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Islamic Education and Ample Space Layout in West African Islamic Manuscripts

Abstract: There is a distinctive type of manuscripts across the whole of West Africa characterised by ample space between the lines. This codicological feature seems to point to teaching practices wherein extra space is planned for annotations. This article attempts to draw a correlation between this specific layout and the content of the manuscripts, thus demonstrating that practices of Islamic education can be deduced from analysis of manuscript production. Following Introduction, section 2 discusses ample space layout relation to annotations in the Borno Quran manuscripts; section 3 focuses on the same features in manuscripts from Borno, other than Quran manuscripts; section 4 is a comparative survey of the Borno, Senegambia and Adamawa manuscripts in terms of the relationship between the types of texts and the ample-spaced layout. This comparison reveals a complex pattern of correlation between types of glosses, layout, titles of works, curricula and phases of education.

1 Introduction

West African Islamic manuscripts can be classified into different taxonomic types with respect to various codicological, palaeographic, philological, sociological and anthropological features – such as format and layout, script style and auxiliary signs, genre and language, social domains and cultural practices. The classification of the manuscripts along these parameters can give insights into the role the manuscripts played in a larger historical context. There is a distinctive

type of manuscripts across the whole of West Africa which is characterised by ample space between the lines. This codicological feature seems to point to teaching practices wherein extra space is planned for annotations. Evidence from the Soninke-speaking community in Senegal where the preparation of such sparse-line layout was assigned to advanced Islamic students suggests that this practice was part of a planned educational process.[1]

It is not clear if there is a systematic correlation between this particular codicological feature and texts used in teaching, because the ample space layout spans a variety of textual genres, from legal and grammatical manuals to treatises on belief and exegetical works, such as the *Risāla* by Qairawānī, the *Mukhtasar* by al-Khalīl, the *Alfiyya* of ibn Mālik, and the *ʿAqīda* of al-Sanūsī, to mention a few. On the other hand, there are genres (medical texts, works on astronomy, agriculture, literature and hagiologies) which are never written in the ample space layout, whether annotated or not, and yet many of them have extensive annotations. This article attempts to draw a correlation between this specific layout and the content of the manuscripts, thus demonstrating that practices of Islamic education can be deduced from analysis of manuscript production. To the best of my knowledge, such a three-way relationship between layout, content and educational practices has not yet been proposed for sub-Saharan material. Thus, as a first attempt of this kind, the present analysis is far from being conclusive and is more an invitation to explore the potential behind such relations than the result of comprehensive research. The preliminary nature of the study applies both to the material I have worked with for a long time and to the material only recently included in the scope of my research. With this disclaimer in mind, I shall first explain the choice and range of material presented here for comparative purposes.

The study bears on three sets of data. The first set is represented by the Borno manuscripts which were produced by Kanuri-speaking Islamic scholars of the Borno Sultanate in what is now northeast Nigeria, southeast Niger and west Chad. This Borno manuscript culture developed with extensive use of a specialised local language applied to Quranic and general Islamic education. Arabic – the predominant language of the main text – was translated into an archaic literary language, Old Kanembu, and its more recent variant, Tarjumo.[2] Most Borno manuscripts are held in private collections in Nigeria and Niger (see the link to the Old Kanembu Islamic Manuscripts digital archive, OKIM, in references to digital resources), although some can be found in public libraries in Nigeria and Eu-

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1 Ogorodnikova's notes from fieldwork data in February 2014.
2 Bondarev 2013; Bondarev 2014a; Bondarev/Tijani 2014.

rope. The commentaries in Old Kanembu are found in Quran manuscripts (9 copies digitised so far with the oldest Quran manuscript dating to 1669, and more recent ones to the early nineteenth century), in works on grammar and faith, and in didactic texts on jurisprudence. The amount of digitised material comprises more than 140 manuscript items photographed in Nigeria, Niger and Chad.

The second set of data are those manuscripts produced in the Senegambia region in Soninke-speaking communities or in the communities where a certain variety of Soninke was used as a language of interpretation and translation of Arabic texts, the languages of the scribes being Mandinka or other Mande languages linguistically related to Soninke. Featuring many annotations in a literary variety of Soninke (also known as Old Mande) and having many informative colophons, these manuscripts can be traced to the Suwarian and Jakhanke scholarly lineages who spoke Soninke and who propagated Islam from the Senegambia to the Upper Volta valley.[3] The Old Mande/Soninke material covers a time span from the end of the eighteenth century to the twentieth century, and probably up to our own times, given the fact that the tradition of writing talismanic texts in Soninke and other Mande languages has not disappeared. The current database of the digitised manuscripts with Mande glosses has drawn on recent findings of Old Mande/Soninke manuscripts (Dobronravin 2012) and on the DFG-funded projects at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC), University of Hamburg. Since 2012, the digital collection of Old Mande/Soninke manuscripts has been expanded, with the addition of 85 newly discovered annotated manuscripts. More than 8,000 digital pages are now deposited in the Old Mande Islamic Manuscripts digital archive (OMIM), which is a restricted access resource. The Old Mande/Soninke manuscripts have been identified in nine European libraries, and in many private collections in Senegal.[4]

Finally, the third set of material is the manuscripts with annotations in Arabic, Hausa and Fulfulde preserved in the Modibbo Ahmadu Fufure collection kept

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3 Bondarev et al. forthcoming; Ogorodnikova 2016; forthcoming. At the beginning of our research on manuscripts with glosses in Mande languages, 'Old Mande' was used as a cover term for varieties of the language found in the old manuscripts which formed an initial core corpus of our study. We knew that the language with many features similar to Soninke belonged to the Mande linguistic family but we were not certain about its precise linguistic affiliation and degree of linguistic dissimilarity from Soninke or other Mande languages. Subsequent research, however, demonstrated that the variety used in the initial core corpus of manuscripts is not too distant from modern Soninke, hence a more accurate term 'Soninke manuscripts'. We retain 'Old Mande' in the titles of the projects and repositories because they deal with various early manuscripts annotated in several Mande languages, including Soninke, Mandinka and Jula.

4 Bondarev et al. forthcoming.

in Arewa House, Centre for Historical Documentation and Research, Kaduna, Nigeria. This collection of about 900 manuscripts originates from Adamawa region in eastern Nigeria where two Islamic manuscript traditions converged in the beginning of the nineteenth century: the old Borno tradition grounded in Kanuri-speaking communities and the Sokoto tradition with strong Fulfulde and Hausa cultural and linguistic layers. This merger resulted in what became known as Adamawa Emirate.[5] The Borno and Sokoto influences are most discernible in the types of Arabic script as well as in the distribution of languages relative to these styles. Thus, manuscripts with annotations in Hausa more often pattern with the angular Borno type of script, whereas annotations in Fulani often pattern with a more cursive style typical of manuscripts written among the Fulani scholars. When compared to the manuscripts from Borno and the Senegambia, the Adamawa material is especially interesting inasmuch as it seems to offer insights into the connective space between the eastern (Borno) and western (Senegambia) cultural areas.

The layout features of the manuscripts from Borno and the wider Senegambia region were initially studied as part of the project 'Writing and reading paratexts in West African Islamic manuscripts: a comparative study of commentaries on Arabic texts in Old Kanembu and Old Mande' which subsequently developed into the project 'Islamic manuscripts with a wide spaced layout as mediators of teaching practices in West Africa', both projects being integrated into the collaborative research SFB 950 at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, University of Hamburg. The manuscripts originating from Hausa and Fulfulde speaking scholarly milieus in what is now north and east Nigeria are the subject of a preliminary study affiliated to the 'Wide space layout project' and conducted by Musa Salih Muhammad, Arewa House, and myself.

This article focuses more on manuscripts of Borno origin with annotations in Old Kanembu, and this for two reasons. Firstly, they were better studied than those from other areas with annotations in Soninke, Hausa and Fulfulde. Secondly, the studies in the Borno manuscripts resulted in several interdisciplinary approaches which set up a framework for similar research in other annotated manuscripts, laying the foundation for the current projects mentioned above.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. Section 2 discusses ample space layout relation to annotations in the Borno Quran manuscripts; section 3 focuses on the same features in manuscripts from Borno, other than Quran manuscripts; section 4 is a comparative survey of the Borno, Senegambia and Adamawa manuscripts in terms of the relationship between the ample-spaced layout

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5 Abubakar 1977; Last 1967.

and the types of texts rendered in this layout, with subsection 4.4 drawing a preliminary hypothesis of a correlation between types of glosses, layout, titles of works, curricula and phases of education; section 5 provides some conclusions and outlines questions for future studies.

2 Ample space layout in the Borno Quran manuscripts

2.1 Preliminaries

Copies of the Quran produced in the eleventh/seventeenth and twelfth/eighteenth century Borno (Bivar 1960; Bondarev 2014a) are among the earliest known Islamic manuscripts produced in sub-Saharan Africa. Most of these manuscripts have wide margins and spaced out lines. Spacious margins as a codicological feature of the written Quran must have been known in Borno and her political predecessor Kanem much earlier – with the introduction of Islam in at least the fifth/eleventh century. This is because in the Middle East and North Africa, the ratio between the size of the page and the size of the writing space in the Quran manuscripts was already favourable to the margins as early as the third/ninth century. This can indirectly be inferred from the ratio of 2/3 between the height of the writing area and the height of the page.[6] Most of the extant Middle Eastern and North African Quran manuscripts came to us with worn edges or trimmed to accommodate later bindings and therefore it is impossible to tell whether the Quran manuscripts with lesser marginal space existed during that time.[7] (Déroche 1985; 1992). What is known is that there was significant variation in space between the lines and the extent to which this space was filled by the ascenders and descenders of the letters. On the one hand, most of the earliest ninth to twelfth century manuscripts show a tendency to fill up the entire interlinear space by the ascenders and descenders irrespective of density of the baselines (as can be seen in almost all specimens reproduced in Déroche 1992). On the other hand, the later Qurans of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries from Iran, Iraq, Mamluk Egypt and Syria as well as Anatolia reflect a much more generous approach to the interlinear space.[8]

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6 Déroche et al. 2006, 167–173; George 2007.

