

SOMALI LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

The Somali language, which is a member of the Cushitic group, is spoken in Somalia and in adjacent parts of Kenya, Ethiopia and the Djibouti Republic. The total number of speakers is probably six million, and the dialect variations are not so great as seriously to impede linguistic unification. One dialect type is now generally accepted as the standard and is used in all public communication; based on the speech of the pastoralist heartland, it most probably evolved several centuries ago as a result of nationwide interclan political and trade contacts, poetic contests and exchanges, and the activities of itinerant Muslim scholars.

The language had no official orthography till 1972, but various private systems of writing it had existed since the beginning of the present century. They were adaptations of the Arabic or the Latin alphabets, or else newly invented alphabets, among which Far Soomaali (Somali Writing) was the most extensively used. Somali is now written in Latin characters and is the sole official language of the Somali Democratic Republic, the medium of instruction in schools and the means of communication in all aspects of public life.¹

In Somali there is a very extensive and thriving oral literature and a great deal of research and documentation has been carried out, mainly by a group of Somali scholars employed in the first thirteen years of independence in the Cultural Department of the Ministry of Education and then, since 1973, at the Academy of Culture.² Some work has also been done by private collectors in Somalia and by researchers from abroad who have written down and recorded oral poems and prose narratives;³ there are in addition very large collections of tape-recordings in the sound

archives of the radio stations which broadcast in Somali, in particular Mogadishu and Hargeysa. Only a small proportion of all this material has been published.

A great part of the Somali oral literature consists of alliterative poetry, using quantitative patterns the nature of which was totally unknown until they were described a few years ago by two Somali scholars working independently, Cabdullaahi Diiriye Guuleed and Maxamed Xaashi Dhamac "Gaarriye". Each has written a number of articles on Somali scansion on the literary page of the daily newspaper *Xiddigta Oktoobar* and each has produced a book on the subject, which at the date of writing still await publication. Their formulations were further developed by John W. Johnson in his article entitled "Somali prosodic systems".

It has thus been established that the genres of Somali poetry are not, as had sometimes been thought, based on their thematic ranges, but on the rigid criteria of the quantitative patterns. The *gabay*, for example, while it is normally used for serious, reflective themes, can treat of other matters, and the *geeraar*, though traditionally associated with warfare and in the past often recited on horseback, can be used in love poetry. Again, the *buraanbur* tends to be used by poetesses, but men do not entirely shun it. Accounts of the uses of different genres can be found in *Somali poetry* by Andrzejewski and Lewis, and in Johnson's *Heellooy*.

The poetic genres, defined by reference to their metres, have their hierarchy in terms of public esteem. The most revered among them are the *gabay*, *jiifto* and *geeraar*, which might be described as classical genres and which dominated the Somali cultural scene until the end of the Second World War. They are still recited on solemn occasions and some distinguished poets still compose in them, while they are used extensively, side by side with other genres, in the poetic parts of stage plays. It seems, however, that the dominant poetic genre today is the *heello*, an innovation less than thirty years old, which was first regarded as being of lower rank. Now, thanks to the great talent of some of its practitioners, it enjoys almost equal prestige with the classical genres.

It is convenient when describing Somali oral literature to view it as composed of two streams, a time-bound stream and a time-free one. The first consists of all those items which can in some

way be placed on the time scale, and the second of those which cannot. Thus a historical narrative, a poem connected with some known event, or even a love poem known to have been recited originally by a real person in particular, known circumstances are examples of the time-bound stream, while an animal fable, a fictional narrative describing events not set in any specific period of time, or a poem used in a work song are examples of the time-free stream.

Poems within the time-bound stream have an important distinctive characteristic; their reciters are expected to memorize them verbatim, as accurately as possible, avoiding any improvisations or deletions, and are also bound by custom to give the name of the original oral author before each recital. This unwritten copyright law, which preserves the poet's claim to fame, operates even after his death, as long as the poem is remembered. Although originally applied to oral transmission, this customary law is adhered to faithfully by collectors of oral literature. When transcripts are made from oral performances of poets or poetry reciters, the name of the original oral author is always stated, and usually the circumstances of the composition and the first recital are explained. The books and articles in which these transcripts are published normally, however, bear the name of the collector on the title page.

From the materials so far published only an outline sketch of the time-bound stream of Somali oral literature can be constructed, but even within these limitations it seems useful to introduce a division into four periods:

1. The Golden Era (the pre-colonial period)
2. The Era of Fire and Embers (1899-1944)
3. The Era of the Lute (1944-1969)
4. The New Era (from 1969)

While the first three periods bear names invented by the present writer, the fourth is a translation of *Waaga Cusub*, a term which is sometimes applied in Somalia to the period from 1969 onwards.

In this study oral and written literature are treated separately, and it should be noted that when oral literature is written down and published it is still regarded here as oral.

Some difficulty arises with the identification of individual oral poems. In Somali poetic tradition titles are seldom given to poems, and identification is achieved by reference to the author, the genre, the recurrent alliterative sound, the subject matter and sometimes also to a particularly striking line, which need not be the first in the poem. Here the practical solution offered by Johnson in his *Heellooy* is adopted, and each poem is identified by its first line or first hemistich, unless it has a title.

Some of the Somali oral literature was written down before the introduction of a national orthography in 1972 and the collectors used in their works a variety of private transcription systems both for the texts and the names of authors. This could be very puzzling for a reader unacquainted with the language and in order to avoid confusion, or doubts as to the identity of authors, all Somali quotations, personal names or titles of works are written here in the official orthography, except in the Bibliography where the data are faithfully reproduced from the title pages.⁴

ORAL LITERATURE: THE TIME-BOUND STREAM

The Golden Era. There is a widespread belief among Somali people that in the pre-colonial period oral literature occupied an even more important position in their national culture than it has done since. Poetry was, it is claimed, the best means of influencing public opinion in such matters as interclan politics, and was an accepted way of airing private disputes and grievances. Poems which excited controversy were answered by other poems, and poets engaged in poetic duels or even multilateral combats, either face to face or with the help of messengers or travellers who memorized the texts. Poetry was also, of course, entertainment, and often poetic combats were arranged for no other purpose, while praise poetry was used on festive occasions as a way of enhancing the prestige of one's kinsmen, friends or benefactors, or even of the poets themselves. In warfare poetic boasts helped to strengthen morale, and victories were commemorated and the dead lamented in verse. Field commanders were usually accompanied by poets, who were entitled to a special share of any war booty.⁵

Anyone who had the requisite talent could become a poet, but they usually had another occupation as well; they were highly respected, though naturally their prestige differed in proportion to their talent.

Oral prose was well developed, especially that involving accounts of the lives of well-known persons and events in local history. There was also a large treasury of oral fiction, both realistic and fabulous, for the entertainment of young and old.

Even if we make allowances for the universal human tendency to glorify the past, this picture of the Golden Era of Somali culture is probably true. In the pre-colonial period most Somalis lived in what might be described as a commonwealth composed of miniature pastoral and city states of varying degrees of sovereignty, some linked by alliances and some divided by feuds, but all sharing the same language, culture and religion.⁶ The links between them were reinforced by intermarriage, trade and a constant movement, through all the Somali-speaking territories, of itinerant Islamic scholars and their students, who travelled freely and were welcomed everywhere; though they were well versed in Arabic, they used their mother-tongue as an auxiliary medium in learning, teaching and preaching.

The Somali tradition concerning this Golden Era is confirmed, at least for the last century of its existence, by the testimony of foreign travellers. Sir Richard Burton gives a glowing account of the art of poetry as practised by Somalis in the middle of the 19th century. In his *First footsteps in East Africa* he talks about the excellence of their poetry and its ubiquity, and makes some interesting remarks about the social prestige and ranking of poets in public esteem: "Every man has his recognized position in literature as accurately defined as though he had been reviewed in a century of magazines". The author of one of the earliest handbooks of Somali, Fred. M. Hunter, also comments favourably on Somali poetry, praising the poetic ideas used and the sentiments.

A testimony very similar to that of Burton is found in *Somalia e Benadir: Viaggio di esplorazione nell'Africa Orientale* by Robecchi Bricchetti. Speaking of the treatment accorded by Somalis to their best poets, he states that when such a poet comes on a visit he is sumptuously received and the place of honour and the best

dishes are reserved for him. He also mentions the great fame of the poet Raage Ugaas (Roghe Ugaz in his transcription), at that time no longer living, and cites two other well-known poets, Maxamed Liibaan Jadeer (Mohamed Liban Giader) and Aadan Axmed Dubbe (Aden Achmed Dubba).

Unfortunately, the published documentation of the oral poetry of the Golden Era is scanty.⁷ The foreign researches of the time, such as Berghold, Hunter, Paulitschke, Reinisch, Robecchi Bricchetti and Schleicher obviously had an insufficient knowledge of the language and of the cultural background to cope with the subtleties and allusiveness of the poetry, and the Somali poetic material in their publications consists of inadequately collected fragments of poems which are semantically opaque for lack of proper annotations. Even so, these fragments confirm the existence of a thriving poetic tradition at the time.

It is difficult to set any starting point for the Golden Era, or to make any conjectures concerning what preceded it. There is some evidence that Somali oral literature goes back to pre-Islamic times. Proverbs, for example, which usually contain the most archaic elements of a culture, use the same alliterative technique as the poetry which is composed today. There is also a well-known invocation in alliterative verse which gives the impression of being of pre-Islamic origin: in it the evils of this world are addressed and commanded to desist.⁸

If we use as our basis the internal evidence of oral narratives, however, the earliest point of reference is approximately the 14th century. There are some hagiographical oral narratives concerning the miracles attributed to Sheekh Xuseen of Bale, a Sufi teacher who lived around the time,⁹ and it is likely, though by no means certain, that the themes of the narratives originated in his lifetime or soon after. In one of them, recorded in the article "The veneration of Sufi saints" by Andrzejewski, the Sheekh restores to a widow her only child, a boy who had been devoured by a hyena, and in another he appears as the victor in a miracle-working contest with the spirit of a powerful Sufi mystic from Iraq.

Another early oral narrative, the theme of which most probably goes back to the 16th century, is the story of the two lovers

of Seylac (Zeilah in its anglicized form). It is set in this ancient port at the time of the famous war-leader Axmed "Gurey", i.e. "The Left-handed",¹⁰ and its hero is the young son of a shipping merchant who falls in love with the daughter of his neighbour. The parents on both sides disapprove, and the boy is sent away to Bombay on a long trading expedition in one of his father's ships. On its return journey the ship is caught in a typhoon, and the boy finds himself journeying aimlessly in perilous southern seas, forced to stop for fresh water and food at hostile islands. While he is away the girl regularly visits the seashore and sends love-messages to him with the help of a mystical bird, the "bird of the saints", which also carries back her lover's replies, recited as he stands near the side of the battered ship. These love-messages are in poetic form, and are still well known all over Somalia. The story ends with the death of both lovers, stricken with grief when the boy, who has been presumed dead, arrives in Seylac on the day when the girl has been forced to marry someone else.

The narrative is given in Maxamed Faarax Cabdillaahi's *Sheekooyin* (Stories) under the title "Dhiif iyo jacayl" (Disaster and love) and is translated in his *The best stories from the land of Punt*. In the first of these two books we also find a narrative about Faarax Garaad Xirsi, popularly known as "Wiilwaal", a Somali chieftain who is said to have re-established in the 19th century, after many years of decline, a small sovereign state in the Jigjiga region. In the story Wiilwaal creates panic among some venerable men of religion who had boldly asserted that "one should not fear anyone except God". He does this by pretending to have executed some of their colleagues, whom he releases unharmed after having proved his point.

An extensive collection of narratives concerning Wiilwaal's rise to power and his subsequent reign are recorded by Shire Jaamac Axmed in a special number (No. 6) of *Iftiinka-Aqoonta*. These portray him as an unusually astute strategist, a ruthless politician, an enlightened social reformer, a patriot and a man of inclusive wit who was also known for his spectacular practical jokes. Embedded in the narratives are passages from his poems; unfortunately there are no complete poetic texts available in the

published documentation, but his fame as a poet has survived to the present day.

In his collection *Gabayo* (Poems), Shire Jaamac Axmed gives five poems¹¹ of Raage Ugaas, who lived in the 19th century and is regarded by many Somalis as their greatest poet, famous for the beauty and restrained elegance of his style and the depth of his philosophical observations. In the first poem, "Leg baruur leh bawdiyo shanshiyo" (Fat breast, leg and shank), Raage defeats another poet of the time, Ina Jadeer, in a poetic duel occasioned by the advances which the latter had made to a woman engaged to be married to Raage. The second, "Alleyl dumay" (One night fall), is a lament over a girl whom Raage wished to marry, but who was given to another man; it is probably unconnected with the theme of the first poem. In the third one, "Sida koorta yucub" (Like the camel-bell made of gyrocarpus wood), he mourns the death of his much-loved wife, Xadiya, who was snatched from him by a lion: this poem has been translated into English in *Somali poetry*. The fourth poem, "Naa sow Xaliimaay! Xadiya xaalna ka ma raacdid" (Listen, O Xaliima, why don't you emulate Xadiya's behaviour in some way?) also has a melancholy theme, for after he lost Xadiya he married her younger sister, Xaliima, but was sorely disappointed and here registers his grievances against her. In the fifth poem "Inta[an] khayli dhuugyaha cas iyo dheeg wiyl ah qaatay" (When I put on a fine red-hemmed cloth and took a riding-whip of rhinoceros hide), he describes, using concrete images, the sufferings and humiliations of his old age: he has to exchange his weapons for a stick to support himself, he finds it difficult to restrain his impatience when waiting for food, and he begins to suspect that his sons and grandsons no longer respect him and that his womenfolk are waiting for his death.

Two other poems of Raage are available in other sources. In his book *Madhaafaanka murtida* (The essential wisdom) Yuusuf Meygaag Samatar gives a poem composed by Raage in praise of his horse, "Geeraar waa nin wanaajiyo" (A *geeraar* poem can be well composed by a man). Another poem is to be found in *Somali poetry*, "Sud libaax leh" (A forest with lions), where he exhorts his listeners to deal circumspectly with those who wield political power. He is also the subject of an oral narrative given in the

article "The art of the verbal message in Somali society" by Andrzejewski and Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal. This describes an episode in Raage's life when he was a student in an itinerant theological college: wanting to send a message to his father through a passing traveller, asking for supplies of food, but unwilling to admit to the stranger that he had to suffer hunger in the college, he used an ad hoc verbal code which he knew only his father would be able to understand.

Only a few other poems which belong to the Golden Era are available in published form. In *Somali poetry* (pp.110-114) we find a three-cornered poetic exchange in a dispute over some looted property which took place about 1880. A caravan trader from Berbera, Wacays Xirsi, was robbed by a warrior called Mataan Xuseen and his kinsmen, but the main purpose of the attack was to humiliate a third man, whose name is no longer remembered: this was the trader's protector, who was responsible for his safety when passing through a certain area. Wacays recites a lament over his losses, and the protector promptly manages to restore his goods except for a costly necklace such as was worn by men of substance. Finally, Mataan returns the necklace to Wacays, explaining his motive for the robbery. The poems in these exchanges, quite apart from their elegance and wit, throw some light on the protection contracts which existed between caravan traders from the coastal towns and the clans in the interior, securing the safety of the trade which flourished in the Golden Era.

In the article "Modern and traditional aspects of Somali drama" by Andrzejewski there are fragments of a light-hearted poetic exchange which took place some time in the 19th century between a poetess called Geelo and a poet of great skill called Dhiidhi Kediye. Geelo acquired fame by winning all her poetic contests against opponents of both sexes, but was finally confronted by Dhiidhi, who was a match for her. Oral tradition asserts that Dhiidhi, who lived far away, was secretly paid to come by the sultan of Geelo's region, who was alarmed by her cleverness. The full version of the duel is to be found in Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal's still unpublished collection, and, in a slightly bowdlerized form, in the article "Dooddii Dhiidhi iyo Geelo" (The dispute between Dhiidhi and Geelo) by Maxamed Xaaji Cali.

The themes of some hagiographical legends take us back to the 18th and 19th centuries. In the article "The veneration of Sufi saints" we find episodes from the life of Sheekh Cali Guure of the Jigjiga region, who died about 180 years ago. In one he is miraculously transported to the sea to repair a sailing-ship in distress when its crew invoke the intercession of the saints, and another tells of the Sheekh's method of stopping interclan warfare. When an outbreak was imminent he would send his students to the opposing armies, asking them to display his rosary and his ablution vessel, and to proclaim divine retribution on anyone engaged in fighting between Muslims.

Another holy man, Ina Cali Qablax, who died when he was very old early this century, was a master of an itinerant college. He was blind, and was known for his patience, generosity and trust in God. In a narrative given in *Hikmad Soomaali* by Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal (pp. 40-45) he shows exemplary generosity and forgiveness. A poor man had offered him and his students hospitality for the night, but in order to feed them he had to steal some of their own sheep and goats, which the students always drove with them for their support. Ina Cali Qablax not only forgave him but gave him many of the herd as a gift.

