



African Studies Center
Readers in Ajami



MANDINKA AJAMI READER & MULTIMEDIA WEBSITE

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& Multimedia Website

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The images featured in this *Reader* were taken by members of the Mandinka Ajami fieldwork team, unless otherwise noted.

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Introduction: Mandinka Ajami Reader

Ajami is the term used to refer to non-Arabic languages and literatures that are written with specially adapted forms of the Arabic script. African Ajami literatures hold a wealth of knowledge about history, politics, and cultural and intellectual traditions of the region, but are generally unknown due to lack of access. The rich Ajami traditions on the continent refute the assumptions that Africa lacks written traditions. Ajami remains important in urban market-places and other centers of the informal economy, and in rural areas where Quranic schools are the primary educational institutions. The result of this widespread grassroots literacy has been the production of a large corpus of Ajami documents spanning several centuries that represents an essential source of knowledge of many African cultures.[1]

Our specialized Ajami Readers in Wolof, Mandinka, and Hausa - three major African languages with rich written Ajami literatures - aim to provide students, language teachers, scholars, and professionals with the necessary linguistic, cultural, and literacy skills to engage with Ajami users of West Africa.[2]

Readers in Ajami and the companion website are rich sources for students and various professionals interested in becoming bridge builders to these increasingly

[1] See also Ngom, F., Rodima-Taylor, D., and Robinson, D. (2023). 'Ajami Literacies of Africa: The Hausa, Fula, Mandinka, and Wolof Traditions. *Islamic Africa*, 14(2), 119-143.

[2] Our project, *Readers in Ajami and Companion Multimedia Website* (<https://sites.bu.edu/ria/>), was funded by a three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education Title VI Program.

important Muslim societies of the Sahel region. These instructional resources cover a range of fields, including business and economy, health and medicine, agriculture and the environment, and human rights, politics, and diplomacy.

In this Reader, you will find materials in Mandinka Ajami. The Ajami tradition in Mandinka and other Mande languages originated in the Mali Empire, which flourished from around 1200 to 1400 CE. The empire expanded in multiple directions, establishing colonies of traders and settlers across much of West Africa, including the Senegambia region. Its most renowned ruler, Sunjata Keita (c. 1217-1255), is remembered through oral tradition, the accounts of griots, and the work of historian Djibril Tamsir Niane.[3] However, one of his successors, Mansa Musa (c. 1280-1337), became much better known to the outside world. His highly visible pilgrimage to Mecca, accompanied by a large entourage and substantial amounts of West African gold, earned him a prominent place on late medieval maps of Africa.[4] During the centuries of Mali's prominence, Mande communities, particularly the Jula subgroup, traded and settled widely in regions now known as Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, The Gambia, and Senegal.

While Ajami traditions in Mande languages appear to have developed early, they remain among the least thoroughly documented. Mandinka scholars in Senegambia produced significant texts on both religious and non-religious topics in prose and poetry. They also established over 60 Islamic learning centers in the region, which, according to oral sources, served as sanctuaries for runaway slaves during the precolonial era. In Senegal, we have discovered an Ajami chronicle of the state of Kaabu (which spanned parts of The Gambia, Senegal, and Guinea Bissau from the 16th to 19th centuries) and a text calling for the downfall of Adolf Hitler. In The Gambia, we have

[3] A Guinean historian and writer. See his book: *Sundiata, an Epic of Old Mali*, 1960, Pearson College Div.

[4] Abbou, T.A. (2016). *Mansa Musa's Journey to Mecca and Its Impact on Western Sudan*.

found missionary translations of Biblical passages and sermons written in Mandinka Ajami.

The Mandinka Reader builds on the Ajami manuscripts, texts, and records digitized by project members during fieldwork in Mandinka communities of Senegal and video interviews and digital images recorded in local communities where Ajami is widely used. Our manuscript selection focused on the overall goal of the project, which is to promote Ajami literacy, cultural literacy, oral proficiency, and linguistic knowledge that is directly applicable to professional and academic disciplines. Through participatory knowledge-making, our team of researchers conducted ethnographic interviews, held conversations with chanters and singers of poems and treatises, and collaborated with local experts in transcribing and translating Ajami manuscripts. Through detailed field interviews, our research team uncovered insights into the daily practices of Mandinka Ajami users, their history of learning and using Ajami, and their assessments of its educational and cultural value. This provides users of the Reader with significant information about the present-day role of Ajami in the Mandinka-speaking communities of West Africa.

The Mandinka Ajami Reader contains six thematic Units with biographical information and images of the authors or discussants of the manuscripts, the texts in Mandinka Ajami with Latin-script transcriptions and English translations, images of Ajami user communities, glossaries and notes, and pedagogical exercises. The Reader Units are complemented by their corresponding Mandinka Ajami video interviews on the project website (<https://sites.bu.edu/ria/mandinka/>) containing video clips with Latin-script and English subtitles; metadata with information about the content and subject of the videos and their location and contributors; Ajami user community images with Latin-script and English captions; and glossaries, notes, and pedagogical exercises.

Unit 1 focuses on the topics of local governance and community record-keeping. It includes three Ajami texts: a community constitution, a record of collective efforts for an annual religious celebration, and a document noting a community purchase for the event. This unit illustrates important aspects of Mandinka Ajami in Senegambia, as

noted in historian Bala Saho's video interview with Fallou Ngom (Boston University). In the video interview that accompanies this unit (<https://sites.bu.edu/ria/mandinka/mandinka-unit-1/>), Professor Saho (University of Oklahoma) discusses the use of Ajami in people's daily lives and its significance in documenting local history and knowledge systems. He also reflects on the importance of oral history and tradition in recording local knowledge, and on the enduring role of colonialism and its adverse impact on knowledge production in Africa.

Unit 2 contains documents that focus on the history of communication and letter-writing in Mandinka Ajami. It presents four texts from the personal archives of Lamin Dampha, a Quranic teacher and Imam in Japine, The Gambia. The unit features a rare historical document listing the names and reigns of 45 precolonial rulers from Jaara, a region that was governed by Mandinka monarchs for over 600 years before British colonization. It also contains letters from family members and community announcements. In the accompanying video interview (<https://sites.bu.edu/ria/mandinka/mandinka-unit-2/>), Mr. Dampha discusses the use of Mandinka Ajami in both personal exchanges with friends and family and in professional settings.

Texts dealing with health and healing are featured in **Unit 3**. These include materials from the archives of traditional healers such as local herbal recipes for treating diseases. The unit also includes poems about the COVID-19 pandemic written by Mandinka scribes from Senegal. In the accompanying video interview (<https://sites.bu.edu/ria/mandinka/mandinka-unit-3/>), Senegalese healer and religious teacher Wandifa Dramé discusses the role of Ajami in African traditional medicine. He explains how he combines plant-based remedies with religious elements, such as Quranic verses, and describes the preparation of various traditional medicines.

Unit 4 focuses on the topics of politics and social critique. It features two Mandinka Ajami poems by Usman Kijera. The first, written during the presidency of Yahya Jammeh in The Gambia, reflects on Jammeh's rise to power and some of his accomplishments. The second poem critiques young Gambian expatriates in Europe and America who return home with changed attitudes and behaviors, often engaging in risky activities.

Usman Kijera, a Quranic teacher, healer, and Mandinka Ajami poet and singer, discusses in the accompanying video interview (<https://sites.bu.edu/ria/mandinka/mandinka-unit-4/>) the ways to write and recite Ajami poems.

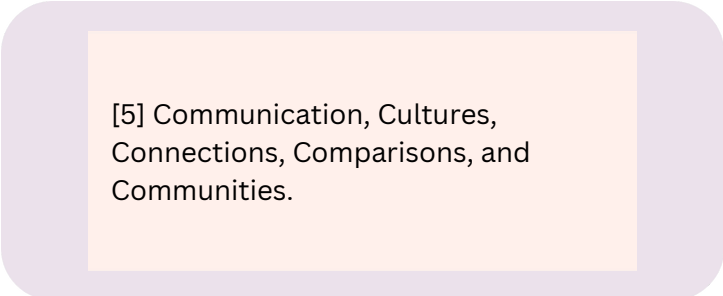
Unit 5 focuses on preserving the legacy of local religious scholars. It contains a poem by Ousman Kijera defending local scholars against the influence of a new generation of Gambian Muslim preachers who, after studying abroad, returned with ideologies that challenge long-standing peaceful teachings. The second is an excerpt from a poem by Kanj Kalifa Jaabi, a respected Mandinka Muslim scholar and educator whom Kijera seeks to protect. In his video interview (<https://sites.bu.edu/ria/mandinka/mandinka-unit-5/>), Kijera discusses the threat of foreign religious influences on African Islamic culture, emphasizing the importance of respecting the peaceful traditions of local elders.

Unit 6 highlights the work of Boubacar Diatta, a well-known Mandinka Ajami poet and singer from Casamance, Senegal. It features five of Diatta's poems. The first is an emotional tribute to his late mother, reflecting on her final moments. The second defends divorced women against verbal abuse from their ex-husbands. The third encourages self-control and trust in God, while the fourth recounts his experience attempting to migrate to Spain by boat. The final poem addresses the spiritual theme of enmity. In his video interview (<https://sites.bu.edu/ria/mandinka/mandinka-unit-6/>), Mr. Diatta talks about the poems he has written and their emotional impact, and performs a poem that he wrote a few days after the death of his mother, commemorating her wisdom, dedication, and care.

Each Reader Unit provides a glossary and notes section. The glossary includes keywords from the unit's Ajami text that may have a special meaning, be unfamiliar, or otherwise worthy of note, and provides an explanation of these. The notes section includes materials referring to local cultural practices, metaphors, idioms, proverbs, and other words that warrant explanation. This is followed by pedagogical exercises that focus on developing learners' Ajami reading comprehension and Ajami writing skills, conversational and listening skills, and cultural competence. The video interviews associated with each unit in the website contain similar sections of glossaries, notes, and

pedagogical exercises, and provide access to an embedded Mandinka Ajami keyboard for learners to use when completing the exercises on the interactive multimedia website.

The primary objective of these instructional materials is to provide students, teachers, academic scholars, and professionals with the language, cultural, and literacy skills they need to engage constructively with the multitudes of Ajami users in West Africa. Although these Ajami users form major constituencies within their societies, they have been largely ignored when it comes to African language teaching and instructional materials. Anchored in the "Five Cs"[5] of the National Standards in Foreign Language Education in the 21st Century, the Readers in Ajami and their companion multimedia resources we have developed help learners develop specialized linguistic competencies relevant to their respective professions, but also the cultural literacy needed to foster successful cross-cultural dialogue and knowledge transmission. The Readers also offer a template and a methodology that can be replicated for other African languages so as to incorporate important local forms of knowledge and writing traditions, which co-exist with Latin script orthographies in Africa. The Readers and associated multimedia resources provide students access to the knowledge recorded in both Ajami and Latin scripts, and complement existing Latin script materials to enhance reading, writing, listening, and speaking proficiency. They provide an excellent model of how to build, assess and sustain textual and digital instructional resources that incorporate local voices and knowledge recorded in multiple Ajami scripts – a resource that many academics and professionals have overlooked for centuries.



[5] Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities.

Mandinka *Ajami* scripts compared to Arabic scripts.²

Arabic			Mandinka	Numeric value
IPA	M.S. Arabic	EI 3 ¹	Mandinka Ajami	
1. [ʔ], [a:]	ا	a, ā/Ā	ا	1
2. [b]	ب	b	ب	2
3. [p]	-		ب/پ	2
4. [t]	ت	t	ط/ت	400
5. [θ]	ث	th	-	500
6. [dʒ], [j]	ج	j	ج	3
7. [h]	ح	ḥ	-	8
8. [x]	خ	kh	-	600
9. [d]	د	d	د	4
10. [ð]	ذ	dh	-	700
11. [r]	ر	r	ر	200
12. [z]	ز	z	-	7
13. [s]	س	s	ص/س	300
14. [ʃ]	ش	sh	-	1000
15. [sʰ]	ص	ṣ	-	60
16. [dʰ]	ض	ḍ	-	90
17. [tʰ]	ط	ṭ	-	9
18. [zʰ]	ظ	ẓ	-	800
19. [ʕ]	ع	ʕ (Unicode O2BF)	-	70
20. [ɣ]	غ	gh	-	900
21. [f]	ب/ف	f	ب/ف	80
22. [q]	ق/ق	q	-	100
23. [g]	-		ک غ	20
24. [k]	ك	k	ک ق/ق/ك	20
25. [l]	ل	l	ل	30
26. [m]	م	m	م	40
27. [n]	ن	n	ن	50
28. [ɲ]	-		پ	50
29. [ŋ]	-		پو، غ، ا، ن، و، ع	-
30. [h]	ه	h	ح خ ه	5
31. [w], [u:]	و	w/v, ū/Ū, -uww	ع و	6
32. [j], [i:]	ی/ي	ī/Ī, -iyy-	ی/ي	10
33. [ʔ]	ء	ʔ (Unicode o2BE)	ء	
34. [č]	-		ج	3

¹ For EI3, see <https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/pages/help/transliteration-islam>.

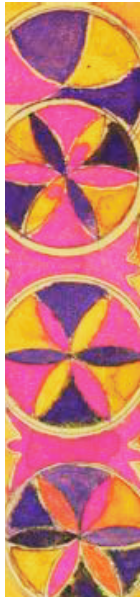
² Courtesy of Ousmane Cisse.

Guide to vowels in Mandinka *Ajami*

Short vowels - Diacritics								
a	ب	ba	i	بِ	bi	u	بُ	bu
			e	بَ	be	o	بُو	bo

Lengthening vowels					
	Initial:	ا		Initial: --	Initial: --
aa	Medial:	اِ	ii/ee	Medial: اِي	uu/oo
	Final:	ا		Final: ي	Final: و

A vowel is lengthened by firstly adding the appropriate diacritics (*fatha*, *kasra*, or *damma*) to a given consonant and then by joining that consonant to *alif* for “aa”, *yā* for “ii” and “ee” or *wāw* for “uu” and “oo” respectively.



Unit 1

Governance and Record-Keeping

This unit illustrates some of the important aspects of Mandinka Ajami in Senegambia noted by Professor Bala Saho in the accompanying video interview. Professor Saho discusses how Ajami has been used in people's daily lives to document local history, preserve knowledge systems, and maintain a grassroots form of literacy that has operated parallel to Western-based institutions for centuries. This highlights Ajami's enduring significance in fostering cultural identity and transmitting community-based knowledge outside formal Western education systems.



Figure 1: Fallou Ngom (on the left) about to interview Bala Saho (on the right).

The unit includes three Mandinka Ajami texts from the archives of Lamin Dampha. The first text is a five-page constitution of the Islamic Council of The Gambia. The document outlines the foundation, membership, key mission, and the articles that govern the organization. The second text is a four-page excerpt from a 24-page community record book documenting people’s financial contributions and collective efforts for the annual celebration of the birthday of Prophet Muhammad. This holiday, which is called *kamoo* in Mandinka, is more widely known as Mawlid. The third text is a record of the purchase of a cow by the community representatives for the Mawlid celebration.[1]



Figure 2: The main library of the University of The Gambia, Kanifing.

[1] To listen to Professor Saho’s interview, see <https://sites.bu.edu/ria/mandinka/mandinka-unit-1/>.

بِبِ
 رَبِّهِ يُعْرِضُونَ لَكَ مَا لِلَّهِ
 حُكْمٌ وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ
 بِحُسْنِ الْحِسَابِ
 وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
 مَا يَخْلُقُكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَمِنْ
 سُلْبٍ لَئِنْ تَكْفُرُوا سَاءَ
 مَا تَكْفُرُونَ
 وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّقُوا
 اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ
 فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِي
 الْأَلْبَابِ الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ
 رُسُلًا لِقَوْمِكُمْ أَنْ تَبْخَسُوا
 مِنْهَا شَيْئًا وَالَّذِينَ تَبْخَسُوا
 مِنْهَا شَيْئًا يَسْعَ فِي سُرَّتِّهِمْ
 أَنْ يَبْخَسُوا مِنْهَا شَيْئًا فَإِذَا
 أُخْبِرُوا بِهِ سَأَلَ اللَّهُ أُولِي
 الْأَلْبَابِ إِن كُنْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ
 الصَّادِقِينَ
 وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
 أَنْ يَكْفُرَ بِكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
 إِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ كَافِرِينَ
 وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
 أَنْ يَكْفُرَ بِكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
 إِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ كَافِرِينَ

1
 1

فِي فَلَاحِ

إِسْلَمٌ فَسَلُّوا إِلَا أَنْبِيَاءَهُ أَلْ هَمُّوْ وَلَمْ يَنْفُؤْ أَلْ عَادِمٌ
بِي لَآ تَقُوْ دِيْلَا هَرْمُوْ كُنُوْ أَنْبِيَاءَهُ بِيْلَا كُنُوْ أَنْتَهِي

إِسْلَمٌ فَسَلُّوا أَلْ مِيْرُوْ بِي فَرْدِيْ رُكُوْ مِيْفَتَا مَحْرِكُوْ بِي أَنْتَهِي

إِسْلَمٌ فَسَلُّوا إِمُوْ أَلْ هَمُّوْ أَنْبِيَاءَهُ مَسْكُوْ أَسِيْ إِبْلُوْ دِيْلُوْ
إِسِيْ بِيْلُوْ نَقَا أَنْتَهِي

إِسْلَمٌ فَسَلُّوا أَلْ مَوْلَا بِيَامُرِ إِبِيَاءَهُ مَوْلَا أَلْ قَوْمِ رَسُوْ سَلُوْ لَآ
بِيْلُوْ جُوْلُوْ دِيْلُوْ أَنْتَهِي

إِسْلَمٌ فَسَلُّوا أَلْ فُرْشُوْ بِي كُوْدِيْ عَمَلُوْ كِيْدِيْ بِيْمَارُوْ قُرُوْ لَآ
أَنْتَهِي

إِسْلَمٌ فَسَلُّوا أَلْ هَمُّوْ مَوْ إِبِيَاءَهُ أَلْ شِكْرِ بِلُوْبُهُ بِلُوْ بِيْلُوْ مَسْكُوْ
بِي لَآ أَلْ قَوْمِ لَآ إِبِيَاءَهُ مَوْلَا أَسِيْ بِيْلُوْ أَنْتَهِي

فَهِيَ لَسَبَهُ جَر

إِسْلَمَ فَسَلَّمَ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ

مَسَلَّمَ وَكَفَيْتَهُ أَنْتَهَى

إِسْلَمَ فَسَلَّمَ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ
كَلَامًا وَكَوَيْتَهُ أَيْ لَوَّاهُ بِشَرِّهِ لَوْ وَكَوَيْتَهُ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ

أَنْتَهَى

إِسْلَمَ فَسَلَّمَ كَفَيْتَهُ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ
لِسَبِّهِ وَكَفَيْتَهُ أَيْ لَوَّاهُ بِشَرِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ

إِسْلَمَ فَسَلَّمَ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ

بِكَلَامٍ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ

سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ

وَرَجَعُوا الْقَامُ لِمَوْجِبِ جَسِّ وَرَأَى أَنَّهُ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ

إِسْلَمَ فَسَلَّمَ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ

إِسْلَمَ فَسَلَّمَ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ أَيْ سَلَّمَ لِسَبِّهِ

س

فَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ

إِسْلَامٌ فَسَلُّوا أَبِي سَيِّدٍ بَوَّسَةَ كَمَا إِتَّخَذَ مَوْلَا يَهُودٍ مَرَّةً لِلَّهِ
تَمَادُّنًا إِكْفُورًا فَعَوَّاهِي إِلَى بَيْتِ أَبِي دَعْبَانَ الْكَوْلِ يَهُودِيٍّ بِبَيْتِ
تَمَادُّنٍ لَيْسَ تَمْلُوكُوا لَسَّخُورَسَ دَعْبَانَ كَعَمْرًا يَهُودِيًّا جَالِدًا لِلَّهِ
بِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ انْتَهَى

إِسْلَامٌ فَسَلُّوا كَعَمْرًا إِنَّا لَسَّوْنَا لِلَّهِ لَيْسَ بِالْحَيْدِ انْتَهَى
إِسْلَامٌ فَسَلُّوا أَبِي لَيْسَةَ بَوَّسَةَ يَهُودِيًّا دَوْلًا لَوْ تَشَبَّهَ
لَسَّجِي لَلَّيَّةِ إِيَّاهُ إِقْبَالِ انْتَهَى

إِسْلَامٌ فَسَلُّوا أَبِي سَيِّدٍ بَوَّسَةَ أَبِي بَيْتِ أَبِي لَسَّوْنَا
لَيْسَةَ بِالْحَيْدِ عَوَّاهِي يَهُودِيًّا كَعَمْرًا كَعَمْرًا مَرَّةً
إِثْنَيْ عَشَرَ كَعَمْرًا كَعَمْرًا كَعَمْرًا كَعَمْرًا كَعَمْرًا
إِسْلَامٌ فَسَلُّوا أَبِي سَيِّدٍ بَوَّسَةَ يَهُودِيًّا كَعَمْرًا كَعَمْرًا
سَبَّحًا يَهُودِيًّا مَوْلَا يَهُودِيٍّ فُلُوسَةَ مَرَّةً كَعَمْرًا لَسَّوْنَا انْتَهَى

ع

فَهِيَ لَوْلَ جَع

إِسْلَمَ فَنَسَلُ أَبِي لَيْسَبُو لَكَ أَيْرَمُو تَلَسَا تَشَبِي كُفُو
لَسْتُمْ عَلَا لِي كُفُو أَبِي لَيْسَبُو دِي وَكُو لَوْلَا لَوْلَا فَرَعُو فَرُو

إِسْتَبِي سَا تَشَبِيَا كِلِ انْتَهِي

إِسْلَمَ فَنَسَلُ أَبِي لَيْسَبُو سَتُّ الْاَلَكُو كُتَبَالُ كُفُو وَال
مُو تَبَالِي أَيْسِي إِتَّيَبُ أَبِي كِي مُو تَشَبِي لَوْلَا انْتَه

إِسْلَمَ فَنَسَلُ اسْتَبِي انْتَا سِي كِي تَبِيَا حِ الْاَلَكُو بِي لَيْسَبُو
بِرِي سِي وَكُو كُو تَبِي انْتَهِي ~~كُو~~ إِسْلَمَ فَنَسَلُ

أَبِي لَيْسَبُو دِي بِرِي سِي عَلَا كُفُو لَوْلَا فَرُو مِينِ ابْتِي وَنِي الْاَلَكُو
بِرِي سِي تَبَا تَشَبُو مَو سَبِ عَلَا سَتُّ الْاَلَكُو كُفُو دِلِ بِرِي سِي
مُو جَلَا تَبَا تَشَبُو ابْتِي وَنِي سَوِي كِي فَرُو مِينِ انْتَهِي كُفُو لَسْتُمْ

بِرِي سِي سِي وَنِي جِي الْاَلَكُو تَبَا الْاَلَكُو كُفُو اِكِلِ تَشَابِي
الْاَلَكُو دِلَا تَبَا انْتَهِي إِسْلَمَ فَنَسَلُ اسْتَبِي كُفُو لَوْلَا فَرُو مِينِ كُو ابْتِي

أَبِي سِي تَبَا تَشَبِي جِي رَالِ لِي كُفُو تَبَا تَشَابِي جِي رَالِ
الْاَلَكُو دِلَا تَبَا تَشَبِي سِي فَرُو بِي لَوْلَا وَالْاَلَكُو لِي كُفُو لَوْلَا فَرُو مِينِ فَنَسَلُ
لِي تَبَا كُفُو انْتَهِي

Transcription 1: Kambiyaa Islaamu Kansuloo la Konsitiisoongo

Kayti Foloo

Tubaabu karoo tili taŋ niŋ naani: Islaamu Kansuloo la dookuu laa foloo le mu ñiŋ ti. Working Committee: Moo taŋ saba niŋ kiliŋ. Ila dookuwo i yaa foloo karoo tili taŋ niŋ saba. I kaa fo karoo miŋ ye May, 1990, wo le saŋo kari luulunjaŋo.

Ila konsitiisoongo

1. Ila kuma foloo wo le mu kafoo loolaalu ti. Majilsoolu aniŋ daayiraalu, i niŋ Islaamu Iñooni, Islaamu Akisison. Ila ofis baa i baa loo la Banjulu le. I maŋ lafi miŋ na kafoo kono: Kuma foloo: I maŋ lafi polotika kumoo kaa dundi kafoo i kono. I maŋ lafaa la kumakaŋ to, aniŋ kiibaaroo to aniŋ tamanseeroo to. Intahaa.
2. Kafoo ñiŋ ye alifaa saba soto. Kafoo Faa le mu wo le ti. Moo foloo Al-haaji Kayirabaa Jawara, aniŋ Al-haaji Abdulaahi Joobu, aniŋ Baakari Daabo. Ñinlu mu Kafoo Faa ti. Intaha.

Kayti Fulanjaŋo

3. Islaamu Kansuloo ala ŋaniyo aniŋ ala hamoo wo le mu ñiŋ ti ko: a ka aadamadiŋ bee la hakkoo dii la horomoo kono aniŋ buuñaa kono. Intahaa.
4. Islaamu Kansuloo ala miiroo be karandir kuwo to miŋ keta madirasoo ti. Intahaa.
5. Islaamu Kansuloo ñiŋ mu ila hamoo ti i niŋ mansakundaa si i buloo duŋ ñoo bulu fo i si ñoo nafaa. Intahaa.
6. Islaamu Kansuloo a ye moolu yaamar i si hamoo warandi fo madirasoo si loo dulaa bee to fo londoo si yiriwaa. Intahaa.
7. Islaamu Kansuloo a la korosiroo bee kafo diŋolu kaŋ ne deemaaroo karoo la. Intahaa.
8. Islaamu Kansuloo ila hamoo mu ñiŋ ti: fo i si ke bulu-baa buloo ti mansakunda ye londi ñinoo karoo la, Lislamo kono fannaa bee to. Intahaa.

Kayti Sabanjaŋo

9. Islaamu Kansuloo a ye semboo soto, a yaa faŋ kafu kafu kutima miŋ mu Musilimu kafoo ti. Intaha.

10. Islaamu Kansuloo yirisuŋo le mu, a ye buloo soto, buloo miŋ yaa loŋ ko a be ke la dookuu bundaa le ti, luwaa be tara la wo dookuu bundaa bulu le miŋ be a kanta la. Intaha.

11. Islaamu Kansuloo kafu le mu a ñanta banleeroo soto la le. A la tamanseeroo be ke la karoo le ti, aniŋ looloo, aniŋ Kambiyaa la fulako. Intaha.

12. Islaamu Kansuloo a ye semboo soto i saa yitandi moolu la niŋ kanjuru baa be kela. I be kiliroo ke la bankoo karoo bee la, niŋ i be taa la wo beŋ baa to. Ñaatonkoo niŋ a be taa la, a niŋ moo saba le be taa la: Majilisi tiyoo le mu i ti, waraŋ fo Almamoo le mu i ti baŋ, waraŋ Daayira Ñaatonkoo le mu i ti baŋ. I be miŋ joo la, Dalasi muwaŋ niŋ luulu. Niŋ kafoo loota, luwaa doolu bi jee, i si naa, wolu fanaŋ, i ye taa. Intaha.

Kayti Naaninjaŋo

13. Islaamu Kansuloo a ye semboo soto ka yitandi moolu la niŋ miŋ maŋ soŋ na duŋ na i kafoo to, fo i ye ila beŋ baa ke. Wo beŋ baa koola, niŋ miŋ be duŋ na, Dalasi taŋ luulu. Saŋ-woo-saŋ, Dalasi keme. Niŋ Majilisi tiyoo be duŋ na, Dalasi taŋ luulu. Intaha.

14. Islaamu Kansuloo kafoo sonta ñiŋ na: saŋ-woo-saŋ i si beŋ siiŋaa kilij. Intaha.

15. Islaamu Kansuloo a ye semboo soto, niŋ i ye dookulaalu tombonŋ sanji saba, i si i falij. Intaha.

16. Islaamu Kansuloo a ye semboo soto, a ye beŋ baa ke saŋ-woo-saŋ siŋaa kilij. Wo koola, niŋ kafoo ye haaji soto, miŋ hawujata, i si beŋo kee noo koteke kumandiroo kono tariyaa. Intaha.

17. Islaamu Kansuloo a ye semboo soto, niŋ i ye kuu soto, i ye ñoo saba a la, niŋ moo saba mu, fula sonta miŋ na, kafoo si soŋ wo la. Intaha.

