

African Voices in Islamic Manuscripts from Mali

The first workshop of the DFG-funded project “African voices in Islamic manuscripts from Mali: documenting and exploring African languages in Arabic script (Ajami)”

In conjunction with the meeting of the “Old Mande Research Network”

Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, Warburgstraße 26

31 October – 1 November 2018

Wednesday, 31 October (room 2002)

- 9.00 am Welcome coffee
9.15 am Introduction: **Dmitry Bondarev, Hamburg**
- 09.30 am **Samby Khalil Magassouba, Bamako and Djibril Dramé, Hamburg**
Analysis of a Soninke Ajami poem
- 10.15 am **Hamadou Boly, Bamako**
Une étude analytique de la poésie du cheick Mouhammad Abdoulaye Souadou
- 11.00 am *Coffee break*
- 11.30 am **Lameen Souag, Paris**
Preliminary notes on a page of premodern Songhay and Tamasheq poetry from Timbuktu
- 12.15 am **Ismaila Zangou Barazi and Sidi Imam Miga, Bamako**
La pensée lexicale dans les manuscrits de Tombouctou (presentation in Arabic)
- 1.00 pm *Lunch*
- 3.00 pm **Darya Ogorodnikova, Hamburg**
The scribes of the Soninke Islamic manuscripts and their networks
- 3.45 pm **Djibril Dramé, Hamburg**
Soninke of the Islamic Manuscripts: A comparative overview of a written register and modern (spoken) Soninke.

Thursday, 1 November (room 2002)

- 10.00 am **Coleman Donaldson, Hamburg**
Preliminary ethnographic and historical insights regarding language, literacy and scholarship amongst the Jula of the former Kong Empire
- 10.45 am *Coffee break*
- 11.15 am **Artem Davydov, Saint Petersburg**
An example of the missionary use of the Arabic script for Guinean Maninka
- 12.00 pm *Round-table discussion*

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Participants: Sidi Bamadio (Bamako), Ismaila Zangou Barazi (Bamako), Hamadou Boly (Bamako), Dmitry Bondarev (Hamburg), Alphadi Cheikna Boulker (Bamako), Artem Davydov (Saint Petersburg), Mohamed Diagayeté (Timbuktu/Bamako), Nikolay Dobronravin (Saint Petersburg), Coleman Donaldson (Hamburg), Djibril Drame, (Hamburg), Imam Shettima Habib (Maiduguri), Abdel Kader Haidara (Bamako/Timbuktu), Philip J. Jaggar (London), Shamil Jeppie (Cape Town), Samby Khalil Magassouba (Bamako), Darya Ogorodnikova (Hamburg), Maria Luisa Russo (Hamburg/Bamako), Abande Mohammed Shettima (Hamburg), Lameen Souag (Paris), Banzoumana Traoré (Bamako), Saadou Traoré (Timbuktu).

Abstracts

Ismaila Zangou Barazi et Sidi Imam Miga, Bamako

La pensée lexicale dans les manuscrits de Tomboctou

الفكر المعجمي في مخطوطات تمبكت

د.إسماعيل زنگو برزي، أستاذ في جامعة بامكو؛ أ. سيدي إمام ميغا، باحث في معهد أحمد بابا

في الواقع، غني عن الذكر أن المعاجم اللغوية متداولة عند أغلب الشعوب التي عرفت الحضارات القديمة، من أروبيين وهنود وفرنسيين وعرب .. إلخ؛ ولكن مما لا مندوحة عنه أن أغلب هذه الشعوب السابقة تقدمت منذ فترة متعاقبة وربما طويلة في صناعة المعاجم، وقد رأينا بعض هذه المعاجم أحادية اللغة، وأخرى ثنائية، وثلاثية .. إلخ حسب هدف المؤلف وحاجة القراء.

وإذا تعلقنا بالمسألة باللغات الأفريقية الكبرى فقد عرفت أيضا بعض الأدبيات المعجمية عبر أبجديات لاتينية في أغلبها. إن لم أقل كلها منذ فترة وربما عرفت ذلك بعيد الاستقلال إلى يومنا هذا، فاعتمدت أغلبها ثنائية لغوية؛ ذلك أن مؤلفيها غربيون يستهدفون إلى خدمة أبنائهم في الدرجة الأولى، ثم إلى خدمة أطر خاص من المثقفين الأفريقيين.

أما إذا تعلقنا بالمسألة باللغة العربية المتجسدة في أبجديتها التي تمثل الأولى من نوعها في كتابة الثقافة والحضارة الأفريقيين منذ قرون، فهل اتخذتها أو وظفتها مخطوطات تمبكت. عبر ما يعرف بالمخطوطات الأعجمية. في صناعة المعاجم للغات الأفريقية؟

إذا كان الجواب بنعم فما تلك اللغة؟ وما نوعية المعاجم المتاحة في المجال؟ وما حجم المعاجم المتداولة؟ وهل يمكن وجود تاريخ تقريبي لهذا النوع من المخطوطات؟

هذه مجموعة من الاسئلة المطروحة التي يحاول البحث الاجابة عنها.