In the published documentation of the last decades of the Golden Era we find poems concerned with oppression. In one, published in *Somali poetry*, "Rag sabaan Ka sabaan baan samaantuun badiyaa" (Over and over again to people I show abundant kindness), Faarax Nuur issues a poetic challenge in a dispute over the harsh actions of one clan and the tribute they exacted. In another of which only a fragment is preserved, published in the same work (on p. 57), this poet sounds the alarm against the impending loss of freedom for the whole nation, and the approaching dismemberment of his country. He warns Somalis of the imminent catastrophe and says: "The country is sold piece by piece without our knowledge", obviously having in mind the treaties between some Somali elders and the colonial powers.

An even stronger admonition, this time backed by action, came from another poet, Sheekh Axmed "Gabyow", who in 1891 resisted the Italian move to the Somali town of Cadaale. In *Istiinka Aqoonta* (No. 4, p. 18), Shire Jaamac Axmed records the poem

"Soomaali aan u dagaallamaynaa" (We are fighting for Somalis), in which the poet tells his listeners that his struggle is in defence of the whole country and that his aim is to show Somalis what their interests are, and where their true path lies, "before the wind of death overwhelms him".

For the religious poetry of the Golden Era no published documentation is available. One poem, however, "Alif yeenne" (The letter Alif said), which was most probably composed in the early 19th century, is found in the thesis *Sufi poetry in Somali* by Cabdisalaan Yaasiin Maxamed (pp. 191-195). The poem, the author of which was a well-known preacher, Sheekh Cali Cabdiraxmaan, is very interesting from the structural point of view: in it the letters of the Arabic alphabet are personified and expound to the listeners the principal tenets of the Islamic faith.

The Era of Fire and Embers. Both oral traditions and historical evidence show that the Era of Fire and Embers was dominated by conflict and warfare. In its first two decades Somalia was ravaged by the war between the Dervishes and the colonial powers, supported by their Somali allies, and in the remaining years, after the defeat of the Dervishes, minor-scale conflicts continued. There were occasional outbreaks of insurgency against the occupying powers, and even more often interclan raiding, which was made particularly deadly because of the large number of firearms retained or stolen from the time of the Dervish war.

Although oral literature continued to flourish, it became dominated by themes of war. Poetry, in particular, was used much more, probably, than it had been in the previous era as a means of propaganda: it sought to keep up morale on either side, to win new allies and to undermine the confidence of enemies. Often it sowed the seeds of distrust and disaffection in the enemy camp, taking advantage of existing grudges and resentments.

Of all the oral works of this era the best documented are the poems of Sayid Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan (1856-1921). The word Sayid is an honorific title, borrowed from Arabic, which means "lord" or "master", and Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan is still called by this title today as he was in his lifetime. Apart from his outstanding poetic talent, he was famous as a leader of the Der-

vishes and is now regarded as one of the greatest among the national heroes of Somalia.

There are three substantial collections of his poems published by Somali scholars, all obtained from poetry reciters within the last thirty years. The earliest is that of Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal and bears the title *A collection of Somali literature: Mainly from Sayid Mohamed Abdille Hasan*. The second was published by Shire Jaamac Axmed partly in his book *Gabayo* (Poems) and partly in Nos. 3 and 4 of *Iftiinka-Aqoonta*. The third, by far the largest, is *Diiwaanka gabayadii Sayid Maxamad Cabdulle Xasan* (A collection of poems by Sayid Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan), edited and annotated by Sheekh Jaamac Cumar Ciise, who had previously published two of the Sayid's poems in his *Ta'riikh aṣ-Ṣūmāl*.

Smaller collections are found in *Somali poetry*, in Vol. III of Cerulli's *Somalia* and in the journals *Sahan* (18 February 1958) and *Horseed* (Nos. 11, 13, 14, 20, and 22). One poem is also published by Panza and Yaasiin Cismaan Keenadiid in their article "Gabai di Ina Abdille Hassan".

Since there are some divergences in the renderings of the poems in the various publications, the texts given in *Diiwaanka* by Jaamac Cumar Ciise will be regarded here as the main source, but it should be observed that this does not imply any adverse judgment on the fidelity or authenticity of the other versions.

The *Diiwaanka* contains over a hundred poems covering a wide range of themes, which can only be discussed here in outline. One of the Sayid's chief preoccupations was to prove to his countrymen that the war which he led was a holy one, a jihad against the infidel powers who were occupying Somali soil: once this was accepted he would have on his side the clear teaching of Islam, and for any Muslim to side with his enemies, or even to remain neutral, was tantamount to apostasy and justified ruthless retribution. This theme occurs in many of his poems but in some it assumes a dominant role. In the poem "Xuseenow caqligu kaa ma baxo idam Ilaahaye" (O Xuseen, God willing, may good sense never leave you), for example, he condemns:

Ikhyarkooda nimankii kufriga, ugu adeegaayey
Aan lagu igrāahine kalgacal, ugu abraaraayey
Kuwii ubad nasaaraad noqdee, Ferenji aanaystay

(The men who of their free choice carry out menial tasks for the infidels
Those who, though uncoerced, go on errands for them as if they were
bound to them by the loving bonds of kinship
And who became like the offspring of the Christians and made
a life-protecting pact with the Europeans.) [p. 2]

In another poem the Sayid draws a portrait of an ideal Muslim, summed up in the first line "Nin Ilaah yaqaan oo sharciga ku isticmaalaya" (A man who has a knowledge of God and follows the Holy Law). He appeals to Somali national pride, and among men of virtue he places:

Niman abuurka Soomaaliyeed, ka anfi taageynin
Oo aan ajuurada kufriga, ugu adeegeynin

(A man who does not turn up his nose against the Somali heritage.
Who does not perform menial tasks for the infidels in order to gain
some profit.) [p. 10]

Apart from his general concern with the rationale of his holy war, the Sayid made specific poetic attacks on his enemies, both foreign and Somali. He composed the poem "Ogaadeen ha ii dirin" (Concerning the words: Do not incite me against the Ogaadeen)¹² after he had come to the conclusion that his negotiations with the British government could not be conducted on equal terms. He makes his accusations point by point in a manner appropriate for a litigant in a dispute before a traditional Somali arbitration court, and although the poem is addressed to the British government it was obviously also aimed at the Somali audience as a statement of his position, a list of the wrongs he had suffered and a protest against interference in matters which should be the concern of the Somalis alone.

Among those Somalis who opposed the Dervish movement there were several highly talented poets who attacked the Sayid and his followers. The poems of Cali Aadan, better known as Cali Dhuux, were particularly abusive, and to silence him the Sayid composed the poem "Nimaan sharaxa diimeed sheynaba ka suurayn" (A man who cannot explain a thing about the faith), listing with poetic hyperbole his alleged vices and misdeeds. He is accused of ignorance, lies, meanness, being a Muslim only in appearance, stirring

up trouble and yet avoiding fighting, and being a bad poet and yet striving to compose poetry. He is described as

Bal nin gaal la shaarugay, shaabbaddiina lagu dhigay.

(A man who has become a companion of the infidels and on whom their official stamp was impressed.) [p. 165]

There are many other *ad hominem* attacks in the Sayid's poems, and he was especially vehement in his condemnation of defectors from his camp. His poem entitled "Eelkii qabsaday" (The harm which befell him)¹³ was composed against Cabdalla Shixiri, who was the Secretary for Foreign Affairs in the Dervish administration. He defected to the British, and the Sayid accuses him of praying to the British as if they were God and of becoming one of the people who are unclean from the Islamic point of view.

Some of the Sayid's poems commemorate important events in the history of the Dervish war. When battles were won he recited triumphal poems, and one of the most admired of these is "Aadaa jiitayaan, Koofilow, dunida joogayne" (You have died, Corfield, and are no longer in this world).¹⁴ It was composed after the battle of Dul Madoobe in 1913 when the British forces were defeated and their commander, Richard Corfield, killed; using a well-established Somali poetic convention of apostrophizing a dead person, the Sayid calls on Corfield to take his words as messages to the Companions of the Prophet in the other world.

Persuasive efforts were made in his poems to create a favourable image of the Dervish war effort, and potential allies were encouraged to join him. At one point the Sayid sought to win to his side one of the sultans who up to that time had remained in a state of neutrality, and sent him as a gift his own favourite horse, called Xiin Finiin, which means "the sound of flying gravel". The celebrated poem "Xayow Faaraxow" (Long life, Faarax!) is a panegyric farewell to the animal, and it ends with the words, addressed to the sultan,

Xariggiisa qabo aadmi kale, kuma xurmeeyeeene

(Seize his bridle,
I would not have honoured anyone else with such a gift!) [p. 73]

The war was not always successful and did, of course, end in failure and the death, through illness, of the Sayid. In several poems he laments the difficulties and defeats he has suffered, and among the most highly-regarded of these is "Xuseenow jigraar la ma hadlee" (O Xuseen, one should not speak of contentious matters), popularly known as "Jiinley", which simply means a poem alliterating in the consonant *j*. It was recited after the Dervishes, pressed by their enemies, sought an alliance with one of the sultans, who promised to offer them shelter and a base for their future operations: they trekked there with their families and livestock under extremely difficult conditions, only to find that the sultan had changed sides when he was threatened with reprisals. The Sayid uses the stylistic device of describing the journey as if he had made it alone.

Jafka hawdka guuraha waxaan, jar iska xooraaeyey
Wuxuu jeeni calaflow libaax, igu jibaadaaeyey
Raadkaan ku jiillaa wuxuu, daba jadeemaayey
Jaldhaftiisa qoobka ah waxaan, dib u jalleecaayey
Jaajuusku geesaha wuxuu, jirayey ruuxayga
Waxaan jaamagaarkii cabsida, jimanka buuraayey
Wiyil joof leh iyo yey waxaan, jirif ku keynaanshey
Jinniqabe shabeel ihi wuxuu, igu jalaacaayey
Juq waxaan u soo iri dugaag, jalabuutaynaaya
Wixii gaade jimiq soola xuli, juhunkii ii muuqday

(In the night journey through the dense bush, O how I stumbled down
escarpments!

O how the heavy-footed lion roared at me!
O how he plodded after me following the same footprints as I!
O how I turned round again and again towards the sounds coming
from him!

O how I watched out for spies on all sides!
O how I made my neck-muscles swell with fear!
O how I had to ward off with pieces of bark the ugly-faced
rhinoceros and the wolf!

O how the jinn-possessed leopard shrieked at me!
Suddenly I came upon swarming slithering beasts,
Creatures stalking, sounds heard through thick forest, muted voices
reaching me) [p. 60]

The changes of mood in the Sayid's poems are often very abrupt, and clearly communicate the poet's sense of urgency and

at times his impatience. His imagery is rich and flamboyant, sometimes giving the impression that he was a mystic and a visionary, and its main source is the scenic beauty of Somalia and the traditional pastoral life of her people.

The poems of Ismaaciil Mire (1862–1951), who was a close companion of the Sayid and a senior staff officer in his army, are also well documented. Some seventy poems were collected from oral sources and published in a book entitled *Ismaaciil Mire* by Axmed F. Cali “Idaajaa”. One of his poems is to be found in Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal’s *A collection of Somali literature: Mainly from Sayid Mohamed Abdille Hassan*, another in *Gabayo*, and a third in *Somali poetry*. Axmed F. Cali’s collection is taken here as our source.

Ismaaciil Mire, like the Sayid, used his poetry during the jihad to enhance the cause of the Dervishes, although when the hostilities ceased he turned to other themes. Among the poems composed during the jihad¹⁵ two are especially interesting. They were recited for his wife, Faadumo Dhoorrey, but were obviously also designed for a wider audience upon whom he wanted to impress his total dedication to the jihad. The first, “Nuurow adaa lagu diroo qaban dalkeenniiye” (O Nuur, you are sent there and will go to our region) was composed when the poet was far from home, defending a fort and its environs. Hearing from a group of travellers that his wife resented his long absence and could neither sleep nor eat, Ismaaciil recited the poem to someone who was going to Taleex, where his wife was staying, so that he could repeat it to her. The poetic message, accompanied by a gift of costly dress material, told her that he himself was distressed by being away from her, and it was only his devotion to the Dervish cause that delayed his return. He also described his soldierly tasks and boasted about his part in the recent battle of Dul Madoobe. The message ends with the advice to his wife to calm herself by turning to her household duties.

The other poem, “Faadumoy falaadkayganaan fiiro kaa bariye” (O Faadumo, I shall teach you to consider my instructions), has a similar theme, and was composed when he had an opportunity of seeing his wife for a few hours only, since his unit had to move immediately; he assures her in the poem of his love, and swears

that he would rather be stricken with smallpox than touch any other woman.

The poem “Annagoo Taleex naal” (While we were at Taleex) chronicles the battle of Dul Madoobe: it describes the Dervish preparations and the enemy camp with its interpreters, guides and tent attendants, and ends with an enumeration of the war booty. There are references to the military tactics of the Dervishes, which involved the stratagem of driving herds of camels in front of the soldiers during the attack on machine-gun posts. Another triumphal poem, “War ninkii iga dooniyow” (O you who seek news from me), was composed when the Dervish forces, besieged in their two forts at Beledweyne, are said to have repulsed against enormous odds the Italian forces and their Somali allies.

The Dervishes had many opponents among Somalis and this is reflected in some of the published documentation. In the texts provided in da Palermo’s grammar on pp. 301 and 310, we find a poem, “Wadaad waalan ba nagaga yimi saba Nugaaleede” (A mad cleric has come upon us from the heartland of Nugaal), which is a virulent attack on the Sayid, and although the name of the poet is not given and the text is faulty at many points, part of it may be genuine. Similarly, in Kirk’s grammar there is a text on p. 178, “Geeraar waa boqollaal” (*Geeraar* poems are in hundreds), again by an unnamed author, which consists of a poetic boast on the raising by the British government of Somali cavalry levies to fight against the Dervishes.

Among the Sayid’s fiercest opponents was the poet Cali Aadan, mentioned earlier. He had at first supported the Sayid, and explains his reasons for turning against him in the poem “Ninkii weligii diintii bannaan daacad ugu sheega” (The man who always expounds the faith in a sincere manner in open places), published in the *Diiwaanka* (pp. 186–187). He accuses the Sayid of attacks on men of religion and on elders, and of using brutal and humiliating methods of forcing his will on others. He wonders why people who are thus treated should flock to the Sayid, whom he dubs “the trickster”, rather than defying or abandoning him, which the poet exhorts them to do. In another poem, “Allaahu akbar” (God is great), recorded in the same book, he accuses the Sayid of maltreating his own maternal kinsmen and a group called Reer Khayr con-

sisting mainly of men of religion. He imputes hypocrisy and infidelity to the Sayid from the very opening lines:

Allaahu akbar eedaanku waa, kaa afkiyo beene

(The call to prayer, "God is Great"—these are merely words on your lips, and prevarication.) [p. 21]

When the Sayid and his Dervishes were defeated Cali Aadan expressed his joy in a poem of which only a fragment is published in *Diiwaanka*:

Waa lagu digtaa duul hadduu kuu darraan jiraye
Bal dayooy wadaadkii wakaa sii dabayshadaye

(One takes delight in the woes of those who were vile to one.
Lo and behold! Gone with the wind is the Cleric!) [p. 125]

Among the existing published documentation there are only two oral prose narratives which refer to the War of the Dervishes. One is of some historical interest: it is a detailed account of a five-man mission which came from Aden in 1909 to the Italian-occupied part of Somalia, carrying a letter from Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ, the head of the Ṣāliḥiyya Brotherhood resident in Mecca, addressed to the Sayid. This famous letter, which, however, Sheekh Jaamac Cumar Ciise in his *Diiwaanka* (pp. 141–142) claims is an almost complete forgery, is said to have condemned the Sayid as an oppressor of Muslims, and the aim of the mission was to deliver it to him personally and to show a copy, or copies, of it to various religious leaders in Southern Somalia. The account of this incident is narrated in the first person by a young man of religion, Maxamed Nuur from Berbera, who took part in the events. The text is published in von Tiling's *Somali-Texte* (pp. 62–92), and the letter itself is discussed by Martin in his *Muslim brotherhoods in nineteenth century Africa* on p. 189.

The second prose narrative is a legend concerning the success-bringing talisman given to the Sayid by the King of the Jinns, a talisman whose power is limited to only twenty-six years. The narrative reflects the admiration which the Sayid's extraordinary military successes inspired among ordinary people; it is recorded

in an article by Andrzejewski under the title "Muhammed Abdille Hassan and the lizard: A Somali legend".