Kayti Luulunjaŋo

18. Islaamu Kansuloo a ye semboo soto, a si moo taŋ-saba tombonj, kafoo sonta wo la le. Kafoo a ye semboo di dookulaalu la kari-woo-kari, i si beŋ sanji kilij. Intaha.

19. Islaamu Kansuloo a ye semboo soto a la kunu-kunj-baalu wolu le mu a la moo baalu ti. A si i tombonj i ye ke moo taŋ niŋ luulu. Intaha.

20. Islaamu Kansuloo i sonta ñiŋ na: Seketeryaa di ila kuu bee si tara Persidaŋo koto. Intaha.

21. Islaamu Kansuloo i ye semboo di Peresidaŋo la. Kafoo la kodoo miŋ be a te finti la, fo Persidaŋo ya a tampu. Moo saba wolu le ñanta a fintindi la. Bari niŋ moo fula ya a tampu, a si finti noo miŋ keta kodoo ti. Intaha.

22. Kafoo sonta niŋ Peresidaŋo ti jee, a la noomalaŋ kafoolu kilij si a batu a la siidulaa to. Intaha.

23. Islaamu Kansuloo a sonta kafoo la kayti kuwo bee, a bee be tara la Seketeri Jenraali le koto. Seketeri Jenraali a te le mu Ceemaanoo ti niŋ karaŋo be ke la, wala kamoo le be ke la, niŋ Kansuloo le baa ke la. Intaha.

Translation 1: The Constitution of the Islamic Council of The Gambia

First Page

On the 14th of the European month: Activities performed by the Islamic Council on the first day. Working committee: 31 members. The work started on the 13th in the month of May 1990, the 5th month [of the year].

Their Constitution

1. Their first article concerns those who established the council, including the schools, religious and cultural organization, the Islamic union, and Islamic Action. Their main office will be established in Banjul. Prohibitions in the council: It is prohibited to bring politics to the council. It is forbidden to talk about it in the news and in posters. End.

2. The council has three elders. These are the Fathers of the Council. The first is Al-haaji Kayirabaa Jawara, followed by Al-haaji Abdulaayi Joobu and Baakari Daabo. These are the Fathers of the Council. End.

Second Page

3. The ambition and wish of the Islamic Council are: To ensure that all human beings are given their rights, honor, and dignity. End.

4. The Islamic Council's primary focus is on education in Quranic schools. End.

5. The Islamic Council's hope is to work hand-in-hand with the government for mutual benefits. End.

6. The Islamic Council urges people to be ambitious so that Quranic schools can be built everywhere in order to spread knowledge. End.

7. The Islamic Council's primary interest is to provide assistance to all its members. End.

8. The Islamic Council's wish is to be the government's right arm in terms of seeking knowledge in all Islamic domains. End.

Third Page

9. The Islamic Council has the authority to associate itself with other Muslim organizations. End.

10. The Islamic Council is a tree with a branch, which will be a working unit responsible for the laws that protect the organization. End.

11. The Islamic Council is an association that should have a flag. The symbol will have a moon, a star, and the Gambian flag. End.

12. The Islamic Council has the authority to inform people about when their General Assembly will be held. They will announce the meeting across the country, when they are planning to hold the General Assembly. When the Head of the Organization attends the council, he will be accompanied by three individuals: The Head of the Quranic school, the Imam, and the Head of Religious and Cultural Activities.

The membership fee is 25 Dalasis. When the Council is formed, other laws (articles) may be adopted. End.

Fourth Page

13. The Islamic Council has the authority to inform those who do not want to remain members of the organization to wait until after the General Assembly is held. After the General Assembly, the membership fee for those who want to be members will be 50 Dalasis. Every year: 100 Dalasis. For the Head of the Quranic School, the membership fee is 50 Dalasis. End.

14. The Islamic Council's members have agreed to this: They will meet once a year. End.

15. The Islamic Council has the authority to change all positions after every three years. End.

16. The Islamic Council has the authority to hold a General Assembly once a year. In addition, if the members have urgent needs, an emergency meeting may be held after its announcement. End.

17. The Islamic Council has the authority to confirm the decision of the two people as the decision of its members, in a disagreement case in which two out of three people concur. End.

Fifth Page

18. The Islamic Council has the authority to select 30 members chosen by the members. The members give authority to council members to meet once every month in the year. End.

19. The Islamic Council has the authority to select key people who are its most important representatives. The selected people should be 15. End.

20. The Islamic Council agrees to this: the Secretariat and everything should be under the President. End.

21. The Islamic Council gives authority to the President. Concerning all withdrawals of funds, the signature of the President is required. Three persons are required to sign for fund withdrawals. However, if two people co-sign, funds may be withdrawn. End.

22. The Islamic Council agrees that, in the absence of the President, one of his Assistants may act on his behalf. End.

23. The Islamic Council agrees that all its paperwork should be handled by the Secretary General. The Secretary General is the Chairperson in Quranic recitation events, or in the celebration of Prophet Muhammad’s birthday, when the events are organized by the Council. End.



Figure 3: Bertil Herding Highway, Banjul, The Gambia.



Ajami Text 2: Kamoo la Bukoo

[Cover]

AMAL S. SALLEH

28 WELLINGTON STREET

BANJUL · THE GAMBIA

كامل ساليه

NAME: _____

CLASS: _____

SCHOOL: _____

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
كَمَا كُنْتَ سَلِيْمًا حَنِیْفًا
آيَا آجِ مَا كَبُرَ نَجْدًا لِّسِرِّ
كَيْفَ هُوَ الْكَاخُ وَنَجْدًا لِّسَارِي
دَلَسِرَ شَاهُ عَمْرَقًا مَلَايِي جَان
دَلَسِرَ شَاهُ عَمْرَقًا أَمَّ حِ كَلْتَمَا
دَلَسِرَ شَاهُ نِيلُو لُو هُ عَمْرَقًا
يَحْيَى نَشْرَ دَلَسِرَ شَاهُ
آيَلُو لُو هُ هَا سَلَامِي
آيَا آجِ وَ مَا أَمَّا حِ سَلَامِي
دَلَسِرَ شَاهُ نِيلُو لُو هُ عَمْرَقًا

عَمْرَقَا بَكْرِي سِرْدَ لَسِرَتَا يُلُو
بَا جَلَمَا سَانِ دَ لَسِرَتَا هُ
مُحَمَّذُ شَوْرَكَا جُلْدَ لَسِرَتَا لُو
لَمِنْ جَبَا دَ لَسِرَتَا جُولَا هُ
جَلَمَا جِيثَ دَ لَسِرَتَا لُو لُو هُ
هَامَجِ كَارُوكَمَرِ دَ لَسِرَتَا مَوَّهْ
مُحَمَّذُ سِنَلِ سَارِ كُولُو دَ لَسِرَتَا
قَا عَمَّشَجِ سَانِ دَ لَسِرَتَا سَتِي هُ
كُو شَبُوسَانِ دَ لَسِرَتَا لُو لُو هُ
كِي بَاهَا لَبَهْ دَ لَسِرَتَا لُو لُو هُ
عَمْرَقَا شَعَايِ دَ لَسِرَتَا لُو لُو هُ

عَمْرَقَا مَا كَمَا كَسَمَا دَلِيسِرُ لَوْلُوهُ

عَمْرَقَا شَا دُ دَ نَجَا دَلِيسِرُ شَا هُ

مَسَانِ كُنِيَا دَلِيسِرُ لَوْلُوهُ

يَلَا يَلَا مَبُورِيَا دَلِيسِرُ شَا هُ

عَمْرَقَا مَوَسِي سَانِ دَلِيسِرُ مَوَا

هُ مَسِي سِي مَوَسِي سَانِ دَلِيسِرُ لَوْلُوهُ

بُورِيَا كَا مَسِي دَلِيسِرُ شَا هُ

أَلَا مَوْلُو دَلِيسِرُ شَا كُنِيَا هُ

لَوْلُوهُ جُوبِيَا لَوْلُوهُ

شُرَيْبِي سُوَيْرِي دَلِيسِرُ لَوْلُو

أَلَا جَلِي دَلِيسِرُ شَا هُ

مَكَمَّةٌ عَلَى جَدِّ لَسِيرِ قَوْلَا
 أَحْمَدُ بِهِ لَسِيرِ سَبِّهِ
 سَلَى بِنَجْمَا جَيْثُ لَسِيرِ تَأْتِلُولُ
 لَسَا حَوْشَايَا لَسِيرِ شَاهُ
 لُكَا جَمْرَايَا دُكْوَةً لَسِيرِ
 شَاهُ التَّحَا جَمْرَايَا لَسِيرِ
 تَلُولُوا آيَلُولُ لَسِيرِ كَانَا
 سَانَا لَسِيرِ مَوْأَا عَرَفَا كَيْيَا
 سَايَا لَسِيرِ تَأْتِلُولُوهُ عَمَلُ
 كَالُ كَيْيَا لَسِيرِ لُولُوهُ قَكَمَّةُ
 جَوْ جَدِّ لَسِيرِ شَاهُ

Transcription 2: Kamoo la Bukoo

[Cover page]

Kamoo la Bukoo

[Page 1]

Bismi l-Lāhi al-Raḥmāni al-Raḥīmi

1. Kamaa kodoo:

Sulaymaan Danfaa aniŋ a dimma Kabiiru Danfaa, Dalasi keme.

2. Al-haaj Fandiŋ Saarii, Dalasi taŋ.

3. Arafan Mulaay Jaane, Dalasi taŋ.

4. Arafan Umandiŋ Kasama, Dalasi taŋ aniŋ luulu.

5. Arafan Yahya Siise, Dalasi taŋ aniŋ luulu.

6. Hiinaa Selaame aniŋ a dooma, Umandiŋ Selaame, Dalasi taŋ luulu. [Arafan].

[Page 2]

7. Arafan Bakar Siise, Dalasi taŋ aniŋ luulu.

8. Ba Jalamana Saane, Dalasi taŋ.

9. Muhammadu Tuurakaa Jalo, Dalasi luulu.

10. Lamin Jambaa, Dalasi fula.

11. Jalamaa Jiite, Dalasi luulu.

12. Maamandiŋ Kuruu Kamara, Dalasi muwana.

13. Muhammadu Sila Sarakuloo, Dalasi taŋ.

14. Faa Ansundiŋ Saane, Dalasi taŋ saba.

15. Kuutuboo Saane, Dalasi luulu.

16. Keebaa Haali Bah, Dalasi luulu.

17. Arafan Senjaate, Dalasi luulu.

[Page 3]

18. Arafan Mankamaa Kasama, Dalasi luulu.
19. Arafan Saajo Danfaa, Dalasi taŋ.
20. Masaane Kumbaa, Dalasi luulu.
21. Bilaali Mambuuree, Dalasi taŋ.
22. Arafan Muusaa Saane, Dalasi muwan.
23. Sisefuu Saane, Dalasi luulu.
24. Boorikunda Ansundiŋ Danfaa aniŋ a la moolu, Dalasi taŋ kononto aniŋ luulu.
25. Joobu Lasi, luulu [Dalasi].
26. Sariifu Soofiri Jalo, Dalasi luulu.
27. Alfa Jalo, Dalasi taŋ.

[Page 4]

28. Muhammadu Aleyu Jalo, Dalasi fula.
29. Ahmadu Bah, Dalasi saba.
30. Bunjaa Jeyte, Dalasi taŋ aniŋ lulu.
31. Saahoo Saañan, Dalasi taŋ.
32. Lunkaa Jame aniŋ a dokoomaa, Dalasi taŋ.
33. Al-haaj Iraaman Daaraame, Dalasi taŋ luulu aniŋ luulu.
34. Soloo Birankundaa Saane, Dalasi muwan.
35. Arafan Keebaa Saañan Dalasi taŋ aniŋ luulu.
36. Alkaal Keytaa, Dalasi luulu.
37. Muhammadu Jawo Jalo, Dalasi taŋ.

Translation 2: The Mawlid Record Book

[Cover page]

The Mawlid Record Book

[Page 1]

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

1. Money for Mawlid celebration.

Sulaymaan Danfaa and his son Kabiiru Danfaa, 100 Dalasis

2. Al-haaj Fandiñ Saarii, 10 Dalasis.

3. Arafan Mulaay Jaane, 10 Dalasis.

4. Arafan Umandiñ Kasama, 15 Dalasis.

5. Arafan Yahya Siise, 15 Dalasis.

6. Hiina Selaame and his younger brother, Umandiñ Selaame, 50 Dalasis. [Arafan]

[Page 2]

7. Arafan Bakar Siise, 15 Dalasis.

8. Ba Jalaman Saane, 10 Dalasis.

9. Muhammadu Tuurakaa Jalo, 5 Dalasis.

10. Lamin Jambaa, 2 Dalasis.

11. Jalamaa Jiite, 5 Dalasis.

12. Maamadiñ Kuruu Kamara, 20 Dalasis.

13. Muhammadu Sila Sarakuloo, 10 Dalasis.

14. Faa Ansundiñ Saane, 30 Dalasis.

15. Kuutuboo Saane, 5 Dalasis.

16. Keebaa Haali Bah, 5 Dalasis.

17. Arafan Senjaate, 5 Dalasis.

[Page 3]

18. Arafan̄ Mankamaa Kasama, 5 Dalasis.
19. Arafan̄ Saajo Danfaa, 10 Dalasis.
20. Masaane Kumbaa, 5 Dalasis.
21. Bilaali Mambuuree, 10 Dalasis.
22. Arafan̄ Muusaa Saane, 20 Dalasis.
23. Sisefuu Saane, 5 Dalasis.
24. Boorikunda Ansundiŋ Danfaa and his people, 95 Dalasis.
25. Joobu Lasi, 5 [Dalasis].
26. Sariifu Soofiri Jalo, 5 Dalasis.
27. Alfa Jalo, 10 Dalasis.

[Page 4]

28. Muhammadu Aleyu Jalo, 2 Dalasis.
29. Ahmadu Bah, 3 Dalasis.
30. Bunjaa Jeyte, 15 Dalasis.
31. Saahoo Saañan̄, 10 Dalasis.
32. Lunkaa Jame and his younger brother, 10 Dalasis.
33. Al-haaj Iraaman̄ Daaraame, 55 Dalasis.
34. Soloo Birankundaa Saane, 20 Dalasis.
35. Arafan̄ Keebaa Saañan̄, 15 Dalasis.
36. Alkaal Keytaa, 5 Dalasis.
37. Muhammadu Jawo Jalo, 10 Dalasis.

Ajami Text 3: Ninsi Sajo

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
 نَسُو لَسَعُ دَ لَسِ كِی كُتْ اِنِ تَنَانِ
 اَلَّتْ كَا یِدْ لَكُ دُ وِلْتْ دُو كُو كُ وُو
 اِیَا اَلَّتْ اَلْحَسَنُ كُنْتِ یَا جَلِیْرُ كُو لَعَا
 مِ مِ كَارِ یَعْتِ لَشِیْخِ اِبْرَاهِیْمِ اِنِ یُونِسَ
 نَبِ اِنِ سُلَیْمَانَ دَ نَبِ اِنِ عَرَبِ لَسِیْرَ دَ نَبِ
 نَسُو بَكَ یَوْمَ اَلْاَشْیِبِ اِبْرِیوقَا مِ
 كُ دِ كَا دَ لَسِ رَ الرِّمَضَانَ
 كُ دِ سَ كُنْتِ اِنِ كُنْتِ
 نَسُو یَعِ كُرْ كُ دِ

Transcription 3: Ninsi Saṅo

Bismi l-Lāhi al-Raḥmāni al-Raḥīmi

Ninsu saṅo Dalasi keme kononto aniṅ taṅ naani. A santa kaabiiloo la kodoo le to, dookuu kodoo to. (I yaa) a santa Alhasan Konte yaa. Jalanberenkoo le mu, miṅ mu karaṅ tiyoo[2] ti. Seehu Ibraahiima aniṅ Yuunus Bah, aniṅ Sulaymaani Danfaa, aniṅ Arafan Seyni Danfaa. Ninsoo faata yawmal ithnayni, 26 yawman min al-Ramaḍāni. Kodi [too]: Dalasi taṅ, kodi taṅ kononto aniṅ kononto. Teretiṅo, kar kilij.

Translation 3: Cow Purchase

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

The cost of the cow is 940 Dalasis. It was bought from the money of the clan[3] earned from collective labor. It was bought from Alhasan Konte from Jalanbere, who is the owner of the [local] Quranic school.[4] [The buyers are]: Seexu Ibraahiima, Yuunus Bah, Sulaymaani Danfaa, and Arafan Seyni Danfaa. The cow was slaughtered on Monday, the 26th day of the month of Ramadan. The [remaining] money: 10 Dalasis and 99 Dalasis. [Purchased] during the first month of the trading season.

[2] The word *tiyoo* (owner) is written as *tiṅo* in Ajami.

[3] The word *kaabiloo* used here refers to a clan or section of a village in Mandinka society.

[4] The fact that the seller's village is identified and that he is the owner of the local school there makes the purchase credible and ensures that the cow was not stolen.



Figure 4: A Senegambian cow, the type that is generally sacrificed in major local events, including the Mawlid (celebration of Prophet Muhammad’s birthday).



Figure 5: Landing Cham drinking tea during the fieldwork in Bala’s home, Brusubi, Serrekunda.

Glossary

Akisison: Action, from English

Alifaa or alfaa: Elder, revered figure, respected person

Banleeroo or bandeeroo: Flag

Barakoo: Blessing

Bukoo: Book, record book, from English book

Buuñaa: Respect, dignity, honor

Ceemaanoo: Chairman, from English chairman

Diyaamu meseṅolu: Small talk, gossip

Faa: Father, the short form for *faamaa*

Foloo: The first

Fulanjaṅo: The second (one)

Hakkoo: Right

Hamoo: Ambition, aim, intention

Hawujata or hawujita: In a hurry, in a rush

Horomoo: Respect, honor

Intahaa: End, from Arabic *intahā*

Islaamu Iṅooni: Islamic Union

Ka a fintindi: To cause to get out, withdrawn, taken out (from *ka finti, ka funti*)

Ka a tampu: To stamp something

Ka faliṅ: To change, take turn

Ka finti: To get out

Kafoo: Crowd, group, assembly

Kanjuru baa: Big trial, litigation, general assembly

Kari-woo-kari: Every month

Kayti or kayiti: Page, paper, document

Konsitiisoonjo: Constitution, from English constitution

Kunu-kunj-baalu: Main representatives, VIPs

Londoo: Knowledge

Looloo: Star

Luulunjaŋo: The fifth

Luwaa: the Law, policy, article, from French loi

Majilsoo: Islamic, Quranic school; from Arabic Majlis

Mansakundaa: Government, at the police (station)

Miiroo: Thought, idea

Naaninjaŋo: The fourth

Ñaatonkoo: The one at the forefront , leader

Ñoo saboo: Argument, dispute, quarrel

Noomalaa: The one behind, assistant, deputy, follower

Ŋaniyo: Wish, intention

Ofis baa: Big, main office, headquarters

Persidaŋ or peresidaŋo: President

Sabanjaŋo: The third

Saŋ-woo-saŋ or Saŋ-oo-saŋ: Every year, each year

Seketeri Jenraali: General Secretary, from English

Tamanseeroo: Advertisement, poster, sign

Yiriwaa: To develop, grow, spread

Notes

A ye semboo soto: Literally, “has the power.” This expression is used throughout the first Ajami text to mean that the Islamic Council “has the authority.”

Daayira, daayiroo, or dahiraa: This is the generic name of the religious and cultural organizations that organize regular religious and cultural events in Senegambia. They

also serve as a support system for its members, including in naming ceremonies, weddings, funerals, and so on.

Ka karanj: To study. When used as a noun, it means “study.” When referring to events, it specifically refers to religious events such as public Quranic recitations, declamation of religious poetry (Mandinka: *suukuwo*), or sermons by local preachers.

Kamoo, gamoo, or kamaa: This is the name for the yearly celebration of Prophet Muhammad’s birthday, which is also known as Mawlidal-Nabi or simply Mawlid. It is one of the most important yearly celebrations in Muslim communities of Senegambia.

Sarakuloo: This is the Mandinka word for members of the Soninke ethnic group. The ethnic group is also called Soninke, Sarakhule, or Sarahule. The patronym Saaho (or its variants such as Saho in English spelling or Sakho in French spelling) is a Soninke one.

Teretoo: The word is written as *teretiŋo* in the third Ajami text. It comes from the French word *traite* (trade). In Senegambia, it refers to the trading season that follows the harvest of cash crops, especially peanuts.

Pedagogical Exercises

Exercise 1: Comprehension

Multiple choice questions

1. Islaamu Kansuloo la konsitiisoŋo to, kafu jumaalu le mu loolaalu ti?
 - a. Kafoo la alifaa saboolu
 - b. Majilsoolu aniŋ daayiraalu, i niŋ Islaamu Iŋooni, Islaamu Akisison
 - c. Buŋ-baa mu be marariŋ karaŋo la
 - d. Kambiyaa karandirilaalu bee
2. Konsitiisoŋo to, kuma foloo ko I maŋ lafi mune la kafoo kono?
 - a. I maŋ lafi diyaamu meseŋolu niŋ ñoo saboo la ila kafoo kono
 - b. I maŋ lafi mansakundaa buloo ye duŋ la ila kafoo kono

- c. I maŋ lafi karandirilaalu la ila kafoo kono
- d. I maŋ lafi polotika kumoo la, ala kumakaŋ, ala kibaaroo aniŋ taamanseeroo

3. Islaamu Kansuloo ala ŋaniyo aniŋ ala hamoo mu mune ti?

- a. Ka aadamadiŋ bee la barakoo dii la horomoo kono aniŋ buuñaa kono
- b. Ka aadamadiŋ bee kafu ñoo ma diinoo kono, horomoo kono aniŋ buuñaa kono
- c. Ka aadamadiŋ bee la hakkoo dii la horomoo kono aniŋ buuñaa kono
- d. Ka aadamadiŋ bee dundi majilsoolu aniŋ daayiraalu kono

4. Mune yaa tinna i ko Islaamu Kansuloo mu yiirisuŋo le ti?

- a. Kaatuŋ kafoo moolu siyaata le
- b. Kaatuŋ Kafoo buloolu niŋfannaalu siyaata le
- c. Kaatuŋ dookuwo siyaata le kafoo kono
- d. Kaatuŋ luwaalu siyaata le konsitiisoŋo kono

5. Islaamu Kansuloo i ye semboo di jumaalu le la ka kafoo la kodoo fintindi?

- a. Peresidaŋo damaŋ
- b. Peresidaŋo niŋ Seketeri Jenraali
- c. Peresidaŋo niŋ moo fula
- d. Peresidaŋo niŋ kafoo la alifaalu

6. Islaamu Kansuloo la kunu-kun-baalu mu moo jelu le ti?

- a. Moo taŋ-saba
- b. Moo taŋ niŋ luulu
- c. Moo taŋ-luulu
- d. Moo muwaŋ niŋ luulu

Exercise 2: Reading

1. Karambuŋo to, karandiŋolu kiliŋ-kiliŋ se kitaabu saboolu karaŋ santo karandirlaa ñaa la fo a se i maakoyi karaŋo to.

2. Suwo kono, karandiŋolu se kuma kaŋolu tombonj ñiŋ kitaaboolu kono. I yee i karaŋ santo la siŋaa jamaa fo i ye i nukundi.

3. Karaŋ buŋo to waraŋ suwo kono, karandiŋ fula se kuma kaŋolu tombonj ñiŋ kitaaboolu kono. I ye ñoo faliŋ i ya karaŋ santo.

Exercise 3: Writing/Dictation

1. Karambuŋo to, karandirlaa se kuma kaŋolu tombonj ñiŋ kitaabu saboolu to. A ye i karaŋ doomaŋ-doomaŋ fo ka baŋ, a ye karandiŋolu yaamari i ye i safee aniŋ Mandinka safeeri-kuloolu la. Niŋ karandiŋolu ye i bandii, i saa juubee mune ye ila safeeroolu niŋ safeeroolu minnu be suukuu kitaaboolu kono fatandi. I se kaccaa wo tomboolu kunna. Karandiŋ fula se i ñoo faliŋ noo ñiŋ dookuwo to.

2. Karandiŋolu se ñininkaari luulu safee kitaaboolu kunna. Niŋ i ye i bandii, i ye ila ñininkaroolu faliŋ ñoo teema. I ye jaabiroolu safee aniŋ Mandinka safeeri-kuloolu la.

3. Karandiŋ-woo-karandiŋ se kuma kaŋ kiliŋ tombonj muŋ diyaata a ye. Niŋ a ye i bandii, a si safeeri sutuŋo ke a kunna.

Exercise 4: Listening/Speaking and Conversation

Podkastoo niŋ Widewoo: I se podkastoo dadaa ñiŋ kitaaboolu nafaa kunna, waraŋ I se widewoo sutuŋolu ke minnu be ñiŋ kitaaboolu kuma kaŋolu faranfansi la, ila miiroo to.

Exercise 5: Cultural Competence

I se aadoolu fannaalu tomboŋ minulu diyaata i ye suukuwoolu kono. Niŋ i ye i bandii, i se i kuntaki aniŋ minulu sotota ila dinkiraa to.



Figure 6: Bertil Herding Highway, Banjul, The Gambia.





Unit 2

History and Communication

This unit contains documents that belong to Lamin Dampha (or Laamini Danfaa). Dampha was born in 1978 and raised in the twin villages of Jaara-Japine in the South Bank Region of The Gambia. He attended elementary and advanced Islamic studies at his father’s school in the village of Japine. His father taught him Mandinka Ajami. Currently, he serves as a Quranic teacher and Imam in Japine. In the interview that accompanies this unit, Dampha discusses, among other things, his everyday use of Mandinka Ajami in communication with friends and family members, and in professional communication and letter writing.



Figure 1: Lamin Dampha during the interview on Mandinka Ajami in The Gambia.

In this unit, we present four texts from Dampha’s personal archives. The first Ajami text is an important and rare historical document that lists the names and the duration of the reigns of 45 precolonial Mandinka monarchs (including a queen) of the land of Jaara. Jaara was the home of these precolonial Mandinka monarchs who ruled the area that included the villages of Jaara, Japine, Badume, and other neighboring communities. We learned from the document that these monarchs ruled the land of Jaara for over 600 years before what is now The Gambia was colonized by the British in the 19th century.

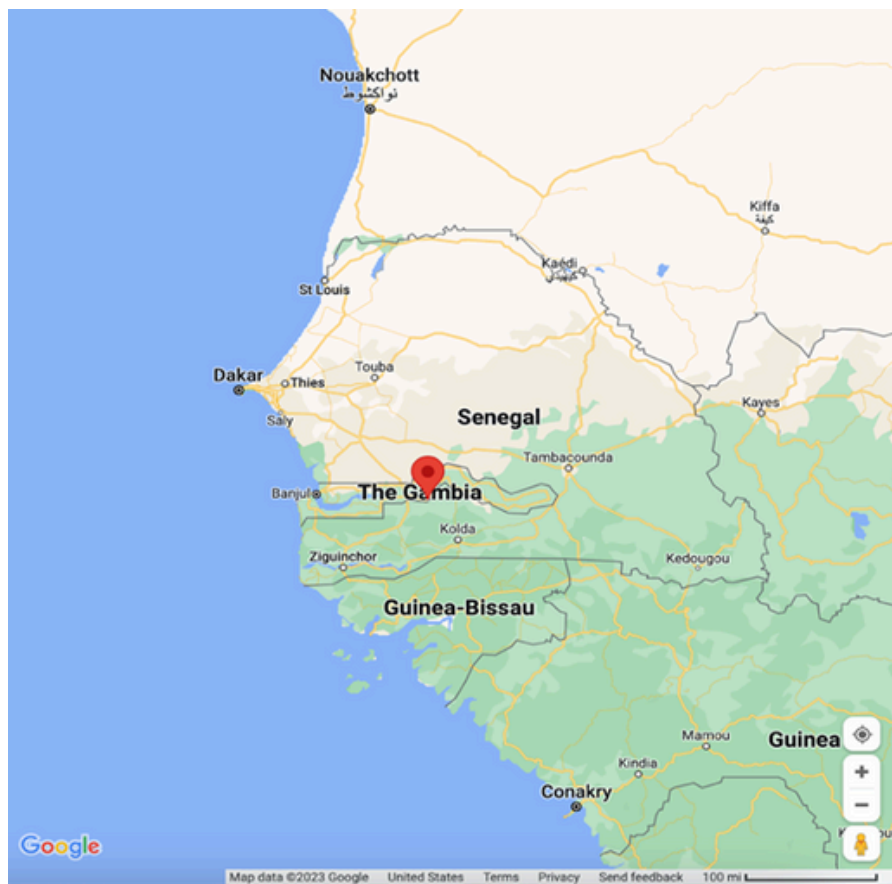


Figure 2: Location of Jaara in The Gambia. Map data @2023 Google.

