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Proposal for a Paper
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by

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Divine Madness: Mohammed 'Abdulle Hassan, 1856-1920

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"The Political Poetry of Mohammed 'Abdulle Hassan and its Relevance
to the Recurring Crisis in Somali History."

Part I: Relevant Readings from the Mullah's Poetry and Commentary
on Same;

Part II: Some Preliminary Notes on the Mullah's Political Poetry.

In this paper, we propose to do the following: first, we will recite key selections of the Mullah's poetry in the traditional mode and, of course, in the vernacular. Second, we will provide a translation of these key poems, with annotations and historical commentary.

Mohammed 'Abdulle Hassan, also known as the "Mad" Mullah of Somaliland, as well as Seyyid Mohammed 'Abdulle Hassan, or simply as the Seyyid to most Somalis, is considered by many in the Somalias and abroad as a national hero; a mighty warrior in the service of liberty, a grand mufti or learned man and a tireless defender of the faith; and perhaps more importantly, for the purposes of this paper, one of the greatest poets, if not prophets, of all time.

The poems we have selected for this presentation are: "Afbakayle" or "The Hare's Mouth," "Canjeel" or, as one authority aptly terms it, "The Tree of Bad Counsel", and "Dardaaran" or "The Will." All three poems are highly political in nature and deal specifically with betrayal of the Somali Dervishes by fellow Somalis, who the Mullah regarded as representing the common or national interest. Treachery and two-facedness in the Dervish ranks is another recurring theme. For instance, "Afbakayle" is a direct condemnation of the Northern and Western tribes, invariably known as the Friendlies by the English, the Mullah's arch-enemy, or backsliders and apostates in the Dervish camp. "Afbakayle" is also very consciously historical. "Canjeel", a doomsday sort of poem, on the

other hand, dwells on the rank treachery and two-facedness in the Mullah's own camp; while "Dardaaran," the Mullah's last will and testament, addresses itself very cogently to the lost cause and to the unenviable fate of all Somalis. Now the poems:

XUSEENOW CAQLIGU KAAMA BAXO
(Afbakayle)

Xuseenow caqligu kaama baxo, idam Ilaahaye
Ha lagu aqbalo duca san baan, kuu akhriyaaye
Ifkana waaya noo joog, nimaan aaminaad tahaye

Haddaad umaaddo waan kuu hubaa, ina uduu khayre
Asaxaabihii baad u tegi, udugga weynaaye
Irdihii jannada inaad ka geli, waa ogsoonahaye

Hawl kalana waa eray yaraan, kuu erganayaaye
Alla igama qaadow adaan, kala illaaweyne
Eedaanka maqal waa salaad, loo addimayaaye

Ilaahi abuuraba kuwii diiday, amarkiisa
Ambiyaalihii iyo kuwii, owliyada caayay
Asxaabtii dariiqada kuwii, awlaxa u qaaday

Ikhyaarkooda nimankii kufriga, ugu adeegaayey
Aan lagu igraahine kalgacal, ugu abraaraayey
Kuwii ubad nasaaraad noqdee, ferenji aanaystay

Nimankii Amxaara u kacee, Adarinuu guurey
Oo Aw-Cabbaas diley, dadkaan eedi kala gaarin
Oo uunka kala fiijiyee, kala irdheysiyyey

Nimankii Amxaara u kacee, Adarinuu guurey
Oo Mililikh aabbe u yehee, u arrin qaadaayo
Oo Xabashi eegi u noqdee, u ololaynaayey

Ingiriiska nimankii wadee, nagu aseebaayey
Afbakayle nimankii kufriga, uraya noo keenay
Ee oodagooyiyo nadhigay, aydii Daratoole

Nimankii ikhwaankii jaree, aabiga u laayey
Ragga ehelukhayrkaa warmaha, kala ajoon waayey
Oo umal daraaddiis girliga, ugu afuufaayey