During the Dervish war other smaller conflicts took place and continued to break out from time to time during the whole Era of Fire and Embers. It is difficult to assign exact dates to a certain conflict which occurred between a chieftain, Ugaas Xaashi, and his subjects as a result of his oppressive rule which was contrary to the customary constitutional law of his region: most probably it took place in the early part of this era. The clans concerned appointed their leading poets as their spokesmen, and one by one they delivered their poetic messages of censure and defiance. The poets involved were Faarax Nadiif, Gabay Shinni, Saahid Qamaan, Dubbad, Qamaan Bulxan and Cabdi Xirsi, and an account of the events, together with the texts of the poems, is given by Shire Jaamac Axmed in his *Gabayo* (pp. 19–21). The message of Gabay Shinni is given in translation in the article "Poetry in Somali society" by Andrzejewski. These poems of protest differ in the degree of their vehemence, and some contain general philosophical observations about human nature. Gabay Shinni, for example, concludes his message:

Durba waa kibraa sado ninkay, dacalka saartaaye
Haddii doobku buuxsamo inuu, daato waw halise

(When fortune places a man even on the mere hem of her robe, he
quickly becomes proud and overbearing;
A small milking vessel, when filled to the brim, soon overflows.) [p. 19]

Another conflict, in which unfortunately blood was shed, took place towards the end of the Dervish war and continued after it. Huge quantities of firearms found their way to the civilian population of Somalia and were used in interclan fighting over pastures and wells, and in attempts either to stop the conflict or to revive it there was much political activity, in which poets acted as spokesmen of their clans or simply expressed their opinions. A multilateral poetic combat thus developed in which some ten of the best-known poets of the time took part, although in the existing published documentation only four poems of this protracted exchange are available. Three, by Cali Dhuux, Qamaan

Bulxan and Salaan Carrabey, are recorded in the article "A Somali poetic combat" by Andrzejewski and Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal, and the fourth, by Ismaaciil Mire, in the book bearing the poet's name as its title which was written by Axmed F. Cali "Idaajaa" (pp. 81-83); in their vehemence and aggressive humour all are typical of such exchanges. The style is vivid and concrete images prevail: Cali Dhuux, for example, describes in detail and with great relish the beautiful camels, with the brand marks and ear incisions of their former owners, now ostentatiously pastured by their captors in the conquered territory. Qamaan Bulxan makes an interesting reference to the speed of the oral transmission of poems throughout the country, which to many Somalis seems almost miraculous:

Caliyow dabuubtaada gabay, Daayinkaa wadaye
Dabaylaha xagaagii bafliyo, daafigaa sidaye

(O Cali, the Everlasting One has driven on the words of your poem
The rustling winds of summer and the warm breeze have carried
them.) [p. 96]

Apart from his participation in this exchange Ismaaciil Mire was also involved in a feud when one of his kinsmen, and a great personal friend, was killed and the people responsible persistently refused to pay the customary compensation. Embittered by this outrage Ismaaciil Mire composed a series of poems between 1928 and 1944 urging his kinsmen to take revenge; these are recorded in *Ismaaciil Mire* by Axmed F. Cali "Idaajaa" (pp. 86-102).

In the same collection on pp. 117-120, and also in *Somali poetry* on pp. 104-111, is the poem "In kastuu kallaho" (Even though he sets out early in the morning), which Ismaaciil Mire composed some time after the Dervish war as a warning against divine retribution: it was addressed to a Somali sergeant in the colonial service who apparently treated very badly those veterans who had fought on the Dervish side. Apart from its preamble and conclusion the poem consists of nine stanzas, each describing an episode in Somali history in which the principal characters bring upon themselves disaster and death through their pride and arrogance.

Amidst these major conflicts purely religious poetry was no doubt composed extensively, but only one poem is available in

published form, namely "Yaa nabi" (O Prophet!), a praise poem by Sheekh Ismaaciil Faarax (died c. 1910), recorded in Lewis's article "The Gadabuursi Somali script".

The religious teachers also continued to preach and to wander through the countryside with their students. Some were men of great piety and virtue and legends grew up concerning their deeds and miraculous powers. A selection of these oral narratives is found in Andrzejewski's article "The veneration of Sufi saints" and most of them concern miraculous intervention in situations of extreme need or danger. Thus we find legends about the famous Sufi, Sheekh Uweys Xaaji Maxamed of Baraawe (Brava), who died in 1909, turning flies into sheep and goats for his hungry students, or about Sheekh Cali Maye of Marka, who died in 1917, miraculously preventing the cooking-pot of a poor family from tipping over. In a more modern setting Sheekh Nuur Maxamed, who died some time before the middle of this century and is buried in Hargeysa, saves one of his disciples from what would have been a fatal car crash; in another story he provides building materials for the construction of a mosque, brought by a mystical lorry which afterwards disappears in the direction of Mecca. There are also legends concerning the miraculous acquisition of the Arabic language, about the jinns for whom room is made in the circle of students as they attend lectures on theology, or about a miser's hoard of money being turned into scorpions by one of the preachers. One story, which concerns Xaaji Sigad of the Jigjiga region, who died some thirty years ago, shows him to be a poet of considerable wit, who upbraids in humorous verse a certain man who has not been sufficiently hospitable to him and his students. When his host responds to the censure with generosity, Xaaji Sigad recompenses him by the miraculous gift of an inexhaustible supply of meat throughout the visit.

These legends, though viewed with scepticism by many Somalis today, represent an important aspect of the cultural history of the Era of Fire and Embers, since they portray the role of the Islamic preachers and masters of itinerant colleges as the bearers of benevolence and peace in times of war and conflict. There are some poems, too, which deal with the private concerns of individuals in the published documentation of this era. Salaan Carrabey, in one

of his poems recorded in *Somali poetry*, "Luukaansi gabay" (The toils of poetry), explains with wit and panache the reasons for his refusal to pay the bridewealth for his newly acquired wife, and laments over the ills of his old age. The poem is full of general philosophical observations, as is another of his in the same collection, "Qaylada xaduurkii ninkay xaraqday laabtaydu" (The man on whose behalf I shouted for help until my lungs were dry). In it he charges with ingratitude a kinsman whom he had helped on many occasions.

Of private concern, too, is the advice which Saahid Qamaan, who died some time before the middle of this century, gives to his new wife, exhorting her to cultivate all the virtues traditionally expected of married women. This is recorded in Johnson's *Heellooy* (pp. 4-7).

Private themes also occur in the prose of the Era of Fire and Embers. In Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal's collection *Hikmad Soomaali* (Text 22), there is a humorous narrative concerning a traveller and sailor, Cigaal Bowkax, who, when he became stranded in South Africa some time at the beginning of this century, managed to extricate himself from his plight by looting a herd of donkeys and selling them at a market.

Apart from the lyrics of dance songs, straightforward love poetry was rare in Somali oral literature until the rise to fame of Cilmi Bowndheri (died 1941). He fell in love with a girl who was given in marriage to someone else, and he composed many poems in a tragic vein. Eventually, popular tradition claims, he died of grief. Some of his poems are available in published form in a book entitled *Ma dhabba jacayl waa loo dhintaa?* (Is it true that one can die of love?) by Rashiid Maxamed Shabeelle, and in an article by Andrzejewski and Maxamed Faarax Cabdillaahi entitled "The life of Cilmi Bowndheri, a Somali oral poet who is said to have died of love". His poems are characterized by powerful imagery taken mainly from the traditional life of the nomadic interior, and they have secured for the poet a fame in Somalia which remains undiminished to this day.

The Era of the Lute. Towards the end of the Second World War various social and political changes were set in motion in the Somali speaking territories which led to a gradual departure, for

some sections of the population, from the traditional Somali way of life. Towns began to grow, and one of the most important aspects of change was the development of trade-truck communication, which opened even the remoter parts of the country to new influences. Truck drivers formed a small but socially important group who brought in a new element of sophistication, and one such driver was Cabdi Deeysi, who created a genre of love poetry jocularly called *belwo* or *balwo*, a word which could be translated as "mischief". In it he combined the theme of love, treated in a somewhat hedonistic manner, with the elaborate imagery characteristic in the past of the more serious, classical poetry, and he introduced new, lively tunes to which the poems were sung, accompanied by tambourine and flute.

The *balwo* were very short, sometimes of two or four lines only, and their high degree of artistry depended on their condensed diction. Images were used which had to be decoded, but since they were all devoted to the theme of love this could be done, if the audience used their imagination. These short poems were sung in turn, on the "string of pearls" principle, by the guests at parties in towns where *khat* leaves (a mild stimulant) were chewed; the poems were separate units, directed at different women whose identity was concealed by the use of panegyric names, or who were simply imaginary.

Radio broadcasting, which began to be popular at this time, needed material to fill transmission time, and the *balwo* proved eminently suitable since it was free from the references to contentious interclan politics which abounded in the classical genres of poetry. The "string of pearls", however, involved large groups of singers and was therefore expensive; soon solo or duet singing of *balwo* developed, and with it the concept of introducing a unified structure. This was the first step towards the transformation of the *balwo* into the *heello*, a much longer love poem, which shared with its predecessor a penchant for condensed esoteric imagery.

The birth of the *balwo* is chronicled and illustrated in the article "The art of the miniature in Somali poetry" by Andrzejewski, and in Johnson's *Heellooy*.

With the growth of a new political awareness, the goals of liberation from foreign rule and the unification of Somali territories began to attract more and more young people, and this trend needed an artistic form which would express it and stir the consciousness of the nation. The *balwo*, and even more the *heello*, were ideal vehicles for the purpose because of their coded imagery: disguising their patriotic message in the images of love, the poets of the time could successfully evade the censorship imposed by foreign administrations, even at the closely controlled radio stations.

Although poems of the *heello* genre are numerous, only a small selection has been published. "Canti somali", an article by Panza, contains two *heello* poems the authorship of which is not given, but the chief chronicler of the *heello* is Johnson, who in his book *Heellooy* not only gives the texts of the poems, all composed between 1945 and 1969, but provides them with ample annotations. All the poems referred to in this section are from Johnson's collection unless another source is stated.¹⁶

Among the most distinguished poets who used the *heello* genre is Xuseen Aw Faarax (born 1928). In 1956 he achieved nationwide fame for his poem "Wiilooy waxaan ahay wadaad lugloo" (O Wiilo, I am a lame man of religion), which though overtly a love poem, contained a patriotic message advocating the unification of the two parts of Somalia, then administered by Great Britain and Italy.

Not all the poems of Xuseen Aw Faarax were thus encoded. In "Inta arligiyo adiga tahay" (While [the dispute] is between you and our country), he openly protests against the handing over of the administration of some Somali-speaking territories to Ethiopia by the British, and in "Qolaba calankeedu waa cayn" (Every nation has a flag of one kind or another) he expresses his joy at the new Somali flag, a white star on a blue ground.

In "Saaxiibbadaadu" (Some of your friends), composed in the eighth year of Somalia's independence, he discusses the thorny problem of alliances with foreign powers. The last of the five poems which are available in published form is "Dhirta xididka hoosaa dhulka loogu beeree" (The trees are planted in the earth so that the roots are below). It is a love poem, very intricate in its

structure, and the poet draws all his metaphors of love from the parts of the trees, their life-cycle and their dependence on rain.

The fame of Xuseen Aw Faarax is associated with that of Cabdullaahi Qarshe (born 1924), who is one of the most distinguished musicians of Somalia. He set several of Xuseen Aw Faarax's poems to music, and was the first to introduce the lute as an additional accompanying instrument, which was later to be joined by the accordion and other instruments. Cabdullaahi Qarshe's lute can be regarded as the symbol of this whole period of Somali poetry.

Cabdullaahi Qarshe is poet as well as musician, and one of his earliest compositions was "Ka kacaay, ka kacaay" (Arise, arise!), in which he urged his compatriots to oppose the British colonial administration. In another, composed soon after Somalia gained independence, he pledged his support for a national campaign to spread education, and the poem begins with the words "Oqoon la'aani waa iftiin la'aaneey" (To be without knowledge is to be without light). He also takes an interest in international affairs, especially those which concern Africa, and when Patrice Lumumba died he recited a dirge "Lumumba ma noola ma na dhi-maney" (Lumumba is not dead, neither is he alive), in which he contrasts his physical death with his immortality as an African leader. Of particular interest from the artistic point of view is his poem "Dawladii gumaysiga" (The colonialist governments); he describes the unhappy boundary which now divides the city of Berlin, and claims that it is the work of Avenging Fate which, though "as slow as a tortoise", always reaches its destination. The retribution which he has in mind is for the Berlin Conference (1884-1885) at which the partition of Africa into zones of influence was debated by the European powers.

The poetry of Cali Sugulle, like that of most poets of the Era of the Lute, is very much concerned with patriotism and social reform. Soon after independence he composed "Soomaalideennii hadday sinnaatay" (If we the Somalis have become equals), in which he exhorts those who govern the country to show constant vigilance, and in "Kuwa libintii gaadhoo" (Those who reached victory) he commemorates the dates of 26 June and 1 July 1960, when first the British Somaliland Protectorate, and then the

Italian UNO Trusteeship Territory of Somalia, gained their independence and at once united to become the new nation of Somalia.

A poem by Cali Sugulle which is particularly well known is "Asaaggeen horow maraan arkayaa" (I see our equals making progress). Composed in 1960, it is an attack on the use of foreign languages in education and public life and the neglect of Somali, which at that time was still an unwritten language: he attributes the backwardness of Somalia at that time to this situation.

Of the poems of Axmed Suleebaan Bidde, only one is available in published form, but it deserves attention since it is popularly believed to have influenced the outcome of the presidential elections in 1967, though overtly it seems to be merely a reproach to someone who has let the poet down. It begins with the words "Innakoo lammaane ah" (While we were together), but it is popularly known as "Leexo", which means a swinging movement such as that of a child swinging on the branch of a tree.

Themes of political and patriotic concern are also present in the works of three other poets in Johnson's collection. Ismaaciil Xirsi "Farxaan", in "Hohey Afrikaay huruddooy" (O Africa, you who are asleep), laments over the passivity and inertia of the continent,¹⁷ while Caweys Geeddow in "Anilaa ballamee barbaareey" (Let me give you some advice, O youths), urges his countrymen to seek economic and political self-sufficiency by exerting themselves in the field of agriculture. The third poem, "Dibi geesaliyo" (The horned bull), by Cabdullaahi Cabdi Shube, glorifies the traditional Somali pastoral heritage.

Outside Johnson's collection there is some documentation of the works of two prominent poets of the Era of the Lute. The first is Cabdillaahi Suldaan "Timacadde" (1920-1973), who used both the classical genres and the *heello*: unfortunately only three complete poems of his large output have been published.¹⁸ The first, "Anigoo sebi uun ahoo" (When I was just a young boy) is a patriotic and religious work composed for the celebrations of the independence of the Somaliland Protectorate in 1960, and was published posthumously in the article "Toddobaadkan iyo suugaanta" (Literature for this week) by Maxamed Xaashi Dhamac "Gaariye" in issue 4/126 of the daily newspaper *Xiddigta Oktoobar*. The second poem,

"Dad wanaaggii laga maydhay" (People who have been washed of their goodness), was composed in 1963 or 1964 and is a lament over the plight of the Somali insurgents in Kenya, who the poet considers were let down by the Somali government of the time. The text is found in the article "Taariikhdii gabayaagii Cabdillaahi Suldaan 'Timacadde' oo kooban" (A summarized biography of the poet Cabdullaahi Suldaan "Timacadde") by Cumar Axmed "Faansaa". The third poem, composed in 1964, is "Rag baa saaqyo amaahday oo in la siiyey u qaatay" (Men have borrowed money and imagined it was a gift). This poem, which was presented in the journal *Hawl iyo Hantiwadaag* (Labour and Socialism) by the anonymous writer of an article entitled "Kala sinaad dad" (Discrimination among people), accuses the Somali leaders of the time of corruption, mismanagement and the exploitation of clan divisions. Some extracts from this poet's works and biographical information about him can also be found in the article "Baaqii Timacadde" (The call of Timacadde) by Cali Jaamac Qalinle.

The other poet of the Era of the Lute is Axmed Ismaaciil Diiriye "Qaasim", but of his numerous poems, which have achieved wide acclaim, only one is available in published form, in an article entitled "Maandeeq" by Maxamed Xaashi Dhamac "Gaariye". Muandeeq is a she-camel's name, with the panegyric meaning "She-Who-Satisfies-The-Mind", and the she-camel is used in the poem as a symbol for Somalia. It was composed some time between 1960 and 1969, and fiercely attacks the maladministration of the economy and of the security of the country, using the pastoral imagery of the nomadic interior.

To the Era of the Lute also belongs the development of the Somali theatre, an innovation less than half a century old which can be regarded as an unusually successful case of cultural syncretism. The representation of real life on the stage was inspired by foreign models such as dramatic sketches, school plays and films, while the dialogue in alliterative verse has its roots in the long tradition of oral poetry.

