <sub>1</sub> wu <sub>1</sub> tuma 'ʔi bulukari f <sub>1</sub> a'n <sup>0</sup> bef <sub>1</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi bu <sub>1</sub> w mara 'ʔi bitana' yey <sub>1</sub> 'ʔi kasu <sub>1</sub> w 'ʔi ba' tu <sub>1</sub> bi banaba'tu <sub>1</sub> ba' mi ka' ku <sub>1</sub> w ka' mi ka' ku <sub>1</sub> w ka' ku <sub>1</sub> w f <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> w siy <sub>3</sub> isek <sub>4</sub> -i	7. n b'í déli ní fúra yé mín b 'í kàn búluw lá tìlebinbulu 8. ní kóɔɔfɛbulu ní báfanbúlu ní wòrodugubulu yé, 9. wò tuma í b 'í j ɔ dɔɔni, wò tuma í b'òlú kári fàn b éɛ fè, 10. í b 'ò màra í b é táa n'à yé í ká só , í b'à tóbi, bànabaatɔ 11. b'à mìn k 'à kò k'à mìn k 'à kò k 'à kò fóo sɪɲɛ ségin	7. I beg you, if all the medicine that you have in foliage, the western foliage 8. and eastern foliage, and northern foliage and southern foliage, 9. then stay a little bit, then cut it everywhere, 10. keep it and bring it to your house, cook it, let the sick person 11. drink it and wash him, let him drink it and wash him, and wash him, up to eight times 12. during eight days. The sick person will recover. Let him wait a little 13. again eight days, if he has not
تَلْبِسْكَ كُنُو بِنَبَاتِ اِ بِكُنْبَا اِبَا مُيْدُونَى تُكْ تَلِ سَبْكَ نَا مَا كُنْبَا اِ	tilesek <sub>4</sub> -i ku <sub>1</sub> nu <sub>1</sub> w bnba'tu <sub>1</sub> 'ʔa bkeneya'. ' b' muy <sub>3</sub> udu <sub>1</sub> w <sup>0</sup> niy <sub>1</sub> tuk <sub>4</sub> -u tile sek <sub>4</sub> -i na' m' keney'. 'ʔi bisek <sub>4</sub> -i	12. tìle séegin kóɔɔ. Bànabaatɔ, à bé kénya. Á b 'à mùɲu dɔɔnin 13. túgun tìle séegin, n'à má	12. during eight days. The sick person will recover. Let him wait a little 13. again eight days, if he has not

بِسْكَ بِئْتَكْ	'ʔe bif <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> tak <sub>4</sub> -e	kénya, í b'à sègin, é bé fólɔ tá ké	recovered, repeat it, do it as for the first time
بَا كَسَدَانَا إِبْتَا سُو بَا تَبِ كَا فُلْ تَا بِكْنِي.	f <sub>1</sub> a' k-a seda'n'a' 'ʔi bita' su <sub>1</sub> w 'ʔi ba' tu <sub>1</sub> bi ka' k-e f <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> lu <sub>1</sub> ta' y <sub>2</sub> u <sub>1</sub> k <sub>4</sub> u <sub>1</sub> n <sup>0</sup> yey <sub>1</sub> .	14. f'à ká sé dàn ná. Í bé táa só, í b'à tóbi k'à ké fólɔ	14. till the end. Go home, cook it and do it
فُوسِ بِي سَبْكَ نِينْبَات مَا كِنْيَا	fu <sub>1</sub> w siy <sub>3</sub> ey <sub>1</sub> sek <sub>4</sub> -i nibnba'tu <sub>1</sub> m' keneya' kénya	15. tá ɲògɔɲ yé , fóo sìnɛ ségin. Ni bànaabaatɔ má kénya	15. like the first time, and so, eight times. If the sick person has not recovered
وَلْ وَتْمَ أ بِسَا وَدْ بِي كُنْجِي فُورِ بِي تَتْ	wu <sub>1</sub> la w tuma 'ʔ bisa'. wu <sub>1</sub> de yey <sub>1</sub> kun <sup>0</sup> ǵey <sub>1</sub> f <sub>1</sub> uwra yey <sub>1</sub> tt	16. wò lá, wò tuma à b'é sà. Wò dè yé kùnjɛfura yé.	16. this time, then he will die. It is the medicine of <i>kunje</i> .
أَبَانْ	a ba'n <sub>1</sub> a	17. À báanna.	17. It is the end.