7 Déroche 1985; 1992.

8 See James 1992, 34 (cat. 5, north-west Iran), 56 (cat. 10, Iran), 60 (cat. 11, Iraq), 78 (cat. 17, eastern Iran or northern India), 108 (cat. 23, Iraq), 110 (cat. 24, Iraq), 114 (cats 26 and 27, Iran), 126 (cat. 29, Shiraz), 142 (cat. 33, Iran), 148 (cat. 35, Iran), 154 (cat. 37 and 38, Mamluk or Iran),

There is a wealth of indirect evidence of a well-developed scholarly 'bookish' tradition in Kanem-Borno in the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries[9]; however, given the gap of more than 300 years between the latest of those thirteenth to fourteenth century Qurans (mentioned above) and the earliest dated *muṣḥaf* from Borno (1080/1669), it would be futile to search for Middle Eastern, North African or Iranian prototypes of these seventeenth century Borno manuscripts. Rather, this basic observation about the difference in layout of Middle Eastern and North African Quran manuscripts from the pre-twelfth century period as against the post-twelfth century manuscripts from Iran, Iraq, Egypt and Anatolia is taken as a typological point of departure. This rough comparison also allows me to stress that the later and somewhat more peripheral manuscript traditions feature wide space between the lines. This interlinear space seems to be a mere visual element of the overall design applied to the production of the Qurans in the Arab-speaking lands, while the manuscripts outside those lands are characterised by a distinctive functional use of the interlinear space, that is the incorporation of annotations in Persian and Turkish.[10] From this point of view, these latter manuscripts are comparable to the Borno Qurans, for they were all produced in Islamic communities with predominantly non-Arabic speaking populations.

The Quran copies in sub-Saharan Africa fall into three different types of layout determined by the arrangement of marginal and interlinear space: (1) wide margins and spaced lines, (2) wide margins and dense lines, (3) narrow margins and dense lines. There might be a fourth type, with narrow margins and spaced lines, but I have never come across any of this kind and – given the overwhelming co-occurrence of spaced lines with wide margins – it is unlikely that such a type exists. The two first types (type 1 = wide margins and spaced lines, type 2 = wide margins and dense lines) can be classified into (a) manuscripts with annotations and (b) those without annotations. Type 3 (narrow margins with dense lines) does not typically have annotations, unless the narrow margins resulted from later trimming or wear

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158 (cat. 39, Mamluk), 186 (cat. 46, Mamluk), 196 (cat. 48, Anatolia or the Jazirah), and 208 (cat. 51, Anatolia). There is no clear chronological line between the 'earlier' and the 'later' manuscripts and the differences in layout are better treated as tendencies. Thus, there are few Persian Qurans dating to the eleventh or twelfth century written in the so-called 'Persian kufic' script with wide space between the lines allowing for translation in Persian below each line, see Small 2015, 44–47.

9 See the elaborated pre-fourteenth century layer of the *tafsīr* tradition in Borno Qurans which points to intensive book based scholarship (Bondarev forthcoming); for a recent update on external and internal historical sources on early Borno scholarly tradition see *inter alia* Dewière 2008; 2012 and Bondarev 2013; 2014a.

10 James 1992, 78–81, 126–129, 208–211; Efthymiou 2010; Small 2015, 44–47.

and tear (as, for example, is the case of the Quran manuscript from the Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Arab 402). I will briefly discuss the Quran manuscripts without annotations before turning to those with annotations, the latter being very important for the understanding of the significance of extra space for Islamic education and scholarly practices.

2.2   Quran manuscripts without annotations

Type 1 b (wide margins, spaced lines, no annotations) seems to be very rare. I am only aware of 'Yunfa's Quran' (Jos MS 62) that dates to the late eighteenth century and supposedly belonged to the ruler of Gobir, Sarkin Gobir Yunfa (Fig. 1). The average size of its page is 15 × 20 cm and it has a fixed seven lines per page layout. Although the edges of the paper are worn, the width of the margins is still very impressive: the text area is only 5 × 11.5 cm, giving a ratio of 4:1 between the margin and the text space. The only annotation in the manuscript is a long passage about the virtues of memorizing the Quran, written in a different hand (surprisingly *suqī* – the script type popular in northern Mali, see Nobili 2011, 125–131).
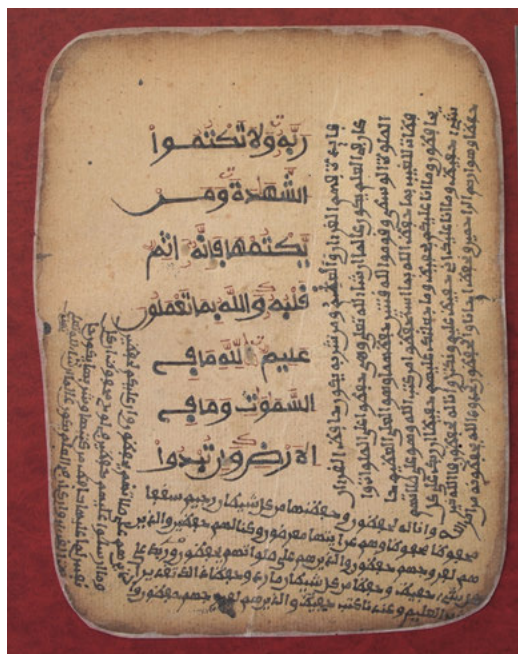

Fig. 1: Quran, 'Yunfa's Qur'an' manuscript. Jos Museum, Jos MS 62.

Type 2 b (wide margins, dense lines, no annotations) is in a way the epitome of the sub-Saharan Quran. It is the most frequent layout of Quran manuscripts, and has found its way into many codicological and palaeographic descriptions of such manuscripts, e.g. Brockett (1987), Contadini et al. (1999) and Déroche (2004, 87). The size of the paper is typically equivalent to bifolios folded in half, giving an approximate average dimension of 16 × 22 cm (i.e. approximately 'quarto' size). The ratio between the marginal and text space ranges roughly from 1:1 to 1.8:1 (as in Brockett 1987 and Déroche 2004 respectively; these figures are given only as an orientation because calculating an average ratio would require a separate statistical study). Some larger size manuscripts feature even a higher ratio of 2.5:1 (margin vs text space) as in the manuscripts of Imam Yousouf of Nguigmi with the paper size 28 × 18 cm and the text area 14.5 × 8.5 cm (Fig. 2).
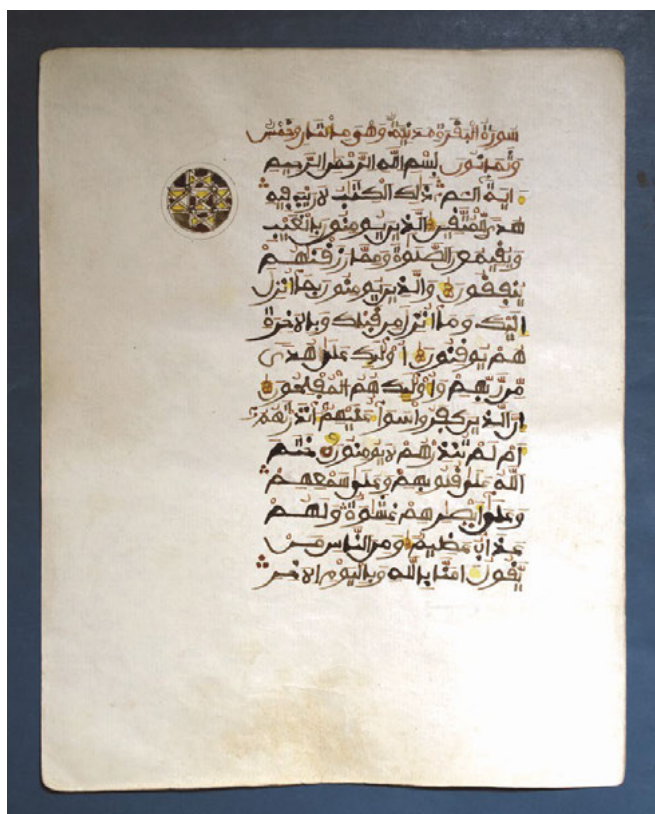

Fig. 2: Quran. Nguigmi, Niger, Imam Yousouf's collection; Old Kanembu Islamic Manuscripts, Digital Collections, SOAS, London.