The earliest experiments in staging plays probably occurred in the 1930s, but it was only in the 1940s that drama became a popular form of entertainment in the Somali-speaking territories. By the 1950s a pattern of play production was firmly established

which continues to the present day. All the serious and important parts of a play are in alliterative verse, and those which the playwright wishes particularly to highlight are sung to an orchestral accompaniment. Short, often humorous passages with naturalistic dialogue serve as scene dividers, a necessary device since plays are often performed in the open air or on curtainless stages.

Before 1972 most of the plays were entirely oral, in the sense that the playwrights composed the verse parts without recourse to writing and the actors memorized them verbatim, again by word of mouth; this was not an easy task, since the Somali poetic conventions forbid any form of improvisation on the part of the reciter. The shorter passages, however, were in prose and were usually improvised by the actors within the guidelines set by the author.

Because of its oral nature the documentation of the early Somali drama is very poor indeed, but in the 1960s tape-recorders came to the rescue, and the sound archives of Radio Mogadishu and Radio Hargeysa have many recordings of complete plays. No transcripts of any of these has been published, but *Shabeelnaagood* (Leopard among the women) by Xasan Sheekh Muumin was privately recorded during a theatre performance, and then transcribed and published together with an English translation in 1974.¹⁹ This highly popular play was first performed at the National Theatre in Mogadishu in 1968, had a long provincial tour and was serialized on the radio. Its title is the invented, descriptive name of the principal character, a cunning, heartless but sometimes very amusing trickster who ruins naive girls by "marrying" them at bogus ceremonies carried out by accomplices posing as Muslim clerics. The play has a strong reformist message and attacks the disintegration of family life in towns, where it is deprived of the traditional support it has in the rural interior. The characters also debate in poetic language the crucial problems of human society and the moral responsibility both of individual citizens and of the leaders of the nation.

A few playwrights used one or other of the unofficial systems of transcribing Somali when making notes to assist their memories, but even when a national orthography was introduced only one play-text was published, namely *Indhasarcaad* (Clouded

vision) in 1978 by its author Cali Sugulle. It was originally composed in 1963 and had many performances. It is concerned with the insurrection of the Somalis inhabiting the North-Eastern territories of Kenya, which broke out soon after that country became independent.

An extract from this play is given, together with a translation, in an article "Modern and traditional aspects of Somali drama" by Andrzejewski, where also another extract from an unpublished play by Cali Sugulle is to be found; this play is entitled *Kalahaab iyo kalahaad* (Wide apart and flown asunder). It was originally composed and performed in 1966 and its main theme concerns the downfall of a young civil servant through alcoholism and his rescue due to the goodness and patience of his wife and his mother.

The same article provides another extract from an unpublished play, *Dhulkeenna dhibaha ka jooga* (The troubles present in our land), by Cali Ibraahim Iidle, which portrays a conflict between a patriotic civil servant and his kinsmen, who are engaged in an intertribal war in the nomadic interior of the country. To win it they need modern firearms from abroad and they press the hero of the play to embezzle government money and provide them with the necessary funds, appealing to the traditional bonds of solidarity between them. He resists the temptation but fails to stop the fighting, in which many people are killed, including members of this own family. The play is full of realism and tension and contains fiery poetic exhortations against the evils of tribalism. It also exposes the habit of *khat* chewing as a cause of dissipation and inertia among the educated élite.

A characteristic of the Somali theatre which is likely to impress a visitor from Europe or America is that it combines popular entertainment with high art. It draws large crowds of people many of whom have had little or no formal education; their behaviour is relaxed and uninhibited, reminiscent of that of spectators at a football match, and yet the poetry used in the plays which they enjoy, and of which they never seem to tire, is rich in its imagery, not unlike that of the Elizabethan theatre in England. In the following lines taken from *Shabeelnaagood* the heroine complains to the man who has abandoned her:

Sidii gool irmaan oy, dhashii kala go'doomeen
 Amma se goodir buureed, gantaali ay ku taal baan
 Xalay gelindhexaadkii, anoo gaydhamayoo
 Hadba gebi ka dhacayoon, gar wali ba ku seegee
 Adaa garan waxay gubee, garwaaqsoo waad igu geftee!

(Like a suckling lioness when she has lost her cubs
 Or like a mountain oryx with an arrow in his body,
 Lamenting and calling, yesterday at dead of night
 Again and again I stumbled down the steep banks—but sought you all
 in vain

You know what seared me—then judge it fairly, for you have wronged
 me!) [pp. 110-113]

Of the large amount of religious poetry composed during the Era of the Lute only one poem is available in print. This is a prayer for rain composed by Sheekh Caaqib Cabdullaahi Jaamac and is published in the article by Andrzejewski "The roobdóon of Sheikh Aqib Abdullahi Jama: A Somali prayer for rain". Several other religious works by this poet can be found in a Ph.D. thesis, *Sufi poetry in Somali: Its themes and imagery*, by Cabdisalaan Yaasiin Maxamed.

The New Era. For the oral literature of the New Era the documentation is very scanty. We have in published form two poems of one of the leading poets of modern Somalia, Xaaji Aadan "Al qallooc", and a B.A. thesis by Cabdisalaan Yaasiin Maxamed which contains a number of poems composed between 1969 and 1972.

The first of the two poems of Xaaji Aadan is incorporated, with due acknowledgement, into the novel *Aqoondarro waa u nacab jacayl* by Faarax M. J. Cawl. The poem, which begins with the words "Waa meel malka ah oo biyo iyo buur madowba lehe" (It is a place sited round about a pass, which has water and black mountains), praises the natural beauty of the poet's home in the Sanaag region which also happens to be the birthplace of the hero and heroine of the novel.

The second poem, "Suryadabin naloo qoolay sudhan mayno lugaha" (We shall not put our feet into a trap ourselves), has a political theme. It declares that the Somali people will not allow themselves to be deceived or manipulated from within or without and expresses their confidence in the leader. This was published in

an article by Axmed Cartan Xaange, "Suugaanta Kacaanka" (The literature of the Revolution).

Cabdisalaan Yaasiin Maxamed's thesis bears the title *Political themes and imagery in modern Somali poetry* and includes a corpus of texts with annotated translations. The texts were transcribed by him from tape-recordings of broadcasts by Somali radio stations. The poems, whose authors are not given in the thesis, give unqualified support to the new government and are characterized by intense patriotism and reformist zeal.

From the literary point of view two of the poems in this collection deserve our particular attention. The first begins with the words "Markii ay gabeene" (When they failed in their duty); the poet speaks of independent Somalia as a she-camel which is grossly neglected by her herders and as a result becomes very hungry and so thirsty that she can no longer give milk, while her skin is covered with blood-sucking ticks which no one takes the trouble to remove. Impelled by anger and pity a group of people, referred to cryptically as "they", seize their weapons and rush to save her from death. Using images taken from the abundant fauna of Somalia the poet praises the camel's rescuers:

Gurdankii fardahiyo
 Gurxankii shabeelkiyo
 Gaadmadii libaaxiyo
 Gacan maroodi yeesheen

.....
 Guuraa halyeygiyo
 Goobyaalka cawshiyo
 Geesaha biciidkiyo
 Gorayada isheediyo
 Dhegaa geriga yeesheen

(They attained the might of an elephant's trunk
 The steady steps of the horses
 The clamorous roaring of the leopard
 The stalking of the lion

.....
 They acquired the sensitive ear of the giraffe
 The marching gait of the hero
 The familiarity with its surroundings of the antelope
 The sharp horns of the oryx
 And the vigilant eye of the ostrich) [pp. 55 and 58]

The audience, accustomed as they were to the well-established tradition of allusive diction in Somali poetry, would immediately recognize that the poem was a eulogy of the National Army who overthrew the civilian government in 1969.

In contrast with the coded message of this poem, that of the second, "Dadka Soomaaliyeed" (The Somali people), given on pp. 48-54, is "in clear" and does not need any deciphering. Its appeal lies in the fact that it gives a majestic and panoramic view of Somali culture and history, and in the first part it glorifies the national heritage, speaking with admiration of the traditional way of living, which was marked by mutual respect among neighbours, by hospitality, the acceptance of the rule of customary law, and decorum and dignity in the seeking of brides and the arranging of dances and wedding-feasts. The ancient skills of mat-weaving, the carving of stools and head-rests, weapon-making, weather forecasting and the art of healing man and beast, all come in for praise from the poet. The poem also gives a brief review of the history of the Somali nation and praises the two men who are recognized as national heroes, Axmed "Gurey" and Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan. When the poet comes to modern times he praises the new revolutionary government and their programme of socialist reforms, and he ends his poem with a prayer in which he asks God to guide Somalia on a straight path and protect her against all evils and dangers.

ORAL LITERATURE: THE TIME-FREE STREAM

In the Somali oral literature of the time-free stream, fictional prose narratives have the best documentation in the published sources. The majority of these narratives are realistic accounts of events and life situations which come within the limits of ordinary human experience but do not refer to any identifiable individuals. That they are fiction is normally signalled at the outset by same words corresponding to "Once upon a time" and by the fact that the dramatis personae are not sufficiently described to make identification possible, often having no names.

Among the published fictional oral prose we also find fabulous narratives in which at least some of the dramatis personae are

animals, things, forces of nature or abstract concepts. Both realistic and fabulous narratives are related in any suitable social situation; there are no formalized sessions or professional narrators.

One narrative is worthy of particular attention because of its relevance to the study of ecology and the way of life of the traditional, pastoral parts of Somalia in the past. It describes encounters between a soothsayer and a snake which has powers of divination, and the message of the story is that an individual does not have control over his life: it is entirely governed by the three factors of warfare, drought and rain. The story is found in Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal's work *Hikmad Soomaali* (Text 23) and has been translated into English by Andrzejewski in "Somali stories", and into Russian by Žolkovskij in *Skazki narodov Afriki*. It has also been analysed from the structural-philosophical point of view by Žolkovskij in his article "Ispytanje proricatelja".

Oral poetry of the time-free stream consists mainly of the texts of love songs, or songs sung while dancing, marching or performing repetitive work such as drawing water from the wells, rowing, weaving or pounding grain. There are also various poems which are obviously fragments of larger poems which once belonged to the time-bound stream, but have long lost any components which would enable them to be placed on the time-scale. Fragments of this kind are cherished for their sapiential element and have a function similar to that of proverbs.

It is interesting to note that in Somali society, both traditional and modern, oral narratives within this stream do not enjoy a very high prestige. Realistic fictional narratives are regarded merely as a source of entertainment and fabulous narratives belong exclusively to child lore, even though they are remembered by adults and provide them with a store of allusions and symbolic images. Poetry of the time-free stream, though rated below that of the time-bound stream, is admired for its verbal artistry and wit.

These attitudes are reflected in the overwhelming preference among Somali collectors of oral literature for research and documentation of the oral literature of the time-bound stream. In broadcasting, where oral literature is very extensively used, a similar preference can be observed. Oral narratives of the time-free

stream are heard only on the children's programme and the poetry of that stream is used only as illustrative material in talks about the traditional culture.

Nevertheless, a number of Somali collectors have been attracted to this field and among them we find Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal, Shire Jaamac Axmed, Cumar Aw Nuux, Muuse Islaam and Cabdulqaadir F. Bootaan, who have added substantially to the available documentation which previously consisted mainly of collections published by European researchers before the Second World War.²⁰

WRITTEN LITERATURE

As far as is known, there are no published written documents which originate from the Golden Era. There have been reports, however, that some manuscripts containing religious poems have been preserved and are in the possession of private individuals or religious fraternities who guard them jealously and are reluctant to allow them to be inspected or photographed.

The Era of Fire and Embers. The only literary documents from this era which have been published are two poems by Sheekh Uweys Xaaji Maxamed (1847–1909). They were composed in the last decade of his life and were written in an orthography using Arabic characters.²¹

The first is "Axad Sheeki" (The year of Cecchi, which began on a Sunday), and it laments the sad state of Somalia which had resulted from foreign invasions and from wars among the Somalis themselves. He reviews recent events in Somali history, starting with an attack by a group of Somalis on Antonio Cecchi's expedition in 1896. The other poem, "Yaa Nabi salaam calayka" (O Prophet, peace be on you), is a religious exhortation designed to be recited by the Qādiriyya Brotherhood of which the poet was the local leader.

The Era of the Lute. The earliest written prose work in the Era of the Lute is the short story "Qawdhan iyo Qoran" (Qawdhan and Qoran) by Axmed Cartan Xaange, which was published in the journal *Horseed* (Vanguard).²² It is a tale of two lovers who try to elope because the girl is being forced by her parents to

marry another man. They are caught, but the man, Qawdhan, is advised by an old veteran of the Dervish War to try again, and this time he succeeds. The old man, while counselling Qawdhan, tells him of his own elopement when he was young, which led to great trouble with the girl's family but ended in a long and happy marriage.

The same author also wrote a play, which as far as I know was never produced, called *Samawada*.²³ This is the name of the heroine, a schoolgirl who gets involved in a patriotic movement against the Italian political and cultural domination of Southern Somalia, a few years after the Second World War, and is killed in a riot. Although the play is fiction it has some basis in history and reflects the growing political awareness of Somali women at that time.

Although throughout the Era of the Lute poetry was almost exclusively oral, some poets began to write down their own poems, and among them Cali Xuseen Xirsi (1913–1976) was the most famous. Most of his poetry still reached the public only in oral form, recited at meetings or, after Somalia became independent, broadcast on the radio, but some was published in the periodicals *Sahan* (Reconnaissance) and *Horseed* (Vanguard). The first to be published was "Midaan duunyo u haystiyo dalkiisa laga qaadin" (Someone whose livestock and land have not been taken away from him), which appeared in 1958;²⁴ it attacks social injustice and the elevated style of the new Somali élite which he contrasts with the poverty of the ordinary people.

The second poem, published in 1967, was "Gabaygaan rakibay iyo dhulkaan xalay garaacaayey" (The poem which I recited and the ground which I was pounding last night).²⁵ This was originally composed in 1954 and concerns the political plight of the Somali people at that time. Cali Xuseen compares his nation first to a destitute old man who has to sleep in the open air, then to a widow who still weeps over the loss of her beloved husband but is forced to marry a man she detests, to camels stricken by drought, to a lion hit by a poisoned arrow, to a foreigner treated unjustly by prejudiced judges, and finally to the captain of a sailing-ship which is breaking up on the high seas.

Cali Xuseen published two other poems in 1967. In "Dagaalkii berigii Jarmankii nabad diidiyo" (The war in which the Germans

rejected peace)²⁶ he describes the Somali liberation movement since the Second World War and complains that when independence was achieved heroes and patriots were often neglected while opportunists and former collaborators reaped the fruits of victory and exploited the country. "In dhoweyd dha'dii gabay ka tegey dhehashadeediye" (Recently I have abandoned the reciting of poems)²⁷ was originally composed in 1962 as a protest against the importation of cars for private use at a time when, in the poet's view, the national resources should have been directed to economic development and the alleviation of the dire poverty of the masses. In the poem the Somali economy is symbolized by a she-camel who should be looked after and protected against beasts of prey and raiders.

The periodicals *Sahan* and *Horseed* published various other poems and some articles of literary interest, and there is no doubt that they contributed substantially to the development of written Somali literature. It should be understood, however, that most of the literary material published in the Era of the Lute consisted of oral literature written down for the sake of preserving it from oblivion. Published collections of such materials have already been described in the section which deals with oral literature.

The New Era. There are two works of creative written literature of the New Era which may be regarded as characteristic of the transition from the oral to the written form. The first is a historical novel, *Aqoondarro waa u nacab jacayl* (Ignorance is the enemy of love), by Faarax M. J. Cawl;²⁸ even though it contains some fictional material, it is based on oral narratives and poems preserved from the time of the Dervish war, and it incorporates some of the poems into the text by putting them into the mouths of the principal characters. The theme is a love story between a Dervish secret agent and a girl whom he rescues in a shipwreck. The hero is wounded in battle and presumed dead, and the girl is forced to marry someone else; the story ends tragically with the girl dying of fever and the man, recovered from his wound, riding to her grave and predicting his own imminent death.

The second transitional work is a play entitled *Dabkuu shiday Darwiishkii* (The fire which the Dervish lit),²⁹ by Axmed F. Cali "Idaajaa" and Cabdulqaadir Xirsi "Yamyam", which depicts,

mostly in verse, the events of the Dervish war. The Sayid, who is the principal character, speaks lines which are drawn from the corpus of his poetry.

Two short novels by Shire Jaamac Axmed are, on the other hand, totally innovative, and use descriptive devices quite different from the traditional techniques of Somali oral literature. *Hal-gankii nolosha* (Life struggle)³⁰ is the story of the intensely unhappy childhood and adolescence of a sensitive boy whose father has divorced his mother and remarried. He runs away to find his mother and has many adventures on his long journey: the story ends with him becoming reconciled with his father, who promises to send him to a modern school. The second story, *Rooxaan* (The spirits)³¹, is about a young man who is suspected of theft when his employer misses money from the till. The young man visits a man of religion, who assures him that he will be able to identify the thief and recover the money in exchange for a hefty fee in advance. After a bogus session with the "spirits" the impostor does not produce the expected results but does retain the fee.