Idilkoodba nimankii dagaal, iigu imanaayey
Nimankaan inkaaree madfaca, ololi ii haystey
Ee ubaxcaddaydii Hartiga, oofta kaga joojay

Nimankii iniinaha ka dhigay, Ilig wixii joogay
Ee Eerago iyo Batalo, igu uquumeeyey
Ee omoska Beerdhiga tukaha, igu ormaysiiyey

Nimankii ayaantii Gumburo, oboda ii dhiibay
Ardaashii Jidbaale i heshee, igu unuun goysey
Nimankii uluuf iyo uluuf, igu agoomeeyay

Nimankii adduunkaygii dhacay, ariyo geeliiba
Anigoo Islaamaba kuwii, ii arxami waayay
Nimankaan Ilaahow lahaa, eyda iga doono

Abaalkayga nimankii ba'shee, ii istixayn waayey
Ahabtiyo ergeyntii kuwii, lagala ayn waayey
Nimankii ijaabada ka tegey, aakhiru sabanka

Nimankii iblays nagu diree, naga ajoon waayay
Nimankii arlada Eebbahay, naga ugaareeyey

Nimankii awaaraha buska leh, nagu eryoonaayay

Nimankii abaartii Caleed, bari na aadsiiyey
Argalkiyo rasaastii kuwii, nagu igbaaraayey
Ee urugadaan qabiyo ciil, igu abaadsiiyey

Nimankii ilmada iga qubee, oohin iga keenay
Nimankii ku alaladay markii, uunku wada jiifay
Nimankii ajuurada cunee, iibkii ii bixiyey

Nimankii intaas nagu falaan, na asaraareynin
Waxba yey addoomaha Ilaah, nooga aargudine
Waxba yaan aduun layga siin, ilintidaydiye

Utuntayda waa heli hadaan, iilka lay dhigine
Araraha intaan marahayey, igu arkaayaane
Maruun baan sidii aar libaax, oodda oo jebinne

Ashtakooda'aa iyo warqado, ku andacodaaba
Mar haddaan shareecadu aqoon, nimanka Iidoora
Ashahaadadoodiyo ma rabo, ina wallayntooda

Mar haddaan wadaad aayad diin, ila ekeynaynin
Amaan aniga lay oran karayn, tanu ahaan mayso
Allow yaa af lama daaliyee, iga asluubeysta.

CANJEEL

War Suudow sedkaa waa jannee, samac kalaankayga
Salaama Alla yeelyow adaan, saakin kuu ahaye
Sowdkaan ku leeyahayna yuu, salabka kaa raacin

Sonkor iyo sarren malable iyo, sixin ku iidaaman
Xeeryaha sanuunadan barnida, lagu sibbaakhaayo
Sulux caana geel sogob la qalay, sarara geedeysan

Sareedada raggii aan wadya, saadka iyo quudka
Saqda dhexe habeenkii raggaan, saha u geynaayey
Kuwii aan sibbaaraayey baa, saatan ii galaye

Salaaddiinta nimankaan qoree, sare u qaadaayey
Raggii sidigta geela hayayoo, suuska beeganaayey
Nimankaan siday doonayaan, sahal u yeelaayey

Nimankaan sariira u dhisee, soohdinta u jeexay
Surradda iyo dadabtii raaggaan, saari ugu goodey
Gabdha wada saruurada raggaan, sowjad uga yeelay

Nimankaan salaaxanahayee, saxar ka eegaayey
Nimankaan siraayada col iyo, saha ka dhawraayey
Nimankann saqiir iyo kabiir, sama u miiraayey

Sidka boqola soof badan raggaan, saari uga yeelay
Soogaan darmaan iyo raggaan, salabaduu dhiibey
Nimankaan sangootida fardaa, siiya oranaayey

Raggaan sumuca maadhiina iyo, saanadda u buuxshay
Nimankaan salaaddiyo u dhigay, subacyadii diinta
Sallallaahu nebigii raggaan, saamax uga doonay