Type 3 (narrow margins with dense lines) is not a popular layout for Quran manuscripts, and it usually betrays lesser trained scribes. An example of this type is manuscript OR.636 in the Special Collection of the Cambridge University Library (Fig. 3).
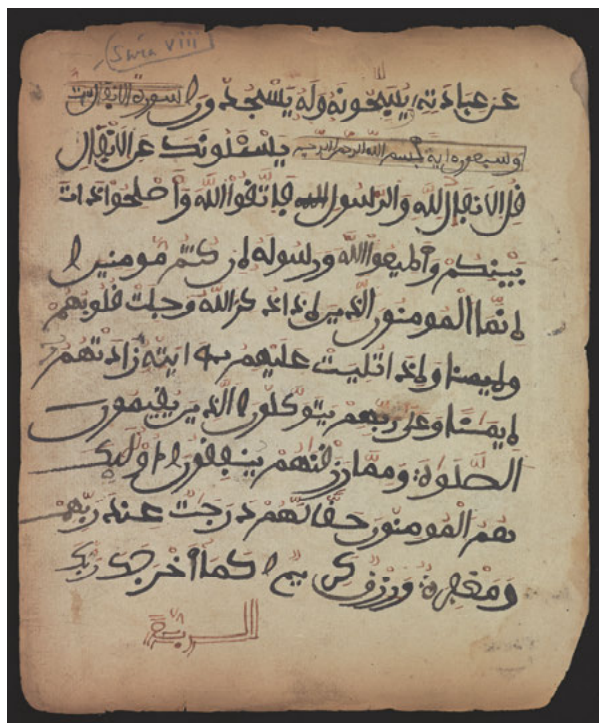

Fig. 3: Quran. Special Collections, Cambridge University Library. OR.636.

2.3 Quran manuscripts with annotations

Annotated Quran manuscripts are predominantly represented by type 1 layout (wide margins and spaced lines). Type 2 (wide margins, dense lines) does not seem to be very common and, presently, I am aware of only one such manuscript, that is MS. (N334) Arabe 402 in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Fig. 4). The sixteen-page section (folios 247 to 253) of this seventeenth-century Borno Quran has a 'quarto' format (i.e. the second fold of the original sheet of paper) but its current dimensions (19 × 15 cm) no longer represent its original size because the edges were trimmed to accommodate this fragment (from Q.68 to Q.98) into the

Fig. 4: Quran. Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS.Arabe 402, fol.249a.

composite volume of the Quran.[11] The notion 'dense lines' is a relative term because the number of lines varies across manuscripts and the space density depends on the size of the paper. Therefore, it is difficult to calculate the precise difference between the dense and spaced manuscripts in terms of the number of lines. Fortunately, the dense-line manuscripts I have consulted so far differ from the spaced-line manuscripts in that they have almost twice the number of lines, leaving no room for overlapping or borderline cases. Thus, the MS. Arabe 402 (which I consider a dense line type) has 19 lines per page contrasted with the similar size MS. E. AR20–1, Kaduna National Archives, that has 9 lines per page (the spaced line type), as illustrated in Fig. 4 and Fig. 5.
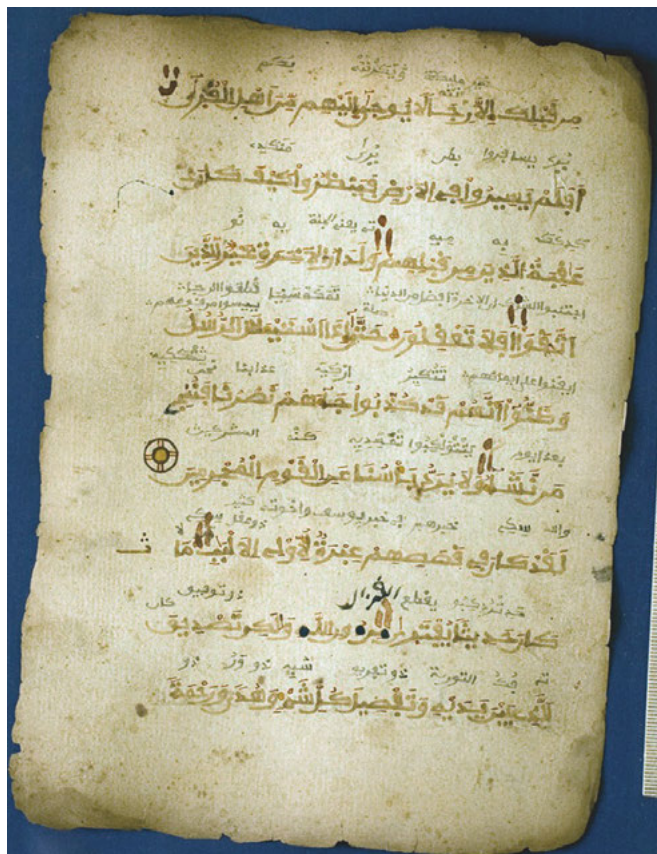
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11 Déroche 1985, 48.

Fig. 5: Quran. Kaduna National Archives, Nigeria; Old Kanembu Islamic Manuscripts, Digital Collections, SOAS, London, MS. E. AR20-1.

Compared to other annotated Quran manuscripts, the MS. Arabe 402 stands out as an exception because the spacing between the lines hardly allows room for annotation. Nonetheless, the scribe who added the annotations in Old Kanembu (possibly the same person who wrote the main text) managed to squeeze these tiny glosses into a space of about 5 mm between the lines which are 10 mm apart. It is not clear whether the scribe anticipated the interlinear additions to this manuscript from the start. And even if he did, he must have intended to add only that quantity of annotations which was consistent with the interlinear space. However, the space proved to be insufficient for some of the longer glosses, resulting in crammed overlaying of words. In contrast, longer glosses and a variety of different commentaries are much better handled by type 1 layout to which I now turn.

2.4 Type 1 layout: wide margins and spaced lines

Two typical formats are found in annotated Quran manuscript from Borno: one is a large size *muṣḥaf* (average dimensions being 33 × 23 cm, roughly corresponding to folio format, i.e. a single fold of the original sheet) and the other is half the size (the average dimension being 20 × 15, corresponding to a quarto format). The larger Qurans commonly have 11 to 12 lines per page as in the following manuscripts: MS.1YM, MS.2ShK, MS.4MM, Kano MS (all available in digital form on the OKIM website). The so called 'Konduga MS' has 13 lines (OKIM) and the MS.3ImI has a varying number of lines, from 11 to 15. The ratio between the margins and text area is approximately 1.7:1 in all manuscripts. Only two of the smaller (quarto) size Qurans are represented in the present corpus; both have nine lines per page and the ratio between the margins and text area is approximately 1.7:1 in MS.AR.33 (Kaduna, NAK) and 1:1 in the MS.E. AR.20−1 (Kaduna, NAK).

Fig. 6: Quran Jos Museum; Old Kanembu Islamic Manuscripts, Digital Collections, SOAS, London; Digital Repository, Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, Hamburg, MS.3ImI.

It is obvious that such a combination of interlinear spacing and wide margins provided enough room for annotations. In some of the manuscripts, the arrangement of annotations may seem chaotic, as on the first pages of MS.3ImI (Fig. 6), and in others there is a more orderly configuration of secondary writings. Fortunately, we have direct evidence that the annotations were already intended by the scribe while copying the main text. This evidence comes from one of the most densely annotated manuscripts, MS.3ImI (dated 1080/1669). After the last chapter of the Quran (*sūrat al-nās*) the scribe adds a quotation from the exegetical treatise *al-Taḥbīr fī ʿilm al-tafsīr* 'The composition on *tafsīr* studies' by the famous Egyptian scholar al-Suyūṭī (849/1445–911/1505). The quotation discusses various authorities who disagree on the matter of mixing the Quran with commentaries and comes to the conclusion that it is permitted to write commentaries in copies of the Quran as long as they are used in teaching:

> Abū ʿUbayd narrated on the authority of Ibn Masʿūd that he said, 'Free the Quran and do not mix it with anything else.' It was narrated on the authority of Ibrāhīm that he disliked (writing) commentaries on the Quran, and Mālik said, 'There is no harm in this (writing commentaries) in the copies of the Quran used to teach the youth, as for the master copies (*ummahāt*) then do not (mix them with commentaries)' (Bondarev 2014, 143).

The flood of annotations in this manuscript shows that the scribe took full advantage of this right. The annotations were added in consecutive stages. The interlinear space was the first to be populated and the marginal the second. Within the interlinear space – as will be shown – we find different kinds of glosses, one type preceding the other. In order to better understand the relationship between the annotations and the layout it is important to explain the nature of the annotations found in the Borno Qurans.

2.5 Arrangement of annotations

Nowadays, traditional Borno *ʿulamāʾ* (scholars) interpret the Quranic Arabic in Old Kanembu applying their knowledge of Arabic grammatical structures as described in traditional Arabic linguistic treatises. The function of Old Kanembu is motivated by the grammatical module of *tafsīr* studies, which includes *iʿrāb* (nominal and verbal inflections), *ḥarf* (particles), *naḥw* (syntax) and other related disciplines. Although this curriculum package is an indispensable part of advanced Quranic education, the Borno *ʿulamāʾ* do not strictly adhere to Arabic linguistic theory, and also employ the distinctive linguistic properties of the Old Kanembu language. The sophisticated annotations in Old Kanembu incorporate four explanatory levels: (a) morphosyntactic, (b) phrase by phrase / lexical, (c) sentential and (d) interpretative

(the latter implicitly incorporating explications based on the famous Arabic exegesis *tafsīr al-Jalālayn*). Thus, the practice of interpretation of the Quran in Old Kanembu is built on two interrelated platforms: metalanguage (i.e. a language designed for the description of another language) and exegesis (i.e. interpretation of the text).

