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,

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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 ‘alif, dāl, ḍāl, 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. 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. ‘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), 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.\textsuperscript{5} 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

\textsuperscript{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 ‘ismu hu ‘his name’.

**Text 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Transcription</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bsmi 'Ilh</td>
<td>1. Bismi Ilahi</td>
<td>1. By the name of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sala.ali</td>
<td>2. Sala've li</td>
<td>2. Greetings to Mohammed and the Highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mu'ham²adi</td>
<td>wa'la'liyʃ</td>
<td>Mohammed. Stop!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mu'ham²adi ' nari</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šubu nari mina^n</td>
<td>3. Süboo nari !</td>
<td>3. Animal, stop! Old male antelope, ruins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kay₂a kutu tu'bu</td>
<td>Minankaña kòto</td>
<td>will cut you (?).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bi' 'i ku'nu tu</td>
<td>túnbug òɓ kúntu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu'bu ti'kun₁u</td>
<td>4. túnbug t'i kùnum, faakundamaa, baakundamaa.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f₁a'ku'dama'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bā'ku'dama'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'i y₂ašubu 'i ta'dina' ' saf₁a 'i y₂a'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šutu kiy₂itadina' ?</td>
<td>6. Süboo kèeñerta, diîna (jînna?), ń s' à fàa ń nàa.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saf₁a 'i y₂a'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šubu musu 'itaⁿdî ?</td>
<td>7. Sübu musoo yitandi ń ná , ń s ' à fàa tata</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na' ? saf₁a tt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti'yuw 'aniⁿ minaⁿ</td>
<td>8. Tío ànnįń minankaña, tío nįń</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaya tiyuw niⁿ</td>
<td>bumban j sùlo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bu'baⁿ sulu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'smh man₁ kara</td>
<td>9. Ismahu mànkara</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>binamu sulawuliⁿ</td>
<td>bîna mú sùla wûleñ.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**

1. Bismi llahi dîna! F’a faakundamaa, baakundamaa. Stop!
2. Greetings to Mohammed and the Highest Mohammed. Stop!
3. Animal, stop! Old male antelope, ruins will cut you (?).
4. Ruins won't swallow you, faakundamaa, baakundamaa.
5. Animal is before your eyes, take them, bush spirit, they will kill it before you.
6. The animal has fallen asleep, bush spirit, I will kill it before you.
7. Show me a female animal, I'll kill it.
8. Hair and male antelope, hair and the root of bumban.
9. Its name is the horn of the mànkara antelope, red monkey.
Line 1. The first spelling could be read as $\kappa'\varepsilon$ sbiy$_1$. However, such a reading hardly makes any sense. Most probably, it is an ordinary basmala (بسمل) written in a fanciful way.

Line 2. Apparently $\kappa'\varepsilon$ ala'li> sala'li is a modified form of $\kappa'\varepsilon$ sala'li which might be an abbreviated version of the Arabic language formula $\kappa'\varepsilon$ Allah 'alayhu wa sallam 'May God bless him and grant him peace'. In the second and third incantations, it is spelled as $\kappa'\varepsilon$ 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 b̀akoto 'he-goat', s̀akoto 'ram').

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

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

Line 6. k̀eenee 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>salali muḥam ʿadi</td>
<td>wa’la’aliy1</td>
<td>1. Salali Muhammadi wa-l-Ṣali Muhammadi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gi’nbi‘ni‘bi’n</td>
<td>qalaqa1a</td>
<td>2. Jimbiŋ kalaka kalaka jimbīŋ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ʌni‘ni‘ni‘a</td>
<td>jimbīŋ</td>
<td>3. Old male antelope, jimbīŋ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ma’mu</td>
<td>Ʌma‘mumu</td>
<td>4. kūdasi. Ismuhu kāsalaajāmbamū.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments

Lines 1-2. Jimbiŋ kalaka kalaka jimbīŋ is a magic formula. There is a Mandinka word jimbī ‘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 kəcəncəroo.

Abdulay Daafée commented: Í s’á buru jàng '(After the incantation is pronounced,) you should rub it'.

Text 3
Salali muḥamādi wa-l-ali: Muhammadi.