[1] To listen to Lamin Dampha’s interview, see <https://sites.bu.edu/ria/mandinka/mandinka-unit-2/>.

The second document is a letter written by one of Dampha’s relatives, who was living in Libya at that time. The letter writer extends his greetings to his family members back home in Jaara and offers condolences and prayers for a deceased local elder. The third Ajami text is another letter by one of Dampha’s family members who was living in Talindiŋ-Kunjaa in The Gambia, away from his native village of Jaara-Japine. The writer sends his greetings to his family members and rejoices about the election of the new Imam. He also sends gifts to his family members along with instructions on how to share them. The fourth Ajami document is a public announcement letter from Jaara-Japine community leaders publicizing their yearly religious event and inviting the public and elders to attend.



Figure 3: Ablaye Diakit  and Lamin Dampha during the interview on Ajami at Bala Saho’s home, Brusubi, Serrekunda, The Gambia.

Ajami Text 1: Jaara Mansoolu

[Page 1]

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ بِبَابِ فَیْدَةِ الْحَاكِمِ کَثِیْرًا
جَدَارَ مَنْسَرٍ قَلْبِ دَلِیْمِیْنِ اَسْمِیْ قَوَاتِ کِیْلِ اِدْمَا جَدَا
رَمَالِ اَسْمِیْ کُنْتُ : اِدْمَا لِبَدَا جَدَا اَسْمِیْ تَدَارِ لَوْر
اِدْمَا جَسْمِیْ اَسْمِیْ کُنْتُ : فَعَسَرَ کَثِیْرًا اَسْمِیْ شِیْنِ
جِدَا اَوْرِ اَسْمِیْ تَدَارِ سَمِیْ لَوْر : جَدَا دَفْعِیْ اَسْمِیْ
وَوْرُورِ وَوْرِ کَرِ ذُبْ سَمِیْ اَسْمِیْ تَدَارِ سَمِیْ : قَرِ سَمِیْ
فَسَمِیْ اَسْمِیْ تَدَارِ کِیْلِ : مَنْسَرِ قَعِیْرِ جِیْفِیْ قَعِیْرِ
اَسْمِیْ وَوْرِ : سَمِیْ قَرِ اَسْمِیْ قَرِ : بَتَا مَسْمِیْ اَسْمِیْ
قَوَاتِ : تَدَارِ اَسْمِیْ کُنْتُ : بِضَبَلِ جَدَا سَمِیْ
اَسْمِیْ سَمِیْ کَلِ کَابِیْرِ کَرِ جَدَا کُنْتُ اَسْمِیْ تَدَارِ لَوْر

كَدْرُ كِلْ جَاكْ اَسَجِ سَبْ مَمَقْدَ بَعْرِقَعِ اَسَجِ
 كَمْتْ جَدَسَا جِيْسِ شَدَا شَدَا مَا كَلَا اَسَجِ شَدَا
 اَسَجِ بَعْرَا: هَسَرِ كَلْ جَاكْ اَسَجِ تَلْ قَرْوَا: سِي
 بَرَا اَسَجِ تَلْ قَرْوَا: سِي اَسَجِ تَلْ شِي
 تَلْ قَرْوَا اَسَجِ تَلْ كَمْتْ: كَسِيَا مَعِ اَسَجِ
 كَمْتْ: ذَرَا هَسَرِ اَسَجِ قَرْوَا اَسَجِ لَوَا: هَسَرِ
 مَمَقْدِ اَسَجِ سَبْ جَكَا نِرَا اَسَجِ كَمْتْ: سِي اَسَجِ
 جَاكْ اَسَجِ تَلْ لَوَا لِيَا شَدَا اَسَجِ نِرَا شَدَا اَسَجِ
 تَلْ رَمَبْ: بَقَا شَمْ بَعْرِقَعِ اَسَجِ تَلْ كَلْ: جِيَا بَكَا
 هَمَقْدُ اَسَجِ كَلْ: هَسَرِ جَعْرِقَعِ اَسَجِ بَعْرَا: تَبْ بَرَا
 اَسَجِ قَرْوَا بَعْرَا: كَا ذِكَا اَسَجِ تَلْ: هَسَرِ هَسَرِ

كُنْتُ وَأَسْجِ فَرْزُونَ، تَبَّ هَيْتَا مَا رَكِبَ أَسْجِ تَارُونَ
 حَمْدِ كَيْسِ أَسْجِ تَابَ، كَسِيكُ بَلَا بَا أَسْجِ تَارُونَ
 فَتَسْرِبَلِ رِقَابِ دَقَسْرِبَلِ مَا دَسْجِ تَنْتَسْرِمَا
 كَيْسِ أَسْجِ بَقُولَا بَرَا بَا أَسْجِ فَرْزُونَ، بَرْمِيكَا
 أَسْجِ تَارُونَ تَشِيرُ هَمْدِ سَدَا أَسْجِ اَهْوَارُ فَرْزُونَ كَابِرُ
 جَدِي سِيكَا فَتَا بَرَا فَهَمْدِ سَدَا أَسْجِ كَمَلُونَ
 تَسْجِ تَارُونَ فَرْزُونَ كَامَرُ سَجِ تَشِيرُ وَكُولَا كَابِرُ جَا
 يَسِيكَا جَارُ فَتَسْرِبَلِ سِيكَا نَسْجِ كِيمُ فَرْزُونَ
 فَهَوَا عَمِ سَابِ جَارُ فَتَسْرِبَلِ سِيكَا سَجِ تَارُونَ
 تَارُونَ بَارُ فَهَوَا فَتَسْرِبَلِ سَابِ فَتَسْرِبَلِ
 تَارُونَ، وَلِدُ فَرْزُونَ جَبْرُ تَارُونَ دَوْمَرُ سَوْمَرُ ٤٥
 بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ

Transcription 1: Jaara Mansoolu

[Page 1]

Bismil Lāhi al-Raḥmāni al-Raḥīm. Bābun fāyidatun li kalāmi kasīran

1. Jaara mansa foloo Jaasii.
A sanji muwaṅ anin kilin.
2. A dimmaa, Faaratalin a sanji kononto.
3. A dimmaa, Liban Jaata, a sanji taṅ nin luulu.
4. A dimmaa, Jaasa Ma-aṅ, a sanji kononto.
5. Mansa Kotoo a sanji seyi.
6. Fidaṅ Waali a sanji taṅ naani sanji luulu.
7. Jaaja Ma-aṅ Bure a sanji wooro.
8. Warakani Jobu Sonko a sanji taṅ anin saba.
9. Mansa Bura Manka a sanji taṅ nin kilin.
10. Mansa Ma-aṅ Yuula Jayfaa Ma-aṅ a sanji wooro.
11. Sirman a sanji wooro.
12. Bataṅ Muusaa a sanji muwaṅ.
13. Nataali a sanji kononto.
14. Balabaali Jaa Sonko seyi a sanji.
15. Najan Koli Kaabi Karafaa Kanna a sanji taṅ anin luulu.
16. Mansa Koli Jaata a sanji saba.

[Page 2]

17. Muhammadu Bureṅ Ma-aṅ a sanji kononto.
18. Jasaa Jayini taṅ naani.
19. Maakan Waali a sanji taṅ naani anin sanji fula.

20. Mansa Koli Jaata a sanji taɗ niɗ woorowula.
21. Saybu Baraa Jaata a sanji taɗ niɗ wooro.
22. Seyini Yadi a sanji taɗ niɗ seyi.
23. Taka Muusaa a sanji taɗ niɗ kononto.
24. Kasiyaɗ Ma-aɗ a sanji kononto.
25. Jilaa Muusaa a sanji muwaɗ niɗ sanji luulu.
26. Masaali Sadaali a sanji saba.
27. Jaakaani a sanji kononto.
28. Sira Tamaa Jaata a sanji taɗ niɗ luulu.
29. Liyaa Sonko a sanji naani.
30. Nudaɗ Yadaa a sanji taɗ niɗ saba.
31. Faatuma Bureɗ a sanji taɗ niɗ kilinɗ.
32. Jiila Bankaɗ Muhammadu a sanji kilinɗ.
33. Mansali Joomaa a sanji fula.
34. Bubu Biraɗ a sanji muwaɗ niɗ fula.
35. Haajuki a sanji naani.
36. Mansa Musu

[Page 3]

Kotoo a sanji wooro.

37. Tembeto Meetanɗ Maalu Koli a sanji taɗ niɗ luulu.
38. Hamadi Koyi a sanji taɗ.
39. Kasidaɗ Balaabaɗ a sanji taɗ niɗ luulu.
40. Mansa Baari Faada Mansa Baari Maadaɗ sanji kononto.
41. Sirmanɗ Kaɗi a sanji fula.
42. Buraɗ Baa a sanji woorowula.
43. Bori Miilanɗ a sanji taɗ niɗ seyi.

44. Muhammadi Sukuu a sanji muwaŋ niŋ wooro.

Kabiriŋ Jaasii la, kataa bula Muhammadi Sukuu la, sanji keme luulu

aniŋ sanji taŋ woorowula aniŋ sanji seyi. Wo koolaa, kabiriŋ Jaasii la Jaara Mansa Koli

Silla naa, sanji keme wooro sanji muwaŋ aniŋ saba.

45. Jaara Mansa Koli Silla sanji taŋ naani.

Jaara Moo-fiŋ mansoo bee: mansa taŋ saba mansa luulu.

Wolu le mararoo ke Japine aniŋ Badume 623.

Translation 1: Jaara Monarchs

[Page 1]

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Important Section on Many Subjects

1. The first king of Jaara was Jaasii.

He ruled for 21 years.

2. His son, Faarataliŋ, ruled for 9 years.

3. His son, Libang Jaata, ruled for 15 years.

4. The latter's son, Jaasa Ma-aŋ, ruled for 9 years.

5. Mansa Kotoo ruled for 8 years.

6. Fadaŋ Waali ruled for 45 years.

7. Jaaja Ma-aŋ Bure ruled for 6 years.

8. Warakani Jobu Sonko ruled for 13 years.

9. Mansa Bura Manka ruled for 11 years.

10. Mansa Ma-aŋ Juula Jaafa Ma-aŋ^[2] ruled for 6 years.

[2] Such long names reflect important family lineages.

11. Sirmanj ruled for 6 years.
12. Bantanj Muusaa ruled for 20 years.
13. Nataali ruled for 9 years.
14. Balabaali Jaa Sonko ruled for 8 years.
15. Najanj Koli Kaabi Karafaa Kannaa ruled for 15 years.

[Page 2]

16. Mansa Koli Jaata ruled for 3 years.
17. Muhammadu Burej Ma-anj ruled for 9 years.
18. Jaasaa Jayini ruled for 40 years.
19. Maakanj Waali ruled for 42 years.
20. Mansa Koli Jaata ruled for 17 years.
21. Saybu Baraa Jaata ruled for 16 years.
22. Seyini Yadi ruled for 18 years.
23. Taka Musaa ruled for 19 years.
24. Kasiyanj Ma-anj ruled for 9 years.
25. Jilaa Muusaa ruled for 25 years.
26. Masaali Sadaali ruled for 3 years.
27. Jaakaani ruled for 9 years.
28. Sira Tamaa Jaata ruled for 15 years.
29. Liyaa Sonko ruled for 4 years.
30. Nudanj Yadaa ruled for 13 years.
31. Faatuma Burej ruled for 11 years.
32. Jilaa Bankanj Muhammadu ruled for 1 year.
33. Mansali Joomaa ruled for 2 years.
34. Bubu Biranj ruled for 22 years.
35. Haajuki ruled for 4 years.

36. Queen Mansa Musu

[Page 3]

Kotoo ruled for 6 years.

37. Tembeto Meetan Maalu Koli ruled for 15 years.

38. Hamadi Koyi ruled for 10 years.

39. Kasidan Balaaban ruled for 15 years.

40. Mansa Baari Faada Mansa Baari Maadan ruled for 9 years.

41. Sirman Kañi ruled for 2 years.

42. Buran Baa rule for 7 years.

43. Bori Miilan ruled for 18 years.

44. Muhammadi Sukuu ruled for 26 years.

The number of years these rulers reigned, starting from Jaasii to Muhammadi Sukuu, is 578.[3] Afterwards, from the first king Jaasii to Jaara Mansa Koli Silla Ja, the kings ruled for 623 years.[4]

45. Jaara Mansa Koli Silla Ja ruled for 40 years.

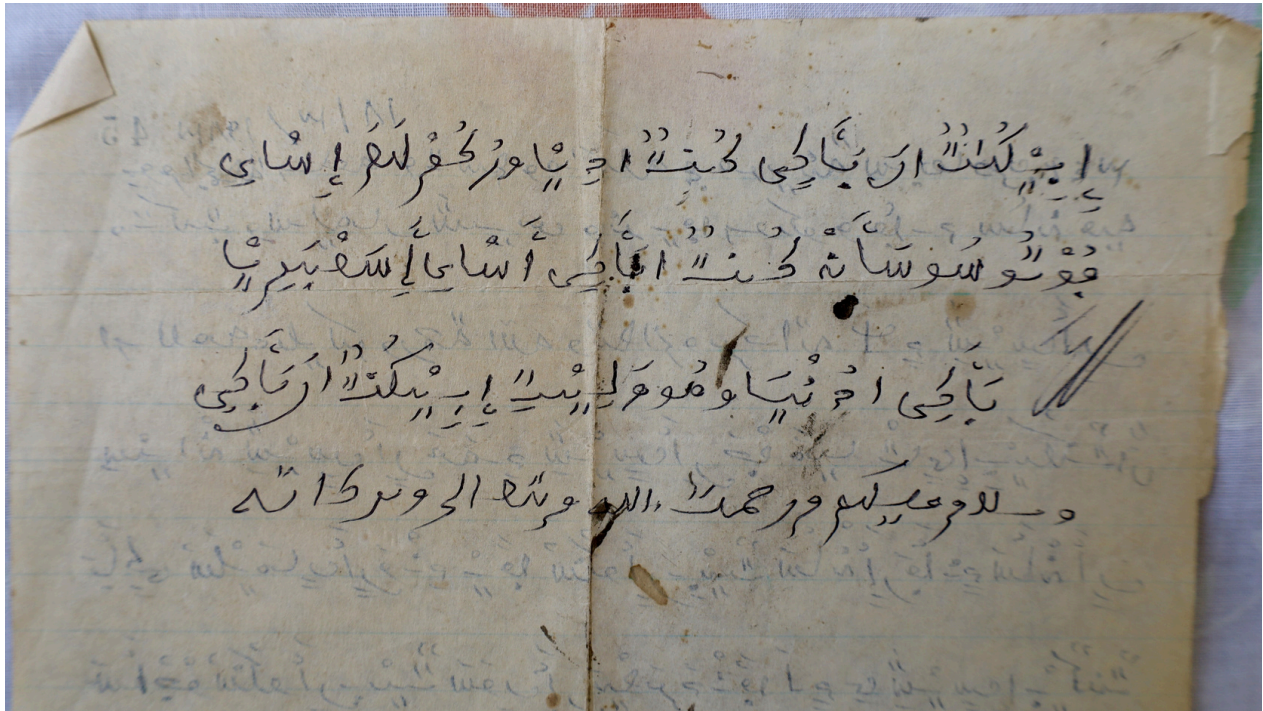
The total number of all the Black African rulers of Jaara is 35.[5]

Those are the ones who ruled in Japine and Badume for 623 years.

[3] The writer's calculation here is slightly off. Based on the numbers in the Ajami text, the 44 rulers reigned for a total of 585 years.

[4] Note that King Jaara Mansa Koli Silla ruled for 40 years, following King Muhammadi Sukuu, the 44th ruler. Based on the number of years of the reign of each of the 44 rulers listed in the Ajami text (585 years) and the 40 year-rule of King Jaara Mansa Koli Silla, the 45th ruler, the total duration of the reigns of all the 45 rulers is 625 years.

[5] This must also be an error. The total number of the rulers listed in the text is 45 instead of 35. If we use British colonization of The Gambia in the 19th century as a benchmark, we can assume that the 45 Black kings ruled the Jaara area (including Japine and Badume) since around 1275 (i.e., 1900 – 625 years of the reigns of Black rulers reign = 1275). This is consistent with oral narratives of the migrations of Mande people from the East (Mali) to the West (Senegambia).



Transcription 2: Kontondiroo niŋ Saŋ-kontoŋo Leetaroo

Assalāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatu l-Lāhi wa ta’ālā wa barakātuḥu

Landiŋ Siise aniŋ Seynu Siise, aniŋ Mamadiŋ Siise, aniŋ Jaamanti, n bee kontonna baake. Sulaymaan, aniŋ Wandifaa Sonko, aniŋ Bintu Saane, aniŋ Fandiŋ Saane, aniŋ Saajo Sonko, aniŋ Bintu Sawane, aniŋ Ņaara Danfaa. Landiŋ Siise, n bee kontonna baake, i niŋ suukononkoolu bee, aniŋ saatee moolu, dindiŋ, keeba. Kontondiroo koolaa, i yaa moy ko Almaami Al-haaji Sankuŋ Danfaa a faata jee. I ko a baadeeta jee. Almaami Al-haaji Sankuŋ Danfaa, n be duwaa laa ye fo Allāhu Ta’alā a see kafara kaa ye aniŋ yanfoo. A see neema kaa a ye. Fo Allāhu Ta’alā a see laakira soonoyaa a ye. Ala maa a so la ariyanna la. Ala maa a so la ariyanna la [repeated], Ala maa aye laajaŋo daa muta. Ala maa a soonoyaa la a ma. Ala maa a munkoo mee la koomankoolu bulu.

[Page 2]

N bee kontonna baake. Kontondiroo koola, i see Futu Saane kontonj baake. A see sabari baake. Duniyaa mu wo le ti. N bee kontonna baake.

Wassalāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatu l-Lāhi wa ta‘ālaa wa barakātuḥu

Translation 2: Greeting and Condolence Letter

[Page 1]

May Almighty Allah’s peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you

Landiŋ Siise, and Seynu Siise, Mandiŋ Siise, and Jamanti, greetings to you all. Greetings also to Sulaymaan, Fandiŋ, Wandifaa Sonko, Bintu Saane, Fandiŋ Saane, Saajo Sonko, Bintu Sawane, and Ŋaara Danfaa. Landiŋ Siise, greetings to you and all your family members and the people of the village, both the young and elderly people. Besides my greetings, I learned that that Almaami Al-haaji Sankuŋ Danfaa passed away and was buried there [in The Gambia]. For Almaami Al-haaji Al-haaji Sankuŋ Danfaa, we pray that Almighty Allah grants him blessings and forgiveness. May He have mercy on him, and may Almighty Allah bless him in the hereafter. May Allah grant him access to paradise [not vocalized]. May Allah grant him access to paradise [repeated and vocalized]. May Allah ease his long rest in the grave.[6] May the pounded millet or rice offerings made for his sake by those he left behind last long [before they are made again in the community].[7]

[6] Here the writer used the Mandinka term *laajanjo*, which refers to the time deceased people rest in the grave until Judgment Day.

[7] Here the writer used *munkoo* (pounded millet or rice) that is distributed to people as a form of charity (offering) for the sake of deceased people in Senegambia.

My warmest greetings to you. Besides my greetings to you, please extend my warmest greetings to Futu Saane. May she continue to persevere.[8] This is life. My warmest greetings to you.

May Almighty Allah's peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you.



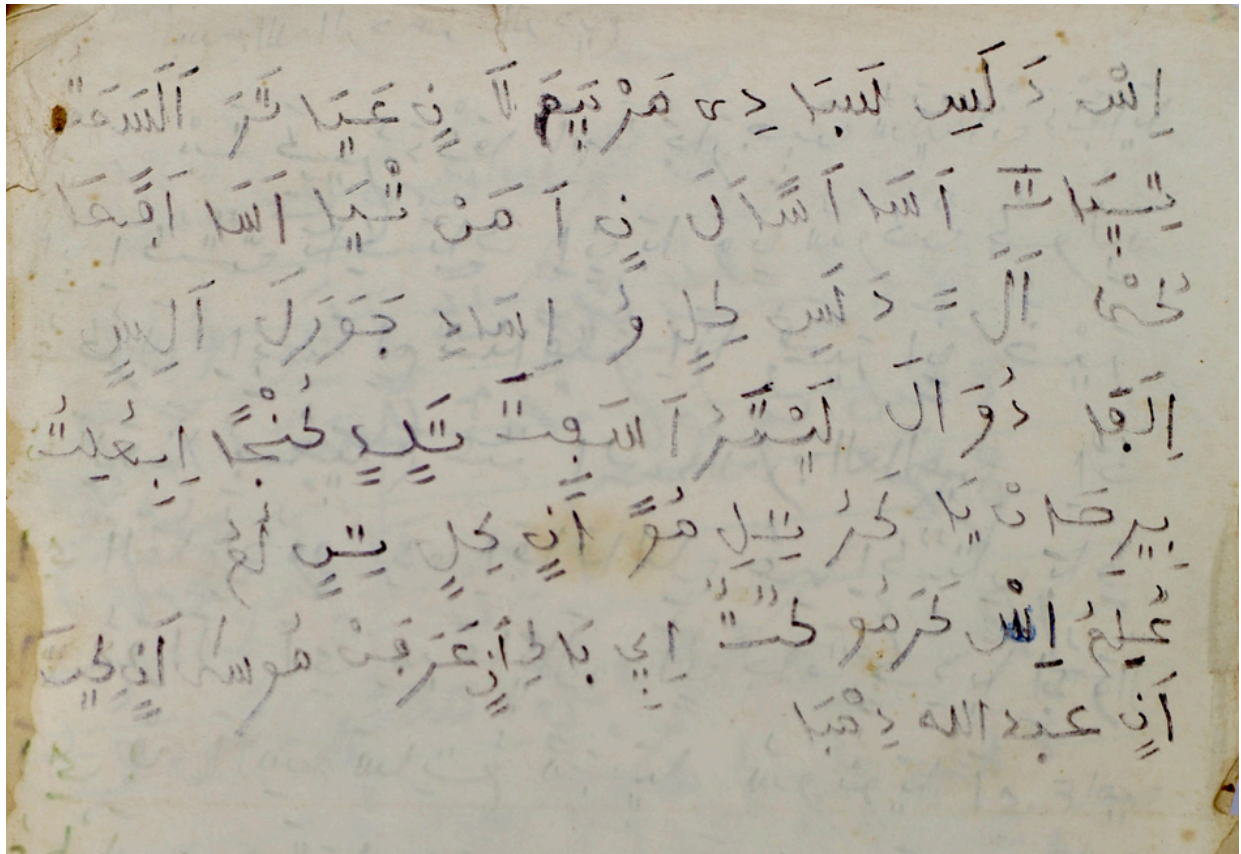
Figure 4: The National Assembly Building, Banjul, The Gambia.

[8] Here, the writer uses *sabari* (from Arabic *ṣabr*, perseverance, patience, endurance). This is interchangeable with the verb *muña* in Mandinka and *muñ* in Wolof, an important Senegambian virtue.

Ajami Text 3: Kontondiroo niḡ Dumbulu Leeteroo

[Page 1]

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
 اَشْرَفَتْ كَبِيرٌ دَنْبًا اَبَتْ جَارَ جَبْتٍ سَلِيْمًا دَنْبًا
 اَبَاطُتْ بَابِي بَابِي اِنِّي بَابِي وَنِ سُرُكُتْ كُورِي
 عَطُورٌ اِبْدَامٌ تَنَا مَتَرٌ اِنَّا بَحِيْرٌ اِنِّي خَيْرٌ
 نِ اَلْبَنَّا بِعِيَامٍ عَدُوِّ الْحَمْدِ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ اَلِي
 اَبِ الْقَامِ اَلْكُورِ دِي اِبَا قَالِدِ عِيَا اَلْبَنَّا بَابِي
 بِي دُوْرَالِ اَي سِيْقَا اَلِ اَنِ جَا تِ كِي دِي اِبْدُوْرَالِ
 اَي فِي اَللَّيْلِ سَا تَعُ شَبِيْطَا سُرُنُوْرِيَا اَي اَمِي
 عَطُورٌ يَمِ تَبَا اِسَادِي بَابِ اَنِ اَيَا سَا اَسَلَا
 اَيَا صَا = عَطُورٌ يَمِ صَا جُنُوْرٌ كِي مَرَّ عَلَيَّ
 اَبْدُوْرِي مَرِيْمٌ لَّا = اَللَّهِ دُوْرَا سُرُكُتْ كُورِي
 تَا دَرَا اِمَلِ مَسُوْرٌ اَنِ اِبَا كُبَا اَلْبِقَا قَتْ دَنْبًا
 كِي لِنَا عَمِي نِي شُوْرَتِي اَللَّهِ اَجِي ذَا اَلْحُوْرُ دَنْبًا
 لَئِي = بَلُوْرٌ اِسَادِ مَرِيْمٌ = كِي بَلَا = عَطُورٌ
 وَ دَا لَيْسَ عُوْرُوْرٌ اِي سَلِيْمًا دَا لَيْسَ لَمِيْبَا



Transcription 3: Kontondiroo niŋ Dumbulu Leeteroo

Bismi l-Lāhi al-Raḥmāni al-Raḥīm

Leetaroo bota Kabiiru Danfaa a bi taa Jaara-Japine Sulaymaan Danfaa yaa. N be i konton na baake anij baa wo niŋ sukononkoolu bee. Wo koolaa, n be daamin, tanaa man tara nna fo hayra anij hayra. Niŋ ali fanan be wo ñaama. Woto, alhamdulillah Rabbil aalamiina. I ko i ye almaami dokoo dii i faamaa la le! Wo ye n kontaani baake. N be duwaala a ye siimaayaa la anij jaatakendiyaa. N be duwaala a ye fo Ala si saateewoo sambañaa soonoyaa a ye. Aamiin. Wo koolaa, ñiŋ tabaa i saa dii baa la. Anij, i yaa san a taa la. I yaa san! Wo koolaa, ñiŋ saafunoolu kuŋ muwan

wo le bi jee. I se doo dii Maryaama la. I se doo talaa suukononkoolu teema, ka taa Daraame la musoolu anij i baa Kumbaa. I se Faamata Danfaa dii kuɗ kilinna. Niɗ tuta jee, i saa a jiiɓee Jaakuɗ Danfaa le ye. Buluwo, i saa di Maryaama la, kuɗ fula. Wo koolaa, wo Dalasi woorowula, ite Sulaymaan Dalasi saba.

[Page 2]

I se Dalasi saba dii Maryaama la. Niɗ a yaa tara a la samata tiɗaata, i sa a saɗ a la. Niɗ a maɗ tiɗaa, a saa faɗ maakoy a la. Dalasi kiliɗo, i saa dii Jawara la. Ali se n lafaa duwaa la. Leetaroo a safeeta Talindiɗ-Kunjaa. N be wole to, Biiri Saane yaa. Karo tili muwaɗ anij kiliɗ teneɗ luɗo. Wo le mu. I se Karamoo kontoɗ n-ɗe baake, anij Arfaɗ Muusaa, anij Kiina, anij Abdullah Demba.

Translation 3: Greeting and Gift Letter

[Page 1]

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

The letter comes from Kabiiru Danfaa going to Jaara-Japine to Sulaymaan Danfaa. I extend my warmest greetings to you, to Mother, and to all family members. After that, I am well where I am. I have nothing but peace. I hope you are in the same conditions. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Universe. I am told that the Imam Stick has been given to your father!^[9] I am very happy about that. I pray for his long life and good health. I pray that God facilitates his leadership in the village. Amen.

[9] Meaning he has been elected as Imam of the village.

After that, give this Mother's tobacco [money]. Also, buy it for her. Please, buy it!

[10] After that, this soap consists of 20 pieces. Give some to Maryaama. Divide equally the others among family members, among the Daraame women and Mother Kumbaa. Give to Faamata Danfaa one piece. If there is a leftover, save it for Jaakuñ Danfaa. For the buluwo,[11] give it to Maryaama, two packets. After that, from those 7 Dalasis, you Sulaymaan take 3.

[Page 2]

And give 3 Dalasis to Maryaama. If you find that her shoes are damaged, buy her new ones. If they are not damaged, she can use the money. The [remaining] 1 Dalasi, give it to Jawara. Please pray for me. The letter was written in Talindiñ-Kunjaa. I reside there at Biiri Saane's home. The 21st of the month, Monday. That's all. Send my warmest regards to Karamoo, Arfañ Muusaa, Kiina, and Abdullah Dembaa.