Numerous short stories have been published, either serialized or in single issues of the national daily *Xiddigta Oktoobar*. The plots are concerned very often with love and marriage, and the subject is treated with seriousness and in the modern spirit of equality between the sexes. Responsible and caring attitudes are implicitly praised and their opposites condemned, as the following examples show.

In "Milgaha jacaylka" (Reverence for love), Yuusuf Axmed "Hero"³² portrays a man who treats with tenderness and respect a young girl who falls in love with him in a brief encounter as passengers on a coach which breaks down in a rainstorm. In the same story we also find a woman who rescues her husband from alcoholism, into which he had fallen during his studies abroad, and he repays her with his love and devotion. In another story by the same author, "Wacdaraha jacaylka" (The vicissitudes of love),³³ an idealistic young man rescues from death through neglect and illness a girl who has run away from a forced marriage (by no means rare before the Revolution of 1969), and looks after her with the help of his kinswomen. He falls in love with her, but as

a result of a set of adverse circumstances she marries someone else.

"Guur-ku-sheeg" (A so-called marriage) by Maxamed Daahir Afrax⁸⁴ describes a marital breakdown, laid bare at an investigation by a family arbitration court assembled at a local People's Orientation Centre. The husband is accused of beating his wife and neglecting her, and the wife, in turn, of attending a *khat*-chewing party as a "hostess", where by chance she meets her husband as her partner-to-be. The hearing reveals how the adverse home background of the young couple has contributed to their present troubles.

The empty night-life of *khat*-parties is also censured in "Dhooftaye maxaad keentay?" (You went far away, but what have you brought back?) by Axmed F. Cali "Idaajaa".⁸⁵ The hero is an engineer who studied abroad and the heroine a girl whom he meets at such a party; their love affair ends with sadness and disappointment for the girl. Even worse than hers is the plight of a schoolgirl called "Ayaandaran", which means "The-Unlucky-One", who is the eponymous heroine of a story by Cabdullaahi Sheekh Xuseen.⁸⁶ A precocious schoolmate has a boy-friend, and Ayaandaran goes out with them both one evening when they are joined by a much older married man, who seduces her there and then. She becomes pregnant but the man denies responsibility, and the story shows how, because of the new attitudes fostered by Somali society, her sufferings are alleviated by the help she gets from several sources, including the school authorities who allow her to finish her studies. She then finds employment and a good husband.

Unthinking selfishness, this time in a woman, is portrayed as a cause of disaster in a story by Axmed F. Cali "Idaajaa", the title of which is a proverb, "Danti mooge maro duug ah horteed ayuu dhammaadaa" (He who does not know where his interests lie is finished sooner than much-worn clothes).⁸⁷ The woman presses her husband, who is a low-paid civil servant, to buy her a set of new clothes which she has seen on one of her rich friends. His refusal leads to a quarrel and she leaves him, taking away their child; to bring her back the man "borrows" some money from the

office safe, but is discovered and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. The woman in her grief tears the expensive clothes and puts on her old much-worn ones.

Another story by this author tells of a senior civil servant who has acquired a taste for an expensive life-style during his studies abroad, and now dislikes his work. He seeks to augment his income by illegal foreign currency deals, but is finally cheated of a huge sum of money which is not his own; he is not, of course, able to go to the police. The title of the story is "Waa inoo berri" (We shall see each other tomorrow),⁸⁸ which refers to the delaying tactics the hero uses in his work towards people who expect action or decisions from him.

Two other stories published in *Xiddigta Oktoobar* deserve our special attention. One, "Gobannimo" (Independence),⁸⁹ depicts the struggle for the liberation of Djibouti from French colonial rule and against cultural imperialism, which takes no cognizance of the national heritage of the people. The author, Axmed Xasan Cabdi "Carwo", vividly portrays the bitter conflict between patriots and collaborators, and the scenes of police interrogation introduce a highly dramatic element.

"Qamaan Bulxan iyo Barni" (Qamaan Bulxan and Barni) by Axmed F. Cali "Idaajaa",⁹⁰ has a historical theme based on oral tradition, and concerns the poet Qamaan Bulxan and his wife Barni Sheekh Cabdille. In the central episode she visits her family, who detain her and make her divorce Qamaan and marry one of her previous suitors. She is recaptured by Qamaan's clansmen, however, and brought back to him. A particular attraction of the story is that it is rich in detail about the social life of Somalia in 1919-1920 and contains extracts from some of Qamaan's poems not previously published.

Most Somali poets now rely on writing in the composition of their works, but their poems reach the public mainly in oral form at private or public recitals, through the radio and more recently through tapes, which circulate throughout the country. Those poets who have achieved fame in the New Era have done so through such oral channels and not through their published works.

Only one collection of modern poems has been published as a book: *Geeddiga wadaay!* (Go on leading the trek!) by Cabdi Mu-

xumud Aamin.⁴¹ The poems cover all the principal tenets of the ideology of the Somali Revolution, and it is interesting to note that the author provides commentaries in prose on his own poems, and often explains the circumstances which inspired him at the time of composition.

Other poems are published in periodicals, the majority of them on patriotic themes, and some have a historical dimension. In one, "Dad ma noola, Leegoy, haddaad war iga doontaane" (O League, if you ask me for news—people are not alive), Cali Xuseen Xirsi addresses his companions in the Somali Youth League⁴² and speaks about the imprisonment of his comrades in a jail in Harar soon after the Second World War. In another very famous poem, which was composed some time between 1960 and 1969, he has a dialogue with a bustard, whose cries are traditionally associated with approaching disaster. It begins with the line "Fiinyahay adaa ololaya oo oohin ciirsadaye" (O bustard, you are weeping and crying for help), and is a lament for Somalia which was afflicted by poverty, as well as by foreign domination in some of her territories and by internal dissension and selfishness among her own people. These two poems are published as illustrative inserts in an article by Idiris Xasan Diiriye: "Cali Xuseen Xirsi (1913–1976)".⁴³ The theme of danger from internal enemies occurs also in Cali Xuseen's poem "Hantidaan wadaagno" (The wealth which we share), composed in 1974, which is a straightforward attack on the tribalism, corruption and lack of concern for the common good which he attributes to some of his compatriots who secretly oppose the present nation-building policy.⁴⁴

Although Cabdulqaadir Xirsi "Yamyam" is one of the leading poets of the time, often heard on the radio, very little of his poetry has appeared in print, apart from the play *Dabkuu shiday Darwiishkii* already discussed. In 1974 his "Gabay ammaan ah" (A poem of praise) was published in the journal *Kacaan*,⁴⁵ and in it he gives credit to the leaders of Somalia for the achievements of the country in various fields and invokes on them God's blessing. Extracts from Yamyam's poem "Nimanyohow calaamada adduun subaxba waa cayn" (O men, each morning the world has a different aspect) are printed in an article by Rashiid Xasan Aadan entitled "Fanka iyo fannaanka" (Art and the artist).⁴⁶ The poem was com-

posed three days after the Revolution of 21 October 1969, to which the poet gives his support, explaining the situation of Somalia and her current needs. Also in the article are extracts from his longest poem, of some 5,000 lines, which surveys the whole history of Somalia from its remote beginnings to the present day, with inserts of factual and ideological commentary. Its title, "Mahadho furan" (Ever-growing permanence), describes the Somali cultural heritage, constantly enriched by new experiences. Further extracts from this poem, and summaries of parts of it, are given in two articles by Axmed F. Cali "Idaajaa", "Mahadho furan iyo sheegista runta" (Ever-growing permanence and truth-telling)⁴⁷ and "Mahadho furan" (Ever-growing permanence).⁴⁸

Of the numerous poems of Qaasim Hilowle (born 1923), much cherished by Somali audiences, only one has so far appeared in print, "Dhallinyaradeenna dhaaratay dhulka aan u dhimanno" (Our young people who have sworn to die for their country); this was published in the article by Rashiid Xasan Aadan "Fanka iyo fannaanka".⁴⁹ In it the poet urges his countrymen to abandon tribalism and the foolish division of people into those of "high" and "low" ancestry.

In "Marinka" (The path)⁵⁰ a diplomat and politician, Cumar Carte Qaalib, explains his personal philosophy of selfless service to his country and invokes God's help to keep him to this task. Significantly the poem is addressed to the great literary scholar and collector of oral poetry Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal, to whom the poet refers as the man "who holds the key to the meaning of poetry".

The poems of Cali Ibraahim Idle, who distinguished himself earlier as a playwright, also deal with matters of public concern. In his "Ciidda Dhallinta Kacaanka" ("Children of the Revolution" Day)⁵¹ he praises the government and its leader for establishing well-run residential schools for abandoned and destitute children, and in "Xuska 8da Maarso" (A commemoration of 8th March)⁵² he lends his support to the pro-feminist policies of the government on the occasion of the foundation of a nationwide women's organization. His "Gabay" (A gabay poem)⁵³ is an enthusiastic panegyric in support of the government's policies and development programmes, while in "Isticmaarka caalamiga ah" (World imperia-

lism) ⁴⁴ and "Dantaa weeye nabadda ku daal" (It is in your interest to exert yourself in the pursuit of peace) ⁴⁵ he turns his attention to international problems and conflicts.

Not all the published poetry of the New Era is concerned with patriotic and political themes, however. We can find poetic detachment from the problems of the day in the poems of Maxamed Xaashi Dhamac "Gaarriye", who in "Maahmaahaha Darwin" (The wise sayings of Darwin) ⁴⁶ comments on the theory of evolution, using the traditional alliterative verse and imagery. In "Garaad-daran", which could be translated as "That which is weak in insight", ⁴⁷ he probes into the question of his own psychological identity, and in another poem, "Dheeriyaa dhuxusha ka madoobiya" (O how tall I am and blacker than charcoal), ⁴⁸ he encourages his readers to take pride in their African physical and cultural heritage.

Periodicals and newspapers, especially *Xiddigta Oktoobar*, frequently feature articles on literary and cultural matters, such as "Habka ururinta suugaanta aan qorneyn" (Methods of collecting oral literature) by Axmed F. Cali "Idaajaa", ⁴⁹ and the series of articles on Somali scansion by Cabdullaahi Diiriye Guuleed and Maxamed Xaashi Dhamac "Gaarriye" referred to in the Introduction.

For the moment the printing capacity of the National Printing Agency in Somalia is to a great extent taken up with the production of school textbooks and adult education materials, several million copies of which have already been printed. Many literary works—novels, collections of poems, essays, as well as two books on scansion—have been accepted for publication but must wait their turn in the queue. When these works reach the printing presses we shall see a real flowering of written literature in Somali.

NOTES

¹ Detailed information concerning the history and characteristics of this orthography are given in the articles "The introduction of a national orthography for Somali" and "The development of a national orthography in Somalia and the modernization of the Somali language" by Andrzejewski.

- ² Accounts of these activities are given in "Research in Somali folklore" by Johnson and "The rise of written Somali literature" by Andrzejewski.
- ³ Materials collected by European and American researchers are provided with translations into their languages. Unfortunately these translations are not readily accessible to the general public since they appear in books of limited editions and in learned journals. An exception to this is the Somali section of *The Penguin book of oral poetry* edited by Ruth Finnegan which has a wide circulation. Ruth Finnegan culled her materials from scholarly publications.
- ⁴ The method of identifying Somali authors and the order of their names are explained in the introductory note to the Bibliography. Note that detailed page, section or text references are given here only when this is necessary for ease of finding the relevant passages in the sources. For works which are very short or have reliable tables of contents or indexes, and thus present no difficulty in this respect, such references are omitted.
- ⁵ An extensive account of these traditions is given in the introduction to *Ismaaciil Mire* by Axmed F. Cali "Idaajaa".
- ⁶ A short account of the pre-colonial history of Somalia, derived mainly from oral traditions, is provided in *Ta'riikh aš-Šūmāl* by Jaamac Cumar Ciise.
- ⁷ There is, however, a sizeable amount of unpublished material originating from this era which has been collected from oral sources by the staff of the Academy of Culture in Mogadishu, the staff and students in the Department of Somali Language and Literature of the National University and some private researchers.
- ⁸ The text of this invocation is found on p. 49 of the thesis *Sufi poetry in Somali* by Cabdisalaan Yaasiin Maxamed.
- ⁹ For bibliographical information concerning him see "A genealogical note relevant to the dating of Sheikh Hussein of Bale" by Andrzejewski.
- ¹⁰ I.e. Iman Aḥmad bin Ibrāhīm (1506-1543).
- ¹¹ Texts 14, 15, 27 (Part I and II) and 33 in *Gabayo*.
- ¹² Text 26 in *Diiwaanka*.
- ¹³ Text 9 in *Diiwaanka*.
- ¹⁴ Text 22 in *Diiwaanka*.
- ¹⁵ The four poems from this period are given in Sections 7, 8, 9 and 18 in Axmed F. Cali's collection.
- ¹⁶ See Note 4.
- ¹⁷ Johnson is uncertain about the authorship of this poem but Rashiid Xasan Aadan in his article "Fanka iyo fannaanka" in *Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/130, 1976, p. 2 attributes it positively to Ismaaciil Xirsi "Farxaan".
- ¹⁸ A large collection of his poems, obtained from poetry reciters or tape-recordings, was prepared in 1978 by Boobe Yuusuf and Saalax Jaamac but it is as yet only in private circulation.

- ⁵³ *Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 6/18, 1978, p. 5.
⁵⁴ *Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/51, 1976, p. 2.
⁵⁵ *Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 5/212, 1977, p. 5.
⁵⁶ *Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/73, p. 3; 4/97, p. 5; 4/102, p. 3; 1976.
⁵⁷ *Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/61, p. 3; 4/67, p. 3; 1976.
⁵⁸ *Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/26, p. 3; 4/32, p. 3; 1976.
⁵⁹ *Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 5/72, 1977, p. 3.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

AADAN AXMED "AFQALLOOC". A contemporary poet, said to be over a hundred years old but still active and creative. Since he has performed a pilgrimage to Mecca, the title *xaaji* (hajji) is usually placed before his name. At the age of thirty he left Somalia and spent some fifty years in Arab countries, where he was engaged in studies and in business, and where he was also for a time employed in government service. On his return to Somalia he devoted himself to composing and reciting poetry; his poems are often broadcast and have achieved great popularity. A large collection of transcripts, taken under dictation from the poet himself, was made in 1977 by Cumar Aw Nuux but still awaits publication; a copy of this collection has been deposited in the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. Transcripts of two of his poems have been published: one in Faarax M. J. Cawl, *Aqoondarro waa u nacab jacayl* (1974, Ignorance is the enemy of love) and another in Axmed Cartan Xaange, "Suugaanta Kacaanka" (*Dhambaalka Akadeemiyaha Dhaqanka*, 1 May 1975, pp. 17-19, The literature of the Revolution).

AADAN AXMED DUBBE (fl. 19th and early 20th centuries). A poet who lived in the Ceerigaabo district. Transcripts of his poems are found in *Diiwaanka*, pp. 34 and 37-38.

AXMED ABIKAR "GABYOW" (1844-1933). A poet and man of religion, born in Cadaale; the title *sheekh* (sheikh) is normally placed before his name to indicate his learning. In 1891 he opposed the advent of Italian colonial rule in his region. He composed many poems on both religious and secular themes, but his works, though now written down by private collectors, remain unpublished. A transcript of a fragment of one poem is found in *Iftiinka-Aqoonta*, 1967, 4, p. 18.

AXMED CARTAN XAANGE (1936-). A writer and literary scholar, born in Laascaanood. He received his early education in Mogadishu, and after completing his secondary education in Dar es Salaam he studied Russian language and literature at the Lomonossov University in Moscow, where his special interest was Tolstoy; he also studied English and economics through correspondence courses. He has been a civil servant since 1971 and is

a member of the Somali Language Commission and of the Academy of Culture. He has published a short story "Qawdhan iyo Qoran" (*Horseed*, 5, pp. 2-12; 8, pp. 2-16; 1967, Qawdhan and Qoran) and a play *Samawada* (1968, [name of the play's heroine]) as well as two works on folklore and literature: *Somali folklore: Dance, music, song* (1973) and "Suugaanta Kacaanka" (*Dhambaalka Akadeemiyaha Dhaqanka*, 1 May 1975, pp. 17-19, The literature of the Revolution). He is also the co-author, with Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal and Cumar Aw Nuux, of an article "Fol'klor v žizni somalijcev" which appeared in Russian, translated by E. S. Šerr, in *Učenyje zapiski so-vecko-somalijskoj ěkspedicii*, (1974). Note that this author's name has the following variants: A. Artan, Ahmed Artan Hange and Axmed Cartan Xange.

