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A Bamana Commentary on *Sūrat al-Wāqīʿa* (Q. 56): A Linguistic and Stylistic Analysis

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Only recently have researchers begun to realise the important role played by African languages in the transmission of Islamic knowledge on the continent. Advanced Islamic education, which may cover all fields of the late medieval curriculum (including *fiqh*, *tawhīd*, *lughā*, *naḥw*, *ṣarf* and *tafsīr*),¹ is based on the oral translation, into a local language, of written Arabic texts. African languages also have a significant role in earlier phases of instruction, inasmuch as the letters of the Arabic alphabet, vowel and punctuation signs, all have designations, often adapted from Arabic, but nevertheless specific to each language.² This is a ‘scholarly orality’, in Francesco Zappa’s felicitous phrase.³ Moreover, it is scholarly not only in its subject matters, but also because it has specific lexical and syntactic resources, designed to facilitate the translation process and express Islamic contents.

The aim of this paper is to highlight a few of the characteristic features of Bamana scholarly language, based primarily on the example of one particular commentary; a full analysis would require presentation of a much larger selection of the corpus, as well as more space. Together with a commentary on *Sūrat al-Raḥmān* (Q. 55), that is appearing simultaneously, this is probably the first time that a longer Qur’anic commentary, as enunciated orally in a West-African language and in a close-to-customary setting, is transcribed and published.⁴

The social contexts and historical development of *tafsīr* in West-African languages have been discussed elsewhere. Suffice it to say that Qur’anic commentaries are proffered in three main contexts: as the ultimate subject of the traditional Islamic studies curriculum; in a ceremonial context, in Ramaḍān; and (in the form of brief citations) in popular preaching. Qur’anic exegesis in the Manding language

probably began developing in the later Mali empire (fifteenth century); in some other languages (Soninke and Kanembu), it may have begun developing considerably earlier, while in yet others (for example, Dogon and Senufo), it is currently emergent.⁵

The commentary appended to this article is part of a full *tafsīr*, collected between 1992 and 1998, from a scholar of Somono background resident in the Segou area.⁶ Recorded in 1998, it is about 40 minutes long, whereas the full *tafsīr* is of about 90 hours' duration. It was chosen within a much larger corpus (also comprising recordings from several other Bamana-speaking scholars) because, though representative in content and linguistic features, it is of exceptional stylistic merit – as immediately noted by all native speakers who listened to the recording, and will be detailed in the course of subsequent analysis. As has been sometimes noted, West-African scholars have great mastery of their native languages,⁷ and this is a case in point.

The appended discourse, which was recorded in the presence of the commentator's advanced students, as well as several friends, neighbours and family members, has the characteristics of *tafsīr* as enunciated in teaching. Thus, unlike the case with ceremonial exegesis in Ramaḍān, verses are not necessarily read or recited in full prior to parsing for commentary and translation. Furthermore, points that have been explained earlier are not repeated, which is why this commentary does not include a discussion of the *basmala*. The appended commentary differs from a *tafsīr*, as it might be enunciated in advanced teaching, only in that lessons (which are usually designed for a single student, though others often listen in) generally present only as much text as that student can assimilate in one session (usually lasting ten to thirty minutes), then revise within a few days; therefore, each lesson usually covers only a few Qur'anic verses. In this instance, the scholar preferred to record 90 minutes (the length of my cassettes) over the course of a morning, these sessions being nevertheless punctuated by breakfast and lunch (which the master shared with his students), and frequent visits from more friends, persons seeking advice, and clients for esoteric work. As is customary, both students and casual visitors asked questions concerning any points that interested them, during and towards the end of each session.

As is so often the case in contemporary Mali, this *tafsīr* is heavily dependent on the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, composed in Cairo by Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Maḥallī (d. 864/1459) and his pupil Jalāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), and its *Ḥāshiya* ('meta-commentary') by Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī (d. 1240/1825), an Egyptian who settled in Medina. Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī's adherence to the Mālikī school of law and membership in the Khalwatiyya order are among the factors that have contributed to the popularity of his meta-commentary in West Africa (where it may have been

introduced by returning pilgrims). Contemporary Malian exegesis also draws (directly or indirectly) on the *tafsīr* attributed to the Prophet's companion and cousin ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿAbbās (d. c. 68/687–8) and other *ḥadīth* collections, though this is not evidenced in this particular commentary; and, in a manner that may vary from one scholar to another, on other exegetical works.⁸

Accordingly, the Somono scholar's commentary treats each of the following: the historical circumstances of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*); general historical background concerning Arabia and the ancient, especially Mediterranean, world; lexical and grammatical analysis and moral, legal, and theological implications. However, unlike the case with some other exegetical traditions,⁹ grammar is not emphasised by Malian scholars. This may be related to the fact that in the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, *naḥw* ('syntax') was apparently taught in a few localities only; it is still a rare subject in some places today.¹⁰

Muhammad Abdel Haleem has argued that Qur'anic descriptions of Paradise should be understood primarily in symbolic, spiritual terms.¹¹ On the other hand, the French government researcher Paul Marty, writing in the 1920s, assumed that the descriptions of the hereafter that he collected from Manding- and Soninke-speaking scholars were to be interpreted exclusively in literal terms.¹² It is the present writer's feeling that for most Malian scholars (of differing language backgrounds), as well as for their audiences, images of Paradise and Hell are to be understood on both the literal and symbolic levels.¹³

In this writer's view, one of the most significant points raised in the appended discourse, for the purpose of understanding Islam in contemporary Mali, is the commentary on Q. 56:28, '*min ye kumuya kè, o de bè se ka timiya kè*' ('He who has created sourness can also create sweetness').¹⁴ This is characteristic of a widespread emphasis on God's beneficence, also evident in a declaration made by the Somono scholar in the course of a conversation in which he defended the value of esoteric work: '*nyuman bè Ala bolo, a bè se k'a di*' ('God is sovereign of all that is good (desirable), He can give of it'). No one, he implies, can constrain God, who, however, constantly favours His creatures and particularly those who seek His help.

Still a young man at the time this commentary was collected, this scholar has gone on to read other exegetical works, including the *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209). Great knowledge and literary talent have led him to become one of the most highly regarded exegetes of the Segou area, and in the past few years, he has organised public Ramaḍān *tafsīr* sessions. It is hoped that it will in future be possible to collect some of these commentaries, which presumably take into account interpretations drawn from his further readings.

General Principles: Parsing, Interlinguistic Interferences (Including Pronunciation) and Conjugation

This method of translation and commentary, dubbed 'translational reading' by Paul Eguchi, is based on the oral delivery of alternating sequences in two languages: Arabic, the language of the written texts, and a local, spoken, one.¹⁵

The commentary in question clearly derives primarily from the *Tafsīr* of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī and its meta-commentary, the *Hāshiya* of Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī. The Malian scholar's oral commentary encompasses nearly all the content of the *Jalālayn*, and selected passages of the *Hāshiya*. In numerous instances, he translates phrases from the former.¹⁶ In several instances, he also presents, contracts or expands material from the *Hāshiya*. This includes the passages about the birds of Paradise (Q. 56:21, on which he expands), its wondrous trees and fruits (Q. 56:26), the wanderers in the wilderness (Q. 56:73), the pearl-like women of Paradise and their wonderful pavilions (Q. 56:23, which he contracts). Whereas the Qur'anic text and its heading are reproduced (read out aloud) in this discourse, the commentaries are not.

Translation is based on the rendering of meaningful segments in the Arabic language by segments of equivalent meaning in the target language. The product of a series of segments in the target language is usually a well-formed sentence.

The Arabic segment may be as short as a single script unit (which may, however, include one or more morphemes and particles as well as a lexeme, or bear complex meaning through inflection), but segments of two or more script units are common as well. In the appended commentary, 159 single script units, 92 two-script units, and 24 three-script units provide the basis for the Bamana translation.¹⁷ This means that though most units are single script units, the majority of words are analysed in the context of segments comprising two or more script units. Analysis of the commentary of another sura collected from this scholar also shows a predominance of one- to three-unit segments, and also a few four-unit segments.¹⁸ The corresponding Bamana sequences may be meaningful syntactic units or clauses, or full sentences. In only seven instances is an Arabic segment rendered by what may be represented as a single script unit in Bamana.¹⁹

It is often said that West-African scholars engage in word-for-word translation, from Arabic into their language.²⁰ This is misleading. Not only, as just noted, are most Arabic words translated in the context of segments that include two or more script units, but, given the writing conventions of Arabic, a single script unit may associate what could, from a linguistic point of view, be regarded as several words. Furthermore, given the complex morphology of Arabic, a single 'word' of this language often needs to be translated by a several-word sequence in Bamana, English, and many other languages.

In five instances, the scholar quotes the Qurʾanic verse in full before attempting his translation (Q. 56:1, Q. 56:22, Q. 56:23, Q. 56:38, Q. 56:94). Two of these Qurʾanic verses, Q. 56:1 and Q. 56:23, consist in three script units; the remaining three consist in two script units. All other verses are parsed prior to translation.

The parsed sequences may correspond to many different syntactic structures and any of the grammatical categories and elements: subject; verbal predicate; non-verbal predicate; subject and predicate; subject, predicate and object; protasis or apodosis of a conditional sentence; object; qualifier; circumstantial or prepositional clause; a preposition, conjunction, personal or demonstrative pronoun, or participle, etc.²¹

There is considerable consistency in parsing practices among scholars and advanced students. This is particularly the case as regards the Qurʾan, as may be inferred from the fact that one scholar can read out the Book for another, pausing appropriately to allow for commentary and translation, even though they have never collaborated before. Advanced students who parse any text in a way their teacher regards as inappropriate are strongly reprimanded. This in turn suggests that parsing involves (apparently implicit) rules that are widely followed, and could be inferred from careful study of a sufficiently large sample. These rules might involve semantics and substantive content as well as grammatical structures, the key factor being ease of translation into the target language.

In translational reading, students and scholars attempt to respect the word order of the Arabic text. However, there are some deviations – with the Qurʾan as well as with non-scriptural texts. The number of deviations from Arabic word order, in the appended text, is probably about average – four for 96 verses.²² In contrast, the commentary on *Sūrat al-Raḥmān* (Q. 55) exemplifies a spectacular number of deviations, since the refrain (Q. 55:13 and later) is always interpreted in an order differing from that of the original text.

On the other hand, scholars may often repeat an Arabic word or phrase, as they draw out different aspects of its meaning and implications. This scholar repeats some segments once, twice, or even three times. These units are sometimes shorter than the initial parsed unit; exceptionally, they may be longer. Scholars may also backtrack in their interpretations, returning to an earlier verse after commenting upon a later one.²³

Translational reading is accompanied, to varying degrees, by explanation. Explanations or amplifications may be directly associated to an initial translation, i.e. integrated into the same phrases or sentences. More commonly, however, they are provided in subsequent ones. In this as in his other commentaries, this scholar's explanations are more developed than most, and about two-thirds of the appended discourse may be characterised as explanation.

In addition to a particularly high incidence of Arabic loanwords (see more in the next section), scholars' discourse may include Arabic citations. The appended commentary includes four phrases and expressions, totalling seven occurrences. These are *bi-qudrati'l-ʿazīz*, to describe the power of the Almighty (cf. Q. 56:55); *wa-tābiʿūn* (repeated twice in a row, 'the successors'), and *tābiʿū al-tābiʿīna* ('the successors of the successors'), as well as the lone word *tābiʿūna*, to describe the generations following that of the Companions of the Prophet (cf. Q. 56:14, Q. 56:40); and the greetings *al-salām ʿalaykum yā ahl al-janna* (repeated twice) and *yā ayyuka al-waliyyu* (Q. 56:26). The formulations concerning the 'successors' are drawn from al-Šāwī's meta-commentary (cf. Q. 56:40); the greetings are inspired by this commentary but not directly drawn from it.

Furthermore, Arabic words and expressions may function as integral elements of the Bamana sentence. In the appended commentary, this includes: Qur'anic or other words that the scholar cites in order to follow them up with a commentary, in a second or third translation; the grammatical terms and alternative readings (drawn from the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*) cited in the commentary on Q. 56:24; ones given as equivalents or illustrations of other Arabic words (cf. Q. 56:29, *mawzu*, ('bananas') – a comparison drawn from the *Jalālayn*); to further explicate a Qur'anic verse (cf. Q. 56:14, *aṣḥābī* ('my [i.e. the Prophet's] companions')); Qur'anic words cited in a less contextually modified form – *ṭalḥu* in the nominative (*marfūʿ*; cited twice) rather than the 'genitive' (*majrūr*) *ṭalḥin* of the Qur'anic text. Exceptionally, common Arabic words may replace their Bamana counterparts: thus, *qāla* ('He/he/it said'), appears in lieu of the recurrent Bamana *a ko* (third person singular, no aspectual reference: he/she/it says/said) in Q. 56:50, Q. 56:52 and Q. 56:95.²⁴ The Arabic interrogative particle *hal* figures in the Bamana commentary on Q. 56:86, probably in relationship to the question-and-answer format privileged by the scholar throughout this commentary (see more below, p. 143). Sometimes, it is unclear whether a certain word is best considered as Arabic, or as an Arabic loanword in Bamana. Thus, in the commentary on Q. 56:72, the trees *al-markh* and *al-ʿafār* are cited in a highly Bamanised pronunciation (*marku* and *afaru*), yet in one instance *al-ʿafār* retains the Arabic definite article, and both terms are followed by the Bamana designations of the most similar local species (*wòlò* and *jangunaani* respectively).²⁵

It is often said that West-African scholars have poor pronunciation.²⁶ This may have been true in the past, but – given access to radio, satellite television, visitors from Arab countries, and the direct or indirect example of persons who have studied in Arab countries – this is rarely (if ever) the case among scholars of repute in Mali today. This scholar's pronunciation is excellent. Even the few consonant sounds that he exceptionally assimilated to the closest Bamana ones, in his commentary on *Sūrat al-Raḥmān*, enunciated six years earlier, are now correctly rendered.²⁷ On the other hand, as is typical of higher-level scholars, his knowledge of Arabic influences his

pronunciation of Arabic loanwords. Thus, the *ʿayn* in the Arabic expression *Allāh taʿālā* ('God Most High') is softened to a *hamza* (*taʿāla*), whereas ordinary speakers simply pronounce a long vowel (*taala* or *taana*, the forms given in the dictionaries). The scholar conserves the uvular *qāf* in the pronunciation of one Arabic loanword, *haqīqa* (cf. Q. 56:62 and below, pp. 138–9). These few peculiarities of pronunciation have been replicated in the transcription.

The scholar's native dialect, Somono, presents some particularities, in vocabulary and pronunciation, as compared to most other varieties of Bamana, including the so-called 'standard' Segu and Bamako pronunciations (themselves rather different from each other). These specificities have been replicated in the transcription.²⁸ In general, perhaps because he lives in an environment in which several dialects are represented and his native Somono is that of a minority only, this scholar's pronunciation of many words is highly unstable. In particular, intervocalic /g/ is often dropped, so that the recurrent words *nyògòn* ('together; similar') and *tugun* ('again', 'no longer') are often pronounced *nyòon* and *tuun*; this trait, too, has been replicated in the transcription. However, I have desisted from representing his pronunciation of the predicative particles, with their widely varying degrees of aperture (ranging from *i* to *è*); these have been noted by the standard *bè* (positive imperfect) and *tè* (negative imperfect).

Bamana, like Arabic, makes a basic distinction between perfect and imperfect aspects, and indicates certain nuances using various particles, or through other elements of the sentence. This aspectual distinction is systematically respected in the appended commentary: a perfect in Arabic is always rendered by a perfect in Bamana, and the imperfect by another imperfect. Conveniently, Bamana, like Arabic, has a negative predicate marker, so *laysa* and its various inflected forms can be rendered by the negative predicate marker *tè*. Counterfactuals, some hypothetical statements, and some references to no-longer-existing situations are conveniently rendered using the Bamana auxiliary marker *tun*. The Arabic active participle (*fāʿil*) is systematically rendered by a verbo-nominal base to which has been adjoined the agentive suffix *-baa* (more rarely pronounced *-baga*).²⁹

When confronted with particularly difficult language, such as pre-Islamic poetry and medieval rhymed prose, Bamana scholars may employ a lexeme-by-lexeme and morpheme-by-morpheme approach, but this is not evidenced here. This kind of element-by-element translation does not necessarily result in a meaningful sequence in the target language, and may be followed by a freer translation that aims to match the meaning, but not necessarily the linguistic structures, of the original text.

In order to effectively translate Arabic words and Islamic concepts into Bamana, scholars have had to devise specialised vocabulary and syntactic patterns. It is to

these that we now turn. Lexical strategies will be discussed first, because syntactic strategies are based essentially on the semantic interpretation of certain Arabic particles.

Specialised Scholarly Lexicon

So far, I have identified the following strategies in Arabic-Bamana religious translation. Some involve the basic, grammatical word-formation resources of the language, whereas others involve the adaptation of terms that exist but are rare in the language, or word borrowing. These strategies are:

the rendering, especially of abstract concepts, by:

- (a) assigning a specialised or additional meaning to a Manding word;
- (b) a term that shares one of its meanings: especially, the rendering of Arabic words that have both abstract and concrete meanings by a Bamana word that shares the concrete meaning;
- (c) a derived noun;
- (d) a compound, or compound and derived, noun (composition and derivation being highly productive in Bamana and other forms of Manding);
- (e) the Manding word whose meaning is deemed to be closest, though not necessarily fully equivalent, to that of the Arabic word, and in some instances, merely evokes it;
- (f) a phrase;
- (g) attributing a specialised meaning to words characteristic of certain Manding languages or dialects only;
- (h) borrowing a term from another African language, and especially from its specialised scholarly vocabulary;
 - particularly common with respect to concrete terms, though also used for abstract ones:
- (i) Arabic loanwords specific to scholarly discourse;
- (j) phonetically adapting an Arabic term;
- (k) or employing a European (French) loanword.

The appended commentary provides illustrations of each of these strategies. Sometimes, several strategies may combine in the coining of a single word or expression. In general, it appears that the rendering of concrete terms presents greater difficulties than that of abstract concepts.

(a) Bamana does not have a verb ‘to be’, even in the sense that Arabic *kāna* may be said to fulfil this function. Consequently, *kāna* and its various inflected forms are systematically rendered in Bamana by the verbo-nominal *kè*, which in ordinary discourse means ‘to do or accomplish’ (for example, Q. 56:6, Q. 56:7). Similarly, Ar. *jaʿala*, when used with reference to God’s creative activity, may also be rendered by *kè* (cf. Q. 56:24, Q. 56:36, Q. 56:65, Q. 56:70, Q. 56:82). The Bamana positive predicative particle *bè* is apparently not perceived, by native speakers, as in any way equivalent to the verb ‘to be’ (though the latter often needs to be inserted when translating into European languages).

(b) The Bamana verbo-nominal *jigin*, whose concrete meaning is ‘to descend’, is used to translate Arabic terms formed from the root *n-z-l* (*anzala*, *nazzala*, *nuzūl*, *tanzīl* ...), which shares this concrete meaning but also refers to the process of revealing the Qurʾan (cf. an example in the introduction to this commentary: ‘*ale aya jiginna Maka*’, ‘Its [the sura’s] verses were revealed in Mecca’). *Jigin* may also be used as an element in a compound word, for example, Q. 56:80, *jiginnifèn*, where *-ni* is a nominalising suffix and *fèn* means ‘element’ or ‘thing’, offered as an equivalent of *tanzīlun* ‘revelation’.

The distinction between revelation of the Qurʾan, expressed through various forms of the root *n-z-l*, and the inspiration or revelation (*wahy*) that resulted in the other sacred books recognised by Islam, is maintained in Bamana, which employs the loanword *wahi* for this purpose.³⁰

The use of the term *gèn*, which in ordinary discourse means ‘to pursue’ or ‘to chase away’, and by extension ‘to herd’, to signify ‘to refute or contradict’ in scholarly discourse (cf. Q. 56:2 and Q. 56:14), can be considered as another example of this strategy. This word, which functions as an element of free discourse and is not directly correlated to an Arabic word here, is systematically used to render the root *n-f-y* (‘to chase away; to refute’), so frequent in the medieval scholastic theology also studied in Mali.

(c) Examples of derived terms include *dabaa* (cf. Q. 56:59) and *dalibaa* (cf. Q. 56:28, Q. 56:50), which are employed as equivalents of Ar. *al-khāliq* (‘the Creator’). These terms are formed by adjoining the agentive suffix *-baa*, and in the second case also the nominalising suffix *-li*, to the very common verbo-nominal *da* (‘to create’).

It could be speculated that *da* is related to, or just one among the many meanings of, a similar-sounding word (or words) that mean(s) ‘to shape’, ‘to begin’, ‘to place’, etc.,³¹ and/or whether the meaning ‘create’ is itself indicative of Muslim influence (or that of another monotheistic religion). But if so, it must be a very ancient influence, because the term is commonly used by practitioners of ‘traditional’ religions. Furthermore, ethnographic data suggests that all African peoples believe in a Creator God.³²

(d) A substantial proportion of Bamana religious vocabulary consists in compound, or compound and derived, nouns. In addition to *jiginnifèn* already mentioned above, one can cite *danfèntigi* (cf. Q. 56:80), which renders *rabbi'l-‘ālamīn* ('Lord of the Worlds', i.e. of all the different orders of creatures). The Bamana word is constituted from *danfèn* and *tigi*, each of which can function as an autonomous term, though *tigi* is most frequently used in compounding. *Danfèn* ('creature'), is itself a compound word, from *da(n)*, a nasalised form of the above-mentioned verb 'to create', and *fèn*, ('thing'); *tigi*, often translated by 'master' or 'possessor', designates the person or object that possesses or controls certain other persons, objects or qualities. *Danfèntigi yòrò* expresses the concept *maqām rabbihi*; *yòrò* and *maqām* mean 'place'.

Tinyètigi ('believer'), and the related *tinyètigiya* (Q. 56:57, Q. 56:87, 'religious faith'), are constituted from *tinyè* ('truth'), *tigi*, and the derivational suffix *-ya*, which usually connotes a degree of abstraction. In ordinary language, *tinyètigi* may simply refer to a person who is telling the truth or is in the right.

However, certainly the most interesting use of compound words to express religious abstractions is not represented in this sura, though it is in Q. 55. *Al-Raḥmān* and *al-raḥīm*, which occur in the *basmala* and have numerous occurrences in the suras as well, are rendered into Bamana by *diyènhinèlabòlentigi* and *laharahinèkèrènkèrènnentigi* respectively. They are constituted from *diyèn*, a very common loanword from Ar. *dunyā* ('this world'); *hinè*, a very common loanword, from Ar. *ḥanna* ('pity, mercy'); *labòlen*, a doubly derived (prefixed and suffixed) form of the Bamana verbo-nominal *bò*, whose most basic meaning is 'to go out' – the derived form, meaning 'sufficient', being also very common;³³ *lahara*, a common loanword from Ar. *al-ākḥira* ('the hereafter'); *kèrènkèrènnen*, a doubled verb meaning 'to reserve or put aside', furthermore suffixed in *-len/-nen*; and *tigi*. These terms thus respectively mean 'the Master of the all-encompassing mercy in this world' and 'the Master of the special mercy in the hereafter'. They refer to the belief that the first encompasses all the creatures of this world, through the very fact of their existence, while the second refers to the bliss reserved, for believers only, in the hereafter. This is a view presented in several of the medieval Arabic commentaries (though not the *Jalālayn*) and goes back to an *ḥadīth* usually attributed to ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, companion and cousin to the Prophet.

Laharadon (6 occurrences) literally means 'day of the hereafter'. Like *laharajòdon* (14 occurrences, but only one occurrence of *laharadon*, in the commentary on Q. 55), it is an equivalent of *yawm al-qiyāma* ('Day of Resurrection'). *Lahara* is a very frequently used loanword from Ar. *al-ākḥira*, while *jò* means 'to stand', and *don* means 'day'. Both these terms are systematically distinguished from *al-yawm al-ākḥir* (the 'Last Day'), rendered by *don laban*, and from *yawm al-dīn* (the 'Last

Judgement'), rendered by *saradon* (cf. Q. 56:56) or much more commonly, by *saralidon* (*laban* means 'last'; *sara* means 'to retribute'; *-li* is the nominalising suffix).

