'Ajamī Annotations in Multilingual Manuscripts from Mande Speaking Areas: Visual and Linguistic Features

Darya Ogorodnikova

Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, University of Hamburg
darya.ogorodnikova@uni-hamburg.de

Abstract

The article describes and analyse the paratextual elements (annotations) in Soninke and Manding languages in the manuscripts from modern-day Senegal, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Burkina Faso. It focuses on specific layout of the annotations in relation to the main text, the linking and tagging/labelling techniques applied to connect them to the source text, their linguistic features and other peculiarities.

Keywords

Soninke – Mandinka – Maninka – Jula – 'Ajamī – annotations – Islamic manuscripts – multilingualism – West Africa

Introduction

The article focuses on a particular type of manuscripts with the main text in Arabic accompanied by translations, explanations and commentaries in several Mande languages rendered in Arabic scripts ('Ajamī).¹ These manuscripts

1 Mande language family comprises about 60 languages spoken in West Africa from Nigeria to Senegal. The Mande languages identified in the annotations are Soninke, Mandinka, Maninka and Jula. The latter three languages belong to the Manding group – a language and dialect continuum within a larger Mande family (see Valentin Vydrine, *Manding-English Dictionary (Maninka, Bamana)*, vol.1: A-DAD, St. Petersburg, Dimitry Bulanin Publishing House, 1999, pp. 7–11; Bernd Heine & Derek Nurse (eds.) *African languages: an introduction*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 18–19.

were a subject of recent studies regarding their origin,² collections in which the manuscripts are found, as well as historical, cultural and linguistic background of their production.³ Previously, the manuscripts were referred to as Old Mande manuscripts. This term being too general, I prefer to name the manuscripts according to the main language of annotations: manuscripts with annotations in Soninke 'Ajamī and Jula 'Ajamī respectively.⁴

The present article aims at exploring visual and linguistic characteristics of these manuscripts. Special attention is given to the study of paratextual elements, in particular annotations.⁵ Drawing on the approach developed by D. Bondarev, annotations may be divided into two categories based on their content, function and placement on the page.⁶ The interlinear annotations, that represent translational activities, are referred to here as 'glosses'. More voluminous marginal annotations that are less dependent on the syntax and lexicon of the main text but deal more with its meaning, are called 'commentaries'.⁷ I will first address (a) arrangement of the main text and annotations on the page, (b) linking techniques used to connect a gloss or commentary to the referred word in the main text, (c) strategies of adaptation of the Arabic script for writing in local languages, and (d) tagging or labelling of glosses in languages other than Arabic. The comparative study and description allow to emphasize particular characteristics of each culture and illustrate cultural specificity of the manuscripts. Then I will examine the 'Ajamī material in the manuscripts in order to sketch the geographic and linguistic varieties of languages used in

2 Darya Ogorodnikova, "Exploring Paratexts in Old Mande Manuscripts", in *Tracing Manuscripts in Time and Space through Paratexts (Studies in Manuscript Cultures 7)*, eds. Giovanni Ciotti & Hang Lin, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2016, pp. 1–34.

3 Dmitry Bondarev, Nikolay Dobronravin, Darya Ogorodnikova, & Tal Tamari, "Soninke and Manding Glosses in West African Arabic Manuscripts", in *Bulletin of SOAS*, forthcoming.

4 Even though, for many manuscripts from the corpus the cultural background of their production is established, for others it remains pending (see more on it below). In this sense the language of the annotations is the core element for drawing clues about the origin of these manuscripts. For convenience, I refer to the entire corpus of the manuscripts as originating from the Islamic communities in the Mande speaking areas.

5 Paratext are broadly understood here as the secondary elements added to the main text with the functions of structuring (e.g. titles, headings), commenting (e.g. annotations), and documenting (e.g. colophons, ownership marks) (see Ciotti, Giovanni & Lin, Hang (eds.) *Tracing Manuscripts in Time and Space Through Paratexts*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2016).

6 D. Bondarev, "Islamic Education and Ample Space Layout in West African Manuscripts", in *The Arts and Crafts of Literacy: Manuscript Cultures in Muslim Sub-Saharan Africa*, eds. Andrea Brigaglia & Mauro Nobili, Berlin, De Gruyter, forthcoming.

7 D. Bondarev, "Islamic Education", *ibid.*

annotations and to investigate the functions of these languages in educational and religious practices.

Most of the analyses are done by me so far on manuscripts with ‘Ajamī material in Soninke. The manuscripts with annotations in Jula will be mostly described as to their visual characteristics. The analysis of their linguistic properties has a tentative and preliminary nature, and many generalisations drawn will be subject to revision in future research.

Corpus

The present study concerns manuscripts with ‘Ajamī annotations in Soninke (sometimes also with an additional layer of Manding glosses) and Jula.⁸ The total amount of bilingual and multilingual manuscripts with Soninke ‘Ajamī glosses exceeds one hundred (about 6000 digital images) with different texts, some of which are complete and others only surviving in fragments.⁹ The major part (approximately 80%) comes from the European collections. The search of the manuscripts containing ‘Ajamī material in Mande languages in libraries is complicated by the fact that this material, usually found in the form of annotations or even separate words, is left without any attention in the catalogues entries. Mislabelling of the languages is also not rare. Thus, the identification requires detailed examination of each page of a manuscript.

The identification of the manuscripts with annotations in Soninke ‘Ajamī in private collections is a result of several field trips carried out by the author in southern and north-eastern Senegal during the years 2013–2016. The search for manuscripts with ‘Ajamī material can be regarded as random in the sense that no special criteria were used for choosing a particular village and/or owner. Such choices mainly result from information given by local people, usually through a chain of contacts. During these field trips, it turned out that manuscripts with annotations in local languages are usually to be found in

8 Other manuscripts which evidence the usage of Arabic script for writing Mande languages are those with Arabic texts incorporating isolated words in ‘Ajamī, such as names of plants and instruments and with magico-medicinal formulae written in variety(ies) of Manding (yet to be identified).

9 The amount of the materials in ‘Ajamī varies considerably in the manuscripts and it was not a defining factor for my study. Thus, manuscripts with only few annotations in ‘Ajamī were also taken into consideration. The number of manuscript includes all those identified at the time of writing the first draft of this article. Since then, new material has emerged.

the families of Islamic scholars who still maintain the tradition of transferring their knowledge by translating and interpreting some popular didactic works. Yet, even when identified, the manuscripts are not necessarily accessible for detailed study, as owners may not allow researchers to touch them.

Many queries end without any tangible proofs of the manuscripts' existence. Often, I was redirected to different places where the manuscript tradition is considered to be strong and well represented (*e.g.* Timbuktu). Sometime, scholars who live in urban areas, mention their native villages as place of their collections. Explanations about the absence of manuscripts may include the destruction of manuscripts either accidentally (because of fire, water damages, insects, *etc.*) or on purpose. Purposeful destruction happens when manuscripts are no longer in use. For instance, with the aim of preserving the information scholars recopy older manuscripts using modern materials or replace them with printed editions, which according to many testimonies are much easier to read than the handwritten script. The originals are then buried or burned. For the same reason of being of no use, they can be given or sold away. Finally, some owners also claimed that larger manuscript collections kept in wooden or metallic cases were stolen, mistakenly taken by thieves for goods of high value.

The manuscripts in the present corpus are kept in four private collections from different sites in the Senegalese southern province of Casamance. However, the current location of manuscripts does not necessarily coincide with their place of production. The study of paratextual elements in the manuscripts allowed to establish origin for about thirty percent of the manuscripts annotated in Soninke, both from libraries and private collections. They can be located in present-day southern and eastern Senegal, the Gambia, and north-eastern Guinea.¹⁰ The exact dating is more complicated, the corpus spans a period from the late 18th through the 20th centuries.

The manuscripts with the Jula 'Ajamī glosses under study were found during a short field trip to Burkina Faso in September 2014. They contain approximately thirty-five units of different volume (that is about 1700 DI). They are kept in private collections of Saganogo and Traoré families in Bobo-Dioulasso and according to the information in the colophons were written by members of these same families. However, in some manuscripts colophons indicate other family names and the place of origin being outside of Bobo-Dioulasso. This is still to be investigated. It is safe to say that they were produced between the 19th and 21st centuries.