AXMED FAARAX CALI "IDAAJAA" (1947-). A literary scholar, collector of oral literature and short story writer. He was born in Gaalkacayo and after attending a Koranic school he went to the Jamaal Cabdinaasir Secondary School in Mogadishu and later to the National Teacher Training Centre at Lafoole. He was a schoolteacher for two years and in 1972 joined the Somali Language Commission; he is now on the staff of the Academy of Culture. In addition to his prolific literary and scholarly output he has contributed many popular articles to the press, both in Somali and in Arabic, which are characterized by deep concern for the progress of the country and the preservation and development of the national culture. Among his more important works we find *Ismaaciil Mire* (1974 [the name of a Somali poet, q.v.]), which combines a collection of transcripts of Ismaaciil Mire's poems with a biography of the poet, the poems being placed at those points in the biographical account when they are said to have been composed. Axmed Faarax has also published a number of articles on Somali poets and their works, including: "Qamaan Bulxan iyo Barni" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 5/95, p. 6; 5/101, pp. 2 and 3; 1977, Qamaan Bulxan and Barni), "Mahadho furan iyo sheegista runta" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 5/38, 1977, p. 2, Ever-growing permanence and truth-telling) and "Mahadho furan" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 5/53, 1977, p. 2, Ever-growing permanence). One of his articles is entitled "Habka ururinta suugaanta aan qorneyn" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 5/72, 1977, p. 3, Methods of collecting oral literature), and gives guidance to amateur collectors. Together with Cabdulqaadir Xirsi "Yamyam" he has published a play *Dabkuu shiday Darwiishkii* (1975, The fire which the Dervish lit). He is also the author of a number of serialized short stories, such as "Danti mooge maro duug ah horteed ayuu dhammaadaa" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/58, p. 3; 4/59, p. 3; 4/60, p. 2; 4/61, p. 2; 4/64, p. 2; 4/73, p. 2; 1976, He who does not know where his interests lie is finished sooner than much-worn clothes), "Dhooftaye maxaad keentay?" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/98, p. 2; 4/99, p. 2; 4/101, p. 2; 4/103, p. 2; 4/104, p. 3; 4/107, p. 5; 4/108, p. 2; 4/109, p. 4; 4/110, p. 2; 4/113, p. 2; 4/114, p. 4; 4/115, p. 3; 4/117, p. 3; 4/125, p. 3; 4/127a, p. 4; 4/127b, p. 2; 1976, You went far away, but what have you brought

back?) and "Waa inoo berri" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 5[4]/318, p. 6; 5[4]/319, p. 5; 5[4]/320, p. 5; 5/11, p. 2; 5/12, p. 5; 5/13, p. 6; 5/14, pp. 5 and 7; 1977, We shall see each other tomorrow).

AXMED "GABYOW" see AXMED ABIKAR "GABYOW"

AXMED ISMAACIIL DIIRIYE "QAASIM". A contemporary poet. He was educated at the secondary school at Sheekh and later joined the civil service, reaching the rank of district officer; he now lives abroad. His poems have a wide circulation through oral recitals and tape-recordings. A transcript of one poem is published in Maxamed Xaashi Dhamac "Gaariye", "Maandeeq" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/114, 1976, p. 3, [the name of a she-camel]).

AXMED SULEEBAAN BIDDE. A contemporary poet, singer and actor. A transcript of one of his poems, together with a translation, is published in *Heellooy*, pp. 123-125.

AXMED XASAN CABDI "CARWO". A contemporary short story writer. He has published a serialized short story entitled "Gobannimo" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 5/50, p. 2; 5/59, p. 5; 5/61, p. 4; 5/64, p. 3; 5/74, p. 7; 5/80, p. 6; 1977, Independence).

CAAQIB CABDULLAAHI JAAMAC (c.1920-). A poet and man of religion; the title *sheekh* (sheikh) is normally put before his name. He was born in Gulufa near Jigjiga, and after attending a Koranic school he returned to the farming and pastoral pursuits of his family, but during the Second World War he was a café proprietor in Jigjiga. He later joined an advanced itinerant college of Islamic studies, and he became a man of religion and a prominent preacher who used alliterative Somali verse in his sermons and in services; this was a departure from the normal practice, which favours Arabic. He went to Mogadishu in 1962 and his work has been associated with the activities of the Cultural Department of the Ministry of Education, the Somali Language Commission and, since 1973, the Academy of Culture. Transcripts and translations of some of his poems are found in Andrzejewski, "The roobdoon of Sheikh Aqib Abdullahi Jama: A Somali prayer for rain", *African Language Studies*, XI, 1970, pp. 23-34, and in Cabdisalaan Yaasiin Maxamed, *Sufi poetry in Somali: Its themes and imagery*, University of London Ph.D. thesis, 1977, pp. 129-143, 146-155, 159-161, 169-189, 197-202, 210-217. Note that this author's name has the variant Aqib Abdullahi Jama.

CABDI DEEQSI "SINEMO" (?-1967?). A poet and a literary and musical innovator. He was born in Jaarraa Horato in Boorame District and spent many years in Djibouti as a lorry-driver and trader. It is said that he was killed during riots in Djibouti. Transcripts of some of his poems, together with translations, are published in *Heellooy*, pp. 52-54. A short biography of the poet is also provided in this work.

CABDI MUXUMUD AAMIN (1935-). A poet, composer of songs, singer and actor. Born in Gebiley, he began his artistic career in Hargeysa in 1953, but now lives in Mogadishu, where his work is associated with the Ministry of Information and National Guidance. He took part in various tours undertaken by Somali singers and actors in foreign countries. He has published *Geeddiga wadaay!* (1973, Go on leading the trek!), a collection of his own poems with autobiographical commentaries. Most of these poems were previously broadcast.

CABDI XIRSI (fl. 19th and early 20th centuries). A poet who lived in the pastoral interior in the Dhagaxbuur area. A transcript of a fragment of one of his poems is found in *Gabayo*, p. 21.

CABDILLAAHI SULDAAN "TIMACADDE" (1920-1973). A poet, who was born in Qadow and spent his earlier life in Harar and Direedawa, moving in 1940 to Djibouti. In 1957 he settled in what was then the Somaliland Protectorate, and followed various occupations throughout his life, including working in a restaurant. He was engaged in political activities, using his poems as a weapon of propaganda; from 1967 he began to receive broadcasting engagements. Transcripts of his poems were published after his death in a number of articles: Anonymous, "Kala sinaad dad" (*Hawl iyo Hantiwadaag*, 1/4, 1973, pp. 48-49, Discrimination among people), Cumar Axmed "Faansaa", "Taariikhdiisii gabayaagii Cabdillaahi Suldaan 'Timacadde' oo kooban" (*Dhambaalka Akadeemiyaha Dhaqanka*, 1 May 1975, pp. 2-4, A summarized biography of the poet Cabdillaahi Suldaan "Timacadde"), Cali Jaamac Qalinle, "Baaqii Timacadde" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/15, 1976, p. 3, The call of Timacadde), Saalax Jaamac, "Xuskii gabayaagii gobanimada Soomaaliyeed" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/18, 1976, p. 2, A commemoration of the poet of Somali independence) and Maxamed Xaashi Dhamac "Gaariye", "Toddobaadkan iyo suugaanta" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/126, 1976, p. 3, Literature for this week).

CABDISALAAH YAASIIN MAXAMED (1948-). A literary scholar, collector of oral literature and poet. He was born in Burco and trained as a teacher in Somalia, then studied in the United States and did postgraduate work in London. He is now a lecturer at the University of Riyadh in Saudi Arabia. He has written two theses in the field of Somali oral literature: *Political themes and imagery in modern Somali poetry* (Vermont 1973) and *Sufi poetry in Somali: Its themes and imagery* (London 1977). The second of the two theses is now awaiting publication. Note that this author's name has the variant Abdisalam Yassin Mohamed.

CABDULLAAHI CABDI SHUBE. A contemporary poet, broadcaster and actor who has been very popular since the first years of Somali independence. A transcript of one of his poems, together with a translation, is provided in *Heellooy*, pp. 159-160.

CABDULLAAHI DIIRIYE GUULEED. A contemporary literary scholar. He majored in English at the Somali National University and was a school-teacher for a few years after his graduation, conducting research into Somali scansion in his spare time. Since 1978 he has been a lecturer in the Department of Somali Language and Literature at the National University. He has published a series of articles on Somali scansion: "Gabaygeenna miisaan" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 6/126, p. 3; 6/134, p. 3, 1978, Analyse the scansion of our gabay poems), "Jiiftadana miisaan" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 6/149, p. 3; 6/150, p. 3, 1978, Analyse also the scansion of the jiifto poems), "Dhaantadana miisaan" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 6/164, 1978, p. 3, Analyse also the scansion of the dhaanto poems), "Suugaanta Soomaaliyeed" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 6/165, 1978, p. 3, Somali literature), "Heelladana miisaan" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 6/172, p. 3; 6/173, p. 3, 1978, Analyse also the scansion of the heello poems), "Geeraarka iyo miisaankiisa" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 6/191, 1978, p. 3, The geeraar poems and their scansion), "Buraanburka iyo miisaankiisa" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 6/247, 1978, p. 3, The buraanbur poems and their scansion), "Hojis iyo hooris buraanbur" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 6/248, 1978, p. 3, The first and second hemistichs of the buraanbur poems), "Ma heellaa mise...?" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 6/283, 1978, p. 3, Is it a heello poem... or what?) and "Bahnnimada xubnaha maansada qaarkood" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 7/71, p. 3; 7/72, p. 3; 1979, The affinity of some components of poetic genres). Note that this author sometimes spells his first name as Cabdillaahi, which is an optional pronunciation variant of Cabdullaahi.

CABDULLAAHI QARSHE (1924-). A poet, lutanist, singer and composer of songs. He was born in Moshi, Tanzania, but attended school in Aden; in 1945 he went to Hargeysa where he worked as a clerk for a time before becoming a professional singer and composer of songs. From his earliest youth he was interested in music, and he introduced the use of foreign instruments, starting with a lute which he acquired as a schoolboy. In spite of this innovation he has always taken great care to preserve the Somali character of the music he composed. He collaborated with several poets by composing tunes for their poems, and provided sung poetic parts for many plays. He played an important part in the setting up of the influential and highly popular group of actors and singers called The Hargeysa Brothers. Transcripts of some of his poems, together with translations and notes on his biography, are found in *Heellooy*, pp. 78-80, 89-91, 120-121, 140-143, 159.

CABDULLAAHI SHEEKH XUSEEN. A contemporary writer. He has published two short stories: "Ayaandaran" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 5/56, p. 7; 5/62, p. 2; 5/63, p. 4; 5/67, p. 4; 5/76, p. 7; 5/82, p. 6; 5/87, p. 4; 5/93, p. 6; 5/99, p. 5; 1977, The-Unlucky-One) and "Raage Ugaas iyo Cabban" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 7/108, 1979, p. 3, Raage Ugaas and Cabban).

CABDULQAADIR FAARAX BOOTAAN (1949-). A collector of Somali literature and a lexicographer. He was born in Gaalkacayo district and received his secondary education in Mogadishu, then worked shortly as a broadcaster. Since 1966 he has been a zealous collector of oral literature and in 1973 he joined the staff of the Academy of Culture in Mogadishu, where in addition to his other duties he is the production editor and chief proof-reader for the publications of the Academy. He was the chief editor of the first monolingual Somali dictionary, *Qaamuuska af Soomaaliga* (1976, A dictionary of the Somali language). He has published *Murti iyo sheekooyin* (1973, Traditional wisdom and stories), which is mainly a collection of works of oral literature.

CABDULQAADIR XIRSI "YAMYAM" (1946-). A poet and poetry reciter. Born in Wardheer, he was educated at a Koranic school and was later engaged in trade on a small scale in Mogadishu, Dhuusamareeb, Kismaayo and other towns. Though he had begun his poetic career much earlier, his popularity and fame rose to its present height after the Revolution of 1969. He frequently recites his poems at public meetings and on the radio. He has published the following poems: "Gabay ammaan ah" (*Kacaan*, 1, 1974, pp. 24-25, A poem of praise), "Kowda Maaajo: Hambalyo 1975" (*Dhambaalka Akadeemiyaha Dhaqanka*, 1 May 1975, p. 1, The first of May: Congratulations 1975), "Hees" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 3/62, 1975, p. 2, A hees poem) and "Ma riyaa ma run baa" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 6/171, 1978, p. 3, Is it a dream? Is it reality?). He is also the author, jointly with Axmed Faarax Cali "Idaajaa", of a play, *Dabkuu shiday Darwiishkii* (1975, The fire which the Dervish lit). Extracts from his poems are published in articles by two other authors: Axmed Faarax Cali "Idaajaa", "Mahadho furan iyo sheegista runta" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 5/38, 1977, p. 2, Ever-growing permanence and truth-telling) and "Mahadho furan" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 5/53, 1977, p. 2, Ever-growing permanence), and Rashiid Xasan Aadan, "Fanka iyo fannaanka" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/31, 1976, p. 2, Art and the artist). Note that the name Cabdulqaadir is sometimes spelt Cabdilqaadir, which is an optional pronunciation variant.

CALI AADAN, also known as **CALI DHUUX** (fl. 19th and first half of 20th centuries). A poet who was a pastoralist, living in North-Eastern Somalia. He joined the Dervish movement but later changed sides and became its vehement opponent. When the Dervish war ended he continued to be actively engaged in the internal politics of his own and the neighbouring regions. Transcripts of his poems are found in *Gabayo*, p. 55, *Iftiinka-Aqoonta*, 4, 1967, pp. 7-8 and *Diiwaanka*, pp. 21, 125 and 186-187. A transcript of one of his poems, together with a translation, is provided in Andrzejewski and Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal, "A Somali poetic combat", *Journal of African Languages*, II, 1, 1963, pp. 15-28 (Part I).

CALI CABDIRAXMAAN (fl. probably 18th century). A religious poet who lived mainly in the North-Eastern part of Somalia. A transcript of one of his poems, together with a translation, is found in Cabdisalaan Yaasiin Maxamed's thesis *Sufi poetry in Somali: Its themes and imagery* (London 1977).

CALI IBRAAHIM IIDLE (1940-). A playwright and poet. He was born in Berbera and after his early education there and at Mandheera, and later employment in a clothing store, he became a school teacher after training in Hargeysa. He was given an opportunity for further training in education in Hargeysa and also studied as a mature student at the College of Education of the National University. He is now on the staff of the Adult Education Department of the Ministry of Education. He composed and produced several plays which were staged in Berbera, Hargeysa and Djibouti. No transcripts of these have been published, except for an excerpt, accompanied by a translation, in Andrzejewski, "Modern and traditional aspects of Somali drama" in Dorson, Richard M. (ed.), *Folklore in the modern world* (1978). After the Somali language had acquired a national orthography he wrote a number of poems, dealing mainly with patriotic and political themes. These were: "Istiimaarka caalamiga ah" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/51, 1976, p. 2, World imperialism), "Ciidda Dhallinta Kacaanka" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/55, 1976, p. 4, "Children of the Revolution" Day), "Xuska 8da Maarso" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 5/39, 1977, p. 7, A commemoration of 8th March), "Dantaa weeye nabadda ku daal" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 5/212, 1977, p. 5, It is in your interest to exert yourself in the pursuit of peace) and "Gabay" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 6/18, 1978, p. 5, A gabay poem).

CALI SUGULLE. A contemporary poet, playwright, actor and broadcaster. He contributed substantially to the development of Somali drama and had achieved fame by the first years of independence. His works have often been broadcast by Radio Mogadishu. Transcripts of some of his poems are available in *Heellooy*, pp. 96-98, 107-112 and 132-134. Only one full transcript of his numerous plays has been published: *Indhasarcaad* (1978, Clouded vision), which was originally composed and staged in 1963. An extract from this, together with a translation, is provided in Andrzejewski, "Modern and traditional aspects of Somali drama" in Dorson, Richard M. (ed.), *Folklore in the modern world* (1978). An extract from his play *Kalahaab iyo kalahaad* (Wide apart and flown asunder), composed and staged in 1966, is also provided, together with a translation, in the same article.

CALI XUSEEN XIRSI (1913-1976). A poet. He was born in Burco and received a Koranic school education there. From the early 1940s he was engaged in the Somali liberation movement in the northern part of the country; in 1948 he moved to Mogadishu where there was more political freedom at the time. When Somalia became independent his poetic work

was associated with Radio Mogadishu from where he often broadcast his poems. Of the many poems which were recited at private and public meetings he published only a few: "Midaan duunyo u haystiyo dalkiisa laga qaadin" (*Sahan*, 4 February 1958, p. 2, Someone whose livestock and land have not been taken away from him), "Gabaygaan rakibay iyo dhulkaan xalay garaacaayey" (*Horseed*, 6, 1967, p. 3 [reprinted in *Kacaan*, 1, 1974, p. 40], The poem which I recited and the ground which I was pounding last night), "Dagaalkii berigii Jarmankii nabad diidiyo" (*Horseed*, 15, 1967, pp. 7-9, The war in which the Germans rejected peace), "In dhoweyd dha'dii gabay ka tegey dhehashadeediye" (*Horseed*, 18, 1967, p. 11, Recently I have abandoned the reciting of poems) and "Hantidaan wadaagno" (*Kacaan*, 1, 1974, p. 70, The wealth which we share). Two of his poems were published posthumously by Idiris Xasan Diiriye in his article "Cali Xuseen Xirsi (1913-1976)" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/43, 1976, p. 2): "Dad ma noola, laegoy haddaad war iga doontaane" (O League, if you ask me for news—people are no longer alive) and "Fiinyahay adaa ololaya oo oohin ciirsa-daye" (O bustard, you are weeping and crying for help).