Other significant uses of compound words, in the commentary to this sura, include: *alijinèdenw* ('the inhabitants of Paradise'), formed from *alijinè*, a loanword from *al-janna* ('Paradise'), *den* ('offspring; inhabitant; member', and *-w*, the Bamana plural marker (9 occurrences); *fòlòmògòw* (4 occurrences) and the tripled form *fòlòfòlòfòlòmògòw* (cf. Q. 56:48) to render *al-awwalūna* ('the first (or early) people'), from *fòlò* ('first, early') and *mògò* ('person'; *labanmògòw* (4 occurrences) and *diyènkunuwomògòw* (cf. Q. 56:40) to render *al-akhirīna* ('the people of later times'), from *laban* ('last') and *kunuwo* ('yesterday'); and *sakakunun* (literally 'die to rise', i.e. resurrection), from *sa* ('to die'), *ka*, the infinitival marker, and *kunun* ('wake up', Q. 56:87, 2 occurrences).

(e) Sometimes, an Arabic term is rendered by one that merely approximates to it in meaning. A significant example (represented in the commentary on Q. 55 but not this one), is the use of Bamana *boli* ('fetish' or 'power object'), to render Ar. *ṣanam* ('idol'). Such a translation places emphasis on the functions and powers ascribed to, rather than the form, of these objects.

In this sura, the approximations concern plant names. Thus, the commentator explains the Arabic tree names *al-markh* and *al-ʿafār* (mentioned in both the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* and the *Hāshiya*) by naming what he considers their closest Bamana equivalents, though he knows full well that they are not the same (cf. Q. 56:72).³⁴

(f) An example of the use of a phrase to render an Arabic word or concept is provided by Bamana *nabi nyumanw*, which corresponds to Ar. *nabiyy*, pl. *anbiyāʾ* ('prophet(s)'). Bamana *nabi* is a loanword formed from the singular form of the Arabic, but it is never used alone: it is invariably accompanied by *nyuman*, a Bamana noun (here used as a qualifier) meaning 'good'. This concept is clearly distinguished from that of Messenger (*rasūl*), which it renders by the terms *kira*, *cira* (which, though they may well be borrowed from Soninke, also correspond to a perfective form of the Bamana verbo-nominal *ci* ('to send') or *ciden* (the most usual Bamana term for 'messenger', in a secular as well as a religious context). The ability to render this fundamental doctrinal distinction is further evidence of the technicity and sophistication of the Bamana religious vocabulary.³⁵

The concept of *shirk* ('polytheism' – associating anything with God) can be expressed through a phrase (see the opening remarks in the commentary on Q. 55), but in the commentary on this sura, it is expressed through a compound word, *filankafoya* (cf. Q. 56:46), uniting the elements that can also form a clause (*filan*, 'two', *kafo*, 'to associate'). In ordinary language, *filankafo* and *filankafoya* may respectively mean 'hypocrite' or 'hypocrisy'. But this may be a secondary interpretation of the

more specialised meaning, since the *munāfiqūn* ('hypocrites') of the Qur'an and early Islamic history are, precisely, those who have not clearly renounced polytheism.

(g) The verbo-nominal *sindi* ('to begin') is found in Maninka and some Bamana dialects only; in Bamana, it refers primarily to vegetal growth, whereas in Maninka, in which it may be used in a general sense, it is often pronounced *sinti*. This word, which totals 6 occurrences in the commentary on this sura, including 3 in its nominalised form *sindili*, is here used to translate various forms of the Ar. root *n-sh-ʔ*. It more usually translates various forms of the root *ḥ-d-th*, with reference to the process of creation; the term *ḥadīth* ('creature') is systematically rendered by *sindilifēn*. The technical sophistication of the Bamana religious lexicon is again demonstrated by the systematic distinction drawn between words derived from the root *kh-l-q* – translated using words that include the element *da* – on the one hand, and the roots *n-sh-ʔ* and *ḥ-d-th*, rendered using *sindi*, on the other.

In Bamana, *kanda* ('to guide') is known only to scholars, who use it in religious contexts only, but it is a common word in at least some Maninka dialects, where it is much employed by ordinary speakers in everyday contexts. In the Mandinka of Senegal, *kanda* is a political title ('village leader').³⁶

Kogomaani (Q. 56:78) ('moral recommendations') is a Somono dialect word, widely known among ordinary Somono-speakers and Bamana-speaking Islamic scholars – but not to ordinary Bamana-speakers, even in Segu and its vicinity. It is one of several Somono words that have become technical terms of Islamic discourse.³⁷

Another very rare – perhaps archaic – term is *mura*, here occurring (Q. 56:26) in the greeting *i ni mura*. The scholar explained that *mura* is an old Bamana word, a synonym of *nisòndiya* ('joy').³⁸ The commentary on *Sūrat al-Raḥmān* also showed up an extremely rare word.³⁹

(h) The word *tana*, systematically employed by Bamana-speaking scholars to render Ar. *ghayr* ('other than', 'the complement of') (Q. 56:86, 2 occurrences) is probably borrowed from Songhay – as may be inferred from the fact that in the latter language, it is widely used in ordinary as well as scholarly discourse – and ultimately from Arabic.⁴⁰ Like *kanda* and (with very few exceptions) *sindi*, it is totally unknown to non-scholarly Bamana-speakers.

(i) Arabic loanwords are currently known to comprise about 20 percent of Bamana vocabulary, and include many high-frequency and basic terms. It is just as impossible to speak Bamana without using words of Arabic etymology as it is to express oneself in English without recourse to words of Latin and French etymology. Though many words that may have originated in the scholarly context have entered general use, some are understood only or primarily by those who have engaged in advanced

religious studies. In the commentary on this sura, these include: *kòdòròli*, a nominalised form from Ar. *qadara* ('to have power; to decree'); *yaakubaya*, from Ar. *qawiyy* ('to be strong'); *hadirin*, from Ar. *ḥaḍara* ('to be present'); and *rayhanu*, from Ar. *rayḥān* ('a fragrant plant'; cf. Q. 56:60, Q. 56:73, Q. 56:84, Q. 56:89).

(j) Several of the above terms have undergone significant phonetic and syllabic adaptation, and all have general currency among Bamana-speaking scholars. However, terms that have undergone only limited phonetic adjustment, and may not be widely understood, even among the scholarly, should be considered a separate category. Examples include *bugutu* (as in *bugutunyaamè*, 'Bactrian [i.e. two-humped] camel'), from Ar. *bukht* ('Bactria'), and Bamana *nyaamè* ('camel', perhaps a very old Arabic or Berber loanword); *gudbanu* ('fragrant poles'), from the Ar. pl. *quḍbān* ('(usually wooden) poles' (but golden according to al-Suyūṭī's commentary)); and *abarikaw*, from Ar. *abārīq* (cf. Q. 56:15, Q. 56:21, Q. 56:18). In general, rare or recent Arabic borrowings and transpositions combine very easily with Bamana terms and older, well integrated loanwords to form new words and concepts, as seen, for instance, in the first example.⁴¹

(k) Though the scholar generally eschews French loanwords, he employs a fair number in his commentaries on this and several other suras. The appended commentary includes 20 occurrences, from 11 French roots. These comprise: two conjunctions (*pasike*, from *parce que*, 'because'; *mè*, from *mais*, 'but'); one unit of measurement (*metri*, from *mètre*); several manufactured objects (*veru* and *veri*, from *verre*, here with the meaning of 'drinking glass'; *buteli*, from *bouteille* ('bottle'; *li*, from *lit* 'bed'); a natural object that is often subsequently refined (*jaman*, from *diamant*, 'diamond'); a disapproved bodily and mental condition (*su*, from *saoul*, 'to be drunk'); disapproved social practices and places – *baru* and *bari*, from *bar*, and *bali*, from *bal* ('dancing ball'); *lumyèr*, from *lumière* ('light'). Again, these loanwords combine easily with other elements of the language: taking the plural marker (*liw*, *buteliw*), forming compound words (*dòlòbuteli*, 'liquor bottle'), or derived terms (*lumyèrba*, great light).⁴²

Though they constitute a minute percentage of the over 7,000 words of the appended discourse, these French loanwords are stylistically and conceptually significant. The scholar states that in general, he will employ a French loanword only when he deems that it conveys the meaning of an Arabic word more accurately than any Bamana word or familiar Arabic loan. However, in this commentary, he also uses French loanwords which have Bamana synonyms, including two actually cited in the discourse: *donkèso* ('place (lit., house) of dancing'), and *yeelen* ('light'). It may be inferred, therefore, that the scholar is also seeking a stylistic effect. In one instance, he perhaps wishes to evoke certain licentious practices in the partygoers' own words. In the other, he may wish to build up, in association with other terms including expressive adverbs,

an image of the luminous beauty of Paradise. Indeed, the symbolism of light, shade and fire is very highly developed in this commentary.

Special mention should be made of several elements that have an important role in the formation of words used primarily or exclusively in scholarly discourse and/or have specific meanings in scholarly usage: *dunge*, *-kange*, *-mandi*, *fēnsiya*, and *-mansa*. The specifically scholarly locution [...] *la so* [...] should also be considered in this context.

Dunge is a loanword, from the Ar. attribute-denoting word *dhū*, as may be inferred from the fact that it is almost systematically used to render this term and its various inflected forms. That it is shared with Soninke and Songhay suggests that it has long been an element of the scholarly vocabulary, while the medial consonant sequence suggests that it may have come in to the other languages through Soninke. Perceived as primarily a Muslim term, it may be used in ordinary discourse (including non-religious contexts) to signify 'the associate(s) of'.⁴³ In scholarly discourse, it may also signify 'to be, or to have a certain quality, for a long time' (e.g. Q. 55:11, Q. 56:12, Q. 56:48). It is employed 9 times in the commentary on this sura, to translate the Qur'anic formulations *aṣḥābu'l-maymana* (Q. 56:8), *aṣḥābu'l-mash'ama* (Q. 56:9), and *aṣḥābu'l-yamīn* (Q. 56:27, Q. 56:38, Q. 56:91). In addition, the locution *hakilima dungew* ('to be intelligent'), appears once (Q. 56:76), *hakili* being a common loanword from Ar. *ʿaql* ('mind, intelligence'), and *-ma* a Bamana suffix, connoting possession of a certain quality or characteristic, used to form nouns that function as qualifiers. The more ordinary Bamana ways of expressing this concept are *hakilitigi* (one occurrence, Q. 56:73) and *hakilima* (following rather than preceding the element being qualified). The implicit model for *hakilima dunge* is Ar. *dhū ʿaql*, recurrent in legal and theological texts. (The Arabic term is not actually quoted in this sura, again showing that once coined, Bamana scholarly vocabulary may be used, by those who master it, in any appropriate context).

Kange, perhaps related to (or borrowed from) the Soninke term meaning 'pure gold' (and perhaps also 'purity' in general), is used to form a series of theological terms, including *galekange*, corresponding to Ar. *al-qadīm* ('the ancient'), i.e. the eternally pre-existing (of God, as opposed to the creatures)⁴⁴ and *hakilikange*, corresponding to Ar. *ʿaqlī* ('rational') (often cited in exposés of scholastic theology).

Mandi is also used to form a series of terms, including *kosamandiya* (appended commentary, Q. 56:14), meaning 'to prefer', and *kelenmandiya* (Q. 55:27), corresponding to Ar. *waḥdāniyya*, referring to the unity of God. *Kosa* is an infrequently used verbo-nominal meaning 'to be competent in or accustomed to'; *kelen* means 'one'. *Mandi* (here used as an element in compound words) probably stems from the verbo-nominal (same pronunciation) meaning 'to like, to cherish'; it is also employed to form several words used in ordinary discourse, for example,

jolimandi and *jolimandiya* (the quality of being a likeable, sympathetic person). It is probably also related to the suffix *-landi*, widely employed in ordinary discourse to designate propensity (e.g. *mògòlandi*, a kind, sociable person).

Fènsiya is formed from *fèn* ('thing'), *si* ('variety, sort'), and the suffix *-ya*. Although its constituents are thus all of Manding etymology, it is used primarily by scholars to signify the possession, to the utmost degree, of a given quality. The appended discourse provides two examples: *kòròkèfènsiya* ('extreme old age', Q. 56:36) and *daamukèfènsiya* ('great pleasure', Q. 56:73); *kòrò* means 'to age or be old', while *daamu* means 'pleasure' (possibly a loan from the Ar. root *d-w-m*, 'to be of long duration').

In ordinary (nowadays, primarily rural) discourse, *mansa* ('king', or more accurately, 'sacred king'), can function as the second element of a compound word, thus connoting possession, to the highest degree, of the preceding element for example, *yirimansa* ('great tree'; *yiri*, also pronounced *jiri*, signifies 'tree').⁴⁵ It is also widely used in scholarly discourse, especially for the formation of the Most Beautiful Names of God (*asmāʾ Allāh al-ḥusnā*) and with reference to some of His attributes. Q. 55:1 provides two examples: *hinèmansa* and *hinèrahmanmansa*, offered as translations of *al-raḥmān*.

Thus, the Bamana scholarly lexicon includes four elements, *-kange*, *-mandi*, *-fènsiya* and *-mansa*, that connote 'possession of a quality or characteristic to the highest degree' and are used to form superlatives and, by implication, absolutes; the first is specific to the scholarly register. In some of its usages, a fifth element, *dunge*, carries the closely related meaning 'to possess a certain quality durably', and by implication, absolutely.

[...] *la so* [...] is a distinctively scholarly locution, uniting the superlative marker *la* and the term *so*, which is known only to scholars and means 'the most excellent in its category'. Thus, the phrase *aw la so kosamandi aṣḥābī* (in the commentary on Q. 56:14) means: 'you should give greatest preference to my companions', *aṣḥābī* ('my companions') being enunciated in Arabic.⁴⁶

It is worth noting that the fact that the Bamana, and the Manding more generally, have long been organised as state societies, and been in contact with other states, has facilitated the translation process. Ar. *malik* is systematically rendered by *mansa* (5 occurrences: Q. 56:55, Q. 56:70, Q. 56:74), whereas *rabb* is rendered by a compound including the element *tigi* (2 occurrences, Q. 56:80) or, less commonly (though not in this text), by *Ma* (which, in the political as well as the theological realm, signifies 'Lord'; 5 occurrences, Q. 56:74, Q. 56:96).

Curious though it may appear from the vantage point of Western languages and cultures, Bamana *fèn* ('thing') is often used as an element in the formation of

compounds designating abstract concepts. The appended discourse offers several examples concerning the divine, more generally religious, and natural spheres.⁴⁷ In other instances, *fèn* may serve to stress the achievement of a certain state or action and provide an equivalent for the adverbial accusative,⁴⁸ or simply provide a nominal base for the formation of a qualifier.⁴⁹ It should be recalled, in this context, that the term *fèn* is also used to refer to the four elements of ancient philosophy (earth, air, water and fire).⁵⁰

The connotations of one (and probably only one) Qur'anic term may have been significantly adjusted in the translation process. The Ar. term *ḥūrun* ('hourī') is phonetically close to *hurr* ('noble', 'free'), which is the source of the commonly employed Bamana word *hòròn*, designating noble personal qualities and/or membership in the most prestigious of the traditional social categories – that of the 'nobles' or 'free-born'.⁵¹ *Ḥūrun* is rendered by this same word, *hòròn*. Bamana translations, then, stress the moral qualities as much as the beauty of the maidens of Paradise.

We may conclude this section by noting the richness of the Bamana vocabulary for speaking about God. The appended commentary includes: *Ala*; *Ala ta'ala* ('God Most High', from Ar. *Allāh ta'ālā*; Q. 56:21, 3 occurrences; Q. 56:91); *dalibaa Ala* ('God the Creator'; Q. 56:28, Q. 56:50); *mansa* ('King'; Q. 56:55, 2 occurrences; Q. 56:70, 2 occurrences); *mansa belebele* ('the Great King'; Q. 56:74); *sebaa* ('the Almighty'; Q. 56:57); *dabaa* ('Creator'; Q. 56:59); *Ma* ('Lord'; 5 occurrences). The commentary on Q. 55 offers, in addition: *diyènhinèlabòlentigi* and *laharahinèkèrèkèrènentigi* (in the introduction to the commentary); the phonetically adapted forms *Allahu* (introduction and Q. 55:6, Q. 56:7) and *rahmani* (introduction); *hinèmansa* and *hinèrahmanmansa* (Q. 55:1; see the discussion above); *bonyètigi*, corresponding to Ar. *dhū'l-jalāl* ('Lord of Majesty' or 'Majestic'; Q. 55:27, Q. 56:78; *bonyè* is an alteration of *bonya* – itself a derived form of *bon*, 'big' – 'honour', 'greatness'); *fonisireyatigi*, corresponding to Ar. *dhū'l-ikrām* ('the Munificent'; Q. 55:27, *fonisire*, 'generous'); *kèbaa* ('Doer'; Q. 55:35); *dalima(n)sa* ('the Creator'; Q. 55:72), corresponding to *al-khāliq*. But this is just a small fraction of the vocabulary that would be revealed by a larger selection of Qur'anic commentaries and other scholarly discourses, for Bamana scholars have specific terms for designating each of the attributes (*ṣifāt*) recognised by Ash'arī theology as well as the ninety-nine Most Beautiful Names of God.

Syntactic Strategies

There is a near-systematic equivalence between certain Arabic particles (*ḥurūf*) and certain Bamana locutions specific to, or primarily characteristic of, scholarly discourse. These include Arabic particles used as intensifiers, conjunctions or

prepositions. The corresponding Bamana locutions emphasise the meanings conveyed by the Arabic particles. Most involve a verbo-nominal with a pertinent semantic field, and a pronoun and/or postposition. They greatly facilitate the translation process by introducing conventional equivalents for terms and structures that find no ready equivalents in ordinary Bamana discourse. In particular, they help scholars respect the word order of Arabic sentences in the translation process, given that Arabic uses prepositions whereas Bamana, like many other sub-Saharan languages, privileges postpositions.

The following are some examples of the most significant or frequently recurring Arabic particles and their Bamana conventional equivalents.

The intensifying particle *inna* is almost always rendered by *i k'a dòn*, literally 'you should know' (Bamana *i*, second person singular personal pronoun; *ka*, marker of the polite imperative; *a*, here used as a cataphoric pronoun; *dòn*, verbo-nominal 'to know'). (Totalling 6 occurrences, see more below.)

The intensifying particle *la-* (which in this sura appears as a correlate of *inna*) is rendered by *n kalina*, ('I swore' or 'I have sworn') (*n*, first person singular personal pronoun; verbo-nominal *kali*, 'to swear'; *-na*, suffixed perfective marker). (2 occurrences: Q. 56:76, Q. 56:77). In Q. 56:95, however, the translation of *la-* is fused with that of other elements of the clause: *la-huwa ḥaqqu*, Bamana *nin ye tinyè de ye* ('This is truth').

The conjunction *bal*, indicating an opposition (often translated into English by 'rather' or 'however'), is rendered by the locution *o/nin kuma dabila* (lit. 'drop that subject'), announcing a change of topic. (*o* is an anaphoric pronoun, while its alternate *nin* is a demonstrative; the verbo-nominal *kuma* is here used as a substantive meaning 'word' or 'discourse'; the verbo-nominal *dabila* means to 'drop' or 'abandon'.) (1 occurrence, Q. 56:67, *o kuma dabila*).

Laqad (the intensifying particle *la-* + the particle *qad* employed to convey certain nuances in conjugation) is rendered by *haqiqa nyè ma* (Bamana *haqiqa*, 'truth', *nyè ma*, a postpositional locution, 'before', itself formed from *nyè*, a highly polyvalent word, and the postposition *ma*). The Bamana locution thus expresses the notion of certain truth, especially about something past (1 occurrence, Q. 56:62). It may be noted that the pronunciation of the Arabic word (in particular, of the consonant *qāf*) has been largely preserved in the Bamana loanword *haqiqa*, whose use is restricted to scholars.⁵²

The Arabic preposition *li-/la-*, generally translated into English by 'to' or 'of', is almost always rendered in Bamana by the locution *ka na a ye*, literally 'to come to it/him/her' (Bamana *ka*, infinitival marker; verbo-nominal *na*, 'to come'; *a*, third person singular personal pronoun; and the postposition *ye*). Though completely

incomprehensible to non-scholars, this is a particularly frequent construction in scholarly discourse; there are five occurrences in the appended commentary. It is significant that one is in the free commentary (Q. 56:37; see more below), further confirming that there is no break (or at least no sharp break) between the language Bamana scholars use when translating from Arabic, and in other scholarly discourse.

The varied meanings of the Arabic preposition *min* are reflected in its Bamana translations. In the contexts of this sura, *min* may mean 'from among' (a group of people) or made 'from' (something). In the appended commentary, it is rendered five times by *ka bò [X] na/ra/la* (Q. 56:40, Q. 56:43, Q. 56:54, Q. 56:69, Q. 56:91) and once by *ka bò [X] ye* (Q. 56:80), *ka* being the marker introducing a verb used as an infinitive, *bò* being a highly polyvalent verbo-nominal whose most frequent and concrete meaning is 'to go out'; *la/ra/na* being the phonetically contextualised forms of one postposition, while *ye* is a second postposition. In one instance, *min* is translated by *kabini ... na* (Q. 56:53); in four instances by *kamii ... na* (one occurrence in the commentary on Q. 56:20, three in the one on Q. 56:21); and in three further instances, by *kabii ... /na/ra/la* (Q. 56:90, Q. 56:92, Q. 56:93). *Kabini* can function as a conjunction or preposition, and generally means 'since' (with reference to time). The dictionaries analyse *kabii* as an expressive form, and *kabini* as an emphatic form, of *kabi* (same basic meaning). *Kamii* is a frequent Somono pronunciation and could thus be considered as a dialectal form of this word. However, many scholars and advanced students state that *kabii* and *kamii* are just variants of *ka bò*. Is there some ultimate etymological relationship among all these words, are *kamii* and *kabii* just phonetic alterations of *ka bò* (rather than *kabi*), or is it merely being claimed that, in the scholarly context, all these expressions should be considered as strictly equivalent in meaning?

The Arabic preposition *qabla* is generally rendered in scholarly discourse by the locution *ka kòn [X] ye*, which is readily understood, but rarely if ever used, by ordinary speakers. This locution is formed from the infinitival marker *ka*, the verbo-nominal *kòn* ('to arrive before' (someone or something)), and the postposition *ye* (one occurrence, Q. 56:45).

The Arabic preposition *‘an*, often with the sense of 'from', may be translated by the locution *ka bò [X] ma*, *ma* being a postposition (1 occurrence, Q. 56:19).

More simply, the Arabic preposition *‘alā*, most usually translated 'on', is systematically rendered by the Bamana postposition *kan* – a very common word in ordinary discourse. However, in scholarly discourse, it is sometimes used in constructions that would not appear natural in ordinary discourse. For example: Q. 56:46, *jurumu kan*, intended meaning: 'in sin', *jurumu*, from Ar. *jurm* ('crime', 'fault'), being a common loanword meaning 'sin'; Q. 56:54, *Zakumu kan*, intended meaning 'from Zakumu' (i.e. the infernal tree called *Zaqqūm*). More natural

expression, in ordinary language, would require a completely different turn of phrase, and/or a different postposition.

The Arabic preposition *bi-*, often translatable by ‘with’, may be rendered idiomatically in Bamana by the locution *ni ... ye*. The appended commentary provides numerous examples, e.g. in the contexts of Q. 56:18 (2 occurrences) and Q. 56:24 (1 occurrence).

Arabic *illā* (‘except’) is rendered idiomatically in Bamana by *fò* (3 occurrences, Q. 56:26, Q. 56:79).

The pronouns and other elements that may be attached to some of the Arabic particles are most usually expressed in Bamana through additional words, or by replacement of the polyfunctional personal pronoun *a* by another, more specific pronoun or a noun.

Thus, one may note:

v. 45 *innahum kānū*, Bamana *i k’a dòn, olu kèra*, lit. ‘know that they became’.

v. 49 *inna*, Bamana *i k’a dòn*.

v. 76 *innahu*, Bamana *i k’a dòn a min ye*; Ar. *-hu* being the attached third person masculine singular pronoun and Bamana *min* being here the relative pronoun, the Bamana being translatable as ‘know that it is’.

v. 77 *idem*.

v. 95 *inna hādhā*, Bamana *i k’a dòn nin min ye*. *Hādhā* and *nin* are demonstratives, and the Bamana locution may be translated as ‘know that this’.

