Manding Ajami samples: Mandinka and Bamana
Valentin Vydrin, Gérard Dumestre

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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.

1 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 ‘әлиәf, дәл, әдәл, әрә’, әзәй, әвәә, 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. 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) 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. әлләә and Мучммад are
nevertheless mentioned in these texts, and Arabic words are inserted here
and there for possibly extra effectiveness, such as e.g. тәмәли (3:3, 3:4),
and probably also qalaqa (2:2). In essence though, the religious core of
this text is quite animist.

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2 The Ajami writing reflects a dialectal form, different from the Standard Bamana one.
3 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.
4 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. 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 ́i and third plural ̀i 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

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5 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Transcription</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bsmtpi 'llh</td>
<td>1. Bismi Ilahi</td>
<td>1. By the name of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sala'li</td>
<td>2. Salaša li Muhammadi wa</td>
<td>2. Greetings to Mohammed and the Highest Mohammed. Stop!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muham²adi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa'la'liy_j</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muham²adi i nari</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šubu narih minan¹</td>
<td>3. Sùboo nari! Minankaña kòto túnbuŋ bé i kùntu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kay²a kutu tu&quot;bu bi'i kùntu</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Animal, stop! Old male antelope! Ruins will cut you (?).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tu&quot;bu ti&quot;kun₁u</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f¹a'ku&quot;dama'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ba'ku&quot;dama'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'i y₂ašubu 'i ta&quot;dina' ' saf₁a' ' y₂a'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>šutu kiy₂itadina' ? saf₁a' 'i y₂a'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>šubu musu 'itaⁿdi ? na' saf₁a' tt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ti'yuw 'aniⁿ minan¹ naba tiyuw niⁿ bu&quot;baⁿ sulu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'smh manⁿ kara binamu sulawulin¹</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments
Line 1. The first spelling could be read as $\chi^\varepsilon\varsigma\,\varsigma\,\varsigma\,\varsigma\,\varsigma$ <hbsiy$_1$>. However, such a reading hardly makes any sense. Most probably, it is an ordinary basmala (بسم) <bsm> written in a fanciful way.

Line 2. Apparently <sala'ali> sala'ali is a modified form of صلى-لسلل<ʔalaʁali> which might be an abbreviated version of the Arabic language formula صلى الله عليه وسلم 'May God bless him and grant him peace'. In the second and third incantations, it is spelled as صلى<salali>.

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 bàkoto 'he-goat', såkoto 'ram').

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

Lines 5, 6. jínna '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$^6$ 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

$^6$ 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Transcription</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>giʿbiɡiʿbiʿn</td>
<td>q1alaq1a</td>
<td>2. Jimbiŋ kalaka kalaka jimbiŋ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mina ʿn kaya kutu</td>
<td>q1alaq1a giʿbiʿn</td>
<td>3. Mīnaŋ kāna koto jimbīŋ nī tē ā lá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>giʿbiʿn nitiʿala</td>
<td>jimbīŋ</td>
<td>4. kūdasi. Ismuḥu ġaʿbamu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments

Lines 1-2. Jimbiŋ kalaka kalaka jimbīŋ is a magic formula. There is a Mandinka word jimbi 'a headgear with fringes', but it hardly fits this context. Kalaka is not a Mandinka word, but might possibly be related to qalaq 'anxiety, insomnia (Arabic)'.

Line 4. Kūdasi is a verb meaning 'to remain underdeveloped', 'to fail to reach normal size' (absent from Creissles et al. 1982).

Kāsalaa is an unidentified type of grass, also known as kācancāroo.

Abdulay Daafée commented: Ê s'ā buru jàŋ 'After the incantation is pronounced,) you should rub it'.

Text 3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Transcription</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>daği٠ daği٠ warika٠ warika٠ ku٠tu٠</td>
<td>Dajiŋ dajiŋ warikaŋ warikaŋ kuntuŋ,</td>
<td>2. Cut dajiŋ dajiŋ warikaŋ warikaŋ,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tama‘li sakata٠</td>
<td>tamaali sákatųŋ tamaali fąa bii.</td>
<td>3. always, that is, always, to kill today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tama‘li f1 abi</td>
<td>Tamaali fó bii ábadaŋ.</td>
<td>4. Always, up to this day, forever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tama‘li f1 ubi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abada٠ tt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šmih kisi musu ra٠</td>
<td>Ismihu kēse mósoraŋ mū.</td>
<td>5. Its name is a rubber bullet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments

Line 2. *dajiŋ dajiŋ warikaŋ warikaŋ* are magic formulae - These are not Mandinka words.