### 5. Grammatological properties of the Bamana Ajami from San

Table 1: Independent units of the Bamana Ajami orthography

Letter	Transcription	Phonemic value	Transliteration
ا	∅	∅	'
ب	b	/b/	b
ت	t, c	/t/, /tʃ/	t
ح	h	/h/	ḥ
ج	j	/dʒ/	ǵ
د	d	/d/	d
ر	r	/r/	r
ز	j	/dʒ/	z
س	s	/s/	s
س	s	/s/	ş
ف	f	/f/	f <sub>1</sub>
ق	g	/g/	q
ك	k	/k/	k-
ك	g	/g/	k <sub>4</sub>
ل	l	/l/	l
م	m	/m/	m
ن / ن <sup>18</sup>	n; vocalic nasality	/n/	n <sub>1</sub> / n
ب	ɲ	/ɲ/	y <sub>3</sub>
ه	h	/h/	h
و	w; length of u, o, ɔ	/w/, /N:/	w
ي	y, ɲ; length of i, e, ε	/j/, /ɲ/, /N:/	y
ي	ɲ	/ɲ/	y <sub>2</sub>

<sup>18</sup> In final position.

## Comments:

- ح appears only in the name of the Prophet محمد | <mḥmd> Muḥammad.
- ز is used representing *j* only once in an Arabic loan, i.e. زَكَا | <zak'> *jáka* 'alms' (3:5) (from Arabic *zakāt*)
- ص appears only once, in an Arabic loan, i.e. صَلَّى | <ṣalila> *sáli lá* 'with a greeting' (3:1) (from Arabic *ṣalā*).
- ع appears only once (2:15), with its meaning remaining unclear.
- ق (with two upper dots as in Mašriqī) representing *g* occurs only once, i.e. in the word كُنُفَا | <ku<sub>1</sub>qu<sub>1</sub>na'> *kóḡra* 'arrived to maturity (perfective form)' (3:15).
- *Nūn* in word-final position appears usually without a dot, i.e. as ن. However, the dotted variant, i.e. ن, is also encountered in the texts.
- The usual graphemic representation of *n* as ن (with two lower dots and one upper dot) never appears in word-final positions. If a word has *n* in the final syllable, ن is always followed by ي. Therefore, it is impossible to figure out which Arabic character served as its base, i.e. ي or ب.
- ي is used representing *n* in only one single case, i.e. سِيَّي | <siyey<sub>1</sub>> *sìḡe* 'time' (1/2:6) (which may be a copyist's or author's error).
- ي appears in the texts only twice, i.e. in يَمُونِي | <y<sub>2</sub>umawn<sup>0</sup>y<sub>3</sub>y<sub>1</sub>> *nùman yé* 'it is good...' (3/1:8), and in يَكُونِي | <y<sub>2</sub>u<sub>1</sub>k<sub>4</sub>u<sub>1</sub>n<sup>0</sup>y<sub>3</sub>y<sub>1</sub>> *náḡn* *yé* 'with each other' (5:15).

- Prenasalization of initial consonants is marked in the same manner as word-internal nasalization by a *nūn* with a *sukūn*, i.e. نْ | <n<sup>0</sup>>, such as in نْكَلِينْ | <n<sup>0</sup>k<sub>4</sub>eleni> *ngèlennin* 'ground squirrel'. Compare also a form كُوْ | <k<sub>4</sub>u<sub>1</sub>w> *gò* 'wonderbean (*Canavalia ensiformis*)' (4:4) which is attested in Charles Bailleul's dictionary (2007) as *ngò* (the prenasalization in this word might be absent from the dialect of the manuscript's author).

### 5.1 Diacritics

*Fathā*, *kasra*, and *ḍamma* are used for representation of *a*, *i*, and *u* respectively, while *sukūn* represents the lack of any vowel (in fact, it used only with *nūn*).