10 D. Ogorodnikova, "Exploring Paratexts", *ibid.* 2016.

As to the cultural background, most of the manuscripts from these two groups can be tentatively attributed to scholars of the western Jakhanke and eastern Jula branches of the Suwarian tradition.¹¹ This is evidenced by personal and place names recorded in colophons, ownership marks, *etc.*¹² The complete list of the libraries and private collections where bilingual and multilingual manuscripts with annotations in Soninke and Jula were identified cannot be given in the present article for lack of space. The references are provided only for the manuscripts addressed here. These manuscripts were found in the following European libraries: Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), Paris, France; University Library (ULL), Leiden, Netherlands; John Rylands Library (JRL), Manchester, United Kingdom; Palace Green Library (PGL), Durham, United Kingdom; Trinity College (TCD) Dublin, Ireland; Bibliothèque Universitaire des Langues et Civilisations (BULAC), Paris, France.

For the manuscripts in private collections, the names of the owners and locations are mentioned. Some of the owners preferred to remain anonymous, I therefore use their initials.

Multilingualism

Some of the manuscripts from the corpus can be regarded as multilingual since, in addition to the main text in Arabic, they contain different paratextual elements written in two or more vernacular languages. This is relevant for the

- 11 Jakhanke and Jula are two groups of scholarly lineages linked by historical and spiritual ancestry to the famous Islamic scholar al-Ḥājj Sālim Suware. The time when he lived ranges from the 13th to 15th century. The Jakhanke lineages ultimately stem from Dia (an ancient city in Masina in present-day Mali) and dispersed to establish new communities in what are now Senegal, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea. The Jula scholarly groups of the Suwarian descent were the prominent propagators of Islam among the people of present day Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso. See, among others: Lameen O. Sanneh, “Futa Jallon and the Jakhanke Clerical Tradition. Part II: Karamokho Ba of Touba in Guinea”, in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. xii, fasc. 2, 1981, pp. 105–126; Lameen O. Sanneh, *The Jakhanke Muslim Clerics: A religious and Historical Study of Islam in Senegambia*, Lanham, University Press of America, 1989; Abdoul Kader Taslimanka Sylla, *Bani Isra’el du Sénégal ou ahl Diakha peuple de diaspora*, Paris, Publibook, 2012; Ivor Wilks, “The Juula and the Expansion of Islam into the Forest”, in *The History of Islam in Africa*, eds. N. Levztion & R. Pouwels, Athens, Ohio University Press, 2000, pp. 93–115.
- 12 A study of paratextual elements aimed at establishing the origin of manuscripts with glosses in Soninke was carried out by Darya Ogorodnikova, “Exploring Paratexts.” For further details on the cultural background of the manuscripts with Soninke and Jula ‘Ajamī glosses, see Bondarev *et al.*, “Soninke and Manding glosses”.

manuscripts where the translation/ explanation in the form of annotations is mainly made in Soninke. The presence of an additional local language is attested in:

1. Supplementary layers of glosses. It can appear separately or parallel to the Soninke glosses, doubling the translation (see section “Glosses marked with *fī kalāminā*”).
2. Colophons. Generally, the information mentioning the owner and place of production of the manuscripts is written in Arabic. There are instances when it is composed entirely in a vernacular (but other than Soninke). The combination of Arabic and vernacular is also not rare. In this case, local words are used for denoting days of the week, indicating when the copying of the manuscript was finished, or for genealogical details about the owner and/ or scribe, while the rest of the colophon is in Arabic.
3. Inscriptions in margins. Most of them are represented by magico-medicinal recipes or talismanic formulae without any clear relation to the main text.

Each of these manifestations can be present alone, but usually, they are found in combination. The linguistic features of the Soninke glosses in these multilingual manuscripts might also be evidence of complex interactions between the vernaculars.¹³

13 These peculiarities were discussed during the meetings of Old Mande Research Network held at the CSMC, University of Hamburg in April 2015 and May 2016 and will be addressed in more detail in a separate publication. The data analysed so far allows to summarize some tendencies. The Soninke language represented in many of the manuscripts under study differs from the dialects described in available literature. The particular trait in question is a sporadic dropping of the uvular /x/ in the position between two vowels. For example, the Soninke word *māxankūtò* ‘attribute’ can appear in the glosses in at least five different spellings: <makakutu>, <maqakutu>, <ma’akutu> <ma’ kutu> or <maⁿku-tu>; the word *yāxaré* ‘woman’ can be rendered as <yakari>, <yaqari>, <ya’ ri> or <yari>; the word *nūxunnè* ‘nose’ appears written as <nuw ni> or <nukuni>, etc. The consonant lenition occurs predominantly between two /a/, and also in words that are cognate in Manding languages (such as Mandinka, for example), leading to absence of the uvular in the intervocalic position. There is no observable spelling convention in the representation of the intervocalic uvular both manuscript-internally and across the corpus of the manuscripts. The consonant can be encoded by either of the two Arabic graphemes *kāf* and *qāf*. If the consonantal grapheme is not used (i.e. omitted in writing), the intervocalic segment is spelled as a long or a short vowel. Yet, there is no manuscript examined so far where intervocalic /x/ is consistently underrepresented in writing (i.e. zero

Visual Characteristics

Placement on the Page (layout)

As mentioned previously, I focus on a particular category of manuscripts with the main text in Arabic and annotations in a vernacular.¹⁴ In these manuscripts, the main text is written in large characters, while the annotations appear in smaller script. In rare instances, the size of the letters is comparable to those of the main text. Depending on the manuscript, annotations in vernacular are scribbled in an unstable hand, or written in a neat and/or steady hand, sometimes imitating the style of the main text. The intensity of glossing and the number of glosses in vernacular may vary across the corpus of the manuscripts and also within one manuscript, some parts being heavily annotated and others left blank. Bondarev distinguishes two particular types of layout, in which annotations are most likely to be found. The **layout type 1** is characterized by spaced lines and wide margins. The extensive space between the lines allows to place the annotations in the close proximity to the explained word of the source text in Arabic. The gloss begins above the word and runs diagonally upwards. Otherwise, the annotations begin above the word in the source text and run parallel to the line.¹⁵ The texts of the annotation, if long, can also be arranged in small blocks above or below the referred word, allowing space for

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graphemic representation). These traits are typical for the manuscripts which originate from Mandinka-speaking areas. This is evidenced by toponyms indicated in colophons, as well as by the Mandinka words in an additional layer of the glosses and/or in colophons. There are also some percentage of manuscripts that do feature consonant dropping in the Soninke of the glosses, but do not have paratextual elements written in any other vernacular. On the other hand, there is another category of bilingual manuscripts recently collected in north-eastern Senegal and western Mali in which the omission of uvular /x/ between two vowels is not attested, this phoneme being invariably represented by *qāf*. Basing on these data, the consonant lenition in Soninke words identified in some manuscripts can be explained by the influence of Mandinka. This particular feature of sporadic under-specification of the consonant /x/ in writing can also be considered as an implicit hint to the presence of an additional language in cases where there are no explicit indications of multilingualism.

- 14 Several manuscripts with wide spaced layout annotated in Soninke ‘Ajāmī contain the same popular didactic texts on Islamic law, belief, grammar, *etc.* For the titles of the most frequent texts, see D. Bondarev, “Islamic education”.
- 15 In the case of Old Kanembu Qurʾān manuscripts the placement of the interlinear glosses could be indicative to the time of production. Thus, glosses written parallel to the line of the main text usually appear in earlier manuscripts and diagonal in later manuscripts (see Dmitry Bondarev, “Multiglossia in West African Manuscripts: A Case of Borno, Nigeria”, in *Manuscript Cultures: Mapping the Field*, eds. Jörg B. Quenzer & Dmitry Bondarev &

other glosses on the same line. These techniques demonstrate a careful and systematic approach of working with the text. In many instances, however, annotations, especially those added by a later hand, could be squeezed in the empty spaces, sometimes also written upside down or written at significant distance from the referred word. In the manuscripts with the **layout type 2** the text is arranged in dense lines with wide marginal space. Hence, the majority of the annotations appear in the margins.

There is also a certain correspondence between the number of annotations and the type of layout in which the main text is arranged, and also between the type of annotation and the language in which it is written.¹⁶ In the manuscripts with layout type 1, there are more interlinear glosses in vernacular, which are rarely longer than a sentence, and most commonly limited to the translation of a word or a short phrase. The manuscripts with the layout type 2 usually encompass more voluminous marginal commentaries, containing quotations or supplying alternative information from other texts. They are mainly written in Arabic, but some manuscripts also feature commentaries and glosses in Soninke.