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

Line 3. *ṣkatan* | *sakatan* was read by Abdulay Daafee as *sökotûŋ* 'that is'. Cf. in Creissels et al. 1982 *səko*, *sòko* 'surtout, encore plus, à plus fort raison'.

Line 5. *Mósoraŋ* 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 $\mathcal{n}$\footnote{In the text, there is not a single word containing a $p$, which makes the other diagnostic criterion (see Vydrin, present volume) inapplicable.}, these texts would belong to the main Mandinka Ajami variety (cf. Vydrin, this volume): $\mathcal{n} \, \langle \mathfrak{n} \rangle$ is $\mathcal{O}K$ represented by ㅎ. Further grammatological characteristics of this document are:

- $-s$ is usually written as $\mathfrak{s}$, except for one case where it is written as $\mathfrak{s}h$, i.e. ܒ ܐ ܕ ܢ ܒ | $\langle \mathfrak{s}h\mathfrak{u} \rangle$ $\mathfrak{s}\mathfrak{u} \mathfrak{b}$ 'animal, meat'.

- $-j$ (a voiced palatal affricate) is spelled as either $\mathfrak{z}$ or چ, with the latter appearing both word-initially and word-finally\footnote{In one word $j$ is probably written using ܕ ܐ ܕ ܢ ܒ ܐ | $\langle \mathfrak{d}\mathfrak{i} \rangle$ (incantation 1, lines 5 and 6). However, we are not sure about the interpretation of this word.}.

- ݬ 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. ܒ ܐ ܕ ܢ ܒ | $\langle \mathfrak{y}\mathfrak{i} \rangle$ $\mathfrak{y} \mathfrak{t} \mathfrak{a} \mathfrak{n} \mathfrak{d} \mathfrak{i}$ 1:7 'to show'.

- The nasal syllabic phoneme $\mathfrak{y}$ (which appears in Mandinka in only two words: $\mathfrak{y} 'I'$, $\mathfrak{y} 'we'$) is written as hamza, i.e. ܒ ܐ ܕ ܢ ܒ (Which could also be an 'ain, i.e. ݬ) 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 ܝ ܚ ܩ ܢ | $\langle q\mathfrak{1} \mathfrak{a} \mathfrak{l} \mathfrak{a} \mathfrak{q} \mathfrak{1} \mathfrak{a} \rangle$ (2:2).

- $\mathfrak{N}\mathfrak{u}\mathfrak{n}$, $\mathfrak{q}\mathfrak{a}\mathfrak{f}$ and $\mathfrak{f}\mathfrak{a}$ are written in the Mağribi way: In word-final positions, $\mathfrak{n}\mathfrak{u}\mathfrak{n}$ has normally (with only one exception) no dot, while $\mathfrak{q}\mathfrak{a}\mathfrak{f}$ is always spelled with one dot above, i.e. ܩ, and $\mathfrak{f}\mathfrak{a}$ always with one dot below, i.e. ܒ.
• Only the three standard vocalic diacritics, i.e. ۹, ۸, and ٧, 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. ۹>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. ۷۸<سلوئنی> sulwa wuleg 'red monkey' (1:9), and rarely by nūn as in ۷۸<مکر> 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.  

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:

9 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 manisci- lotre 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 1972.¹⁰
Page 2

11. wò k ñfè mónnikebaaw bè jìgin Sankeere la .
Wò tuma túlunkè. 12. mín k èra yèn à yè (? ) kòlèn dála. Wò nògòn bè ké mónnikeyòo là.
13. Sankeere la . Wò yè sàné ó sàné . Ní dúgu m ‘à bila , sùman bè nè ,
14. sòrè bè ké sènè lá , héré bè tòa nà . Ní dúgu yà bila , sùman
15. bè gèlèyà , bòna b è tòa nà , kèlè bè ké jàmàna kònce , màsaw
16. bè sà , dènmisènw bè bòna , tàsumà bè tènèlè kè yòròw là .