However, in one instance the scholar deemed it sufficient to just translate the attached pronoun: Q. 56:51 *innakum*, Bamana *aw, -kum* being the Ar. second person plural attached pronoun and *aw* the Bamana second person plural personal pronoun.

One may also note, among other interesting constructions:

v. 24 *la-hum*, Bamana *ka n’u ye*.

v. 38 *li-aṣḥābi’l-yamīni*, Bamana *ka na kiniyanfandungew ye* (‘for the companions of the right’).

v. 73 *li’l-muqwīna*, Bamana *ka na yaakubayabaaw ye* (‘for the strong’).⁵³

v. 91 *fa-salāmun laka*, Bamana *kisi bè ka n’i ye*. Ar. *salām*, usually ‘peace’ or ‘safety’, is here interpreted as Bamana *kisi* (‘salvation’), while Ar. *ka* and Bamana *i* are second person singular pronouns. The Bamana phrase may be translated as ‘You will be saved’.

It is significant that in one instance, the Bamana prepositional locution is used without reference to an Arabic model, in relatively free discourse: Q. 56:37, *ka na jònnu ye?* ('for whom?'). This provides further confirmation for the view that there is no break between the linguistic register of the translation and that of the supplemental commentary (or indeed, scholarly discussion in general).

The Arabic relative pronoun *alladhī*, and its various inflected forms, are quite naturally translated by the Bamana relative pronoun *min* (cf. Q. 56:68, Q. 56:71).

Arabic *mā*, when used as a relative pronoun, is translated by the Bamana word *fèn* ('thing'), usually followed by a postposition, thus establishing a correspondence between the semantic connotations of the Arabic and Bamana terms.⁵⁴ However, when Ar. *mā* is employed as an interrogative pronoun, it is usually rendered simply by one of the Bamana interrogative pronouns.⁵⁵

It is evident that given the significant incidence of specialised vocabulary and syntactic structures in this commentary, ordinary listeners do not comprehend it completely. They may fail to understand certain passages, or – perhaps more frequently – misunderstand them. Nevertheless, they feel that they have grasped its central messages and appreciate it as an oratorical feat.⁵⁶

Reflexivity, Orality and Rhetoric

This scholar's discourses are definitely self-conscious and reflexive, and include sophisticated semantic analysis. He specifically discusses the problems posed by the interpretation of both Arabic and Bamana words and also the difficulties of rendering the former into the latter. For example, with respect to Q. 56:26, after a first explanation that emphasises – in line with Arabic commentaries – that the denizens of Paradise deserve their bliss, he elaborates on this in what he explicitly recognises as idiomatic Bamana expressions: *o kòrò bamanankan na, ni a diyara anw yèru da, a' ni tulu, a' ni mura, a' ni sasòn* ('As we may, if we like, say in our own Bamana tongue "You (pl.) and oil, you and joy, you and a joyous atmosphere"'). Each of the last three clauses is a salutation, customarily used to greet those attending a festive event; the oil in the first greeting refers to a prized ingredient of better meals. In his commentary on Q. 55:27, the scholar discussed the difference between literal interpretation and *ta'wīl* (allegorical) interpretation. In the course of this commentary, he furthermore identified an Arabic expression, *li-wajhik*, as idiomatic and therefore, not literally translatable into other languages.

The reasoned, dialectical nature of this discourse is stressed through a diversity of conjunctions and locutions marking logical and/or causal relationship. These include: *barisa* (14 occurrences), *kosòn* and *o kosòn* (5 occurrences), *barisabu*, *bari*, *yaasa* and the French loanword *pasike* (1 occurrence each).⁵⁷ There are also: 8 occurrences of

min b'a la ('that is') and 4 occurrences of *ka da a kan* ('that is to say'), expressions primarily encountered in scholarly discourse; and 20 occurrences of *k'a fò* (also meaning 'that is to say'), which is common in ordinary discourse as well. The frequently recurring *o tuma* can be a tic (equivalent to the English 'well'), but is indubitably employed many times in this discourse in a temporal, logical or causal sense, to mean 'then' or 'therefore' (for example, 3 occurrences in the commentary on verse 3). The discourse is also characterised by a very high frequency of conditional sentences (generally introduced by the conjunction *ni* ('if'/'when')). While some of these replicate temporal markers (for example, Q. 56:1, Q. 56:4) or conditionals (Q. 56:88, Q. 56:90, Q. 56:92) in the Qur'anic verses or their Arabic commentaries, others are added by the scholar (for example, in Q. 56:8 and Q. 56:15).

The scholar also uses a full panoply of the terms available in ordinary Bamana discourse to refer to thought processes and intellectual activity: *kofòli* ('explanation'), *miiri* ('to think'), *taasi* ('to meditate'), and *hakili* ('intelligence') (respectively: 1, 2, 2, and 3 occurrences).⁵⁸ He also appeals for intellectual inquiry, as seen in the idiomatic expressions *nyè nyini* ('to study or research profoundly') and *nyèdòn* ('to know well') (both in the commentary on Q. 56:73). Locutions involving *kòrò* ('meaning') are employed fifteen times.

The interrogations and question-and-answer format so characteristic of this and several other suras are replicated and amplified in the scholar's commentary. For example, with respect to Q. 56:8, the single question of the Qur'anic verse ... *mā aṣḥābu'l-maymanati* (*Who are the fortunate people?*) is posed twice (*yala, fèn jumèn ... ye di?* ; *yala, jònni don?*). In addition, the first question cumulates three interrogative markers: *yala*, *jumèn*, and *di*. In the commentary on the following verse, Q. 56:9, the Qur'anic question *mā aṣḥābu'l-mash'amati* (*Who are the companions of the left?*) is only stated once, but with the aid of three interrogative markers (*yala, mun ye ... di*). (Cf. also the treatment of Q. 56:27, Q. 56:41, Q. 56:47, Q. 56:64, Q. 56:69–72, Q. 56:81, Q. 56:83–4.) He also adds questions as a rhetorical tactic, especially in discussions concerning rare or foreign words (cf. Q. 56:17 and Q. 56:18) and natural phenomena (Q. 56:30, Q. 56:33, Q. 56:55, Q. 56:71, Q. 56:73), in evoking psychological attitudes (Q. 56:66, Q. 56:73), introducing a following verse segment (Q. 56:52) or verse (Q. 56:37), and stressing the omniscience and omnipotence of God (Q. 56:61, Q. 56:63, Q. 56:73).

The discourse is highly emphatic, as seen in the diversity and high incidence of focalising and emphatic particles, including: *de* (over 160 occurrences), *dè* (5 occurrences), *kòni* and *dun* (1 occurrence each). *Sa* (possibly an alteration of *sisan*, 'now') functions in this and many other discourses as an emphatic marker (8 such occurrences here), while in a usage highly characteristic of the Segu area, *ban* (probably related to the similarly pronounced verbo-nominal *ban*, 'to finish') also

functions as an emphatic marker (Q. 56:62, Q. 56:73).⁵⁹ The noun *yèrè* (here several times pronounced *yèru*) ('him-/her-/it-/one-/self/ themselves') (36 occurrences) and the emphatic personal pronouns are also used. Divine declarations are most usually rendered using the plural of majesty (*anw*: over 20 occurrences), or exceptionally, in the emphatic singular form, *ne* (3 occurrences, Q. 56:55, Q. 56:61).⁶⁰

A trait often associated with orality, but perhaps more accurately and simply considered a characteristic of the Bamana language (for it is not true of all languages that privilege an oral as distinct from a written tradition) consists in a large number of 'expressive' and onomatopoeic terms. These include the following doubled verbs and their derived forms: *burabura*, *farafara*, *lamaalamaa*, *manamana*, *mugumugu*, *munumunu*, *pikipiki*, *poyipoyi*, *sarasara*, *tòmòtòmò* (8 terms totalling 13 occurrences).⁶¹ Most of these terms are also used, usually with a less intensive meaning, in simple form.⁶² One verb (*kotakotakota*, Q. 56:54) and one noun (*fòlòfòlòfòlò*, Q. 56:48) generally used in simple or doubled form, are tripled. The expressive adverbs employed are *taraki*, evocative of gluttonous eating (Q. 56:21), and *paraki*, evocative of bright light (Q. 56:23). *Gobaki*, which occurs six times in the commentary on Q. 56:55 and may be considered a true onomatopoeic term, evokes (as may be inferred from this commentary but also confirmed from other sources) a thirsty animal drinking. Each of the above words may be used in ordinary discourse and is readily understood by Bamana-speakers, but their high concentration creates an artistic effect and contributes to the vivid, emphatic tone of the appended commentary.

More certainly, the high incidence of exclamations and interjections may be considered a mark of orality. These include: *òo*, *koyi*, *èe*, *wo*, *aa* and *han* (respectively: 15, 13, 8 (including 4 in the dialogue between the saints and the marvellous birds of Paradise), 6, 3, and 2 occurrences), and *dèrè*, *heh* and *jaa* (1 occurrence each).

Dialogue situations – including the question-and-answer format mentioned above but also other forms of direct address to the listeners and imagined conversations – are very important, occurring in the explanation of 65 of the 96 verses of this sura. These include dialogues between God and humans, among humans, among the saintly inhabitants of Paradise (Q. 56:26) and between them and the marvellous birds (Q. 56:21) and women (Q. 56:23) created for their sake.

Muhammad Abdel Haleem has stressed the significance of *iltifāt*, or abrupt shifts in pronoun referents, in the rhetorical structure of the Qur'an.⁶³ The Bamana commentary conserves and develops this feature, leading listeners to feel personally concerned by the beliefs, events and situations described. Through the play of dialogue, images and effective word choice (here drawing on ordinary, shared Bamana vocabulary), the listener is plunged into an imagined experience of the hereafter. Audience members may utter exclamations or gesture while listening to the

explanations, and discuss them amongst themselves and with other persons, immediately after the session and also in the succeeding days. Although the descriptions of Paradise are undoubtedly taken from Arabic commentaries, they are so skilfully rendered and adapted as to be almost tangible to Bamana listeners. Like successful story-tellers in the Bamana milieu, this scholar creates and makes palpable an imagined universe that is at once familiar and exotic: familiar in its social relationships, sentiments, desires and frustrations; exotic in its grandeur, riches, distance in time and/or space – and in this case, promise of ineffable bliss.⁶⁴

Among figures of rhetoric properly speaking, this discourse is rich in polyptotons (*jinās al-ishtiqāq*). Three of these may be compared to the *mafʿūl mutlaq* ('absolute object') of Arabic, in which a verb is followed by a noun, from the same root, in the accusative case, thus expressing manner. In Bamana, the verb is followed by its nominalised form, from the same root, and a postposition, thus also expressing manner. The Bamana formulations are: Q. 56:5, *mugumugu mugumuguli ... la* (lit. 'crushed a crushing'); Q. 56:24, *sara sarali la* ('paid a payment'); Q. 56:35, *sindi sindi la* ('formed a forming').⁶⁵ In the first and third instances, the scholar is replicating a Qurʾanic figure of speech; in the second, one suggested by al-Suyūṭī's commentary. In a fourth instance (Q. 56:4), a construction with *gèlèya* ('difficult, extreme', and by extension 'to possess a certain quality to an extreme degree'), often used to render Ar. *shadīd*, is employed to render the *mafʿūl mutlaq* of the Qurʾanic verse.⁶⁶ A fifth polyptoton occurs in free (untranslated) discourse (towards the end of the commentary on Q. 56:28: *dalibaa Ala ye dali kè*, 'God the Creator has created'). In a sixth and a seventh example: Q. 56:22, *a finya ka fin, a jèya ka jè* (lit.: 'its blackness is black, its whiteness is white'), a typical Bamana construction is used to render the word *shidda* (in this instance, connoting intensity of degree) in al-Šāwī's commentary. But it is a moot point, at least at this stage, whether the Bamana constructions are inspired by Arabic ones or merely convergent, for the same constructions are also used by ordinary speakers, even in non-Muslim, rural areas. Did use of such constructions diffuse from the lettered – who study Arab rhetorical theory as well as poetry and art prose – to the general population, or is this just coincidence?⁶⁷

Repetition can often be used very effectively in oral rhetoric.⁶⁸ This is the case here, especially in the evocation of the fruits of Paradise, Q. 56:28, *a bèe lajèlen diya, diya, diya ... a si tè kelen ye* (lit. 'Each and all are pleasurable ... each is unique'); the word *diya*, repeated three times with a rising intonation, means 'pleasure'.

That God created *kafu ani nunu cè* (cf. the commentary on Q. 56:55) is an elegant translation of an Arabic, Qurʾan-inspired citation, *baynaʾl-kāf waʾl-nūn*, i.e. between the two consonants of the imperative form of the Arabic verb 'to be' (as in the recurrent Qurʾanic phrase *kun fa-yakūn* (God said 'Be' and it came about).

One must mention the set expression, inspired by a beautiful image, in the commentary on Q. 56:21, *fēnw [...] min kibaruya [...] ma toni dusukun na* ('matters of which the heart has received no intimation'), with reference to *toni*, the sound of softly falling, widely scattered drops of rain.

Finally, it must be noted that the relatively rich morphology of this discourse, given its extensive use of prefixes and suffixes – the speaker seems to eschew unmodified, un-enriched roots – as well as its studied alliterations and repetitions, do confer it a certain rhythm, though it would be an exaggeration to speak of *saj*^c ('rhymed prose').

As one listens to this commentary, one achieves an empathetic understanding of how the basic facts of human psychology and physiology, the agricultural cycle, beneficent or menacing natural phenomena, are constituted into a comprehensive knowledge system that testifies to God's existence, omniscience and omnipotence.

In earlier work, I argued that because Islamic instruction was provided in African languages, concepts from Islamic theology, philosophy and mysticism may have come to the attention of, and even been adopted by, non-Muslims. The commentary on this sura seems to provide additional evidence for this point of view. It depicts death (see especially Q. 56:25, Q. 56:30, Q. 56:89) as liberation from suffering and the passageway to unending, infinite bliss. In ways completely atypical of West-African traditional religions as they are generally presented, Sory Camara and Dominique Zahan, writing about some of the initiations of the Mandenka of Senegal and the Bamana of the Segu region of Mali respectively, describe similar beliefs.⁶⁹ Belief in the four elements (*ʿunṣur*) seems to have carried over from Islamic theology, medicine and divination to non-Muslim myth and initiation.⁷⁰

Conclusion

In conclusion, the exegetical process involves the parsing of Arabic sentences into segments usually comprising one to three script units. Meaningful segments of Arabic text – read out orally – alternate with meaningful segments in Bamana; the two languages alternate in the stream of speech. Bamana-speaking scholars have built up a specialised lexicon by assigning additional, technical meanings to existing words; applying the basic word-formation procedures of their language (especially compounding and derivation) to form new terms; and judicious borrowing (from other African languages as well as Arabic). Furthermore, they have created new syntactic structures – especially including prepositional locutions – permitting closer adherence to the word order of the Arabic sentence. Scholarly discourses – such as the commentary presented here – may lay emphasis, through their rhetorical structures, on the rational character of acquiescence in religious truths. At the same

time, rootedness in an oral culture is apparent in the high incidence of interjections and in strategic repetition, while the Bamana linguistic and oral literary heritage manifests itself in the use of expressive verbs and qualifiers, onomatopoeia, quotation of social greetings, and choice of metaphors. There is no break in linguistic register as between translation and freer-ranging explanation.

A Commentary on Q. 56, *Sūrat al-Wāqīʿa*: Bamana Transcription and English Translation

The transcription includes all elements of the scholar's discourse. Qur'anic citations are conserved in the transcription (but not the translation), in order to show the parsing process. Indeed, only those Arabic words that are necessary to the comprehension of Bamana sentences are quoted and/or interpreted in the context of this English translation.

Verse numbers have been added in order to facilitate reading; they were not mentioned in the oral discourse. The heading – read in Arabic, then translated into Bamana – corresponds to that of the print edition, currently common in Mali, of Aḥmad al-Sāwī's *Ḥāshiya ʿalā'l-Jalālayn*.

To allow the reader who may not be familiar with Bamana or Arabic access to the rhetorical structure of the appended discourse, the following graphic conventions have been observed:

Transcription:

Italics: words enunciated in Arabic in the scholar's discourse.

Heavyset italics: Arabic words and phrases, not drawn from the verses of this sura.

Underlining: French loanwords.

Translation:

Arabic quotations are *italicised*;

‘ ’ single quote marks are placed around cited Bamana words (cited prior to definition and analysis, rather than employed as functional parts of a sentence).

In accordance with general practice, square brackets [] are used to indicate information implicit in the original discourse. Consequently:

{ } braces are placed around words and expressions that are here translated from Arabic (because the scholar did not provide a Bamana explanation).

The Bamana transcription is in the orthography official for this language in Mali (simpler version: è and ò correspond to the open vowels ε and ɔ; tone is not marked). Arabic transliteration conforms to the personal pronunciation of the scholar, reading in Warsh.

Transcription

Sūrat al-Wāqī'a.

makkiyatun illā a-fa-bi-hādhā'l-ḥadīth al-āya thullatun min al-awwalīna al-āya, wa-hiya sittu aw sab'u aw tish'u wa-tish'ūna āya.

a ko, *Sūratu'l-Wāqī'a*, nin ye a kofòli ye. ale aya jiginna Maka, fò ni a kèra *a-fa-bi-hādhā'l-ḥadīth*, o b'a kòndò, ani *thullatun min al-awwalīna*, o b'a kòndò, olu ye Madina taw ye. a ko, nin bèe lajèlen, dów ko aya bi kòndòntòn ani aya wòorò wala aya wolonfila wala aya kòndòntòn.

bi'smi'llāhi al-raḥmān al-raḥīm.

1. a ko, *idhā waqa'ati'l-wāqī'atu*, a ko, tuma min na, ni alkiyama, n'a jòra,

2. *laysa kādhibatun*, a ko nkalontigiya tè bilen, *li-waq'atihā*, ka na a jòli ye, o de kòrò, ko a kèra koyi. u y'a gèn, u bè na yen laharakènè kan, kuma caman tè bilen wo!

3. *khāfīdatun*. i bè na yeli kè alkiyama kènè kan, majiginbaga, min majiginna a ka wale jugu kosòn ka taa don aljahanama kòndò. *rāfi'atun*, min b'a la, o tuma, n'o ye kòròtabaa ye, i bè na u ye alkiyama kènè kan, minnu ka wale nyuman, ni olu y'o kè, a diyara Ala ye, a y'u sòn daraja la ka taa olu don alijinè kòndò. ni a fòra *khāfīdatun*, jahanamè, o tuma, ale de bè duguma, pasike jahanama o bè fò dugukolo wolonfila kòrò. alijinè, o de bè san fè, o tuma, o kòròtalen don ka taa o la.

4. *idhā*, tuma min na, *rujjati'l-arḍu*, ni dugukolo lamaalamaana, *rajjan*, a ka lamaalamaa gèlèya la,

5. *wa-bussati'l-jibālu*, kuluw, olu yèrèkèla k'u ti, *bassan*, ka olu ti k'u mugumugu, mugumuguli yèrè la.

6. *fa-kānat*, nin ka kuluw kè *habā'an*, gòngòn ye, o gòngòn ye *munbaththan*, gòngòn min b'a la, n'o ye jènyèlifèn ye.

7. *wa-kuntum*. aw kèra, alkiyama kènè kan, *azwājan*, aw kèra nòniya nòniya, *thalāthatan*, min ye nòniya saba ye.

8. *fa-aṣḥābu'l-maymanati*, alkiyamadon, ni i sera yen, i bè na ye kiniyanfan dungew, jònni don ? minnu ka bataki dira u ma u kiniyanfan fè. ni Ala ko, ko olu ka fèsèfèsè ka nògò. Muhammadu, *mā aṣḥābu'l-maymanati*? yala, fèn jumèn ye maymanati mògòw ye di ? Ala ye taa ka segin k'a kan, o konyè bonyè kosòn, ni u donnen alijinè kòndò.

yala, jònni don ? o kòrò ye, ko alijinèdenw don, minnuw ka bataki dira u ma u kini fè, olu bè taa alijinè kònò.

9. *wa-aṣṣḥābuʿl-mashʿamati*, ani *mā aṣṣḥābuʿl-mashʿamati*, ko numanyanfan dungew, maaw minnu sònna u ka bataki ra u numan fè, Muhammadu, *mā aṣṣḥābuʿl-mashʿamati* ? yala, mun ye numanfèmògòw dungew ye di ? ni i tè oluw dòn, olu de ye maaw ye, maaw minnu dògòyara, k’u malo k’u don jahanama kònò.

10. *waʿl-sābiqūna*. ani kònribaaw ka taa kayira ma, olu de ye jònni ye ? olu ye nabi nyumanw ye. nabi nyumanw, olu de bè bèe lajèlen nyè fè. *al-sābiqūna*. min ye kònribaaw ye, kabini olu bonyè kosòn, kabini hère la ani kibaruya la.

11. *ulāʾika*, nin jamakulu, *al-muqarrabūna*, nununw de ye surunyabaaw ye.

12. *fī jannāti*, u bè alijinè kònò. *al-naʿīmi*, alijinè min nèemanen don.

13. *thullatun*. jamakulu belebele, o bè *min al-awwalīna*. kabini fòlòmògòw tèmènnenw na. diyèn kunuwo, jamakulu belebele, olu bè minè olu la ka olu don alijinè kònò.

14. *qalīlun*. *wa-qalīlun*, ani jamakulu ncininin, *min al-akhirīna*, kabini labanmògòw ra, kabini nabi nyuman ka manton na. òo ! dòw ko, ni a fòra ko *thullatun min al-awwalīna*, ko manton minnu ko don, Ala kira yèrè tilew mògòw, ko olu ko don, barisa, ka da a kan, a fòra ten, kira ko, aw la so kosamandi *aṣṣḥābī*. òo ! o tuma, sisan, a ko *wa-tābīʿūn*. *wa-tābīʿūn*, ani mògòw minnu tugura n ka sahabaw ra, ani mògò minnu tugura olu la. òo ! dòw ko, o tuma, ko o de ko don, o tuma, minnu ko o ko don, o bèe lajèlen ye tiyèn ye. ko, ka da a kan, Ala kira ko, ko ale manton, ko, ni laharadon kèra, ni laharadon kèra, ni alijinèdenw tòmònna k’u fara nyògòn kan, ko ni alijinèdenw tilan saba ye, fila ye ale manton ye, olu bè taa alijinè kònò. fila, o ye ale manton ye. kelen, o ye ka taa diyèn kunuwo fò ka na se Ala kira bòli ma, olu bèe lajèlen b’o la. nin t’o gèn.

15. o tuma, alijinèdenw nununw *ʿalā sururin*, u bè kalakaw kan, *mawḍūnatin*, kalaka min b’a la, n’o gese dalen don, n’o ye *gudbanu* ye, anw bè anw ka liw ye cogo min na. nin li dilako, ni i y’o lajè, a nègè sarasralen bè nyòon na cogo min na, ka nègè sarasara nyòon na cogo min na. o tuma, alijinè fana, li minnu bè, Ala kèlen bè, ka a da k’a sòrò k’a nègè sarasara nyòon na, sanu ani wari, sanu ani jaman, olu de kèlen bè k’a masiri.

16. *muttakiʿīna*. u ye nònkònmbaaw ye, *ʿalayhā*, a kan, *mutaqābilīna*, u ye nyèsinbaaw nyòon ma.

17. *yaṭīfu ʿalayhim wildānun*. denmisennu bè munumunu u kan. o denmisennu *mukhalladūna*, olu ka denmisennu ye duumifèn ye, u tè sa. n’a fòra *mukhalladūna*, k’a

fò u bè duumi alijinë kònò, u bè duumi alijinë kònò. nka *mukhalladūna* kòrò ye mun ye ? u duuminen don u ka denmisenya na, u tè kòrò.

