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*Sources on Islam composed in the vernacular:
Somali women's religious poetry*¹

Studies concerning the shaping of Swahili culture in East Africa suggest that one feature of gender construction and differentiation in the African north Indian Ocean is based on formal instruction in the Arabic language². Women in the Muslim world have rarely had access to instruction at higher levels of written Arabic and, therefore, much of women's poetic religious production has been overlooked by historians and Islamicists.

However, the existence of well-known female poets such as Dada Masiti, whose work has survived in both oral and written sources, could prove to be the tip of the iceberg – the 'iceberg' being the much more widespread production of religious Islamic works and celebrations by women, whose compositions seem 'submerged' because they rarely appear in written sources.

Other evidence, including religious poetry, hinting at women's flourishing religious life in Islamic East Africa and the Horn has recently come to light³. The fact that women's religious poetry is rarely written down is not proof of its irrelevance in the context in which it is produced. That Somali women generally do not compose in Arabic, let alone write in Arabic script, together with the emphasis given to written sources in studies of the history of religion, history in general, and of Islamic

¹ Some transcriptions of Somali language in Arabic script had been used before the 1972 and the Arabic written and spoken language has always been appanage of a Muslim elite. The official transcription of the Somali language into Latin script was adopted by an independent Somali national government for the first time in 1972. However, the transcription of personal names has proved problematic because what are essentially the same names are pronounced differently in different parts of Somalia. Consistent codification would not only favour the dialect of one area over that of another but also give the impression that a person comes from an area with which he has no connection whatsoever. Thus, when choosing one of the currently available transcription options for a particular name, I am merely identifying the person and not taking part in this dispute. For the sake of consistency with my previous articles, all transcriptions are in English except for words in *Italics*, which are either Bravanese (Chimwini or Chimbalazi) or Somali. However, where possible, I have preferred Bravanese to Somali or Arabic.

² See for instance Eastman 1988.

³ See for instance Arnfred 1999; F. Declich 1996, 2000; Larsen 1995; 1999; 2000; Kapteijns 1996; 1999; Kassim 1995, 34; Olmi 1987; Purpura 1997.

religious issues, has contributed to the fact that women's role in the production of Muslim meanings has been scarcely noticed or taken into consideration as legitimate and relevant. However, I believe it is not only necessary to gather women's oral religious poetry but that these compositions are a legitimate source in the study of East African Islam that can only enhance our knowledge of the past and present socio-cultural dynamics of the Muslim religion in the area. In fact, as shown elsewhere⁴, by celebrating and reciting poetry, women contribute to the negotiation of Muslim meanings in Somalia. Special forms of negotiation are also present in other East African areas⁵.

This article presents two religious poems produced in Somalia in the early years of the 20th century and attempts to view them as embedded in the local history and cultural context of East Africa and the Horn. Specifically, I shall be looking at the work and influence of the poet and Muslim saint, Dada Masiti, who was based in Brava town on the Benadir coast of Somalia. In her youth, she also lived in Mombasa and perhaps other locations in Kenya.

Dada Masiti was born in Tunda, an urban centre on Pate Island off the very northern Kenya Coast. She was reputed to be over 100 years old when she died in 1918-1919, and it is generally accepted that she was born between 1820-1830⁶. Her full name was Masiti Habibi Jamaladdin; Masiti is a contraction of two words, *mwana* and *siti*, both honorific titles meaning "lady"⁷. The 'Lady' referred to here is Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet Mohammed, and the name has the same kind of connotations for the Bravanese as the name "Madonna" has for Catholics. The appellative *Dada* means "grandmother" in Bravanese and was added to her personal name as a sign of respect: she was highly regarded for her piety, religious education, and goodness. She was born into the first rank of the local nobility: she was a *Sharifu* from the *Mahadali* lineage on her father's side and her maternal great grandfather was from the *Nadhiri* lineage.

⁴ See also F. Declich 1996; 2000.

⁵ See also Larsen 1995; 1999; 2000 for Zanzibar and Arnfred 1999 for the Ilha do Mozambique.