Page 1

f₁u₁l₁u₁u₁n₁0 da la. kasu₁ru₁ka’ k₄iyeya’
wu₁ , k₄uy₁y₁mu₁n₁ik₄ebeaw₀ bikîk₄-i san’ keyre la wu₁ tuma
tulu₁n₀k₄-e min’ keyra yen₁₀ ’y₁ ku₂u₁n₁0 da la . wu₁
y₃u₁k₄u₁n₁0 bik-e mu₁nikey₁yu₁ru₁la .
sankey₁r la . wu₁ yey₁
sanwu₁w₁ san₁ ,
niduk₄-u ma’ bila sumay₁ by₃ey₁
su₁ru₁ bik-e sene la .
heyrey₁ bita’ ya’
niduk₄-u ya’ bila
sumay₁-

b₄k₁leya’ bana’ bita’ ya’
kelebik-è gamana’
ku₁nu₁ masa’w₀
bisa’ dimis’aw₀
bibana’ tasuma’
bityslik-e yu₁ru₁w₀ la

ku₁lu₁n₀ duk₄ulew₀ de
b’ du₁ .
dunaw₀ t’
yu₁ru₁ du₁n₀
f₁u₁w duk₄ulew₀ .
duk₄ulew₀ .
yetaraw₁re₀ wye₁
tey’raw₀ yemu₁riw₀
ye₁
nidew₀ wu₁lu₁’ a
taraw₁re₀ la . ’t₄ bita’ na’ yeey₀ ka’
f₁u₁ ku₁lu₁n₁0 ye₁
karan’ telu ku₁lu₁m₀ba’
’a nisu’ ye de ye₁
dukuleν₀ ye₁ ’je de ye₁
dunaw₀
f₂₀ k₄lòn dála , kà
sòrè kà jànya
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.
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.\(^{11}\)

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\(^{11}\) The original text:
le detantere de docimen de janaba koli le meme Bory Bary airite a son pere que ecri pour - enssenne les Banbara en religon. le copissite Almamy malick Yattara.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Transcription</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nin³ye₁₁</td>
<td>ɡ'n'b kwïlïye₁</td>
<td>1. Nin yé jànaba kòlì yé.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɡana'ba ku₁wli bik⁴-e</td>
<td>ɡẹn ki ko-</td>
<td>2. Jànaba kòlì bë kë, a bë kë ní jì sàniyalen yé. Ì bë fólo kà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'i bu₄₁su₁₄₁</td>
<td>jàniy 202</td>
<td>3. Ì kòrọla kò kà í tége fila kò kà í dá mëguri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'i ku₁ru₁ya ku₁w kà</td>
<td>ɡẹn 202</td>
<td>4. kà i nùn kò k' i nèda kò k' i bólo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'i yëda' ku₁w k i -</td>
<td>jiopi 202</td>
<td>5. fila kò k' i kùnkolo màsà¹² k' i tùlo màsà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'i ku₄₁wu₁₄₁</td>
<td>jàniy 202</td>
<td>6. k'ì sèn kò . Wò tùmà i b' ènà kòlì dàmìne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'i bûl₁ul₁u₁</td>
<td>jàniy 202</td>
<td>7. Ì b' è fòlo ní kùnkolo yé k' à kò siñè sàba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'i kàn¹₁kù₁wli</td>
<td>jàniy 202</td>
<td>8. wash one side with your right hand, whash your left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'i bûl₁₁ey₁₁</td>
<td>jàniy 202</td>
<td>9. hand and examine if water has reached everywhere. Bring water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'i ku₁w</td>
<td>jàniy 202</td>
<td>10. to the lower part of your back, pour water on your buttocks. Make it in a way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'i k' - tu₁w₄₁' a</td>
<td>jàniy 202</td>
<td>11. that the water may reach the lower belly, take care of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'i bûl₁₁ey₁₁</td>
<td>jàniy 202</td>
<td>12. not touching your private parts with your hand. Then the ablutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'i ku₁₁w</td>
<td>jàniy 202</td>
<td>13. are performed, the ablation water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹² A form inexistent in Standard Bamana, which might be Maninka in origin.
These are the religious ablutions that were mentioned in God's way.