18. *bi-akwābin*. o tuma, u bè munumunu u ni nyògòn cè ni veru ye, veri ye, ni a fòra *akwābin*, veru ye min ye ni ngòri t'a la. *wa-abārīqa*, ani abarikaw, abarikaw ye jumèn ye ? u ye buteliw ye, buteliw minnu kankala ka jan, ni minènanw b'u la. *wa-ka'sin*, ani dòlòminènw, u bè munumunu ka na n'o ye, *min ma'inin*, kamii dòlò, kamii o jinyèw na, min b'a la, n'o bè poyipoyi, a tè tigè fewu.

19. *la yuṣadda'ūna*. o tuma, o kòni, ni u ye dòlò min, u kungolo tè dimi, *anhā*, ka bò a ma, *wa-lā yunzafūna*, dòlò yèrè t'u b'u cogoya la, k'a fò u bè su fana, u tè su.

20. *wa-fākihatin*, ani mугanmafènw, olu bè munumunu u cè fè n'o ye, *mimmā*, kamii fèn na, *yatakhayyarūna*, u yèrè bè min sugandi.

21. *wa-laḥmi ṭayrin*, ani kònòsogo, *mimmā*, kamii fèn na, *yashtahūna*, u bè min nege minè. *wa-laḥmi ṭayrin*, ani kònòsogo, *mimmā*, kamii fèn na, *yashtahūna*, u bè fèn min nege minè. o tuma, u b'u ye alijinë kònò. alijinë kònò, Ala kira ko ten, a ko, kònòw dòw bè, Ala ta'ala fè, alijinë kònò, a ko kònòw nununw kankala ka jan, i n'a fò bugutunyaamè. kònòw nununw ka bon, u ta ye bonyè dan ye. Ala kèlen bè k'o kònòw dila, o kònòw nununw bè alijinë kònò, kònòw nununw caman don, olu bè munumunu alijinë kònò, alijinë ji duman, u bè to k'olu min, alijinë jiridenw nyumanw, u bè to k'olu dun, u balolen don o la, kònò ninw sogo nòniya nòniya, o bèe a kelen o kelen, nòniya caman de b'a la. a fan dò bè, o jèninèn bè, a fan dò bè, o wusulen bè, a fan dò bè, o balabalalen bè, a fan dò bè, o jiran bè, a fan dò bè, o tobilen bè, ayiwa, o tuma, fèn o fèn, dilaliko o dilaliko bèe, ko o ka di, e ye min dòn, fò ka taa a bila fèn bè Ala fè i tè fèn min dòn. barisa, a ko, fènw bè ale fè min kibaruya yèrè ma toni dusukun na, janko dakan fò k'a b'o lakari, nyèw ma a ye yèrè. a ko, nin bèe lajèlen de bè Ala fè yen. òò ! a y'a kanu min ye anw ye ka da min kan, o ye dònin ye a ka fènw na nyòon na, o tè bèrè ye. a y'a kanu ka min di anw ma, a ye nin kè ka aw yèrè dèmè, aw ka balo ni nin ye, barisa, aw tè taa dumuni kò. o tuma, dumuni nin, aw k'a kè ten, aw b'a kè ten, aw b'a kè ten, a ye min jiran anw na, o ye nin ye. a tò, daamu tò, o bè, o bè. a ko, o kònòw nununw, olu bè munumunu alijinë kònò. ni kònòw nununw nana, u bè pan, ka n'u sigi Ala ta'ala ka waliyu kèrè fè. waliyu ye jònni ye ? mògò o mògò donna alijinë kònò, e ye waliyu ye. u b'i pan ka dulon i kèrè fè. èe, anw nana ! anw ye alijinë kònò de minnu bè kofò kè, ne o dò de koyi ! anw ka di de ! òò ! ni wusulen ka di e ye, n filè wusulen don ! ni jirannen ka di e ye, n jirannen don. jirannen filè nin yòrònin na yan. n'a sòrò i t'o fè, ko balabalalen de ka di e ye, o filè yanni nò. n'a sòrò i t'o fè, ko wusulen don, a filè nin ye de ! n'a tobilen yèrè de don, min tobilen bè naji damadama na, a gèrègèrè, o filè nin yòrò nin na yen. fan jumèn de ka di e ye ? aa ! i t'a dòn, anw balolen don de, anw balolen bè alijinë jiridenw dakabanaw de la. anw bè olu de yòròw don, Ala kèlen bè ka olu yòròw jiran anw ma, anw bè ka munumunu olu de nyòon cè, anw bè balo o de la, ni i y'o dun, i bè tòlò, ni i y'o dun, i bè fa, ni i y'o dun, i bè kè ten.

o tuma, anw bè min alijinè kònyè saniyalen, anw bè min o de la. n ko, èe Ala ka walijukè ! fan jumèn de ka di e ye sa ? min ka di e ye, o fò ye sa ! o yòrò bè di e ma. n filè i kòrò nin ye dè, ne de ye e ta ye. n nakun ye e de ye koyi ! òò ! kabini o kèra min kè, o tuma, n'o kèra, a b'a fò ten, fò waliju sigilen, fò a kanu bè don a dusukun na, Ala yèrè bè na kanu bila o walijukè dusukun na. n'o kèra, walijukè b'a fò, wa i terun ka gèrè n na. òò ! ni a y'a sòrò min ka d'a ye, ni a ko wusulen de ka di, ni a ye wusulen dun, a bè diya ye o la, o diya kojugu, o bè na tobilen kanu d'a ra. a bè terun ka gèrè o yèrè la, a bè o yèrè diya kojugu, a bè na jeninen diya don a la, a bè terun ka gèrè o yèrè la, balabalalen diya bè na don a la. ni i ye terun ka gèrè min na dòròn, i b'a sòrò, i b'a fò o de ka di ka tèmèn e bòra min na sisan. a bè kòndòsogo dun, kòndò n'a bonya, k'a ban taraki ! a kolow tonnen don, a bè tila ka kolow jèra ka fara nyògòn kan, kòndò bè pikipiki ka wuli k'i jò ka pan. ko kura tugun, ka tila ka taa daamuta yòrò la tugunni. kòndòw bè ten, u bè ten nin nò, oluw bè ten. Ala kira ko ten. a ko, kòndòw bè. o kòndòw kòni ma wuli fò u bè waso nyògòn na, nin cogoya de la. n bè ten, n bè ten, n sogo de bè ten, n sogo de bè ten, n sogo de bè ten. o de ye u ka waso ye, mun na ? Ala ta'ala ka waliju ka dumuni k'a la. o de la, Ala y'o kofò alkurani kòndò ten, a ko, *wa-laḥmi tayrin*, ani kòndòsogow. *mimmā*, kamii fèn na, *yashthahūna*, minw bè, o tuma, ni u bè fèn min nege minè, min ka di u ye.

22. *wa-ḥūrun*, a ko, *wa-ḥūrun*. ani daamuta, o bè ka n'u ye, alijinè hòrònmusow la, hòrònmusow minnu nyèkisè, a finya ka fin, a jèya ka jè, u nyègolo, u nyèkisè, a ka kunba, u nyèkisè dun tè, u nyèkisè ka kunba. o de, minnu b'a la, n'u nyèkisè ni u ka kunba.

23. ni i y'u ye, *ka-amthāli'l-lu'lu'ī al-maknūni*, ni u bè i n'a fò, luuluw de, luuluw min datugulen bè a fara kòndò. ni a dayèlèla, luulu bè cogo min na, luulu bè manamana de, a nòrò bè maa nyè minè. òò ! ni i y'o bara ta ka n'o sigi, mògò kèlen k'o nyèw wusu o bara la yòrò min na, ka sin k'a fèn minè, ka sin a foroko fara k'a bò o la ten, bèe bè sin k'a ye tenni nò pewu ! o de kosòn, alijinè bè tenni nò. kira ko tenni nò. o tuma, tuma dò bè kè, i b'a sòrò, alijinè kòndò, yeelen, lummyèr dò de bè na bò alijinè kòndò. don dòw aw sigilen, n'a kèra ten, a bè kè mògòw nyè kan ten paraki, a lummyèrba bè bò ten. mògòw b'a fò, nin ye mun ye ? èe, o bè fò alijinèmuso dò ani a cè bè baro la, alijinèhòrònmuso dò, ko, a ni a cè bè baro la, ko kuma de diyara, cè nisòndiyara o yòrò la, k'u yèlèla nyògòn fè. ko alijinèmuso yèlèla, ko a nyinkisèw min bòra de, ko, o yeelen de ye nin ye. o yeelen yèrè, o bèe lajèlen n'a daamu ye, o bèe lajèlen n'a masiri, o bèe lajèlen n'a diya. a yeelen yèrè min bè bò, o bèe lajèlen n'a diya. èe ! a ko, anw ye nin kè.

24. *ja'alnā*, o de *ja'alnā*, *ja'alnā* anw ye kèli kè, *la-hum*, ka n'u ye, anw ye kèli kè u ye, *jazā'an*, sara de la, o ye *maf'ūlu la-hu* ye, wala, a k'a kè, *jazā'an*, a bè se ka kè *maṣḍaru* ye, ni a kèra *maṣḍaru* ye, *fi'lun* min bè, ni o ye *taqḍiru* ye a kan, o ye *jaz'aynāhum*. anw y'u sara *jazā'an*, anw y'u sara sarali la, a bè

kè *maṣdari* ye, *bi-mā*, ni fèn ye, *kānū*, u kèra, *ya^cmalūna*, u bè fèn min bè, n'o b'o wale.

25. *lā yasma^cūna fihā*, alijinèdonbaaw nununw, minnu bè alijinè daamu na, u tè mènni kè alijinè kònò, *laghwan*, tiyènni kuma na, *wa-lā tāthīman*, u yèrè tè mènni kè alijinè kònò, jurumuko la k'a fò, ko dò bè alijinè kònò, ko nin ye jurumuko ye. anw tèmènna o sèbènyòrò kan. k'a fò, ko dò bè fò alijinè kònò, ko min ye kumajugu ye, anw tèmènna o fòyòrò kan. ni i ye fèn o fèn mètò i da, ni i y'o fò alijinè kònò, n'i y'o fò, juguman t'o la. ni i bilalen ko o ko la, k'i k'o kè alijinè kònò, ko o jiginen b'i la, ni i y'o kè, baasi t'o ra. kun tè, mun na a kèra, ayi, o tè. nin ka kan ni kèli ye. alijinèkow bèe ye a ka kan, a ka kan. ni i ye ko o ko ye alijinè kònò, nin ka kan, a ka kan ni nin ye. o de bè alijinè kònò. o de kòrò ye, ko fò alijinè baara bèe lajèlen, ko o ko ni o kèra alijinè kònò.

26. *illā*, fò, *illā qīlan*, fò kumakan. kumakan jumèn ? ni a' b'o mèn, *salāman salāman*, a' bè o de mèn alijinè kònò, *al-salāmu 'alaykum yā ahl al-janna* ! o ye mèlèkèw mankan ye. *al-salāmu 'alaykum yā ahl al-janna* ! barisa mèlèkèw, olu tè don alijinè kònò, olu dulon bè larisi de la. òo ! larisi fana de, olu taalen b'u ka sigi larisi kun na, olu sigilen bè, ka olu ka kè larisi fana masiri, o ye masiriko dan ye, u bèe bè dò fara alijinè diya kan. a' bèe nin kònò, a' nyè bè olu yèrè la, o bèe y'a diya ye. olu bè, a filè dòròn, olu bè salamu bila ka foli bila a' kan. èe ! *yā ayyuka al-waliyu*, a' ni daamu, a' ni a ka kan, a' ni a ka kan, o kòrò bamanankan na, ni a diyara anw yèru da, anw b'a fò, a' ni tulu, a' ni mura, a' ni sasòn. òo ! ani dun ka fa, ani da, a' ka kan n'a ye alijinè kònò, foyi tè fò alijinèdenw ni nyògòn cè nin kò. dumuni duman, hòrònmusow bè nyògòn gèn a kan, a kònòsogow duman, olu bè nyògòn waso la a kan, min ka di i ye dòròn, o kè. min ka di i ye, o kè. min ka di i ye, o fò.

27. a ko, *wa-aṣḥābu'l-yamīni*. *aṣḥābu'l-yamīni*, ani kiniyanfan dungew, ko kiniyanfan dungew. *mā aṣḥābu'l-yamīni*, yala, jònni de ye kiniyanfan dungew ye ? kiniyanfan dungew dama, olu de bè daamu na ten yen, olu filè alijinè kònò.

28. *fī sidrin*, u bè ntòmòsun cè la, *makhḍūdin*, o ntòmò minnu b'a la, n'olu sun nugulen don. barisa, tuma min na, ni a fòra alijinè kònò, ko ntòmòsun bè alijinè kònò, kaafiriw yèlèla. aa ! ko kira ka kuma, ko a ye yèrè sòsò bi dè ! e Muhammadu de ko, ko fèn bè alijinè kònò, ko alijinèdenw bè fèn min nege minè, maa si tè anw na yen min bè sòn k'o bè yèlèn ntòmòsun bala. ni o tè, òni b'i sògò. jaa, o bè na alijinèdenw farafara ye. Ala kira ko u ma, a ko aw ma mèn, aw ma faamu. a ko, yala, Ala de m'a fò, ko ntòmò wa ? u ko, òhòn. o ko, Ala ko ntòmòsun bè alijinè kònò, ko *makhḍūdin*, ntòmò min bè ònibòbali don, ntòmò minw bè alijinè kònò, òni t'a la k'a fò k'o bè maa tòrò. òni bè bò yòrò o yòrò fè, Ala kèlen k'o bèe lajèlen kè jiridenw bòyòrò ye. ntòmòsunw, ntòmò òni falennen don yòrò o yòrò, ni i ye òni min bòlen ye, ni o bòra yen, i b'a sòrò jiridenw nòniya bi wolonfila ani fila, o de poyilen don o yòròw la. jirisun bi wolonfila ani fila, a jiri kelen o kelen, a bèe lajèlen, ni a y'a den bò, a bèe

lajèlèn diya, diya, diya, min b'a la, a si tè kelen ye. i b'a dun ka taa i bè bò diya dò de k'a la, i ye min dun, min ni o tè kelen ye. i b'i da fa, i bè bò diya dò de la, min ni o tè kelen ye. barisa, dalibaa Ala de ye dali kè, min ye kumuya kè, o de bè se ka timiya kè sa ! o de bè se o la.

29. *wa-talhin*, ani **talhu**, **talhu** ko **mauzu**, o bè alijinè kònò, namasaw *manḍūdin*, minnu düşün dalen don nyòon da fè, ka taa dugumana na ka taa a bila fò a san fè.

30. *wa-zillin*, ani suma bè alijinè kònò, *mamdūdin*, suma min b'a la n'a duuminen don. ni tile bòra, ni dugu jèra, suma, a bè min ? anw ka taa sigi suma na, suma bè tilebin fè. ni ula sera, suma bè min ? suma taara kòròn fè, tile b'o suma wuli. alijinè kònò, a b'a la dè, a duuminen a la. a mènna n kan, a bè n bana, o tè alijinè kònò. bana yèrè tè wo !

31. *wa-mā'in*, ani ji, *maskūbin*, ji min b'a la, n'o boli duuminen don. alijinè kòji bè tèmèn dòròn, a ka di e ye cogo min, a kè ten. ji jara, o t'a la.

32. *wa-fākihatin*. ani mугanmafènw, *kathīratin*, minnu ka ca.

33. *lā maqṭū'atin*, olu tè k'u sòròwaati fana bè ban. *lā maqṭū'atin*, o kòrò ten, u sòròwaati tè ban. k'a fò sisan, anw bè waati jumèn na ? anw bè tilema na, nin jiriden de ye tilematuma jiriden, ni tilematuma tèmènna, ni fonènè sera, i ni fonènè ta de kan, nka tilematuma ta, e t'o sòrò bilen, o tè alijinè kònò. san waati bèe a dennen don, a fanw bèe lajèlèn ka kan. *wa-lā mamnū'atin*. a ma kè k'a b'i kumaniyina, barisa, anw ka diyèn jiri, n'a duman ka di e da ye, ni wari t'i bolo, ni dò wèrè min kumaniya a la, ni a sun tè i ta ye, ni wari t'i bolo, i nakara a kò. o tuma, alijinè kònò, o tè. barisa, ka da a kan, wari, o ye e ka baara min kè yan. i y'a san, o y'o bannen ye. ni i donna alijinè kònò, i donna min kònò, o ye i ta ye. fènw bèe b'i bolo yen.

34. *wa-furushin*. ani dèbèn, *marfū'atin*, dèbèn minnu b'a la, nununw kòròtalen don.

35. *innā ansha'nāhunna*, anw ye alijinèmusow sindi, *inshā'an*, anw y'u sindi sindi la.

36. *fa-ja'lnāhunna*, anw y'u kè, *abkāran*, ka olu kè npogotigiw ye, barisa, alijinè **hūrun** 'aynun min kofòra, olu bè, ani kuma min sera nin yòrò nin na, ni anw ka diyènmusow koyi, diyènmusow, minnu bè na taa don alijinè kònò, ko o musokòròba musokòròba, kòròkòròlenw, minnu kòròla fò ka taa se u ka kòròkèfènsiya ma, Ala bè na taa o ni denmisennin ncininw nununw, minnu fana fatura, k'a sòrò olu fana ma se u ka musoya dan na, a bèe lajèlèn si bè taa kè si kundama kelen ye. san bi saba ani fila wala san bi saba ani saba. a bèe lajèlèn si bè taa kè o kundama ye, olu si kèra o ye. a kelen kelen bèe lajèlèn bè taa kè Adama jòkundama hake ye, o bè taa d'a kelen kelen bèe lajèlèn ma. ko Adama jòkundama hakè ye, o kan ka bèn bi wòròrò, o tuma, ko darbu wolonfila, o bè taa bèn kè mèn naani ma, nònkònya kè mèn naani, a bè taa bèn mètri kè mèn fila. Adama jòkundama tun y'o ye ka taa san fè, mètri kè mèn fila, Adama jòkundama tun ye o ye. o tuma, alijinèdenw bèe lajèlèn bèe taa o kundama na. o tuma,

o de o ko ye. n'o kèra sisan, ni i nana gèrè a la, i b'a sòrò a bè npogotigiya ra, tuma o tuma, ni i nana a nò fè, i bè na s'a ma, i b'a sòrò a bè npogotigiya ra. i b'o npogotigiya ta, dimi t'a la, foyi t'a la, a tatò ka di ale la, a tatò ka di e yèrè la. ni i wulila ka bò a san fè, a bè tila ka segin a dankoya kòrò la npogotigiya ra. ni i bènnà ni a ye ko kura, i bè tila ka na o daamu kèlen na tugun.

37. ko fana, alijinèmusow 'uruban, cèkanu musow don. atrāban, filankulu kelen don, o bée lajèlen bè si kundama kelen na. ko, alijinèmusow nununw sindira, nin ka sòrò k'u kè bikiru ye, ka na jònnu ye de ?

38. li-aṣḥābi'l-yamīni. u kèra u ye ka na kiniyanfandungew de ye.

39. thullatun. jamakulu belebele, min al-awwalīna, fòlòmògòw ra.

40. wa-thullatun, ani jamakulu belebele, min al-akhirīna, ka bò labanmògòw ra. kuma dò yen fòlen, min de fòlen sa, anw y'a dòn, k'a fò Ala kira manton ko don. dòw ko o tuma, sisan, diyènkunuwomògòw minnu tèmènna, ko jamakuluba bè kisi olu la, Ala y'o fò. ani labanmògòw fana, o tuma, n'o ye, Ala kira manton ye, ko jamakulu belebele bè kisi olu la. dòw ko, thullatin min al-awwalīna, Ala kira tile sahabaw, maaw minnu kunnadiyara olu la, o jamakulu belebele, o bè taa alijinè kònò. o tuma, nununw bée ye olu ye. laban fana na, minnuw bòra Alakira sahabaw kò fè, *tābi'ūna* kò fè, *tābi'ū al-tābi'īna* kò fè, ko jamakulu belebele wèrè bè olu la fana min bè taa alijinè kònò.

41. wa-aṣḥābu'l-shimāli. aṣḥābu'l-shimāli, mā aṣḥābu'l-shimāli ? yala, mun ye aṣḥābu'l-shimāli ye ? o de kòrò ye, Muhammadu, yala aṣḥābu'l-shimāli, yala, jònni don, Ala ka an kisi u ma. a ko, olu de, ni laharadon sera,

42. fī samūmin, olu bè finyè gònin de la. o finyè gònin, o bè don u kunkolondègèn ni nyògòn cè, wa-ḥamīmin, ani ji gònin, u bè o de cè ra.

43. wa-ḡillin, ani suma, u b'o cè ra, min yaḥmūmin, ka bò suma gònin na, u b'o de ce ra, sisifèn, sisi bè bò, sisi min ka fin, o bè bò ka na u nò fè.

44. lā bāridin, sumaya tè, k'a fò, ko anw ka taa anw sigi jirisuma duman na, o tè so min na o bée, u bè taa o de kònò. wa-lā karīmin. filèliyòrò cènyè nyuman yèrè t'u la yèrè.

45. innahum kānū, i k'a dòn, olu kèra, mutraḡfīn, u yèrèkun nèemabaaw ye, qabla dhālika, ka kòn nin ye, ko olu tugura diyèn de nò fè, olu tun kèra u yèrè nèemana. diyèn sigi kònò, olu tun kèra, ni dununkan bòra kòròn na, ko a dununfòbaa ye jònni ye, ko n y'o dòn. ni a fòra dòlò duman jiginna yen fè, ko dòlòbuteli tun ye da joli ye, ko nin da don, anw y'a san o la, olu tòra u yèrè nege na nin dama da ra. ko, o de y'a to, alijinè hòrònmusow, o de y'u taa k'u dan, barisa u taara u taw nò fè baru kònò, olu ma bò bari daw la, olu ma bò balikònòdaw na, donkèsò kònò. olu ma bò Alakotayòròw

kènèw kan, o tuma, o de kosòn, ko, olu sara kèra nin ye, olu ka daamu minè diyèn na yan.

46. *wa-kānū*. u kèra, *yūṣirrūna*, olu kèra, olu bè duumi, *ʿalā l-ḥinṭhi*, jurumu kan, *ʿl-ʿaẓīm*, min ye jurumu belebele ye, n'o ye filankafōyaw ye.

47. *wa-kānū*, kèra, *yaqūlūna*, u b'a fò, *aydhā mitnā*, yala, tuma min na, ni anw sara, *wa-kunnā*, ni ka anw kè, *turāban*, ka anw kè duguma buguri ye. *wa-iẓāman*, ani kolo kòrò mugumugulenw, anw salen kò k'o ko ye, *innā*, ko yala, anw de, ko anw bè na anw yeru minè ko kura *la-mabʿūthūna*, ko yala, ko anw ye kununfēnw wa ?

48. *a-wa-ābāʿuna*. wala anw faw yèru *al-awwalūna*, min ye fa fòlòfòlòfòlòmògòw ye, anw mokèw ta mokèw, yala, olu minnunw tēmèna, yala, ko olu ye kununbaaw ye wa ? u tun bè kota kè, u ko nin ye nkalon dan ye. ni i sara, a banna. ni i sara, a banna. foyi tè. aa, ni nin ma bila kaafiri dusukun na, a fana tè se ka diyèn diya bò. òo ! ni e ye diyèn diya bò, lahara diya, o na taa k'i dan kè, o bè taa k'i dan yèrè, i tè na o sòrò.

49. Muhammad, a f'u ye, ko, *qul*, a fò, ko, *inna al-awwalīna*, i k'a dòn fòlòmògòw minnu tēmèna, *waʿl-akhirīna*, ani labanmògòw minnu, ni olu bè, minnu ma bò fòlò yèrè, minnu bè na bò.

50. a f'u ye, ko *la-majmūʿuna*. *qāla*, olu bée lajèlen ye kafolifèn ye, *ilā mīqāti yawmin*, ka taa don waati la, *maʿlūmin*, don min bè, n'o ye don dònne ye, ko laharadon. walahi, ni laharadon sera, a kelen tè to o kò, i fa na jir'i la yen, i bè n'i fa ye kènè kan yen, ni e tun t'a dòn. o ta fa, o n'a ye kènè kan yen. o ta fa, o n'a ye kènè kan yen. bée lajèlen fakè kòrò, n'o ye Adama ye, a' n'a ye kènè kan yen. jinèw bée lajèlen fakè, n'o ye Iblisa ye, a n'a ye kènè kan yen. dalibaa Ala, a ma nyinè fèn o fèn dali kò, a tè nyinè o kunini kò koyi.