1. Greetings to Mohammed and the Highest Mohammed.

Dajān dajān warikaŋ warikaŋ kuntuŋ,

2. Cut dajān dajān warikaŋ warikaŋ,

Tamaļi sakataŋ
Tamaļi f1abi
Tamaļi f1ubi
Abadaŋ tt
Ismihu kese
Mósoraŋ mu

3. always, that is, always, to kill today.

4. Always, up to this day, forever.

Its name is a rubber bullet.

Comments

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

Lines 3, 4. *<tamaļi>* tamaļi is certainly Arabic *tamalli* 'always' (this word is absent from the everyday Mandinka).

Line 3. *<sakatan>* sakatan was read by Abdulay Daafee as *sokotuŋ* 'that is'. Cf. in Creissels et al. 1982 såko, sóko '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 \( \eta \), these texts would belong to the main Mandinka Ajami variety (cf. Vydrin, this volume): \( n \) \(<\hat{n}> \) is OK represented by \( \hat{\imath} \). Further grammatological characteristics of this document are:

- \( -s \) is usually written as \( \hat{s}in \), except for one case where it is written as \( \hat{s}h\hat{\imath}n \), i.e. \(<\hat{\imath}ubu> \) \( s\hat{\imath}bu \) 'animal, meat'.

- \( j \) (a voiced palatal affricate) is spelled as either \( \hat{j} \) or \( \hat{\imath} \), with the latter appearing both word-initially and word-finally.\(^8\)

- \( \hat{\imath} \) 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 \( \eta \), although there is only one occurrence in the text, i.e. \( \hat{\imath}ita^\hat{\imath}di \) \( yi\tauandi \) 1:7 'to show'.

- The nasal syllabic phoneme \( \hat{\imath} \) (which appears in Mandinka in only two words: \( \hat{\imath} 'I', \hat{\imath} 'we' \)) is written as \( \hat{\imath}amza \), i.e. \( \hat{\imath} \) (Which could also be an '\( \hat{\imath} \)ain, i.e. \( \hat{\imath} \)) 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 \( \hat{\imath}\hat{q} \) \( <q\hat{q}_{1}a_{1}\hat{a}> \) (2:2).

- \( \hat{\nu}n, q\hat{\alpha}f \) and \( f\hat{\alpha}^\prime \) are written in the Ma\( \ddot{\imath} \)ribi way: In word-final positions, \( \hat{n}un \) has normally (with only one exception) no dot, while \( q\hat{\alpha}f \) is always spelled with one dot above, i.e. \( \hat{q} \), and \( f\hat{\alpha}^\prime \) always with one dot below, i.e. \( \hat{f} \).

\(^7\) In the text, there is not a single word containing a \( p \), which makes the other diagnostic criterion (see Vydrin, present volume) inapplicable.

\(^8\) In one word \( j \) is probably written using \( d\hat{\alpha}l, \hat{\imath}n \) \( <\hat{\imath}ina\hat{\imath}> \) (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. ˌ, ˷, and ˴, 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. ٛ 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. سُلْوِنٍ | <sulwuliⁿ> sùla wùleŋ 'red monkey' (1:9), and rarely by nūn as in مَنْ كَرَ | <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.9

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 lorssqeu jevi jessi tro diure et je fai sa pour avar enor si yana. et avec le 3 maniscri- 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

¹⁰ The original text:
le détentéer de docimen Karantéla Kolomba le piu sacré de- san. Bory Bary ecri par son pere an karactere- arabe a san pour loui, en 1911 a san. le copisste Almamy malick Yattara a san en 1972.
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:

4. *Karantela, the Big Well, good evening! You are the native, it is you*
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.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{11} The original text:
le detantere de docimen de janaba koli le meme Bory Bary airite a son pere que ecri pour - enssenge les Banbara en religon. le copissite Almamy malick Yattara.
Transliteration
nin³ye₁ yė₁ ˈgi'ë₁
kwiliye₁
ˈga'ba ku₁ w₁ bi₄-e
'?a bi₄-e ni ˈgiy
sanyा'lenye₁ ˈti'i
bif₁'u₁u₁ k-a