14. min f ṣira āla siρa' yl la ṭa mɑάn dɛ̀mɛn. Āmiīna.

15. Ála má án dɛ̀mɛn. Ameń!

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 1972.¹³

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¹³ The original text:

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

¹⁴ The syntax of this phrase is not clear.
yé mín yé Ála , one, and it is God, 
Muhamadu fána 
Ála kà cíden dôn;
5. kà i jìjá sáli là 
àní sáníya ; kà sún 
sünkalo lâ ; kà jáka 
bò;
6. kà híjí k é ní sé 
b’à yé . Nin dúuru , 
ninnu dè yè 
silameya yè .
7. Ní màa yé òinnu 
dòn k’à báara , à 
kèra silama yè . 
Númanya.
8. Númanya: 
µnuman yé i ká Ála 
tiṣẹtiyiga kà 
Muhammadu 
tiṣẹtiyìga , i ká 
mèlekew
9. tiṣẹtiyìga , kà 
éjìana tiṣẹtiyìga kà 
jáhanama 
tiṣẹtiyìga fàna kà 
élikiyìama
10. dòn wò 
tiṣẹtiyìga , wò dè bë 
màa k é silame 
ònuman yè . Silame ,
11. à bè wàkàl Ála 
lá. Wàkàlò nùnuman 
yè . Wàkàlè dè yè : ní 
màa yè mín sòò,
12. à k’à d ón , Ála 
dè y ’à d ‘í mà ; n’í 
mà mín sòò, í k’à 
dòn , Ála dè m’à 
13. d’ì mà . Ní í 
bànà ìk k ’à d ón 
Ála dè y ’à s ’í mà , 
ní sàrà , Ála dè y ’à 
sé è mà . 

diymay1 ni?i?i 
banà , ’i?i kà du1 
’ííh de ya’ siyìmay1 
’i?i sa’ra’ ’ííh de y’ 
sëymay1
14. diymay1 
ni?i?i 
banà , ’i?i kà du1 
’ííh de ya’ siyìmay1 
’i?i sa’ra’ ’ííh de y’ 
sëymay1
15. diymay1 
ni?i?i 
banà , ’i?i kà du1 
’ííh de ya’ siyìmay1 
’i?i sa’ra’ ’ííh de y’ 
sëymay1
16. diymay1 
ni?i?i 
banà , ’i?i kà du1 
’ííh de ya’ siyìmay1 
’i?i sa’ra’ ’ííh de y’ 
sëymay1
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.
Transliteration

niye₁₁ f₁ura kumayey₁₁ ku₁₁w kili f₁ura
f₁ura miyn₁₁ be ku₁₁w kili f₁ura k-e. ku₁₁w kili
na’ banana’ ’bi-k-e baraku₁₁ru₁₁ dimiye₁₁

wu₁₁ f₁urak-e suk₄₄u₄ ’je bi k₄₄u₂ₘ₄k₁₁₄⁰ muw₄₅₄aⁿ

Transcription

1. Nin yé fúra kúma y é, kókili fúra.
2. Fúra mìn b é kókili fúrak é. Kókili,
3. n’á bána, , à bér kée bázaradimi yé.
4. Wó fúrak é súgu: é b é ǵókun₁₆ mûgan
5. ân kélen b ñ, i b’òbó tòbi k’ à m b kósebe.
6. Wó tùma í b ’à wórc, ì b é Tumbutu kògo dòñi
7. k’á lá f ’à ká tímíya. Î b’à sì só kónk k’à dátugu
8. kà só fánà dátugu à dà lá. Ní dugu jéra
9. í b’òtà k’ à duñ f’à k’ kónsbara fá. Ní jí b’à lá
10. í b’ô min . Ní yé ngélènnin só̀ r ì b’à fágà ì k’ à kíli bò
11. k’ à duñ kà hérà à kán . Wó tùma í b ’í jântó í

Translation

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.
4. Here is a means to treat it: get twenty-one beans of the wonderbean plant (Canavalia ensiformis),
5. boil them till they are very well cooked.
6. Then peel them, put a little salt of Tombaktu
7. to make it mild. Put it in the house and close it
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 hérrìi conapele kookili foura. le meme Bory Bary - eciri par son pere Amadou Bay marabou. le kopisse Almamy malick Yattara. a 1972 a san.