*Tašdīd* is rarely employed representing gemination of a nasal sonant as in e.g. كُنْنَا | <ku<sub>1</sub>lu<sub>1</sub>n<sup>2</sup>a'> *kòlon ná* 'to the well' (1/2:9) - mostly it is used with unclear purpose, e.g. دِمْسَوْ | <dimis<sup>2</sup>aw<sup>0</sup>> *dénmisenw* 'children' (1/1:16). Also, it occurs in Arabic loans in order to reproduce the original orthography, e.g. أَلْجَنَّا | <'ʔal<sup>0</sup>ǧan<sup>2</sup>a> *àlijana* 'Paradise' (3/1:9), جَهَنَّمَ | <ǧah<sup>2</sup>an<sup>2</sup>ama><sup>19</sup> *jàhanama* 'hell' (3/1:9).

In the Bamana Ajami orthography, new diacritics have been introduced for the representation of middle vowels: an 'inversed *ḍamma*', i.e. ُ | <u<sub>1</sub>>, representing *o* or *ɔ*, as well as a lower dot, i.e. ̣ | <e>, representing *e* and *ɛ*. There is also a combination of lower dot + *fathā*, i.e. ̣̣ | <ae>, which represents the open front vowel *ɛ*, and which is used only

---

<sup>19</sup> The *tašdīd* on top of the *hā'* was put here mistakenly by the writer.



in text 4: هَبْرَ | <haera> *héra* 'be in peace' (4:11), ئَ | <yerae> *yèrɛ* 'self' (4:11).

Generally, vocalic diacritics are provided. However, they may be omitted from time to time, apparently due to negligence of the writer or copyist.

Diacritics representing vowels which are not preceded by a consonant are placed on top of a supporting 'alif hamza, i.e. ا | <'?> or ا | <'?i>, such as e.g. in ا | <'?u> *ù* 'they' (1/2:6), ا | <'?e> *é* 'you (singular emphatic)' (1/2:3).

Vocalic nasality is marked either by *mīm* in word-internal position, when the nasal vowel is followed by a labial consonant, or by *nūn* with *sukūn*, i.e. ن | <n<sup>0</sup>>, in all the other contexts, e.g. كَرْتَبَلْ كَلْمَبَا | <karan<sup>0</sup>tela ku<sub>1</sub>lu<sub>1</sub>m<sup>0</sup>ba'> *Karantɛla kəlɔnba* 'big well of Karantela' (1/1:1), يَنْ | <yan<sub>1</sub><sup>0</sup>> *yàn* 'here' (1/1:1). Not infrequently, the nasality remains unmarked in word-final positions, such as e.g. دُ | <du<sub>1</sub>> versus دُنْ | <du<sub>1</sub>n<sub>1</sub><sup>0</sup>> *dɔn* 'to know' (1/2:1) (both spelling variants appear in the same line), بَابْ | <ba'f<sub>1</sub>a> *bá fàn* 'North' (1/2:7), أَبْبِي | <'?a bif<sub>1</sub>iyey<sub>1</sub>> *à bí fíyen* 'he will become blind' (1/1:6), كِبْ | <kele> *kélen* 4:5 'one'. More rarely, and probably by negligence, it also remains unmarked in word-internal positions, as e.g. in دَنْكُودْ | <den<sup>0</sup>kuwdi> *dénkundi* 'baptism' (1/2:8). When followed by the plural marker -w /ù/, nasality is never marked in the spelling of vowels - e.g. دُكُلُوْ | <duk<sub>4</sub>lew<sup>0</sup>> *-dúgulenw* 'natives' (1/2:2), دُنُوْ | <dunaw<sup>0</sup>> *dúnanw* 'strangers' (1/2:1), نِيدُوْ | <nidew<sup>0</sup>> *ní dénw...* 'if children...' (1/2:3).

The syllabic nasal *ń*, which occurs in the first singular pronoun of Bamana is featured in the texts only once, where it is followed by a labial

consonant and expressed by a *mīm* with a *sukūn*, e.g. مُبِيدِل | <m<sup>0</sup>biydeli> *ń* *b'í déli* 'I beg you' (5:10). Supposedly, in all other contexts it is rendered by *nūn* (in the same way as prenasalization and syllable-final nasal).