⁶ Some writers (Kassim 1995, p.34) have also dated her birth on 1219 h (that is circa 1804/1805 AD); although oral sources and litanies about her refer that she lived over one hundred years, in such case Dada Masiti would have lived approximately 115 years!

⁷ *Mwana* is in Chimwini and *siti* is in Somali language.

Data about Dada Masiti's life come from oral sources, from the autobiographical verses of her poetry, and from the research of a *shekhi*⁸ known as Mohammed Gadhudo⁹ who spent the last years of his life compiling a history of the most important *mashekhi*¹⁰ of Brava. According to one historical tradition, Dada Masiti left Tunda for Brava at a very young age and, after her wedding, was taken to Mombasa by her husband. Apparently he treated her like a slave, but she escaped. Autobiographical hints in her poetry, however, seem to suggest that her husband may even have sold her as slave in Mombasa; she was later saved and brought back to Brava by *sayidi* Omari *wa sayidi* Qullatteni, whom she recalls and praises in her poetry. The *Sharifu*¹¹ Omari Qullatteni was *khalīfa*¹² of the *Qādirīyya* brotherhood in Zanzibar; his grave still lies in a rural area on Zanzibar Island. After these misfortunes, she lived in Brava for the rest of her long life. She had no children.

The poetry of Dada Masiti

One of the poetic genres used by Dada Masiti is what is known as *shtenzi* in Chimwini or Chimalazi, the Bantu-based language spoken in Brava. This genre is similar to what Kiswahili-speakers refer to as *tendi*.

The *shtenzi* does not have a fixed number of verses and can have a hundred of them. This type of poetry is composed to be sung; rhythm is therefore as important as the choice of words and prosody. The most common structure is a stanza constituted by four half-verses, of which the first three verses rhyme internally having the same desinence and the fourth verse rhymes with the forth verses of the whole poem bearing the same ending.

Dada Masiti excelled at composing *shtenzi*, mastering the versification and rhyming structure so well that she was praised for her

⁸ In Chimwini the appellative sheikh is *shekhi* (s.) and *mashekhi* (pl.).

⁹ *Shekhi* Mohammed Abdurahman Osman, nicknamed "Mohammed Gadhudo" that is "Mohammed the red", died in the late 1980s.

¹⁰ *Mashekhi* is the plural of *shekhi*.

¹¹ In Kiswahili – and generally throughout Zanzibar – the appellation *Sayidi* means being a member of a family related to the Prophet Mohammed. This appellation might be assimilated with the Somali *shariif* or *ashraaf*, though discussions on this issue can be a matter of dispute.

¹² In Somalia the word *khalīf* refers to leaders of brotherhood's celebrations. However, in other Muslim contexts, the appellative *khalīf* is used differently.

skills by other religious personalities of her time. The following, for instance, are the words of *shekhi* Moallim Nuri:

*Shtamnomba rabbu'l filati*¹³

Let us pray the Lord of the spaces
to have mercy on all the *Masadati*¹⁴
Men and women
and especially on the grandmother Masiti

....

It is good to learn the *shtenzi*
in order to achieve the most complete wisdom
And [learn]¹⁵ what has happened in the past
overall the story of the woman *Mahadali*¹⁶
Masiti, good and scrupulous,
observed the prayers with all her heart
And lived in the world for a long [time]
beyond a hundred years
Masiti, a smart woman
of great eloquence and intellect
She knew how to compose a complete *shtenzi*
giving it the right [metrical] weight
Masiti, woman of talent,
her praise does not end
I do not forget her *ziyara*¹⁷
the first month,
The 16th day go
and visit her
Without a doubt you will receive much good from it
because it takes away evil and misfortunes
Always good descends;
many are buried here

¹³ Convention dictates that the first line of a poem is also its title.

¹⁴ *Masadati* is the plural of *Sayyid*, that is “descendant from the Prophet”, and means “the people who call themselves *Sayyid*”, referring to families in Zanzibar who reconduct their lineage to the Prophet’s family.

¹⁵ Words in square brackets are those unexpressed but implied in the text.

¹⁶ The word refers to the lineage of Dada Masiti’s father.