It could be also nkòkun 'head of a species of locust', although the following context makes this interpretation less probable.

16
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.17

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17 The original text:
le detantere de dociman de cilissi foura. tougoure Bory Bary tourve danles afer de son pere - Amadou Bary le marabou. copié par Almamy malick yattara a san en 1972 a san
k₄eleyalen yé m ɔɡo
mu₁k₄u₁f₁ey₁ 'ʔi ba'
bulu₁mine
ka' ᵃVy₃es-i yiri ma' wu₁
yirinin¹ tu₁k₄u₁ k-u₁
kun₀'ɡey₁
gëleyalen yé m ɔɡo
fè, i b' à bólo minè
3. k' à ñésin yiri mà,
wò yirinin t ɔɡo kó
kùnje.

4. 1 b' à f 5 yiri mà
yiriba' kun'gey₁ '?e
dé
yey₁ yiri' k₁ru₁
yey₁ yiri

ku₁ru₁ de bibanà'
k₄u₁f₁urakaey₁.
banaba'tu₁nin⁰ '?a
sary₁ ma' k₁ru₁w₁⁰
bela
6. 1 má sé kà bâna
k₄u₁f₁urakey₁ kà
kénéya' kun'gey₁.

m⁰byìdeli nifura yey₁
miy₃n⁰ bi'?i k-a
buluw⁰ la tilebebulu
nık₁ru₁n⁰f₁ey₁ bu.lu
nib₄f₁a bu.lu
niw₁ru₁d₄k-₄ bu.lu
yey₁
7. ñ b' i déli ní fúra
yé mín b 'i kàn
buluw lá ,
tilebinbulu
wörodugbulu yé,
yey₁
w₁ tuma '?i
bygu₁y₁
d₁w₁niy₁ wu₁tuma
'ʔi
bılıka
8. ní kòrònbëbulu ní
báfànbulu ní
búluwulù yé,
yey₁

f₁aⁿ⁰be₁f₁ey₁
9. wò tûma í b 'i jò
dònì, wò tûma í
b' olú kári fàn b è
fè,
thëm
9. 1 b' ñòṣet à b è
táà n' à yé i kà só , ñ
b' à tòbi, bánabaatò
ba' mi ka ku₁w ka' mi
k₄a' ku₁w ku₁w
f₁u₁w siy₃iṣek₄-i
10. í b' ò màra í b è
tàà n' à yé i kà só , ñ
b' à tòbi, bánabaatò
bà mi kà ko
càm kà ko
bà ko'

11. b' à mìn k 'à kò
k' à mìn k 'à kò k' à
kò fóo sînè sëègin
tile₄-i
ku₁nu₁w
b₄nba'tu₁ 'ʔa bkeneya'.
'b' mu₃u₄d₁w₀niy₁
tuk₄-u tile se₄-i na'
m' këney'. 'ʔi bise₄-i
12. tile sëègin
kòn. Bànabaatò, à
bë kénéya. A b' à
mònju dòsèn

13. tûgùn tile
sëègin, n' à mà
14. You say about
the plant, kunje big
tree. You have seen
a big tree, it is an
old
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. Kunje,

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
14. f‘à ká së dàn ná. Í bé taa só, í b‘à tóbi k’à ké fólo
15. tá nògòn yé , fóo si nè séegi. Ni bànabaatò má kénéya

5. Grammatological properties of the Bamana Ajami from San

Table 1: Independent units of the Bamana Ajami orthography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Transcription</th>
<th>Phonemic value</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
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<td>Ø</td>
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<td>b</td>
<td>/b/</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
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<td>t, c</td>
<td>/t/, /tʃ/</td>
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<td>/h/</td>
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<td>/y/</td>
<td>y₁ / y₄</td>
<td>y₁ / y₄ / y₅ / y₆</td>
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<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>/n/</td>
<td>y₂</td>
<td>y₂</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18 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. زکا | <zak'> jáka 'alsms' (3:5) (from Arabic zakāt)

- ص appears only once, in an Arabic loan, i.e. صلی | <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 ɡ occurs only once, i.e. in the word گنا | <ku₁qu₁na'> kʊɡra 'arrived to maturity (perfective form)' (3:15).