These four levels of presentation of the Quranic text reflect stages of formal language acquisition, namely learning Arabic together with literary Old Kanembu. The four levels are represented in both oral and manuscript forms. In the oral mode of Quranic teaching and learning, the teachers and students perform a phrase-by-phrase parsing of the Quranic text with an incremental increase of complexity in Old Kanembu output. The prosodic pattern of the Old Kanembu phrases delineates their terminus points. The pitch goes high on the last syllable of a syntagma and the vowel of that syllable receives prominent lengthening. These elements are usually final syllables of verbs or monosyllabic postpositional clitics and so the prosody highlights the morphosyntactic and phrase by phrase levels.[12]

The same four levels are reflected in the annotated Borno Quran manuscripts. The phases of language acquisition and processing of the Quranic text have distinct visual features which are as follows. Level (1) – morphosyntactic parsing – is represented by short graphemic items written above those Arabic words that are subjects and objects of verbal phrases, heads of prepositional phrases, nouns with genitive ending, etc. Level (2) – phrasal / lexical – is represented by short verbal and noun phrases written above the corresponding Arabic phrases. Level (3) – sentential translation – is seen in full Old Kanembu clauses written either interlineally or in the margins if interlinear space has already been exhausted by the preceding procedures. Level 4 – the interpretation that goes beyond strictly grammatical structures – is reflected in longer passages in Old Kanembu which may have lexical items that are translations of Arabic words of an Arabic *tafsīr* rather than of those given in the Quran.[13] These passages are also written in the margins. Finally, there is level 5 in the Quran manuscripts, namely annotations in Arabic quoted from many Arabic authored *tafāsīr*. These tend to occur in the margins, but sometimes also between the lines.[14]

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12 Bondarev 2013; Bondarev/Tijani 2014.

13 Bondarev 2013; Tamari/Bondarev 2013.

14 Bondarev forthcoming.

2.6 Glosses versus commentaries

Regarding content, function and placement on the page, the different kinds of annotations can be grouped into two more general categories: the interlinear annotations which I call 'glosses' and the marginal annotations which I call 'commentaries' (Tab. 1). Interlinear glosses represent translational activity based on the application of the Arabic grammatical tradition adjusted to the structures of the target language.[15] The four levels of Old Kanembu annotation can be grouped into two educational stages. The first is a strictly pedagogical stage (the morphosyntactic level and phrase-by-phrase level) and the second is an advanced stage of Quranic education (the sentential level and interpretational level).[16] The first "pedagogical" stage predominantly occurs between the lines, whereas the second stage is represented in the margins (with the sentential level as a borderline case, sometimes occurring between the lines as well).

In contrast to the interlinear glosses, marginal commentaries reflect a more advanced level of scholarship whereby a larger body of texts in Arabic are used as sources for the exploration of the main text, e.g., exegesis (*tafsīr*) treatises in the case of Quran manuscripts with annotations in Old Kanembu (Bondarev forthcoming). Evidence that the interlinear type of annotation (glosses) preceded the marginal type (commentaries) is easily retrievable from the way the different layers or levels of writing interact with each other on the page, and from the pages of single manuscripts that preserve traces of phased production of the annotated *muṣḥaf*. I have illustrated the phases of accumulation of secondary texts elsewhere on the example of MS.AR.33 (dated 1117/1705; Kaduna, NAK).[17] This volume of the Quran was probably produced among Kanuri-speaking *'ulamā'* in Hausa-speaking Katsina. Three folios selected from the manuscript demonstrate three separate text arrangements. The first is the Quranic text, the second is the Quranic text with Old Kanembu glosses, and the third is the Quran, Old Kanembu and an Arabic commentary (*tafsīr*). The *terminus ad quem* for the different types of annotations on the same page can be identified by how the glosses and commentaries mesh. The most conspicuous is the page from MS.3ImI (dated 1080/1669) which has the interlinear glosses in Old Kanembu written in a bright brown ink. The marginal space – into which the glosses occasionally run from the main text area – is filled by passages

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15 There is a certain type of manuscript with intra-linear glosses, i.e. glosses written within the line following small sections of Arabic text in the same line. This type of annotation is beyond the scope of the article.

16 Bondarev 2013.

17 Bondarev 2014a.

from *al-Tafsīr al-jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qurʾān* by Abu ʿAbd-Allāh al-Qurṭubī (671/1273). The *tafsīr* quotations are carefully penned around the Old Kanembu glosses, showing that the glosses were written prior to the commentaries. The same order of writing is plainly reflected in other manuscripts. Figures 7, 8 and 9 illustrate the point.

Fig. 7: Quran, Q.27:49-61, *terminus ad quem* for the different types of the annotations. Jos Museum; Old Kanembu Islamic Manuscripts, Digital Collections, SOAS, London; Digital Repository, Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, Hamburg, MS.3Iml.
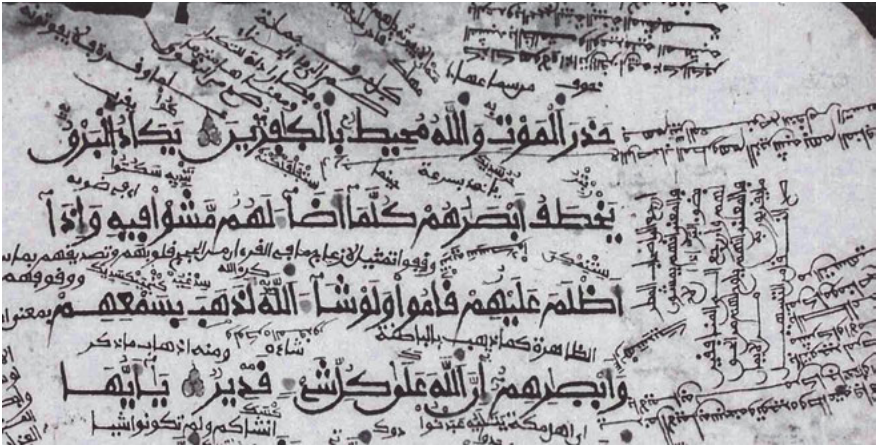
Fig. 8: Quran, Q.2:20, *terminus ad quem* for the different types of the annotations. Old Kanembu Islamic Manuscripts, Digital Collections, SOAS, London, MS.2ShK.

Tab. 1: Glosses vs commentaries: two types of annotations in the Borno Quranic manuscripts.

Criteria (from formal to functional)	Old Kanembu (type 1)	Old Kanembu (type 2) & Arabic
	Not absolute but rather tendency	
1. Placement on page	Interlinear	Marginal
2. Length	Shorter	Longer
3. Authorship	Anonymous	Authored
4. Degree of dependence on text	Dependent on syntax and lexicon of the main text	Dependent on the meaning of the main text
5. Transmission	Mostly oral	Mostly written
6. Content variance	Predictable (significant consistency across different manuscripts)	Unpredictable (manuscript specific)
7. User's qualification	Lower level of expertise	Higher level of expertise
8. Recognition within the tradition	Called '*tarjumo*'	Called '*tafsir*'
→	Gloss	Commentary

Fig. 9: Quran, Q.21:95-104, *terminus ad quem* with Old Kanembu and quotations from *al-Jalālayn,* al-Wāḥidī's *al-Wajīz* & Samarqandī's *Baḥr al-ʿulūm*. Old Kanembu Islamic Manuscripts, Digital Collections, SOAS, London, MS.4MM.

2.7 Interlinear annotations and the spacing of the lines

We can now return to the question of the relationship between interlinear annotations and the spacing of the lines. Some annotations are written parallel to the lines of the main text and some obliquely (previous three Figures, 8–10). Although not an absolute rule, there is a noticeable tendency to write the Old Kanembu glosses obliquely, and the Arabic annotations parallel to the main text. This tendency is seen in MS.3ImI which has 15 lines on the page (Fig. 7) and especially in MS.2ShK that has 11 lines on the page (Fig. 10), the latter having more
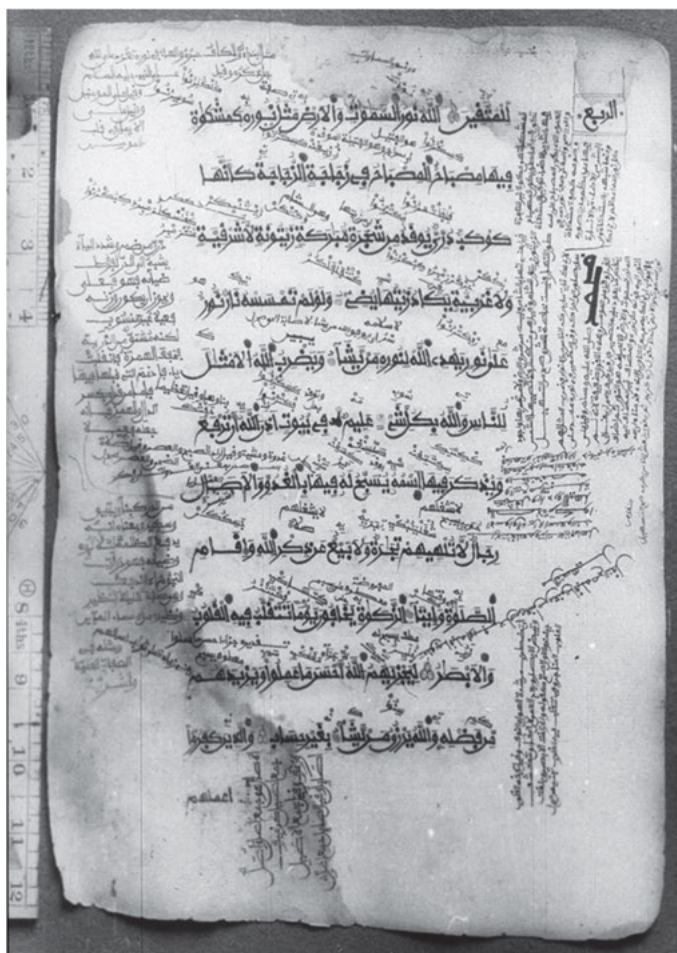

Fig. 10: Quran, Q.24:34-39. Old Kanembu Islamic Manuscripts, Digital Collections, SOAS, London, MS.2ShK.

space between the lines. Compared to the more tightly arranged MS.3ImI, the angle of the written glosses in MS.2ShK is much wider, with some glosses tilted at almost 45°.