Nimankaan sokeeyaha bidiyo, siiro iyo aammin
Sarsarkooda nimaankaan degiyo, suuqa gurigooda
Saxariiradey igu faleen, waa sahwiyaayaaye

Nimanyahow si daran baa qalbigu, ii saddamayaaye
Sokeeyiyo xigaalaanan sugin, saaca mantaaye

Soomaali oo idili way, sun iyo daybaaqe

Sullankood la naar iyo gun iyo, saaruqey helaye
Sinjidhaannadii bay khatalay, saanjiga ahaaye
Oo waa seediyaashey wexeer, saatan ii galaye

Saro nama dhex ool Faarixii, seerigii xulaye
Ibleys baa sallaan kala degoo, Saaxilkuu diraye
Sucdi haddii u leeyahay kufirga, uma sujuudeene

Sakal lagu rid Reer-Samatar Khalaf, seega taladiiye
Subeerrey noqdeen wiilashaan, saakullayn jiraye
Kolkaan anigu saafi u noqday, sir ila dooneene

Sankuneehle oo idili, way saa'ilahayaaye
Nin kaleba salaaf hayla galo, sarada ceebeede
Sugi maynin Qoriyow inuu, suuqya ii tumane

Sakaar waxaan u gooyiyo waxaan, sama u daadshaaba
Amxad-fiqi sawaab kagama helin, sadaqaddaydiye
Sannahaabadiisaanan abid, seexan kari hayne

Saniciisa baas iyo hadduu, saxalku ii keenay
Subaac qooqan baa iigu yimid, sabada ciideede
Inuu ferenji ii soo sawiray, waw su'aal qabaye

Subbeehigu wuxuu igu khatalay, saahid baan ahaye
Safiihnimadu waatuu dorraad, gaal u saacidaye
Soddon jeer ka badan ceeb intuu, saancaddu falaye

Markaan sebi ahaa iyo haddaan, suurad oday yeeshay
Saamaa Ilaah iiga dhigay, saaxir ii colahe
Saaxiibkii aan yeeshaaba, waa sayma lagu reebye

Mar haddaanu sebenkeer nafluhu, saadi noqonaynin
Waxba yaanan sida nin qaba, seletin goorteere
Ilaahow adaan kuu samree, suubi taladayda.

DARDAARAN

Min daroofle aqal daahya weyn, dadab la heedaamay
Dermo iyo firaaash lagu gamiyo, daalam iyo googgo
Aniga oo waxaan doonayaba, derajaday haysta

Iyo duni wixii nagaga lumay, dararkii Ceeldheero
Dab wax gubi dayuurado kufrigu, nagu dul gawdiidshey
Dumbuq subuca degalkaan ka kacay, dahab wixii yiillay

Dakhil jabay wixii daar burburay, ama bukaar duugmay
Didibtii bannaanayd wixii, dad iyo maal jiifay
Diric iyo waxay shiikh dileen, ama duq waayeela

Maxajabad daboollayd wixii, gaal u dukhuulaayey
Dabatoobka Iidoor wuxuu, darayey caarkiisa

Lo' durdura wixii deebila geel, nala ka sii daayey
Dulihii shareerraa wixii, daal na caga gooyey
Dirrowgii qabsaday reerkayaga, dalankicii gaaray

Dulkuneeffe kaan soo ag maro, duullan ka hor geyska
Dan la'aan waxay nagu faleen, darab nijaaskeedku

Doonyaha shammalka ah haddii, dakhalka loo laalo
Maruun baa dabaylahaa sidaa, kor u dandaanshaane
Oo doofaarradii ku jiray, daraxu caynshaaye

Dabro cudura duumo iyo furuq, waxa dadkii xaaqay

Annagu diidi maynoo mar baa, daayin noo wacaye

Ninkiise tiisa loo deynayaa, haygu diirsado e
Kolna haddaan cid laga deynahayn, mowdka dabaqdiisa
Ninkii haatan nagu diganayow, dan iyo xeeshaa