- Nūn in word-final position appears usually without a dot, i.e. ن. However, the dotted variant, i.e. ن, is also encountered in the texts.

- The usual graphemic representation of ɲ as ں (with two lower dots and one upper dot) never appears in word-final positions. If a word has ɲ in the final syllable, ں is always followed by ی. Therefore, it is impossible to figure out which Arabic character served as its base, i.e. ب ی or ں.

- ي is used representing ɲ in only one single case, i.e. سيي | <siyey₁> سئه 'time' (1/2:6) (which may be a copyist's or author's error).

- ي appears in the texts only twice, i.e. يُونِي | <y₂umawn⁰y₃y₁> نُونَن یَ 'it is good...' (3/1:8), and in يُونِي | <y₂u₁k₄u₁n⁰y₃y₁> نُونَن یَ 'with each other' (5:15).
Prenasalization of initial consonants is marked in the same manner as word-internal nasalization by a \textit{nūn} with a \textit{sukūn}, i.e. 
\textit{n̄} | <n^0>, such as in 
\textit{n̄}k̄4el\textit{eni} > \textit{ng̱el\textit{enny}n} 'ground squirrel'. Compare also a form ꞽ | <k^4u<_4w> \textit{g\textit{ɔ佣金}} 'wonderbean (\textit{Canavalia ensiformis})' (4:4) which is attested in Charles Bailleul's dictionary (2007) as \textit{n̄g\textit{ɔ佣金}} (the prenasalization in this word might be absent from the dialect of the manuscript's author).

\textbf{5.1 Diacritics}

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

\textit{Tašdīd} is rarely employed representing gemination of a nasal sonant as in e.g. ꞽ | <ku^1lu^1\textit{n}\textit{a}^2> \textit{k\̱λ\textit{n}佣金} 'to the well' (1/2:9) - mostly it is used with unclear purpose, e.g. ꞽ | <dimis^2aw^0> \textit{dēmis\textit{en}佣金} 'children' (1/1:16). Also, it occurs in Arabic loans in order to reproduce the original orthography, e.g. ꞽ | <'r\textit{al}\textit{g}Hamilton\textit{a}> \textit{ḁj\textit{j}an\textit{a}佣金} 'Paradise' (3/1:9), ꞽ | <\textit{gah}^2\textit{an}^2\textit{ama}>\textsuperscript{19} \textit{j\textit{a}han\textit{ama}佣金} 'hell' (3/1:9).

In the Bamana Ajami orthography, new diacritics have been introduced for the representation of middle vowels: an 'inversed \textit{ḍamma}', i.e. ꞽ | <\textit{u}^1>, representing \textit{o} or \textit{ơ}, as well as a lower dot, i.e. ꞽ | <\textit{e}>, representing \textit{e} and \textit{ε}. There is also a combination of lower dot + \textit{fatha}, i.e. ꞽ | <\textit{ae}>, which represents the open front vowel \textit{ɛ}, and which is used only

\textsuperscript{19} The \textit{tašdīd} on top of the \textit{hā'} was put here mistakenly by the writer.
in text 4: ʰɛɾa 'be in peace' (4:11), ʰɛɾe '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 ʾalif hamza, i.e. ʾأ | <ɾɖ>, such as e.g. in ʾأ | <ɾɖu> ʾthey' (1/2:6), ʾأ | <ɾɖe> ʾyou (singular emphatic)' (1/2:3).