¹⁷ Prescribed annual visitation to a grave of a *shekhi*.

Of the Prophet's family
visit them and say "*sheilillah*"¹⁸
May you receive the mercy of Lady Masiti,
daughter of Habib Jamaladdin,
A woman who had mercy on the poor;
descending from the Prophet
She is *Mahadali* in origin
but the grandfather of her mother
Was of the *Ali Nadhiri* family,
both ancestries of great nobility.

Bravanese poetry from the coast, with its prevalent didactic-religious character, has flourished since the 18th century if not earlier and has developed well-defined rules and prosody. Chimwini poetry was transcribed using Arabic characters adapted to reproduce sounds that do not exist in the Arabic language. Surviving written sources appear to indicate that religious poetic production in Brava was considerable from the end of the 19th century until the 1930s. The principal active composers were *Shekhi* Awees Mohammed al Qadiri¹⁹ (1847-1909), Dada Masiti (died 17 *Wamusi*²⁰ 1337; died 1919), *Shekhi* Qassim bin Muhyaddin al-Barawi (1295h - 14 *Ramadhani* 1340h, circa 1878/1879-1922)²¹ and Moallim Nuri Haji Abdulkadir (1299h - 1379h; circa 1881/1882-1959)²²,

¹⁸ Means "chosen by God" and it is used as an epithet of invocation in litanies for the Muslim saints.

¹⁹ The personal name of this *shekhi* is sometimes written as Uways, Aweys, etc. I have chosen to write it according to the pronunciation I have heard in rural areas.

²⁰ In Brava the month called *Wamusi* is the first month after *Ramadhān*, usually referred by other Muslims as *Shawwāl*, and is considered the first month of the year as it is usually in East Africa. However, in the Muslim world the first month of the year is *Muharram* that is instead called by the Bravanese *Wanne*, namely, "the fourth month" from "-nne" meaning "four" in Chimwini and Kiswahili. This makes all the more difficult to date clearly events and births as well as deaths when one does not know to which criteria an informant made reference to when nominating the first month of the year. As to Dada Masiti, her month of birth *Wamusi*, that is *Shawwāl*; as this is considered the first month of the Muslim year for the Bravanese the conversion of this date to a Gregorian year is more uncertain than usual. She could have been give birth the 23rd of October 1918 or the 15th of July 1919. Moreover, as Kassim (1995 p. 34) suggest the date of Dada Masiti's birth being the year 1339h this contributes to such uncertainty.

²¹ Dates reported in Kassim (1995, p. 34).

²² Dates reported in Kassim (1995, p. 34) as from oral report by the Bravanese scholar *Shekhi* Sayidi, grandson of *shekhi* Nureni Ahmed Sabir Al-Hatimi.

and *Shekhi* Nureni Ahmed Sabir Al-Hatimi (1247h-1327h: circa 1831/1832-1909/1910)²³. Some writers from this period, following the teacher *Shekhi* Awees, popularised Muslim precepts by using local dialects and languages, including Chimwini, for those who did not understand Arabic.

Brava and Muslim education in the Indian Ocean system

Social stratification in Brava reflects the prestige status ascribed to lineage groups in terms of ranks of nobility. The urban population comprises several categories: first are the *Masharifu*, who claim descent from the Prophet Mohammed and who arrived from the Hadramaut (Southern Yemen) approximately thirteen generations ago. The *Masharifu* are divided into two sections or lineages, *Nadhiri* and *Mahadali*, which are considered equally noble. It will be recalled that these are respectively the lineages of Dada Masiti's maternal great grandfather and father. Another group, known simply as *Warabu*, or "the Arabs", arrived from southern Arabia during the second half of the 19th century as a consequence of inter-tribal warfare in their country of origin.

Next are two groups that are considered the "Bravanese" *strictu sensu*: *Bida* and *Hatimi*, both of whom claim Arab ancestry. They are also considered noble, though less so than the *Masharifu*.