[10] Note that in traditional Mandinka society, some elderly women smoke tobacco with local pipes called *tabandaa*. It is an age-grade tradition exclusive to senior women. Sometimes, they smoke a local plant called *taba-saba*.

[11] The local name for the laundry bluing powder to enhance the look of washed clothes, especially white ones.

Ajami Text 4: Kankulaari Leetaroo

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ
وَضِيئَةِ الشَّيْخِ
لِيَسْرُوبَتْ جَارِجِيْنَةٌ
الْإِمَامُ الْحَاجُّ شَرِيْفِي سُنْكُونَايْبِ الْإِمَامِ
الْحَاجِّ كَبِيْرِيْ نَبَا الْكَالْوَايْمِيْ الْحَاجِّ
جَنَكُو سَانِي الْكَالْوَايْمَارِكُو الْحَاجِّ
سِيْنِي دَنْقَا لِسِيْبُو الْحَاجِّ بِاَكْرَجَلِيْ نَبَا
اِكُو اَل سَاوَسَا كَمُو اَدَا لِيْت مِيْنَعَلِ
يِيْنَا اِيْرِيْلِي - كَرُوِيْلِي وَرُوِيْلِي
اَلِيْلِي بُوِيْلِي بِاِيْلِي جِيْلِي سَانِي الْقَالِي
وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

Transcription 4: Kankulaari Leetaroo

Bismi l-Lāhi al-Raḥmāni, al-Raḥīmi

Al-ḥamdu li l-Lāhi Rabbi l-‘ālamīn

Wa ṣalātu wa salām ‘alā Rasūlu l-Lāhi

faḍīlatu al-shaykhi

Leetaroo bota Jaara-Japine.

Al-imaamu Al-haaji Sariifu Sonko, Naa ’ibu Imaamu;

Al-haaji Kabiiru Danfaa, Alkaaloo Tembeto; Al-haaji

Jankoo Saane, Alkaaloo Maarikotoo; Al-haaji

Seeni Danfaa, Seefoo; Al-haaji Baakari Jali Danfaa;

i ko ila saŋ-woo-saŋ kamoo i dalita miŋ ke la,

ñinaŋ Epriili karoo til wooroo la.

Ali la buuñaa baa bi jee, aniŋ saatee alfaalu bee.

Wa salāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatu l-Lāhi wa barakātuhu

Translation 4: Public Announcement Letter

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Praise be to Allah, the Creator the Universe

And may peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah

the chosen spiritual leader

The letter comes from Jaara-Japine.

Imam Al-haaji Sariif Sonko, Deputy Imam;

Al-haaji Kabiiru Danfaa, Tembeto village chief;

Al-haaji Jankoo Saane, Maarikotoo village chief;
Al-haaji Seeni Danfaa, Seefoo [village chief]; and Al-haaji Baakari Jali Danfaa
announce that their yearly religious ceremony will be held
this year on the 6th of April.
Your presence and that of all village elders will honor us greatly.

May Allah's peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you



Figure 5: Bertil Herding Highway, Bijilo area, Kombo, The Gambia.

Glossary

Alkaaloo: Village chief

Arijanna: Paradise (from Arabic *al-Jannah*)

Baadeeta: Buried, from the verb *kaa baade* (to bury)

Dindiŋ: Child, young, youth

Dumbuloolu: Gifts, presents (sg. *dumbulu*)

Duwaa: Supplication, prayer (from Arabic *du'a*)

Epriili: April, from English April

Faata: Died, from the verb *ka faa* (to die)

Faranfansi: Describe, explain, differentiate, distinguish

Ka a jiibee, juubee: To look at, see, check, verify, inspect something, to observe

Ka a kankulaa: To announce something publicly, inform the public

Ka a mMoy or moyi: To hear something, understand, be informed

Ka a nukundi: To master, memorize, turn something into powder (when used in cooking)

Ka ñoo faliŋ: To take turn, to replace one another

Karambuŋo or karan-buŋo: Classroom

Karantaa: Quranic school, learning place, school

Keebaa: Old person, elderly, senior

Keme: Hundred

Kibaari-taamansee: Billboard, advertisement sign, information sign

Kontondiroo: Greeting

Koomankoolu: Those left behind

Kummaayaata: Important, pivotal, necessary, prominent, crucial

Laadoolu or aadoolu: Cultures, customs, traditions (sg. *laadoo* or *aadoo*)

Laakira: Hereafter (from Arabic *al-Ākhira*)

Mararoo: Reign, rule, administration, regime

Moo-fiŋ mansoo: A/the black king

N bee kontonna baake: I extend my warmest greetings to you

Naa'ibu: Deputy Imam (from Arabic *Nā'ib*)

Neema: Blessing

Ñoŋ or ñoo: One another

Saatee alfaalu: Village elders

Safeeri-kuloolu: Letters of alphabets and scripts

Safeeroolu: Writings, texts (sg. *safeeroo*)

San-kontoŋo: Presenting condolences

Soonoyaa or, sooneyaa: Ease, simplicity, achievement

Tomboolu: Subjects, points

Yanfoo: Forgiveness, from *ka yanfa:* to forgive

Notes

A sanji: The writer of the first Ajami text dealing with the rulers of Jaara used a *sanji* throughout the text, which is a short form for a *ye sanji x*, to mean “s/he reigned for X number of years.”

Laajaŋo: This Mandinka refers to the time deceased people rest in the grave until they are resurrected on Judgment Day. It is a compound word consisting of *laa* (to lie down, rest) and *jaŋo* (duration/length).

Ma-aŋ: The numerous rulers of Jaara with this given name indicates that they are descendants of Eastern Mande people from the Empire of Mali that Sunjata Keita founded in the 13th century. According to local traditions, *Ma-aŋ* or *Mahan* are local variants of *Maghan* or *Magan*, a given name of Sunjata and his father. Senegambian Mandinka people refer to those with the names of *Ma-aŋ* or *Mahan*

as *tilibonkoolu* (People from the East), i.e., those who who came from the East (Mali) to settle in Senegambia during the expansion centuries ago.

Munkoo: This term refers to pounded millet or rice shared in Mandinka communities as offerings for the sake of deceased people. This serves as an opportunity for members of the community to honor and pray for the deceased, and also to pray that death rarely occurs among them so that such offerings rarely need to be made.

Queen Mansa Musu Kotoo: The list of the 45 rulers of Jaara includes this queen who ruled for 6 years. She was the 36th ruler.

Seyi: This is the Mandinka word for number 8, not to be confused with the verb *sey* (to return home, go back home), and *Séy* (a Senegambian patronym).

Pedagogical Exercises

Exercise 1: Comprehension Multiple choice questions

1. Jaara mansa jumaa le la mansayaa saŋolu siyaata i bee ti?
 - a. Jasaa Jayini
 - b. Jaara Mansa Koli Silla
 - c. Fadaŋ Waali
 - d. Bori Miilaŋ
2. Jaara la mansa musoo ye sanji jelu le ke mansayaa to?
 - a. Sanji taŋ luulu
 - b. Sanji muwaŋ niŋ wooro
 - c. Sanji wooro
 - d. Sanji taŋ naani aniŋ fula

3. Mansa jumaa le keta Jaara la mansa labajo ti?
- a. Mansa Koli Silla Ja
 - b. Mansa Musu Kotoo
 - c. Muhammadu Sukuu
 - d. Mansa Koli Jaata
4. Lamin Dampha la taarikoo to, a ko Jaara-Badume ye mansa jelu le soto?
- a. Mansa taŋ naani niŋ luulu
 - b. Mansa taŋ saba niŋ luulu
 - c. Mansa muwaŋ niŋ seyi
 - d. Mansa keme luulu aniŋ woorowula
5. Dampha ye sanji jelu le fo ko wo le keta Mansa Jaasii niŋ Mansa Koli Silla teema?
- a. Sanji taŋ naani aniŋ sanji fula
 - b. Sanji keme luulu aniŋ taŋ woorowula niŋ seyi
 - c. Sanji taŋ saba niŋ fula
 - d. Sanji keme wooro sanji muwaŋ aniŋ saba
6. Jumaa loŋ Mansa Jaasii diŋ foloo muŋ mansayaata?
- a. Faarataliŋ
 - b. Libaŋ Jaata
 - c. Jaasa Ma-aŋ
 - d. Mansa Kotoo

Exercise 2: Reading

1. Karambuŋo to, karandiŋolu kiliŋ-kiliŋ se taarikoo waraŋ leetari saboolu karaŋ santo karandirlaa ñaato fo a se i maakoyi karaŋo to.
2. Suwo kono, karandiŋolu se kuma kaŋolu tombonj ñiŋ leetari saboolu kono, i se i karaŋ santo la siña a jamaa fo i yee nukundi.
3. Karambuŋo to waraŋ suwo kono, karandiŋ fula se kuma kaŋolu tombonj ñiŋ taarikoo niŋ leetari saboolu to, i se i ñoo faliŋ, i se i karaŋ santo.

Exercise 3: Writing/Dictation

1. Karambuŋo to, karandirlaa se kuma kaŋolu tombonj ñiŋ taarikoo waraŋ leetari saboolu to. A ye i karaŋ doomaŋ-doomaŋ fo ka baŋ, a ye karandiŋolu yaamari i ye i safee aniŋ Mandinka safeeri-kuloolu la. Niŋ karandiŋolu ye i bandii, i saa juubee mune ye ila safeeroolu niŋ safeeroolu minnu be kitaaboo kono fatandi. I se kaccaa wo tomboolu kunna. Karandiŋ fula se i ñoo faliŋ noo ñiŋ dookuwo to.
2. Karandiŋolu se ñininkaari luulu safee taarikoo waraŋ leetaroolu kunna. Niŋ i ye bandii, i ye ila ñininkaroolu faliŋ ñoo teema. I ye jaabiroolu safee aniŋ Mandinka safeeri-kuloolu la.
3. Karandiŋ-woo-karandiŋ se kuma kaŋ kiliŋ tombonj muŋ diyaata a ye. Niŋ a ye i bandii, a si safeeri sutuŋo ke a kunna.

Exercise 4: Listening/Speaking and Conversation

Ñininkaroolu niñ Jaabiri Sutunolu: Ñininkaroolu niñ jaabiri sutunolu safee ñiñ taarikoo warañ leetari saboolu minnu be kitaaboo kono kunna. Niñ i ye bandii, i se i naati karambuño to fo i niñ i kafuñoolu se ñoo ñininkaa i kunna.

Exercise 5: Cultural Competence

Alu se laada kummaayariñolu tombonñ ñiñ kitaaboo kono. Niñ alu ye i bandii, alu se i faranfansi.



Figure 6: Arch 22, Banjul highway coming from Serrekunda, The Gambia.



Unit 3

Health and Healing

Disclaimer: The goal of this unit is only to share treatments of illnesses documented in Mandinka Ajami texts. The materials should not be construed as medical advice.

This unit includes four Mandinka Ajami texts from the city of Ziguinchor and the town of Kerewane in southern Senegal. The first one is a six page document from the personal archive of a local Mandinka healer named Wandifa Dramé (or Wandifaa Daraame in standard Mandinka Latin script spelling) who lives in Ziguinchor. This document includes local herbal recipes for the treatment of 16 diseases, including erectile dysfunction, stomachache, hemorrhoids, asthma, and gastritis. It also includes recipes to help women with abnormal periods, those who continue to bleed after giving birth, and those who experience unsuccessful pregnancies. This document is written using the Hafs writing system as reflected in the qāf (q) with two dots (ق) and the fā with one dot above (ف), instead of the Warsh qāf (ق) and fā (ف) used in the remaining three documents in this unit.

The second document is an excerpt from the archives of another Mandinka healer called Mamadou Biaye (or Mamadu Biyaay) who also lives in Ziguinchor. The text was preserved as part of project EAP 1430.[1] It provides local herbal recipes for treating HIV/AIDS and urinary tract infections.[2] The remaining documents are two short poems on the Corona virus authored by Boubacar Diatta (or Buubakar Jaata) from Kerewane. Diatta's work in other areas is featured in unit 6. Due to the poor quality of his original texts, the two poems were rewritten by Ismaila Djiite (or Ismayila Jiite), a Mandinka scribe from Ziguinchor.



Figure 1: Wandifa Dramé, a Mandinka healer, about to be interviewed on his treatment methods, local diseases, and the medicinal properties of local plants.

[1] <https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP1042>.

[2] To listen to Wandifa Dramé's interview, see <https://sites.bu.edu/ria/mandinka/mandinka-unit-3/>.

Ajami Text 1: Booroolu

[Page 1]

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
قُوْ سَلُوْعِيْ بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ سَلُوْعِيْ بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ سَلُوْعِيْ
سَلُوْعِيْ كُلُّوْ كُلُّوْ سَلُوْ اسْمُهٗ كِتَابُ بُوْرِيْ مَو
سَلُوْعِيْ قَرِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ قَابُوْ كُنْ اسْمِ كِتَابُ بُوْرِيْ مَو
بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ قَابُوْ كُنْ
كُلُّوْ كِلْ مَنِيْ لَجُوْ نِيْ كَامِ اسْمِ كِتَابُ
اسْمِ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ
كِرْ جِهْ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ
سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ
سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ
سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ سَلُوْعِيْ

اِسْمُهُ شُوْرِيَا بُوْجِي جَارَا رَمُو سَرُوْمُو
 عَجَاثُو حِي لِيْرُو دُشُو جَاثُو اِسِي اِكْفُو اِسَامِ
 شُوِيْمَا بُوْجِي جَارَا اَمُو نِيْمِي نِيْمِي نِيْمِي
 بُوِيُو دُمُو لَآ حِي جَالُو مِ

اِسْمُهُ بِيْرُو جُوْرُو سَلُو حِي سِي جَعُ سَلُو اِسِي
 تَلِيُو سَلُو اِسِي اِبْرُو جَرُو اِسِي اِكْفُو كَابُو
 كُنْ اِكَامِ عَمُوْرُو دُجَارَا اَمُو وُلْمُو كُوْبُو
 يَسِي مَنِي قَاكُو لَ مِ اِسْمُهُ كَسُوْمَا
 بُوْرِي مُو شِيْرُو جَا بُوْمُو مَدَسَبَ حِي قَبِي جِنُوْمُو
 مَدَسَبَ اِسَا حِي لِيُو لِيَسَرُو جَا دِي اِسِي دِي
 مِيَا قَا حِي كِي جَا دِي اِسَامِ مِيَا مِيْنِ كِي جَا
 اِسْمُهُ وُلْمُو تَلِيُو

إِسْمَهُ سَنِيوُدُ تَسْلُو وَكَأَجَابَتْهُ سَالُو دِي
 إِسِي فَوَكَتِلِ كُنْ تُو نِي بِي كُو لَانِ إِطَا
 كَالَا إِكُو مَأَا إِسَا عَشُو إِحْمَعُ تُو وَبِي حِي
 دَمَا إِسِي فَوَكَتِلِ وَبِي فَوِي لِقُنْ تُو بِي
 تُو دَامُو تُو إِسْمَهُ سَمَائِيوُ سَلُو بِي
 كِي بُو رِي مَأُو إِسْعِرْ جَرَّ إِسْكِي قَبُو كُنْ
 إِقَائِمِ بِي كُنْ بُو رِي مَأُو تُو
 تَدَ كُنْ جَارَرُ رُو سَلُو إِسْمَهُ إِسْمَهُ اللّهِ
 سَعِي النَّيْ ~~بِي~~ إِسْيَاوُزُو وَكَأَجَابَتْهُ
 سَلُو جَرَّ جَرَّ سَأَبُو كُنْ إِقَائِمِ إِسْمَهُ كُنْ
 بِي تُو سَبُو كِي كَالِيَا كُنْ سَمَائِيوُ

إِسْمُهُ سَبُّوهُ حَسَبُوهُ وَلَا تَحَابُّوا إِيَّاهُ وَلَا تَوَدُّوهُ
إِسْمُهُ سَبُّوهُ تِلْكَ كُنْ تَوَدُّوهُ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَتَسَاءَلُونَكَ تَوَدُّهُمْ
لَمَّا نَسُوا مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ فَلْيَقْضِ تَوَدُّكَ
تَوَدُّهُمْ مَوْثِقًا إِنَّ سَعَةَ سَمَائِكُمْ سَلْوَةً
كَمَا يُبْغِضُونَ مَا كَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ فَكَيْفَ يُقْبَلُونَ
إِذَا قَامَ بَدَلُكُمْ فِي بُيُوتِهِمْ
تَمَّ كُنْ حَبَارَئِيلُ وَيَسْلُوهُ **سُبُّوهُ** بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ
سَجِيئَاتِهِ **سَبُّوهُ** شَيْئًا وَرَدَّ **سَبُّوهُ** سَمَائِكُمْ
سَلْوَةً فَجَمْعُهُمْ سَبُّوهُ كُنْ إِقَامِ اسْمِهِ إِنْ كُنْ
بِهِ تَوَسَّبُوا كَيْ تَكَالِبُوا كُنْ سَبُّوهُ سَبُّوهُ

اِسْمُهُ بِيْتِي تَقُولُوْا اِسْمًا كَتُوْا عَمُوْكَو
 اِسْمًا كَيْفِي جَقَّادْتُو اِسْمًا كُنْ دِيْم بُوْرَمُو
 اِسْمًا كُنْ سَبِيْتِي دِرْ اَمُو
 سَلْنُو بُوْسَلُو اِسْمًا عَجَا جِدِ جُوْعِي مُو
 اِسْمًا عَجِدِ عَا وَ جِيْتِي اِسْمًا جُوْر كِيْتِي
 تَبِي وَ نُوْا اِسْمًا مَنِيَا نِي مَسُوْبِي دَمُوْر
 اِسْمًا مَسُوْر دَمَا اِسْمًا مَنِيْدِي تَلِيُوْا اَيْدِي
 اَيْبِيَا اِسْمًا نَا و سَلُوْا اَيْدِي كَبُوْ كُنْ اَيْم
 جُوْعِي يَسِيَا كُنْ سِيَا دِرْ اَمُو
 مَهْ

اسمہ ڈو لے سلو کیا پور مو
 اساتین سبو جانہ اشہ سبو
 دموشن ادا جیور کیا سبیا
 ۱۱
 اسمہ ڈو لے سلو یفوسو قاکور جیہ قرو
 کن سبیا سب اشہ کیو کن ایم
 آسہ کیہ یا اشہ ڈو لے سلو
 یفوسو ولت پیلو منکو اشہ قرو
 اشہ کیو کن اشہ اشہ کیو
 آسہ لو ۱۱

Source: Wandifa Dramé's personal collection.

Transcription 1: Booroolu

[Page 1]

Bismi l-Lāhi al-Raḥmāni al-Raḥīmi

1. Kewoo suloo aniḡ pataakule suloo aniḡ bantancurukoo suloo aniḡ kulunḡ-kalan suloo. Ismuhu: keeyaa boori mu. I saa faranḡ-faranḡ, i saa ke kaboo kono, i saa miḡ.

Keeyaa boori mu. *Tammat.*

2. Pataakule, wo a suloo, i saa faranḡ-faranḡ. I saa ke kaboo kono, i kaa miḡ. Niḡ kee la maniyoo lanfuta, niḡ a kaa miḡ, a si kendiyaa. A si semboo soto, a si ke diḡo ti. Niḡ musoo miḡ harijee sitita diḡo la, a saa miḡ. A si harijee soto. Aniḡ tubaabu jiyo.

Tammat.

3. A fatoo i sa tuu. A munkoo wo kono-dimiḡ boori mu. I saa ke jiyo kono i saa miḡ.

Tammat.

[Page 2]

4. *Ismuhu:* tubaabu jii jaararanḡ mu. Sarawonkoo a fatoo, aniḡ leeri dutoo fatoo, i sii kafu i saa miḡ. Tubaabu jii jaararanḡ mu. Nii baa minna, i te yaayibooyoo domoo la aniḡ caaloo. *Tammat.*

5. *Ismuhu:* Borojoo suloo aniḡ sinjaḡo suloo, i bee tiliboo suloo. I sii faranḡ-faranḡ, i sii kafu kaboo kono, i kaa miḡ. Emooridu jaararanḡ mu, wo le mu “kuuboote” Mandinka kaḡo la. *Tammat.*

6. *Ismuhu:* Hasumaa boori mu. Tomboronḡ jamboo muuda saba aniḡ katijankumoo muuda saba, i saa aniḡ liyoo liitaroo fajindi. I sii jii ndiḡ ke a kaḡ, aniḡ aye faji, i saa miḡ. Niḡ i baa minna, kaasi faa, somondaa, wulaaroo, aniḡ tilibuloo.

[Page 3]

7. *Ismuhu*: Mamboodo, a suloo wala a fatoo, i sa loo daa ti. I sii kuu ala tili kononto. Niŋ i bee kuu la ala, i taa ke la i kuŋo kaŋ. I saa a soo i kaŋo to, wo ye jii duuma. I sii kuu ala wo ñaama fo tili kononto bala. Tawundaŋo mu. *Tammam*.

8. *Ismuhu*: Samaatiñoosuloo bala kandi boori mu. I saa faraŋ-faraŋ, i saa ke kaboo kono, i kaa miŋ. Bala kandi boori mu. *Tammam*.

9. Ala konoo jaararoo, wo siloo i sii Bismillahi safee alakhir, siñaawoorowula, i sii samaatiñoosuloo faraŋ-faraŋ, i saa bula kono, i kaa miŋ. A si i kono bayi noo, siboo aniŋ kaliyaa kono si seniyyaa.

[Page 4]

10. *Ismuhu*. Paapiyo a kuloo i si a tuu, a munkoo i saa ke jiikandoo to i saa miŋ. Kono dimiŋ boori mu. *Tammam*.

11. *Ismuhu*: Kono sabatindirai mu. Salanomboo suloo, i saa fajindi fo a ye moo. I si a jindi. Ala wo jiyo, i see cuuru koyo tabi wo la a sii miŋ baŋ. Niŋ musoo baa domo la, a se sii duuma, a saa ñaa tiliŋ tiliboo la, a yaa domo a yaa baŋ. A si naa wo suloo bula kaboo kono a yaa miŋ fo a yee seeyaa. Kono sabatindirai mu. *Tammam*.

[Page 5]

12. *Ismuhu*: Dowoliŋ suloo, keeyaa boori mu. I saa aniŋ suboo fajindi i se suboo domo. I se naa a daajiyo miŋ. Keeyaa si baŋ-baŋ. *Tammam*.

13. *Ismuhu*: Dowoliŋ suloo, niŋ musoo ka kuuroo je karoo kono siñaasaba, i saa ke kaboo kono a ya miŋ. A si kendiyaa. *Tammam*.

14. *Ismuhu*: Dowoliŋ suloo, niŋ musoo wuluuta yeloo maŋ kuntu, i saa faraŋ-faraŋ, i saa bula kaboo kono, a saa miŋ, a si kuu ala. A si loo. *Tammam*.

[Page 6]

15. *Ismuhu*: Jamba saboo a suloo. Jusu kuntu kaliyaa jaararanj mu. I saa bula liyoo kono, i saa londi fo lookunj, i si naa amiñ. Niñ Allahu yaa ke, i si kendiyaa. *Tammam*.

16. *Ismuhu*: Pataakule suloo. Estomaa boori mu. I saa ke kaboo kono, i saa miñ. Inshaa Allahu Ta'ala, i si kendiyaa. *Tammam*.

Translation 1: Medicines

[Page 1]

1. The roots of *aphania senegalensis*, *annoma senegalensis*, *ceiba pentandra*, and *combretum nigricans*. Name: medicine for manhood (erectile dysfunction). Cut them into pieces, put them in a bottle [with water], and drink it. It is a medicine for manhood. Done.

2. The *annoma senegalensis* plant: Its roots, cut them into pieces, put them in a bottle [with water], and drink it regularly. If a man's sperm is weak, if he regularly drinks it, he will be cured. He will be strong and able to produce a child. If a woman is not lucky with having a child, she can drink it. She will be lucky [with a child]. [It also cures] dermatological infections. Done.

3. Its bark, pound it [till it becomes powder]. The powder is a medicine for stomach ache. You can put it in water and drink it. Done.

[Page 2]

4. Name: Remedy for dermatological infections. Add the bark of *detarium macrocarpa* and *cordyla Africana* [in water] and drink it. It is a medicine for dermatological infections. When drinking it, don't eat sardines and *bonga* fish. Done.

5. Dig out the roots of *alibertia patinoi* and *cassia sieberiana* that face East. Cut them into pieces, put them in a bottle [with water], and drink it regularly. It is a remedy for Hemorrhoids, which is called “*kooboote*” in Mandinka. Done.

6. Name: Remedy for asthma. Boil three portions of *zizyphys mauritiana* leaves and three portions of *psorosperum senegalensis* leaves together with a liter of honey. Add a little water and boil them together, and drink it. When drinking it, take a full cup in the morning, evening, and afternoon.

[Page 3]

7. Name: Put the root or bark of *detarium microcarpum* in a recipient [with water]. Take a shower with it for nine days. When taking showers with it, do not pour it over your head. Pour it on your neck so the water flows down. Shower with it in this manner for about nine days. It is a protection against misfortune. Done.

8. Name: The *albrizzia ferruginea* root is a medicine for fever. Cut it into pieces, put it into a bottle [with water], and drink it. It is a remedy for fever. Done.

9. To cure stomach ache with it, write *Bismi l-Lāh* until the end^[3] seven times [and soak it in water], cut into pieces the *albrizzia ferruginea* root, put it inside, and drink the concoction regularly. It can provoke diarrhea that cleans up the stomach from waste and worms.

[3] Here the author means to write the entire opening chapter of the Quran, *Surat al-Fātiḥa*.

[Page 4]

10. Name: Pound the seeds of papaya fruit, take the powder and put it in hot water, and drink it. It is a medicine for stomach ache.

11. Name: Medicine to preserve a pregnancy. Boil the roots of *Salanomboo*[4] until it is well cooked. Then take it down [from the fire]. Use the water to prepare a rice porridge that she can finish eating alone. When eating it, the woman should sit down, face East, and eat it all at once. Afterwards, she should put the roots [with water] in a bottle and drink the water until it becomes tasteless. It is a medicine to preserve a pregnancy. Done.

[Page 5]

12. The *dowolinj*[5] root, a medicine for erectile dysfunction. Boil it with meat and eat the meat. Then drink the broth. The male reproductive organ will become strong. Done.

13. Name: The *dowolinj* root, if a woman sees her period three times in a month [which is abnormal], put it in a bottle [with water] for her to drink. She will be cured. Done.

14. Name: The *dowolinj* root, if a woman has given birth and she bleeds continuously, cut the root in pieces, put them in a bottle [with water] for her to drink and shower with. It will stop. Done.

[4] The scientific name of this plant cannot be found.

[5] The scientific name of this plant cannot be found.

15. Name: The root of *figus sycomorus* is a medicine for treating cardiac problems. Put it in honey and leave it there for a week, and drink it. God willing, you will be cured. Done.

16. Name: The *annoma senegalensis* root is a medicine for gastritis. Put it in a bottle, and drink it regularly. God willing, you will be cured. Done.



Figure 2: The road to the big market of Boucotte in Ziguinchor.

Ajami Text 2: Sidaa niṅ Suku Booroo

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
 سِیْدَا بِنْرَا
 نِ بِا سِیْدَا جَرَا، اِیْسِ قِیْلِ سَلُو جَرَا سِی
 پَا كُنْتُ كُنْتُ، یَا قَجِیْدِ فُو عِیْدِ مَوَعِی لِیُو
 لَتْرِیْلِ (ا)
 فُو بِنْرَا اِیَا كَبُو كُنَا یَا لِیُو مَسَا قَجِیْدِ شُو عِیْدِ
 تَسِیْسَاتِ یَا مِ شَمَعِیْنِ فُو رَا رِ
 وَ یَا شَرَا قَبْرِ تَسِیْتِ عَلِی تَسِیْسَا جِیَا عِبْتَلِ
 جِنَا عِ یَا لَتْرِیْلِ تَسِیَا بِنَا مَنَا عِ یَا مَنْرَا
 عِبْتَلِ عِ یَا تَسِیْسَا جِیَا كِیَا یَا
 اِنْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ عِ كِیْدِ تِیَا
 بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
 تَسِیْرَا وُكَا سُدُ بِنْرَا
 نِ فُو شِیْكَتِ اُمِیْ شَمَعَانِ، یَا سِیْرَا وُكُو
 سَلُو سِیْرَا سِیْرَا یَا قَجِیْدِ یَا دَا تَسِیْسَاتِ لَعِیَا مِ
 اِیَا عِلْمِ جَوِیْتِ
 اِنْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ عِ سِیْ كِیْدِ تِیَا

Source: Mamadou Biaye's Collection, <https://eap.bl.uk/collection/EAP1042-43>.