Hamadou Boly, Bamako

Une étude analytique de la poésie du cheick Mouhammad Abdoulaye Souadou

Cheick Mouhammad Abdoulaye Souadou (m. 1852) fut une figure remarquable du soufisme du 19eme siècle au Mali. Il contribua grandement à la diffusion du soufisme à Dilly et ses environnants. I produisit ainsi plusieurs poésies élogieuses à l'honneur du Prophète. Sa descendance Oumou Dilly et son enfant Cheik Modibo Kane prirent le flambeau de sa pensée soufie après sa mort. Nous allons traiter ici et étudier l'une de ses poésies panégyriste dans cet exposé.

Artem Davydov, Saint Petersburg

An example of the missionary use of the Arabic script for Guinean Maninka

In my talk I will discuss the Arabic-based writing system used by SIM and Pioneer Bible Translators for Guinean Maninka. The range of topics I am going to cover includes the grapheme inventory and its connections with segmental phonology and tonology of Maninka, orthography and word division. A comparison with Roman-based Manding systems and with N'ko will be made.

Coleman Donaldson, Hamburg

Preliminary ethnographic and historical insights regarding language, literacy and scholarship amongst the Jula of the former Kong Empire

In this talk, I introduce my recently re-opened research project about language, literacy and scholarship amongst the Jula community of the former Kong Empire in southwestern Burkina Faso and northeastern Côte d'Ivoire. I begin by presenting my foray into the topic via Ajami literacy practices that I stumbled upon when visiting my former Peace Corps village in 2012. Following some contextual and theoretical preliminaries regarding the Kong Jula network, linguistic registers and the Islamic healing tradition, I introduce my library- and field-based investigations conducted since arriving in Hamburg in 2018. Next, I discuss specific preliminary insights and holes of knowledge regarding 1) the history of the Kong network and its clerical tradition; 2) the current state of Jula Islamic scholarship *au sense large* (viz. schools, scribes and healing practices); 3) distinct Jula registers tied variously to Islam, Kong, Christianity, and changing ethnic relations in southwestern Burkina Faso. I conclude with potential paths for future research down the road.

Djibril Drame, Hamburg

Soninke of the Islamic Manuscripts:

A comparative overview of a written register and modern (spoken) Soninke

The written register used in various Soninke manuscripts differs in many ways from the modern Soninke spoken varieties. This presentation is a preliminary comparative overview of phonological, morphological and syntactic features identified in the written Soninke and in the Soninke dialects. The comparison will be based on the data from ten manuscripts, previously analysed by Darya Ogorodnikova, and four dialects of Soninke, such as Gidimaxa, Gajaaga, Jaahunu and Kaedi.

Samby Khalil Magassouba, Bamako and Djibril Dramé, Hamburg

Analysis of a Soninke Ajami poem

This presentation deals with a Soninke Ajami poem about fish, water and fire. The fish is very strong in the water and becomes very weak while on fire. The fire cannot resist the force of the water. This poem is used to guide people to do good things and be humble in life. In the first part of the presentation, we will introduce the poem and play the recording as sung by the author. In the second part we will analyse and explain the poem using some known literary sources.

Darya Ogorodnikova, Hamburg

The scribes of the Soninke Islamic manuscripts and their networks

West African Islamic manuscripts with the main texts in Arabic and annotations in Soninke were most probably used for educational purposes. It is evidenced by references in the margins, indicating teachers, students and also some scholarly centres located in the greater Senegambia region and Guinea. This information allows us to understand the links between the manuscripts and to reconstruct the networks of scholars involved in the production and circulation of these manuscripts. I will present preliminary results of this reconstruction and discuss some linguistic features of Soninke used as the language of annotations. I will demonstrate that scribal choices of spelling were possibly conditioned by specific linguistic background of scribes and scholars.

Lameen Souag, Paris

*Preliminary notes on a page of premodern Songhay and Tamasheq poetry from
Timbuktu*

Among catalogued non-Arabic materials at the Ahmed Baba Institute of Higher Learning and Islamic Research, one fragment consisting of a single page stands out in several respects. Its format is quite unusual among West African Ajami materials in the prominence given to the Ajami material: it consists of two finely calligraphed non-Arabic poems, one in Koyra Chiini (Songhay) and one in Tamasheq (Tuareg Berber), with Arabic marginal and interlinear commentaries explaining the first of them. Linguistically, unlike most material examined, it seems to reflect a relatively early source: both the Koyra Chiini and the Tamasheq poems show archaisms predicted for earlier stages of the languages but unattested in 20th century materials. This presentation will explore the content of this fragment and its consequences for our understanding of the linguistic history of the region.