Last come people belonging to the *Tunni* group, who are apparently of Digil descent²⁴. The *Tunni*, who are divided into five large groups - the so-called *shan gamas*²⁵ - are at the lower end of the prestige scale. Though not considered noble, they are very rich in cultivable land in the rural areas surrounding Brava and own many buildings in the town itself, thus holding economic power.

Idealised marriage dynamics reflect prestige categories. Women are supposed to marry either within their own category or into a higher one; men marry within their own category or in the next lower down. Thus a woman's family can raise its social status over the generations through the favourable marriages of their womenfolk. Similarly, a man's

²³ Dates reported in Kassim (1995, p. 33) as from oral report by *Shekhi* Sayidi Nureni Ahmed Sabir Al-Hatimi.

²⁴ Digil is one of the large recognised groups of descent in Somalia.

²⁵ See Colucci 1924. "*Shan*" means "five" in Somali and *shan gamas* refers to a confederation of five lineages.

family can lose status as a result of marriages down the social scale. The system also favours a certain social mobility within levels of prestige status.

Unlike other parts of Somalia, it is very common for Bravanese women to know the Koran by heart. It is therefore not so surprising that instruction in local Koranic schools, which mainly consists of learning by rote the Koran, is mainly given by female teachers. Classes in Koranic interpretation as well as Arabic grammar and syntax are given to male students in the mosque: this is a male sphere to which women are not admitted. The higher level of formal instruction in the Arabic language given to men in the masculine sphere of the mosque is the pivotal mechanism that confers a dominant position in public and inter-cultural relations on men.

Yet there is a religious context that involves the knowledge and recitation of religious poetry in the Chimalazi language that is mainly feminine. Whilst poetry is reproduced by both men and women, memorising and reciting poems is generally a female role. This is usually done in a group, with older women teaching the younger ones. Men come to know these poems through hearing these recitations, which are often performed by the women of the family or a by group of women from the neighbourhood network. If a Bravanese man is asked where he learnt these poems, he is likely to answer, "From my sisters," "From my mother and my aunts".

Women often recite religious poetry when they meet either in doing a joint task or simply when they come together in socialising contexts. They also recite poetry whilst working on their own at embroidery²⁶ or sewing. Women perceive their poetry recitations as an ordinary, almost everyday religious activity. This may explain why, in addition to the famous Dada Masiti, other less well-known women composed religious poetry in Brava.

Despite women's exclusion from the Arabic grammar classes given in the mosques, female literacy - or at least knowledge of the Koran - was high in Brava. Men's knowledge of Arabic and Koranic interpretation was also high as compared to most other parts of Somalia²⁷.

²⁶ They used to embroider the typical Bravanese cap, the *makofiya*.

²⁷ As to the scarce knowledge of the Koran and the Arabic language in rural Somalia see also Lewis (1969, p. 145).

There is evidence²⁸ to indicate the centrality of Brava in the diffusion of Islamic enculturation in the Indian Ocean. It would be interesting to explore in more depth women's role in the production of Islamic meaning in this and other parts of East Africa.

The personality of Dada Masiti

This, then, was the socio-cultural context in which Dada Masiti's personality developed. She became a recognised figure in the religious context of Brava and she is still remembered by the Bravanese who pay annual visitations (or *siyaaro* in Somali) to her grave on the anniversary of her death. The most important *mashekhi* of her time mentioned her several times and sang her praises in a variety of ways. For instance, *Shekhi* Qassim wrote the following *shtenzi*:

Dada Masiti nsomela du'a
(Dada Masiti give me your blessing)

Dada Masiti pray for me
you who belong to the family of *Adnani*²⁹
You descend from the Prophet Mohammed;
you are the peace of the just people
You are a treasure jealously conserved, your love
is the fundament of every faith
Loving you is a [religious] must, as God said
the highest in the Koran
Who does not love you is a misbeliever;
they are ignorant people.
I cannot praise you [adequately], your praises
are endless and cannot be contained in the world.
You virtuous and devoted *sharifa*,
daughter of powerful Lords,
May God, grant me, you, my mother
and [my] brothers a good death.
May [God], bedew us with the rain of abundance
for us to find sustenance and clothing.