Linking Techniques

If placed at distance from the text/word they refer to, the annotations are linked to the source text by a line. So far, the following types of linking techniques were attested in the manuscripts:

- a) a simple line the ends of which connect the annotation and the referred word in the main text.
- b) a line with a hook in two different shapes: most commonly, the hook is in the shape of the letter ‘*ayn*’ (Figure 1); another variant is when the line begins with a hook that looks like an inverted ‘*ayn*’ or a ‘tooth’ of the letter *sīn*. In both cases the hook points to the word in the main text.
- c) a loop-ended line; the loop can either be attached to the referred word in the main text or to the translation into local language (Figure 2). It is not infrequent, that the line has loops on both ends (Figure 3).

Jan-Ulrich Sobisch, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2014, p. 131). More investigation is needed to establish whether the same criteria are applicable for manuscripts with glosses in Soninke.

¹⁶ D. Bondarev, “Islamic Education”, *ibid.*

FIGURE 1 Simple lines and line with a hook. Private collection of Aliou Ndiaye, Senegal.
PHOTO BY AUTHOR

FIGURES 2 & 3 Linking line ending in a loop. Palace Green Library, Durham Ms Or1/Arab. 11/2 fol.13b. and University Library, Leiden, Ms Or.14.052(1) fol.5a

These types of linking techniques can be found in combination within one manuscript, for example, the same scribe links the glosses to the main text both by simple lines and hooked lines. However, there are also some features that are presumably specific to a certain geographical and/or cultural area. Thus, lines ending with loops are specific to the manuscripts annotated in Soninke, but were not yet reported in other manuscript cultures, as for example, Old Kanembu or Hausa. The line with a hook in the shape of a *sīn* “tooth” is used in the manuscripts from Burkina Faso, but never appears in those that can be attributed with Senegambia origin. It should also be noted that in the manuscripts with glosses in Soninke, a line as linkage is generally made even if the distance between the annotation and the referred word from the main text is short. In the manuscripts with Jula ‘Ajamī the linkage occurs more rarely. It is also common that the gloss begins close to the word from the main text, but due to lack of space it is carried on to the margins by stretching the stroke between the connected letters.

Non-Arabic Graphemes

Most commonly, the annotations in vernacular visually contrast the Arabic ones by the use of vocalic diacritic signs, which are often omitted in Arabic, but crucial for deciphering the text in local languages. However, in rare instances, the glosses in vernacular may be left without any vocalic notation.

For writing non-Arabic languages some manuscript cultures had developed additional characters different from standard ones. They can be of help for recognizing the presence of 'Ajamī elements in the manuscripts. While this is true for languages such as Hausa, Fulfulde and Wolof,¹⁷ it is not the case for Soninke. The strategy of rendering Soninke in Arabic script goes by using the existing graphemes that represent the closest analogues of Soninke sounds and by assigning to some of them additional non-Arabic reading. Thus, 'ayn in Soninke 'Ajamī is used for rendering /ŋ/ e.g. <'ari> ṇārī 'to see', but can also be used as support for a long vowel or vowels not preceded by a consonant.¹⁸ The letters *bā'* and *fā'* aside from the standard readings can both stand for /p/, like

17 See e.g. Meikal Mumin & Kees Versteegh eds., *The Arabic Script in Africa: Studies in the use of a Writing System (Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics)*, Leiden, Brill, 2014; Fallou Ngom, "Ajami Scripts in the Senegalese Speech Community", in *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 10, (2010), pp. 1–23; and Lameen Souag, "Ajami in West Africa", in *Afrikanistik online*, 2010, <http://www.afrikanistik-online.de/archiv/2010/2957>.

18 The examples of the glosses are organized as follows: in angular brackets the transliteration is given, then the interpretation, followed by a free translation. For the representation of non-Arabic graphemes, I use the system developed by Mumin & Versteegh, *The Arabic Script in Africa*, with some modifications. The basic letters of Arabic script are rendered with the symbols of the standard transliteration. The derived graphemes are encoded as a variant of the baseline letter by assigning them the Roman ordinal number in subscript. Thus, *ghayn* with three dots above ڭ is marked as <gh₁>, *wāw* with three above ڭ as <w₁>. In Mumin & Versteegh, the *yā'* shape without dots (i.e. *alif maqṣūra*) is considered the first derivation and rendered as <y₁>; another variation – *yā'* with three dots below in there is rendered as <y₂>. Since in this article I do not mark distinction between *yā'* and *alif maqṣūra*, I use <y₁> for *yā'* with three dots below ڭ. I mark the lexical tone of the Soninke words in accordance with available materials: Denis Creissels, "Phonologie segmentale et tonale du Soninké (parler du Kingi)", in *Mandenkan* 55, 2016, pp. 3–174; Ousmane Moussa Diagana, *Dictionnaire soninké-français (Mauritanie)*, Paris, Karthala, 2011. For Mandinka: Denis Creissels, *Lexique mandinka-français*, 2011, http://www.deniscreissels.fr/public/Creissels-lexique_mandinka_2011.pdf. For Julia: Abi Sangaré, *Dioula de Kong (Côte d'Ivoire): phonologie, grammaire : lexique et textes. Thèse de 3ème cycle*, Grenoble, Université de Grenoble, 1984. For Maninka: Vydrine, *Manding-English Dictionary*. The acute and grave diacritic marks are used for rendering the high and low tone respectively. The vowels without any diacritics carry the same tone as the preceding vowel.

in <sabi> sáppè ‘salt’ and <bafuw ri> bàppóorè ‘Nile perch’. The *yā*’ could be read as palatal glide /y/ or palatal /ɲ/, e.g. <ya’ ki> yáaxè ‘eye’ or <ya’ ka> jáagà ‘to pray’, ‘to supplicate’. However, in some manuscripts one dot below is used for rendering /e/. Three dots above the letter *kāf* are added for distinguishing voiced and voiceless velars /k/ and /g/. Although, this modified grapheme is mainly attested in more recent writings (e.g. in the glosses added by later hand to older manuscripts or to printed editions of texts).

The analysis of the orthographic features of texts written in Mandinka ‘Ajamī made by Vydrin demonstrates different approaches as to how non-Arabic sounds are codified. They could be regarded as individual choices made by each scribe. Some of them transform existing graphemes by means of additional dots. In terms of example, the palatal /ɲ/ can be represented by *yā*’ with three dots below. In some texts this same grapheme is used for rendering /c/. The sound /p/ is rendered with the letter *bā*’ having two dots below. The velar nasal /ŋ/ is occasionally rendered by *ghayn* with three dots above.¹⁹ The samples of Mandinka ‘Ajamī in the form of the interlinear glosses which appear in the manuscripts alongside with translations into Soninke, do not differ from the latter in terms of representing specific sounds. It is done by the same means: i.e. no modification of the script, but additional readings for several letters. More recent glosses in Mandinka written in pen or modern inks on older manuscripts, however, do introduce some innovations for the existent spelling model, for instance by adding a dot below *yā*’ for rendering /ɲ/ and two dots above *ghayn* for /ŋ/.

As to the manuscripts with glosses in Jula ‘Ajamī, some modified Arabic characters were introduced for representing the initial voiced velar stop /gb/.²⁰

- 19 Cornelia Giesing & Valentin Vydrine, *Ta'rikh Mandinka de Bijini (Guinée-Bissau): La Mémoire des Mandinka et Sòoninke du Kaabu*, Leiden & Boston, Brill, 2007; Valentin Vydrine, “Sur l’écriture Mandingue et Mandé en caractères arabes (Mandinka, Bambara, Soussou, Mogofin)”, in *Mandenkan* 33, 1998, pp. 1–87; Valentin Vydrin, “Ajami Scripts for Mande Languages”, in *The Arabic Script in Africa: Studies in the Use of a Writing System*, eds. Meikal Mumin & Kees Versteegh, Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014, pp. 199–224.”
- 20 Delafosse attests the usage of two modified Arabic graphemes for encoding sounds absent from Arabic in some Jula ‘Ajamī samples from Bonduku: *bā*’ with three dots below for /kp/ and *wāw* with three dots above for /gb/ (Maurice Delafosse, *Vocabulaires comparatifs de plus de 60 langues et dialectes parlés dans les régions limitrophes, avec des notes linguistiques et ethnographiques*, Paris, E. Leroux, iv, 1904). Donaldson reports the case of usage *ghayn* with three dots above for rendering /gb/ (Coleman Donaldson, “Jula Ajami in Burkina Faso: A Grassroots Literacy in the Former Kong Empire,” in *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, 28(2), 2013, pp. 19–36.

Depending on the strategy chosen by the scribe, it can be rendered by *wāw* or *ghayn* with three dots above, e.g. a gloss to *al-ḥammām* ‘the steam bath’: <ẓi w₁aniy šu> or <jigh₁anishu> jī gbànin só ‘house of hot water’, gloss to *wa fī l-shafatayn* ‘in the lips (dual)’ <da gh₁ulufila> dágbolo filá ‘two lips’; gloss to *bi-‘arīsh* ‘with arbour’: <w₁ ata> gbáta ‘shed, hangar’.