As mentioned before, the interlinear glosses reflect a "pedagogical" stage of learning Old Kanembu which means that extra space between the lines was anticipated for this specific, less advanced phase of learning practice. These practices were expressed in the glosses written obliquely, i.e. those that take up more space. Thus, the linguistic and codicological features of the early Borno Qurans show an important correlation between the formal process of language acquisition (Arabic and Old Kanembu) and an almost standardised ample-spaced layout (see the ratios of margin to text area and the number of lines per page described earlier). The pressure of formal learning and teaching practices on the interlinear space is much more discernible in the non-Quranic manuscripts from the Borno area and other regions of West Africa.

3 Ample space layout in non-Quranic manuscripts from Borno

Compared to the Borno Qurans, the non-Quranic annotated manuscripts available in our digital corpus (OMIM and OKIM) are represented by much more recent specimens. The manuscripts from Borno date from the mid-nineteenth to the late twentieth centuries, the manuscripts from Hausa and Fulani speaking areas in what is now northern and north-eastern Nigeria date to the nineteenth / early twentieth centuries, and the manuscripts from the Senegambia span from the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Most of the manuscripts of this particular ample space type are produced in the 'quarto' format, on average measuring 15 × 20 cm. The non-Quranic Borno manuscripts originate from a larger cultural area of Kanuri and Kanembu-speaking *'ulamāʾ*, including northeast Nigeria, southeast Niger and northwest Chad.

The method of inserting annotations at an angle between amply spaced lines which is already visible in the early Borno Qurans is fully developed in these non-Quranic manuscripts. The space between the lines has increased substantially, with only five to six lines per page. Consequently, the angle of the annotations is always wide – from 35° to 55°. In many manuscripts, this arrangement is made at the expense of the margins so that the text area becomes wider and the margins narrower, with the resultant ratio reversed in favour of the text area, as opposed to the Quran manuscripts. A 27-page manuscript of the popular didactic poem *al-*

Murshid al-muʿīn ʿalā ʾl-ḍarūrī min ʿulūm al-dīn by Ibn ʿĀshir [ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. ʿĀshir al-Anṣārī al-Fāsī] (d. 1630), is a typical example of this kind of manuscripts (Fig. 11). It has six lines per page with little marginal space but generous interlinear room filled up with the glosses in Old Kanembu written obliquely.
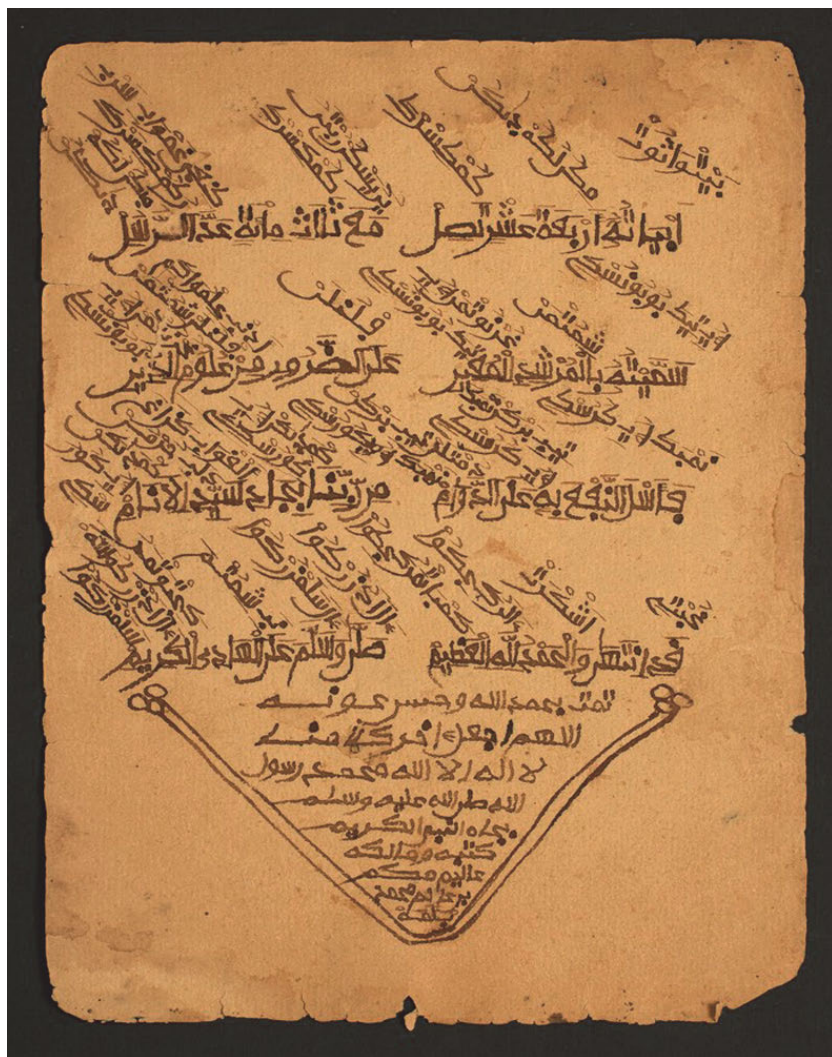

Fig. 11: *al-Murshid al-muʿīn* by Ibn ʿĀshir. Maiduguri, Imam Shettima Habib's collection; Old Kanembu Islamic Manuscripts, Digital Collections, SOAS, London.

This is the same variety of Old Kanembu used in the earlier Quran manuscripts. However, there is an important difference in the type of glosses used for translation of the Arabic. If the Old Kanembu glosses in the Borno Qurans consist of four layers of interpretation, the *al-Murshid* manuscript has only two types of glosses, namely phrase-by-phrase (level 2) and sentential (level 3) representations, which render the Arabic text into Old Kanembu using a method comparable to parallel translation technique. Neither the morphological glossing (level 1) nor the broader interpretation (level 4) is present in the manuscript. It is not clear whether the annotations were written by the scribe for teaching purposes in the class or for private use. In the colophon, the scribe calls himself 'Ālīm (sic.) m.k.m. b. 'Ālim Muḥammad Blama. If the first name 'Ālīm (the correct form would be *'ālim*, 'scholar') refers to the scribe's learned status rather than his proper name, it is possible that he performed teaching duties and that his manuscript (his ownership is also indicated in the colophon) can be broadly qualified as a teaching manuscript – even if there is no evidence of its usage in the classroom environment. If 'Ālīm is his personal name, then the scribe could have been an advanced student who practiced Arabic and Old Kanembu by way of copying and translating *al-Murshid*.

Some manuscripts have come down to us with oral explanations transmitted in the families of scholars or in the scholarly milieu. One such manuscript is a very short one-folio creed of oneness (*tawḥīd*) based on *'Aqīda ahl al-tawḥīd al-ṣughrā* by Muḥammad b. Yusuf al-Sanūsī (d. 1486) (Fig. 12). According to the owner of the manuscript, chief Imam of Nguigmi, Imam Yousouf, the composition of the Arabic text and its interpretation in Old Kanembu were realised by his grandfather Muhammad Suma Lameen when he was the chief Imam of Nguigmi in the 1910s or 1920s. The Old Kanembu text is not a mere translation of the Arabic text but rather an interpretation of short Arabic sentences that summarise what is required to be proven as God's attributes in relation to the emergence of the world. The annotations in Old Kanembu refer to a larger text of *al-'Aqīda al-ṣughrā* and thus represent the most elaborate interpretative level (level 4) which points to a much more advanced stage of scholarship and thus corroborates the oral information attached to the manuscript. But again, we do not know if Imam Suma Lameen wrote the manuscript for his personal use or for his teaching.
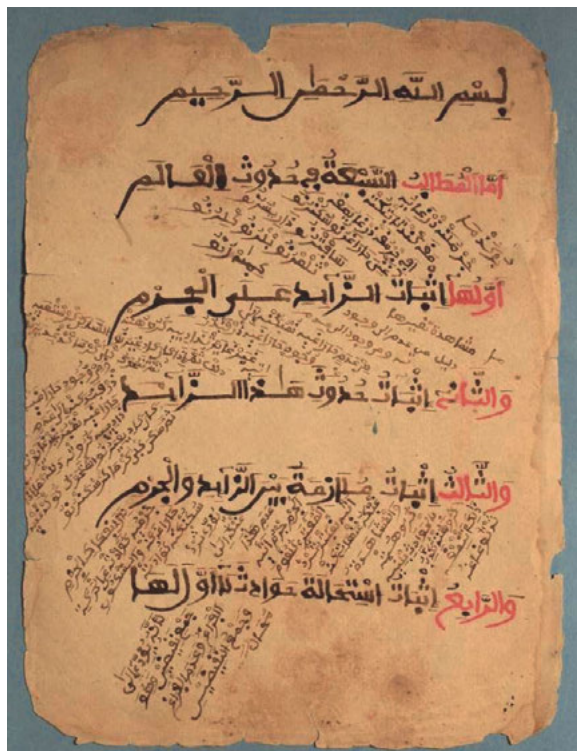
Fig. 12: Abridgement of *ʿAqīda ahl al-tawḥīd al-ṣughrā* by al-Sanūsī. Nguigmi, Niger, Imam Yousouf's collection; Old Kanembu Islamic Manuscripts, Digital Collections, SOAS, London.