Vocalic nasality is marked either by ʾm̄ in word-internal position, when the nasal vowel is followed by a labial consonant, or by ʾn̄ with sukūn, i.e. ʾن | <n⁰>, in all the other contexts, e.g. ʾكَرَتْلَ كَلْنِيَا | <ɾɖa> Karantela ʾkɔłnba 'big well of Karantela' (1/1:1), ʾيَن | <yan⁰> ʾyàn 'here' (1/1:1). Not infrequently, the nasality remains unmarked in word-final positions, such as e.g. ʾذ | <du¹> versus ʾذ | <du⁰₁> ʾdɔn 'to know' (1/2:1) (both spelling variants appear in the same line), ʾبَابٌ | <ba²f₁a> ʾbá fän 'North' (1/2:7), ʾأَبِيِّ, ʾأ | <ʔa bif₁iyey₁> ʾà bǐ ʾfiyen 'he will become blind' (1/1:6), ʾكِلِّ | <kele> kélen 4:5 'one'. More rarely, and probably by negligence, it also remains unmarked in word-internal positions, as e.g. in ʾبَنْكِرْدَ | <den⁰₃kuwdi> dēnkundi 'baptism' (1/2:8). When followed by the plural marker -w /ˈu/, nasality is never marked in the spelling of vowels - e.g. ʾنَذَزْ, ʾنَزْ | <duk₄lew⁰> -dughulenc 'natives' (1/2:2), ʾنَذَزْ | <dunaw⁰> dūnanw 'strangers' (1/2:1), ʾنَذَزْ | <nidew⁰> ní dénw... ʾif children...' (1/2:3).

The syllabic nasal ʾn, 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. \(<m^0\text{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: \(<\text{beya'} \ su_1ru_1> bée y'à sârc 'all have found it...' (1/1:1), but | <tîy_3batu> tîn̂baːtɔ 'truthful' (3/1:3). On the other hand, letters marking vocalic length in Arabic orthography, i.e. ١, ٢, and ٣, may appear where there is no vocalic length in Bamana: | <na'na> nàna 'came' (1/1:3) | <sàma'sen_1^0> sâmāsen 'buttress' (3/1:3) | <miy_1^0> mîn 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: | (<?u kana' yey_1 ka' laḡey_1> ʻu kàn'â [kànáà] yé k'â [kâà] lájé 'they should not see it' (1/1:4), | <′?i bu_w tu_1bi> i b'ò [bòò] 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. → | <i′ ?i>; e.g. | <k_2-i′ ?i sen_1^0 ku_1w> k'i sên 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. | <w_u_1 ku_1f_1ey_1> wò kó fë 'after that' (1/1:11), | <sumay_1 by_3y_1> sùma bí nè 'food will be abundant' (1/1:13), | <suk_4uw> sógu 'sort' (4:4).
The plural marker, /ù/, is rendered by a wāw with a sukūn, i.e. ٥ | <w⁰> as in e.g. مًا ٝ | <ma' kuᵣ₁w⁰> màa kɔ́rw /màa kɔ́r̥ù/ '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 ألكبُنم | <'ʔal⁰kiyaw⁰ma> ʔlikiyama 'Doomsday', which should rather be القيامة | <'alqiya'mt̆> al-qiyyāma. In any case, the author writes Arabic loans which have undergone phonological changes following Bamana Ajami orthographic tradition, such as e.g. ٝ | <ğiy₃y₁> jìŋe 'world' (cf. Arabic dunyā) (3/1:14), ْدَبَر | <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 ٝ | <ma' tibenima' yey₁> Màa tɛ̀ bèn nǐ 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. ٝ | <'ʔe de yey₁ duk⁴ulen⁰yey₁> é dè yé dùgulen yé 'you are the native' (1/2:4) | <tilebif₁ey₁ 'ʔanikuᵣ₁n⁰f₁ey₁> tilebi fè àn̥í kɔ́rn 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. |<du₁k₄-u₁ 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. |<ma’> màa (1/1:3,5:5). However, occasionally it may also appear in the western dialectal form, i.e. |<mu₁k₄-u₁> mògɔ (5:1). Throughout all the manuscripts, western forms predominate, e.g. |<tu₁k₄-u₁> tògɔ 'name' (1/1:8, 3/1:1, 5:3) (cf. the eastern form twàa).

Occasionally, intervocalic velars are elided, as for example in |<s_i_y₁> sii 'to sit' (4:7) (cf. Standard Bamana sîgî), or |<y₃u₁w nay₁> nòɔn ná 'to each other' (4:13) (cf. Standard Bamana nògɔn 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. |<k₄iya’> gîya 'to grow clear' (4:8) (cf. Standard Bamana jé or jé-ya, Proto-Manding *xóyi, and in certain Maninka varieties gé).
References