Transcription
1. Nin yé jànaba
köl yé.
2. Jànaba köl b é
ké, à b é ké ní jí
sániyalen yé. Ê b é
föl kà
3. Í kórɔla kò kà í
tége fila kò kà í dá
mùguri
4. Kà í nún kò k 'í
nèda kò k 'í bólo
bùlu₁
5. Fila kò k 'í
kùnkolo mä₄ 12 k 'í
túlo mä₄
6. K'í sèn kò. Wò
túma i b énà kcoli
dámìne.
7. Ê b é fòlo ní
kùnkolo yé k 'à kò
sìŋe sàba
8. K à 'ìi
fàn kélé kò
kìni bòlo ˈfè, kà
nùmabolo
bùlu₁f₁e₁y₁ kà'
numabu₁u₁
kùw kà' laġe₁y₁
nìgiiy₁ sèra ṭa bëla
'ìi bìgiy₁y₁ lase
9. Kò k 'à láj é ní jí
sèrá à b èè lá. Ê b é
jí lásè
10. Ê kòton nà kà jì
kë i jùkunaw mà. Ê b é jí lásè
11. Ë kì a' kà nà
kìì, kà jìgi
yèrè là
12. Ê kà nà se' i
këyà la nì' i
bùlu₁ ye₁y₁ w₁ tuma
yè. Wò tûma wò
kùw wìli
köl
13. Kële nà, à b 'ì
wàsà sëlijì lá. Wò

Translation
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,
4. Wash your nose,
5. Hands, scrape your
head and your ears,
6. Wash your feet.
7. Start with your
head and wash it
thrice,
8. Wash one side with
your right hand,
9. Wash 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

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12 A form inexistent in Standard Bamana, which might be Maninka in origin.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page 1</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Transcription</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>kalan bidamine</td>
<td>ni 14.</td>
<td>Learning begins with the name of God and greeting to the Messenger of God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ni l’2ah</td>
<td>14. sira’y la</td>
<td>14. that were mentioned in God’s way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>miy1 u tu1 k4 u1</td>
<td>k-u 14.</td>
<td>14. the religious ablutions were sufficed you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ey1</td>
<td>ey1</td>
<td>These are the religious ablutions that were sufficed you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>sama’sen1 u</td>
<td>yey1</td>
<td>15. May God help us. Amen!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yey1</td>
<td>yey1</td>
<td>15. Ála má án dêmëna. Àmïïna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>duwru yey1</td>
<td>yey1</td>
<td>15. May God help us. Amen!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tijëbeato</td>
<td>masa</td>
<td>15. May God help us. Amen!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>masa mak-e</td>
<td>màse makhé</td>
<td>15. May God help us. Amen!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f1 u1 w</td>
<td>nimasa</td>
<td>15. May God help us. Amen!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 airite 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.
kelen⁴ yey₁ miyⁿ⁴ yey₁ ʻll₂⁹ h mhmɗ f₁anay₁ ʻll₂⁹ h k-a tiyden⁰ du₁ 5. kă jī jā sāli łā’ ānî sāniya ; kă sūn sunkalo łā ; kă jāka bō ;

kahlīg-e niseba’ yey₁ nin⁰ duwrə, nunun⁰ de yey₁ 6. kă hūjī k ē nī sē b’a yē . Nin dúuru , ninnu dē yē silamëya yē .

y₃uman⁰ y’a y₂umawn⁰ yey₁ ʻʔi k-a ʻll₂⁹ h tiy₃tki₄yey₁ 7. Nî māa yē ninnu dōn k’a bāara , ā’ kēra silama yē . Nûmanya .