One example of an ample space manuscript certainly written by an advanced student is a section from *Qaṣīda al-Burda* (*al-Kawākib al-durriyya fī madḥ khayr al-bariyya*) by Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd al-Buṣīrī (d. 694/1294–6) (Fig. 13). The information about the scribe was given by the owner of the manuscript, Imam Shettima Habib of Maiduguri, who knew the student personally. The layout of this manuscript is the most spacious possible because there is only one line running across the page with the Old Kanembu text representing level 2 and 3 translations of the Arabic original. It is reasonable to assume that the space for annotations in all such manuscripts was anticipated and carefully prepared by the scribes from the start. Another item from Imam Yousouf's collection (Nguigmi) shows exactly this initial stage of preparation of the Arabic text for annotations (Fig. 14). The *fiqh* manual *Lāmiyyat al-Zaqqāq* by ʿAlī b. Qāsim b. Muḥammad al-Tujībī al-Zaqqāq (d. 1506) is written in only four lines per page but for some reason it was never annotated.
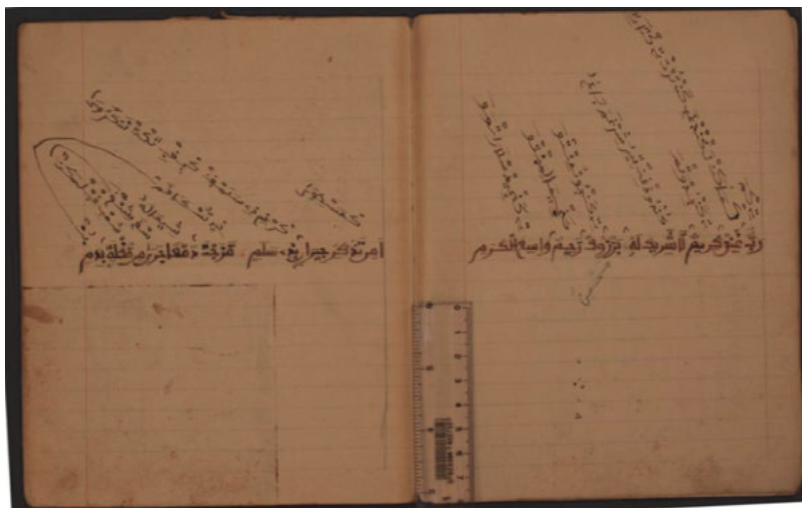
Fig. 13: *Qaṣīda al-Burda* by al-Buṣīrī. Maiduguri, Imam Shettima Habib's collection; Old Kanembu Islamic Manuscripts, Digital Collections, SOAS, London.
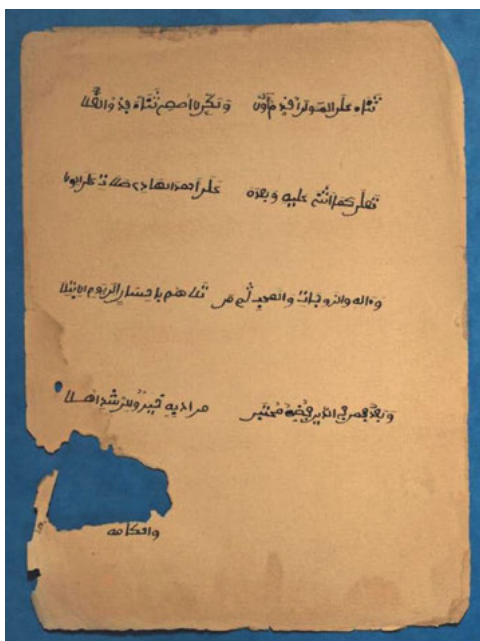

Fig. 14: *Lāmiyyat al-Zaqqāq*. Nguigmi, Niger Imam Yousouf's collection; Old Kanembu Islamic Manuscripts, Digital Collections, SOAS, London.

4 Ample space layout and text types: A cross-cultural comparison

4.1 Borno

The significance of the annotated spaced-line manuscripts in the wider context of Borno Islamic manuscript culture (and in West Africa in general) can be better appreciated through a comparison of the texts typically rendered in the dense-line types and the texts rendered in the spaced-line type. There are certain genres which never occur in spaced-line form, such as historical accounts (Kanuri *gargam*), charters of privilege (*maḥram*), exegetical works, sections of *al-Risāla al-Qayrawāniyya* on the computation of inheritance, medicinal texts, works on astronomy, agriculture, and talismans. Among these dense-line type manuscripts whose layout allows enough room for marginal annotation, the *gargams* and *mahrams* do not feature any secondary writing whereas other dense-type manuscripts often have marginal annotations. Occasionally, interlinear glosses also occur there, crammed in miniscule writing into the tight space between the lines. However, the type of annotations in these manuscripts is very different linguistically from those used in the spaced-line types. The commentaries are predominantly in Arabic and, if the vernacular is used at all, the glosses are in Kanuri rather than in Old Kanembu. This type of manuscripts is indicative of either a non-scholarly context (e.g. *gargam*-s and *maḥram*-s) or of a higher scholarly context, the latter presupposing that the users of the manuscripts have mastered major disciplines within Islamic education.

This brief appraisal of the two types of layout demonstrates that there is a correlation between the spaced line layout and the types of texts rendered in it. One obvious tendency is the use of this layout for an intermediate phase of Islamic education wherein proficiency in the literary Old Kanembu language is important for a grammatical and lexical understanding of the Quranic and Classical Arabic (Bondarev 2013; Bondarev/Tijani 2014). It can reasonably be expected that texts transmitted in this layout belong to a particular intermediate syllabus of Islamic education. The titles of the works typically found in the manuscripts with amply spaced lines are indeed indicative of the intermediate stage at which foundational works are introduced to the students of Arabic grammar, the biography of the Prophet Muhammad, and the basics of Islamic law and theology.[18] These titles include (but are not restricted to) the following works.

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[18] See *inter alia* Tamari 2002 and literature cited there in 111, n. 35; Hall/Stewart 2011; Tamari/Bondarev 2013, 42, n. 28, especially literature.

Arabic grammar:

Al-Muqaddima al-Ājurrūmiyya (a concise treatise of Muḥammad b. Dāwūd al-Ṣanhājī Ibn Ājurrūm (d. 1223); *Al-Muṣannaf a-yā ṭālib al-iʿrāb* (a poem on the study of rules of declension).

Biography of the Prophet/devotional texts:

Qaṣīda al-Burda by al-Būṣīrī (d. 1295/6); *Dalāʾil al-khayrāt* by al-Jazūlī (d. 1465); *Al-ʿIshrīniyyāt* by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Fāzāzī (d. 1230).

Islamic law:

Mukhtaṣar al-Akhḍārī by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Akhḍārī (d. 1585); *Lāmiyyat al-Zaq-qāq* (mentioned before).

Theology:

al-Murshid al-muʿīn (mentioned before); *al-ʿAqīda al-Sanūsīyya* (mentioned before).

A similar pattern of correlation between the types of text and the layout is observed in the manuscripts annotated in Soninke.

4.2 Ample space layout in non-Quranic manuscripts annotated in Soninke

The language used in these manuscripts is a specialised scholarly variety of Soninke (of the Mande branch of the Niger-Congo language family) spoken in Mali, Senegal, Mauritania as well as the Gambia, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau. Scholarly Soninke survives in the manuscripts from the Senegambia region where it had a wide application in translational practices in many religious genres (Ogorodnikova 2016; forthcoming, Bondarev et al. forthcoming).

The glosses in Soninke can be grouped into three levels of grammatical representation: phrase-by-phrase, sentential and interpretational. Similar to the Old Kanembu glosses, the phrase-by-phrase level occurs between the lines and was almost certainly used for pedagogical purposes. The more complex sentential and interpretational levels are typically placed in the margin. In a few instances,

Fig. 15: *Jawāhir min al-kalām* by Ibn Sulaym al-Awjilī. Bibliothèque universitaire des langues et civilisations, Paris, MS.ARA.219bis, fols 7b and 8a.

the sentential level occurs both between the lines and in the margins. (Ogorodni-kova 2016; forthcoming). Citations, cross-referencing and explanations in Arabic mostly appear in the margins and less frequently between the lines. As is the case with the Old Kanembu glosses, the annotations in Soninke are usually found in manuscripts with an ample space layout. The titles of the works used in these manu-scripts point to the same intermediate phase of Islamic education as the Old Kanem-bu manuscripts.