Dangaraaradii nagu dhacdiyo, webi dabaashiisa
Inkastoo daleel nala dhigaan, doocna nagu cayman
Duuflaalladii naga harow, dan iyo xeeshinna

Doodna waxaan u leeyahay dadkeer, hadalka deyn waayey
Nimanyahow damiinnimada waa, lagu dulloobaaye
Dadku wuxuu jeclaystaa waxaan, duxi ka raacayne

Dagaalkii nasaarada anaa, daalib ku ahaaye
Dalka ma lihid anigaa ku iri, doora weynaha e
Daliikii rasuulkii anaa, doonayoo helaye

Anaa diiday maantuu lahaa, deeqan iga hooye
Diinkayga anigaan ku gadan, dabaqi naareede
Anaan labada daarood tan hore, derejo moodayne

Markay duushay gaaladu anaan, daabbaddu rarine
Goortay dareeraan anaan, diiradduu qabane
Anigaan dariiq iyo waddada, dowga sii marine

Anaan doora weynow kufriga, daacadnuu geline
Ferenjiga dirayska leh anaan, diiradduu qabane
Sida doxorka Iidoor anaan, duudxammaal noqone

Doofaarka eyga ah anaan, daarihiis geline
Anigaan dillalk iyo ardiga, duubiguu xirane
Anigaan dariiqada Alliyoo, diinta caasiyine

Daarood Ismaaciil ma oga, dowga loo qodiye
 Waa wixii durbaan tumay markaan, dowga sii maraye
 Wa wixii dayoy yiri intuu, soo dabbaaldegaye

Dadow maqal dabuubtaan ku iri, ama dan haw yeelan
 Ama dhaha darooryiba jiryaye, doxorku yeelkiisa
 Nin ragey dardaaran u tahaye, doqon ha moogaado

Dawo lagama helo gaal haddaad, daawo dhigaataane
 Waa idin dagaayaa kufriga, aad u debcaysaane
 Dirhankuu idiin qubahayaad, dib u goaysaane

Marka hore dabkuu idinka dhigi, dumar sidiisiiye
 Marka xigana daabaqadda yuu, idin dareensiine
 Marka xiga dalkuu idinku oran, duunya dhaafsada e

Marka xiga dushuu idinka rari, sida dameeraaye
 Mar[se] haddaan dushii Adari iyo, Iimey dactal dhaafay
 Maxaad igaga digataan berruu, siin la soo degiye.

Now a translation:

1. "Afbakayle": The Hare's Mouth¹

O Hussein;² May God preserve and increase your understanding--
 your retentive powers!

God be my witness as I shower holy blessings upon you
 May God keep you from harm's way; as you are my trusted companion.

But even should you depart from us, I know for certain that you
 will find bliss in the other place!

The Prophet's blessed Companions will be anxiously awaiting your
 arrival;

I know for sure you will be ushered into Paradise through the very Main Gate.

Now, let me request a favor or two from you!

Allah who has blessed you with such retentive Memory may preserve you awhile;

Hearken to my words; as they are but the call of a Muezzin:³

They who have often ignored the commands of Allah-- the Creator of all things;

They who have often cursed all the ancient prophets and the holy saints;

They who have raised their deadly spears against the faithful followers of the true tariqah;⁴

They who have chosen, of their own free will, to be servants of the accursed Infidel,

They who have chosen this path without coercion-- but simply out of love for him!

They who have elected to become the adopted children of the Christian-- they who willingly placed themselves under his protection;

They who have even joined the Amhara⁵, in the Province of Harar!
Those cruel assassins of Aw 'Abbas⁶ -- that gentle soul who had done them no wrong,

They who are solely responsible for all the divisiveness and distrust among the people!

They who have even joined the Amhara, in the Province of Harar
They for whom Menelik⁷ has become father and guiding light!
They who have become Ethiopians by choice-- not by coercion!