…

y₉umany₄ y’a y₉umawn⁰ yey₁ ʻʔi k-a ʻll₂⁹ h tiy₃tki₄yey₁ 8. Nûmanya : Nûman yē i kā Ála tịjëtiğiyi kà Muhammadu tịjëtiğiyi , i kā mëlekew⁰ 8. Goodness: It is good that you recognize the truth of God and Muhammad, the truth of

tiy₃tki₄yey₁ kâ’ 9. tịjëtiğiyi, kà āljana tịjëtiğiyi kà jāhanama tịjëtiğiyi fāna kà álikiyama 9. angels, the truth of Paradise, and also the truth of Hell, the truth of

dōn wò tịjëtiğiyi, wò dē bè màa k ē silame nûman yē . Silame ,

y₉uman⁰ yey₁ sila’ma’ 10. of the Doomsday, it is what makes one a good Muslim . A Muslim, 10. he relies on God . To rely, it means: whatever one receives ,

…

a k’a du₁ ēn₁ ʻll₉ h de ya’ diyma’ nima’ miyⁿ₁ su₁ru₁ 11. k’hà dôn , Ála dē m’a 11. he knows that it is God who has given it to him; whatever you do not receive, you know that it is God who

…
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.15
Transliteration
niye₁₁ fura₁₁ kumayey₂₁ ku₁₂ w kili₁₁ fura₁₁
fura₁₁ miyn₁₀ be ku₁₂ w kili₁₁ fura k-e. ku₁₂ w kili₁₁

Transcription
1. Nin yé fura kúma y ë, kókili fúra.
2. Fúra míin b é kókili fúra è. Kókili,
3. n'á bána, a bë ké bàrakarédimi yé.

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 Tombuktu
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 hérfi conapele kookili foura. le meme Bory Bary - eciir par son pere Amadou Bay marabou. le kopissé 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.
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
k₄eleyalen₁⁰ yey₁ gëleyalen yé m ṭgó₃ fè, ì b' à bólo mine 3. k'à ñësin yiri mà, wò yirinì t ṭgó₃ kó kùnje.
4. ì b' à f sì yiri mà yiribá kùn'gey₁. Ò dè de yey₁ yiri kù₁ru₁ yë yiri yey₁ yiri
kù₁ru₁ de bibana' kù₁ru₁ f₁urakaey₁.
5. kòrc de bè bána kòrc fùràkè. Bànabato, nì à seray₁ ma' kù₁ru₁w₀ bela kà masey₁ kà 'bàna' kù₁ru₁ f₁urakey₁ kà' kù₁ru₁ kà keneya' kùn'gey₁.
6. ù mà sé kà bána kòrc fùràkè k'à kényya. Kùnje
m₄biydeli nifura yey₁ miyn₁₀ bi'ò i k-a
bùluw₀ la tilebèbènu
7. ñ b'ì déli ní fùra yè mín b 'ì kàñ bùluw lá, tilebinbulu
nikù₁ru₁n₁₀f₁eey₁ bulu
8. ní kòrÇfèbènu ní bafanbùlu ní
niw₁ru₁dük₁₄u bulu
wòrodugbulu yè, yey₁
wu₁ tuma 'òi bygü₁₁y₁
d₁₁wu₁niy₁ wu₁tuma
9. wò tûma í b 'ì j ó
dóoni, wò tûma í b'ólu kà rí fàn b ëë fè,
'òi bulw mara 'òi
bitana' yey₁ 'òi
kasu₁₁w 'òi ba' tu bí
banabatu₁₁
10. í b'ò màra í b ë
táà n' à yè i kà só, ì b' à tàbí, bànabàato
ba' mi kà kù₁₁w ka' mi
kà' kù₁₁w kà' kù₁₁w
f₁₁u₁ sìy₁₃isek₁-
11. b'à mín k 'à kò k'à
k'à mín k 'à kò k 'à
kò foó sìñë séegín
tilesek₁₄ kà kù₁₁nu₁w
bnba'tu₁ 'òa bkeneya'. 'ò b' múy₃u₁₁w₄niy₁
12. tile séegín kònc. Bànabàato, à bë kényya. À b' à múy₃u₁₁dòcìñ
kù₁₁nu₁w
13. tûgun tile séegín, n'â mà
tuk₄-u tile sek₄-i na' m' këneye'. 'òi bisek₄-i
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, 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
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
the person is
seriously ill, take
him by the hand
3. and direct him to
the plant whose
name is kunje
(Guiera
senegalensis
shrub).
4. You say about
the plant, kunje big
tree. You have seen
a big tree, it is an old
5. Grammatological properties of the Bamana Ajami from San