²⁸ See among many others: Bang 1999; Guillain 1856-1857; Revoil 1888.

²⁹ *Adnani* is a name the Bravanese ascribe to the Prophet.

You *sharifata* Masiti, descendant
of Lady Fatima, mother of the two Husseins³⁰,
I am the one who sung [you and] to you and I want your
blessing,
give it to me, do not deny it to me, you who are my two
lights³¹
Your *shekhi* is a great thaumaturge
he is *shekhi Jeilani*³².
How many have benefited from your blessing,
your blessing is powerful and efficacious.
Blessing and peace be always
on the Prophet *Adnani*
*Taha*³³, the best of all men
on his companions, on his family and on you all.
I pray to God, Him who
sent down the *suras* of the Koran
He sent down [the archangel] Gabriel,
He made him descend to the Prophet *Adnani*.
This is the biggest of all miracles.
One hundred and fourteen *suras*
And with the blessing of Gabriel
give us the faith
And with the blessing of our Lord *Taha*
our Prophet, give us your forgiveness
Take away from us all our enemies
and take away the envious and the ignorant.
Give us what we need to go to Mecca
to Medina and to Jerusalem.

Even without an accurate analysis of its contents, it is clear that this poem reflects a sort of sanctification of Dada Masiti. In this area of Africa, people who are particularly pious and/or hold religious power are eulogized in poems that are sung by followers together at annual visits to sanctuaries and during sufi celebrations. It is therefore common to hear

³⁰ Fāṭima is the daughter of the Prophet.

³¹ Explain "two lights".

³² i.e. 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī

³³ *Taha* is another name the Bravanese ascribe to the Prophet.

poems dedicated to Shekhi Awees, to Shekhi Abdul Qadir Jilani and others as a means of paying tribute to them.

In Brava, one of the saints praised is the female saint Dada Masiti. She was evidently very well inducted into the world of religious poets and was a highly respected one. Shekhi Qassim, who wrote the previous praise, had known Dada Masiti personally.

Traces of a number of poems written by Dada Masiti have survived handwritten in copybooks compiled by Bravanese pious men, scribes or amateurs³⁴. A poem she wrote about the Prophet's daughter Fatima shares common themes with other poems commonly recited by Somali women: prayers about Fatima, Eve, and other women from the Koran are part of celebrations performed by women throughout their lives in almost all of the rural areas of northern and southern Somalia. They are known as Nabi-amman, Abbay sittidey or Sittiat, depending on the region and tradition³⁵.

Dada Masiti also wrote other kinds of poetry, such as the following autobiographical poem whose verses are much corrupted with Somali words and have not been well-transcribed.

Ya rabbi ya muta'ali

Oh highest God, the only Lord without equals
I do not forget to pray to you, I thank you in all circumstances
One begins with "In the name of God", by imploring His
blessing
He is the one to be worshiped - the name of majestic Lord
Lord merciful and compassionate, who created the earth and
the sky,
Who provides with His generosity - His providence is endless
My wish is to praise God And to implore the Prophet
Mohammed, who answers prayers.
Mohammed the selected, praised and glorious,
His shining light existed since the beginning of the time.

³⁴ Amateurs had gathered photocopy of these copybooks before the 1990 civil war.

³⁵ See, for instance, F. Declich 1996; 2000; Banti 1988, Cerulli 1957.

Oh Prophet, ask for Heaven for me, this is my wish.
May the end of the life arrive with the profession of faith, the
hour of death.
Oh Lord, allow me bliss and a death in the faith,
This is the remedy against evil.
It has been said with certainty and you have to believe like
truth,
That death arrives unexpected, motiveless.
The agony that shows itself with great strength waits for us,
Its suffering wraps us with intolerable pain.
We will go enter the place of certainty, human beings cannot
do anything [to prevent this],
The end happens without the chance to carry away anything
The good who did good things bring with them their actions.
Their souls are selected, Heaven is reserved to them.
How many I have already seen, princes of the same high rank
Who have lost everything, their persons and their goods.
They have left their wealth, their wishes have ended,
Their patrimony is no longer theirs: the living await their
inheritance.
If I look at those deprived of the light of the day, without any
more voice, no words,
I see that after life there is death, I do not forget this truth.
I cannot forget the dark and the fear of my sins
They are many and they make me cry
The sins torment me and [my] time is finished,
Much of my life I have wasted by chatting.
Oh Lord with your mercy, my sins made me cry,
And because of them I am loaded like a servant
I implore Your forgiveness, that my sins be forgiven
This is what we implore from You: Your mercy You grant
with generosity.
The world is deceptive, may it not mislead you with its
attractions,
I, myself, I became its victim and I cannot sleep for the
sorrow
The world deceived and overwhelmed me
I forgot to be a person, I had become a servant [slave]