They who gladly showed the English our place of refuge;
They who brought upon us, at Afbakayle,⁸ the odious Infidel!
They who are responsible for our exile to Daratole-- a no-man's-land!

They who have slaughtered so many pious men for mere sport;
They who would not hesitate, even for a moment, before spearing the holy and the wise alike;
They who, for no other reason but mischief, have showered these saintly men with flaming bullets from the fiery throat of a Maxim gun!

They who would never come to visit with me, but for the evil intention of doing battle;
They, Allah's curses be upon them, who have armed themselves with flame-throwing cannons against me!
They who have so often unjustly smote the fair-skinned Harti⁹ with death-dealing bullets!

They who have massacred every last soul at the wells of Illig;
They who have sent me hurtling to the very edge of Batalo tarn in the forbidden valley of Eerigo;
They who, on the parched plains of Beerdhiga, made mince-meat of so many of my followers for the crows to feast upon!

They who, at the battle of Gumburo, have betrayed me to my worst enemies;
Those merciless fools who, at the telling battle of Jidbale, severed the head(from my Dervish organization)
They who have caused thousands upon thousands of youngsters among by people to become untimely orphans!

They who have robbed us of all our possessions-- sheep and camels alike!¹⁰

They who would show me, a fellow-muslim, no mercy whatsoever;
They for whom I have requested abomination from Allah-- the
accursed dogs!

They who have so conveniently forgotten all my erstwhile generosity
toward them;
They who have ignored every envoy and peace-overture I have
extended to them;
They who have cast away every custom and tradition-- as if they had
expected the world to end the very next day!

They who have accepted the Devil's evil advise-- he who must have
turned them against us!
They who have so cruelly driven us from every last place of refuge!
They who have chased us so relentlessly from place to place-- as if
they were riding dust-devils (instead of horses)!

They who have driven us from all goodly land to the sere slopes of
the 'Al Hills of the East!
They who often took pleasure in taking aim at us with deadly
projectiles!
They who have left such deep scars of bitterness and anger in my
soul!

They who have made me cry (like a woman), shedding countless tears
of sorrow!
They who have ululated for joy at the sight of the massacred
multitudes!
They who have partaken of usury and who have sold us out for a mere
pittance;

They who have done all this and more to us and yet can offer
nothing in their own defense;
These men are now telling us that they will come to our rescue in

our struggle against our supposed enemies!
 Let them not beguile me with offers of timely restitution!

I will avenge myself upon them-- if Death does not overtake me
 before then!

They think my exile (from my natural haunts) has left me without
 recourse;

But one day, God granting, I will smash into their cowardly midst
 with a he-lion's roar-- scattering them like so many defenseless
 sheep!

Whatever it may take, one day I will achieve my objective-- even if
 I have to resort to writing petitions or appealing to a judge!
 Since the Iidoor¹¹ have shown their contempt for
 and persisted in their defiance of the Shari'a Law;
 Then it avails them none that they now recite their catechisms in
 my deafened ears!--

If no priest can say to me he has an understanding of the (sacred)
 verses of the (holy Qur'an) approximating mine;
 If it is inconceivable that any man can stand out and say to me,
 "Look ye here, you have erred in your answer to my question!"
 Then, oh God Almighty, no man should waste his breath in futile
 disputation with me; but would rather do well in quenching his
 (intellectual) thirst at the font of my fathomless knowledge!

2. "Canjeel"¹

Oh, my beloved Sūdi,²

May Allah make the fruits of Paradise your deserved portion!

And may He also preserve you in peace, while you remain with us in
 this world.

Now, heed my weighty words with much care- lest my wisdom is blown

away by the four winds!

.....

Oh, men!

My heart palpates with sorrow,

Since no friend or kinsman can comprehend the sheer madness of
this world, when bosom pals so treacherously back-stab each other,
When all the Somalis have proven a poisoned potion to me!