Tagging or Labelling Annotations in Vernacular Languages

Types of Tagging

There are also tags or labels that scribes use for marking different vernacular languages, in order to distinguish non-Arabic annotations. This is, for instance, the word ‘Ajamī (literally meaning non-Arabic), which usually appears at the end of the annotation. It may be represented in different shapes, which seem to differ in dependence to the regional or cultural specificity of a manuscript. Thus, in the corpus of manuscripts with glosses in Soninke, this label is usually written with the *yā*’ at the end (i.e. ‘ajamī).

It is also typical, that it appears in stylized form, and ‘Ajamī (Figures 4–6) is reduced to ‘ayn-jīm, with or without a dot under the *jīm* (Figures 7 (a) & 9(b)), or even to ‘ayn alone, which is written as if it would be in the initial position (Figure 8 (c)).

FIGURES 4, 5, 6 Labelling Soninke glosses. Trinity College Library, Dublin Ms 2689 fol. 24a; The John Rylands Library, Manchester Ms 780 [825] fol. 78b; Bibliothèque Universitaire des Langues et Civilisations, Paris, Ms.ARA.165a

FIGURES 7, 8, 9 Different types of abbreviations of the word ‘ajamī used for marking non-Arabic annotations

FIGURES 10 & 11 ‘Ajamī labelling in manuscripts annotated in Jula. Private collection of Hassan Traoré (left) and L.O. (right), Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso.
PHOTO BY AUTHOR

In the manuscripts collected in Burkina Faso, the annotations in Jula can be introduced by the Arabic *ay* ‘i.e.’. They are labeled with ‘*ajam*’ (عجم), which appears after the gloss. In one manuscript, the scribe used *fī* ‘*ajam*’ (lit. ‘in non-Arabic’) for introducing the glosses in vernacular. The word ‘Ajamī’ in the manuscripts examined is spelled generally with three letters – ‘*ayn-jīm-mīm*’. The tail of the *mīm* either goes down the line (Figures 10 & 11 (a)) or curves to the right (Figure 11 (b)). It is seldom that any abbreviation appears, but in some instances, it is attested in the shape of the “*ayn* hook” (sometimes also with one dot below) or simply with the letter ‘*ayn*’.

Another type of marking glosses in non-Arabic languages found in the manuscripts is the usage of the phrase *fī kalāminā* – ‘in our words’ or ‘in our language’ (in some rare instances: *min kalāminā* ‘from our words/language’ or *qūl fī kalāminā* ‘said in our words/language’). Generally, this tag appears before the annotation in vernacular, but can also be placed after it.

It should be noted that there is a distinction as to how this label is used in the two manuscript cultures under study. Thus, in manuscripts annotated in Jula, the labels ‘*ajam*’ and *fī kalāminā* seem to be interchangeable, and the glosses can be marked either by one of them or both. The tagging with *fī kalāminā* is however less frequent. In the multilingual manuscripts from Senegambia, this label is only attested for marking the glosses in an additional local language (Figure 12 (b)), while Soninke glosses either labelled with ‘*ajamī*’ (Figure 12 (a)) or remain unmarked.²¹

21 This is relevant for the manuscripts discussed in the present article, i.e. the annotated manuscripts. However, Constant Hamès provides examples where in the manuscripts

Nonetheless, there are examples when the scribe, while not providing too many details about the “main” language of the glosses (*i.e.* Soninke) or his own language (Manding, marked with *fi kalāminā*), is more precise about tagging the glosses in a different West African language. In such instances, the locality where the language is spoken is mentioned and/ or the name of the language. It can be demonstrated on the example from two manuscripts containing *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* kept in BULAC shelf mark Ms. ARA.112b (Figure 13) and in the collection of Aliou Ndiaye from Adéane, Senegal (Figure 14). The fragment of the text under study – sura *Yā-Sīn*:80 – mentions some varieties of green trees from which the fire is kindled. It includes the trees *markh* and *‘afār*, and all trees, except for jujube (*‘unnāb*).

In both manuscripts, the scribe further provides the word “jujube” with an explanation in Arabic: *al-‘unnāb ka-rummān thamar qāmūs* ‘the jujube similar to a fruit of pomegranate dictionary’ (Figures 13 & 14 (a)). In this commentary, the last word is most likely an indication that the definition was taken from a certain dictionary. In the link to this commentary one finds two almost identical annotations: <lbn lbn fi kalām ahl jn su‘uy> (Figure 13 (b)) and <lunbaⁿ

FIGURES 13 & 14 Two manuscripts with *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* Q36:80 with similar annotations in Arabic and the Songhay language of Jenne. Bibliothèque Universitaire des Langues et Civilisations, Paris, Ms. Ara.112b fol. 21a and private collection of Aliou Ndiaye, Senegal

lunbaⁿ ahl jn su'uy> (Figure 14 (b)).²³ Considering that the preceding commentary in Arabic defines the word “jujube” by comparing it to the fruit of the pomegranate tree, it is possible that the first element of the annotation <lnb lnb> or <lunbaⁿ lunbaⁿ> suggests an analogous local plant, named in Songhay *lumbulumba* a variety of ‘liana with suckable orange-red fruits’.²⁴

The next set of words <fi kalām ahl jn> can be understood as *fi kalām ahl Jenne* ‘in the language of people of Jenne’.²⁵ Finally, the last element of annotations in both manuscripts <su'uy> **sojoy** is most likely a designation which the scribe gives to people (or language) of Jenne and can be interpreted as Songhay.²⁶

In addition, the usage of the phrase *kalām al-‘arab* meaning most likely ‘language, talk of Arabs’ is found in some manuscripts for marking the definitions of words in Arabic, like for example the word *al-naskh* ‘copying’ is accompanied on the margins with an explanation on the margins as follows: *al-naskh fi kalām al-‘arab ibtāl shay’ wa-iqāma ākhar makānihi ba‘da ibtāl al-awwal* ‘in Arabic language “copying” [is] the erasure of a thing and the recreation of it in another place after the first elimination’.

Absence of Tagging

In about one third of manuscripts examined, the glosses in Soninke stay without any labelling. Some tentative explanations can be suggested. First, it might be seen in relation to the approach of annotating the main text. Thus, the labelling with *‘ajamī* is predominantly attested in manuscripts where the presence of Soninke glosses is relatively low (both in general and

23 The first word of the annotation is vocalized in the manuscript from southern Senegal. There is also <fi kalām> *fi kalām* ‘in the language of’ missing from this annotation, maybe accidentally omitted by the scribe. Although the two manuscripts contain several glosses providing names of plants in the same additional language, I refer to this exact gloss as it seems to be the most representative, since it contains indications on the locality and on the language in which it is written.

24 Jeffrey Heath, *Dictionnaire Songhay-Anglais-Français: Tome II Djenné Chiini*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1998, p. 14.

25 The reading “Jenne” is suggested on the basis of the neighboring annotation, where this word is vocalized with *kasra* (i.e. <jini>). This diacritic is commonly used for representing /e/.

26 This word **sojoy** (also spelled as **songoy**) is listed in Jeffrey Heath, *Dictionnaire Songhay-Anglais-Français: Tome III Koroboro Senni*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1998, p. 283.

in relation to annotations in Arabic). Depending on the manuscript, it can be consistent or sporadic. Conversely, in the manuscripts that are densely annotated in Soninke, this marking tends to be lacking. Secondly, it can be explained according to the origin of the manuscripts. Many of the manuscripts that differentiate Soninke from Arabic with the label *‘ajamī*, can be linked to the activity of the Jakhanke scholars under the spiritual guidance of al-Hajj Salīm Gassama, in the scholarly centre of Touba (Futa Jallon, Guinea), based on the names recorded in the colophons and the margins. Manuscripts with no or limited usage of this label mainly originate from the Gambian chiefdoms (Baddibu, Kombo, Noomi, *etc.*). However, neither of these hypotheses alone seem to be sufficient for explaining the presence or absence of the *‘ajamī* tagging in a manuscript. The combination of the first and the second may point to certain methods of working with Arabic texts practiced in different localities and maybe also at different stages of the traditional Islamic education. It is also probable that there are other reasons behind the choice of the scribes as to how to label non-Arabic annotations.