<table>
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<td>∅</td>
<td>∅</td>
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<tr>
<td>١</td>
<td>b</td>
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<td>b</td>
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<td>t, c</td>
<td>/t/, /ʧ/</td>
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<td>l</td>
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<td>١٤</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>/m/</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>١٥</td>
<td>n; vocalic nasality</td>
<td>/n/</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>١٦</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>/n/</td>
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<td>١٧</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>/h/</td>
<td>h</td>
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<td>١٨</td>
<td>w; length of u, o, ɔ</td>
<td>/w/, /Vː/</td>
<td>w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>١٩</td>
<td>y, n; length of i, e, ɛ</td>
<td>/ɪ/, /ɪ/, /Vː/</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>٢٠</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>/n/</td>
<td>y₂</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18 In final position.

14. f’à ká sé dàn ná. Í bé tää só, í b’á tóbi k’á ké fólọ
15. tá nògon yé, fóo sì nẹ séegìn. Ni bànabaatọ má kénéya
16. this time, then he will die. It is the medicine of kunjẹ.
Comments:

- ح <mḥmd> appears only in the name of the Prophet Muhammad.
- ز <zak>' is used representing ج only once in an Arabic loan, i.e. زکا 'alms' (3:5) (from Arabic zakāt).
- ص <ṣalila> appears only once, in an Arabic loan, i.e. صلی الله 'with a greeting' (3:1) (from Arabic ṣalā).
- ع <y2umawn0y3y1> appears only once (2:15), with its meaning remaining unclear.
- ق <ku1qu1na '> representing ɡ occurs only once, i.e. in the word قُلَّا '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. ں or ی.
- ی <siyey1> is used representing ɲ in only one single case, i.e. siyɛ 'time' (1/2:6) (which may be a copyist's or author's error).
- ی <y2umawn0y3y1> appears in the texts only twice, i.e. in نَُمَانَ یِ 'it is good...' (3/1:8), and in نَُجَٰنَ یِ '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. ۵۰, such as in ۵۰k4eleni> ngèènnin 'ground squirrel'. Compare also a form ۵۰ | <k4u1w> 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

Fatha, kasra, and ẓamma 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. ۷۱ | <ku1u1n2a'> kɔlɔn ná 'to the well' (1/2:9) - mostly it is used with unclear purpose, e.g. ۸۰ | <dimis2aw0> dénmisɛw 'children' (1/1:16). Also, it occurs in Arabic loans in order to reproduce the original orthography, e.g. ۸۷ | <ʾ?al0gan2a> ālijana 'Paradise' (3/1:9), ۸۷ | <ḡah2an2ama>19 jāhanama 'hell' (3/1:9).

In the Bamana Ajami orthography, new diacritics have been introduced for the representation of middle vowels: an 'inversed ẓamma', i.e. ۷ | <u1>, representing o or ɔ, as well as a lower dot, i.e. ۸ | <e>, representing e and ɛ. There is also a combination of lower dot + fatha, i.e. ۹ | <ae>, which represents the open front vowel ɛ, and which is used only

19 The tašdīd on top of the hā' was put here mistakenly by the writer.
in text 4: ḥərə 'be in peace' (4:11), ʿyərə '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 ʿalif hamza, i.e. | <haera> <ye rae> ʿbe in peace' (4:11), such as e.g. in ʿ | <?u> û 'they' (1/2:6), ʿ | < ?e> é 'you (singular emphatic)' (1/2:3).