.....

Of all the people in this camp, I would have never suspected
Qoriyow³ to be seeking my demise,
Yet the pernicious villain had secretly fashioned sharp-tipped
spears⁴ intended for my person!

I am convinced that a Ferenji⁵ has sent him to me
To secretly take my snap-shot so as to steal my soul!

.....

Among all living things who breathe through their nostrils,
God, in His mysterious ways, has turned them into sworn enemies of
mine.

Since I was a mere lad, to the present when I am horrid with
grey,

Every friend I make flees from me faster than the wispy hairs on a
horse's tail!

Therefore, if in these unsettled Times, there could be found not a
single sincere soul that one could trust with confidence;
Then let me not, as like a man possessed by evil demons,
sommolently stagger out of bed in a blind rage in the wee hours of
the night--

Oh, Allah! Since I have placed my full faith in You alone; reward
me accordingly/ Remain by my side and repair my damaged affairs as
only You are capable of doing!⁶

3. "Dardaaran": The Will

O, the joy of reclining in style,
within a hut of re-enforced walls,
for safety and repose;
On a cozy mat padded with mattresses
for ease and sleep;
With food and drink of every variety
and description spread before me!
I have lost all this and more by
the cool streams of 'Eel Dheere.
O, the treasures we have left behind
at the battle scene,
O, the broken gates and pulverized forts,
the precious stores buried under rubble,
O, how many brave warriors and pious sheikhs
have they slaughtered, not mentioning all
the elderly and the infirm they had massacred!
O, how the Infidel intruded into our harem quarters,
violating the honor of many a veiled maiden,
in turn maliciously allowing his Iidoor flunkey
to thrust them with his filthy foreskin!
How many herds of cattle, thousands of camels
with udders swollen with (goodly) milk,
have they stampeded into the wilderness for
hyenas to feast upon,
While we had to flee on foot, over rugged terrain
and across barren deserts, without our life-
sustaining flocks!
The hardships that my kinsmen and I have been
forced to endure,
The inhospitality and treachery of those
that we have chanced on our weary way!

When boats set sail for the wider sea,
at times their sails may be torn asunder
by adverse winds,
And yet, sometimes the creatures that sail in them may be saved by
miraculous waves
that carry them safely ashore.
But, alas, in our case, the Fates
have not been so kind!

Our people have been visited with new misfortunes,
Malaria and smallpox having swiftly claimed
many among our ranks!
Yet, we would never refuse to heed the call,
as the Ever-Lasting may choose to make his claim
upon us whenever it so pleases Him.
Let him, who may, rejoice in our demise;
But since the fear and fact of death
are ever-present realities,
Let him laugh at us now that thinks
that he will live forever!
Ah, the suffering we have known,
swimming across (crocodile-infested) rivers!
Still, even though we have been abused
and abandoned to our fate,
Let us know your own fate, you
snickering snivellings that have been spared!
And a word of advise to those who persist
in their whispering and jeering--
O men, stupidity is an ever-lasting curse
and most people are given over
to mundane and meaningless things!
It was I who was ever-ready in the fight
against the Infidel,
I, who told the uncircumcised bastard

that the land was not his, but mine!
It was I who forever sought and now found
the blessed visage of the Prophet (Muhammad).
It was I who rejected the Infidel's
ever-ready presents and gifts,
I, who refused to sell my faith
for the House of Hell;
I, who placed no value
on the first of the two Worlds.
Nor was it I who often helped the Infidel
to successfully flee the scene of fighting,
by fetching his baggage after him.
Nor have I agreed to act
as his willing scout and eyes!
It was not I who became the
the intimate of the impure Infidel;
Not I who carried the flags
of the uniformed Ferenji!
Nor have I, unlike the Iidoor donkey,
ever agreed to carry his filthy baggage
on my bare back!
It was I who refused to enter
the house of pigs and dogs,
I, who would not consent
to wearing his lowly leg-wrappings,
I who would not reject the true faith
or stray from the Righteous Path of God!
O, the Darood Ismaa'iil remain
oblivious to the dangers awaiting them;
It was they that rejoiced the most
when I was cut adrift, buffeted by storms;
It was they that snickered: "Oh, see, see!
How the old man flees!"
O, you people! Listen to these words of