Transcription 2: Sidaa niḡ Suku Booroo

Bismi l-Lāhi al-Raḡmāni al-Raḡīmi

Sidaa booroo

Ni i be Sidaa jaara la, i si foolee suloo jamaa siḡ yaa kuntuḡ-kuntuḡ, yaa fajindi fo a ye moo aniḡ liyoo liitar kilinḡ (1). Wo booroo, yaa ke kaboo kono, yaa liyoo muḡ maḡ fajindi soo a kaḡ. Saasaatoo yaa miḡ, somondaa niḡ wuraaroo. Wo yaa tara a maarii taata ala saasaa juube opital. Jannaa be liitar saba banna minna, a se muru opital a yaa saasaa juube kotenke. Inshallah, a [se] kendiyaa.

Bismi l-Lāhi al-Raḡmāni al-Raḡīmi

Sarawonkoo, suku booroo. Niḡ moo sukita a muka sumunaa noo, ye sarawonkoo suloo seeraḡ-seeraḡ, yaa fajindi, yaa di a saasaatoo la a yaa miḡ. A yaa ke a la miḡ jiwo ti. Inshallah, a se kendiyaa.

Translation 2: Medicine for HIV/AIDS and Urinary Tract Blockage

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

When treating HIV/AIDS, dig out numerous *landolphia heudelotii* roots, cut them in pieces, and boil them until they are well done with one liter of honey. Then put the medication in a bottle and add to it honey that is not boiled. Let the patient drink it in the morning and afternoon. Meanwhile, the patient should go check their health condition at the hospital. Before finishing three liters of the medication, they should return to the hospital to check again their health condition. God willing, they will be cured.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Detarium macrocarpa, a medicine for urinary tract blockage. If a person experiences a blockage and they cannot urinate, chop into pieces *detarium macrocarpa* roots,

boil them, and give it to the patient to drink. Let them use it as their drinking water. God willing, they will be cured.



Figure 3: A mural on the wall of an elementary school during the COVID pandemic.



Figure 4: Members of our team traveling for fieldwork during the COVID pandemic.

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ كَرْوَنٍ وَرِسِّ
عَامِيٍّ يَا لَللَّهِ سِنَّةً كَاكُنْتُمْ مَوْسِ
أَسْأَلُ دَوْرَ رَتِّ أُمِّي مَوْبِ
جَمَاسِ رِخِ حَيِّ نَاتِ هَامِثِ
أَمِّي بِيَّتِ كَوُولِ بِيَّتِ
كَبِيرَاتِ نَاتِ جَمُولِ جَمْرِ سِيْلِ
بِلَادِ بِلُولِ أَمِّي بَجِي جَمَانَا
أَلْبَلَلِ جَنْكِرْمَنْبِي جِيْتِي كِي
مَنْبِيُولِ بِيِّي جِ دَوْلِمِ نِيْلِي كَرِسِ

Transcription 3: Koroona Saasaa 1

A'ūdhu bi l-Lāhi min Koroona Wirus

Amīn Yā Allāhu i si n tanka a kana n moosii.

A saasaa dewuŋ warta, a ye moo baa

jamaa saaree haniŋ naate[6] daamiŋ.

A ye beteyaa kuwoolu bee naasi.

Kabiriŋ ate naata jaameŋolu fo marseelu,

bulu-duŋ-buloolu a ye baadiŋyaa jamaa naasi.

Albalaalu jankara muŋ bee jiita naŋ kunuŋ,

Muŋ bee ye wolu bayi jaŋ duwaa le mu, naa li yaa koroosi.

Translation 3: Corona Disease 1

May God protect us from the Coronavirus.

Amen, O Allah, protect us so it doesn't touch us.

The trouble of its disease is great, and many

people have been killed by it even if it wasn't discovered there.

It has reduced all good behaviors.

Since it appeared, mosques and markets

shaking hands, and family relationships have all been reduced.

The disease misfortunes that occurred in the past,

what addressed all of them here were prayers, if you look into it.

[6] This is the contraction form of *nij ate* (if it).

Ajami Text 4: Koroono Saasaa 2

إِسْتَكَّ كَوَلِيَّامِي

سَسَا تِنِي بِلِي

إِبَادُونَ سَوَحِي

إِثْرِيَا كَيْي بِلِي

إِبَادُو مَمِي مَتِي

كَسَارُو بِنِي بِلِي

مَسَاتُو تِيَمِي

كَسَارُو تِنِي بِلِي

بُونُو مَكِي نِي بِيَاتِي

تُوَيَاتِي نَاسَلِي

نِي كَوْدَل بِيَلِي

إِسْنُور لِكِي بِلِي

وَنُور لِكِي سَبِيَدِي

إِمَارِيُو بِيُولِي

Source: Boubacar Diatta's poem, rewritten by the scribe Ismaila Djitté.

Transcription 4: Koroona Saasaa 2

I si tanka koleyaa ma
saasaa ti nee i bala.

I baadij soroha.

I tariyaa, kanee bula!

I baadijo muumee i muta,
kasaaroo bi nee bala.

Muñ sonta tooñaa ma,

kasaaroo ti nee bala.

Boonoo mañ ke, niñ faniyaa ti,
Tooñaa te naasi la.

Ni yee koo dii la faniyaa la,

i sii nooroolu kee bala.

Wo nooroo le kee sabatindi
i Maariyo batoo bala!

Translation 4: Corona Disease 2

Protect yourself from trouble
so the disease won't reach you.

Protect your loved ones.

Hurry up, don't abandon them!

Hold on to all your relatives,
for destruction is coming close to them.

If you accept the truth,
destruction won't come close to you.

There will be no loss, if it turns out to be a lie![7]

The truth cannot be hidden.

If you turn your back on a lie,

you will put light near you.

And it is that light that will make you dwell

in the vicinity of Your Creator!



Figure 5: Ziguinchor city Departmental Council Headquarters, a former Portuguese slave trading post.

[7] Here the poet was challenging conspiracy theories about COVID-19 in his community, where many people did not believe it existed and were suspicious about the vaccines. He urges people to follow social distancing.

Glossary

Alabatudulaa: Place for prayer, place of worship, house of prayer, sanctuary; (pl. *alabatudulaalu*)

Albalaa: Affliction, trial, misfortune, calamity (from Arabic)

Baadijyaa: kinship, family relationship

Bala kandi: Fever, body temperature

Bantancarukoo, batancurukoo, or Bantaŋ curukoo: *Ceiba pentandra*

Beteyaa kuwoolu: Good behavior, good conduct, decency

Booroo: Medication, medicine, remedy

Borojoo: *Alibertia patinoi*

Bulu-duŋ-buloolu: Handshakes

Caaloo: *Bonga* fish (*ethmalosa fimbriata*)

Cuuru koyoo: White porridge, rice porridge

Daajiyoo: Sauce, broth

Dewuŋ: Worry, anxiety, nervousness

Emooridu: Hemorrhoids (from French)

Estomaa: Gastritis (from French)

Fatoo: Skin, tree bark

Foolee: *Landolphia heudelotii*

Hasumaa: Asthma (from French)

Ismuhu: His/its name (from Arabic)

Jamba saboo: *Ficus sycomorus*

Jamboo: Leaf

Jankaroo: Illness, disease

Jankartoo: Patient

Ka a moosii: To rub, to caress, massage

Ka a saaree: To bury someone or something, kill

Ka afajindi: To boil something

Ka i sumunaa: To urinate

Ka naasi: To reduce, affect, alter, deform

Ka tanka: To protect, preserve, prevent

Kaboo: Bottle

Kaliyaa: Worm, tapeworm

Kasaaroo: Destruction, calamity

Katijankumoo: *Psorospermum senegalensis*

Keeyaa booroo: Erectile dysfunction medicine, manhood medicine

Kewoo: *Aphania senegalensis*

Kono sabatindiraj: Protect a fetus, preserve a pregnancy, stomachache reliever

Kono-dimiŋ or kono dimoo: Stomachache

Koroosi: To observe, assess, inspect, scrutinize

Kuluŋ-kalaŋ: *Combretum nigricans*

Kuuboote: Hemorrhoids

Lanfuta: Weak, lethargic, lack of vigor

Leeri dutoo: *Cordyla africana*

Liyoo: Honey

Mamboodo: *Detarium microcarpum*

Maniyo: Sperm, semen (from Arabic)

Miŋ jiwoo: Drinking water

Nooroo: Light, aura

Opitaal or opital: Hospital (from French *hôpital*)

Paapiyo: Papaya

Pataakule: *Annoma senegalensis*

Saasaa: Sickness, illness, disease

Sabatindi: To cause someone or something to stay still, dwell

Samaatiño: *Albrizzia ferruginea*

Sarawonkoo or saarawonkoo: *Detarium macrocarpum*

Seeraŋ-seeraŋ or siiraŋ-siiraŋ: To chop, cut into pieces

Seeyaa: Stale, tasteless, insipid, flavorless

Sinjaŋo: *Cassia sieberiana*

Suku booroo: Medicine to unblock the urinary track, infection

Sumunaa: Urine

Tammat: Finished, done (from Arabic)

Tomboroŋ: *Zizyphys mauritiana*

Yaayibooyoo or yaabooyoo: Sardine

Notes

Harijee sitita: Literally, “tied, bound luck, or unlucky.” The phrase is used when referring to individuals who are unfortunate in general, i.e., people who often fail in their endeavors. The contrary, “*harijee firinta*” (literally, “untied, unbound luck, or to be lucky”) is used for people who succeed in whatever they undertake. In Mandinka society, these situations may have tangible or spiritual religious causes and remedies.

Jusu kuntu kaliyaa: Literally, “a heart parasite.” The expression is used in Mandinka to refer to an unstable heart condition that involves chest pain, nausea, and vomiting.

Kuuroo: The word means “washing, laundry.” When it is used in the context of women’s reproductive health, it means menstruation period.

Tawundaŋo: “Door, cover, or lid.” It is also used as a generic term for protection against misfortune or evil. In Mandinka society, as in many African societies, some misfortunes are believed to have supernatural causes. Thus, they are treated by local healers with specialized payers and plants that are believed to have magical properties.

Tiliboo: Literally “where the sun rises.” This term means “East.” Its use in the treatments 5 and 11 in the first Ajami text reflects the Islamic influence on traditional Mandinka healing. Mandinka Muslims face east toward the Kaaba in Mecca when praying. Similarly, the requirement of writing the entire opening chapter of the Quran (*al-Fātiḥa*) in treatment 11 further shows the influence of Islam on Mandinka traditional herbal medicine.

Tubaabu jiyo or tubaab jiwo: “White people’s water.” The phrase is used in Mandinka to refer to dermatological infections. In Wolof, it is generically called *ndoxum siti*.

Yeloo manj kuntu: Literally, “blood flow that is not broken or interrupted.” This phrase is used to mean bleeding that continues after giving birth.

Pedagogical Exercises

Exercise 1: Comprehension

Multiple choice questions

1. Booroolu to, yiri sula jumaa le ka diŋ sotoo soneyaandi kewo niŋ musoo ma?
 - a. Kewoo suloo aniŋ pataakule suloo
 - b. Bantancurukoo suloo aniŋ kulunj-kalaŋ suloo
 - c. Pataakule suloo
 - d. Kulunj-kalaŋ suloo
2. Booroolu to, musoo miŋ ka kuuroo je siŋaa saba karo kono ñanta mune taa la?
 - a. A se dowoliŋ suloo ke kaboo kono a yaa miŋ
 - b. A se dowoliŋ suloo ke kaboo kono a yaa miŋ a ye i kuu a la
 - c. A saa faraŋ-faraŋ, a saa bula kaboo kono, a saa miŋ, a si i kuu a la
 - d. A se paapiyo kuloo tuu, a yaa ke jii kandoo to, a yaa miŋ
3. Niŋ sidaa saasaatoos ye booroo miŋ, a ñanta taa la ala saasaa juubee la mintoo le?
 - a. A maarii ñanta taa ala saasaa juubee la moo fiŋ jaararilaa yaa
 - b. A maarii ñanta taa la ala saasaa juubee la opitaal le
 - c. A maarii ñanta taa ala saasaa juubee la mooroolu yaa
 - d. A maarii ñanta taa la wuloo kono, a ye liyoo niŋ foolee suloo fajindi jee

4. Mune yaa tinna Buubakar ko: “Koroona ye beteyaa kuwoolu bee naasi?”
- Kaatun a ye baluu kuwoolu bee le naasi
 - Kaatun a saasaa dewunjo warta le
 - Kaatun a ye moo baa jamaa le saaree
 - Kaatun a ye alabatudulaalu, dookuudulaalu nij baadiyyaa le naasi
5. Koroona Saasaa 2 to, Buubakar ko: “Mun sonta tooñaa ma.” A lafiti mune fo la?
- A lafiti a fo la moo mun sonta ko koroona mu tooñaa le ti
 - A lafiti a fo la moo man soñ ne ko koroona mu tooñaa le ti
 - A lafiti a fo la moo mun sonta le ko koroona sotota le bari a man a fan kanta
 - A lafiti a fo la moo mun sonta le ko koroona sotota le bari a ko Ala baa kanta la le
6. Borojoo suloo anin sinjanjo suloo ka jankari jumaa le jaara?
- Tubaabu jii jaararan mu
 - Bala kandi jaararan mu
 - Emooridu jaararan mu
 - Kono dimin jaararan mu

Exercise 2: Reading

- Karambunjo to, karandinjolu kilin-kilin se kitaabu naanoolu karanj santo karandirlaa ñaa la fo a se i maakoyi karanjo to.
- Suwo kono, karandinjolu se kuma kanjolu tomboñ ñin suukuu kitaaboolu nin jaarari kitaaboolu kono. I yee i karanj santo la siñaa jamaa fo i ye i nukundi.

3. Karambuŋo to waraŋ suwo kono, karandiŋ fula se kuma kaŋolu tomboŋ ñiŋ suukuu kitaaboolu niŋ jaarari kitaaboolu kono. I ye ñoo la kuma kaŋolu faliŋ i ye i karaŋ santo.

Exercise 3: Writing/Dictation

1. Karambuŋo to, karandirlaa se kuma kaŋolu tomboŋ ñiŋ kitaabu naanoolu to. A ye i karaŋ doomaŋ-doomaŋ fo ka baŋ, a ye karandiŋolu yaamari i ye i safee aniŋ Mandinka safeeri-kuloolu la. Niŋ karandiŋolu ye i bandii, i saa juubee mune ye ila safeeroolu niŋ safeeroolu minulu be kitaaboolu kono fatandi. I se kaccaa wo tomboolu kunna. Karandiŋ fula se ñoo la kuma kaŋolu faliŋ noo ñiŋ dookuwo to.
2. Karandiŋolu se ñininkaari luulu safee suukuu kitaaboolu niŋ jaarari kitaaboolu kunna. Niŋ i ye i bandii, i ye ila ñininkaroolu faliŋ ñoo teema. I ye jaabiroolu safee aniŋ Mandinka safeeri-kuloolu la.
3. Karandiŋ-oo-karandiŋ se kuma kaŋ kiliŋ tomboŋ muŋ diyaata a ye. Niŋ a ye i bandii, a si safeeri sutuŋo ke a kunna.

Exercise 4: Listening/Speaking and Conversation

Podkastoo niŋ Widewoo: I se podkastoo dadaa ñiŋ suukuu kitaaboolu niŋ jaarari kitaaboolu to nafaa kunna, waraŋ i se widewoo sutuŋolu ke minulu be ñiŋ kitaaboolu kuma kaŋolu faranfansi la, ila miiroo to.

Exercise 5: Cultural Competence

I se aadoolu fannaalu tomboŋ minulu diyaata i ye suukuu kitaaboolu niŋ jaarari kitaaboolu to. Niŋ i ye i bandii, i se i kuntaki aniŋ minulu sotota ila dinkiraa to.



Unit 4

Political Tribute and Social Criticism

This unit includes two Mandinka Ajami poems by Usman Kijera. The first was written when former president of The Gambia, Yahya Jammeh, who now lives in exile in Equatorial Guinea, was in power. It describes his access to power and some of his achievements. The second poem is a criticism of the group Kijera calls “*Semesta Maalajo*” (“Semester Man”), i.e.; young Gambian male expatriates in Europe and America who return home for vacation with new attitudes and new lifestyles and who are engaged in risky behaviors. Kijera was born in 1989 in Banjul, The Gambia. He completed his Islamic studies partly in The Gambia and partly in the neighboring southern Casamance region of Senegal. He is now a Quranic teacher and healer who combines plant-based and Islamic medicine. He is also a Mandinka Ajami poet and singer, and has written on different topics related to culture, moral values, and African cultural rules. In his accompanying video interview, Ousman Kijera talks about how to write and recite Mandinka poems.[1]

[1] To listen to Ousman Kijera’s interview, see <https://sites.bu.edu/ria/mandinka/mandinka-unit-4/>.



Figure 1: Image of Ousman Kijera in his home in Birikama, The Gambia.

Ajami Text 1: Wii Yaayaa

[Page 1]

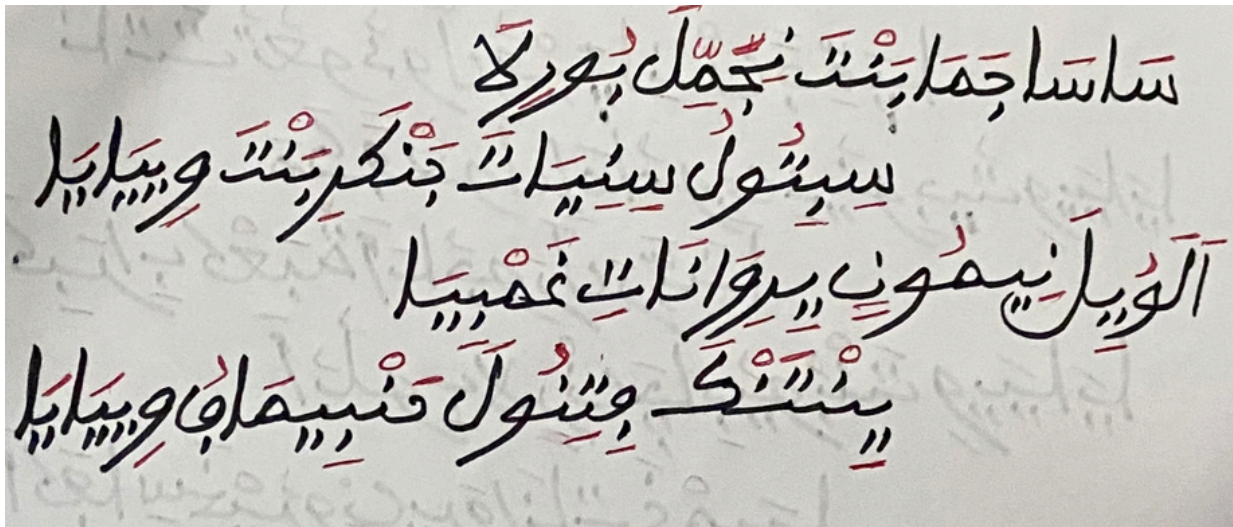
غَمِيْبٌ قَايَابِلٌ بَرِيْبٌ كُنَّا
كَبِيْرٌ تَلُوْمَلْتُ تُوِيَا لَنْتَ وِيِيَا يَا
يَا يَا بِنُكُوْتَا لِكَلِكُمْ مَنُكَمَا
الْحَمْدُ تَشُوْكَالَا تَخَابُنُ وِيِيَا يَا
الْكُتَّ مَرُوِيْرُنَا لَنْ غَمِيْبَا
وَبِيْدِيْلٌ يَحْيَا لِحْنِ مَقَا فِ وِيِيَا يَا
وَلَنَا سَمُوْلٌ بِنُكَاسِ جِيْبَا لِفِيْتَا
كَبِيْرٌ وِيِيَا تَشُوْكَ مَنَسُوْدُنْتُ وِيِيَا يَا
أَبْلُوْبٌ مَآءَا لَمْ تَجْمَا يَا يَا
سَلَكُنْتُ سِيْلَا لَوْلِيُوْلَتُ وِيِيَا يَا
مَنَسُوْلٌ تَلُوْلِيْ بِلْنَا تَ غَمِيْبَا
وَيَسْتُوْلُ تَلُوْمَلُوْمَقَا فِ وِيِيَا يَا
يَا يَا لِيْلَا يَا سِلْجَا مَبَا لِيِيْمَا
يَا عَمُوْلٌ يَجُوْجُ سِيُوُوْنَا تَ وِيِيَا يَا

(1)

جامِعُولِ جَنَّتِ اَجَسُوِيَّتِ غَمِيَا
صَلِيْلَالِ كُنَالِ وُلِيُوِيَّتِ وَيِيَا
دُصْرُوِيَّتِ وَيِيَا وَيِيَا وَيِيَا
كُنُوِيَّتِ وَيِيَا وَيِيَا وَيِيَا
سَيِّجَانِ كِيِيَالِ كِيِيَالِ سَنَمُوَا
تَسْبِيِيَّتِ فِرَانُوِيَّتِ وَيِيَا
مَنَسُوِيَّتِ مَنَسُوِيَّتِ وَيِيَا
فِيِيَا نَجَاشِيِيَّتِ وَيِيَا
قَاتِيِيَا مَامُوِيَّتِ لَامِيِيَا
لِنَالِ سُوِيَّتِ وَيِيَا وَيِيَا
كِيِيَا وَيِيَا وَيِيَا وَيِيَا
وَلِيُوِيَّتِ وَيِيَا وَيِيَا وَيِيَا
نِيُوِيَّتِ وَيِيَا وَيِيَا وَيِيَا
وَلِيُوِيَّتِ وَيِيَا وَيِيَا وَيِيَا
(٢)

تَاثُّتُّ تُعُوذُ وُلُّ فَيِيَانُنُّ جَمِيَا
مَكَّعُ عَوْلُ اِمَامُ وِي دِيئُو جِيَتْ وِيِيَا
كَبِيَا بَكْعَبَةُ اَبَا جُوْرُلُ رَسِيْنَا
اَبَلُو بَلَا رِنُ جَا جِيُو نِيَتْ وِيِيَا
اَكْبَا سَخِيْرُو نِي رِيْرُو اَنَا غَمِيَا
بَنُكُو كُنَا جَا بَنُكُو كُنُتُّ وِيِيَا
اَبِي عَوْلُ يَا سَمْبُ كَا جِنْدَالُ غَمِيَا
اَجَلَا بَمِيَا لَالُ بَنُكُو كُنُتُّ وِيِيَا
اَبِي مَوْلُ كُنُتُّ بَلَدِيُو لَا حُوْجَلَا
دِيْنِي فُكِيَا مَسُو نِي كُوْلُ وِيِيَا
غَمِيَا لُ فُرِيَا جَلُو مِيْنَا بَلَسِيَلَا
فَتُكِيَلُ مَرَلُو لُ وَا لُو سِيْتُ وِيِيَا
يَا يَا كُ ثَا كُتُّ سَعُو لِيْنِيْتُ دُنْجَلَا
لُنْدُو لُ رِيْرُو اَتُ سِنُجُو وِيْتُ وِيِيَا

(۳)



Transcription 1: Wii Yaayaa

Gambiyaa be ɲaañãa baa le la biraa ye nna bankoo taa

Kabiraa tiloo malata tooñãa lonta wii Yaayaa

Yaayaa ye bankoo taa le kidi kadi[2] maɲ kuma

Alhamdu tentoo koola ɲaa fo nuɲ wii Yaayaa

Ala ko nna maraloo birin daalunna Gambiyaa

Wo be dii la Yaayaa la haniɲ miɲ ma a fo wii Yaayaa

Wo la naa saɲo[3] fankaasi ñee baalu fintita

Kibiroo baa tintoo to mansoo dunta wii Yaayaa

A buloo be maɲ-maɲ na moto ñimma baa bi taa

[2] Here, *kili kadi* is used in the Ajami text for *kidi kaɲ* (sound of gunfire).

[3] Here, *saɲo* is written as *samo* in the Ajami text.

Silakantoo siilaalu wolu bee wilita wii Yaayaa
Mansoolu tanj luulu niŋ fula naata Gambiyaa
Wo te sotoo la tili to tiloo miŋ maa fo wii Yaayaa
Baa baalu bilita a ye sila janj baalu bee mana
Baadiŋolu bee ye ñoo je seewoo naata wii Yaayaa

[Page 2]

Jaamiŋolu janjanta ofisoo bee to Gambiyaa
Salilaalu sunnaalu wolu bee wilita wii Yaayaa
Domoroo be fayila wo niŋ siti fanoo jamaa
Konkoo fele a banta feetoo banta wii Yaayaa
Siti faani koy baalu kilaa baa la sunna mu
Tasabay Quraanoo dokoo muta[4] wii Yaayaa
Mansoolu gañeeta le minnu ye lonnaalu teeriyaa
Fo i ma a je nna Jaasii la kuuña lonta wii Yaayaa
Faati Imaamoo wo niŋ Laamini Tuure la
Lonnaalu suwandoo to nimisa le te wo to wii Yaayaa
Kilaa ye leetari kii kaafiri mansa doo le kanj
Wo le too mu Kawkish a yaa fara waaci wii Yaayaa
Nabiyommu yaa danka Ala ma ila mansayaa ye fara
Wo le naa la jamaa dunta turuutumbuŋo to wii Yaayaa

[4] This word *muta* (to hold, grab) is written as *mata* in the Ajami text.

[Page 3]

Naa tuta toŋondo la fo i ñaa niŋ nna Jamme ñaa
Maka faŋo la Imaamo ye diinoo je i to wii Yaayaa
Kabiraa be Kaaba to a baa juura la *Rabbanā*
A buloo be laariŋ ñaajiyo bonta wii Yaayaa
A ko faa si hayiroo niŋ yiriwaa naati Gambiyaa
Bankoo kana ñaaboo banku kotenna wii Yaayaa
Abiyonolu yaa samba kaa jindaa la Gambiyaa
A felaa be muyi la a la banku kanoo la wii Yaayaa
A be moolu kontonna bulu diyoo la a te hawuja la
Dindiŋ fo keeba musoo niŋ kewoolu wii Yaayaa
Gambiyaa la foroyaa-juloo moyi naa be lembe la
Fatakoyi la maraloolu wolu bee banta wii Yaayaa
Yaaya ko ŋa a kata saŋo le be n daŋ-na daŋ-dulaa
Londoolu yiriwaata senefero woyita wii Yaayaa

[Page 4]

Saasaa jamaa banta niŋ Jamme la boori la
Sibitoolu seneyaata jankari banta wii Yaya
Ala wo i la neemoo niŋ yiriwaa jamaa naati Gambiyaa
Ye n tanka fitinoo la hani n bee maa fo wii Yaayaa

Translation 1: Long Live Yahya

[Page 1]

The entire Gambia is rejoicing greatly since he took over our country.

When his sun shined, the truth was revealed.[5] Long live Yahya!

Yahya took over the country without a single gunshot.

The entire Gambia is rejoicing greatly since he took over our country.

When his sun shined, the truth was revealed.[5] Long live Yahya!

Yahya took over the country without a single gunshot.

After praising the Lord, let's say: "Long live Yahya!"

God had decreed since creation that The Gambia will be ruled one day

by Yahya, even if no one says: "Long live Yahya!"

The year he took power all the big fish of the ocean came out!

The celebrations took place at the shore when the President arrived. Long live
Yahya!

He was waving his hand as a beautiful car was moving.

All those sitting on the roadsides stood up to say: "Long live Yahya!"

52 presidents came to The Gambia [for his inauguration].

This doesn't happen in a generation, except in one that says: "Long live Yahya!"

Big rivers were bridged and asphalt was put on all the major long roads.

So all the relatives could visit each other and rejoice. Long live Yahya!

[Page 2]

Mosques were built in many offices across The Gambia.

Those who pray and fast, all of them stood up to say: "Long live Yahya!"

Food and clothes were thrown to people![6]

Hunger and lack of clothes are now eradicated. Long live Yahya!

[5] Here the poet means when Jammeh took power, everyone could see his singularity.

[6] It was common for President Yahya Jammeh's escort to throw food and clothes (especially t-shirts) to the crowds following his motorcade.

Wearing a large white attire, following the tradition of the Prophet,
he holds prayer beads, the Quran, and a cane. Long live Yahya!

Presidents who befriend scholars are fortunate!