51. *thumma*, o kò fè, *innakum*, aw, *ayyuhā al-ḍālūna*, ya aw sòsòlibaaw, filibandi nununw, *al-mukadhdhibūna*, minnu ye kiraw sòsòlibaaw ye.

52. *la-ākilūna*. *qāla*, aw ye dumunibaaw ye, dumunikèbaaw ye, *min shajarin*, a' bè na dumuni kè jirisun dò ra, o jirisun ye jumèn ye ? *min zaqqūmin*, o bè bò Zaquumu na.

53. *fa-māliʿuna*, aw ye falibaaw ye, *minhā*, kamii o jirisun na, *al-buṭūna*. *fa-māliʿuna*, o tuma, a ko aw ye falibaaw ye, *al-buṭūna*, kònòbaraw la, *minhā*, o jirisun nin na.

54. *fa-shāribūna*. aw ye minnibaaw ye. *ʿalayhi*, Zakumu kan, min bè ni a' y'o dun. Zakumu ye jiri min ye, n'a dunna, a ka kunan. ni i y'a bila i da kònò, a ka kunan. a duntò, a man di. a ka basi. a ka farin. a kununtò, a bè nèn bòsi. a bè taa kònò fara k'a jigin. diyagoya, i b'a kunun, a tè na to i da kònò. diyagoya, i b'a dun, i tè se ka to dumunikèbaliya la. ni i ye dumuni kè, a minnògò ka jugu, minnògò gèlèn, o ma na o la tuma min, o tuma, o b'i sòrò k'o min, *min al-ḥamīmin*, ka bò ji gònin na. jahanamè tobilen, fò a ji bè buraburalen, ji bè kotakotakota tuma min, o tuma, i kulutò minnògò

gannen, o bè soli k'a di i ma, i b'o min, o ye i minniji ye. ni o tè, ji t'i bolo. o kètò k'o min.

55. Muhammad, *fa-shāribūna*. o tuma, ko minnibaaw don o la *shurba'l-hīmi*, nyaamèw minnògòtòw, o ka minnikò si, o bè dantò a yèrè la ? minnògò bè nyini ka nyaamè min faa, ni i taara o dabila bajì ra, n ko o tè dò wèrè kè, gobaki, gobaki, gobaki. ji gònin bè yen, a bè ka jigi jahanamadenw kònò, gobaki, gobaki, gobaki. o dama tè kò, a bèe ka nugu bòra ka jigin ni a ye, ka nèn fara ka jigin ni a ye, ka kònòbara suurun ka a to duguma, a bè tila ka wuli ka yèlèn, *bi-qudrati'l-‘azīz*, a bè kè ni o de wo. mansa min ko, ne b'a kè kafu ani nunu cè, mansa min ka baara o de bè, kafu ani nunu cè, a bè tila ka segin a nò na.

56. *hādha*, èe ! a ko, nin min ye *nuzuluhum*, nin ye *aşḥābu'l-shimālī* jiginyòrò ye, *yawma'l-dīni*, saradon la kòni. ni laharadon sera, u jiginyòrò filè nin ye.

57. *naḥnu*, anw, *khalaqnākum*, anw ye aw sòrò, k'a sòrò aw tè, *fa-law-lā tuṣaddiqūna*, yala, aw tè tinyètigiya kè ni kunun ye, bari sebaa ye fènw bèe lajèlen sindili kè, fènw min tun tè, o tigilama, o ye se fènw bèe lajèlen segili la o bannen kò koyi.

58. *a-fa-rāytum*, o tuma, aw ye ne kibaru sa, kaafiru, aw ye n kibaru, *mā*, fèn na, *mā tumnūna*, fèn min bè ni aw b'o manyuji kerun, ka taa muso denso la, aw cèw bè manyuji min kerun ka taa musow densow la, yala, aw kòni b'a dòn k'o taara, ji dun fana den t'a la, sogo t'a la, kolo t'a la. nka aw sigilen bè k'o kònò, o bòli kònò. o tuma, o bè na bò tuma min na, ni a bè na bò, aw bè n'a ye, a bè na bò a sentigilama, a bè na bò a bolotigilama, aw bè na jèra a kun na, ko den, k'a ta, aw bè sin don a da.

59. *a-āntum*, yala, aw, *takhlūqūnahu*, yala, aw b'o de manyuji da k'o kè faritigi ye wa ? *am naḥnu al-khāliqūna* ? yala, anw de ye dabaa ye, k'a kè faritigi ye.

60. *naḥnu*, anw, *qaddarnā*, anw de kòdòròli kè, *al-mawta*, saya ra, *baynakum*, aw ni nyògòn cè. anw tè bèe faa don kelen na koyi, saya yèrè tè ko a bè bò kòròyada koyi. saya te ko a bè bò denkada koyi, ko a bè bò fakunda koyi. min ka waati sera, o de bè taa, anw b'o tòmmòn ka taa n'o ye. *wa-mā naḥnu*, anw ma kè, *bi-masbūqīna*, ko anw ye kònnibaa ye, k'a fò, o tuma, ko anw ye dèsebàa ye, anw tè dèse fana.

61. *‘alā an nubaddila*, ni ma anw ka kèli kè, *amthālakum*, aw nyògònna wèrè la ka o kè aw nò na, anw tè dèse o la koyi. k'a fò ko a' bè na anw de dan, ko anw t'a' sòrò, o tè kòyi. ni a ka di ne ye, ne bè aw bèe halaki ka bò yen ka ban pewu. ka fèn wèrè kè aw nò na. *wa-nunshi'akum*, anw ye aw da, *fī mā*, fèn na, *lā ta-‘alamūna*, aw tè fèn min dòn. anw ye aw da, ka bò fèn na, aw tè fèn min dòn. anw y'o kè, aw nyè t'a la wa ? suriyaw bè, gònw bè wo, jèw tè wa ? jònni y'a da ?

62. *wa-laqaḍ*. haqiqa nyè ma, *‘alimtum*, aw ye dònni kè, *al-nash'ata al-ulē*, fòlò sindili la wo, *fa-law-lā tadhdhakkaruna*, ni aw tun y'a sòrò aw tun bè taasi, aw tun ka miiri ban lasli minnu tèmènna kòni.

63. *a-fa-rāytum*, aw ye n kibarū dè, *mā*, fèn na de, *taḥruthūna*, aw bè fèn min na, ni aw b'ò sènè, aw bè dugukolo kan ka a fara k'a yèlèmè, ka sènèsun don a kòrò. yala, aw b'ò min kè wo ?

64. *a-āntum*, yala, aw hadamadenw, *tazra'ūnahu*, yala, aw de b'a falen wa ? aw b'a sènè. yala, aw de b'a falen wa ? *am naḥnu*, walima anw, *'l-zāri'ūna*, walima anw de ye a falenbaa ye ?

65. *law nashā'u*, ni a tun ye anw kanu k'a diyara anw ye, *la-ja'alnāhu*, n kali na, anw b'ò sènèfèn kè, *ḥuṭāman*, anw b'ò kè falenfèn ye, falenfèn min jalen don, fènkisè tè sòrò a la, *fa-ẓaltum*, aw tun na laban, ni aw tun taara ka taa a lajè, a jalen, *fa-ẓaltum*, aw tun na laban, *tafakkahūna*, aw tun na laban, aw bè aw bolo mugaŋ o kan, ka kabakoya. aw tun na laban ka bolo mugaŋ o kan, barisa, ni kojugu kèra hadamaden na, ni a kamanaganna, i b'a kè ten, ko ten. fèn fòlòfòlò, mògò bè sin k'a kè ten, k'a kè ten, ka bolo da i da la ten, k'i bolo mugaŋ, aw tun bè n'ò kè. tuma min na, ni anw ye aw ka sènèfènw nununw bèe lajèlen k'a tiyen, k'a kè fèn jalen ye, min bè, ni kisè ma sòrò a la.

66. aw tun bè na mun fò ? aw tun bè na fò *innā*, anw *la-mughramūna*, an kalina, anw kòni kèra jurusarabaaw de ye sa. o de ye, ko juru karila anw kan na. anw ye nin nafolo min bò ka sènè kè, anw ye nin nafolo nin don anw ka sènè da fè. mè san tèmènna, foyi ma sòrò. aw tun y'a to ka nimisa mun y'a to aw ye sènè yèrè kè ?

67. *bal*, o kuma dabila, *naḥnu*, anw tun b'a fò ten, *maḥrūmūna*, anw kumaniyana an ka sènè de la, hère ma sòrò a la fewu. nyinan sènè kè, o kèra bònè ye, u b'a fò ten.

68. *a-fa-rāytum*, aw ye n kibarū de, *al-mā'a*, ji, *alladhī*, ji min, *tashrabūna*, ni aw b'ò ji min,

69. *a-āntum*, yala aw, *anzaltumūhu*, yala, aw de o ji jigin wa ? *min al-muzni*, ka bò kabasun jèman na, ji min bè jigin aw kan ka bò san fè, yala, ji min n'ò ye aw ka minnògòbòran ye, yala, aw yèru de y'ò jigin aw yèrèw ma wa ? *am naḥnu*, wala anw, *al-munzilūna*, wala anw de o ji jiginnibaaw ye wa ?

70. *law nashā'u*, ni anw y'a kanu, ko ni a diyara anw ye, *ja'alnāhu*, anw ye o ji kè, *ujājan*, aw y'ò kè kògò ye. ni aw ko, ko aw b'a min a na, a tun tè maa kelen minnògò bò aw ra, *fa-law lā tashkurūna*, yala, aw tè barikada kè ? mansa min ye nin bèe lajèlen kè aw ye, yala, o mansa nin, o man kan ni aw ka barikada ye wa ? o ka kan ni barikada ye dè.

71. *a-fa-rāytum*, yala, aw ye n kibarū, *al-nāra*, tasuma, *allatī*, tasuma min, *tūrūna*, n'ò ye tasuma min ye, ni aw bè ka tasuma bò a ra, aw ka jiriw, aw bè olu mana, ko nin ye dògò ye, tasuma de bè bò a ra. yala, dògò ye mun ye ? tasuma bòra a la, aw nyèw b'a la, aw b'a kari tuma min na, aw b'a ta, aw b'a doni ka da aw kun. tasuma, maa bè se

k'o ta ni i bolo ye wa ? aw bè na taa a bila, o tuma, tasuma de bè na wuli a la, yala, tasuma min bè bò o la,

72. *a-āntum*, yala, aw, *ansha'tum*, yala, aw ye sindili de kè, *shajaratahā*, a jirisun na wa ? aw bè na taa sun ta ka na, k'a fò nin ye marku ye. i y'a dòn, jiriw bè minnu bè nyògòn nyè tasumako la, dòw bè ko marku. òo ! dòw bè, u b'o wele ko *al-afāru*. marku, anw b'o wele ko wòlò. òo ! *afaru*, anw b'o wele ko jangunaani, tasuma nyininibaaw, ni olu taara kungo kònò, k'u bè taa jiri nyini, jiriw de bè tòmtòmtò u fè, nin jiri, i b'o nin de ka ta, o de dògò nyè ka di ka tèmèn ni nin dògò nin kan. yala, jiri nin, ni e ko, nin dògò nyè ka di, yala, e de y'a falen wa ? *am nahnu* ? wala anw *al-munshi'ūna*, yala, anw de jiri yèrè falenbaaw ? yala, anw de y'a falen ?

73. *nahnu ja'alnāhā*, anw y'a kè *tadhkiratan*, anw y'o falen k'o kè hakilijigin ye, hakilitigiw fè, k'a dòn, ko tasuma bè sòrò yòrò wèrè min tè diyèn ta yen han. anw ye nin de jiran a la yaasa a' ka dòn, ni aw ye nin tasuma ye, o tuma nin tasuma nin bòra min ? tasuma nin sòròkun, a' k'o nyè nyini. ni aw ye nin tasuma sòròkun nyèdòn, n'o kèra, jahanama tasuma kunfan, o tè na a minè, anw k'a dòn o tasuma bè. *wa-matā'an*, ani anw y'o kè, daamukèfènsiya de ye, *li'l-muqwīna*, ka na, o tuma, yaakubayabaaw ye, minnu ye taamabaaw ye, olu ka yaakubaya fè, o tuma, ni olu de bè laban n'o ye, mògòw minnu bè taama na kungodarakolon kònò, o tuma, falenfènw si tè yòrò minnu, ji tè yòrò minnu na, o tuma, hali sa, o tuma, olu ka nin lajè ban, nin bè sòrò cogo di ? ji nin bè kè cògò di ? ni e bè ka taama yòrò la, mun y'a se kungo kolon kònò ? foyi, foyi tè yòrò min na. o tuma, ni u magòw jòra, tasuma t'u bolo yòrò min na, jiriw bè kari k'o bila yen, k'o mana yen, k'o kè tasumako magow ye. yala, mun y'o ke ?

74. *fa-sabbih*, Ma saniya kè sa, o de ko subhanallahi fò kè, *bi'smi rabbika*, i Ma na, *al-azīm*, Ma min ye mansa belebele ye. i k'o subhanallahi fò.

75. *fa-lā-uqsimu*, n bè n kali, *bi-mawāqī'in'l-nujūmi*, n bè n kali ni dolojiginyòròw ye, n'o ye tilebintuma ye,

76. *wa-innahu*, i k'a dòn a min ye, *la-qasamun*, n kalina, nin ye kaliyòrò belebele ye, *law ta'lamūna*, ni aw tun b'a dòn, *azīmun*, kabako koba don. ko, ni aw tun kèra, ni aw tun ye hakimima dungew ye, aw tun na dònni kè, nin kali bonyana, k'a fò kali kèra kun min kan, o de ye tiyèn de ye.

77. *innahu*, i k'a dòn a min ye, min bè ka kalan aw kan, *la-qur'ānun* n kalina aw tun na dòn, k'a fò alkurani don, *karīmun*, alkurani min ye bonyèniyèn ye.

78. *fī kitābin*. ko kurani yèrè, ko a sèbènnen don, sèbènyòrò la, *maknūnin*, sèbènyòrò min b'a la, o tuma, n'o ye tangalifèn ye, n'o ye kurani gafe ye. o kurani fana de, n'o ladili kè ka kogomaani caman kè ka d'a kan,

79. *lā yamassuhu*, wa maa kelen bolo kana da alkurani kan, *illa'l-muṭahharūna*, fò ni a kèra saniyabaaw ye. o de kòrò ye, kaafiri bolo kana maga alkurani na. kaafiri bolo

man kan ka maga alkurani na, kaafiri, mun na ? kaafiri bolo man kan ka maga alkurani na, barisa Ala ko, kaafiri ye sòfè ye. kaafiri ye sòfè ye, kaafiri ye sòfè ye mun na ? barisa, ka da a kan, isilamèya kònò, ko dama dò bè isilamèya kònò min bè isilamèya saniya, isilamèya tè se ka taa nògò kan. maa, ni a balikuyara, ni a balikuyara, ni muso don, a bè na hayida. ni kaafiri hayidara, a tè joli kò. ni a y'a sòrò, i donna furu la, o tuma, ni i ni cè surunyana nyèdon na, wala, o tuma, i ni muso surunyana nyèdon na, o tuma, hali sa, lawa min bè bò i fè, o tuma, o lawa min bè bòli k'i nògòra, i ka kan k'o ko, o koko la, kaafiri t'i ko. nin ye nògò ye. barisa, nin nògòw nununw, safunè t'o bò. koko de bò a la, o de b'o bò. walima i dara k'i sunògòra, walima i ye bololatulonkè kè, i ye bololatulonkè kè, fò lawa de taara bò i ra, lawa giriman, den bè dila ni o de la, fò a taara ka taa bò i la, o tuma, o kònòna na, wala i sunògòra, i nana sugo, i sera sugo ra, wala o de taara bòlen i fè, koli kèra e kan diyagoya, e ka kan k'i ko. kaafiri tè nin si ko. Ala ko sòfè don. a kana maga alkurani na. o tuma, kana maga alkurani na, kana a saalo. barisa, kurani ka sanu, a bè wele ko kitabu sanuman, kitabu sanuman, a bennen don maa saniyalen, o de k'a ta, o de ka maga a ra. kurani nin, ko jumèn don ? ni a fòra, k'a ka sanu,

80. *tanzīlun*, kurani ye jiginnifèn ye, *min rabbi'l-ʿālamīn*, ka bò danfèntigiyòrò de ye. danfèntigi, o de ta ye alkurani ye.

81. *a-fa bi-hādha'l-ḥadīthi antum*, yala, aw ye *mudhinūna*, yala, aw ye finyèbaaw ye wa, walima aw ye nkalontigibaaw ye wa, *bi-hādha'l-ḥadīth*, ni alkurani nin ye ? aw de ko, ko alikurani saniyalen, ko o tè tiyen ye wa ? yala, aw bè alikurani saniyalen, yala, aw bè ko o de ye finyè ye wa ? o kòrò ye mun ye ? a janabatò de b'o maga o la wa ? a hayidatò de bè maga o la wa ?

82. *wa-tajʿalūna*, o tuma, aw bè kèli kè, *rizqakum*, aw garijègè de la, o tuma, o barikada a ye, *annakum*, k'a fò aw, o tuma, *wa-tajʿalūna*, aw de bè kèli kè, *rizqakum*, aw ka garijègè la, min ka bò sanji la, o tuma, o barikada a ye, *annakum*, k'a fò, aw *tukadhdhibūna*, ko aw bè sòsòli kè, o tuma, ni Ala ka nini ye, o tuma, aw la. tuma min, a' b'a fò sisan, o tuma, k'a fò sisan, a bè na jumèn fò ka sòsòli kè ? ni Ala nana ni a ka sangi ye, aw de bè taasi, ko nin dolo nin de, ko o de b'a to san bè na. ko nin dolo min filè, heh ! ko nin, èè ! nin ye dolo ye, o kòrò ye ko san bè na dèrè ! ko dolo de bè sanji na. o kòrò de ye ten. k'a kè k'a fò, ni i ko, ni i ye nin dolo ye, k'a fò, ko o bè sanji na, ko sariyatigiw ko, o ye kaafiri ye. kaafiriya ye, o tè. o tè kaafiriya ye. òò ! k'a fò sisan, sanji nali yèrè de, o de bè dolo ka se la ?

83. a ko *fa-law-lā*, a ko yala, *idhā balaghati*, tuma min na, ni ni fòsitò, ni ni sera *al-hulqūma*, ni ni sera ngòonòkun na, n'o ye sumatèmènsira ye,

84. *wa-antum*, ya aw mògòw minnu hadirin bè su la, *ḥīnaʿidhin*, o tuma, *tanzūrūna*, aw bè filèli kè ka taa su ma.

85. *wa-naḥnu aqrabu ilayhi*, anw de ka surun su nin na, *minikum*, ka na anw la, ni dònnya ye. anw de ka surun su nin na. kabini dugu ma jè ban, o de kòrò ye ko, kabini san ma yèlèmè, anw y'a dòn ko nyinan suw minnu bè taa, karisa b'a la. kabini kalo ma jò, anw ka dònni b'a la su min bè taa nin kalo nin na, maa minnu bè sa, karisa b'a la. fò ka na se a don ma, fò ka na se a waati ma, fò ka na se, mògòw sigilen a kun na ka tigè a kan sa, ko a bè ka fèn min kè sisan, ko o de bè wele, ko saya segara. fò ka na s'o ma, anw de dònne b'o kan ka tèmèn aw kan, *walākin lā tubşirūna*, aw kòni t'o dòn dè.

86. *fa-law-lā in kuntum*. ni aw de tun kèra, han, **hal**, aw de tun kèra, *ghayra madīnāna*, ko aw tun kèra mògòw ye sisan, ko aw ye saralibaa tanaw ye. nin ma k'a fò, ko, kunun min bè, n'o bè fò sa, ko aw bè kunun, aw ko aw ye kununbaa tanaw ye, aw yèru ka kunnakuma na.

87. *tarji'ūnahā*, o tuma, ko, aw de bè se k'a segin tugun ni ni ye ka na farikolo la, a selen kò fè, o tuma, a ngèdonòdingè na. ni aw ko, aw ko, sakakunun tè tiyèn ye. ni sakakunun tè tiyèn ye, ni se min b'aw ye, ni aw bè se ka ni selen, ni foosilen ka bò a farikolo la foositò, ni a y'a sòrò aw tun bè se, ka ni segin ka na, ka na ni a ye ka na a don. o de kòrò ye, aw tè se o la koyi. *in kuntum*, ni aw kèra, *şādiqīna*, a' ka tiyèntigiya kuma na, a' bè ka fènw minnu kuma na, ni a y'a sòrò aw tun bè se, k'a kè, ko aw bè se ka ni segin ka na n'a ye, o de kòrò ye, aw tè se koyi.

88. *fa-ammā in kāna*, ni su nin kèra, *min al-muqarribīna*, ko a kèra surunyabaaw la,

89. *fa-lawḥun*, sègènnafiyèn bò, saya de dabòla o kama, saya tè tòrò ye. barisa, diyèn latigè ye sègèn ye, diyèn latigè ye tòrò ye. diyèn latigè, haali ni i kèra fèntigi ye, i haminen don. diyèn latigè, ni i kèra masakè ye, i sirannen don. diyèn latigè, ni i kèra faantan ye, i fujuninen don, haali dòròmè t'i kun, ko mògòw tè na ka n deli, mògòw tè na n k'a kè tèn, mògòw tè na n k'a kè tèn. haali ni i y'o miiri, e yèrè tòròlèn don, ne yèrè bè na nin sòrò cogo di ? diyèn latigè b'o cogoya la, lafiya tè diyèn kòndò, saya de bè na kè sa, saya de kòrò ye ko lafiya ye, ko ni a y'a sòrò, su nin, ni a kèra surunyabaaw la, lafiya don de. *wa-rayḥānun*, ani rayhanu, garijègè cènin don de, *wa-jannatu*, ani alijinè, o de ye saya *na'imin*, min ye nèemaso ye de. barisabu, a taatò yòrò min, sègèn tè tuun.

90. *wa-ammā in kāna*. ni a kèra *min aṣḥābi'l-yamīni*, ni su nin kèra, kabii kiniyanbolomògòw ra,

91. *fa-salāmun laka*. èe ! kisi bè ka n'i ye, e su nin kisila ka bò Ala ta'ala ka lajaba ma. lajaba tè, e tè tòrò sòrò tugun. i kisira, *min aṣḥābi'l-yamīni*, ni a kèra ka bò kiniyanfundungew ra kòni.

92. *wa-ammā in kāna*, ni a kèra, *min al-mukadhdhibīna*, kabii nkalontigèlibaaw la, *al-dāllīna*, min ye filibandiw ye.

93. *fa-nuzulun*, jigi yòrò *min ḥamīmin*, o de b'a ye, *min ḥamīmin*, kabii ji gònin na,

94. *wa-taṣṣiyatu jahīmin*, ani jahimi, ani o ka jenini ye.

95. *inna hādhā*, i k'a dòn nin min ye, *la-huwa ḥaqqu'-yaqīni*, **qāla**, nin ye tiyèn de ye, min ye dankanniya ye.

96. *fa-sabbih*, saniya kè de, *bi'smi rabbika*, i Ma, o tògò ra, o saniya, *al-ʿazīmi*, min ye Ma belebele ye.

Translation

This is the explanation of *Sūrat al-Wāqīʿa* [Q. 56]. Its verses were revealed in Mecca, with the exception of *a fa-bi-hādhā'l-ḥadīth* [Q. 56:81] and *thullatun min al-awwalīna* [v. 13]. Those were revealed in Medina. Some say that it totals 96 verses, others 97 or 99 verses.

1. It is said, when the Resurrection comes about,

2. it is said that there will be no more lying concerning its reality. That means, it will have come about. They denied it, yet they come to the assembly place of the hereafter. From then on, there'll not be much debate.

3. In the assembly place of the resurrection, you'll see the humiliated ones – persons who were abased on account of their evil deeds and made to enter hell. You'll also see the elevated ones, whose good deeds, whose deeds were pleasing to God – you'll see them in the assembly place. He granted them a high station and made them enter Paradise. The word *khāfiḍatun* is used because hell is underneath, below the seven earths. Paradise is above, it is raised above all else.