CAWEYS GEEDDOW. A contemporary poet, singer and composer of songs who has been very popular since the first years of Somali independence. A transcript of one of his poems, together with a translation, is published in *Heellooy*, pp. 134-135.

CILMI BOWNDHARI (or BOODHARI) (1908-1941). A poet who spent his early life as a pastoralist; in 1930 he went to Hargeysa, moving after a year to Berbera. There he obtained a job in a restaurant and was trained as a baker and pastry cook, work in which he excelled, so that he was finally put in charge of a bakery. Around 1934 he fell in love with a very young girl and composed many poems to her and about her; these gained him immediate fame, although he had never been a poet before. It is said that as his love was not reciprocated, his unhappiness seriously affected his health, especially when the girl was married in 1937 to someone else. It is extremely difficult to establish with certainty the facts about the matter, since his poetry, rich in metaphor and hyperbole, has given rise to many legends, and the people concerned, whose testimony could be relied on, could not be interviewed or questioned for reasons of delicacy and the Somali sense of decorum. The most recent researches suggest that neither the girl nor her parents gave Cilmi any encouragement or promise; it is even asserted that he had hardly ever spoken to her and that his love was in fact reminiscent of that of Petrarch for Laura. In about 1940 he was apparently persuaded by the elders to marry someone else, and in 1941 he died in Berbera. Transcripts of his poems, placed within the framework of his biography, are given in Rashiid Maxamed Shabeelle, *Ma dhabba jacayl waa loo dhintaa?* (1975, Is it true that people die of love?). Translations of some of his poems, based on transcripts deposited in the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, are given in Andrzejewski and

Muhammed Faarax Cabdillaahi, "The life of 'Ilimi Bowndheri, a Somali oral poet who is said to have died of love", *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, IV, 2/3, 1967.

CUMAR AW NUUX. A contemporary literary scholar and collector of oral literature. Initially trained as a teacher, in the early 1960s he joined the Cultural Department of the Ministry of Education where he was engaged in research on oral literature. He became a member, and later the Secretary, of the Somali Language Commission and played an important role in the introduction of the national orthography in 1972. From 1973 to 1976 he continued his researches in the Academy of Culture in Mogadishu, and since 1976 he has lived in Qatar. He has published *Some general notes on Somali folklore* (1970), "Somali culture and its immense riches" (*New Era*, 5, 1972, pp. 41-43) and "Songs that derive from folk dances" (*New Era*, 7, 1972, pp. 19-21). He is also the co-author, with Axmed Cartan Xaange and Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal, of an article "Fol'klor v žizni somaliycev" which appeared in Russian, translated by E. S. Šerr in *Učenyje zapiski sovecko-somalijskoj ekspedicii* (1974). Note that this author's name has the variant Omar Au Nuh.

CUMAR AXMED "FAANSAA". A contemporary writer. He has published "Taariikhdiigii gabayaagii Cabdillaahi Suldaan 'Timacadde' oo kooban" (*Dhambaalka Akadeemiyaha Dhaqanka*, 1 May 1975, pp. 2-4, A summarized biography of the poet Cabdillaahi Suldaan "Timacadde").

CUMAR CARTE QAALIB. A contemporary poet, diplomat and politician. He began his career as a teacher, and when Somalia became independent he joined the diplomatic service, reaching ambassadorial rank. From 1969 to 1976 he was Foreign Secretary, and from 1976 to 1977 Secretary for Higher Education and Culture. He is now Minister in charge of the Presidency Office. Of his many poems, known through recitals, only two have been published: "Hiil qaran" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/89, 1976, p. 4, To the aid of the nation) and "Marinka" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/101, 1976, p. 5, The path).

DHIIDHI KEDIYE (fl. 19th century). A poet who lived in the pastoral interior in North-Western Somalia. He was known for his powers of improvisation and witty repartee. A transcript of one of his poems, in dialogue with the poetess Geelo, is found in Maxamed Xaaji Cali, "Dooddii Dhiidhi iyo Geelo" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/19, pp. 2 and 4; 4/31, p. 2, 1976, The dispute between Dhiidhi and Geelo). A transcript of an excerpt from this poem, together with a translation, is provided in Andrzejewski, "Modern and traditional aspects of Somali drama" in Dorson, Richard M. (ed.), *Folklore in the modern world* (1978).

DUBBAD (fl. 19th and early 20th centuries). A poet who lived in the pastoral interior in the Dhagaxbuur area. A transcript of one of his poems is published in *Gabayo*, p. 20.

FAARAX GARAAD XIRSI "WIILWAAL" (fl. 19th century). A poet who was a *garaad* (ruler) of a Somali sultanate with Jigjiga as its capital. He is usually referred to as Garaad Faarax or simply as Wiilwaal. He came from a long line of *garaads* and distinguished himself as a war-leader and politician of exceptional ability and as a social reformer. He had a very strong and colourful personality, immense courage and ruthlessness and, at times, great wit, and it was probably these qualities which gave rise to the many legends about him. Various philosophical observations are attributed to him by oral tradition. The history of his reign, based on oral traditions, is provided in a special number of *Iftiinka-Aqoonta* (6, 1967), which is entirely devoted to the subject. It should be noted that although 1767 is given there as the year of his death, this has been disputed and it seems more likely that he died some time in the middle of the 19th century. Transcripts of some fragments of his poems are published in the same number of this journal, on pp. 16, 18 and 20.

FAARAX MAXAMED JAAMAC CAWL (1937-). A novelist. He attended a trade-school in Hargeysa, and between 1959 and 1962 studied at the Chelsea College of Aeronautical and Automobile Engineering in London. After his return to Somalia he was a teacher for two years and then joined the Police Force, where he now holds a senior rank as an officer in charge of a motor transport section. He has published a novel, *Aqoondarro waa u nacab jacayl* (1974, Ignorance is the enemy of love) and a history of Somalia in fictionalized form, *Garbadaubkii gumeysiga* (1978, The shackles of colonialism).

FAARAX NADIIF (fl. 19th and early 20th centuries). A poet who lived in the pastoral interior in the Dhagaxbuur area. A transcript of one of his poems is found in *Gabayo*, p. 19.

FAARAX NUUR (?-c.1930). A poet who lived in North-Western Somalia and played an important role in the public affairs and internal politics of his time. A transcript of one of his poems, together with a translation, is published in *Somali poetry*, pp. 134-137.

GABAY SHINNI (fl. 19th century). A poet who lived in the pastoral interior in the Dhagaxbuur area. A transcript of one of his poems is provided in *Gabayo*, p. 19, and is translated in Andrzejewski, "Poetry in Somali society" in *Pride and Holmes* (ed.), *Sociolinguistics: Selected readings* (1972).

GEELO (fl. 19th century). A poetess who lived in the Dhagaxbuur region. A transcript of one of her poems, in dialogue with Dhiidhi Kediye, is found in Maxamed Xaaji Cali, "Dooddii Dhiidhi iyo Geelo" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/19, pp. 2 and 4; 4/31, p. 2, 1976, The dispute between Dhiidhi and Geelo). A transcript of an excerpt from this poem, together with a translation, is found in Andrzejewski, "Modern and traditional aspects of Somali drama" in Dorson, Richard M. (ed.), *Folklore in the modern world* (1978).

IDIRIS XASAN DIIRIYE. A contemporary writer. He published a short biography of Cali Xuseen Xirsi, q.v., in the article "Cali Xuseen Xirsi (1913-1976)" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/43, 1976, p. 2).

INA JADEER (fl. 19th century). A poet who lived in the pastoral interior of Northern Somalia. A transcript of one of his poems is found in *Gabayo*, p. 31.

ISMAACIIL FAARAX (?-c.1910). A religious poet and man of religion who lived in Northern Somalia. A transcript of one of his poems, together with a translation, is provided in Lewis, "The Gadabuursi Somali script" (*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XXI/1, 1958, pp. 134-156).

ISMAACIIL MIRE (1862-1951). A poet who was born in Laasadaar and spent his youth as a pastoralist; he later became one of the most zealous leaders in the Dervish movement, entrusted by Sayid Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan with the work of military intelligence, the maintenance of forts, the general supervision of the state of readiness of the Dervish troops and the prevention of sabotage and subversion. When the Dervishes were defeated, after a short spell in jail he returned to the life of a pastoralist and henceforth avoided any contact with town life or foreign administrations. Transcripts of his poems are published in Axmed F. Cali "Idaajaa", *Ismaaciil Mire* (1974), and one transcript, together with a translation, is provided in *Somali poetry*, pp. 104-110.

ISMAACIIL XIRSI CIISE "FARXAAN" (1942-). A poet, playwright and actor, born in Buuhoodle. He began his acting career in 1957, and has been a member of The Actors of Dawn theatrical company and of the National Army Theatrical Ensemble. He has composed and produced several plays, none of which, however, has appeared in published form. A transcript of one of his poems, together with a translation, is provided in *Heellooy*, pp. 157-158. Note that doubt is expressed there as to its authorship, which is tentatively attributed to Axmed Yuusuf Ducaale.

JAAMAC CUMAR CIISE (1932-). A literary scholar, collector of oral poetry and historian; as a man of religion the title *sheekh* (sheikh) is normally placed before his name. He was born in Boosaaso, and after attending a Koranic school and an itinerant Islamic college he became a man of religion, working mainly in the nomadic interior. About 1954 he began to collect the poems of Sayid Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan and the oral traditions concerning his life, a task which took twenty years to accomplish. He visited all the sites of battles and the forts of the Dervishes and collected the oral texts of the Sayid's poems from veterans of the war. In 1957 and 1961 he attended educational courses for teachers of Arabic and religion in Hargeysa and Mogadishu. He is a member of the Somali Language Commission and is on the staff of the Academy of Culture in Mogadishu. He has published *Diiwaanka gabayadii Sayid Maxamad Cabdulle Xasan* (1974, A collection of

the poems of Sayid Maxamad [variant spelling of Maxamed] Cabdulle Xasan) which contains a large corpus of transcripts of the poems and extensive annotations concerning the historical background, place-names and archaic vocabulary items, as well as a short biography of the poet. Sheekh Jaamac Cumar Ciise is also the author of a historical work, *Taariikhadii Daraawiishta iyo Sayid Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan (1895-1921)* (1976, The history of the Dervishes and Sayid Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan, 1895-1921). He has published three historical works in Arabic: *Ta'riikh aṣ-Ṣūmāl fī al-ʿuṣūr al-wuṣṭā wa al-ḥadītha* (1965, A history of Somalia in the Middle Ages and in modern times), *Zuṣamāʾ al-ḥarakāt as-siyāsiyya fī aṣ-Ṣūmāl* (1965, The leaders of political movements in Somalia) and *Thawra 21 Uktubir 1969: Asbābuhā, ahdāfuhā, munjazatuhā* (1972, The Revolution of 21 October 1969: Its causes, its objectives, its achievements). Note that in the Arabic works of this author his name is transcribed as Jamac ʿUmar ʿIsā.

MATAAN XUSEEN (fl. 19th century). A poet who lived in the pastoral interior of Northern Somalia. A transcript of one of his poems, together with a translation, is found in *Somali poetry*, pp. 114-115.

MAXAMED CABDULLE XASAN (1856-1921). A poet who is also regarded as the national hero of Somalia. Born in Buuhoodle district, he received a Koranic education and then studied Islamic law and theology as an itinerant scholar with many of the leading Somali *ulema* of the time. He went to Arabia for further studies, learning Arabic well enough to write poetry in it. In Mecca he joined the Ṣālihiyya Brotherhood, which was known for its revivalist rigour, and on his return to Somalia he organized armed resistance against the foreign powers who had partitioned Somalia; he was a highly gifted war-leader and his Dervishes had a military organization reminiscent of a modern army. He aimed at creating a unified Somali state, transcending all regional and clan divisions, embracing all Somalis: in that sense he is rightly regarded as the ideological architect of modern Somalia. After twenty years of fierce fighting the forces of Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan were defeated, partly by aerial bombardment and partly because an epidemic (probably influenza) struck the Dervishes. He refused offers of honourable surrender, evaded capture and died of an illness in 1921 at Imey. Further information concerning his life and deeds can be found in Lewis, *A modern history of Somalia: Nation and state in the Horn of Africa* (1980) and Martin, *Muslim brotherhoods in nineteenth-century Africa* (1976). Of fundamental importance for his biography are two historical works by Jaamac Cumar Ciise: *Ta'riikh aṣ-Ṣūmāl fī al-ʿuṣūr al-wuṣṭā wa al-ḥadītha* (1965, The history of Somalia in the Middle Ages and modern times) and *Taariikhadii Daraawiishta iyo Sayid Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan (1895-1921)* (1976, The history of the Dervishes and Sayid Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan (1895-1921)). Transcripts of his poems are available in *Gabayo*; Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal, *A collection of Somali literature: Mainly*

from Sayid Mohamed Abdille Hassan (1964); Jaamac Cumar Ciise, *Diiwaanka gabayadii Sayid Maxamad Cabdulle Xasan* (1974, A collection of the poems of Sayid Maxamad Cabdulle Xasan); and in the periodicals *Sahan* (18 February 1958), *Horseed* (11, 13, 14, 20, 22, 1967) and *Iftiinka-Aqoonta* (3, 1966; 4, 1967). Some transcripts, accompanied by translations, are published in Jaamac Cumar Ciise, *Ta'riikh as-Sūmāl*; Bruno Panza and Yaasiin Cismaan Keenadiid, "Gabai di Ina Abdille Hassan" (*Somalia d'Oggi*, 1, 1, 1956, pp. 21-22); and *Somali poetry*. Some of the poems written in Arabic are published in two works by Jaamac Cumar Ciise, *Ta'riikh as-Sūmāl* and *Taariikhadii Daraawiishta*.

MAXAMED DAAHIR AFRAX. A contemporary writer. He has published a short story "Guur-ku-sheeg" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 3/332, p. 2; 3/338, p. 2; 3/343, p. 3; 3/376, p. 5; 3/380, p. 3; 3/400, p. 2; 3/406, p. 2, 1975, A so-called marriage).

MAXAMED FAARAX CADILLAHI. A contemporary collector and translator of oral literature. He began his career as a teacher and joined the Cultural Department of the Ministry of Education in the early 1960s. He was a research assistant in Somali at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, between 1965 and 1967, and became a librarian after his return to Somalia. He has published a collection of oral narratives *Sheekooyin fogaan iyo dhowaan ba leh* (kn. 1967, Stories from near and far), and a collection of translations of oral narratives, some of them taken from his first book, under the title *The best short stories from the land of Punt (Somalia)* (1970).

MAXAMED LIIBAAN JADEER (fl. 19th century). A poet who lived in the pastoral interior of Northern Somalia. He is mentioned as a prominent poet by Robecchi Bricchetti in *Somalia e Benadir: Viaggio di esplorazione nell'Africa Orientale* (1899), but no transcripts of his poems are yet available in published form.

MAXAMED NUUR (c.1890-?). A man of religion, born in Berbera, who took part in an expedition which delivered a letter from the head of the Ṣālihiyya Brotherhood in Mecca to Sayid Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan's headquarters. He also travelled to Germany as the Muslim chaplain to a group of his countrymen hired by a German circus. Transcripts of his narratives of these events were published in Maria von Tiling, *Somali-Texte und Untersuchungen zur Somali-Lautlehre* (1925).

MAXAMED SULEEBAAN BIDDE. A contemporary poet, singer and actor. Transcripts of his poems are found in *Heellooy*, pp. 152-156, 161, 172-173.

MAXAMED XAAJI CALI. A contemporary collector of oral literature. He has published "Dooddii Dhiidhi iyo Geelo" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/19, pp. 2 and 4; 4/31, p. 2, 1976, The dispute between Dhiidhi and Geelo).