Vowel length is marked irregularly: بِيَا سُرُ | <beya' su<sub>1</sub>ru<sub>1</sub>> *b'éε y'à* *sòrɔ* 'all have found it...' (1/1:1), but تَتَبَّطُ | <tiy<sub>3</sub>batu> *tìɲebaato* 'truthful' (3/1:3). On the other hand, letters marking vocalic length in Arabic orthography, i.e. ا , ي , and و , may appear where there is no vocalic length in Bamana: نَانَ | <na'na> *nàna* 'came' (1/1:3), سَمَاسِينُ | <sama'sen<sub>1</sub><sup>0</sup>> *sàmasen* 'buttress' (3/1:3), مِينُ | <miyn<sub>1</sub><sup>0</sup>> *mín* relativization marker (3/1:2).

Quite regularly, vocalic assimilation (usually referred to in the description of Bamana as "elision") is expressed by a letter representing a long vowel in Arabic orthography, particularly when the resulting vowel is a long *aa* or *oo*: أَكْنَآبِي كَا لَجِي | <'ʔu kana' yey<sub>1</sub> ka' laǵey<sub>1</sub>> *ù kàn'à* [kànáà] *yé* *k'à* [káà] *lájé* 'they should not see it' (1/1:4), إِبُو تَبِي | <'ʔi bu<sub>1</sub>w tu<sub>1</sub>bi> *í b'ò* [bóò] *tóbi* 'you will cook it' (4:5). If this assimilation results in an *i*, it is represented as a separate syllable: In such a case, *ii* is written as *kasra* below a supporting 'alif hamza, with an additional *kasra* on the preceding letter, i.e. إِـ | <i 'ʔi>; e.g. كِـ إِسِينُ كُو | <k<sub>2</sub>-i 'ʔi sen<sub>1</sub><sup>0</sup> ku<sub>1</sub>w> *k'í sèn kò* 'to wash your feet' (2:6).

Very frequently, word-finally 'length letters' are encountered which do not express any length in Bamana Ajami orthography, as they do in other orthographic traditions, e.g. وَ كُجِي | <wu<sub>1</sub> ku<sub>1</sub>f<sub>1</sub>ey<sub>1</sub>> *wò kɔ fè* 'after that' (1/1:11), سُمَي بِيِي | <sumay<sub>1</sub> by<sub>3</sub>y<sub>1</sub>> *sùma bí ɲè* 'food will be abundant' (1/1:13), سَكُو | <suk<sub>4</sub>uw> *súgu* 'sort' (4:4).

The plural marker, /ù/, is rendered by a *wāw* with a *sukūn*, i.e. و | <w<sup>0</sup>> as in e.g. مَا كُرُوْ | <ma' ku<sub>1</sub>ru<sub>1</sub>w<sup>0</sup>> *màa kòrɔw /màa kórúù/* 'old people' (1/1:3).

The author of the texts makes an effort to maintain the original orthography in Arabic loans, although he does not always succeed, as e.g. in اَلْكَیَوْمَ | <'ʔal<sup>0</sup>kiyaw<sup>0</sup>ma> *àlikiyama* 'Doomsday', which should rather be الْقِيَامَةُ | <'alqiya'mt̄> *al-qiyāma*. In any case, the author writes Arabic loans which have undergone phonological changes following Bamana Ajami orthographic tradition, such as e.g. جِیْ | <ǧiy<sub>3</sub>y<sub>1</sub>> *jíjɛ* 'world' (cf. Arabic *dunyā*) (3/1:14), هَيْرَ | <haera> *héra* 'be in peace' (cf. Arabic *ḥayra*) (4:11).

### 5.1 Orthographic segmentation of words

Segmentation of written speech into graphic words in San Bamana Ajami is more or less orderly (especially in comparison with the specimens published in Vydrine 1998). Content words are normally written separately and are fused together only rarely, e.g. as in مَا تَبِنِمَا پِي | <ma' tibenima' yey<sub>1</sub>> *Màa tɛ̀ bèn ní màa yé* 'people do not meet each other' (literally 'a man does not meet a man') (1/2:9).