I was a servant [slave] who escaped. I left my possessions and escaped

I found people who saved me, and brought me back [home] with their efforts

They brought me back with good advice, the good believers of Mohammed,

With plenty of zeal. My soul underwent many reproaches.

When the soul is rebuked, it does not wait to be beaten

As it is happening, one does not realise it is something that came from God.

My soul requested forgiveness from God, heard the advice and warnings

That were given to me directly and indirectly.

Behave well, death is close,

You will leave as presents blessings and good examples.

I have left my blessing in the house, to the obedient children,

God bless them with wealth and children,

I have left my blessing to all, be that enough for them,

Send evil away from them, especially from the son of my maternal uncle,

At every hour I disdain myself

For the weakness of my body: oh, how I was once long ago!

That time is passed, misfortunes have changed me,

My veins are all burnt, like the grass in the dry season.

I was young, with good health and plenty of support,

I knew how to make myself felt, as a captain or a governor.

Youth is finished, the joints do not want be together anymore,

I am winded, I do not have voice any more.

I was a well-known person, I had power and money to spend,

Now I am weak, I submit myself to God.

I am waiting with patience, that You give me life,

I wait for my exit from the house of the deceptions

And to enter the eternal house.

My house is a grave, and her beauties

Are sand and stones, without companions nor relatives,

We go in the house of stones and sand, all together

Devoid of light and doors, in obscurity and in loneliness.

Lady, daughter of the Prophet, assist me,

Give me light in the grave and make easy for me the questions³⁶

Lady, be my guarantor, keep me close like a thing entrusted to you.

You are the healer of the soul, the Doomsday.

I had the blessing of the *shekhi*, powerful intercessor.

Oh Lord, take me into account among Your followers, for the merits of the *shekhi*.

My *shekhi* is obedient to God, Aba Alawi the pure

And good, of the family *Hashimi*. My actions are concluded.

My actions are concluded, the *shekhi* has interceded for me,

The good was realised, through the *shekhi* who loves the things promised by God.

His path is advantageous and his seat is a seat of prayer,

He was born in sanctity, he is the one whose prayer will be fulfilled.

The *shekhi* gave me his blessing, I have found peace,

The good [I had] was enough, the bad no longer has the upper hand

It is a long time since I learned patience, thanks to the good Prophet

May the end come with a good death, and may it be robed by good actions.

As he was dying, the well-known *Shekhi* Nureni - who only wrote in Arabic - is said to have commanded Dada Masiti to compose a poem for his funeral. Oral tradition consistently reports that he considered her to be a great poet and that he asked her to compose a poem based on the words, "After life, there is the death; may nobody cry when the *shekhi* dies". Nowadays, when this poem is recited, people introduce it by explaining how it was commissioned from Dada Masiti. It is not only women who sing these verses; groups of men also sing the poem she wrote in Bravanese for the *shekhi*'s funeral:

³⁶ After death, on the Doomsday, everybody will be questioned about good and bad actions in life.