4. When the earth trembles, it will be with such force

5. that the mountains will be thrown about and smashed till they are reduced to powder, mere powder.

6. The mountains will become dust, this dust – a scattered one.

7. As for you [people] in the assembly place of the hereafter, you'll be of different categories – of three categories.

8. On the day of resurrection, upon arriving there [= in the assembly place], you'll see the companions of the right – who are they? Those who have received their certificates in their right hands. God has declared that their examination will be made easy. Muhammad, who are the fortunate people? God has said and repeated – because it's so very important – that they'll enter Paradise. So, who are they? That means that they are the inhabitants of Paradise: those who received their certificates in their right hands will go to Paradise.

9. And the companions of the left – the persons who received their certificates in their left hands. Muhammad, who are the people, the companions of the left? Should you not know them, they are the persons, the persons who have been humiliated, shamed and made to enter into hell.

10. And the first to go to the place of felicity, who are they? They are the prophets – the prophets will be placed in front of everybody else. They will have precedence in honour and felicity, the first to be informed [of their entry into Paradise].

11. This is the host of those who are close [to God].

12. They are in Paradise, Paradise which is so very pleasant.

13. A great host of the earliest, past generations. A great host of the people of yester times will be selected and made to enter Paradise.

14. And a lesser host of the people of later times, drawn from the prophetic community. Oh! According to some, the words *thullatun min al-awwalīna* refer to the people of the Messenger's own times. They say it refers to them, for it is said that the Messenger declared: 'give utmost precedence to *aṣḥābī* {my companions}'. Oh! Now, as for [the expression] *wa-tābi'ūn*. *Wa-tāb'iūn*: the persons who succeeded the companions, and the ones who succeeded them. Oh! According to some, it's about these – well, as for these [interpretations], all are true. For God's Messenger said that as for his community, that when the Day of Resurrection comes about, when that Day comes about, once the inhabitants of Paradise have been selected and gathered together, they'll form three divisions. Two will be drawn from the Messenger's community, they'll enter Paradise. Two will be drawn from his community. One will consist of persons who lived from the earliest times until the appearance of the Messenger. All of these will be included. This proposition doesn't contradict the [preceding one].

15. The inhabitants of Paradise will [rest] upon goodly beds. Those beds will be made of fragrant poles and woven cloth. They resemble our beds, [but] if you observe them, [you'll notice that] they're made of intertwined metals, interlaced metals. Thus, the beds of Paradise – God has created them of interlaced metals: gold and silver, gold and diamonds – they are so decorated.

16. They recline upon their elbows, gazing at each other.

17. Youngsters will circulate in their midst. As for these youngsters, their youth is perpetual, they don't die. The word *mukhalladūna* means that they are perpetually in Paradise, they remain there forever. But what does *mukhalladūna* mean? Their youth is eternal, they don't age.

18. They move about in their midst bearing glasses. Glasses – the word *akwābin* means a drinking vessel that has no handle. And ‘abarikaw’, what are ‘abarikaw’? Those are bottles, long-necked bottles with handles. And drinking vessels – they move about bearing these, which contain beverages from its springs [= the springs of Paradise] – ones which bubble, which never stop flowing.

19. Now then, about this: drinking these beverages doesn’t make their head ache, it doesn’t alter their mental state, it doesn’t make them drunk – they don’t become drunk.

20. And succulent fruits: they [the youngsters] move about in their midst, bearing fruits from among which they choose.

21. And flesh of birds according to their desire. And flesh of birds in accordance with their desire. Indeed, they’ll see them in Paradise. As for Paradise, the Messenger of God has so declared, he said, there are birds provided by God in Paradise; these birds have long necks – you would say they resemble Bactrian camels. These birds are big, extremely big. God has created these birds, which are found in Paradise. They are numerous; they move about in Paradise, drinking its sweet water and eating of its excellent fruits: they feed on these. The flesh of these birds is of different sorts: each and every one of them presents different varieties [of flesh]. One part [of each bird] is grilled, another is smoked, another is boiled, another fried, another cooked [in sauce]; all the tasty modes of preparation that you know, and others that you’re not familiar with – that only God knows. For, [the Qur’an] says, God has provided things of which the heart has received no intimation – still less the voice recounted or the eyes seen. All these are with God there [in Paradise]. Oh! He has desired to show us only a little of all He has – not much. What he has wished to give us, He has done it in order to help you (pl.), so that you may live upon it, for you can’t do without food. You do like this, you do like that, you prepare it like that – this is what he has shown us. There are other pleasures also, indeed, indeed there are. [The Qur’an] says that these birds move about in Paradise. These birds fly about, they alight near one of the saints of God Most High. What’s a saint? Every person who enters Paradise is a saint. They fly about and alight near you. ‘Hey, we’ve come! We’re the birds of Paradise you were told about, I’m one of them! We’re so very tasty!’ Oh! ‘If you like smoked [flesh], then I’m smoked! If you prefer fried, then I’m fried. See this part here, it’s fried. But if you don’t like that, and you say you prefer boiled, see it right here. But if you don’t like that [either], and you say you want smoked, see it right here! But if it’s cooked [flesh] you want, cooked only in sauce, exclusively in sauce, see this part here. Which part would you like? Ah! Don’t you know, we feed upon, we feed upon the marvellous fruits of Paradise. We know where they are, God has shown us their locations, we move about amongst them, we feed upon them. If you eat of them, you become fat; if you eat of them, you are sated; if you eat of them, you become like this.

Moreover, we drink of the pure springs of Paradise, that's what we drink. I say, oh you male saint of God! Which part would you like? What you like, just say it! That part will be given you. See me right next to you here. I'm yours. I was created for you.' Oh! As soon as this has come to pass, as soon as this has happened, as soon as the bird has thus spoken, desire for it enters the heart of the seated saint; God himself places this desire in the saint's heart. Once this has taken place, the saint says: 'Now then, come near me!'. If he prefers smoked, he [begins by] eating smoked, he finds it so very tasty; this wonderful taste makes him desire cooked food; he draws near to that part of the bird. He enjoys it very much, it leads him to desire the grilled; he draws close to it, and experiences desire for boiled. Every time you draw near a part of the bird, you find that it's even tastier than what you had just before. He eats the bird's flesh, the bird that is so very big, and finishes it off completely! Its bones are piled up, then they come together, the bird flutters its wings, rises and stands – once again taking off to a pleasuring place. These birds are like that, they're exactly like that. God's Messenger has so spoken. It [the Qur'an] says, there are birds. These birds don't leave until they have bragged together, in this fashion: 'I'm like this, I'm like this, my flesh is like this, my flesh is like this, my flesh is like this.' That's how they brag; why? [Because] God Most High has made them the saints' food. That's why God has said in the Qur'an, 'and birds' flesh as they desire', which is pleasing to their taste.

22. It is said, and pleasure – they'll have it with the noble women of Paradise: the noble women the dark of whose eyes is so very dark, whose white is so very white. Their eyes, their eyes are large; their orbits are not sunken, their eyes are large. That is, their eyes are large.

23. If you saw them, you would say they are like pearls, pearls enclosed in their shells. It's like a pearl that has been opened, a pearl that gleams, dazzling the eyes of the beholder. Oh! If you take the shell and set it down, immediately the person scrutinises and grasps it, removes its outside covering, then all turn to gaze upon it. Therefore, Paradise is like that. The Messenger has so declared. Well, at certain moments, you'll find that light, a great light, emerges from Paradise. Some days you're seated, when all of a sudden, it dazzles people's eyes. A great light gleams. People say, 'What is this?' Well, it's that one of the women of Paradise and her husband are in conversation, a noble woman of Paradise and her husband are engaged in conversation; their conversation was pleasant, at that moment the man rejoiced, they laughed together. The woman of Paradise laughed, revealing her teeth: that's the source of this light. That light, all that light and its pleasure, all that light and its ornamentation and delightfulness – that gleaming light and its pleasure. Oh! It [the Qur'an] says, We have created it.

24. That is, we have provided them, we have provided them, *jazāʿan*, with a recompense – that is a *maḥḥūlu la-hu* [object]. Alternatively, one can consider that *jazāʿan* is a *maḥḥdar* [internal object]. Now, if one considers that it is a *maḥḥdar*, the *taqdīr* [implicit] verb is *jazʿaynahum*: we have recompensed them with a *jazāʿan*, we have recompensed them with a recompense. It becomes a *maḥḥdar*: with what they have accomplished.

25. These denizens of Paradise, who are in the felicity of Paradise, they don't hear any evil words in Paradise. They don't hear anything about sins, that there is anything sinful in Paradise – we're beyond the phase in which sins are recorded. To say that there are evil words – we're beyond that. Anything you hear yourself say, anything you say in Paradise, anything you say – there's no evil. Anything you're incited to do, that you should do it in Paradise, anything that comes to your mind – if you do it, there's no evil. There's no reproach – why was it done? – no, there isn't. This should be done. In Paradise, all things are fine, are fine. Whatever you see in Paradise, it's alright, you deserve it. That's what Paradise is like. That means, all the activities of Paradise, whatever is done in Paradise [is fine].

26. Except, except words. Which words? You (pl.) hear *salāman*, *salāman*, that's what you hear in Paradise, *al-salāmu ʿalaykum yā ahl al-janna!* {Greetings upon you, oh people of Paradise!} That's the sound of the angels: *al-salāmu ʿalaykum yā ahl al-janna!* For the angels don't enter Paradise, they are suspended from the throne. Oh! As for the throne, they go sit on its summit; they're seated, thus ornamenting it – a most admirable decoration; each [angel] adds something to the agreeableness of Paradise. All of you there, you gaze upon them – all this is [part of] its delight. They are – just look! – greeting you, saluting you: *yā ayyuka al-waliyu* {Oh, you saint!} – you (pl.) and pleasure, you merit it, you deserve it. In Bamana, this means – as we may say in our own language, if we like – you (pl.) and oil, you and joy, you and a joyous atmosphere. Oh! And eating unto satiety, and sleeping – you deserve this in Paradise, the inhabitants of Paradise don't lack any of this. Tasty food – the noble women rivalise over it, the delectable birds brag about it together. Whatever you like, just do it. Do as you like. Say what you like.

27. It is said: and the companions of the right, the companions of the right. Now then, who are the companions of the right? Only the companions of the right enjoy themselves there: behold them in Paradise.

28. They're seated upon jujube trees, ones with smooth trunks. For, when it was said there were jujube trees in Paradise, the unbelievers jeered. Ah! As for the Messenger's words, he really contradicted himself today! You, Muhammad, said that there's something in Paradise, something desired by its inhabitants; but not a single one among us would agree to climb a jujube tree, for its thorns would pierce him. Indeed, they would shred the inhabitants of Paradise. God's Messenger replied: You didn't

understand, you didn't comprehend. He [the Messenger] said: Didn't God say jujube trees? They said: Indeed. He [the Messenger] explained: God said that the jujube trees in Paradise, these jujube trees don't bear thorns; the jujubes of Paradise don't have injury-provoking thorns. God has replaced every thorn-bearing spot by a fruit-bearing one. In every spot where you would normally see a thorn, instead you'll see 72 varieties of fruit, emerging from those places. 72 trees, the fruits of each and every one of them – of all of them – are delectable, and each [fruit] is different. As you eat, you discover new tastes – what you tasted and this one, they're not the same. As you fill your mouth, you discover new tastes – what you tasted and this one, they're not the same. For God the Creator has created: He who has created sourness can also create sweetness. Indeed, He can.

29. And *ṭalḥu*, *ṭalḥu* are also called *mauzu*, they're in Paradise – banana trees whose clusters are close together, from the ground to the top.

30. And there's shade in Paradise, a permanent shade. When the sun rises, at dawn, where's the shade? Let's go sit in the shade: it's to the west. And in the evening, where is it? It's moved eastwards, the sun has displaced that shade. In Paradise, there's true shade, it's permanent. I stayed in the shade for a long time, I became ill – it's not like that in Paradise. There's no sickness at all!

31. And water – water that is always flowing. As the water of the pools of Paradise flows by you, you may do with it as you please. The water has dried up – there's none of that.

32. And succulent fruits, numerous ones,

33. whose season doesn't end. *Lā maqtū'atin* means: whose season doesn't come to an end. For example, in which season are we now? We're in the hot season, this fruit is a summer one. When the hot season passes, and the cool season comes, you may have cool season fruits, but you'll no longer find the summer ones; it's not like that in Paradise. They bear fruit all year round, in all seasons alike. You're not prevented [from enjoyment]: with our earthly trees, if you find it tasty – but you don't have money, or something else prevented you from obtaining it – if the tree doesn't belong to you, if you don't have money – you must renounce it. But in Paradise, it's not like that. That is, because the money [of Paradise] consists in the actions you have accomplished here [in this world]. Buying – that's all over in Paradise. If you've entered Paradise, then everything there is yours. You have everything you like.

34. And mats, these mats, are elevated ones.

35. We have created the women of Paradise, We have created them indeed.

36. We have made them, made them virgins. For the *ḥūrūn ʿaynun* of Paradise thus mentioned, they really exist. And this is what is said about our this-worldly women,

the this-worldly women who will enter Paradise: every old woman, every very old woman, who reached extreme old age – God will make them – and little children, who died before their femininity was fully manifested – He'll make them all the same age: 32 or 33 years old. All of them will have that age, that will be their age. And each and every one of them will be of Adam's height, each and every one will be granted that. Adam's height was sixty – or rather seven – measures, which is equivalent to four hundred, four hundred elbow measures, which in turn is equivalent to two hundred meters. Adam's height was at least that, two hundred meters, that was Adam's height. Therefore, all the inhabitants of Paradise will be of that height. Indeed, that's how it will be. Now then, if you draw close to her [a woman of Paradise], you'll discover that she's a virgin. Each and every time you visit her and approach her, you'll find she's a virgin. You deflower her – there's no pain, nothing unpleasant; this deflowering is pleasurable to her, it's also pleasurable to you. And when you rise up from her, she returns to her previous, virgin state. And if you meet her another time, you'll experience that pleasure again.

37. It [the Qur'an] also says that the women of Paradise are attracted to men. They belong to a single age group, they're all the same age. It is said, these women of Paradise were created virgins, for whom?

38. They were thus created for the companions of the right.

39. A great host of the people of ancient times,

40. and a great host of the people of later times. These words over there – what is said – we know it means the community of God's Messenger. Now then, according to some, the people of yester times – a great host of them will be saved, God has thus spoken. And the people of later times, that is of the Messenger's community – of them too, a great host will be saved. According to some, the companions of the Messenger's own time, the fortunate ones among them, a great host of them, will enter Paradise. Therefore, all of these are among them. And the later ones, the ones who lived after the companions of the Messenger, and after their *tābiʿuna* {successors}, and *tābiʿū al-tābiʿīna* {successors of the successors} – of them also, a numerous host will enter Paradise.

41. Now then, who are the *aṣḥābu'l-shimālī*? That means, Muhammad, as for the *aṣḥābu'l-shimālī*, who are they? May God preserve us from [joining] them. It is said that on the Day of Resurrection,

42. they will be placed in a scorching wind. That hot wind will penetrate their brains, and furthermore, they'll be placed in hot water.

43. And in shade, hot shade – they'll be in that, and smoke; smoke will appear – black smoke – and pursue them.

44. There's no shade, such that we may go sit in a tree's pleasant shade – there isn't any in that entire dwelling, the one they'll go to. And there's not a single pleasing prospect.

45. Know then, that before this, they became their own purveyors of pleasure, they pursued worldly pleasure, they followed their own desires. In this life, when drumbeats were heard to the east, they would say, 'Who's the drummer? I know him.' When it was said that quality liquor was available, they would say: 'How much is a bottle?'. 'It's this price.' 'We'll buy it.' They followed only their own desires. That's why they won't accede to the noble women of Paradise, because they went after their own [this-worldly] ones in bars. They wouldn't leave the bars, they wouldn't leave the ballrooms, the dancing places. They wouldn't leave the places where God is disobeyed, therefore, because of that, this is their retribution – they have taken their pleasure in this world.

46. They became, they became, they persisted in sin, a great sin: that is, polytheism.

47. They would say, is there, when we die, we'll become, we'll become dust of the earth, and old powdery bones. After our death, we'll become like that. Then, shall we, will we become agents once again, will we be resurrected?

48. Or our very fathers, the very earliest ones, our grandfathers' grandfathers, who died long ago, will they really be resurrected? They were disobedient, they said this was an outrageous lie. Once you've died, it's finished. Once you've died, it's over. There's nothing. Ah, but if this weren't placed in the unbelievers' hearts, they wouldn't be able to enjoy this world either. If you've given yourself over to the pleasures of this world, then you'll be deprived of the pleasures of the hereafter. Truly, they'll leave you behind, you won't have them.

49. Muhammad, tell them – declare, know that the people of bygone times, and those of later times – those who are living, those who are not yet living – those who are to come – ,

50. Tell them that all of them will be gathered together on a certain day, on a determinate day, that of the resurrection. By God, at the resurrection, not a single person will be forgotten. Your father will be shown to you, you'll see your father in the assembly place – even if you didn't know him. And his father, you'll see him in the assembly place – and his father too. And the ancestor of all – Adam, that is – you'll (pl.) see him there. The father of all the jinn – Iblis, that is – you'll (pl.) see him in the assembly place. God the Creator didn't forget to create anything, He won't forget to resurrect it either.

51. Then, you (pl.), you who deny, you who err, who contest the Messengers,

52. You'll eat, you'll be the eaters, you'll eat of a tree – of which tree? – of the one called Zaqqum.

53. You'll be sated of that tree, your stomachs will be sated of it.

54. And drinkers, after you've eaten of it, that is of the Zaqqum tree. Zaqqum is a tree, such that if one eats of it, it's bitter. If you introduce it into your mouth – it's bitter. Upon being eaten, it's untasty, it's acrid, it stings. Upon being swallowed, it scorches the tongue, it rips the stomach and makes it fall out. Whether you like it or not, you'll swallow it, it can't just stay in your mouth. Whether you like it or not, you'll eat it, you can't do without food. Upon eating it, you'll experience great thirst, a terrible thirst. At that moment then, you'll drink hot water. Hell is cooking away: its water is boiling, it bubbles as it boils. Then, as you scream out from severe thirst, this water will be presented to you. You'll drink it, it's your drinking water. Aside from it, you don't have any water. He drinks it.

55. Muhammad – well, it [the Qur'an] says that they drink of it like thirsty camels; when those drink, do they observe any limit? A camel that is about to die of thirst – if you set it next to water, I [the scholar] say, it does nothing but gulp, gulp, gulp. There's hot water, it descends into the bodies of hell's denizens: gulp, gulp, gulp! And that's not all: their intestines fall out completely, their tongue is torn and falls out, their stomach slides out and falls to the ground; then, these return to their regular places, *bi-qudrati'l-ʿazīz* {by the power of the Almighty}, by that [power]. The King who said, I do it twixt the letters *kāf* and *nūn*, the King whose activity is betwixt *kāf* and *nūn* – He'll make him [the sinner] return to his initial state.

56. Hey! This will be their dwelling on the Day of Judgment. On the Day of Resurrection – behold their dwelling place.

57. We, We created you when you were not. Won't you believe in the Resurrection? For the Almighty has created all things, which were not. Indeed He can make them return after their end.

58. Now then, inform me, unbelievers, do inform me, when you ejaculate semen into women's wombs, the semen that you men ejaculate into women's wombs – you know that it went: this liquid contains no child, no flesh nor bones. Yet you wait for it [the child] to appear. Then, when it appears, you see that it is born with arms and legs. You gather about it, saying 'A child'; you pick it up and place the breast in its mouth.

59. Are you, are you the ones that create that semen and make it into a body? Or are We its Creator, making it into a body?

60. We, We have ordained death for you (pl.). We don't make everybody die at once. Death isn't reserved for the most aged. It doesn't concern the sons' generation [only], nor the fathers' generation [only]. When a person's time has come – he goes! We

select and take him. We're not the first [humans to die]; to say that We are incapable: We're not incapable.

61. Even though We haven't replaced you (pl.) by others, it's not because We can't do it. To say that you may escape us, that We won't catch you – that's not true. If I [God] so wish, I can destroy and remove you all, definitively, and replace you with something else. We created you of what you know not. We created you of what you know not. We accomplished this, don't you observe it? There are forms, there are baboons; aren't there boars? Who created them?

62. Truly, you know about the first creation – if only you meditated, if only you considered seriously the first, long past things.

63. Tell Me about it: when you cultivate, you stand above the ground and open it up and turn it over, and introduce plants. Don't you do that?

64. But, you human beings, are you the ones that make them grow? You cultivate, but are you the ones that make grow? Or are We, are We the Growers?

65. Had We wished, had We liked, I swear, We would make those cultivated things, those plants, into dried-up ones, with no grains. And finally, you would, when you came to see them, dried up, you would end up, you would end up putting your hand over your mouth, in astonishment, you would end up putting your hand over your mouth, because, when something bad happens to a person, when he's anxious, you (sing.) do like this, thusly. Firstly, a person acts like this, like this, placing his hand over his mouth, placing his hand, that's what you would do, if We destroyed all your crops and dried them up – that is, if they had no grains.

66. What would you (pl.) say? You would say, we swear, we have become debtors. That is, we are unable to pay our debts. We invested all these resources in our farming, we spent all this on cultivation. But the year has gone by, we've obtained nothing. You'd be full of regret: why did we cultivate at all?

67. Rather, we would say that we were prevented from obtaining our crops, we found no happiness at all in cultivation. This year's cultivation has been disastrous: that's what they'll say.

68. Tell Me now: water, the water, the water that you drink,

69. Are you, are you the ones that make it come down from the white rain clouds, the water that descends upon you from above, the water that quenches your thirst, are you the ones that make it come down for yourselves? Or are We, are We the ones that make this water come down?

70. If We liked, if We so wished, We would make this water salty. And if you proposed, you proposed to drink of it – it wouldn't quench the thirst of a single

person. Well then, won't you give thanks? The King who made all this for you, well, this King, doesn't He deserve your thanks? He truly deserves thanks.

71. You tell Me: fire, the fire, the fire that you obtain from wood: you light it, saying this is firewood, this gives fire. But what is firewood? Fire comes forth from it, you see it with your eyes. You chop it, and take it, and load it onto your heads. [But as for] fire, can a person hold it in his hands? You lay it down, fire comes forth; well, the fire that comes forth from it,

72. now then, now then, are you the ones who created the tree? You take some wood, it's a 'marku'. You know some kinds of wood are better than others for making fire – and some of them are called 'marku'. Oh! There are some others, called *al-ʿafāru*. The *marku* tree, we call it 'wòlò' [in our Bamana language]. Oh! As for the *afaru*, we call it 'jangunaani'. Those who want fire, when they go into the bush with the intention of fetching wood, they select the wood: this wood, take this one, it's better than that other one. Now concerning this tree, you say its wood is good [for making fire] – did you make it grow? Or are We, We, the ones who made it grow? Is it We who made it grow?

73. We made it, We made it grow as a reminder to the intelligent that there's a fire other than that of this world. Ha! We showed this to you [human beings] so that you may know, so that when you see this fire – where does this fire come from? Search well the reason for this fire's existence. If you know the source of this fire well, if that happens, you won't experience curiosity about hellfire, we [humans] should know that that Fire exists. And We made it a source of great enjoyment for the strong, for strong travellers, when at the last they obtain fire. The persons who journey through the empty bush: there are no plants there, nor water. So then, so then, they consider this, how will this be obtained? How will this water be obtained? When you travel through an area, what brought it [water] to the desolate bush? There's nothing, nothing, in that place. Therefore, if they need it – they don't have fire in a certain place, wood is chopped and laid down, and lighted, so that they may obtain what they need by way of fire. Now then, who made this?

74. Praise the Lord, that is, say *subhāna llāhi* – your Lord, the Lord who is a great King. Say *subhāna llāhi*.

75. I swear, I swear by the stars' setting places, at the close of day,

76. know that I [God] have sworn a great oath, if you but knew – a great miracle. If you were, if you were intelligent, you would know that this is a great oath, that this oath was proffered on account of the truth.

77. Know then, that what is recited to you, I swear that you'll know it, that it is the Qur'an, the most venerable Qur'an.