of wisdom-- or, again, you may simply
ignore them, as you are wont to.
Or you can shriek, derisively,
"Oh, the wind-bag is holding forth again!"
These are parting words of wisdom,
and a warning to the wise--
Let fools forever remain in darkness!
There is no prosperity or peace
that can come from entering into treaties
and agreements with the Infidel,
for he cannot be trusted!
He is merely laying traps for you,
while you let your guard down.
And the Dirhams he dispenses to you now
will prove a poison in disguise!
At first, he will disarm you and render you
defenseless like women and children,
Then he will brand you,
as though you were mere chattel
He will then press you to sell your lands
to him for worthless trinkets;
And, finally, having dispossessed you,
he will turn you into braying donkeys,
to bear his burdensome load--
Ah, but what is the use of this warning
to you now, for I, your only defender,
have been driven past Harar and Iimey,
beyond the proper confines of our common
patrimony;
And, doubtless, he (the colonizer)
will be even here, before long,
with the speed of his diabolical telegraph!

NOTES

1. "Afbakayle" (The Hare's Mouth)

1. A place name and site of the first major engagement between the Mullah's Dervishes and the British. See Aw Jaamac Cumar Ciise, Taariikhdiid Daraawiishta iyo Sayid Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan, 1895-1921 (Muqdisho: Akadeemiyaha Dhaqanka, 1976), p. 51. Cf. Douglas Jardine, The Mad Mullah of Somaliland, (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1923), pp. 61-66.

2. This is the Ḥussein of many of the Mullah's poems, the trusty Ḥussein Fāraḥ Dhiḡle' who memorized the Mullah's poetry from A to Z and who could recall it almost as easily at a moment's notice. See Sh. Jaamac Cumar Ciise, Diiwaanka Gabayadii Sayid Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan (Xamar: Wakaaladda Madbacadda Qaranka, 1974), p. 1n.

3. Muezzin: he who calls Muslims to prayer; hence, a guiding light.

4. This probably refers to the followers of the Ṣāliḡiyya order.

5. The ruling ethnic group in Ethiopia. One could conceivably become an Amhara by adopting this group's language, religion, and culture; while denouncing his own.

6. Aw 'Abbās was a confidant and close associate of the Mullah. He was murdered in cold-blood during the abortive revolt at Gurdumi, c. 1900. See Sh. Jaamac Cumar Ciise, Diiwaanka Gabayadii, p. 2, and Sa'id S. Samatar, Oral Poetry and Somali Nationalism; The Case of Sayyid Maḡamed 'Abdille Ḥasan (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1982), p. 121.

7. I.e. Menelik II, ruler of Ethiopia.

8. This poem has great historical significance as it not only enumerates the wrongs perpetrated against the Mullah and his Dervishes by fellow Somalis, especially the Northern tribes and in particular by the Ishāq (whom he derogatorily refers to as "Iidoor"); but also because the poem pointedly lists most of the major battles fought by the Dervishes against the British and a host of other intractable enemies. This implies that the poem must have been composed late in the Mullah's tumultuous career. Finally, it is noteworthy that the Ishāk tribes' peace overtures evince such bitterness in the Mullah's soul that he relives every indignity suffered by himself and by his people, which means that by the time he concludes his recitation he is in no mood for any sort of compromise.

9. A sub-section of the Darod, the Mullah's tribal-family grouping. The Harti consist of the Dhulbahante, Majerteen, and Warsangli; Harti being one of the mythological sons of Sheikh Isma'il 'Abdirahmān al-Jabartī, an exiled Arabian prince, nicknamed Darod by his Dir hosts.