Don't you see how Jassey's work is now well-known.[7] Long live Yahya!

For Imam Fatty and Lamin Touray,

there is no regret in honoring scholars. Long live Yahya!

Prophet Muhammad once sent a letter to a polytheist king.

His name was Kawkish and he tore it apart. [8] Long live Yahya!

The Prophet cursed him, saying: "May your reign be torn apart."

As a result, he and many of his people caused the obliteration of their lineages.

[Page 3]

If truth be told, anyone who had eye contact with our Jammeh,

even the Imam of Mecca, recognized his piety. Long live Yahya!

When he was at the Kaaba honoring the Creator,

his hands were stretched as his tears were falling. Long live Yahya!

He said he did so to bring peace and prosperity to The Gambia,

so that the country will not envy any other country. Long live Yahya!

Planes took him and landed him in his beloved Gambia.

Here he is smiling for his love of the country. Long live Yahya!

He is greeting people, shaking their hands, and does not hurry.

[7] The people mentioned here and in the following verses are Gambian religious leaders. The spelling used here is that of The Gambia.

[8] This refers to the story of the correspondence between Khosrow II, the King of Persia, and Prophet Muhammad.

Young and old and women and men are all saying: Long live Yahya!

Listen to the Gambia's national anthem ringing,

European rule has totally ended here. Long live Yahya!

Yahya asked us to do our best so that only death could be our limit.

Knowledge has spread and agricultural products have expanded. Long live Yahya!

[Page 4]

Many diseases have been eradicated with Jammeh's medicine![9]

On Saturdays the country is cleaned and major diseases are eradicated. Long live Yahya![10]

O God, please bring great prosperity to the entire Gambia,

and protect us from conflicts, even if not all of us are saying: Long live Yahya!



Figure 2: Image of President Jammeh in a 200 Dalasi bill (about \$2.5). Courtesy of Bala Saho.

[9] During his presidency, President Jammeh also served as a traditional healer. He claimed to have found cures for HIV/AIDS and asthma, which was highly contested and controversial.
[10] During President Jammeh's rule, every Saturday was devoted to cleaning the country and this tradition endures.



Figure 3: Kairaba Avenue, Serrekunda, The Gambia.



Figure 4: 200 Dalasi note, Central Bank of The Gambia.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
تَبَابُدُ وِکَدُو بِيحَال لَمَنْسِيَا
بِرِيك فَا سَمُونِي دُرُوك دِيلَتَا
حَرَام نَافَلُونْت دَوْمَا لَبِرِي
مَنْوَتَال جَا لَآخِرِ خَسَارَتَا
سَمَسْت مَا الْعَوْتَا مَكُورُو وُجِي
مَنْيَمَل فَوَارَا لَوْرُو كِنِي كَتَا
بِرَات جِيك غَمِيَا كَمُول مَلَكِن
دِيَام پَال تَام پَال بِيَل كِنَكْتَا
أَبَا كَبُوسَلِنْدَا لَبُول جِنْدَا
بُرُوفَا سَكْتُول سَا كَلِي سَمِيَسْتَا
سَمَسْت مَا الْعَوْتَا مَلُوعَا لَات مَوْجِي
اَكْمُوكِنَا كَل فَحَابَا س تَشْكُتَا

كُفِي كَاسُوبِ حَابُولَا سِرِيْنِ سِرِيْتِ
أَوْصِي فَرِيْتِ أَلْ جَنْ كُنْدَا
عَمْتِ لَسْتِ بَجَلِيْتِ نَايْتِ كَلُوبِ
سَامَا بِنَالِ رَايِيْزِلِ جِيْلِ تُوِيْتَا
يَا دَفْتِيْ يَادَا كِي سَلِيْمِ نَبْتَا
سَمَسْتِ مَا لَعُو بِاللَّهِ فَايْتِ سَمِيْتَا
سَمَسْتِ بِيْتَرِيْتِ لَالِ پَمْتِ مَنَسَلَا
كُجَرِ دِيْمَسُوْبَلَا كَسْتُوْمَا
يُصَبُّ مَنْتَجَا سَجَا اَكِيْبُو
سَمَسْتِ لَسْتُوْلِ يَاتِيُوْمَسُوْفَتَا
اِپْتِيْلِ بَرْمِيْسِ نِيْلِ كُوْفَلَا
سَمَسْتِ يُوْتَجِيْ اِنَالِ كَمْبُوْبَتَا
لَسْتِ مَلُوْتِ دِيْمَتَا كِ مَعُوْلَبَعُوْتِيَا
كُنْ لَسَمَسْتِ جِيْنَالِ بِيْ بِيْمِيْجِيْتَا
(۱۲)

آفاغصيا نوچينا لاي
ايبي دوم اكا فوا فرول گتا
سافارن جي پوال ستيه سكو ليبي
تکيت و افلال ناسنال بيما تا
وتنگ مالغو ساميا سيليف سا
مندک ناقلا نيا جي ساما ستا
مسول موپتغي ونال لعت ماکل
سمست مالغو بيغسل خراوتنا
مالاجما شپا سبت ليل مسو
دول فات دول دبرت دول فوسابتا
تيا بدوم تامليت مو مو جي
ستو کنيينا فويت مالومتا
تيا بدو فريل موجمال مرثنا
سياما فوارل سکو سمستا
(۱۳)

أَمْرًا تَأْتِيْنَا نُوِيْمُ بِلَوْ فِر
بَلِيْنَا تِيْنَا الْعَوِيْنَا وَلُوِيْتِيْنَا
عَالَجَمَابِ لَأَخْرِيْكُ وَوَمِيْدُ فِلِي
أَنْمُولُ وَوَأَنْمُولُ وَوَأَلْتُ نَمِسْنَا
أَنْمَأَسْتُوْكُ دِيْتُوْتُكُ حِيْعُوْدُرُ
مَسُوْلُ يَأِيْنُوِيْمُ فَبِأَخْسَارِنَا
يَمْنُ

(١٤٤)

Transcription 2: Semesta Maalaŋo

[Page 1]

Bismi l-Lāhi al-Raḥmāni al-Raḥīm

Tubaabuduu kodoo bii halaala maŋ siyaa

Biriŋ i ko faasimoo niŋ durooku dilita

Haraamu naafuloo nene te domo la bureyi

Miŋ too bota la jaŋ laakirii i kasaarata

Semesta Maalaŋo taama kuu waroo tu jee

Mune i muluŋ fuwaare la waroo ka moo kataa

Biriŋ a te jiita Gambiyaa a ko moolu maŋ kuniŋ

Diyaamu ñaalu taama ñaalu bee le kenkita

A baa daboo[11] selendi la a be doolu jindi la

Puru fo sunkutoolu saa kili Semesta

Semesta Maalaŋo suba saloo salaatooyi

A ko moo kanaŋ kuniŋ fo haa paasi teni ka taa

[Page 2]

Kofii kaaso be haabu la sereeti niŋ sereeti

O may fureni alla la jaŋ ne kandita

Ŋa miti soto biji le to nayiti kulub

[11] Here, *daboo* (shoulder) is written as *kaboo* in the Ajami text.

Saama n bi taa la Raayisi le jee le tooyita
Ñaadaa fiŋ niŋ ñaadaa koyi siliimu niŋ bataa
Semesta Maalaŋo billaahi fo Eeti si i muta
Semesta bitireetilaalu ñinne maŋ silaŋ
Ka farla-dii musoo bula ka sunkutoo muta
I ye musoo miŋ tu jaŋ sanji taŋ a kee batu
Semester sunkutoolu yaa ti ye wo musoo fata
I ñinata i la poromiis nii la lofo la
Semesta i ye wo tu jee a naa la kumboo bi taa
Sunkutu mutoo ti diinaa taa a ke moo labaŋo tiña
Kunuŋ semesta jiinalaalu bee dameejita

[Page 3]

Alaa fo Gambiyaa nunto jiinalaalu lee
I bee be duuma i kaa fo ko afero le n kataa
Saafari niŋ Jankee Waali, sitii diskoolu wolu lee
Tikeeti waafilaalu naa sannaalu yeemanta
Woto n ko Maalaŋo saama ñaasii i ye i kiisa
Mandiŋ ko naafula niŋ beeyaŋ bi jee saama siitaa
Musoo la moyi ite fee wo naa lafita maŋ kilin
Semesta Maalaŋo bii musoolu garaawuta
Malaŋ jamaa la sayaa saabuta la le musoo
Doolu faata doolu dabrata doolu fuusaa bota
Tubaabuduu mu taama le ti moo-moo bi jee
Sotoo kanee ñina fo ite maŋ saloo muta
Tubaabuduu fureelu moo jamaa le murta naŋ
Saayaa maŋ fuwaare loŋ soko semesta

[Page 4]

Amerka taa niŋ naa niŋ wo ye miŋ baloo firin

Pileeni taa ye naa luŋo bi naa wo luŋ ite taa

Maalan jamaa be laakirii la woosiyoolu fele

Nna moolu woo nna moolu woo ali taa n nimisata

Nte maŋ sotoo ke diina too tuluŋ hayaŋoo doron

Musoolu ñaa ñinoo ye minnu faa i kasaarata

Translation 2: Semester Man

[Page 1]

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Of the money that comes from Europe nowadays, only a little is licit.

It is said it comes from criminals involved in drug dealings.

Illicit wealth should never be consumed.

If you've become famous [due to it], you'll be ruined in the hereafter.

Semester Man, stop your boastful working style!

Please, be humble like a poor person for boasting gets people in trouble.

Since his return to The Gambia, he says: "People are not hip!"

His speaking and walking manners have all changed.

He raises one shoulder and lowers the other [when walking]

so the young ladies call him "Semester!"

[When you tell him]: "Semester Man, wake up to morning prayer calls,"

he says: Don't wake me up until after 10:30 am!

[Page 2]

Sipping his cup of coffee loudly,

he says: "Oh my friend, this place of yours is hot!

I have a meeting at the beach and at the nightclub.

And tomorrow, I'm going to Rise Nightclub. It's more fun there!"

[Sleeping with], dark-skinned, light-skinned, and slim ladies who are more harassed,

Semester Man: "I swear you will end up catching AIDS!"

Semester Men, who are betrayers themselves, aren't afraid of betrayal.

You prefer to leave your legal wife and to have a girlfriend.

The wife you've left here who has been waiting for you for 10 years,

you leave her because of holiday women!

Did you forget about your promise to her and your love?

Semester Man, how can you leave her alone with her tears?

Womanizing is prohibited in religion; it destroys people's life in the end.

[Beware], all previous Semester Men womanizers have all been ruined.

[Page 3]

Tell me where are the Gambia's previous Semester Men womanizers?

They are all down, saying: "It's the lifestyle that got me in trouble!"

Where are Saafari, Jankee Waali and the city discotheques?

Tickets sellers and ticket buyers have all disappeared!

So I say, Semester Man, think about your future to save yourself.

The Mandinka say: "If you're rich with livestock, don't forget tomorrow's snack!"

Just because a woman is nice to you, it doesn't mean she loves you.

Semester Man, beware, today's women are dangerous.

Many Semester Men died because of women.

Some died; some got bewitched; and others became physically worn out.
Europe is a land of travelers and everyone is found there.

Don't let the pursuit of wealth make you forget your obligatory Islamic prayers.
Many corpses have come back here from Europe.

Death doesn't care about the poor [or rich], let alone Semester Men!

[Page 4]

If going back and forth to America makes you rude,
if taking planes back and forth [makes you rude], a day will come you won't travel.

Many Semester Men are in the hereafter and here is their regret:

“O My people! O My people! Leave me alone, for I am responsible!

I didn't invest in piety, only in playing and foolishness.

[I now realize that] if you die because of womanizing, you've wasted your life!”



Figure 5: A local bar and restaurant in Kotu, one of the beachside resort areas in The Gambia where tourists and holidaymakers such as the “Semester Men” discussed in the poem spend time.

Glossary

Abiyonolu: Planes (from French *avion*) followed by the Mandinka determiner -o and the plural morpheme -lu

Afero: A/the thing (from French *affaire*) used to mean “lifestyle” in the second poem

Baa: The sea

Bitiree: Betray (from English)

Daajika or daajikoo: Behavior, conduct, habit, manner

Daaluŋ: Day of Creation

Dabarata or dabarta: Bewitched, hexed, jinxed, charmed

Dameejita: Damaged (from English)

Dilita: Deal (from English)

Diyaamu ñaa: Manner of speaking, speaking style

Dorooku: Drug (from English)

EET: AIDS (from English)

Faasimoo: Criminal, evil person, wrongdoer

Fankaasoo: Ocean

Feetoo: Lack of clothes

Fitaroo: Sweeping, cleaning

Foroyaa-julo: Song of freedom, national anthem

Furee: Corpse, dead body

Fuusaa bota: Worn out physically, weakened, stained, bubbles or foam came out when referring to a drink

Fuwaare: Worn out, poor

Haa paasi teni: Half past ten (from English)

Halaala: Licit, lawful (from Arabic *ḥalāl*)

Jiinalaalu or jeenalaalu: Womanizers, fornicators, adulterers

Ka a fita: To sweep something, clean

Ka a kawandi: To advise someone, preach, give a sermon

Ka a kidimandi: To celebrate something, glorify

Ka cafar: To be crazy, behave unconsciously

Ka ñina: To forget

Ka ñaaña: To celebrate, show pride in something

Ka silaŋ: To be afraid, fear

Kaa faŋ-yiitandi or ka i faŋ-yitandi: To show off

Kasaarata: Destroyed, ruined, ruined

Kataa: Trouble, misfortune

Kawandoo: Advice, preaching, sermon

Kibiri baa: Great boasting, also big celebration

Kofii kaasoo: Coffee cup (from English coffee and French *tasse*)

Konkoo: Hunger, starvation

Kuniŋ: Awake, wake up, hip, fashionable, woke

Loofa: Love (from English)

May fureni: My friend (from English)

Miti: Meeting (from English)

Murta or muruta: Returned, from the verb *ka muru* (to return)

Ñaaboo: To envy

Ñaadaa fiŋ: Black face, darker-skinned face

Ñaadaa koyi: White face, white-skinned face

Ñaajiyo: Tear

Nayiti kulub: Night Club (from English)

Ofiso: Office (from English)

Pileeni: Plane (from English)

Poromiis: Promise (from English)

Puru: From French pour (*for*)

Saloo muta: To perform a prayer

Seewoo: Happiness, joy

Sitii diskoolu: City discotheques (from English)

Soko: Let alone, not to mention

Sotoo: Pursuit of wealth, from the verb *ka a soto* (to have, possess something)

Sunkutoo: Young lady, girl, girlfriend

Taama-ñaa: Manner of walking, walking style

Tikeeti: Fare, ticket (from English ticket)

Woosiyoo: Concern, worry, from *woosii* (to express concern, regret)

Woyita: Expanded, increased, spilled over

Yeemanta: Disappeared, vanished; from *ka yeemanj* (to disappear, vanish)

Notes

Ka daboo selendi; ka doo jindi: Literally, “to raise one shoulder; to lower the other.” This is a walking style of trendy young people in Senegambia. In Senegal, it is called *dëngal* (Wolof: to tilt), i.e., to tilt one’s body to one side while walking.

Mansoo: Literally, “king.” It is also used to refer to heads of states. When used with the qualifier *baa* (great) as in *Mansaa Baa* (The Great King), it usually refers to God.

Semesta Maalaño: “Semester Man.” The name Maalañ is a common male name in Mandinka society, similar to John in America. The poet uses “*Semesta Malaño*” as a generic name for young male Gambian expatriates who come back home for a semester vacation, usually every 6 months, especially in December. The equivalent of “*Semesta Malaño*” in Senegal is *Modou-Modou*.

Sereeti niñ sereeti: This is an onomatopoeia reflecting the noise the “Semester Men” make when drinking coffee. It is meant to mock them and to highlight their new attitudes.

Tubaabuduu: The word literally means “White people’s country.” It is a generic term used to refer to Western countries where Gambian expatriates live.

Wii Yaayaa: Kijera uses this phrase throughout the poem to mean Long live President Yahya Jammeh.

Pedagogical Exercises

Exercise 1: Comprehension

Multiple choice questions

1. “Wii Yaayaa” to, mune keta kabiriŋ Yaayaa be bankoo taa la?
 - a. Yaayaa ye bankoo taa le kidi kumata siiŋaa jamaa
 - b. Yaayaa ye bankoo taa le moo maŋ kuma
 - c. Yaayaa ye bankoo taa le kidi kadi maŋ kuma
 - d. Yaayaa ye bankoo taa le kidi kiliŋ dammaa le kumata
2. Niŋ “Wii Yaayaa” to, suukuu kitaaboo ka mune kidimandi?
 - a. Yaayaa ye Gambiyaa bankoo taa luŋo miŋ na aniŋ kuu kendoolu minulu keta
 - b. Yaayaa ye kuu jawoolu minulu ke Gambiyaa bankoo kaŋ
 - c. Yaayaa ye Gambiyaa bankoo yiriwandi ŋaamiŋ
 - d. Yaayaa ye dookuwo muŋ ke fo Gambiyaa diŋolu maŋ ŋaaboo banku kotenna
3. “Wii Yaayaa” to Kijeera ko: “Sibitoolu seneyaata, jankari banta.” A lafita mune fo la?
 - a. A lafita a fo la ko niŋ sibitoo maŋ sii Yaayaa buka funti banta
 - b. A lafita a fo la ko sibiti-woo-sibiti bankoo diŋolu ka saatee fita le faa ye seneyaa
 - c. A lafita a fo la ko sibitoo koolaa, bankoo diŋolu ka fitaroo ke le luŋ-oo-luŋ
 - d. A lafita a fo la ko Sibitoolu ka seneyaa le bari luŋ doolu i buka seneyaa

4. Ñiñ “Semesta Maalaño” to, suukuu kitaaboo safeeta mune kamma?
- a. Ka Gambiyaa diñ-kewoolu niñ diñ-musoolu tankandi Semesta Maalaño ma
 - b. Ka Semesta Maalaño tankandi saasaalu ma niñ i naata Gambiyaa
 - c. Ka Semesta Maalaño la dookuwoolu yitandi niñ i naata Gambiyaa
 - d. Ka Semesta Maalaño kawandi daajika betoolu la niñ i naata Gambiyaa
5. “Biriñ a te jiita Gambiyaa a ko moolu mañ kuniñ.” Kijeera lafiti mune yitandi la?
- a. Ko niñ Semesta Maalaño futata Gambiyaa a ka tubaabu aadoolu le naati
 - b. Ko niñ Semesta Maalaño naata Gambiyaa a buka moolu konton
 - c. Ko niñ Semesta Maalaño naata Gambiyaa a ka cafar le
 - d. Ko niñ Semesta Maalaño naata Gambiyaa a ka a fañ-yitandi le
6. Kijeera ko: “Maalaño, saama ñaasii i ye i kiisa.” A yaa yaamari mune la?
- a. A yaa yaamari a ye naafulu niñ beeyañ ñiniñ fo ala saama se sooniyaa
 - b. A yaa yaamari a ye taa diskoolu to fo a se sunkutoolu muta
 - c. A yaa yaamari a ye ala bii baaroolu beteyandi fo ala alkiyaama se sooniyaa
 - d. A yaa yaamari a ye ala bii baaroolu ke bari a ye i miira saama la

Exercise 2: Reading

1. Karambuño to, karandiñolu kiliñ-kiliñ se suukuu fuloolu karaan santo karandirlaa ñaa la fo a se i maakoyi karaan to.
2. Suwo kono, karandiñolu se kuma kañolu tombon ñiñ suukuwoolu kono, i yee i karaan santo la siiña jamaa fo i ye i nunkundi.
3. Karaan buño to warañ suwo kono, karandiñ fula se kuma kañolu tombon ñiñ suukuwoolu kono, i ye ñoo faliñ i ya karaan santo.

Exercise 3: Writing/Dictation

1. Karambuŋo to, karandirlaa se kuma kaŋolu tomboŋ ñiŋ suukuu fuloolu to. A ye i karaŋ doomaŋ-doomaŋ fo ka baŋ, a ye karandiŋolu yaamari i ye i safee aniŋ Mandinka safeeri-kuloolu la. Niŋ karandiŋolu ye i bandii, i saa juubee mune ye ila safeeroolu niŋ safeeroolu minulu be suukuu kitaaboo kono fatandi. I se kaccaa wo tomboolu kunna. Karandiŋ fula se i ñoŋ na safeeroolu faliŋ noo ñiŋ dookuwo to.
2. Karandiŋolu se ñininkaari luulu safee suukuwoolu kunna. Niŋ i ye i bandii, i ye ila ñininkaroolu faliŋ ñooŋ teema. I ye jaabiroolu safee aniŋ Mandinka safeeri-kuloolu la.
3. Karandiŋ-oo-karandiŋ se kuma kaŋ kilii tomboŋ muŋ diyaata a ye. Niŋ a ye i bandii, a si safeeri sutuŋo ke a kunna.

Exercise 4: Listening/Speaking and Conversation

Podkastoo niŋ Widewoo: I se podkastoo dadaa ñiŋ suukuwoolu nafaa kunna, waraŋ i se widewoo sutuŋolu ke minulu be ñiŋ suukuwoolu kuma kaŋolu faranfane la, ila miiroo to.

Exercise 5: Cultural Competence

Ñiŋ suukuwoolu kuma kaŋolu nafaalu aniŋ ila dinkiraa kuu kummaayaariŋolu teemoo yiitandi.





Unit 5

Defending the Legacy of Local Scholars

This unit includes two Ajami texts. The first is a four-page poem by Ousman Kijera (or Usmaan Kijeera).[1] In it, he defends local scholars against the new generation of Gambian Muslim preachers who studied abroad and returned home with ideologies that challenge the long-established peaceful teachings and legacies of their elders. The second document is a four-page excerpt from a 16-page poem authored by Kanj Kalifa Jaabi, one of the highly revered Mandinka Muslim scholars and educators of Senegambia whom Kijera seeks to support. The name Kanj Kalifa Jaabi (in the standard Senegalese Mandinka orthography) is written as Kang Kalifa Jabbie in the Gambian English-based spelling and Kang Kalifa Diaby in the Senegalese French-based spelling. Several works by the local Mandinka scholars that Kijera advocates for have been transcribed and translated in our previous Ajami project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.[2]

[1] To listen to Ousman Kijera's interview, see <https://sites.bu.edu/ria/mandinka/mandinka-unit-5/>.

[2] See <https://sites.bu.edu/nehajami/the-four-languages/mandinka/mandinka-manuscripts/>.



Figure 1: Ousmane Kijera, the poet (on the left) listening to a local elder, Muhammed Lamine Ceesay (on the right) discussing the challenges facing the legacies of local scholars and elders.



Figure 2: Fieldwork team members discussing with Kijera and his family in front of his house.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
رَبِّي صَلَاةً تُؤْتِي سُوْدِيْنَ أَحْمَدًا
نَسَامَلُ سِيَّتْ كَانَا فِنْدُهُ أَرْجَنَالَا
يَا رَبِّ مَنْسُو غَمِيَّاتِكْ سَنَكِيلِي
بَابَا لِبِيَّاتُو مِيْمُوْر كَرْتَسَبَالَا
غَمِيِّي ذُوَالَا فُلُو لِيْمَالُ بَرْكُوْكَ
أَمِيْنِ أَمِيْنِ الْمَائِيَّةِ وَآمَّنَالَا
الْكَمْبِ تَامِ فَرْنُ كِيْلُ مَثْكَنَا
بِيكُنْتْ تُؤِي فُوْكَرْ عَتَلْ دِيْجَا كَلَالَا
سُوْ سُوْرِيَّو سَبْ كِيُوْ تَلِيْتْ أَيْلَالَا
كُوْمِنْتْ سُنْتْ بِلُوْلِيْ وَتْ كَسْ شُكُوْلَا
مِنَاتْ سُوْدِيِّي فُوْ كَلِ مَثْمَشْكَوَاتِي عَلِي
خَرِيْجِ لِيْبِيَّاتُو بَا كَلِ خَضَارِيَّالَا
مَرْتَسِيِّي فَرْتَاوِيَّ بَا كَلِ سَلْفُوْلَا
مَقَالُ تُوْتَا لِيْبِيِّي بَعْدُ عَلَالَا
(د ا ع)

هُوَ دَانَ مَصْرَافِ مَرْزِيٍّ وَلَمْ يَمُتْ أَلِجَمَا
 مَثُجِيَّتِ دَامِ وَيَسْبِيئُولِ دَا جَكَلَا
 غَمْبِيئِيلَ لَنَالِ يَسْبِيئَسَامِ سَامِ قَالَا
 دَوْلَا كَلَّتِ سَبِيئِيلِ يَدُولِ كَلَّتِ بَدْعِيئِيلَا
 يَسْبِيئَالِ كُنْتُ إِبَادِ عُمُومِ كَمَلِ أَكْمَنِي
 سَامُنْتُ أَرْجِيَّتِ جَاهُوئِيئِيلِ مَرْزُوئِيلَا
 وَلَمَّا فَرَّقْنَا بِأَفْلُوئِيئِيلِ مَثَبَا
 نِيئِمَتِ كَمَا فَوَاسَا جِيئِيئِيلِ أَبُولِ بَرْجِيئِيلَا
 وَالْيَوْمِ دِيئِيئِيلِ لَكُولِئِيلِ وَنُتْرِكُوا
 لَنَالِ نِيئِمِ بَرْجِيئِيلَا جَاهُوئِيلِ تَلِيئِيلَا
 الْعَالِ مَنُكُوئِيلِ مَدَّ هَبِئِيلِ كَلَّتِ كَنُوعِ
 وَالْيَوْمِ سَلِئِيلِ نَلِمِ وَنِيئِيلِ وَأَبْرُوئِيلِ كَمَلَا
 قِيئِمَا جِيئِيئِيلِ مَنِئِيلِ كُوئِيئِيلِ أَلِئِيلِ فَنُتْرِكُوا
 قَرَلُولِ مَانُوئِيلِئِيلِ سَبُوئِيئِيلِ وَوَلَا

((٢))

فِيمَا جَعَلُوا بِمَنَاتِكَ مَنِيحًا
جَاهِلتَ لَنَاكَ مَوِيحًا سِيحًا
مَعْنِي لَا تُبَاتُ نَوِيحًا كَالْكَرَا
مَعْنِي الْإِنَا حِي وَيَا بِيكُورِ جَنَرَا
رَجِيحًا لَمَّا دَاغَمُونَ كَثُورِ سِدَا
يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ تَعْمَلُ خَطْبُوتُ وَأَبْ كَجَزَا
عُودِي يُولُ جَا جَاتِ سُنُكُوتَا فَاقْتَنَا
فَبِرُولِ يِيمَا فِرِي كُنْتُ وَيِيهِ سِلَا
كَلْبُولِ كَمَسِيدِ كَرَمُولِ شِيمَ لَا سَبِيهِ
وَلِعَلِّي يِي كُنَّا إِهَامِي وَسَبِيهِ حَمَسِلَا
دَا تَرَ كُنَّا وَلِيهِ وَمِيرَا يِي وَكُنُورِ شِخْ
إِنَّمَا يِي وَيَا ذُولِي ذُولِ كَمَكَمَلَا
يَا مِرْلَمُولِي لَا كُنُورِ وَلَنَاكَ الْإِلْمُولِي
يِي شِخْ كُنَّا جِي مَالِ شِخْ يِي مَمَلَا
(١٣٥)

شَيْخُ وَيْلٍ دِي شُوتْ مَوِيَا كَايِجَلُولِ يَتَا
 كَمُولِ كَايَا مَوِي شِيُولِ مَرْتَبَا
 نِيكُوِي كَايِرَا يَادِي شُ مَكْصَلَا كَصُغْ
 صَلْبَلِنِ صَمْبَلِ شُغْ اِدِ نَسِينِ وَلِشُولَا
 حَتَا جِكُو مَشَا جَوِيَا لِكُو سَلُولِ دِي تُوَا
 دِي كَرِي كِتَابِي مَنَا يَمِيَا جَوَا رِثَا
 عَمُولِ كَلْنَا كِنَا دِي نُو تُو حِكْمَتَا
 اَسْلُوْبِي يَمَا اَلُو كَرُو لِي تَشْتُولَا
 تُوِيَا تِ يَلِنُولِ تُوِيَا تِيَلِ يَالِ مِرْتُغْ
 حِكْمَتِ تَشْتُولَا فِينِي سَتِيَا تِ كِيَمَطَا
 كِيِيَا لِكُرْمُولِ شَيْخُوَا يَلِجَلُولِ يَلَا
 "جِيِي دِي وَمَا السَّاحِ بِنْتِ كُنْتَا لَا
 كِيِيَا لِنُكِيِي كِنَا كُنْتَا لِكُلُو تَجِيِي
 كُو دِي وَبِ يَتَا وَمَا بِنُكِيِي لِي يَلَا
 (اعراب)