Ba'di ya hay ni mowti, shekhi chifa isilowa

After life, death - when the *shekhi* dies nobody will cry.
Write "In the name of God": this is the principle from which
to start,
Lord merciful and compassionate, His mercy is invoked.
We invoke His mercy, so that He may have pity on the *shekhi*
May the rigours of Hell be spared to the *shekhi*
Shekhi Nureni Nasimu, for him mercy is invoked
You all pray to the Compassionate, in order to increase the
merits of the *shekhi*,
May his merits be increased and may this gain for him more
respect
And by the intercession of the Prophet may he be granted
every good
The *shekhi* and his companions will receive their
compensation
Their compensation is big: they will be blessed in Heaven
There is Heaven "*Adhini*" where the well beloved [of the
Lord] go,
It is the one for the best loved, their souls are brought there.
All the blessed will be gathered there and will have a room
close to the Companions of the Prophet.
And I, for their merits, pray in order to obtain forgiveness,
Pray for a pardon from God, for the forgiveness of my sins
May God forgive my sins, which are heavy to bear.
Pray that I may be placed in the shadow of *Mana Fatima*
Many have not known the big personality of the *shekhi*
A few have known it, and they have not been believed,
They are not believed and their news is denied.
What else is left to give to those who have known the
character of the *shekhi*?
What can be given? May thanks be rendered to God.
The house of God is eternal, hope is invoked from Him.
Those who have known the character of the *shekhi* will not
see evil
They will not see evil, [but] will be protected from it
Where the *shekhi* is, one finds advantage and greatness

With him one finds religion, a treasure to preserve.
With him one finds wisdom, helpful to use.
With him one finds intelligence, a jewel to be searched for.
Although the *shekhi* wanted to keep on living, this is not realistic.
It is not possible to live for ever, death is certain.
Death is a door opened wide, everybody is thronging the door
Death is water in a compote: every soul is sprinkled with it
Death is in front of us, let's pray for a good end
Let's pray for a good death, which is a path to achieve eternal compensation.
The death of the *shekhi* is unavoidable, pray in order to have it delayed
Pray for the *shekhi*'s death be delayed and his life prolonged
If his years of life be increased, his knowledge will be disseminated
Disseminate his knowledge in order to reinforce the faith
It is a good thing to select from among the words the *shekhi* has spoken:
Write the meaningful sayings, neglect those which are not useful
Neglect those that are not useful, which are thrown away
Those [sayings] that are erroneous, myself I do not want to be conserved
How can I want them to be conserved, myself I shall be despised.
The *shekhi* is powerful through God, he [the *shekhi*] is a protection under which to take refuge
His [the *shekhi*] protection is immediately efficacious
Oh *shekhi*, I want His protection to be invoked for me
Oh *shekhi*, pray for me, in order for me to be free myself.
At the death of the *shekhi* do not cry, raise hymns [*dikri*]
Hymns and Koran readings come to their apex
At the death of the *shekhi*, how can one cry? It is a day of joy.
It is a real day of joy we will [share and] announce it one each other

One participates in announcing a wedding and in participating
one tightens bonds

Tighten the bonds and look for the blessing of the *shekhi*
Until then free people will not have finished washing the
shekhi[s' corpse].

[When] Are completed the preparations on the body of the
shekhi and it has been dried

After having been washed and dried, it will be wrapped in a
shroud

Will be wrapped in the shroud and sprinkled with scented
water,

Sandal and fragrances and cotton will be put on.

Put on him a tunic and a shawl to cover him

We shall put on the turban and we shall cover him with a
cloth:

The *shekhi* enters Heaven, where people dress in a luxurious
manner

The preparations of the *shekhi* are finished, now people pray
for him

Those who pray for him are shedding tears

Tears flow so much that they soak the clothes

Thereafter read the *fataha*: the *shekhi* is lead out

Now the *shekhi* goes away: every person asks forgiveness,
one and all

All ask forgiveness for whatever evil they may have done to
others

People ask forgiveness from children for their birth

And for what has been missed in educating and loving them

People ask forgiveness from women for the way in which
they have been treated:

They have been wronged without them being aware.

All follow the *shekhi*: the town becomes empty.

Citizens and foreigners, all together, a tide of people that
cannot be distinguished.

Those who sing the funerary hymn are in front, slacken one's
pace

The procession will proceed so slowly that all will get tired.