78. The Qur'an is written in a space, a space that's protected, a Qur'an volume. The Qur'an is the source of many counsels and warnings.

79. No person, other than a purified one, may lay his hand on the Qur'an. That means, an unbeliever must not touch the Qur'an. An unbeliever must not touch the Qur'an – an unbeliever, why? An unbeliever must not touch the Qur'an because, God has so declared, an unbeliever is excrementally dirty. Why is an unbeliever so filthy? Because, it's because, in Islam, certain things in Islam purify, Islam isn't compatible with filth. A person who becomes adult, who becomes adult – if it's a woman – she will menstruate. If an unbeliever menstruates, she doesn't wash herself from the blood. If you enter marriage, then, if you and your husband unite, or you and your wife unite, then, even so, the semen which comes forth from you, the semen that comes out and soils you, you must wash it in the prescribed manner – an unbeliever doesn't wash. It is filth. For these kinds of filth are not removed by soap. [Only] the prescribed washing removes them, that's what removes them. Or you lay down to sleep, or you played around, you played around until semen came forth from your body, the heavy liquid children come from, until that came forth from you; or you slept, you dreamt, you dreamt, and that came forth from you: you must necessarily wash, you must wash yourself. An unbeliever doesn't wash from any of these. God has declared that he is excrementally filthy. He must not touch the Qur'an. He must not touch the Qur'an, he must not place his hand upon it. For the Qur'an is pure, it's called the sanctified Book, the sanctified Book; it's suitable for purified persons, those are the ones who can hold it and touch it. What is this Qur'an? If it's said to be sanctified, [that's because]

80. the Qur'an is a Revelation from the Lord of creatures. The Qur'an belongs to the Lord of creatures.

81. Are you, are you fibbers, or liars, concerning the Qur'an? You say that the pure Qur'an – that it isn't true? You say that the pure Qur'an is just a fib? What does that mean? May a person polluted by sex touch it? May a menstruating woman touch it?

82. Now then, you should give thanks for your subsistence, thanks for your nourishment that comes from rainwater, [but] you contest God's gift to you. Now then, what do you say in order to contest Him? God provides His rain; you [pl.] reason that a certain star makes the rain come. Hey, now consider this star! This star means that rain is coming! The star brings rain. That's what it means. To say that, if you say that when you see this star, that it brings rain – [some] jurists say that it is unbelief. But it's not unbelief. It's not unbelief. Oh! Now then, making rain come, is that in the star's power?

83. It is said, it is said, when the soul that departs [the body] reaches, the soul reaches the throat, that is, the pathway of food,

84. oh you people who are watching over the dying one, who are gazing at him,

85. We're closer to this dying person than you are in knowledge. We're closer to him. Before break of day, that means, [or rather,] before the year began, We knew that such a one will be among its dead. Before the month begins, We know who will die in the course of it – such a one is among the persons who will die. Until the day he dies, until his time has come, until it has come, people sit about him so as to have certitude: that is called – one says that death has overcome him. Till it has overcome him – We know it better than you, but you don't realise it.

86. If you were, if you were, ha, persons who won't receive retribution commensurate with your actions. As for the resurrection, you will be resuscitated; you say that you won't be resuscitated – that's your fantasy.

87. Therefore, then, can you make the soul return to the body, after it has reached the throat? If you say, you say – death followed by resurrection, that's not true. If the resurrection isn't true, if you have the capacity, if you can make the soul – the soul that is departing the body – if you can make it return, and enter [the body]. That means, in fact you can't! If you, if you speak truly about these matters, if you could, if you could make the soul return – that means, in fact you can't.

88. If the dead one is among those close to God,

89. Rest – death was made for this purpose; death isn't a torment. For life in this world is trying, it's a torment. Even if you're wealthy, you're preoccupied. If you're a king, you're fearful. If you're poor, you're sorrowful – you don't have a penny, nobody comes to solicit me, people don't ask me to do this, they don't ask me to do that. If you reflect about it [your situation], you're tormented: how will I obtain this? That's what this life is like, there's no rest in this world. But death, death means rest – provided that the dead person is among those close to God, it's restful. And 'rayhanu' – good fortune, and Paradise: that's what death is in the pleasant place. Because he's leaving for a place where there is no more suffering.

90. If the dead one is from among the companions of the right,

91. then, you'll be saved, you dead one, you will have been saved from the torments imposed by God Most High; you'll (sing.) never suffer again. If you are among the companions of the right, then you will have been saved.

92. [But] if he is from among the liars, those who err,

93. he'll dwell in – that's what he'll have – very hot water,

94. and hell and its grilling.

95. Know then, that this is the indubitable truth

96. and praise the Name of your Lord, praise the great Lord.

NOTES

1 Respectively: law and cultic obligations; theology; literature (in both Mali and Guinea, *lughā*, literally 'language', comprises the study of both religious and profane poetry, as well as art prose); Arabic syntax and morphology; culminating in Qur'anic exegesis.

2 For studies of traditional Islamic education in Mali, see, for example, Geert Mommersteeg, *Het domein van de marabout. Koranleraren en magisch-religieuze specialisten in Djenné, Mali* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Utrecht, 1996), chs 3 and 4; and the undersigned, 'Styles of Islamic Education: Perspectives from Mali, Guinea and The Gambia' in Robert G. Launay (ed.), *Writing Boards and Blackboards: Islamic Education in Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, forthcoming).

3 Francesco Zappa, 'Ecrire l'islam en bambara. Lieux, réseaux et enjeux de l'entreprise d'al-Hâjj Modibo Diarra', *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 147:3 (2009), pp. 167–86 (see p. 170). Mervyn Hiskett speaks of 'learned versions of the vernacular languages' in *The Sword of Truth: The Life and Times of the Shehu Usuman Dan Fodio* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 36, whereas Murray Last and Louis Brenner speak of *malamanci* (Hausa, literally: malams' (Islamic scholars') speech), 'learned dialects' and 'languages of religious explanation' (Louis Brenner and Murray Last, 'The Role of Language in West African Islam', *Africa* 55:4 (1985), pp. 432–46, see especially pp. 432–3, p. 443 n. 2).

4 Moulaye Hassane has transcribed, translated, and analysed a Songhay version of *Sūrat al-Baqara*, collected under the aegis of Boubou Hama, French-language author and political leader, in Say (Niger) in 1968 (Moulaye Hassane, *La transmission du savoir religieux en Afrique subsaharienne. Exemple du commentaire coranique à Saayi (Niger)* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Paris IV, 1995); see also his article in this volume). Several decades earlier, Colonel Ardant du Picq had collected and published the transcription of a Zarma commentary on several verses of the same sura (*La langue songhay. Dialecte d'Yerma* (Paris: Larose, 1933)). John Paden has published an English translation of a colloquial Hausa commentary (intended for a general audience) on *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*, collected in Kano in 1967 (*Religion and Political Culture in Kano* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); see pp. 298–305). Valentin Vydrine has published a Mandinka rendering of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* ('Sur l'écriture mandingue et mandé en caractères arabes (mandinka, bambara, soussou, 'mogofin', *Mandenkan* 1998, pp. 32–67; see pp. 32–3), while Artem Davydov has retranscribed, analysed and translated a *nko* commentary on *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* (close, in my view, to the Maninka oral tradition) in 'On Souleymane Kanté's Translation of the Quran into the Maninka Language', *Mandenkan* 48 (2012) pp. 3–20, and the present writer, two Bamana commentaries on *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*: 'L'exégèse coranique (*tafsīr*) en milieu mandingue: rapport préliminaire sur une recherche en cours', *Islam et sociétés au sud du Sahara* 10 (1996) pp. 43–79, see pp. 70–9. *Nko* is an alphabetic writing system (also showing tone) for African languages (initially Maninka) created by the Guinean Souleymane Kanté in the 1940s (see especially, Dianne White Oyler, *For 'All Those Who Say N'Ko': N'Ko Literacy and Mande Cultural Nationalism in the Republic of Guinea* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Florida at Gainesville, 1995); Dianne White Oyler, *The History of the N'ko Alphabet and Its Role in Mande Transnational Identity: Words as Weapons* (Cherry Hill, NJ: Africana Homestead Legacy Press, 2005); Jean-Loup Amselle, *Branchements. Anthropologie de l'universalité des cultures* (Paris: Flammarion, 2001). The commentary on Q. 55 is forthcoming under the title: 'Qur'anic Exegesis in Manding: The Example of a Bamana Oral Commentary on *Sūrat al-Raḥmān*' in Zulfikar Hirji (ed.), *Approaches to the Qur'an in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

André Miquel has devoted a book to the interpretation of *Sūrat al-Wāqīʿa* and alternative strategies for rendering it into French: *L'Événement. Le Coran, sourate LVI* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1992).

This paper draws on fieldwork about scholarly Islam carried out since 1992, primarily in Mali but also in Guinea and The Gambia (cumulating over three years specifically on this topic). This project has so far taken me to the following locations: Bamako and periphery; Segu and environs; San and environs; Ja (Dia): primarily Bozo-speaking; the Fulbe country of the Masina; Tuba (Touba), Cercle de Banamba: Soninke-speaking; Diakhaba (Cercle de Bafoulabé): Maninka-speaking; Jenne: Songhay-, Bozo-, Fulfulde-, and Bamana-speaking; Timbuktu: Songhay-, Moorish- and Tamasheq-speaking; the Mandenka country of The Gambia; and the Maninka country of northern Guinea. In addition to the Bamana *tafsīr* (about 90 hours of recording) of which an excerpt is presented here, a second full *tafsīr* was collected from another Bamana-speaking scholar in 1992 (about 60 hours), while a full ceremonial Songhay *tafsīr* (about 110 hours) was collected in 2011. Several partial *tafsīr* were obtained in each of the following languages: Bamana, Maninka, Soninke, Bozo, Songhay, and Fulfulde. Oral commentaries of texts representative of the other disciplines of the Islamic curriculum have also been collected and are in course of publication.

5 Manuscripts and linguistic evidence suggest that a tradition of oral and written commentary in Old Kanembu goes back at least to the sixteenth century; see especially: A.D.H. Bivar, 'A Dated Kuran from Bornu', *Nigeria Magazine* 65 (1960), pp. 199–205; Dmitry Bondarev, 'An Archaic Form of Kanuri/Kanembu: A Translation Tool for Qur'anic Studies', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 8:1 (2006), pp. 142–53, and 'The Language of the Glosses in the Bornu Quranic Manuscripts', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 69:1 (2006), pp. 113–40.

Soninke *tafsīr* has (to my knowledge) not yet been the subject of a special study; however, given very early contacts with the Islamic world (going back at least to the end of the ninth century CE), and the key role of Soninke-speakers and persons of Soninke background in spreading Islam in West Africa, early development of a tradition of learning involving the vernacular seems a possibility. See also the introduction to this volume.

6 The Somono are water-folk, usually Bamana-speaking; they are especially numerous along the Niger River between Segu and Kulikoro, though they are also found north and south of this area. Though most have traditionally obtained their living through fishing and ferrying, they have long included scholarly lineages, including some that claim a Soninke origin. See, for example: Paul Marty, *Études sur l'islam et les tribus du Soudan*, vol. 4, pp. 47–52, pp. 56–63; Charles Monteil, *Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta*. 2nd edition (Paris: G.P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1977) (1st edn, 1924), pp. 43–4, p. 49, pp. 323–4, pp. 339–40.

7 See, for example, Dinie Bouwman, *Throwing Stones at the Moon: The Role of Arabic in Contemporary Mali* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leiden, 2005), p. 170, p. 172, p. 186. However, Dinie Bouwman severely underestimates the Arabic proficiency achieved by traditionally-trained scholars.

8 In particular, interpretations of the *basmala* draw on a *ḥadīth* of which Ibn ʿAbbās is usually identified as the initial transmitter (see more below, p. 132). The widely-known *ḥadīth* about Adam (cf. the commentary on v. 36) is in this instance drawn directly from al-Ṣāwī, but it is also mentioned (for example) in that preeminent *ḥadīth* collection, Muḥammad al-Bukhārī's (d. 256/869) *Ṣaḥīḥ*, book 60, *ḥadīth* 3326, another text available in Mali. The print edition of al-Ṣāwī's meta-commentary currently most consulted in Mali is: *Ḥāshiyat al-Ṣāwī ʿalā Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* (4 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1993), which also includes the texts of the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* and of al-Suyūṭī's *Lubāb al-nuqūl fī asbāb al-nuzūl*. Manuscript copies of the *Jalālayn* are still commonly used in rural areas. Ibn ʿAbbās' *tafsīr* is now printed in the margins of al-Suyūṭī's *al-Durr al-manthūr fī l-tafsīr bi l-maʿthūr* (6 vols. Beirut, Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1980),

another work available in Mali, but this cannot be the source (or the initial source) of the interpretations found in oral *tafsīr*, which are shared by scholars from all the linguistic traditions cited, and are therefore presumably several centuries old.

9 Notably Old Kanembu and, further afield, in Indonesia: Taufiq Prabowo and Claude Guillot, 'Les *pesantrèn* ou centres d'enseignement de l'islam à Java' in Nicole Grandin and Marc Gaborieau (eds), *Madrasa. La transmission du savoir dans le monde musulman* (Paris: Arguments, 1997), pp. 185–98.

10 Thus, oral traditions credit the saintly Alfa Bokar Karabenta (c. 1780–1860) with introducing the study of *naḥw* and the *Ājurrūmiyya* to Ja, probably c. 1820, from the then Soninke-speaking village of Sibila (in the Segu region). The *Ājurrūmiyya* is a key text by the Moroccan Muḥammad b. Ājurrūm (d. 723/1323). (Verbal and noun morphology had, however, been studied in Ja prior to this.) Concerning the life and historical significance of Alfa Bokar, see especially: Amadou Hampaté Bâ and Jacques Daget, *L'Empire peul du Macina (1818–1853)* facsimile reprint (Abidjan and Paris: Les Nouvelles éditions africaines, Editions de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences sociales, 1984) (1st edn, Bamako, 1955), pp. 177–85; and Shinzo Sakai, 'Alfa Boari Karabenta de Dia', *Islam et sociétés au sud du Sahara* 8 (1994), pp. 67–84 (the influence of Alfa Bokar on the teaching of grammar and *fiqh* is mentioned, p. 75).

11 See especially: 'Paradise in the Qur'an' and 'The Qur'an Explains Itself: The *Sūrat al-Raḥmān*', respectively pp. 93–106 and pp. 158–83 in Muhammad Abdel Haleem, *Understanding the Qur'an: Themes and Style* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999).

12 Marty, *Etudes sur l'islam et les tribus du Soudan*, vol. 4, pp. 274–5; and *Etudes sur l'islam en Côte d'Ivoire* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1922), pp. 281–4.

13 Observers in Guinea and Burkina Faso have come to similar views, while stressing the importance of Paradise as a goal for many believers. See Roger Botte, 'Stigmates sociaux et discriminations religieuses: l'ancienne classe servile au Fuuta Jaloo', *Cahiers d'études africaines* 34:1–3, no. 133–5 (1994), pp. 109–36, especially pp. 128–32; Maud Saint Lary, 'J'épargne pour l'Au-delà": le salut comme rhétorique de la réislamisation au Burkina Faso', *L'Homme* 198–9 (2011), pp. 227–46. The images of Paradise drawn from Fulfulde poetry discussed by Christiane Seydou can be understood at several levels: Christiane Seydou, 'Poésie religieuse et inspiration populaire chez les Peuls du Foûta Djallon', *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 14:1 (2001), pp. 23–47 (special issue: Islamic Religious Poetry in Africa).

14 The transcription of Bamana in this article conforms to the orthography official in Mali: more precisely, to the simplified version which does not mark tone, and in which è and ò are employed to represent the open vowels ε and ɔ.

15 Paul Kazuhisa Eguchi, 'Notes on the Arabic-Fulfulde Translational Reading in Northern Cameroon', *Kyoto University African Studies* 9 (1975), pp. 177–250.

16 Examples of materials translated from the *Jalālayn* include some several-word sequences from the commentaries on: verses 4, 8, 10, 13, 18, 28, 31, 33, 39, 44, 46, 57, 58, 61, 70, 73 and 75. The commentary on Q. 56:61 refers back to Q. 2:65, Q. 5:60 and Q. 7:166.

17 The following listing includes only those elements of the Qur'anic text that are immediately followed by a translation or explanation. Repeated readings are included, so long as each is followed by a commentary or translation, but quotations from other texts and the heading are not included. Each Arabic segment, as identified by verse number, is classified by length.

One script unit: (3)(3)(3)(4)(4)(6)(6)(6)(7)(7)(1)(10)(11)(11)(12)(13)(14)(15)(14)(16) (16)(17)(17)(17) (18)(18)(18)(18)(19)(20)(20)(20)(21)(21)(21)(21)(22)(24)(24)(24)(24)(24) (24)(24)(26)(28)(28)(29)(29)(30) (30)(31)(31)(32)(32)(34)(34)(35)(36)(36)(37)(37)(39) (40)(40)(42)(43)(45)(46)(46)(47)(47)(47)(47)(47)(47)(49)(49)(50)(50)(51)(51)(51)(52) (53)(53)(53)(53)(53)(53)(54)(54)(55)(56)(56)(57)(57)(58)(59)(60)(60)(60)(60)(60)(61)(61)(62)

(62)(63)(64)(64)(64)(65)(65)(65)(65)(66)(66)(67)(67)(68)(68)(68)(69)(70)(70)(71)(71)(71)(72)(72)(72)(72)(72)(72)(72)(72)(73)(73)(74)(74)(75)(76)(76)(76)(77)(77)(78)(80)(81)(82)(82)(82)(82)(82)(82)(83)(83)(84)(84) (84)(86)(87)(87)(89)(89)(89)(89)(92)(93)(96)(96)

Two script units:

(2)(2)(4)(5)(8)(9)(9)(10)(12)(13)(14)(14)(15)(2)(18)(19)(19)(21)(21)(21)(2)(26)(26)(27)(28)(33)(33)(33)(35)(36)(38)(39)(40)(40)(41)(42)(43)(44)(44)(45)(46)(47)(47)(48)(49)(51)(52)(52)(54)(55)(56)(56)(57)(58)(58)(59)(60)(61)(61)(62)(62)(63)(64)(65)(68)(69)(69)(69)(70)(70)(71)(72)(72)(73)(75)(76)(78)(79)(79)(81)(81)(83)(85)(86)(87)(88)(91)(92)(93)(93)(94)(95).

Three script units:

(3)(8)(9)(3)(17)(23)(25)(27)(40)(41)(50)(59)(61)(80)(85)(85)(86)(88)(90)(90)(91)(92)(95)(96).

18 For the verses with the exception of the refrain, the breakdown is as follows:

One script unit:

(1)(2)(2)(3)(3)(3)(3)(3)(4)(4)(5)(5)(5)(6)(6)(6)(6)(6)(6)(6)(7)(7)(7)(7)(7)(9)(9)(9)(9)(10)(10)(10)(11)(12)(14)(14)(14)(15)(15)(19)(19)(19)(20)(20)(20)(20)(20)(20)(20)(20)(22)(24)(24)(26)(26)(27)(27)(27)(27)(27)(27)(33)(33)(35)(35)(35)(37)(37)(37)(37)(37)(39)(41)(41)(43)(43)(43)(44)(44)(44)(44)(46)(46)(46)(46)(52)(54)(54)(54) (58)(58)(58)(64)(68)(68)(70)(70)(72)(72)(74)(76)(76)

Two script units:

(8)(8)(9)(11)(11)(12)(14)(15)(15)(17)(17)(20)(22)(24)(24)(26)(26)(37)(37)(33)(33)(33)(33)(35)(35)(39)(39)(41)(41)(44)(46)(48)(54)(54)(56)(56)(60)(66)(66)(70)(72)(74)(76)(76)(76)(76)(78)

Three script units:

(9)(27)(27)(27)(27)(33)(39)(43)(50)(54)(60)(60)(74)(78)

Four script units:

(8)(31)(33)(33)(52)(68)

Eight script units:

(39)

The refrain is ordered into segments of 1, then 3 script units (1 + 3; 29x), except for Q. 55:61, which is neither parsed nor explained, and Q. 55:32, where the distribution is: 1 + 1 + 4 + 1 + 3.

This commentary also has an introduction (with a citation but no parsing) and substantial remarks about the *basmala* (through which the introduction to the sura is furthermore continued). The explanation of the *basmala* is organised around 13 single-script-unit segments (including some words not from the Qur'an) and a citation comprising four script units.

19 These are: the emphatic form of the first person plural pronoun (*anw*, itself formed from the ordinary plural *an* + the plural marker *-w*; three occurrences, Q. 56:57, 60, 66); a conjunction (Q. 56:26, *fə*, 'except'); a verb (Q. 56: 47, *kəra*, 'became'); and twice, a noun (Q. 56:68, *ji*, 'water'; Q. 56:71, *tasuma*, 'fire').

20 See, for example, Mommersteeg, *Het domain*, ch. 4; and by the same author, *In the City of the Marabouts: Islamic Culture in West Africa* (Long Grove IL: Waveland Press, 2012), pp. 49–51 (translated from the fourth Dutch edition: 2009; first Dutch edition: 1998); Bouwman, *Throwing Stones at the Moon*, pp. 37–40.

21 Some examples are: Q. 56:1, *idhā waqaʿatiʿl-wāqīʿatu*, protasis; Q. 56:2, *laysa kādhibatun*, apodosis; *li-waqʿatihā*, indirect object (there are deviations from the word order of the Qur'anic verse); Q. 56:3, *khāfīdatun* and *rāfīʿatun*; predicates, active participles; v. 4, *idhā*, conjunction, *rujjatiʿl-ard*, verb and its subject, *rajjan*, noun in the 'adverbial accusative', qualifying the action indicated by the verb.

22 These deviations occur in the reading of Q. 56:2, Q. 56:45, Q. 56:60 and Q. 56:81.

23 These repetitions are: Q. 56:3, *khāfīdatun* ; Q. 56:9, *mā aṣḥābu'l-mash'amati*; Q. 56:10, *al-sābiqūna*; *thullatun min al-awwalīna* from Q. 56:13, repeated in the context of Q. 56:14; Q. 56:17, *mukhalladūna* (repeated twice); Q. 56:21, *wa-laḥmi ṭayrin, mimma* and *yashṭahūna*, each repeated once; Q. 56:22, *wa-hūrun*; Q. 56:24, *jazā'an* (repeated twice); Q. 56:26, *illā*, repeated in the context of the longer unit *illā qīlan*; Q. 56:28, *makhḍūdin*; *thullatun min al-awwalīna*, from Q. 56:39, repeated in the context of Q. 56:40; Q. 56:41, *aṣḥābu'l-shimāli* (repeated thrice); Q. 56:53, *fa-māli'ūna, minhā, al-buṭūna*, each repeated once; Q. 56:56, *aṣḥābu'l-shimāli*, a repetition harking back to Q. 56:41; Q. 56:58, *mā*, repeated in the context of the longer unit *mā tu'mnūna*; Q. 56:65, *fa-ḡaltum*.

24 The commentary on Q. 55 includes one occurrence of the pronoun *huwa*, three of *lā* ('no'), and four of *hākadhā* ('thus, so'), as well as several citations.

25 The reference to these trees is taken from the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* as further developed in the *Hāshiya*. For descriptions of these trees and a summary of proverbial lore, see Edward William Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon, Derived from the Best and Most Copious Eastern Sources* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society Trust, 1984), vol. 1, p. 1257, vol. 2, p. 2090, p. 2705 (1st edn: 1863–93). Charles Bailleul, *Dictionnaire bambara-français*, 3rd rev. edn (Bamako: Donniya, 2007), p. 465, identifies the *wòlò* as a member of the genus *Terminalia*. The term *ntòmò* (here employed to translate the Qur'anic *sidrin*, cf. v. 28) corresponds to the entry *ntòmòlòn*, identified as *Ziziphus mauritiana*, in Bailleul's dictionary (p. 347). For botanical descriptions, see Hans-Jürgen von Maydell, *Arbres et arbustes du Sahel*, French adaptation by Jean-Bernard Chappuis, Eschborn: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, 1992, diffusion: Weikersheim: Josef Margraf, pp. 368–71 and pp. 378–80.

