Letter from Ahmad al-Bakky al-Kounti to Umar Tall, written in the mid-19th century and today in the Mohamed Taha Library. Al-Bakky was the leader of the Kounta, a desert people known as promoters of peace and as mediators in conflict between warring factions. He pleaded with Umar Tall to allow the people of Timbuktu to continue in their traditional Qadiriyya Sufi observations and not be forced to follow the more ascetic and militant Tijaniyya.
Opposite This illustration on a manuscript in the Ahmed Baba Institute represents the rhythms of Moroccan music and their subdivisions, as well as their influence on human health. It is from an 18th-century treatise on culture, copied in 1822.

Above Another page on music from the same manuscript. West African musicians today still play the kora, a stringed instrument made from a gourd and plucked like a harp.
لا إله إلا الله وللملكة وحده نصيحة
الحمد لله واعظ السمع والسمع والرده ملكاً يوم القيامة
نعت الله ونعت الله وتسع أرني
الجدران المستديرة
الله يعانه عليهم غير
عجب وعلوم ولا