In contrast to the case of annotations in Soninke, marking of the translations in an additional local language (with rare exceptions) is consistent. Further, no abbreviation occurs for the label *fī kalāminā*. Only in few instances it appears reduced to *fī kalā*, but it is most likely because the scribe could not write it completely on the same line due to lack of space. Quite often, glosses in a vernacular other than Soninke receive double marking with both *fī kalāminā* and *‘ajamī*. Interestingly, as attested in several multilingual manuscripts from Senegambia, this double marking is applied for the early layer of glosses in Mandinka, however, glosses added by a later hand (usually written with pencil or pen) do not have any tagging at all.

Linguistic Features of the Annotations

Glosses in Soninke

The glosses in Soninke are well-formed phrases, conveying the meaning of the source text in Arabic and reflecting on its grammatical nuances. The main text is broken down in short phrases (one or more words), that are then carefully rendered in Soninke according to the following principles:

1. When translating a noun or an adjective or other words with attributive meaning, the phrase in the target language will be marked by an equational/identificational copula *ní*:
  - a) gloss to *al-imām* ‘leader’: <ka’ naⁿkiyini> kàananké *ní* ‘[it] is a leader’;

- b) gloss to *tayyib* 'good, pleasant': <a' ri 'i kani > à lîṅè gâ ní 'which is sweet, pleasant'.
- 2. Elements which include prepositions or conjunctions are rendered with the corresponding conjunction or postposition in the target language²⁷:
  - a) gloss to *wa-l-kalām* 'and words, speech': <duw safi> dó sèfé 'and speech';
  - b) gloss to *min ṣāḥir anfihi* 'from the visible [part of] his nose': <khali 'a nuw ni fuw ba"qa"ti" 'a> gèllí à núxunnè fó bangantèn ṅá 'from the visible part of his nose'.
  - c) gloss to *thumma attakhadhtumu al-'ijl* 'then you (m pl) took to yourselves the calf [as a god]': <sa' ki 'i da wu da" li"mi" tiki ka' maniy ya> sàagé ì dà wùdanlénmè tàgá kàmané yá 'then they have created (forged) the calf as their lord'.
- 3. When translating verbs and verbal phrases, the tense and aspect characteristics are considered:
  - a) gloss to *yafraghu al-mā* 'he pours water': <' wu dhi ḍu kunu"> à wó jí jòxúnu 'he pours water';
  - b) gloss to *lā yufidu al-nadam* 'the regret is not of help': <nimisayi" 'a' 'a ti i' wa sana> nìmisiyén ṅá à ntá ì wàsáná 'the regret, it does not satisfy them';
  - c) gloss to *aḍallānā* 'they (dual) lead us astray': <'i fili duw samudi> ì filli d'ó sámundi 'they two have deceived us';
  - d) gloss to *lam yazal* 'he (God) has not ceased': <a' lamakiri> Állà mà gìri 'God did not leave'.

This stability in the approaches as to the parsing of the main text in Arabic, but also to the translational techniques (both in terms of grammar and vocabulary) can be traced across the whole corpus of the manuscripts. That is, they were uniform in different geographical areas and for at least one hundred

27 These correspondences show very little variability, although in principle there may be more than one way of translating the same linguistic element. The Arabic *wa* 'and' typically rendered with the Soninke *dó* (see example 2a), although, it is also possible to use à *dó* 'and also' or *kafini* (*kafunu*) 'with', 'and'. This latter appears in the glosses in stable correspondence to another element in Arabic – *mā'a* 'with'. The same holds true for Arabic *thumma* 'then' may be translated with *kén fállè* 'after', 'then'. This translation, however, was not attested in the glosses, where the word *sàagé* 'then' is used (see example 2c). According to Diagana, this is a grammaticalized form of the verb *nàn sàagé* 'return', and it is only used as connective in the domain of Qur'ānic exegesis. See Diagana, "Dictionnaire soninké-français", p. 173. More on the fixed correspondences between Arabic and Soninke is to be found in Bondarev *et al.*, "Soninke and Manding glosses."

years. Tamari and Bondarev argue that scholarly language can be characterized by specific syntactic constructions, specialized or technical vocabulary, but also by usage of invariable correspondences between the grammatical and lexical elements of Arabic and those of the target language. In this sense, the linguistic characteristics of the Soninke of the glosses may evidence in favor of learned register of the language.²⁸ However, more detailed study is still to be done.

Intertextual Translations

There are variations in how closely the grammatical and lexical nuances of the source are reflected in Soninke. Some glosses represent an explanation rather than a direct translation. For example, the suffixed pronoun can be rendered in Soninke with a corresponding noun: gloss to ‘*alayhim* ‘on/upon them’ (*i.e.* ‘prophets’) <’a la’ fa’ ru nuⁿ maqa> Állà fáaronun màxá ‘on/upon the God’s prophets’. It can also appear in the form of a complete phrase in the target language, like in the following: gloss to *li-hi* ‘for him’ <’a na’ ’a lahudaⁿa’> à ná Allahu dá ‘it is for God.’

Other glosses demonstrate even higher level of independency of the main text as they appear through the medium of annotations in Arabic that clarify the meaning, provide synonyms, *etc.* In such instances, the linkage is usually made to the corresponding intermediary annotation. Yet, glosses may still be placed in the proximity to the word in the source text or even be connected to it by a line, but they base on the intermediary gloss in Arabic:²⁹

- (1) Word in the main text *li-wujūdihi* ‘for his existence’; interlinear gloss in Arabic: *ay li-wujūdihi khālīqu-l-khalā’iq* ‘*i.e.* for His existence, the Creator of all creatures’.

Soninke ‘Ajamī	Transliteration	Interpretation	Translation
يَكُونُ كَمَا كَيْ دُ	<tikifuw nu ⁿ taga ⁿ da’ na’ kitayi ⁿ da ⁿ >	tègefónun tàgan- daana kiteyen dá	‘for the existence of the Creator of all creatures’

28 T. Tamari & D. Bondarev “Introduction and Annotated Bibliography”, in *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 15/3, 2013, pp. 1–55.

29 These examples are taken from PGL Ms ORI/ARAB.11/1 fol. 14a and fol. 28a.

- (2) Word in the main text *ṭabīʿa* ‘nature’, ‘character’; interlinear gloss in Arabic: *khalāqa al-ʿālam bi-l-ṭab* ‘He created the world with the nature’.

أَدَّ تَلِكُ مُنْتَلَكُ تَبَا	<ʿa daʿ tiki funu ⁿ taka à dà tègefónun	‘he had created the creatures
tidhi ku yaʿ>	tàgá tí jíkù yá	with the nature’

The wording choice (see example (1)) and the grammatical structure (see example (2)) evidence that translations in Soninke relate specifically to Arabic glosses rather than to the passage in the main text.

Variation in Annotations

The same word of the main text may receive more than one translation into Soninke. This is, for example, the case when a manuscript accumulated different layers of annotations, which are written by different persons, who had worked with the text. Sometimes, the annotations can be repetitive and completely identical in terms of word choice, but exhibit minor differences in the strategies of encoding Soninke sounds in Arabic graphemes.

Annotations, written by the same hand, that refer to the same element in the main text, but offer variations in interpretation follow one after another divided by the Soninke conjunctive *mà* ‘or’:

Glosses to *ka-lladhīayunfiqū mālahu riʿāʿ al-nās* ‘[in the manner of the one who expends of his substance] to show off to men’³⁰:

Soninke ‘Ajāmī	Transliteration	Interpretation	Translation
سُرُو نْيَاكُولَا غَرِيْسَابَدَا	<suru w nu ⁿ yakuw la ⁿ ‘ari yi ⁿ sa’ buda ⁿ >	sòrónun yáaxòn lájariyen sáábù dá	‘for the eyes of people to see’
مَا سُرُوْن لَكِيْ كِيْسَابَدَا	<ma’ suru w nu ⁿ laki ⁿ ku ⁿ yi ⁿ sa’ buda ⁿ >	mà sòrónun láqqèn kóyen sáábù dá	‘or for the mouths of people to talk’
مَا سُرُوْن تَزْ مَكِيْسَابَدَا	<ma’ suru w nu ⁿ turu ⁿ muku ⁿ yi ⁿ sa’ buda ⁿ >	mà sòrónun tóròn mùguyén sáábù dá	‘or for the ears of people to hear’

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30 Text of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* Q 2:264, manuscripts from a private collection of Aliou Ndiaye, Senegal. Translation of the quoted fragment by Feras Hamza from <http://www.altafsir.com>.

FIGURE 15 Annotations in Soninke ‘Ajamī. Trinity College Library, Dublin MS 2179, fol. 19b

Alternatively, they can be labelled with the Arabic word *ṭarīq* ‘way/method’ and a corresponding number (always spelled as a word): *al-awwal* ‘the first’, *al-thāni* ‘the second’, *al-thālith* ‘the third’, etc.