Postpositions are mostly, albeit not always, written together with the preceding word, e.g. اِدِي دُكُلُنِي | <'ʔe de yey<sub>1</sub> duk<sub>4</sub>ulen<sup>0</sup>yey<sub>1</sub>> *é dè yé dùgulen yé* 'you are the native' (1/2:4), تَلِيْبِي اَنِكُرُنِي | <tilebif<sub>1</sub>ey<sub>1</sub> 'ʔaniku<sub>1</sub>ru<sub>1</sub>n<sup>0</sup>f<sub>1</sub>ey<sub>1</sub>> *tilebi fè àní kórɔn fè* 'on the western side and on the eastern side' (1/2:6). Monosyllabic auxiliaries (predictive markers) are usually written together with either the preceding or the subsequent word.

In some instances, derived words are split up orthographically in accordance with their morpheme boundaries, e.g. دُكُّ لَلا | <du<sub>1</sub>k<sub>4</sub>-u<sub>1</sub> lila'> *dògoli lá* 1/2:9 'secretely'.

## 5.2 The dialectal characteristics of the texts

The manuscripts are written in a Bamana variety quite close to what is today Standard Bamana, with certain features typical of the eastern dialects, such as the imperfective marker *bí*, as opposed to *bé* in Standard Bamana.

Most often, the lexeme for 'person' appears in its eastern dialectal form, i.e. ما | <ma'> *màa* (1/1:3,5:5). However, occasionally it may also appear in the western dialectal form, i.e. مُكُّ | <mu<sub>1</sub>k<sub>4</sub>-u<sub>1</sub>> *mògɔ* (5:1). Throughout all the manuscripts, western forms predominate, e.g. تُكُّ | <tu<sub>1</sub>k<sub>4</sub>-u<sub>1</sub>> *tógɔ* 'name' (1/1:8, 3/1:1, 5:3 ) (cf. the eastern form *twàa*).

Occasionally, intervocalic velars are elided, as for example in سِييِي | <siyy<sub>1</sub>> *sìi* 'to sit' (4:7) (cf. Standard Bamana *sìgi*), or نُونَى | <y<sub>3</sub>u<sub>1</sub>w nay<sub>1</sub>> *nón ná* 'to each other' (4:13) (cf. Standard Bamana *nógɔn ná*). Elision of intervocalic velar consonants is typical of Maninka and Mandinka languages spoken in the western part of the Manding area, but also for numerous Manding variants on the southern and eastern periphery of that area.

Also, at times archaic forms are encountered in the texts, such as e.g. كِيَا | <k<sub>4</sub>iya'> *gíya* 'to grow clear' (4:8) (cf. Standard Bamana *jé* or *jé-ya*, Proto-Manding \*xóyi, and in certain Maninka varieties *gé*).

## References

- Bailleul, Charles (2007). *Dictionnaire Bambara-Français. 3e édition corrigée*. Bamako: Donniya.
- Creissels, Denis, Sidia Jatta & Kalifa Jobarteh (1982). "Lexique Mandinka-Français". *Mandenkan* 3:1-207.
- Vydrin, Valentin (1998). "Sur l'écriture mandingue et mande an caracteres arabes (mandinka, bambara, soussou, mogofin)". *Mandenkan* 33: 1-87.
- Vydrin, Valentin (2008). "To be respectful in Mande - Where does Maninka honorific vocabulary come from?", *Mande Mansa: Essays in honor of David C. Conrad*, ed. by Stephen Belcher, Jan Jansen & Mohamed N'Daou, 216-225. Zürich, Berlin: Lit.
- Yattara, Almamy Maliki & Bernard Salvaing (2000). *Almamy, une jeunesse sur les rives du fleuve Niger*. Brinon sur Sauldre: Grandvaux.
- Yattara, Almamy Maliki & Bernard Salvaing (2003). *Almamy, l'âge d'homme d'un letter malien*. Brinon sur Sauldre: Grandvaux.