Theology is the discipline which is most extensively represented in anno-tated manuscripts with wide space between the lines, whose titles include *al-ʿAqīda* by al-Sanūsī; *Tajrīd fī kalimat al-tawḥīd* by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī; the poem *Iḍāʾat al-dujunna fī ʿaqāʾid ahl al-sunna* by al-Maqqarī and two poems by Ibn Sulaym al-Awjilī (d. 1801/2) *Dalīl al-qāʿid li-kashf asrār ṣifāt al-wāḥid* and *Jawāhir min al-kalām* (Fig. 15). In the field of law, the *fiqh* manual *al-Risāla al-Qayrawāniyya* was most frequently copied in the spaced-lines format with subse-quent glosses in Soninke (Fig. 16). The devotional genre is mostly represented by al-Buṣīrī's poem about the Prophet *Qaṣīda al-Burda* (Fig. 17) and a *Takhmīs* (in pen-tastichs) on al-Fāzāzī's *ʿIshrīniyyāt* of Ibn Mahīb (d. 1230).
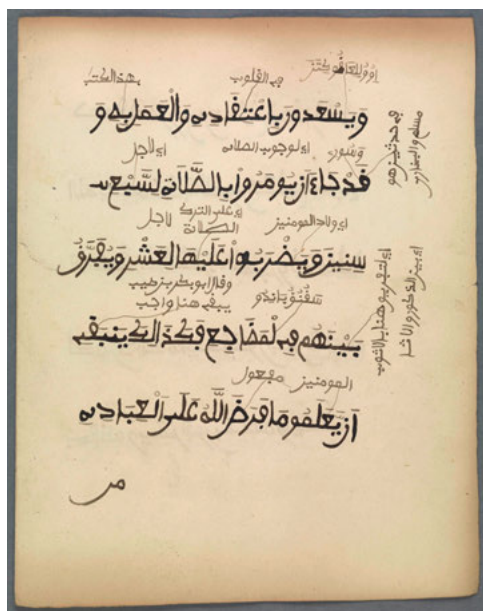
Fig. 16: *Risāla al-Qayrawāniyya*. Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS.2179, fol.6b.

Fig. 17: *Qaṣīda al-Burda* by al-Buṣīrī. Leiden, University Library, MS.Or. 14.052 (5) fol.2a.

4.3 Ample space layout in non-Quranic annotated manuscripts from Adamawa

A preliminary survey of manuscripts from the Adamawa collections held in Arewa House, Kaduna, also reveals a striking correspondence between the small number of lines per page and the titles of the works rendered in this type of layout. The following observations are based on my notes from a visit to Arewa House in November 2013, on a draft paper by Musa Salih Muhammad (Malam Musa), Chief Archivist of Arewa House (Muhammad 2014), and on a personal discussion with Malam Musa. There are four genres/type of texts that are predominantly transmitted in wide spaced layout (from 3 to 8 lines). The first genre is short versifications on grammar or lexicographic works such as AH/MAF122 *Alfiyya ibn Mālik* – 7 lines, annotations (Muhammad 2014); AH/MAF 141 *Qaṣīda b. Wurdi* [sic][19] *by Zainuddīn Abu Hafsin Umar b. Muhammad al-Wurdi* [sic] which is a poem on grammar – 7 lines, annotations in Arabic; AH/MAF 82 Arabic/Fulfulde dictionary – 6 lines. The second type is devotional poetry including AH/MAF 95 *Burda* – 5 lines, annotations in Arabic; AH/MAF281 *Jawahir al-saqlī* [sic][20] by Abu Madyan – 6 lines, annotations (Muhammad 2014). The third type is a major work on legal matters *Mukhtasar al-Khalīl* (e.g., AH/MAF171 – 7 to 8 lines with annotations in Arabic and Hausa; AH/MAF182 – 5 lines with mostly Arabic annotations; AH/MAF255 – 7 lines, mostly Arabic, some Hausa) and various short texts also on legal issues such as AH/MAF294 *Qaṣīda fī bayān ʿilm al-farāʾiḍ* by Sheikh Idris (7 lines, annotated) and many others (Muhammad 2014). The fourth genre is theology represented – *inter alia* – by the following manuscripts: AH/MAF283 *Tawḥīd* (al-Sanūsī) – 5 lines, Arabic; AH/MAF 140 al-*Murshid al-muʿīn* by b. ʿĀshir – 3/4 lines, Arabic and Hausa; AH/MAF 89 an abridgment of al-Awjilī's *tawḥīd* – 6 lines, Arabic.

4.4 Defining phases of education

The wide spaced manuscripts from the Adamawa area, represented by the Modibbo Ahmadu Fufure collection, have wide margins just like the wide spaced manuscripts from the Senegambia with annotations in Soninke. This is however not typical of the spaced-lines manuscripts with annotations in Old Kanembu which do not feature particularly wide margins. More research is needed to understand whether these manuscripts (i.e. with wide marginal and interlinear

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19 Should be al-Wardī.

20 Should be al-Ṣaqallī or al-Ṣiqillī ('the Sicilian').

space) were prepared for texts and teaching practices different from those mediated by manuscripts with wide interlinear space but narrower marginal space. One possibility could be that more marginal space was anticipated for more advanced studies with more extensive use of Arabic commentaries alongside the glosses in Soninke. But it cannot be ruled out that there was no systematic correlation between the two layouts and the genres and practices they represented. These speculations aside, it is worth noting that the intended choice of the language of annotations in the spaced-lines manuscripts is not always obvious. On the one hand, there is an observable tendency of reserving the space between the lines for the vernacular as demonstrated in the Old Kanembu glosses; on the other hand, the wide interlinear space is often filled with Arabic annotations as well, especially in texts known for their complexity and readily available together with derivative texts used in explaining the original texts.[21] Blurred boundaries between the Arabic and the vernacular as found in the layout under discussion will certainly defy an absolute taxonomy of manuscripts used in the teaching/learning environment. The multilingual features that do not fit into the general tendency described for the spaced-lines layout may be suggestive of a wider potential for this type of manuscripts, open to both intermediate and advanced users.

The layout of widely disseminated texts tends to be very similar (sometimes standardised) in format, as is the case with the Quranic manuscripts or didactic poems in manuscript form (Daub 2012/2013) or copies of *al-Nuqāyā* analysed by Rudolf Sellheim (Déroche 2006, 179, n. 65). The titles of the works represented in the amply spaced manuscripts discussed so far belong with texts which were widely known in West Africa and associated with a 'core curriculum' in Islamic studies in the region, as suggested by Stewart and Hall (2011) on the basis of the frequency of such texts in Sahelian libraries. The noticeable patterning of such features as annotations, layout, work titles, their popularity and relevance for a particular phase of Islamic education gives ground for a (tentative) classification of manuscripts according to their place in the phases of Islamic education. A remark on the terms 'intermediate' and 'advanced' is in order. I have used the term advanced with two degree adverbs ('less' and 'more') to avoid categorising what is a non-fixed, gradual and individual process of attaining knowledge in Islamic sciences in the traditional systems of learning in sub-Saharan Africa (see note 18).

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21 'Derivative' is used here in the sense of Hall and Stewart 2011, meaning secondary texts drawn from an original composition, for example, texts such as the legal treatise *Mukhtaṣar al-Khalīl* or the theological work *al-ʿAqīda al-Sanūsiyya*.

As demonstrated here and elsewhere (Bondarev 2013), the glosses in Old Kanembu and commentaries in Arabic, especially in the Quran manuscripts, delineate the boundaries between the less and the more advanced phases quite unambiguously. This allows me to refine the vague notion of the advanced stage of education, defining two (less vague) categories: intermediate and advanced. Given the similarity between the practices of annotations in Old Kanembu and Soninke manuscripts, it is reasonable to apply the two terms to the general classification as shown in Tab. 2.

Thus, we can postulate three levels in the process of education. The first is an elementary phase of writing and reciting the Quran using wooden writing boards; the second is an intermediate level of instruction reflected in the annotated manuscripts, and the third is the advanced level represented by the dense-line scholarship manuscripts. This is still a coarse grain grouping that illustrates tendencies rather than absolute categories and therefore some latitude should be given to correspondences between the phases of education and identification features. The elementary phase is the clearest of all, having been well studied (see literature in Tamari/Bondarev 2013, 42, n. 28). The intermediate phase as defined by subject, layout and annotations, might also be a valid unified category even if, as mentioned earlier, it may overlap with the advanced phase. The latter can further be divided into sub-phases 1, 2, 3 and so on, depending on regional and personal peculiarities in approaching Islamic education, and a separate study is needed in order to better understand the relationship between the dense space layout and the texts and genres it mediates. Disciplines of Islamic education are given in Tab. 2 for both categories because (a) there are possible overlaps in studying the same text at both intermediate and advanced levels and (b) each discipline has several branches and subject matters, some more advanced than others.

5 Conclusions and further questions

The linguistic and codicological features of the early Borno Quran manuscripts show that the formal process of language acquisition (Arabic and Old Kanembu) correlated with an almost uniform ample-spaced layout. The pressure of formal learning and teaching practices on the interlinear space is much more discernible in the non-Quranic manuscripts from Borno, Senegambia and other regions of West Africa. These manuscripts have from one to seven lines per page, which leaves enough room for annotations written obliquely to the main text.

Tab. 2: Phases of education, subjects and manuscript format.

	Elementary (Primary & Secondary)	intermediate	Advanced 1,2,3...
Activity and objectives	Writing, reciting & memorising shorter verses of the Quran followed by the same for the entire Quran	Learning Arabic & learned vernacular; writing & reading Arabic texts	Further study of (complex) Arabic texts; mastering composition in Arabic
Disciplines (the most general)	Quran	Prophet Muhammad (*madḥ*) Arabic language (*naḥw*) Jurisprudence (*fiqh*) Belief (*tawḥīd*) Quranic exegesis (*tafsīr*)	Prophet Muhammad (*sīra & ḥadīth*); Sufism (*taṣawwuf*)
Material	Wooden tablet	Tablet[22] & paper	Paper
Format		Wide spaced lines	Tight spaced lines

5.1 Layout, annotations and education

The layering of annotations on the page seems to be conditioned by distinctive stages of learning reflected in the manuscript traditions of the Kanuri-speaking Borno scholars, Soninke-speaking scholars of Senegambia and most likely in other cultural areas such as the Hausa and Fulfulde scholarly centres in what is now northern Nigeria. On the basis of their placement on the page as well as their functional distribution, I distinguish between the interlinear annotations which I call 'glosses' and marginal annotations – 'commentaries'. Interlinear glosses represent a pedagogical stage of translational practice based on an application of

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22 Reported for some manuscript cultures in Borno, Mali and Mauritania. In Borno until recently (before 1990s), all disciplines listed in the 'intermediate' column were studied on the wooden board. The students usually wrote a short passage of a text with wide space between the lines (three to four lines on one side of the board) and then inserted annotations by dictation from the teacher in order to memorise the annotations after the class (Imam Habib Shettima p.c.).

the Arabic grammatical tradition adjusted to the structures of the target vernacular language.