Numbering in Arabic is also used for linking glosses or commentaries that are connected by their meaning, but written separately. This can be illustrated with the example from the manuscript TCD MS 2179, which contains *al-Risāla* composed by Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawani (d. 996). The passage in the main text gives examples of bodily fluids that need to be washed out (Figure 15). In the case of sperm, the liquid is described as follows: *rā’ihatuhu ka-rā’ihati-l-ṭal* ‘it smells like a date palm blossom’.³¹

The scribe provides additional information on the topic in the form of separate annotations. Though, the meaning of Soninke annotations differs to a certain extent from the Arabic source, he links each of them with a line to the words in the main text. He groups the four annotations to two pairs numbering them respectively with the Arabic ordinal numerals *al-awwal* ‘the first’ and *al-thāni* ‘the second’. Under ‘first’, he describes the case of a healthy person, while under ‘second’, he explains about a sick person:

³¹ Translation of the quoted fragment from Joseph O.P. Kenny, *The Risāla: Treatise on Mālikī Law of Abd Allāh ibn-abībZayd al-Qayrawānī* (922–996), Islamic Education Trust Minna, Niger State, Nigeria, 1992.

Pair of annotations in Soninke marked with the Arabic ordinal numeral *al-awwal* 'the first' (Figure 15 (a)):

Source text	Transliteration of the glosses	Interpretation	Translation
<i>rā'ihatuhu</i> 'its smell'	<maniy ti ⁿ mi ⁿ 'a siri ṣaḥatida ⁿ >	máni tímèn njá sèré sàhanté dá	'the smell of sperm of a healthy person'
<i>ka-rā'iha</i> 'like smell'	<'a naku tamari y yikuw fuw ki ti ⁿ mi>	à nà qóò támàré yígefo ké tímè	'it is like the smell of the date fruits'

Pair of annotations in Soninke marked with the Arabic ordinal numeral *al-thāni* 'the second' (Figure 15 (b)):

<i>rā'ihatuhu</i> 'its smell'	<sari wa tu ⁿ ti maniy ti ⁿ mi ⁿ 'a>	sèré wátúnte mání tímèn njá	'the smell of sperm of the sick person'
<i>al-ṭal'</i> 'date palm blossom'	<'a nakuyi ⁿ li muti tiy ti ⁿ mi ⁿ 'a>	à nà qóò yèllé mòtinté tímèn njá	'it is like the smell of the rotten egg'

The majority of the glosses are anonymous. In some cases, however, they may be assigned to a person (in some cases to the same individual, who had written the manuscript, in others not). The name of the scribe, who added the annotation appears after the words *min yadi* 'from the hand of'. It is also worth noticing, that this attribution mainly appears after longer commentaries in Arabic or Soninke, rather than after short glosses in vernacular, even if judging by the similarity of handwriting they could be attributed to the same person.

Glosses Marked with *fī kalāminā*

Glosses in Mandinka

Generally, the glosses in the additional local languages are less numerous than the glosses in Soninke. They could appear parallel to the translation into Soninke or alone. It is worth mentioning that identical translations of some words were found in several manuscripts (containing same or different texts). Some of the glosses appear in sets, for instance in the manuscripts with the

FIGURES 16, 17, 18 Similar commentaries suggesting the names of the animals (fish) that swallowed Yunus in three manuscripts: Bibliothèque Universitaire des Langues et Civilisations Ms. Ara.112b, fol. 219a, private collection of Aliou Ndiaye, Senegal, Bibliothèque nationale de France Ms.Arabe 5439 fol. 37a

famous exegetical text *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* form BULAC, shelf mark Ms. Ara.112b and from the collection of Aliou Ndiaye (Figures 16 & 17).³²

The names of some animals (and fish) accompany the word in the main text *fa-ltaqamahu* ‘and he devoured him’, ‘he swallowed him up’. The intermediate commentary in Arabic (marked with (a) on Figures 16 & 17) reads as follows: *wa-fi ba‘di-l-riwāyati asmā’ li-ḥitān alladhīna ibtal’ūhu* ‘and in some accounts the names of the fish that swallowed him (i.e. Yunus)’. These names are followed by the equivalents in Soninke (b) and an additional local language – Mandinka (c).³³

Interestingly, similar annotations with the same group of words for different types of animals are attested in another in the manuscript BnF Ms Arabe 5439 fol. 37a, containing a poem in praise of the Prophet. However, unlike the two *Tafsīr* manuscripts, the one from the BnF does not have the Soninke translations, but only Manding glosses marked with *fi kalāminā* (Figure 18 (c)).

Category	Arabic	Soninke	Mandinka
Fauna, flora	<i>wa-l-timsāḥ</i> ‘and crocodile’	<duw kiniy> dó kínè ‘and crocodile’	<banba> bàmba ‘crocodile’
	<i>wa-ḥāḥāk</i> (sic.) ‘and hippopotamus’?	<dwu ka’ mi> dó wùngáamè ‘and hippopotamus’	<mali> mālì ‘hippopotamus’
	<i>al-burbūt</i> ‘burbot’	<du bafū ri> dó bàppóorè ‘and Nile perch’	<sa’ lin> sáalen ‘Nile perch’
	<i>ka-l-khafāfish</i> ‘like bats’	-	<tushu> tònso ‘bat’
	<i>wa-l-jawāmīs</i> ‘and the buffaloes’	<duw ja’ musa’ nu ⁿ > dó jaamusanun ‘and buffaloes’	<kubiru> kòoburu ‘humped buffalo’
	<i>wa-l-bahma</i> ‘and lamb, sheep’	<duw ja’ kili ⁿ mi> dó jàxélenmè ‘and lamb’	<sa’ jiydi ⁿ di> sàajiidíndiḡ ‘lamb’
	<i>al-jazar</i> ‘the carrot(s)’	-	(a) <wusu> wóso ‘sweet potato’ (b) <k’a ⁿ ḡa ⁿ > kánja ‘okra, gumbo’
	<i>ka-l-sūs</i> ‘like the woodworm’	<’i kubutu ⁿ buta’> ì qóò bòtonbotaa[na] ‘like a hole piercer’	<du ⁿ > dúḡ ‘wood eating insect’

32 These manuscripts were addressed earlier in this article. See section “Tagging or labelling annotations in vernacular languages”, pp. 14–16.

33 See the translations in the table below.

Category	Arabic	Soninke	Mandinka
Archi- tectural structures	<i>al-‘uṭm</i> ‘blockhouse’	-	<tata’> tàta ‘fortress’
	<i>sūrahā</i> ‘its wall’	-	<bu ⁿ kubuw> búṅkabo ‘adobe wall’
Arms, tools and utensils	<i>aṭlāl</i> ‘ruins’	<tuw bu ‘a> tónbonṅè ‘ruins’	<tu ⁿ bu ⁿ kutuw> túmbuṅ kòto ‘ancient ruins’
	<i>fī l-manjāniq</i> ‘in catapult’	<fi yra mi du> pii[te] yīraamé dí ‘in a cloth for throwing’	<da fura> dàmpuraṅ ‘slingshot’
	<i>tijfāf</i> ‘protective armor’	<kula’ di ya> kúlàadé yá ‘a piece of wrapped cloth used to carry load’	<fiy ⁿ ki> fīṇṇki ‘a piece of wrapped cloth used to carry load on the head’
	<i>wa-sahm</i> ‘and arrow’	<bu ⁿ ni ^m ‘a> búnnèn ṅá ‘arrow’	(a) <biyin> bèpe ‘arrow’ (b _m) <qalabiy ₁ uw> kálabepo ‘arrow’
	<i>wa-maqīṣ</i> (sic.) ‘?’	<du qidu> dó qédò ‘and sickle’	<wu ru tu> wòroto ‘sickle’
	<i>wa-miḥrāt</i> ‘and plow’	<du tunki> dó tóngè ‘and plow’	<da ba> dàba ‘hoe’
	<i>dithāraka</i> ‘your cover’	<‘ankufa’ ri fuyi> án qùfàarinfo ‘your coverage’	<bitira> bítiraṅ ‘coverage, blanket’
	<i>bī-l-dahw</i> ‘with bucket’	<tika’ yiya> tí gàayé yá ‘with rope and container for drawing water’	<dhu lu mira ⁿ ‘u> jùlu mirāṅo ‘calabash bowl with rope’
	<i>fī-l-mā’ al-inā</i> ‘in the water of the vessel’	<kuli ⁿ ji’ du> qóllèn jí dí ‘in the water of the receptacle’	<jitara ^{nfor jar, drinking cup’}
Sub- stances	<i>al-ma’āzif</i> ‘stringed instruments’	-	<bala> bála ‘xylophone’
	<i>al-qār</i> ‘tar, pitch’	<mana> mánà ‘viscous substance’	<mana> mána ‘viscous substance’
	<i>wa-l-dawā</i> ‘and for the remedy’	<safa’ ri y da ⁿ > sáfàré dá ‘for remedy’	<bw r> bóori ‘medication’
	<i>al-sham</i> ‘the wax’	<mali ⁿ > málèn ‘the wax’	<ka’ ya> kàajri ‘wax’
	<i>bī-l-hinnā</i> ‘with henna’	-	<buluwu> bùlúwo ‘washing blue’
	<i>au jīr</i> ‘or lime’	<ma’ kiyru> mà giiru ‘or lime’	<butū> bùutu ‘ashes, dust’