Transcription 1: Rabbī Salaatoo niŋ Kiisoo Dii nna Ahmadu La

[Page 1]

Bismi l-Lāhi al-Raḥmāni al-Raḥīmi

Rabbī salaatoo niŋ kiisoo dii nna Ahmadu la

Niŋ Saama Luŋ siita kanaa n foondi Arjana la

Yā Rabbī Mansoo Gambiyaa tanka sonka kele

Baa baa le be n ñaato miŋ ye n muura kara saba la

Gambiyaa duwaalaa foloolu ñimmaalu barakoo kaŋ

Aamiini aamiini Ala maa ñiŋ duwaa muta la

Ali ko n be taa miŋ karaŋ dunkeelu minnu ka naa

Bee ko nte too ye fo kori ntoolu duŋ te jaakali la

Soosoori ñoo saba ka ñoo tulu-buŋ niŋ ayoolu la

Kuwoo miŋ te suŋ te buloo le wo te ka sonka wo la

Miŋ naata Sawudiya woo ko le muta Massiko nte fele

Khiriiji Liibiyaa wo ye faŋ kili Hadarii la

Murtanii karannaa wo baa faŋ kili la Salafoo la

Miŋ maa la too taa a ye bee buŋ niŋ *bid'a* le la

[Page 2]

Sudaani, Misra, Qatar niŋ wolu misaalu jamaa

Miŋ jiita daamiŋ wo ye ñuŋ wolu la daajika la

Gambiyaa la lonnaalu yee bee saamu saamu fula

Doolu kilita Sunni la ñiŋ doolu kilta *bid'i* la

I yee daalu kuntu i baadiŋo miŋ ka sali a ka suŋ

I saa munta Arajanna caaboo i toli marta wo la

Wolu maŋ karannaa baa foloo bee konti minnu bi jaŋ

Ni ye minna kuma foo i saa je i be wolu purca la

Waalijo mu diinoo to dal kuu le ti wo niŋ tara-kuu
Lonnaalu teema birinŋ naŋ saahiboolu tili la
Alifaalu minnu koo ŋa deŋ madhhabu kilinŋ na kunuŋ
waalinŋ silaŋo le mu wo niŋ fitinoo boroo kamma la
Fo i maa je bii jamaani kawuyee baalu finti ta naŋ
Farloolu maŋ noo bituŋ Sunnoo i be ñoo la wo la

[Page 3]

Fo i maa je aadoolu ñimmaa taata minnu bi jaŋ
Jaahili ti lonnaa ti moo bee baa sañoo-sika la
Mufti Isbaati niŋ wo yaa londi kaa lakura
Mufti Inaafii wo yaa bee koora jana kara la
Raji buŋolu maŋ daŋ kamoo aninŋ konferensi dulaa
Yawmal jumantuŋo la kutuboo to a be kajafri la
Oodiyoolu janjanta sonkoo taata faa futata
Kaburoolu teemaa furee kuŋ to i be ñoo saba la
Taalibool la kuma sindi karamoolu teema laa sababu
Wolu fele i ye ñoo-koŋ i maŋ ñoo saba de hani musu la
Aa tara kunuŋ wolu be ñoo moyrinŋ i be ñoo kanurinŋ
I be taa la ñooyaa doolu ite doolu kooma-kuma la
Yaamari lamoylaa kunuŋ wolu taata Ala le lamoyi
Bii duŋ ŋa taa jee to n maa loŋ bii a be miŋ maa la

[Page 4]

Sheehoo i yee la diinoo tu mooyaa kaŋ i ye fuloo lo i ye taa
Kana moolu kaañanŋ moolu bee niiboo ila martaba la
Nii ko i ye kaafiri i baadiŋo miŋ ka sali a ka suŋ
Sali-bali niŋ suŋ-bali bituŋ, i dantee ñe wo le too la
Hanaa jikoo muntaa jawyaa la ko saloolu diŋo

Dukaree kana a bay muna ñiiñaa jooa to la
Nja moolu kili naŋ ka naa dinoo to hikmatu la
Usuuloo bo ñimmaa a loo kariwolu fo tana te wo la
Tooñaa te fili noo la tooñaa tiyoolu ñaa la fereŋ
Hikmatu te soto la fo nii sutuyaata keemoko la
Keebaalu karaŋ-moolu Sheehoo i bulu fuloo dii la
I ye jii ye duuma i saa je buŋ ta koto taa la
Keebaa la bankee kana kuntu a la kuluu ti jee
Kuu doo be banta wo maa bankeeli jaawo bula

Translation 1: O My Lord, Offer Peace and Blessings to our Prophet

[Page 1]

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

O My Lord, offer peace and blessings to our Prophet Muhammad.

When Judgment Day comes, don't prevent me from entering Paradise.

O My Lord, The Great King, save The Gambia from quarrels and conflicts.

A great ocean of protection covers us on three sides,
thanks to the beautiful prayers of our Gambian ancestors.

Amen, Amen! May their prayers be answered.

You once said: "I am just going abroad to study and return home."

But now you say: "My name must be well-known!" Why shouldn't we worry?

You criticize, quarrel, and slap one another's face with Quranic verses,
fighting over trivial things, instead of focusing on the essential.

The one who studied in Saudi Arabia says: "I am here, a Mashriqi Educated!"

The one who studied in Libya calls himself "a Hadhari!"

The one who studied in Mauritania calls himself "a Salafi!"

And if you don't adopt his denomination, he accuses you of the sin of *bid'a*![3]

[Page 2]

From the Republic of the Sudan, Misra, Qatar to many other places,
wherever they studied, they brought over their manners.

Now, they put all Gambian scholars in two categories:

They call one group "Sunni people" and the other "*Bid'a* people!"

They stop talking to their relatives who perform obligatory prayers and fasting.

It's as if they are the custodians of the key to paradise!

They have no respect for the early great teachers who were here.

If you ever talk about them, you'll see how they disparage them!

Differences of opinions have been part of the faith.

They have existed between scholars since the era of the Prophet's companions.

Our elders taught us to belong to one school of thought

because they were afraid of such discord and wanted to save us from conflicts.

Don't you see how many bogus people show up nowadays?

They don't even fulfill their divine primary duties, but fight over the *Sunnah*![4]

[Page 3]

Don't you see how our beautiful local traditions have disappeared?

Both ignorant and learned folks are full of themselves.

For instance, if the Islamic jurist Lisibaati settles an issue,

his colleague Inaafii would trash the entire ruling!

[3] *Bid'a* is an Arabic word that refers to sinful innovations, i.e., local practices that contrast with the original teachings of Islam.

[4] *Sunnah* is the Arabic word for the teachings and traditions of Prophet Muhammad.

Now places of gossip don't exclude celebrations of the Prophet's birthday and pious venues,

and sermons of Friday prayers are now for slandering others.

Their audio recordings have spread and their quarrels have reached

the graves! Even before lying corpses at cemeteries, they keep wrangling, due to the students who broadcast the messages of their rival teachers.[5]

So, here they are hating each other, not fighting over serious issues such as women! Yet, in the past, these were the same people who used to get along, loved each other, paid a visit to each other, and didn't backbite one another.

People went to sermons in the past to hear the words of God,

but today they say: "Let's go attend. I wonder who will be vilified today!"

[Page 4]

Dear Scholar, please fulfill your religious duties with kindness and respect, and move on.

Avoid generalization and deal with everyone according to their level.

If you call "nonbeliever" your fellow human being who prays and fasts,

then tell me what would you call those who don't even pray and fast?

Even if they may engage in sinful conduct such as not praying,

please don't dismiss them because that isn't a beautiful act that will bring you reward.

Let's invite people to the faith with wisdom.

There is nothing wrong in sharing the lovely principles of the faith eloquently.

Truth can never be lost before the eyes of those who know truth.

[5] Here, Kijera is referring to how the students of rival scholars use social media and technology to share broadly the sermons of their teachers which intensify the tensions.

Wisdom can't be attained, except through humility before a teacher.
So give your utmost respect to the scholars and the teachers of our elders
and be humble, and you'll see that there is nothing wrong in being beneath them.
Don't go beyond the limits of the elders' legacies, for doing so is ill-mannered;
and beware that there are public topics that will lead you to make sinful comments!

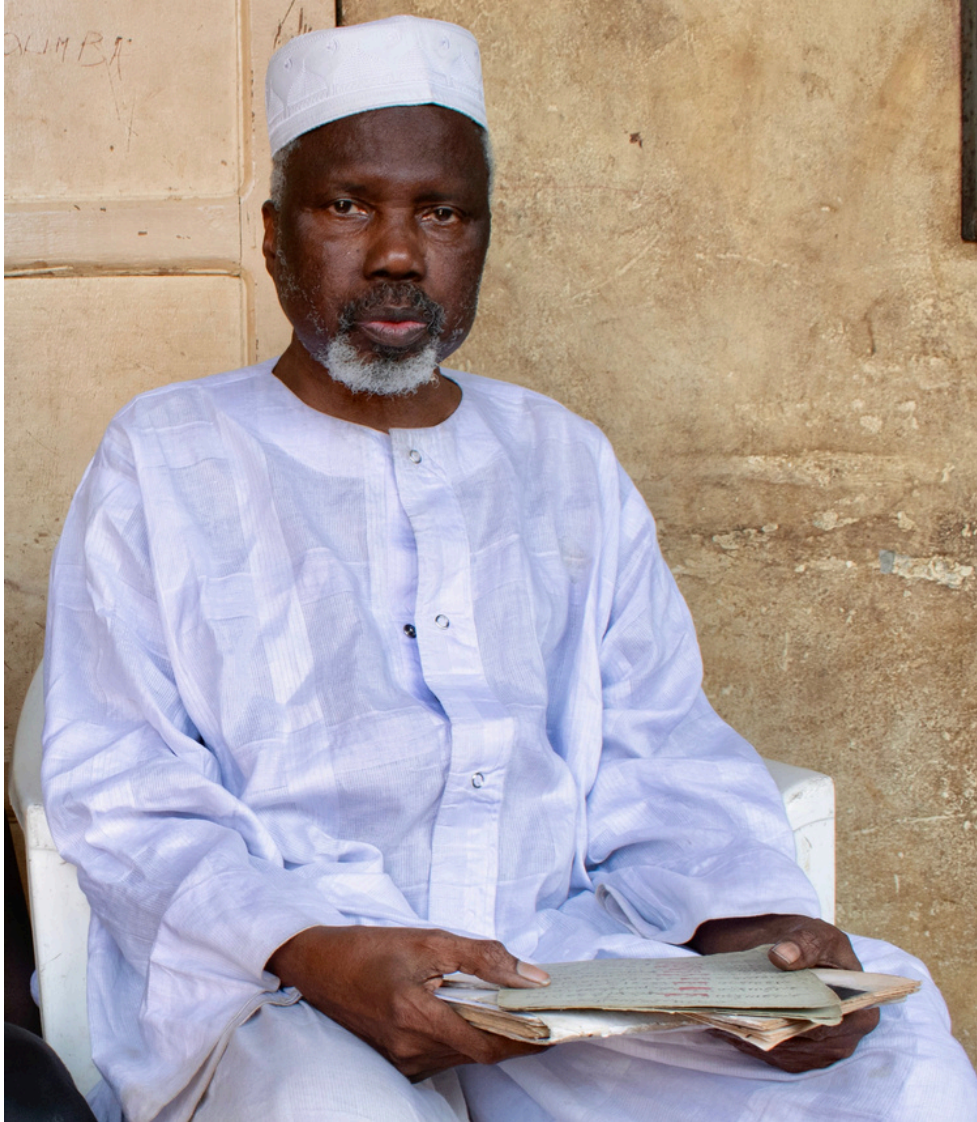


Figure 3: Image of Ansou Daffe of Ziguinchor who passed away in 2019, a year after his personal archives that included Kaŋ Kalifa Jaabi's poem were digitized through our Project EAP 1042. We are grateful to him and his family.

Ajami Text 2: Na Maariyo Tentu Miṅ Maṅ Daṅ

[Page 1]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
قَمِيذُ قَمِيذُ قَمِيذُ قَمِيذُ قَمِيذُ قَمِيذُ
أَمَنُ دِيوُثُ أَيَفَدَا
بِقَامِ لَيْسَ قَالِ اتَانِ
إِلَهُ مَعِ إِسْرُتْ لَوْ كَالِ
أَيَا بِلِ شُوكِ مَوِي
كَتَالِ دَرِ شُوكِ
أَقْتِ شُوكِ مَرِ قَمِيذُ
قَمِيذُ قَمِيذُ قَمِيذُ قَمِيذُ
أَمَنُ دِيوُثُ أَيَفَدَا
بِقَامِ لَيْسَ قَالِ اتَانِ
إِلَهُ مَعِ إِسْرُتْ لَوْ كَالِ
أَيَا بِلِ شُوكِ مَوِي
كَتَالِ دَرِ شُوكِ
أَقْتِ شُوكِ مَرِ قَمِيذُ
قَمِيذُ قَمِيذُ قَمِيذُ قَمِيذُ

وَرُوْبِلَ قِيْشُو كِيِي	ع نُو قِيْشُو كُو مَرِيِي
اِيْتِي نِيْسِي سِي سِي اَمَا بِيَا	اِيْتِي اِيْدَا رَ كِيْلَا لَآ
كَنَا كُو مَآ كَ لِي سِي رُوْنِي	اِيْتِي سِي سِي كِي سِي رُوْنِي
اِيْتِي يَدَا نُو كَنَا رُوْنِي	اِيْتِي اِيْدَا رَ كِيْلَا لَآ
قَلِيْبِي قِيْشُو مِيْمِي رُوْنِي	اِيْتِي اَمِيْرَا مِيْمِي رُوْنِي
اِمِيْرَا مِيْمِي رُوْنِي	اِيْتِي اِيْدَا رَ كِيْلَا لَآ
قَلِيْبِي نُو قِيْشُو مِيْمِي رُوْنِي	قَلِيْبِي اِيْمُوْنِي رُوْنِي
اِيْمَا قَلِيْبِي رُوْنِي مِيْمِي رُوْنِي	اِيْتِي اِيْدَا رَ كِيْلَا لَآ
نِيْمُوْنِي مِيْمِي رُوْنِي	لِيْمُوْنِي مِيْمِي رُوْنِي
اِيْتِي اِيْمُوْنِي رُوْنِي	اِيْتِي اِيْدَا رَ كِيْلَا لَآ
اِيْمُوْنِي رُوْنِي	اِيْمُوْنِي رُوْنِي

اس

اير للبتنه للسنوالة	ايت اءار كيلالا
الدم نكو بيتوتو	بينو اءار اكنبو نو
ايتا لكال الله تنيتا	اقر قينه نء كيلالا
اقر تينو واكيب اء	اقر تينا اءا سا بي
اقر اءر بءا سا بي	ايت اءا كيلالا
ايتا لكر و تمولس	قني اءا بءر و بءر
هكبا جمه بءاير	ايت اءا اءار كيلالا
ايتنو و ققوبت	اكر اءا اءار تينا
للكو تينا اءا الله	ايت اءا اءار كيلالا
ايت اءا اءا	ايت اءا اءار كيلالا
الله اءا اءا	ايت اءا اءار كيلالا

Transcription 2: Na Maariyo Tentu Miṅ Maṅ Daṅ

[Page 1]

Bismi l-Lāhi al-Raḥmāni al-Raḥīmi

Ḥamidtu ka qālīqī ḥamdan

Na Maariyo tentu miṅ maṅ daṅ

A maṅ tuu diboo to a ye n kanda

I ñanta denna kiilaa la

Jamaa si neema ila ye taa sii

Duniyaa sabatoo tumoo maṅ sii

I see moy i see tuloo kaasi

I ñantee denna kiilaa la

I ñaa yele kuu ka nee muunee

Duniyaa foṅoo to kanee neenee

Kanaa laaraṅ basoo feenee

I ñantee denna kiilaa la

A fo ite tuloo le maṅ foo-taṅ

Fo sondeme-jaa le yee kuṅo baṅ

Wo laa tinna ite maṅ bambaṅ

I ñantee denna kiilaa la

I baa taata i faa taata

I mama taata i mumu taata

Ite fantiṅo ko miṅ taata

I ñanta faṅ dendi kiilaa la

[Page 2]

Waroo bula faa ye too kaañāṅ

Ñoo faasikoo maṅ ñiṅ

I te tu la niḡ sii dammaḡ jaḡ
I ḡantee denna kiilaa la
Kanaa koomoo ke siiroo ti
I ye naa saayiḡ ke siinoo ti
Ye naa ḡaa to ke ḡaaroo ti
I ḡantee denna kiilaa la
Malayka jatoo be miḡ noo la
I ḡantee miira i suu la
I maḡ yamfaa la siinoo la
I ḡantee denna kiilaa la
Salaatoo niḡ saloo bambaḡ
Sadaa bo niḡ duwaa kee daḡ
I ye i Maariyo toolu fii kuḡ jaḡ
I ḡantee denna kiilaa la
Tiloolu be tamba la i taa too
Safaaroo yaa sutoo waliḡ bee to
I ye taa luwoo la keefaa to
I ḡantee denna kiilaa la
I sii seewondi seewoo la
I sii jusoo landi hayiiroo la

[Page 3]

I sii sabatindi siinoo la
I ḡantee denna kiilaa la
I sii deḡ kuḡ yee tutuu
Yee fili jee i kumboo to

Ni yaa loŋ ko ila dantee to
I maŋ faŋ dendi kiilaa la
I maŋ tii noo i ko ñe yaayi
I maŋ bambaŋ i maŋ saayi
I maa loŋ bii bee kaa baayi
I ñantee denna kiilaa la
I tee la kooroo tumoo lonna
Fo niŋ dabaroo bi naa banna
Malayka jamaa bi naa benna
I ñantee denna kiilaa la
I yaa too fee kafoo benta
I korita i ñaalu bambanta
Sikoo bota jee i bee sonta
I ñantee denna kiilaa la
I baarata minna ñimmaa to
I baarata minna jawmaa to
I saa bee joo tara i ñaa to
I ñantee denna kiilaa la

[Page 4]

Ite maŋ duniyaa la taaña loŋ
I maŋ suutoo la laaña loŋ
I maŋ bankoo la kuliyya loŋ
I ñantee denna kiilaa la
I ye timma jamaa be kumboo la
I tuloo-soo faata bankoo la

I baloo bee faata tumboo la
I ñantee denna kiilaa la
Seriifu foloolu ñaatonkoo
Jamaanoo moolu santonkoo
I luwoolu kana saŋ n koo
I ñantee si faŋ dendi kiilaa la
Malayka fuloo be naa kamma
I sii jiji i sii maŋ-maŋ
I tee tuu la jee fo yee kuma
I ñantee faŋ dendi kiilaa la
A duumankoolu bee loota
A santonkoolu bee jiite
Maloo bankee tumoo siita
Fo niŋ miŋ denta kiilaa la
Biraa be waaliŋ-na ñaamoo la
Kee maa neŋo dunta ñaamoo la

Translation 2: I Praise the Creator Who is Everlasting

[Page 1]

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

I thank you my Lord immensely.

I praise the Creator who is everlasting,
for He didn't leave me in darkness and He protected me.

Entrust yourself to the Prophet!

Many will profit from them [God and Prophet Muhammad] and will be safe.

This is not the time to relax in this world, [6]
nor the time to hear and pretend not to hear [their injunctions].

Entrust yourself to the Prophet!

Open your eyes so nothing can misguide you,
and don't let the delights of this world fool you.

Don't turn your praying mat into a sleeping bed.

Entrust yourself to the Prophet!

Is it because your ears can't hear well
or your stubbornness that holds you back?

Is this why you are not committed [your religious obligations]?

Entrust yourself to the Prophet!

[Remember], your mother died and your father died;
your grandparents died and your great-grandparents died.

And here you are behaving like a dead hoe![7]

Entrust yourself to the Prophet!

[Page 2]

Don't be boastful and put yourself above your status.

Sinning is not good.

You were not brought into this world just to have fun.

Entrust yourself to the Prophet!

[6] Meaning one should invest in piety and follow God's commandments and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad.

[7] Here, the poet uses a metaphor. He compares people who do not fulfill their religious obligations to "dead hoes," i.e., worn-out hoes. Just like a worn-out hoe is useless in a farm, people who ignore their religious duties are wasting their time on earth.

Don't spend your past getting drunk,
spend your present sleeping,
and thus spend your future [in the hereafter] screaming!

Entrust yourself to the Prophet!

Beware of the might of the [interrogating] angels,
and prepare for your home [in the hereafter].

You don't lessen your sleep [so you can worship more on earth]!

Entrust yourself to the Prophet!

Strengthen your optional and obligatory prayers,
and don't miss the opportunity to give charity and implore God.

Praise relentlessly the great names of your Creator wherever you are.

Entrust yourself to the Prophet!

Many days will pass after your departure [from this world].
and everyone will go through the same journey.

You will go to the middle of a crowd [on the Judgment Day].

Entrust yourself to the Prophet!

If you entrust yourself to the Prophet, you'll receive joyful news,
your heart will rest in peace

[Page 3]

and you'll have time to sleep well.[8]

Entrust yourself to the Prophet!

[8] Since the Judgment Day is believed to be extremely intense, the poet suggests that being given the opportunity to sleep and rest is reserved to those who entrusted themselves to Prophet Muhammad; those destined for paradise.

Otherwise, you'll be hung and placed up high
and will be left alone there crying,
once it is determined based on the appraisal [of your deeds]
that you did not entrust yourself to the Prophet!
You won't be able to fly away, let alone to wander around;
and you will be neither strong nor resilient.

Don't you know there won't be any excuse for anyone on the Judgment Day?

Entrust yourself to the Prophet!

You won't know when exactly you'll be punished
until the Judgment Day is about to end
and many angels gather in one place.

Entrust yourself to the Prophet!

They will call your name before the crowd
while you are exhausted and your face is sad.

And your sins will be disclosed and you will agree.

Entrust yourself to the Prophet!

For all your righteous deeds
and all your unrighteous deeds,
you'll receive all their paybacks.

Entrust yourself to the Prophet!

[Page 4]

You neither know how the earth system works,
nor do you know how the night system works.

And you don't know the weight of the earth.

Entrust yourself to the Prophet!

If you are saved in the hereafter, you'll see many people crying
with their ears filled with sand
and their bodies filled with worms.

Entrust yourself to the Prophet!

The head of the first descendants of the Prophet
and the most eminent religious leader of the world,
may I not miss their assemblies.

Entrust yourself to the Prophet!

Two [interrogating] angels will come to you,
and they will shake you and jostle you.

They won't let you free until you respond to their questions.

Entrust yourself to the Prophet!

Everyone below you will stand up
and everyone above you will come down [to witness].

This is the time to disclose all shameful deeds for everybody,
except for those who entrusted themselves to the Prophet.

Those who did not entrust themselves to him will give wrong answers
and their tongues will fail to utter words [to the interrogating angels]!



Glossary

Caaboo: Key

Daajika or daajikoo: Manner, behavior, habit

Diboo: Darkness

Jaahili or jaahiloo: Ignorant, uninformed (from Arabic *jāhil*)

Ka jaakali: To worry

Ka jijiji: To shake

Ka neenee: To mislead, trick someone

Ka ñoo-konj: To hate one another, dislike one another

Ka purca or ka puruca: To disparage, criticize, belittle

Kaa kooma-kuma: To backbite, slander

Kaburoolu: Graves, tombs (from Arabic *qabr*)

Korta: Tired, from *ka kori* (to be tired, exhausted)

Kuluu: Well mannered, disciplined, well brought up, from the verb *ka kulu*

Ñiiñaa: Beauty, goodness

Ñaaroo: Scream, from the verb *ka ñaara*

Oodiyoolu: Audio messages (from English audio)

Seewoo: Joy, happiness

Waalij: Adversity, enmity

Notes

Bid'a: This Arabic word refers to a sinful innovation, i.e., any local practice that is believed to diverge from the original teachings of Islam and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad. This is a controversial issue among Muslims because what constitutes a local sinful innovation is quite debatable.

“I baa taata i faa taata, I mama taata i mumu taata”: “Your mother and father [left this world]; your grandparent and your great-grandparent left [too].” The verse is used to

to remind people that this life is ephemeral and to urge them to invest in righteous deeds, which are the only things that will be useful to them in the hereafter.

“Ka ñoo tulu-buŋ niŋ ayoolu la”: “To slap one another’s faces with Quranic verses.” The poet uses this phrase to highlight the controversies regarding interpretations of Quranic verses and the resulting religious tensions that the new foreign-educated Gambian Muslims generate in the country.

Sunni People: The poet uses “Sunni people” to refer to individuals who are believed to follow the *Sunnah*, i.e., the teachings and traditions of Prophet Muhammad. The poet contrasts this group with the people labeled as “*Bid’a* people,” i.e., those who include sinful innovations in their religious practices.

Pedagogical Exercises

Exercise 1: Comprehension Multiple choice questions

1. Rabbī Salaatoo” to, Kijeera lafita mune yitandi la ñiŋ kitaaboo to?
 - a. Gambiyaa dunkeelu minnu karanta araabu bankoolu to maŋ alifaalu horoma
 - b. Gambiyaa dunkeelu minnu maŋ karaŋ muka lonnaalu foloolu konti
 - c. Gambiyaa dunkeelu minnu karanta araabu bankoolu to ka alifaalu buuñaa le
 - d. Gambiyaa dunkeelu minnu karanta tubaabuduu maŋ lonnaalu foloolu konti

2. “Rabbī Salaatoo” to, dunkee miŋ karanta araabu bankoo to ka mune naati?
 - a. A ka wolu la londoo le naati
 - b. A ka Gambiyaa daajikoolu niŋ aadoolu le murundi naŋ
 - c. A ka wolu la daajikoolu niŋ aadoolu le naati Gambiyaa
 - d. A ka wolu la kuu betoolu le naaati Gambiyaa

3. “Rabbī Salaatoo” to, mune yaa tinna alifaalu ko ŋa denj madhhabu kilij na kunuŋ?
 - a. Kaatuŋ i ka bori dunkeeli minnu ka taa karaŋo la Murtanii le ma
 - b. Kaatuŋ i ka bori waaliŋo niŋ fitinoo le ma
 - c. Kaatuŋ i ka bori jamaani kawuyeelu le ma
 - d. Kaatuŋ i ka bori dunkeeli minnu ka taa karaŋo la Sawudiya le ma

4. “Ŋa Maariyo Tentu” to, Kaŋ Kalifa lafita munne kawandi la?
 - a. A lafita kawandi la ko muŋ ye ila duniyaa ke siiroo ti ala saama be koleyaa la
 - b. A lafita kawandi la ko muŋ faa taata a baa taata ala saama be koleyaa la
 - c. A lafita kawandi la ko muŋ yaa la duniyaa ke faŋ waroo ti ala saama be koleyaa la
 - d. A lafita fo la ko muŋ maŋ i denj kiilaa la duniyaa ala saama be koleyaa la

5. “Ŋa Maariyo Tentu” to, “I ñaa yele kuu ka nee muunee,” a ye moolu yaamari mune la?
 - a. A ye moolu yaamari i kana duniyaa foŋoo nooma fo i ye ñina Ala batoo la
 - b. A ye moolu yaamari i ye ñaa yele i ye duniyaa foŋoo nooma fo a yee muunee
 - c. A ye moolu yaamari i ye ila laaraŋ basoo feenee fo i ye ñina Ala batoo la
 - d. A ye moolu yaamari i ye duniyaa foŋoo nooma niŋ i lafita kiisa la

6. “Ŋa Maariyo Tentu” to, “I sii seewondi seewoo la,” a lafita mune fo la?
 - a. A lafita fo la niŋ i ye saayiŋ ke siinoo ti i bee joola seewoo le la
 - b. A lafita fo la niŋ i ye bii laaraŋ basoo feenee i bee joola seewoo le la
 - c. A lafita fo la niŋ i ye bii baaroolu beteyandi i bee joola seewoo le la
 - d. A lafita fo la niŋ i ye bii dookuwoolu beteyandi i bee joola seewoo le la

Exercise 2: Reading

1. Karambuŋo to, karandiŋolu kilij-kilij se suukuu fuloolu karaŋo santo karandirlaa ñaato fo a se i maakoyi karaŋo to.

2. Suwo kono, karandiŋolu se kuma kaŋolu tombonj ñiŋ suukuwoolu kono, i yee i karaŋ santo la siiña jamaa fo i ye i nunkundi.