In contrast to the interlinear glosses, marginal commentaries reflect a more advanced level of scholarship whereby a larger body of texts in Arabic are used as sources for exploring the main text, e.g., exegesis (*tafsīr*) treatises in the case of the Quran manuscripts with annotations in Old Kanembu/Tarjumo or derivative explanatory texts (*sharḥ*) in the case of legal treatises such as *Mukhtaṣar* by al-Khalīl. The same is true for the Soninke manuscripts. Citations, cross-referencing and explanations in Arabic occur in the margins and rarely between the lines, e.g., in the manuscript of *al-Risāla* by Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī (*al-Risāla al-Qayrawāniyya*) from Ziguinchor MS. 'Risala Cissé Ziguinchor' or in *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* (Ogorodnikova forthcoming). In addition to the Arabic, texts in the vernacular are also sometimes placed in the margins, both in the Old Kanembu/Tarjumo and the Soninke manuscripts, most typically representing sentential and interpretational levels of commentary.

That these phases of learning and scholarship aggregated sequentially from elementary to more advanced and from interlinear to marginal notes is especially visible in the Quran manuscripts with Old Kanembu/Tarjumo and Arabic annotations.[23] In most cases, these two types of annotation (interlinear and marginal) did not result from random opportunistic exploitation of the available space but rather were part of the planned process of manuscript production and use – from the design of the layout to the paratextual exploration of the main text. Thus, the annotated manuscripts without sufficient interlinear space do not have the sophisticated (grammar-oriented) glosses, and only feature marginal (non-grammatical) commentaries and occasional translations of single words. This indicates that different scholarly practices were purposively mediated via different types of layout.

The discussed correlations between the layout and specific types of annotation, layout and phases of education indicate that some of the annotated manuscripts originate from classroom activity (in a wider sense of teacher – student interaction), and some from personal use by advanced scholars. For example, among the Old Kanembu/Tarjumo manuscripts, typical classroom manuscripts would be the annotated Borno Qurans, works on belief and dogma (*al-ʿAqīda al-ṣughrā* by al-Sanūsī, *al-Murshid al-muʿīn* by Ibn ʿĀshir and their derivative texts) and versified didactic texts on legal aspects of Islam (*Mukhtaṣar al-Akhḍārī* by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Akhḍārī and its derivatives). The same manuscripts may be used at a significantly more advanced level of scholarship, like the Borno

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23 Bondarev 2013; 2014a; forthcoming.

Qurans.[24] However, private usage by advanced scholars is most typically reflected in the manuscripts which represent works on legal issues (sources and branches of law), Sufism and medicinal texts. Annotations in this kind of manuscript are mostly written in Arabic with only occasional notes in Old Kanembu/Tarjumo or Kanuri.

Typical classroom manuscripts with Soninke annotations are represented by prose and versified works on faith and attributes of God (al-Sanūsī's *ʿAqīda* and its derivatives, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī's *Tajrīd fī kalimat al-tawḥīd*, al-Maqqarī's poem *Iḍāʾat al-dujunna fī ʿaqāʾid ahl al-sunna*, and al-Awjilī's poems *Dalīl al-qāʿid li-kashf asrār ṣifāt al-wāḥid*) and *Jawāhir min al-kalām*, as well as the manual on law *al-Risāla al-Qayrawāniyya*. These manuscripts usually have many interlinear glosses in Soninke and blocks of explanatory texts in Arabic and often in Soninke. On the other hand, the exegetical, medicinal and talismanic manuscripts originate from a more advanced scholarship. Similar distributional tendencies are probably observable in the Hausa and Fulfulde annotated manuscripts but more research is needed to make a preliminary generalisation (as attempted here for the Old Kanembu/Tarjumo and Soninke manuscripts).

5.2 Contradictory evidence

The frequency of the works mentioned in the Soninke manuscripts which were produced by Jakhanke clerics contradicts the received wisdom that the major texts transmitted among the Jakhanke lineages through learning were the exegetical text *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, a foundational work on Mālikī law *al-Muwaṭṭaʾ* by Mālik b. Anas, and the devotional text about the Prophet Muhammad *Kitāb al-Shifāʾ* by al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ (Wilks 1968; 2000, 98; Sanneh 1979, 158). It is thus reasonable to ask why the most frequent texts annotated in Soninke are the *al-Risāla al-Qayrawāniyya* and not *al-Muwaṭṭaʾ*, al-Awjilī's *Dalīl* and *Jawāhir* and not *Kitāb al-Shifāʾ* and why copies of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* are rarely annotated (one such copy from Bibliothèque Universitaire des Langues et Civilisations, Paris, has rare glosses in a variety of Soninke and another from a private collection in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, has infrequent glosses in Jula (Ogorodnikova, personal communication). Different perspectives of research aside (i.e. evidence based on participant observation, interviews and the writings of sixteenth-century West African biographers [Wilks 1968; Sanneh 1979, 158] vs. material evidence based

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24 Bondarev forthcoming.

on manuscripts), there may be factors as yet unknown which explain the annotational overrepresentation of one type of texts against the others. What is claimed as cultural heritage in more recent biographies and oral tradition is not necessarily representative of the transmission of knowledge over time, as observed, for example, in the change of exegetical paradigms in Borno whereby the *tafsīr* sources attested in the earlier Quran manuscripts are no longer recognised by modern day Islamic scholars as being part of the historical Borno tradition (Bondarev forthcoming). Interestingly, Hall and Stewart (2011, 114) also question the role of the *Muwaṭṭaʾ* in the educational process among the Jakhanke (Dyula), for it 'cannot be understood as single discrete text'; they suggest that in order to 'fully appreciate the level of sophistication of study of the *Muwaṭṭaʾ* ... we need to know the derivative forms of [it]... that were studied.' It is important therefore, that we look for those derivative forms in our future research and see if they have similar wide space layout.

There are other facts which seem to be contradictory on the face of the manuscript evidence. Thus, the frequency of *al-Risāla* annotated in Soninke is well explained by the popularity of this legal textbook through the history of Islamic West Africa.[25] The same *Risāla* is not however among the most annotated manuscripts of the Old Kanembu/Tarjumo collections nor is it among the most annotated manuscripts of the Hausa and Fulfulde collections in Nigeria.[26]

Another composition, the *Mukhtaṣar* of Khalīl, was as popular as the *Risāla* but the manuscripts from the Senegambia do not have Soninke glosses, and only rarely are they annotated in Arabic, whereas the *Mukhtaṣar* manuscripts from the eastern part of West Africa originating from the Hausa, Fulfulde and Kanuri/Kanembu manuscript cultures are extensively annotated both in Arabic and the vernacular. The differences in the manuscript annotations of these two important and very popular texts may point to different channels and changing currents in the history of knowledge transmission in the western (Soninke) and eastern (Hausa, Fulfulde and Old Kanembu/Tarjumo) centres of Islamic learning.

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25 For the Senegambia tradition see Sylla 2012; wider Timbuktu and Mali region see Saad 1983, 77; Tamari 2002; for Borno see Bobboyi 1992, 53–54; and for a general overview see Hall/Stewart 2011.

26 Bondarev fieldwork 2013.

Appendix: digital archives

Old Kanembu Islamic Manuscripts (OKIM): http://digital.soas.ac.uk/okim.

This digital collection provides online access to one of the earliest written sub-Saharan languages in manuscript form – Old Kanembu. The content of the collection is constantly being updated and some items have more detailed metadata than others. OKIM is the outcome of the following three research projects: 'Early Nigerian Qur'anic manuscripts: an interdisciplinary study of the Kanuri glosses and Arabic commentaries' (2005–2007, funded by the AHRC, based at SOAS, University of London); 'A study of Old Kanembu in early West African Qur'anic manuscripts and Islamic recitations (Tarjumo) in the light of Kanuri-Kanembu dialects spoken around lake Chad' (2009–2011, funded by the DFG and the AHRC, based at SOAS, University of London and the University of Hamburg); and 'Cognitive layers in West African Islamic manuscripts' (2012–2013, funded by the DFG, based at the University of Hamburg).

Old Mande Islamic Manuscripts (OMIM):

This is a digital collection of manuscripts with annotations in Soninke and other Mande languages from many European libraries and private collections in West Africa put together in the course of the projects 'Writing and reading paratexts in West African Islamic manuscripts: a comparative study of commentaries on Arabic texts in Old Kanembu and Old Mande' (2013–2015) and 'Islamic manuscripts with a wide spaced layout as mediators of teaching practices in West Africa' (2015–2019). Due to restrictions on copyright and ownership rights, the collection is only accessible to scholars (including visiting members) of the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC), University of Hamburg, through an administrative domain of the CSMC website.

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