10. Goats and sheep are usually not taken in inter-tribal raids. This is considered beneath a warrior's dignity.

11. A frequently employed collective nickname for the Ishāq tribes. For the original, see Sh. Jaamac, Diiwaanka, pp. 1-4.

2. "Canjeel"

1. A tree of the genus mimusops. See P.E. Glover, A Provisional Check-List of British and Italian Somaliland Trees, Shrubs, and Herbs (London: Crown Agents, 1947), p. 337.

2. Haji Sūdi, alias Ahmed Warsame, was a Habr Tolja'lah, Ishāk,

gentleman who threw his lot with the Mullah early on in the Mullah's tumultuous career and who remained steadfastly by his appreciative mentor's side until, advanced in years and feeble of body but not spirit, he was killed by the British and their Ishāk collaborators, his own clansmen, while stoutly defending the fort and citadel of Taleh against British attack in their final anti-Dervish campaign of 1920. For more on this, see Abdi Sheik-Abdi, Divine Madness: Mohammed 'Abdulle Hassan, 1856-1920 (London: Zed Books, 1992), pp. 197-200.

3. This particular weapon is comparable to the West African assagai.

4. Qoriyow (the Skeleton or Bones) was a renowned theologian, a trusted and close confidant-- perhaps, a boyhood playmate; and a pre-eminent member of the khusuusi, the Mullah's inner circle of counselors, which hardly ever exceeded half-a-dozen men! His precipitous fall from grace made the khusuusi circle even tighter. In pathos, this perhaps is the most eloquent rendition of Julius Caesar's famous exclamation, "e tu, Brutus?".

5. A Frank and, by extension, all white infidels.

6. A variant translation of these concluding lines may be rendered as follows: "Let me seek my only solace from Allah alone, who is my counsel and confidant; /Let Him gently guide my feeble step in the righteous Path of the Faith!" This, needless to add, represents a much abbreviated version of the Mullah's cataclysmic poem.

3. "Dardaaran" (The Will)

1. These are said to be wells or springs that lay 20 miles south-

west of Erigavo, possibly very near the Mullah's summer palace at Medishe (Miranshe). See Sh. Jaamac Cumar Ciise, Diiwaanka Gabayadii Sayid Cabdulle Xasan, p. 125n.

2. These include, aside from many warriors, Amir, the Mullah's uncle, killed at the onset of the final British campaign by an aerial bomb, and Haji Sūdi and Ibrāhim Boqol, "two of the dervish leaders [and] right-hand men of the Mullah" who were killed outside the walls of Taleh while engaged in its defense. See Major H. Rayne, Sun, Sand, and Somals; Leaves from the Notebook of a District commissioner in Somaliland (London: H.F. and G. Witherby, 1921), pp. 219-220. The Mullah collaborates this in lines 7-9 of his famous poem, "Dardaaran" (see above).

3. I.e. to permit his Ishak foot-soldier to rape them, in turn.

4. Literally, hogs; perhaps meaning non-believers, or even, possibly, a remote reference to the creatures in Noah's Ark!

5. I.e. the Here and Hereafter.

6. The Iidoor (i.e. Ishāk) here merely symbolize those Somali groups that have collaborated with the Christians or colonialists in their on-going efforts at taking over the land.

7. Meaning, the Infidel and his associates.

8. This is a piece of uniform (puttee), probably originating in British India and usually worn by low-ranking native soldiers, such as members of the King's African Rifles, serving in Europe's wars of colonial conquest and pacification. In the Mullah's eyes, wearing this piece of uniform denoted servitude to the white man.

9. The other major tribes in Somalia, such as the Dir, Hawiya, and

Ishāk, have already made their uneasy peace with their respective colonial conquerors. Only the Darod, 'Ali Dhuuh's and the Mullah's tribe who inhabited the interior of the Horn, were still untamed.

10. I.e. an Oriental coin.