MAXAMED XAASHI DHAMAC "GAARRIYE" (1949-). A contemporary scholar, poet and essayist. He was born in Hargeysa and after attending secondary school at Sheikh he graduated in biology at the Somali National University and was a teacher for several years, later working at the Academy of Culture in Mogadishu. He is now a lecturer in Somali literature at the National University. He has published a series of articles on Somali custom and other literary subjects: „Miisaanka maansada" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 3/425, p. 3; 4/2, p. 3; 4/8, p. 3; 4/14, p. 3; 4/20, p. 3; 4/55, p. 3; 4/61, p. 3, 4/63, p. 3; 4/73, p. 3; 4/86, p. 3, 4/90, p. 3; 4/108, p. 3; 1976, The extension of poetry), "Maandeeq" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/114, 1976, p. 3 [the name of a she-camel]) and "Toddobaadkan iyo suugaanta" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/126, 1976, p. 3, Literature for this week). Some of his poems have been published: "Dheeriyaa dhuxusha ka madoobiya" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/26, p. 3; 4/32, p. 3, 1976, O how tall I am and blacker than charcoal), "Maah-maahaha Darwin" (*Xiddigta Oktobar*, 4/73, p. 3; 4/97, p. 5; 4/102, p. 3, 1976, The wise sayings of Darwin) and "Garaaddaran" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/61, p. 3; 4/67, p. 3; 1976, That which is weak in insight).

MUUSE CUMAR ISLAAM (1937-). A collector of oral literature. He went to school in Gaalkacayo, trained as a teacher in Mogadishu and taught between 1961 and 1969. He joined the Cultural Department of the Ministry of Education and was engaged in research into oral poetry; he is now on the staff of the Academy of Culture in Mogadishu. He has published a collection of oral narratives, *Sheekooyin Soomaaliyeed* (1973, Somali stories).

MUUSE XAAJI ISMAACIL GALAAL (c.1920-). A literary scholar and a leading specialist on Somali literature. He was born in Burco district and spent his early youth as a nomadic pastoralist, becoming a teacher towards the end of the Second World War. Later he was engaged in linguistic and literary research at the Department of Education at Sheikh and then for three years (1951-54) at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, where he also studied phonetics. When Somalia became independent he joined the Cultural Department of the Ministry of Education, where he was engaged in research into oral literature. He was a member, and for a time the Chairman, of the Somali Language Commission and he contributed very substantially to the development of the present national orthography for Somali. He has probably the largest private collection of oral literature in Somalia. He is also a well-known broadcaster and public lecturer on the subjects of his specialization, on which he is generally recognized as a national authority, that is oral literature, traditional sciences and technologies, and oral history. He is now on the staff of the Somali Academy of Culture in Mogadishu. His publications include *Hikmad Soomaali* (1956, Somali wisdom), a collection of oral narratives, and *A collection of Somali literature: Mainly from Sayid Mohamed Abdille Hassan* (kn.1964), which contains transcripts of oral poems which he made during several

years of research. He has also written several works on Somali traditional culture, richly illustrated with excerpts from oral poetry, and these include: "Some observations on Somali culture" in *Perspectives on Somalia* (1968), a collective work published by the Somali Institute of Public Administration, Mogadishu, *Seeska hiddaha Soomaalida* (*The basic traditional education in Somalia*, 1969) and *Stars, seasons and weather in Somali pastoral traditions* (1970). He is also the co-author, with Axmed Cartan Xaange and Cumar Aw Nuux, of an article "Fol'klor v žizni somalijcev" which appeared in Russian, translated by E. S. Šerr, in *Učenyje zapiski sovecko-somalijskoj ekspedicii* (1974). Several variants of his name are used in his publications: Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal, Musa H. I. Galaal, Muusa Galaal and Muusa H. I. Galaal.

QAASIM HILOWLE (1923-). A poet, singer, composer of songs and actor. Born in Mogadishu, he was educated at a Koranic school and then trained as a carpenter and cabinet-maker, a calling which he still pursues. He spent some years in Ethiopia and on his return to Somalia in 1943 he achieved fame as a poet, devoting himself to patriotic and reformist themes. When independence came he became one of the most popular performers and poets on Radio Mogadishu. Transcripts of some of his poems are found in Rashid Xasan Aadan, "Fanka iyo fannaanka" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/13, 1976, p. 2, Art and the artist).

QAMAAN BULXAN (fl. 19th and early 20th centuries). A poet who lived in the pastoral interior in the Dhagaxbuur area, taking an active part in the public affairs of his time. He married Barni Sheekh, a woman renowned for her beauty, and events in their lives have given rise to prose narratives circulating in oral traditions. Transcripts of his poems are found in *Gabayo*, pp. 20 and 47-48; *Iftiinka-Aqoonta* (3, 1966, p. 13; 4, 1967, pp. 6 and 8-9) and Axmed Faarax Cali "Idaajaa", "Qamaan Bulxan iyo Barni" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 5/95, p. 6; 5/101, pp. 2 and 3, 1977, Qamaan Bulxan and Barni). A transcript of one poem, together with a translation, is given in Andrzejewski and Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal, "A Somali poetic combat" (*Journal of African Languages*, II, 2, 1963, pp. 93-100 (Part II)).

RAAGE UGAAS WARFAA (c.1810-?). A poet who lived in the pastoral interior in the Dhagaxbuur area. He was the son of a sultan, and after attending a Koranic school and later an Islamic itinerant college he played a prominent part in the life of his region. Of his poems only a few have been published, and transcripts of them are found in *Gabayo*, pp. 31-32, 40 and 46; Yuusuf Meygaag Samatar, *Madhaafaanka murtida* (1973, The essential wisdom) and Cabdullaahi Sheekh Xuseen, "Raage Ugaas iyo Cabban" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 7/108, 1979, p. 3, Raage Ugaas and Cabban). Transcripts of two poems, together with translations, are provided in *Somali poetry*, pp. 64-66.

RASHIID MAXAMED SHABEELLE. A contemporary collector of oral poetry and oral traditions, now living in Holland. He published *Ma dhabba jucayl waa loo dhintaa?* (1975, Is it true that people die of love?), which is a collection of transcripts of poems by Cilmi Bowndheri placed within the framework of a biography of the poet.

RASHIID XASAN AADAN. A contemporary writer on subjects concerned with Somali literature. He has published articles on Somali poets: "Fanka iyo fannaanka" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 3/418, p. 3; 4/13, p. 2; 4/19, p. 2; 4/31, p. 2; 4/130, p. 2; 1976, Art and the artist).

SHAAHID QAMAAN (fl. 19th and early 20th centuries). A poet who lived in the pastoral interior in the Dhagaxbuur area. A transcript of one of his poems is found in *Gabayo*, pp. 19-20, and of another, together with a translation, in *Heellooyi*, pp. 4-7.

SHALAN CARRABEY (?-c.1950). A poet, who was born in the Burco district and was at first a pastoralist. He went abroad as a young man, travelling widely in East Africa and visiting Aden. He was engaged in trade, in which at times he was very successful and at times suffered setbacks because of his volatile temperament. He learned several languages, including English, Swahili and Hindi, and at various times served as an interpreter. He spent his later years in Somalia. A transcript of one of his poems is found in Muuse Xaaji Ismaaciil Galaal, *A collection of Somali literature: Mainly from Sayid Mohamed Abdille Hassan* (kn.1964) p. 19. Transcripts with translations are published in Andrzejewski and Musa H. I. Galaal, "A Somali poetic combat", *Journal of African Languages*, II, 2, 1963, pp. 190-205 (Part III) and in *Somali poetry*, pp. 114-134.

SHIIR JAAMAC AXMED. A contemporary literary scholar, writer and collector of oral literature. He received his early education in Somalia, then pursued linguistic and literary studies in Cairo, London and Moscow. Long before the introduction of the national orthography he was a staunch advocate of written Somali, and a collector of oral literature. In 1969 he joined the Somali Language Commission, and the system of writing Somali which he used in his own journal, *Iftiinka-Aqoonta*, was subsequently chosen as the official orthography of the country. In 1973 he joined the newly formed Academy of Culture in Mogadishu and became its Director-General; in 1978 he left the Academy for the diplomatic service and became Cultural Attaché at the Somali Embassy in Cairo. He has published *Gabayo, maah-maah iyo sheekooyin yaryar* (1965, Poems, proverbs and short stories), which contains transcripts of oral poems with historical commentaries, proverbs and oral narratives. He published similar annotated items of oral literature in his journal *Iftiinka-Aqoonta*, for which he provided all the materials, there being no other contributors. He has written two novels: *Halgankii walowha* (1973, Life struggle) and *Rooxaan* (1973, The spirits). He is also the

author of *Narwaha af Soomaaliga* (1976, A grammar of the Somali language). Note that the earlier variant of his name was Shire Jaamac Ahmed.

UWEYS XAAJI MAXAMED (1847–1909). A religious leader, born in Baraawe district, who composed religious poetry in Arabic as well as in Somali. The title *sheekh* (sheikh) is usually placed before his name, and his first name has several pronunciation variants: Uweys, Aweys, Awees or Uwiis. He attended a Koranic school in Baraawe, and from about 1870 to 1880 he travelled extensively in Arabia, studying advanced theology in Baghdad, where he became a strong adherent of the Qādiriyya Brotherhood. On his return to Somalia he became the leader of this Brotherhood in Southern Somalia and showed great zeal and ability in establishing local Qādiriyya communities; he did a great deal to encourage and develop agriculture and education. His influence extended to Kenya, Tanzania and Zanzibar, which he had visited, and he contributed substantially to the spread both of Islam in East Africa and his own Brotherhood. He was an opponent of the Dervish movement and it is sometimes asserted that he was killed by them. This view, however, is not universally accepted in Somalia and there is a great deal of uncertainty as to who assassinated him at Biyooley in 1909. On account of his piety and his generosity to the poor his tomb is now a place of pilgrimage. Further information about him can be found in Martin, *Muslim brotherhoods in nineteenth-century Africa*, 1976. Two manuscripts of his Somali poems written in the Arabic script are edited and provided with translations in Cerulli, *Somalia*, III, 1964, pp. 118–124 and 128–133. Bibliographical information concerning his poems in Arabic and hagiographies of him are given in Andrzejewski, "The veneration of Sufi saints and its impact on the oral literature of the Somali people and on their literature in Arabic", *African Language Studies*, XV, 1974, pp. 15–54.

WACAYS XIRSI (fl. 19th century). A poet and caravan trader who lived in Northern Somalia. Transcripts of two of his poems, together with translations, are provided in *Somali poetry*, pp. 112–115.

WIILWAAL see **FAARAX GARAAD XIRSI** "WIILWAAL"

XASAN SHEEKH MUUMIN (c.1930–). A playwright, poet and actor, born in Boorame district. After attending a Koranic school he was engaged in trading and teaching; for a time he worked as a tailoring instructor. Between 1965 and 1968 he was employed as a broadcaster by Radio Mogadishu, and in 1968 he joined the Cultural Department of the Ministry of Education; from 1972 to 1976 he worked in the section of that Ministry which deals with youth activities. He is now engaged in research into Somali oral literature at the Institut Supérieur d'Études et de Recherche Scientifiques in Djibouti, and also broadcasts. Of all his works, which have reached the public mainly through the radio and the stage, only the transcript of his

play *Shabeelnaagood* is available in published form, to be found together with a translation in a book entitled *Leopard among the women—Shabeelnaagood: A Somali play*, 1974.

XASAN YAAQUUB "BAABRAQIIS". A contemporary collector of oral literature. Until a few years ago he was a shopkeeper and on account of his fairness to his customers he was given the nickname "Baabraqiis", which means "A gate to cheap merchandise". He has published two collections of Somali oral literature: *Adduunyo waa sheeko iyo shaahid* (1974, The world in what you are told and what you see) and *Waari mayside war ha kaa haro* (1974, You will not live for ever, let a good reputation remain behind you).

XUSEEN AW FAARAX (1928–). A poet and playwright. He was one of the founder members of a group of actors and singers called The Hargeysa Brothers. In the 1950s he contributed substantially to the development of Somali drama and frequently collaborated with Cabdullaahi Qarshe; he is now a member of a group called The Actors of Dawn. His work has been closely associated with Radio Hargeysa and with Radio Mogadishu, the staff of which he joined in 1966. Transcripts of some of his poems, together with translations, are provided in *Heellooy*, pp. 92–94, 98–99, 121–122 and 173–175.

YAASHIN CISMAAN KEENADIID. A contemporary collector of oral literature and lexicographer. He was educated in Somalia and at Rome University where he wrote a thesis on the poetry of Sayid Maxamed Cabdulle Xaasan. He was the Head of the Cultural Department of the Ministry of Education between 1960 and 1969, and a member of the staff of the Academy of Culture between 1973 and 1975, also serving as a member of the Language Commission. He has one of the largest private collections of Somali oral literature. He has published, jointly with Bruno Panza, an article "Gabai di Ina Abdille Hassan", *Somalia d'Oggi*, 1, 1, 1956, pp. 21–22. He is the author of *Qaamuuska af-Soomaaliga* (1976, A dictionary of the Somali language), and is now preparing a larger version of this work.

YUUSUF AXMED "HERO". A contemporary short story writer. He has published two serialized short stories: "Milgaha jacaylka" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 4/63, p. 3; 4/69, p. 4; 4/75, p. 2; 4/81, p. 2; 4/93, p. 4; 4/99, p. 4; 4/111, pp. 2–3; 4/123, pp. 2–3; 4/128, p. 4; 4/139, p. 2; 1977, Reverence for love) and "Wacdaraha jacaylka" (*Xiddigta Oktoobar*, 5/30, p. 7; 5/48, pp. 6–7; 5/53, p. 6; 5/60, p. 7; 5/72, p. 5; 5/78, p. 7; 5/89, p. 7; 5/101, p. 6; 5/132, p. 3; 5/156, p. 6; 1977, The vicissitudes of love).

YUUSUF MEYGAAG SAMATAR. A contemporary collector of oral literature and an expert on traditions and customs. He worked as a broadcaster and was a pioneer of written Somali before the introduction of the national

orthography. He is now on the staff of the Academy of Culture in Mogadishu. He has published a collection of proverbs and oral poetry under the title *Madhaafaanka murtida* (1973, The essential wisdom).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

It is essential for the reader to realize that many of the works in this bibliography are in Somali only; unless there is a statement to the contrary, it is to be assumed that when a work has a title in Somali it is written in that language only and that no translations are provided. Works with titles in other languages give translations of the Somali texts.

In the body of this article titles of works are often abbreviated: thus when Maxamed Faarax Cabdillaahi's work published in 1967 is referred to as *Sheekooyin*, the reader will find from this bibliography that the full title is *Sheekooyin fogaan iyo dhowaan ba leh*. Similarly, Shire Jaamac Axmed's *Gabayo, maahmaah iyo sheekooyin yaryar* and John William Johnson's *Heellooy heelleellooy: The development of the genre heello in modern Somali poetry* are abbreviated to *Gabayo* and *Heellooy* respectively. Translations of the titles of works by Somali authors are given in the Biographical Notes.

Since surnames are not used in Somalia, all the names of Somali authors are given in their traditional order and are not inverted. Thus the given name comes first and is followed by that of the person's father and then by that of his grandfather, if stated. Nicknames are put in inverted commas in accordance with the Somali convention in this matter. In some library catalogues and publishers' lists Somali names are inverted, leading to confusion, and for this reason readers should try all the possible permutations in the order of names when tracing works by Somali authors.

It should be noted that the honorific titles *sheekh* and *xaaji* are used in Somalia for learned men of religion, and for people who have performed a pilgrimage to Mecca, respectively. These titles, though used in the article itself, are omitted in bibliographical entries and in the headings of biographical notes.

When Somalis write in a foreign language they usually spell their names in a manner which suggests how they should be pronounced in that language. Thus a man whose name is written Maxamed Jaamac Ciise in the official orthography may spell his name Mohamed Jama Esa when he writes in English, and Moamet Giama Issa when he writes in Italian, with comparable adaptations for Arabic, French or Russian, and such forms were also, of course, used by foreign writers. The introduction of a national orthography has not eliminated all such variations in the spelling of personal names even when the author is writing in Somali, owing to the existence of optional pronunciation variants and indeed of personal preferences. Such a lack of uniformity in spelling can obviously lead to confusion and in order to avoid this all personal names in the body of the article are

given in their official orthographic forms, and if variants exist only one of them is used. When these forms diverge from those of the title pages of bibliographical items, they are cross-referenced to show that they refer to the same authors, e.g. Maxamed Faarax Cabdillaahi = Mohamed Farah Abdillahi.

It may be useful for the reader to note that in the Somali orthography the voiced pharyngeal fricative consonant is represented by the letter *c* and its voiceless equivalent by the letter *x*. An average English speaker would normally be unable to perceive the sound represented by the letter *c* in Somali and would just omit it in writing, hence the spelling Abdullah for Cabdulle. The sound represented by *x* in Somali would, however, be perceived by him as *h* and he would thus write Axmed as Ahmed.

The spelling of the name Akademiyaha Dhaqanka (The Academy of Culture) has recently been changed to Akadeemiyaha Dhaqanka. Only the new spelling is used here.

The Bibliography does not include those translations which neither provide nor identify their original sources. The only exception is *A tree for poverty: Somali poetry and prose*, by Margaret Laurence, a book whose general authenticity is recognized by Somali scholars.

When the letters "kn." are placed before the year of publication this means that the work bears no date but that the author of this article knows it from private information.

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