26 For example, Marty, *Côte d'Ivoire*, pp. 266–7, who says that these difficulties, of which the scholars are well aware, make them reluctant to speak Arabic, even though from other points of view, some have an excellent knowledge of the language. This kind of reticence to express oneself orally in Arabic, because of inadequate pronunciation, may be at the origin of the myth that West-African scholars do not 'speak' or 'understand' Arabic.

27 Nevertheless, in reading Q. 56:49, his pronunciation of *qul* approximates *gul* (the Arabic voiceless uvular plosive *qāf* being assimilated to the Bamana voiced velar plosive /g/).

28 Typical Somono pronunciations in this commentary include: *kamii*; *jōnni* and *jōnnu* (standard: *jòn*) ('who'); *yèru*, pl. *yèruw* (standard: *yèrè*, *yèrèw*) (most usually in the sense of 'self, in itself'); *kabasun* (standard: *kabasen*) ('cloud'); *sangi* (standard: *sanji*) ('rain'). *Kogomaani* is a word specific to Somono speech (see more below). It is to be hoped that Somono speech forms will be studied soon, prior to complete assimilation to dominant language varieties.

29 The term 'verbo-nominal', widely used in the description of Mande languages, has been defined by Maurice Houis as referring to a category of lexemes, present in certain languages, that may, without prior morphological modification, contextually assume the syntactical functions characteristic of either verbs or nouns, receiving their typical morphological markers. Houis also employs the term 'bivalent'. See Houis, *Aperçu sur les structures grammaticales des langues négro-africaines*, Cours professé à la 1ère session de l'Initiation à l'étude des langues négro-africaines (Marseille: N.D. du Roucas-Blanc, 22 août – 3 septembre 1966, Lyon, 1967) (typescript), pp. 55–7, pp. 65–70; and by the same author, 'Plan de description systématique des langues négro-africaines', *Afrique et Langage*, 1st semester 1977 (special issue), pp. 19–25.

30 These sacred books are: the *Ṣuḥuf Ibrāhim* or 'Leaves of Abraham', generally believed to be lost, *Tawra* (Pentateuch), *Injīl* (Gospels, or more broadly the New Testament), and *Zabūr*, 'Psalms of David' (though the text recognised by Islam differs from that of the Bible).

31 See Bailleul, *Dictionnaire bambara-français*, pp. 74–5.

32 See, for example, E. Bolaji Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* (London: Longman, 1962); Harry Sawyerr, *God. Ancestor or Creator? Aspects of Traditional Belief in Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone* (London: Longman, 1970) (admittedly all within the periphery of possible Muslim influence); but also Bradford Keeney et al., *Ropes to God: Experiencing the Bushman Spiritual Universe* (Philadelphia: Ringing Rocks Press, 2003). It should be recognised, however, that all areas of the African continent have been, at certain times at least, accessible to influences from the historic monotheistic religions – which is not to say that this is the source of their belief. Archaeological research over the past century incontrovertibly proves that, contrary to a widespread view, the African continent has been highly permeable to outside contacts.

33 More precisely, these are the causative prefix *la-* and the so-called ‘passive participle’, the suffix *-len*.

34 See also the discussion above, p. 128, and the associated note (n. 25). Both ‘Umar al-Ṣalghawī (d. 1934), the famous Hausa-speaking scholar, and this Bamana-speaking Somono scholar, encountered a similar problem in the translation of *ḥanṣal*, ‘colocynth’, in the pre-Islamic poet Imrū’ al-Qays’ *Muʿallaqa* – translating it with reference to the most similar of locally-known plants. Thus, ‘Umar rendered it by ‘gourd’ (as indicated in Rattray’s English translation of the Hausa text; only one folio of the original Hausa manuscript is shown), while the Bamana-speaking scholar cited a bitter watermelon. See R.S. Rattray, ‘Hausa Poetry’ in E. E. Evans-Pritchard et al. (eds), *Essays Presented to C.G. Seligman* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1934), pp. 255–65 (on p. 261); and my ‘Un poème arabe en traduction bambara: la *Muʿallaqa* d’Imrū’l-Qays’ in Bertrand Hirsch and François-Xavier Fauvelle-Aymar (eds), *Les ruses de l’historien. Essais d’Afrique et d’ailleurs en hommage à Jean Boulègue* (Paris: Karthala, 2013), pp. 441–87.

35 Both prophets and messengers have received instruction from God, but only messengers have the obligation of communicating it to other human beings.

36 See Matthew Schaffer, *Djinns, Stars and Warriors: Mandinka Legends from Pakao, Senegal* (Leiden: Brill 2003), e.g. pp. 22–3, p. 63, pp. 118–19. *Kanda* is furthermore employed in Soninke: see e.g. Mody Bathily, *Dictionnaire soninké/français, français/soninké* (Rouen: Author, distributed Librairie Dades, 2008), pp. 140–1; Ousman Moussa Diagna, *Dictionnaire soninké-français (Mauritanie)* (Paris: Karthala, 2011), p. 100; and Brad Smeltzer and Susan Smeltzer, *Lexique soninké-français-anglais. Soninke-French-English Dictionary* (Bamako: SIL-Mali), p. 145 (on www.sil-mali.org, last consulted December 2012). In Songhay, it may mean ‘to convert to Islam’: see Youssef Mohamed Haïdara, Youssef Billo Maïga, and Mahamadou Bagna Maïga, *Dictionnaire songay-français* (Bamako: EDIS, 2010), p. 178.

37 Cf. *mafakoya* in the commentary on *Sūrat al-Rahmān*.

38 *Mura* is listed in only one dictionary, accompanied by inadequate, almost contradictory explanations. Thus, this dictionary states both that the general meaning of the word is ‘problem, worry’, and that the corresponding greeting, *i ni mura*, may be used jokingly to salute a peer. Gérard Dumestre, *Dictionnaire bambara-français* (Paris: Karthala, 2011), p. 709.

39 Cf. the discussion about *firisiyalen* (‘light blue or green’), in the commentary on Q. 55. It is otherwise evidenced only in Maurice Delafosse’s *Essai de manuel pratique de la langue mandé ou mandingue* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1901), p. 19, p. 22.

40 Or possibly from Soninke, where it is also used both as a scholarly term and in ordinary discourse. For *tana* in Soninke, see Oudiary Makan Dantioko, *Dictionnaire soninké-français* (Bamako: Jamana, 2003), p. 193, and Smeltzer and Smeltzer, *Lexique soninké*, p. 8, p. 255. For *tana* in Songhay, see e.g. A. Dupuis-Yakouba, *Essai de méthode pratique pour l’étude de la langue songoï ou songaï, langue commerciale et politique de Tombouctou et du Moyen-Niger* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1917), p. 197; Jeffrey Heath, *Dictionnaire songhay-anglais-français*

(3 vols. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998), vol. 1, p. 233; vol. 2, p. 181; and Hāidara et al., *Dictionnaire songhay-français*, p. 284. Heath suggests (plausibly in my view) that Songhay *tanaa* is a loanword from the Arabic root *th-n-y* ('other, different, additional'); by implication this would hold (directly or indirectly) for the other languages as well.

41 A full listing of Arabic loanwords in the appended commentary would include those below. Etymologies are provided only when they (or the word itself) are not cited by Bailleur (the etymologies were established by Michel Lagarde) and/or in the text of this article. However, Michel Lagarde provides further etymologies (not mentioned in the dictionary) in a duplicated document: *Influences de l'arabe sur la langue bambara* (Centre d'étude de langue bambara de Falajè, 1988).

Words are given in the forms in which they appear in the scholar's discourse, including grammatical markers and compounds that include elements of Bamana etymology. In the case of words that include elements of non-Arabic origin, the Arabic element(s) are underlined. The more straightforward cases include: abarikaw, Adama, Ala, Ala ta'ala, alijinè, alijinèdenw, alijinèdonbaaw, alijinèhòrònmuso, alijinèmuso, aljahanaama, alkiyama, alkiyamadon, alkurani, aya (from Ar. *āya*), baasi, balikuyara, barikada, barisabu, bataki, bikiru, bugutunyaamè, daamu, daamuta, daraja, darbu, diyèn, diyènkunuwomògòw, diyènmusow, dòròmè, dunge, dungew, duumifèn, duuminen, fujuninen (from Ar. *ḥuzn*, 'sadness'), garijègè, gudbanu, haali, hadamaden, hadamadenw, hadirin, hakè, hakilijigin, hakilima, hakilitigiw, halaki, haminen, hayida, hayidara, hayidatò, hèrè, hòrònmusow, Iblisa, islamèya, jahanaama, jahanamadenw, jahanamè, jahimi, jamakulu, janabatò, jurumuko, kaafiri, kaafiriya, kafu, kayira, kibaruya, kiniyanfandungew, kòdòròli, kurani, ladili, lafiya, lahara, laharadon, laharakènè, lajaba (from Ar. *al-ʿadhāb*, 'torment'), larisi (from Ar. *al-ʿarsh*, 'the throne'), luuluw (meaning specifically pearls in scholarly discourse, but either pearls or diamonds in ordinary speech), manton (from Ar. *umma*, 'community'), masiri (from Ar. *maṣāgh*, 'jewellery'; folk etymologies cite the Bamana verbo-nominal siri, 'to attach'), maymanati, mèlèkèw, nabi, nafole, nèema, nèemabaaw, nèemaso, nòniya (from Ar. *nauʿ*, 'sort, species'), nòrò (from Ar. *nūr*, 'light'), nunu, rayhanu, sahabaw (from Ar. collective *ṣaḥāba*, 'companions'), salamu, sariyatigiw, subhanallahi, suriya (from the Ar. root *ṣwr*, 'form; likeness'), tuma (from Ar. *thumma* 'then'), waati, wala (from Ar. *aw lā*, 'or not'), walijukè, walima (from Ar. *aw lam*, 'or not'), waliyu, walahi, wari (from the Qur'anic [Q. 18:19] *wariq*, 'money') yaakubaya, yaakubayabaaw, Zaquumu. Lagarde, *op. cit.*, provides the same or very similar etymologies for lajaba, nòrò and wala.

It is to be noted that in two instances (*barisabu*, *jamakulu*), a compound term is formed from two synonyms, one Bamana and the other Arabic, each reinforcing the other. *Hèrè* and *kayira* correspond to different degrees in the adaptation of the same Arabic root (*kh-y-r*), though not necessarily the same term, to the Bamana language.

Less obvious borrowings may include: *bònè*, *fisa* or *ka fisa*, *fèsèfèsè*, *gafe*, *ka surun* and *taasi*. The wide distribution of *bònè*, *fisa* and similar terms in West-African languages suggests that they are loans (cf. the listings in Maurice Delafosse, *La langue mandingue et ses dialectes* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, Paul Geuthner, 1955) (posthumous publication), p. 74, pp. 208–9). *Bònè* could perhaps stem from *bun* or *bawn* ('separation'), or *bayn* ('separation; discord'), while *fisa* ('to be better') (especially in relation to health) might come from *ṣiḥḥa* ('health') (by metathesis; furthermore, in many Manding and Soninke dialects, Arabic /h/ may be reinterpreted as /f/). *Fèsèfèsè* is common to Bamana, Soninke and Songhay-Zarma scholarly speech. Though widely understood, in Bamana it is connoted as a Muslim term; is systematically employed to translate the Arabic verb *fassara* and also its verbal noun, *tafsīr*; and is often said, by scholars, to derive from this set of Arabic words. It may be linguistically and culturally significant that an Arabic term would have been reinterpreted as a doubled one in a West-African context. Possible relationships between *gafe* and Ar. *kitāb* ('book') or *daftar*

(‘notebook’) have often been hypothesised; one can also suggest a relationship to Ar. *daffa* (‘book cover’, and perhaps by extension, ‘volume’). Bamana *ka surun* (‘to be near; to be short’), could well be a reinterpretation of the Ar. *qaṣīrun* (same meanings).

More surely, comparison with Songhay strongly indicates that *taasi* is borrowed from Ar. *fattāsh* (‘inquirer’), or another word from the same root; the Songhay term, like the Arabic ones, may have either concrete or abstract meanings (always abstract in Bamana). Perhaps not coincidentally, the *Taʾrīkh al-Fattāsh* (‘Chronicle of He Who Inquires’) is a famous historical work composed in Timbuktu in the mid-seventeenth century. For the Songhay terms, cf. Dupuis-Yakouba, *Essai de méthode pratique pour l’étude de la langue songoi ou songai*, p. 198; Heath, *Dictionnaire songhay-anglais-français*, vol. 1, p. 235, p. 182; Haïdara et al., *Dictionnaire songay-français*, p. 280.

Though they do not appear in the commentary on this particular sura, the astonishing trajectories of *dawula* and *dabali* are worth noting here. In Bamana, *dawula* means ‘the quality of being charming’ or, sometimes, ‘glory’, ‘prestige’, or ‘fame’. In Songhay (*dawla* or *addawla*), the latter meanings are preponderant – thus strongly suggesting that these West-African words all stem from the Arabic [*al-*]*dawla* (‘state’, i.e. the form of political organisation)! Bamana *dabali* and Songhay *dabari* (‘ruse, magical means’), are systematically used to render Ar. *dabbara*, which strongly suggests that these culturally loaded terms entered these languages as phonetic adaptations of Arabic ones.

Concerning the etymology of Manding words, see also Francesco Zappa, ‘When Arabic Resonates in the Words of an African Language: Some Morphological and Semantic Features of Arabic Loanwords and Calques in Bamana’ in Giuliano Lancioni and Lidia Bettini (eds), *The Word in Arabic* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 229–49.

42 *Dòlò* is usually translated as ‘beer’, and this is indeed the referent in most contexts. However, it more accurately means ‘alcoholic beverage’, and may also designate a medical drink or any flavourful beverage (for example, syrup or coffee).

43 In recent years, it has also become connoted as an intellectual term. Thus, an association founded by French-language-trained linguists, poets, educators and other leaders in defence of Mali’s native languages is called *Bènbakan dungew* (lit. ‘Friends of the ancestral languages’).

44 This term is not evidenced in the commentaries on Q. 55 and Q. 56, but there is an example in a commentary on the *Fātiḥa* (‘L’exégèse coranique’, pp. 71–2, p. 76).

45 See especially: Jean Bazin, ‘Princes désarmés, corps dangereux. Les ‘rois-femmes’ de la région de Segou’, *Cahiers d’études africaines* 28:3–4, no. 111–12 (1988) pp. 375–441; Youssouf Cissé and Wa Kamissoko, *La grande geste du Mali* (Paris: Karthala, 1988), pp. 294–9, pp. 344–47. Youssouf Cissé gave a series of yet-to-be-published lectures on West-African sacral kingship at the Sorbonne c. 1990.

46 This *so* is pronounced with a high tone, like the word for ‘house’, but scholars nevertheless consider that it is a distinct term; it contrasts tonally with *so* (‘horse’), which has a low or modulated tone. I have published another example of the use of this locution: *o la so bilennen*, (‘its reddest [dates]’), in an oral translation of al-Ḥarīrī’s (d. 516/1122) fifteenth *maqāma* (‘La prose littéraire arabe en traduction bambara: une *maqāma* d’al-Ḥarīrī’ in Ursula Baumgardt and Jean Derive (eds), *Paroles nomades. Ecrits d’ethnolinguistique africaine en hommage à Christiane Seydou* (Paris: Karthala, 2005), pp. 431–63; see p. 445, p. 453, p. 460). A *maqāma* is a story told in rhymed prose and verse.

47 Thus, *bonyènifèn*, *tangalifèn* and *jiginnifèn* correspond respectively to *karīmun*, *maknūnin* and *tanzīlun*, Q. 56:77, Q. 56:78, Q. 56:80; *duumifèn*, *kununfènw* and *kafolifèn* correspond respectively to *mukhalladūna*, *mabʿūthūna* and *majmūʿūna*, Q. 56:17, Q. 56:47, Q. 56:50. *Sisifèn* (‘smoke’), corresponds to an aspect of the meaning of *yaḥmūmin*, Q. 56:43. *Sènèfèn* (‘cultivated plant’), *fènkisè* (‘grain’) and *falenfèn* (‘growing thing’ and by extension ‘plant’),

figure in the explanations of Q. 56:65 and Q. 56:73; they correspond to *nabāt* ('plants') and *ḥabb* ('seed, grain') in al-Suyūṭī's commentary.

48 Thus, in Q. 56:6, *jènyèlifèn* ('dispersed thing'), renders *munbaththan*.

49 Thus, *muganmafèn* (Q. 56:20, Q. 56:32) (lit. 'succulent things'), also a fairly common word in ordinary discourse, is formed from *mugan* ('to suck'), the above-mentioned suffix *-ma*, used to form qualifiers, and *fèn*. While in this context it clearly means 'succulent fruits', in other contexts, I am told, it could refer to any food consumed in this way, for example, candy and ice cream.

50 See more below, p. 146 and note 70.

51 Although it is the majority social category in most Manding-speaking and other West-African societies (in which it may be designated by analogous terms), it is nevertheless perceived as extremely prestigious. The Bamana loanword *hòròn* has been formed from the Arabic indefinite nominative singular forms *ḥūrun* and *ḥurrun*.

52 The ordinary Bamana word for 'truth' is *tinyè*. It occurs frequently in this commentary (five times, including twice as an element of the scholarly term *tinyètigiya*), and eleven times in Q. 55.

53 For analysis of the Bamana terms *kiniyanfundungew* and *yaakubayabaaw*, see above pp. 135–6.

54 Q. 56:20, Q. 56:21 (2 occurrences): Ar. *mimmā*, Bamana *kamii fèn na*; Q. 56:24: Ar. *bi-mā*, Bamana *ni fèn ye*; Q. 56:58: Ar. *mā*, Bamana *fèn na*; Ar. *mā*, Bamana *fèn min bè*; Q. 56:63: Ar. *mā*, Bamana *fèn na*.

55 The Bamana translations are: Q. 56:8: *fèn jumèn*; Q. 56:9: *mun*; Q. 56:27: *jònni*; Q. 56:41: *mun*, and then in a second translation: *jònni*. *Jòn*, *jumèn*, and *mun* respectively mean 'who', 'which', and 'what'. *Jònni* is a Somono dialectal form of *jòn*.

56 Thus, in Bamana, the difference between ordinary and scholarly language is by no means as radical as in the Kanuri domain – related to the linguistic evolution from Old Kanembu as well as to the specificities of scholarly language (see the work of Bondarev). The misunderstandings of Bamana scholarly discourse by ordinary speakers merit a study in itself, but this is deferred to another venue for reasons of space. In general, it may be said that elementary expositions of *tawḥīd* ('theology') are more fully understood than *tafsīr*. However, only expositions of medieval poetry and art prose are perceived as recondite by ordinary speakers (see my, 'La prose littéraire arabe en traduction bambara' and 'Un poème arabe en traduction bambara').

57 It should be noted that *barisa* and *barisabu* are emphatic compound terms, formed from *bari* ('because') and *sa* (perhaps an alteration of *sisan*, 'now') or *sabu* ('cause', 'because', from the Arabic *sabab*, 'cause'). See also n. 41, above.

58 The verb *kofò* can mean 'to remember', 'to cite or mention' or 'to explain'. In the first two usages, it can be used as the equivalent of Ar. *dhikr* (in mystical as well as scriptural contexts). In the three instances in which it appears in the appended discussion, it is always used in the second sense. Concerning the probably Arabic etymology of *taasi*, see above, note 41.

59 These usages of *sa* and *ban* seem not to have been reported in the dictionaries. However, Bailleul, *Dictionnaire bambara-français*, p. 17, p. 27, p. 30, mentions several related usages of *ba(n)(i)*, while Dumestre, *Dictionnaire bambara-français*, mentions some related usages of *sa*, p. 858.

60 The other emphatic forms used here are: *e* (second person singular) and *ale* (third person singular).

61 Cf. Q. 56:54, Q. 56:28, Q. 56:4, Q. 56:23, Q. 56:47, Q. 56:21, Q. 56:18, Q. 56:15 and Q. 56:73. These words (many of which are not in the dictionaries, though they are all commonly understood, at least in the Segu area) respectively mean: to become extremely hot; to shred, rip

to pieces; to shake, vibrate; to scintillate; to reduce to fine powder; to move about; to rise up or take off; to gush forth; to be intertwined; to choose or select carefully.

62 These are: *bura* ('to tender cook'); *fara* ('to separate'; 'to tear apart'); *lamaa* ('to move or shake'); *mugu* ('to reduce to powder'); *munu* ('to turn'); *poyi* ('to flow', 'gush forth'); and *tòmò* ('to collect or select').

63 'Dynamic Style' in Haleem, *Understanding the Qur'an*, pp. 184–210.

64 Cf. the similar configurations of the familiar, the exotic, and the supernatural achieved in recounting, in Bamana, a nineteenth-century French novel and a late medieval Arabic romance (the *Sīrat Sayf b. Dhī Yazan*): 'La littérature française en traduction bambara: l'exemple du *Comte de Monte-Cristo*', *Journal des Africanistes* 80:1–2 (2010), pp. 151–75; 'Les œuvres orientales parmi les sources d'inspiration de la littérature orale ouest-africaine: un 'roman de chevalerie' arabe en traduction bambara', *Journal des Africanistes*, forthcoming. See also note 13, above.

65 Suffixation of the nominalising marker *-li* is usual, but not obligatory, in Bamana.

66 Either *gèlèya* or *ka gèlèn* may be used. For additional examples, see Q. 55:44, Q. 56:64, Q. 56:72.

67 The absolute accusative is well discussed by Davydov, 'On Souleymane Kanté's Translation', pp. 13–14. Additional discussion and examples are found in my, 'La prose littéraire arabe en traduction bambara', p. 444; and 'Un poème arabe en traduction bambara', p. 486; and 'Qur'anic Exegesis in Manding'. Other constructions involving polyptotons include those on the model *x ta x* or *x ka x*, where *x* is a noun while *ta* and *ka* are possessive markers ('Un poème', p. 486). The possible influence of Arabic written literature on the oral creations and literary style of the Tuareg of Niger is discussed by Dominique Casajus, 'L'errance d'Imrū'l-Qays: poésie arabe et poésie touarègue', *Journal des Africanistes* 72:2 (2002), 139–51; and on the rhetorical figures of ordinary Bamana speech, in 'La prose littéraire', p. 441.

68 See Ingse Skattum's key study, *De Bakoroba Koné à Camara Laye. La répétition comme trait d'oralité dans la littérature mandingue traditionnelle et moderne* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oslo, 1991).

69 Sory Camara, *Grain de vision. Afrique noire, drame et liturgie* (Bordeaux: Centre d'étude d'Afrique noire, 1994), pp. 22–6, p. 33; Dominique Zahan, *Sociétés d'initiation bambara. Le N'domo. Le Kòrè* (Paris: Mouton, 1960), pp. 170–1, at pp. 177–8, p. 340, p. 356.

70 The four elements are also discussed in *tafsīr*, including al-Šāwī's commentary on *Sūrat al-Raḥmān*, verses 14–15 (vol. 4, p. 199 in the Beirut edition). For examples of the four elements in West-African religions, see especially: Viviana Pâques, 'Bouffons sacrés du Cercle de Bougouni', *Journal de la Société des Africanistes* 24:1 (1954) p. 63–110; Amadou Hampâté Bâ, 'Le grand fétiche de Yérémadio', *Ecclesia* 249, (1969) pp. 27–33, continued in *Ecclesia* 250 (1970), pp. 48–55; M. Anthony, 'La théorie des quatre éléments dans les religions afro-brésiliennes', *Cahiers de Littérature Orale* 61 (2007) (special issue: 'La ronde des éléments'). For a critique of the notion of 'traditional' religions and an analysis of the processes through which Muslim influences were probably conveyed, see Jean-Loup Amselle, 'Le paganisme blanc' in his *Logiques métisses. Anthropologie de l'identité en Afrique et ailleurs* (Paris: Payot, 1990), pp. 181–208; Bréhima Kassibo, 'La géomancie ouest-africaine. Formes endogènes et emprunts extérieurs', *Cahiers d'études africaines* 32:4, n° 128 (1992), pp. 541–96; and by the undersigned, 'Notes sur les représentations cosmogoniques dogon, bambara et malinké et leurs parallèles avec la pensée antique et islamique', *Journal des Africanistes* 71:1 (2001), pp. 93–111.