Vocalic nasality is marked either by m̄m in word-internal position, when the nasal vowel is followed by a labial consonant, or by nūn with sukūn, i.e. َن | <n0>, in all the other contexts, e.g. | <karan0tela ku1lu1m0ba> Karantela kɔʌnlba 'big well of Karantela' (1/1:1), َن | <yan10> yən 'here' (1/1:1). Not infrequently, the nasality remains unmarked in word-final positions, such as e.g. َذ | <du1> versus َذ | <du1n0> ḍn 'to know' (1/2:1) (both spelling variants appear in the same line), َب | <ba′f1a> bά fən 'North' (1/2:7), َب | <′?a bif1iyey1> à bί fίyen 'he will become blind' (1/1:6), َب | <kele> kélen 4:5 'one'. More rarely, and probably by negligence, it also remains unmarked in word-internal positions, as e.g. in َن | <den0kuwdi> dέnkundi 'baptism' (1/2:8). When followed by the plural marker -w /ù/, nasality is never marked in the spelling of vowels - e.g. َن | <du4lew0> -dūgulenw 'natives' (1/2:2), َن | <dunaw0> dūnanw 'strangers' (1/2:1), َن | <nidew0> nì dέnw... 'if children...' (1/2:3).

The syllabic nasal ň, 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. <m⁰biydeli> ň b’í délî '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: <beya su₁ru₁> bēє y'à sâr 'all have found it...' (1/1:1), but <tiy₂batu> tijnebaatɔ 'truthful' (3/1:3). On the other hand, letters marking vocalic length in Arabic orthography, i.e. ِ, ٍ, and ٤, may appear where there is no vocalic length in Bamana: <na'na> nàna 'came' (1/1:3) | <sama'sen₁⁰> sàmasen 'butress' (3/1:3) | <miyn₁⁰> 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: <ʔu kana’ ye_y₁ lağey₁> ù kàn’â [kànàà] yé k‘à [kàà] lâjé ‘they should not see it' (1/1:4), | <ʔ'í bu₁w tu₁bi> í 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 ‘ʔi_i>; e.g. ُكـيِـبْ كُو | <k₂-i ’ʔi sen₁⁰ ku₁w> k’í sěn 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. ِزْكَبْ | <wu₁ ku₁f₁ey₁> wò k’ò fè ‘after that' (1/1:11) | <sumay₁ by₃y₁> sùma bí nè ‘food will be abundant' (1/1:13) | <suk₄uw> súgu 'sort' (4:4).
The plural marker, /ù/, is rendered by a wāw with a sukūn, i.e. ރ | w° as in e.g. ޮމރުއ | ma' ku₁ru₁w° màa kɔʳɔw /màa kɔʳù/ '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 ެޅިބާށ | 'ʔal⁰kiyaw⁰ma> ަިދބިދް毛泽东 'Doomsday', which should rather be the ބާއދާނބަނ | 'alqiya'mt> al-qiyāma. In any case, the author writes Arabic loans which have undergone phonological changes following Bamana Ajami orthographic tradition, such as e.g. ެދބުރާލ | ެސ ސ | <giy₃y₁> jīn 'world' (cf. Arabic dunyā) (3/1:14), ެދބުރާލ | <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 ެދބުރާލ | ma' tibenima' yey₁ Màa té bèn nì 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. ެދބާއދުރާލ | ḍe de yey₁ duk₄ulen⁰yey₁> é dè yé dugulen yé 'you are the native' (1/2:4), ެދބުރާލ | tilebif₁ey₁ 'ʔaniku₁ru₁n⁰f₁ey₁> tilebi fè ànî kɔ̀rw 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. دُڅُلَّائَا | <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 b́, as opposed to bɛ in Standard Bamana.

Most often, the lexeme for 'person' appears in its eastern dialectal form, i.e. مَ | <ma'> màa (1/1:3,5:5). However, occasionally it may also appear in the western dialectal form, i.e. مُنَ | <mu₁k⁴-u₁> mɔgɔ (5:1).

Throughout all the manuscripts, western forms predominate, e.g. مُنَ | <tu₁k⁴-u₁> tɔgɔ 'name' (1/1:8, 3/1:1, 5:3) (cf. the eastern form twàa).

Occasionally, intervocalic velars are elided, as for example in سَ | <siyy₁> sii 'to sit' (4:7) (cf. Standard Bamana sigi), or بُنَ | <y₃u₁w nay₁> nɔɔn ná 'to each other' (4:13) (cf. Standard Bamana nɔgɔn 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. خَ | <k⁴iya'> gíya 'to grow clear' (4:8) (cf. Standard Bamana jé or jé-ya, Proto-Manding *xóyi, and in certain Maninka varieties gé).

27
References