Category	Arabic	Soninke	Mandinka
Body related	<i>khawāšir</i> 'waists'	-	<kuw kili> kóokili 'kidney'
	<i>bi-akbād</i> 'with livers'	<ti ⁿ buti ⁿ 'a> t'ì búttèn ɲá 'with their livers'	<dhu su> jùsu 'liver, heart'
Abstract nouns, emotional states		<sundun buna' quw ya ma' nuqudu bura' quw ya> sòndonburaaxu mà nòxon- dunburaaxu 'evil heart or wickedness'	<kunutu kuya'> kónotokuyaa 'evil, cru- elty, meanness'
	<i>al-faza</i> 'fear'		<s ^o la 'uw> sílaɲo 'fear'
	<i>bi-l-sa'd</i> 'with the good luck'	<ti wu lili ⁿ 'a kuw ya> tí wùlalinɲaaxu yá 'with fortune'	<kuna' di ya> kùnnadii- yaa 'luck, good fortune'
	<i>fa-kam anna</i> 'how many moans'	<kuw tumayi' na ⁿ kaba'> giútúmèye nànn gàbé 'groans are many'	(a) <'uta ⁿ > ɲúntaɲ 'groan' (b. _m) <gh ¹ ta ⁿ wu> ɲúntaɲo 'groan'
	<i>wa-l-ħirṣ</i> 'and the desire, eagerness'	<du sa' nu muya' kuw ya> dó sá[go]nù mùɲaaxu yá 'and endurance to desires'	<kuru tu di ya> kóron- tondiyaa 'haste'
	<i>ṭa'a</i> 'obedience'	-	<sabari ⁿ > sábari 'patience, tolerance'
Other	<i>'adūw abika</i> 'enemy of your father'	<'a fa' ba ku ⁿ ni ⁿ niy> án fāaba qónnèn ní '[it] is the enemy of your father'	<' f' dh w> í fāa jáwu 'enemy of your father'
	<i>al-ṣadika</i> 'friend'	-	<tiy ri diy mā> téeri díima 'sweet/good friend'
	<i>zādaka</i> 'your provision, supply'	<'a di 'i ⁿ fa> án dènɲéfo 'your provision'	<sila fada> sílafanda 'provision'
	<i>wa-ashara-l-muḥarram</i> 'and tenth of Muharram'	<'a l ^o muḥara mi kasuw tanmu 'a> al-Muḥarram qásò tánmú ɲá 'tenth of the month of Muharram'	<musu kutu> mùsukó- too '1st month of the lunar year'

Category	Arabic	Soninke	Mandinka
	<i>ṣāma sittatu alafi</i>	<’a kada sini wu dhi ni	<ji wu li wu ru> [sán]jii
	<i>sanat</i> ‘fasted for six	tumi suw mu> à gà dà sīnè	wúli wóoro ‘six thousand
	thousand years’	wújunè tūnmú súumù ‘he	years’
		fasted for six thousand	
		years’	

The preliminary examination of the glosses allows us to suggest that glossing in Mandinka ‘Ajamī is not made randomly. It is possible to trace a certain regularity as to what semantic types of words they refer to in the main Arabic text. They can be tentatively grouped under several categories:³⁴

From comparison of the glosses in two languages it becomes apparent that translations into Soninke carefully reflect the grammatical structures of the source text, taking into consideration the conjunctions, postpositions, suffixed pronouns, *etc.* The glosses in Mandinka, with some exceptions, mainly address the core semantic elements of the referred fragment of Arabic text. In both languages, the choice of an analogous word or concept lies in the similarity of functions, like, for instance, the translation of a ‘protective armour’ with ‘cloth used to protect the head while carrying the load’, or in example with ‘sling-shot’ used for explaining ‘catapult’, both being weapons meant for throwing, or again with henna and washing blue, where resemblance based on the ability of these agents (substances) to cause color change. In some cases, the translations into Soninke are represented by the Arabic borrowings, *e.g.* **jaamusanu** ‘with buffalos’, **mà giiru** ‘or lime’, while in Mandinka it rather goes by the search of an example from the local context (even if it is not fully equivalent).³⁵

34 This table is not complete and provides only some glosses from fifteen out of about thirty five manuscripts kept both in European libraries and private collections. The additional language in the glosses could be identified as Mandinka. Some of the words from the main text in Arabic have several translations into vernacular. In this case, they are marked with letters (a), (b), *etc.* If the gloss is added by a later hand and written in pen or modern inks, I mark it with .m for ‘modern’.

35 The singular form of Arabic *jāmus* ‘buffalo’ is used combined with the Soninke plural suffix -nu. The word **giiru** is not attested in any available dictionary. It is recognized by my consultants as a borrowing from Arabic *jūr* ‘lime’ integrated into Soninke vocabulary. They also mentioned that it is not known by the Soninke speakers not familiar with the specific context of the Qur’ānic interpretation and in the spoken language the word **lāsó** (from French ‘la chaux’) ‘lime’ is used.

In this regard, one of the manuscripts collected during a field trip to southern Senegal is of a certain interest. It is a two-folio wordlist, in which words in Arabic are provided with an equivalent in Mandinka preceded by the phrase *fī kalāminā*. They are arranged according to a certain order: the words that can be attributed to the same semantic category, such as names of some housewares, birds, aquatic animals and fish, wild animals and insects, are written following one another. Still neither a visual distinction between these groups of words, nor naming of the categories is made. The words from this wordlist partly coincide with the ones attested in the glosses. It is very tempting then to suggest, that this type of document was used as aids for working with Arabic texts.

While in the examples discussed above the target element of translation is predominantly a noun, a few instances are attested, where a gloss in Mandinka appears parallel to the one in Soninke for rendering Arabic verbal phrases:

(1) Gloss to *intafakhat awdājuhu* 'his jugular veins swelled'

Language	Transliteration	Interpretation	Translation
Soninke	<'a ka ⁿ ni ⁿ yimu ⁿ yiti>	à qànnénpiimún yití	'his jugular veins swelled'
Mandinka	<ka ⁿ fasa>	kánfasa	'jugular vein'

(2) Gloss to *thumma yalighuhu* 'then he licks it'

Soninke	<sa' kiy i' wa ta' ra na>	sàagé i w'à tàrana	'then they lick it'
Mandinka	<niwu 'u>	néwuŋ	'to lick'

(3) Gloss to *yaklabu* '[but if a horse put in *hubus*] becomes mad'³⁶ (intermediate Arabic gloss: *yamalluka* 'it becomes impatient with you'):

Soninke	<a wu kiyidi ni>	à wó qínindini	'it bites'
Mandinka	<ki ⁿ di ri>	kíndiri	'biting'

36 Translation of the cited fragment by Kenny, *The Risāla*.

(4) Gloss to gloss to *dahanat* ‘she rubbed oil’

Soninke	<‘a ka’ da’ ri ⁿ di>	à gà dáarindì	‘she rubbed oil’
Mandinka	<muw ri>	‘mùuri’	‘oiling, greasing’

In these examples, the Mandinka ‘Ajamī glosses are mainly single-word translations, which address the noun component of the referred phrase (1), or provide an infinitive (2) or nominalized form of the verb (3 & 4), leaving aside grammatical aspects of the source text.