3. Karambuŋo to waraŋ suwo kono, karandiŋ fula se kuma kaŋolu tombonj ñiŋ suukuwoolu kono, i ye ñoo faliŋ i yaa karaŋ santo.

Exercise 3: Writing/Dictation

1. Karambuŋo to, karandirlaa se kuma kaŋolu tombonj ñiŋ suukuu fuloolu to. A ye i karaŋ doomaŋ-doomaŋ fo ka baŋ, a ye karandiŋolu yaamari i ye i safee aniŋ Mandinka safeeri-kuloolu la. Niŋ karandiŋolu ye i bandii, i saa juubee mune ye ila safeeroolu niŋ safeeroolu minnu be suukuu kitaaboo kono fatandi. I se kaccaa wo tomboolu kunna. Karandiŋ fula se i ñoŋ faliŋ noo ñiŋ dookuwo to.

2. Karandiŋolu se ñininkaari luulu safee suukuwoolu kunna. Niŋ i ye i bandii, i ye ila ñininkaroolu faliŋ ñooŋ teema. I ye jaabiroolu safee aniŋ Mandinka safeeri-kuloolu la.

3. Karandiŋ-woo-karandiŋ se kuma kaŋ kilij tombonj muŋ diyaata a ye. Niŋ a ye i bandii, a si safeeri sutuŋo ke a kunna.

Exercise 4: Listening/Speaking and Conversation

Podkastoo niŋ Widewoo: I se podkastoo daada ñiŋ suukuwoolu nafaa kunna, waraŋ i se widewoo sutuŋolu ke minnu be ñiŋ suukuwoolu kuma kaŋolu faranfane la, ila miiroo to.

Exercise 5: Cultural Competence

Ñiŋ suukuwoolu kuma kaŋolu nafaalu aniŋ ila dinkiraa kuu naafaariŋolu teemoo yiitandi.



Unit 6

Memory and Social Issues

This unit focuses on the poems of Boubacar Diatta (or Buubakar Jaata), a popular young Mandinka Ajami singer and poet of Casamance, Senegal. He was born and raised in Pakaawu-Kerewaani (Pakao-Kerewane in French spelling) where he began his Quranic studies. Later, he relocated to Jaara-Barookundaa in The Gambia where he completed his studies. He learned Mandinka Ajami through reading the writings of local elders when he was attending Quranic school. Since then he has specialized in Mandinka Ajami poetry singing by imitating old poetry singers. Currently, he serves as a Quranic teacher and Mandinka Ajami poet and singer.[1] Diatta's Quranic and Mandinka poetry students include both boys and girls. His own daughter, Binta Diatta, featured in the NEH project, is also an Ajami singer.[2]

In this unit, we include five poems by Boubacar Diatta. The first is a moving poem in which he remembers the last moments and subsequent death of his beloved mother. In the second, he defends divorced women who are verbally abused by their ex-husbands. The third poem urges people to strive to control themselves and to trust God. The fourth poem deals with his attempted migration to Spain by boat, and the last one is a spiritual poem in which Diatta ties enmity to Satan's work. Because the written poems he shared with us were in draft form and some were torn or stained, they were rewritten to enhance their textual quality by Ismaila Djitté, a Mandinka scribe from the city of Ziguinchor, Casamance.



Figure 1: Mandinka poet, singer, and Quranic teacher Boubacar Diatta.

[1] To listen to Boubacar Diatta's interview, see <https://sites.bu.edu/ria/mandinka/mandinka-unit-6/>.

[2] To listen to Binta Diatta's chanting of a Mandinka Ajami poem, see <https://sites.bu.edu/nehajami/the-four-languages/mandinka/mandinka-manuscripts/balukuu-suukuwo/>.



Figure 2: Boubacar Diatta (in the middle in white before a drum) with his family, students, and friends preparing to chant one of his Ajami poems with local drums.



Figure 3: From left to right, Ibrahima Yaffa (senior facilitator of the fieldwork team); in the middle, Malang Sané (a famous Mandinka poetry singer in Ziguinchor), and Ibrahima Ngom (the photographer of the fieldwork team) at Hotel Nema Kadior, Ziguinchor, Senegal.

Ajami Poem 1: N Baamaa la Saayaa

[Page 1]

اِسْتَكَّ طَوَلِيَّامَه
سَسَا تَنِيَّ بَلِي
اِبَادُونْ سَوَحِي
اِتْرِيَا كَيْي بَلِي
اِبَادُو مَمِي مَتِي
كَسَارُو جِنِيَّ بَلِي
مَسَا تَوَلِيَّامَه
كَسَارُو تَنِيَّ بَلِي
بُونُو مَكِيَّ نَجِيَّانِي
تَوَلِيَّامَه نَسَلِي
نِيَّ كَوْدَل جِنِيَّانِي
اِسْنُوْر لَكِيَّ بَلِي
وَنُوْر لَكِيَّ سَبِيَّدي
اِمَارِيُو بَتَوَلِيَّامَه

نُسْرَتَ نُنَاك جِيٲَلُو نَكِيٲ نُنَا مِيٲَلَا كِيَا
 اَكِيٲ نَادِدِ وُجِيٲِيٲِ فِلُو جِيٲِ اِكُوٲِ يِيٲَا
 نَعْنَابُوْرَتَا وُلِيٲِيٲِمَا كُنَا كِيٲِ بَكِيٲِرُوٲِيٲَا
 كَدِدِيٲُوٲِ جِيٲِيٲِ فِلُو يِيٲِرُوٲِ يِيٲِمَا
 جَمَلِ سَلْعَانَا كُوٲَا نُنُنَا كِيَا

بِرِنُعِيٲَتَا دَامِيٲُو نُنَا مِيٲِرُوٲِ جَا جَانَا
 مَبِيٲِيٲِ لِيٲِ فُوٲُوٲِيٲِ يِيٲِيٲُوْمَا دِيَا بَلَا
 وَاٲُوٲِ مَمِيٲِيٲِيٲِ نَسْعُوٲِ لَاقَتَا
 لَدُوٲِ سُوْمَدِ لَا بِرِنَا بَلِكِ بِيٲِيٲِ لِكَلَا
 بِرِنِيٲِيٲِ كِيٲِ دَامِيٲُو كِيٲِرُوٲِ فِيٲِيٲِ اُنُنَا
 اِمَا جِيٲِ نَكُوْمَا يِيٲِنَا اِيٲَرِيَا بِيٲِيٲِ اِسْنَا كُنَا
 نَعْنَابُوْرَتَا وُلِيٲِيٲِمَا جِيٲِيٲُوْرُوٲِ فُوٲِ سَلِيٲِيٲِ
 نَعْنَابُوْرَتَا وُلِيٲِيٲِمَا جِيٲِيٲُوْرُوٲِ فُوٲِ سَلِيٲِيٲِ
 بِنِجُوٲِ كَرِا فُوْرَتَا وُلِيٲِ دِيٲَا سَتِيٲَا

Transcription 1: N Baamaa la Saayaa

[Page 1]

Allāhumma, yā Rabbī

ṣalli ‘alā Muḥammada.

Allāhumma, yā Rabbī

ṣalli ‘alā Muḥammada.

Adamadiŋ na saayaa saŋo,

jaaral taa kanandi la,

Maari Baa la nooroo kaŋ.

I maa je n fele ka taa,

ŋa n naa samba jaaraloo[3] la

niŋ n kotoolu Hiina[4] niŋ Mayi.

Nna kanuntee Umar Maraŋ

wo le naata moolu taa.

Aramiisoo somanda la

n taata Seeju kooma Tambana Baa.

Ka birinŋ n futata daaminŋ to,

jee loŋ n kaawandita.

Ŋa n naa kumandi daaminŋ to,

i yaa kuŋ wili a ye n fele.

[3] This word *jaaraloo* is written as *jaarawoo* in the Ajami text.

[4] The name *Hiina* is also written as *Hiima* in the Ajami text.

N baloo ye n tiyoo taama
fo nna miiroolu janfata.

[Page 2]

N sarta n naa la jee le to, n kaa ye:
“N naa, n be taa la Kambiyaa.”
A ko ñe: “Taa dindiñolu jiibee foloo,
janiñ i ka wili ye taa.”
N fanañ borta wo le ñaama
ka taa kuñ fo Kerewaani
ka dindiñolu jiibee foloo,
yaamaroolu timmata.
Juma luñ salfanaa koolaa
n naata taa Kambiyaa.

[Page 3]

Biriñ n futata daamiñ to,
nna miiroolu janjanta.
M be jee le fo lookuñ na.
N niyo mañ diyaa n balaa.
Wo waatoolu muumee bee
nna suufoolu lanfuta
Luñ doo somandaa la,
portaablo be lenka la.
Biriñ ñiñ dankunta daamiñ to,
kibaaroo fele a naata.

I maa je n kotoomaa Hiina:[5]

“I taryaa bii-bii i si naa kata.”

N fanaŋ borta wo le ñaama

Jiibooro fo Siliiti.

N fanaŋ borita wo le ñaama

Jiibooro fo Siliiti,

Binjoona Karifuuro to.

Wo luŋ n dunta suuta baa.

Translation 1: My Mother's Death

[Page 1]

O Allah, My Lord,

may peace and blessing be upon Muhammad.

O Allah, My Lord,

may peace and blessing be upon Muhammad.

The year a human being is supposed to die,

no cure can prevent it

due to the power of the Almighty.

See how I am leaving

to take my mother to treatment

with my sisters Hiina and Mayi.

It was my good friend Umar Maraŋ

[5] The name *Hiina* is written here as *Ñiinaa*.

who came to take us [to the healer].

It was on a Thursday morning that

we went behind Seeju, to the village of Tambana Baa.

When we arrived there,

I became distressed.

When I called to my mother,

she raised her head and looked at me quickly.

Then my body shivered[6] until

my thoughts wandered far.

[Page 2]

There, I sought my mother's permission, telling her:

“Mom, I'm going to The Gambia.”

She told me: “Go see the children first,

before getting up and leaving.”

That's how I rushed

peacefully to Kerewaani

to see the children first,

fulfilling her wish.

On a Friday, after the afternoon prayers,

I then went to The Gambia.

[6] He means that he had
goosebumps.

When I arrived there,
my thoughts were unsettled.
I stayed there for a week.
I was not in a good mood
during all that time.
My limbs also weakened.
One day in the morning,
my mobile phone rang.
When I answered,
the news reached me.
That's when my older sister Hiina said to me:
“Hurry up and come close right away today.”
I then rushed immediately
from Jiibooro to Siliiti.
I then rushed immediately
from Jiibooro to Siliiti,
and from Binjoona to Karifuuru.
On that day, I arrived home late at night.



Figure 4: Boubacar Diatta (on the right) being interviewed on the poem he wrote on the loss of his mother by our project’s senior facilitator Shaykh Ibrahim Yaffa (on the left).

Ajami Poem 2: Musoo le taamu duniyaa ti

مُوسَى لَتَسْمِ الدُّنْيَا تِ مَوْيَسْنَوَلِ
دَهَلِ نَطُورِكِ مَنْتَرِكِبِكِ
يِمَسَّ بِكَ فُطُوكُنْ إِفِيئَعَتِ
عَكْنِكِبُرَجُوجُ تَلَلَا إِبْتَوَمَلِ
إِ مَنَشُدِيَا عِيِي يِيرَلِ إِبَاوَمَلِ
نِيكَسَلِيلِ بَرَاكِ تِي لَبْنُضَلِ
عَكْشَالِكِسْ كُيَبُولَلَا إِكَنْفُ
إِ كَلَلِدِ تَنُولَلَهْ إِبِيَسَلَلِ
نِيْمِيْفُجُ إِلا بَرَجُولِ إِكَمِنَكُنْ
نِيكِرَتِ إِسَنَكَمُولِ بِيِدِوَمَلِ

Transcription 2: Musoo le taamu duniyaa ti

Musoo le taamu duniyaa ti. Moo ye soŋ wo la.

Dahaala niŋ tuuroolu maŋ tara kee bala.

I ye musu bula futuwo kono i ko yanfata,

i kana kibaara jawñãa tilaa la[7] i baa tuumi la.

I maŋ seedeyaa, i bee yaara la i baa waafi la.

Ni i ka sali le, baraaj te i ye labandulaa.

I ka ñaa le kaasiŋayiboolu la i ka a nukun.

I ka a bulandi tanoolu la i bee saata la.

Nii mee foñõo ila baara jaw la i ka miŋ nukun,

ni i tenkerenta, i si naa ke moolu bee ye duuma la!

Translation 2: The world belongs to women

The world belongs to women.[8] Let's admit it.

Lack of rest and pounding grains [for food] are not for men.

So when you divorce a woman and say you don't want her anymore,

don't spread bad news about her and accuse her wrongly.

Without evidence, you go around talking badly about her.

Even if you pray [five times a day], you won't have any divine reward in the end.

You're fooling yourself and hiding your flaws.

You are getting her in trouble and talking badly about her behind her back.

[7] This is the contraction of *tiliŋ a la*.

[8] Meaning women are more hardworking than men in his Mandinka society.

If you don't stop your bad deeds you're concealing,
when they are disclosed, you'll be regarded as inferior to everyone.



Figure 5: Yamadou Camara, a Mandinka writer and manuscript owner.



Figure 6: On the way to the village of Kerewane, with a sign showing how America is helping people commercialize cashew nuts.

Ajami Poem 3: I Faḡ Mara

وَإِقَمَرِي عَيْنَا مَرَارِكِي
إِلَى مَرْجِي سَيْفِي
لِقَلِّ إِيَّانَا اللّٰه
إِعْنَانَا دَانِي خَيْرَلِي
نِيكَتِي يَارَبِي
أَسْجُوتِي نَامَ إِكُو
أَسْكِنِي كَرْبِي لِي
أَتِيكِي بِشَوْجَلِي
كَلِيلِي سَكَلِي
نَعْمَلِي جَدَلِي
دُنَالِي يَمْنَبِي
سَبُو يَمْنَبِي
دُنُووُ إِكِي مَنُووسِي
أَلِيْدِي دِيَامَلِي

II

Transcription 3: I Faṅ Mara

I faṅ maraa i yee naa maraloo ke,

ila mara-feṅ si i nafaa.

I faṅ loṅ i yee naa Ala loṅ.

I ye naa daani kayra la.

Ni i kaa ye: “Yā Rabbī!”

A saa fo i ye: “Naam, i ko?”

A se i ke kuruṅ bayilaa.

A ye i ke betoo bala,

kuliyaaalu sikalaalu,

neemoolu jindilaa,

dunlaa ye muṅ bambu,

semboo be muṅ bala.

Dunoo i kee muṅ ne woosi?

Alii dee diyaamo la!

Translation 3: Control Yourself

Control yourself before trying to control anything else,

so that whatever you control will be useful to you.

Know yourself first before trying to know God.

And then seek peace from Him.

Then, if you call on Him: “O My Lord!”

He’ll answer: “Yes, what do you want?”

And He’ll make you an evil chaser,

guide you toward good people,

those who can endure hardship,

and turn you into someone who brings down blessings,

the one people of heaven endorse,
someone with a mighty power!
You are just a load [on God's back], what are you complaining about?
Please, stop whining!



Figure 7: The senior facilitator of the fieldwork, Ibrahima Yaffa, and other travelers crossing the Marsassoum River by ferry on the way to Kerewane.

Ajami Poem 4: Nna Espaañi Taama Siloo

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
أَلْقُولِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى

مَبِي بَابُورَلِي مَبِي وَلِمَتِي
مَبِي كَبِي بَابُورَلِي دَنِي
اللَّهُ كَلِي نَجُورِي تَتِي
إِلَّا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى

نُتَامَتَا نُتَامَتَا نُتَامَتَا عِيَسِي
نُتَامَتَا نُتَامَتَا نُتَامَتَا عِيَسِي
بِرِ مَوْجَمَالِي تَتِي إِلَّا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى

بِرِنْدَسَتِي إِلَى كُرُوا رَسَلِي
تَبَابُورَلِي وَلِي
بِرِنْدَسَتِي إِلَى كُرُوا رَسَلِي
تَبَابُورَلِي وَلِي
إِنِّي بَتُورِي تَتِي إِلَّا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى

|||

Transcription 4: Nna Espaañi Taama Siloo

Lā ilāha illa l-Lāha!

Lā ilāha illa l-Lāha!

Alaa fo le li *lā ilāha*

illa l-Lāhu ta'ālā!

M be baa borla m be wulima la.

M be kañee bor la duniyaa.

Allaahu ko le niḡ joḡo yaa te tentu,

illa l-Lāhu ta'ālā,

N taamata n taamata;

n naata duḡ Espaañi.

N taamata n taamata;

N naata duḡ Espaañi.

Bariḡ moo jamaa le taata.

Illā l-Lāhu ta'ālā.

Biriḡ n dasata ila Kuruwaa Ruus la,

tubaaboolu wilita.

Biriḡ n dasata ila Kuruwaa Ruusu la,

tubaaboolu wilita.

I niḡ ila batoo baalu naata.

Illā l-Lāhu ta'ālā.

Translation 4: My Migration to Spain

There is no god but Almighty God!

There is no God but Almighty God!

Say, there is no god,

but Almighty God!

I'm traveling through the sea; I'm crawling [in the boat]

in search for a better life.

God said a servant must praise Him,

The Most Exalted!

I traveled and traveled more

until I entered Spain [by boat].

I traveled and traveled more

until I entered Spain.

And we were numerous [in danger].

Praise be to The Most Exalted [Who saved us]!

When we came close to their Red Cross,

White people got up.[9]

When we came close to their Red Cross,

White people got up.

They came with their big ships [to rescue us].

Praise be to God, the Most High!

[9] Referring to the Spanish coast guards.

Ajami Poem 5: Bi Ismika

بِسْمِكَ اللَّهُمَّ
وَيَاكَ نَعْبُدُ
وَيَاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ
كَأَلَّه دَانِي خَيْرِي

مَا رَجِي مَجِيئِي
مِنَّا نَابِرِي
وَلَهُ تَمَاحِي
سَلَوِبُ نَجِيئِي

كِي جَوَاطِي نِي وَسِيئِي
إِجْلِيئِي نَجَسُو
أَسِيئِي نَامِيئِي
أَشِيئِي سَامِيئِي

Transcription 5: Bi Ismika

Bi Ismika Allāhuma!

Iyyāka naʿbudu,

wa iyyāka nastaʿīnu.

N ka Ala daani hayira la.

N maṅ feṅ je miṅ jikita.

N maṅ laa nna baara la.

Wa laa tiṅ[na] nte maṅ haañi.

Silaṅo be n fatee bala.

Kee jawo kele nii wo siita,

Ibliisa niṅ jusoo.

A sii tooraa, naa mee faa,

a si i foondiṅ saama la!

Translation 5: In Your Name

In Your name, O Lord!

It is You we worship,

and it is from You we seek assistance.

We ask God to offer us peace.

I don't see anything I can rely on,

and I don't trust my own deeds.

That's why I am afraid.

In Your name, O Lord!

It is You we worship,

and it is from You we seek assistance.

We ask God to offer us peace.

I don't see anything I can rely on,

and I don't trust my own deeds.

That's why I am afraid.

Fear has taken all over my body!

When [you think] it's time to fight an enemy,

[know that] Satan has entered your heart.

And he will either harm you or kill you,

or will make you a loser Tomorrow![10]

[10] The poet used *Saama* (Tomorrow) to refer to the Hereafter, as customary in Senegambia.

Glossary

Adamadiŋ or aadama-diŋ: Literally, child of Adam, human being

Aramiisoo: Thursday (from Arabic *al-khamīs*)

Baara: work

Borta or Borita: Run, rushed, hurried, from *ka bori* (to run)

Damaa or dammaŋ: Alone, just, only

Dasata: Come close, near

Fisiyaata: Feeling better

Fondiŋ or fondi: To cause to lose, miss, fail

Futuwo: Marriage

Hayira, heera, khayira, or kayira: Peace, wellbeing (from Arabic *al-khayr*)

Ibliisa: Satan (from Arabic *Iblīs*)

Jaaraloo or jaararoo: Healing, treatment

Jaararilaa: The healer

Joŋ: Slave, servant

Ka a faasaa: To advocate for someone, to defend someone, to take someone's side

Ka a fele: To look at, gaze

Ka a kanandi: To help escape, save, rescue

Ka a kumandi: To call to someone

Ka a kuntaki: To compare

Ka a mara: To control something/someone, rule, govern, to be in charge

Ka a saata: To talk badly behind someone's back, slander

Ka a samba: To take away, bring away

Ka a tuumi: To accuse

Ka haañi: To be courageous, to dare, to be fearless

Ka jiki: To trust, rely on

Ka nukuj: To hide
Ka woosi: To complain, express concern, rant
Kaawandita: To be troubled, distressed, worried
Kanuntee: Beloved one, dear friend, from the verb *ka kanu* (to love)
Kuruuj: Evil, badness
Labandulaa: End, at the end, in the end
Lanfuta: Inept, weakened, paralyzed; from *ka lanfu* (to become weak)
Lookuj: Week
Miiroo: Thought
Neemo: Sustenance, blessing
Njayibo: Flaw, defect, intimate concern, private matter.
Saayaa: Death
Sarta or sarata: To seek permission before traveling, announce travel plans
Seedeyaa: Witness, evidence
Semboo: Power, strength, fitness
Suufoolu: Limbs, from *suufoo* (body part or joint)
Suuta baa: Late at night, past midnight
Tanoo: Trouble
Tenkerenta: Disclosed, revealed, from *tenkerej* (to reveal, disclose a secret)
Timmata: Completed, fulfilled, accomplished
Tuuroo: Pounding (when preparing food)
Yaamaroo: Instruction, advice

Notes

Dunoo: Literally, “load.” In this unit, it is used as a metaphor to refer to someone who is protected and supported by God; or in the poet’s own words, “someone that God carries on His back,” just like an African mother carries her child on her back.

Jiibooro, Siliiti: These are the names of two towns located at the border between Senegal and The Gambia. Jiibooro (spelled as Jiboro English) is located in The Gambia and Siliiti

(or Séléti in French spelling) is located in Senegal.

Ka ke moolu bee ye duuma la: Literally, “to be below everybody.” The expression is used in this unit to mean someone who is disgraced and shamed in the community, a situation that is most feared in Mandinka society.

Kañee: Profit, advantage, benefit. In the unit, it is used in the phrase *kañee bor la*, meaning “running after a better life,” i.e., seeking a better life.

Kuliyaalu sikalaalu: Literally, “lifters of heavy things.” The phrase is used to refer to people who can endure hardship or persevere in the face of hardship with virtue. This is an important virtue in Mandinka society. The expression is the equivalent to the Mandinka verb *ka muña* (to persevere, endure, have patience).

Kuŋ, Binjoona, Karifuuro: These are three locations in Senegambia. Kuŋ (also known as Kun-Barra) is located in the Gambian town of Barra at the border with Senegal. Binjoona (or Bignona in French spelling) and Karifuuro (also known as Carrefour Diaroumé or Madina Wandifaa) are two major towns in southern Senegal.

M be, n be: These are the equivalents of “I am” in English. The two variants are used interchangeably throughout the Ajami texts in this unit.

Tilaa la: This is the contraction form of *ka a tiliŋ a la* (to direct to, towards).

Wa laa tiŋ: This is the contraction of *wo le yaa tiŋ na* (that’s the reason why).

Pedagogical Exercises

Exercise 1: Comprehension

Multiple choice questions

1. Buubakar ko: “Adamadiŋ na saayaa saŋo, jaaral taa kanandi la.” Mune mu a kotoo ti?
 - a. I se i jaara ñaa-woo-ñaa, Ala ye ila saayaa saŋo saafee le fo a banta
 - b. Ala le ka adamadiŋo kanandi saayaa ma
 - c. Adamadiŋo la saayaa saŋo, Ala baa jaara la wo tumoo le la
 - d. Ala le ka adamadiŋo jaara, ate fananŋ le ka a faa

2. Buubakar ye a baamaa samba jaaraloo la muntoo le?
 - a. Seeju kooma Tambaakundaa
 - b. Kerewaani
 - c. Seeju kooma Tambana Baa
 - d. Jiibooro fo Siliiti

3. Buubakar ko: “Yaamaroolu timmata.” A lafito mune fo la?
 - a. A yaa baamaa samba le jaararidulaa
 - b. A yaa baamaa la yaamaaroolu ke le fo a banta
 - c. Ala taama siloo koyita, a si taa noo Kambiyaa
 - d. A ye dindiŋolu jiiɓee le fo a banta

4. Jumaa le ye a baamaa la kibaaroo futandi Buubakar ma?
 - a. Ala kanuntee Umar Marañ
 - b. A kotoolu Hiina niŋ Mayi
 - c. A kotoomaa Hiina damaa
 - d. Jaararilaa

5. Mune yaa tinna Hiina ko Buubakar ye: “I taryaa bii-bii i si naa kata?”
 - a. Kaatuŋ a baamaa fisiyaata le
 - b. Kaatuŋ jaaraloo banta le
 - c. Kaatuŋ Buubakar meeta le Kambiyaa
 - d. Kaatuŋ saasaa ye a baamaa batandi le

6. Jiibooro niŋ Siliiti be banku jumaalu le to?
 - a. Jiibooro niŋ Siliiti bee be Senekaali bankoo le kaŋ
 - b. Jiibooro be Senekaali bankoo le kaŋ
 - c. Jiibooro be Kambiyaa bankoo le kaŋ; Siliiti be Senekaali bankoo le kaŋ
 - d. Jiibooro niŋ Siliiti bee be Kambiyaa bankoo le kaŋ

Exercise 2: Reading

1. Karambujo to, karandiḡolu kiliḡ-kiliḡ se suukuu luuloolu karaḡ santo karandirlaa ḡaala fo a se i maakoyi karaḡo to.
2. Suwo kono, karandiḡolu se kuma kaḡolu tombonḡ ḡiḡ suukuwoolu kono. I yee i karaḡ santo la siḡaa jamaa fo i ye i nunkundi.
3. Karaḡ buḡo to waraḡ suwo kono, karandiḡ fula se kuma kaḡolu tombonḡ ḡiḡ suukuwoolu kono. I ye ḡoo la kuma kaḡolu faliḡ i ya karaḡ santo.

Exercise 3: Writing/Dictation

1. Karambujo to, karandirlaa se kuma kaḡolu tombonḡ ḡiḡ suukuu luuloolu to. A ye i karaḡ doomaḡ-doomaḡ fo ka baḡ, a ye karandiḡolu yaamari i ye i safee aniḡ Mandinka safeeri-kuloolu la. Niḡ karandiḡolu ye i bandii, i saa juubee mune ye ila safeeroolu niḡ safeeroolu minulu be suukuu kitaaboo kono fatandi. I se kaccaa wo tomboolu kuḡ na. Karandiḡ fula se ḡoo la kuma kaḡolu faliḡ noo ḡiḡ dookuwo to.
2. Karandiḡolu se ḡininkaari luulu safee suukuwoolu kunna. Niḡ i ye i bandii, i ye ila ḡininkaroolu faliḡ ḡoo teema. I ye jaabiroolu safee aniḡ Mandinka safeeri-kuloolu la.
3. Karandiḡ-oo-karandiḡ se kuma kaḡ kiliḡ tombonḡ muḡ diyaata a ye. Niḡ a ye i bandii, a si safeeri sutuḡo ke a kuḡ na.

Exercise 4: Listening/Speaking and Conversation

Podkastoo niḡ Widewoo: I se podkastoo ke ḡiḡ suukuwoolu la nafaa kuḡ na, waraḡ I se widewoo sutuḡolu ke minulu be ḡiḡ suukuwoolu kuma kaḡolu faranfansi la, ila miiroo to.

Exercise 5: Cultural Competence

I se aadoolu fannaalu tombonj minulu diyaata i ye suukuwoolu kono. Niñ i ye i bandii, i se i kuntaki anij minulu sotota ila dinkiraa to.



Figure 8: Yousoufa Demba, facilitator of the fieldwork team, with a young man making tea. Brikama, The Gambia.



Recommended Further Reading

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- NEH Ajami Project (2019-2023). Ngom, F., Rodima-Taylor, D., et al.
<https://sites.bu.edu/nehajami/>

Answer Key for Exercise 1: Multiple Choice Questions

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Unit 1	b	d	c	b	c	b
Unit 2	c	c	a	b	d	a
Unit 3	c	a	b	d	a	c
Unit 4	c	a	b	d	a	c
Unit 5	a	c	b	d	a	c
Unit 6	a	b	b	c	d	c