Glosses in Maninka

Another local language which is used alongside Soninke for explanation purposes in two manuscripts kept in BnF shelf marks Ms. Arabe 5299 and Ms. Arabe 5609 can be identified as Maninka.³⁷ The translation of the source text is based on the system of fixed correspondences between lexical and functional items in Arabic and Maninka. Thus, for instance, Arabic *wa* ‘and’ and *‘in* ‘if’ are rendered with *àní* ‘and’ and *ní* ‘if’; the preposition *fī* ‘in’ and *‘alā* ‘on’ are conveyed with the postpositions *dó* and *mà* respectively. This approach is similar to what is attested in the Soninke ‘Ajamī glosses. The same applies to the verbal phrases that are translated into target languages (both Soninke

37 Interestingly, even though the glosses in the two manuscripts demonstrate similar grammatical and phonological characteristics, the orthography in Ms. Arabe 5299 shows some particular features. For instance, grapheme *ḍāl* is occasionally used in free alternation with conventional *lām* for rendering /l/ in Maninka glosses. The lower dot represents /e/ both in Soninke and Maninka. Although no evident distinction is made between the open and closed vowels, I assume that the variety of the language in question belongs to the Eastern branch of Manding subcontinuum, and has 7 vowels. Therefore, by Maninka I mean the variety of Guinea-Conakry and Mali (Manding region). The main grammatical characteristics that allow this conclusion are as follows: 1) predicate marker *kā* used for perfective affirmative; 2) marker *lá* is attested in alienable possessive constructions; 3) plural is formed with *-lu/ -nu*. The phonological distinctive features are: 1) *k-* in the initial position (which corresponds to *c-* in other varieties: *e.g.* *kě:cě* ‘man’, *kín:cín* ‘bite’); 2) *-d-* in the position between two vowels (which corresponds to *-r-* in Bamana and *-t-* in Mandinka: *e.g.* *kúda:kúra:kúta* ‘new’, *túdu:túru:tútúu* ‘to plant’). The retention of the intervocalic velar *-g-* (or *-k-*) distinguish the variety of the glosses from Maninka-Mori.

and Maninka), considering the tense, aspect and mood characteristics of the source language:³⁸

(1) Gloss to gloss to *jaddada al-shaikh* 'the sheikh renewed'

Maninka 'Ajamī	Transliteration	Interpretation	Translation
يَم كَكَدَقَدِيلَ يَ	<kimu kukaquda quda yali key>	kèmcɔgɔ kà kúdakudayali ké	'the elder made the renovation'

(2) Gloss to gloss to *athinahu* 'he listened to him'

أَبَدَ أَ تَلَى مَلُ	<'a bada 'a tulu malu>	à báda à tólomalo	'he listened'

(3) Gloss to *fa-lā tagħḍabna* 'you (fem. dual.) should not become angry'

الْكَنْدُ وَمِمْ	<'al ^o kana di miya ma>	álu káná dími à mà	'you (pl.) should not become angry with him'

(4) Gloss to *wa tashfaqu* 'and you have pity'

إِ بِهِنَالِ	<'i bihinala>	í bé híнала	'you have mercy'

(5) Gloss to *fi-mā qad ġarasta* 'what you have planted'

إِ كَا وَشَدُ	<'i ka' mitudu>	í kà mén túdu	'what you have planted'

Annotations in Jula³⁹

Generally, the manuscripts with glosses in Jula found in Burkina Faso do not have much 'Ajamī material. Usually only some words and phrases from the

38 Examples 1–3 are taken from Ms. Arabe 5299; examples 4–5 are from Ms. Arabe 5609.

39 The main phonetic features that characterize the language of the glosses: (a) phoneme /r/ attested in postposition *rá*, nominalising suffix *–ri*: e.g. *fī al-awwal* 'at first' <juwna ra> *jóona rá* 'early', gloss to *al-ḥusbān* 'calculation' <dh atiri> *jàtiri* 'account', and also in the intervocalic position gloss to *al-khajal* 'shame' <maru ya> *màruya* 'shame', gloss to *inqisāmuhu* 'its fragmentation' <tara> *táran* 'part', gloss to *nawan* 'date pits', 'fruit stones'

main text in Arabic receive translation. It is possible to identify two approaches which treat grammatical aspects of the source language by reflecting them in the target language. First, in many cases verbal phrases are only provided with an equivalent of the semantic verb, without marking person, number or tense and aspect characteristics. This could be illustrated with the following examples: (1) gloss to *qad gharasta* ‘you have planted’ <tutu> tútu ‘to plant’; (2) gloss to *yakhūnū* ‘they betray’ <janfa> jànfá ‘to betray’. The noun elements from the main text are also rendered with one word without the related conjunctions, prepositions or suffixed pronouns: (1) gloss to *bi-alamīnā* ‘with our pain’ <di yimi> dími ‘pain’; (2) gloss to *ḍarratuhā* ‘her co-wife’ <sinamusu> sinamusu ‘co-wife’. Second, some of the glosses are well-formed phrases composed in accordance with following grammatical rules of both languages (1 & 2), with rendering Arabic dual by means of the Jula cardinal number *fila* ‘two’ (3) and by considering the postpositions related to the word from the source text (4).

- (1) Gloss to *qad inataqaba* ‘he has put on a veil’:

Jula ‘Ajamī	Transliteration	Interpretation	Translation
أَ بَرَزَ	<’a biri ra>	à b́rira	‘he covered’

- (2) gloss to *mālik* ‘ruler, owner, proprietor’:

مَرْبِكْ	<mara ri bakalu>	màraribaka lò	‘[he] is the owner’

- (3) Gloss to *al-kū‘ayn* ‘elbows (dual.)’:

نَعْرَ فِلا	<nu’ukkuru fila’>	nòngonkuru fila	‘two elbows’

- (4) Gloss to *fī* ‘ushshihi’ ‘in his nest’:

يَقَر	<yaqara>	ṇàgá rá	‘in the nest’

<tamaru kuru> tamaro kóro ‘date seed’; (b) presence of –w- in the position between the vowels, e.g. gloss to *al-baṣal* ‘onion’ jàwá ‘onion’. Such features are typical for the Jula dialect spoken in Kong, an important pre-colonial commercial and educational centre in Ivory Coast (Derive, *Étude dialectologique*; Sangaré, *Dioula de Kong*).

Concluding Remarks

Bilingual and multilingual manuscripts from Mande speaking areas of West Africa evidence that traditional Islamic scholars had developed a complex system of working with Arabic texts. These practices comprise several languages, which interact on different levels. A study, that goes beyond focusing on the main text and takes into consideration codicological and palaeographic aspects of the manuscripts, and also analyses the paratextual elements, allows to understand and reconstruct the methods and the role of the local languages involved in the educational processes.

The manuscripts from the corpus examined for this article share a number of visual characteristics, such as script style, layout, linking techniques and the way of labelling non-Arabic annotations. In their combination, these features evidence the existence of certain traditions and might be indicative of the cultural, geographical and possibly temporal origins of manuscripts. Accurate placement of the glosses on the page and precise linkage give us hints of the working techniques with the text and indicate that commenting was a well-planned process in the manuscript usage. Linguistic configuration of this process can be explored thanks to several hints in the manuscripts. Interestingly, the distribution of the languages as to writing different types of paratexts provides certain insights into the role of the vernaculars. For instance, in multilingual manuscripts Soninke is not attested for writing colophons and Mandinka is used for this purpose instead. Similarly, Mandinka is attested in amulets and talismanic formulae in the manuscript form the same cultural area. This suggests that Soninke was exclusively used for interpretation and commenting on the texts.

Uniform strategies for encoding Soninke and Mandinka of the glosses in Arabic scripts, as well as the fact that annotations in both languages are usually written by the same hand allow us to consider them as complementary parts of a unified system. However, the two languages apparently had different functions, which are reflected in different approaches to the translation. The Soninke glosses are intended to explain the meaning and grammatical structure of the source text. Mandinka glosses in these manuscripts are mainly oriented to convey its meaning, which in many cases goes by the search for an equivalent from the local reality. Thus, the function of these glosses is to place the reader in a familiar context. Distinguishing two languages by tagging them with *ʿAjamī* and *fī kalāminā* serves as evidence that Soninke was also used for the translation and interpretation of texts by non-Soninke speakers. The absence of tagging of Soninke glosses and the meticulous marking of the additional translational language suggests that Soninke was a default intermediary

language of exegetical practices among the Jakhanke communities of Senegambia (and maybe also beyond). The coherence in translations and fixed grammatical and lexical correspondences between Soninke and Arabic could serve as evidence of the existence of a specific exegetical language developed by traditional scholars that remained stable over vast geographical areas and through time. Even though the evidence is still quite limited, a similar approach to translations is observed in Maninka ‘Ajamī glosses. The manuscripts with glosses in Jula demonstrate an approach to translational practices different from these two. An interesting question is why the scholars were using Arabic words for “navigating” through the paratextual elements. This, in particular, concerns labeling the glosses with *‘Ajamī* and *fī kalāminā* and the numbering of examples and different interpretations with Arabic numerals. This has a potential to provide further clues about the functions of the local languages.

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