Once arrived at the grave, all sit down

Sit and rest, while the *shekhi* is buried.
But how can one proceed to the burial? All are weeping.
Some people are watching him, for fear that he will be taken
away
He is taken away by the angels, in order to show him his room
[in Heaven]
They will show him his place, and they will choose his wives
They are among the *Huri* and will be chosen for the *shekhi*
And a bed adorned with precious stones and silken carpets
And every comfort and good food for eating
The *shekhi* is getting married, while his grave is being
covered.
Cover it and leave, there is nothing else to do
Now one can hear a call, generous presents are given to the
crowd
Many angels will be coming as servants
To distribute merits, as one distributes coffee beans [at
funerals]
Those who are at the windows will be receiving them as
presents too
And also they will be thrown to those who are on the
balconies
And when they have finished, afterwards one will be coming
back
When they are ready to go back, they will be assailed with
doubts
They will start doubting and there will be affliction and
sadness
The paths where one was passing everyday are sad
Sad are the classes and the places where they were given
The mosque is dark but the lamp cannot be lit:
The lamp was himself, light shining.
Bear your loss, the *shekhi* is no longer there.
The *shekhi* is in Heaven, he expects that one goes and visits
him
Who will go, will it be the women good and obedient, those
who are praised
The women who love obedience, those are to be taken care of.

Oh community of Mohammed, the faith makes us brothers.
What is just will be followed and what is unjust will be
abandoned.
Leave injustice, the way of injustice leads to damnation.
My poetry is finished, read the *fataha*
Read the *fataha*, that is the way to achieve merits

By describing the celebrations for the death of the *shekhi* this poem might seem to have almost a didactic aim as to the good practices for disposing of a funeral. Yet, by following the contents of the verses and the rhythm of the sequence of the described events, the whole poem looks rather like an accompaniment for a meditation on the death and the meanings of life. Interestingly enough the central part of the poem conveys the sense of being lead through the visualisation of a real funeral where the reciters/singers are repeatedly comforted and urged not to cry but be happy for the *shekhi*, thereafter, suddenly confronted with the sadness and uncertainty caused by the lack of his presence. The last part of the elegy drives further the reflections of the participant reciters/singers to follow only the *shekhi*'s good sayings and examples in order to join him again in the Heaven rather than to despair for his final absence.

Dada Masiti was definitely involved in the circle of Bravanese *mashekhi* of her day and was treated as a pious woman. This is confirmed by the compositions of Moallim Nuri who wrote about her after her death. She was also considered a respectable woman, who was able to compose excellent and well-organised verses in Chimbalazi. Moreover, she was thought to be as powerful as many other *mashekhi*, as can be seen by the fact that *shekhi* Qassim encourages people to invoke her in order to receive forgiveness for their sins.

Is written: oral as male: female?

Returning to the initial point of this paper about written and oral sources in East Africa, it is important to investigate how written traces of Dada Masiti's life survived. Like most women of her time, Dada Masiti could not write. Shego Bakari - a famous calligraphist from Brava who used to prepare his own ink³⁷ - transcribed the poem Ba'di ya hay ni

³⁷ In Mogadishu at the Garesa Museum were contained some specimen of calligraphic examples written by Shego Bakari.

mowti, shekhi chifa isilowa³⁸ in a copybook owned by a Hatimi woman. An unknown scrivener transcribed Dada Masiti nsomela du'a³⁹ composed by shekhi Qassim bin Muyaddin al-Barawi, in a manuscript book on parchment belonging to Shekhi Baddawi, a Bravanese who died towards the end of the eighties⁴⁰. We may infer that these poems were transcribed because they were used during the respective annual celebrations for shekhi Nureni and Dada Masiti herself. Who commissioned Shego Bakari to transcribe this poetry, composed in Chimbalezi, in specially adapted Arabic script? And if no one commissioned him, why did he happen to record women's poetry? At this remove, these questions are unanswerable.

What would have happened if no one had taken the trouble to transcribe these compositions, or if no one had recorded recitations of women's poetry, whether composed a century ago or as recently as the 19080s?⁴¹ Obviously we would not have so many examples of women's religious poetry and hence we could well have reached the conclusion that women had no role at all in the social dynamics of the diffusion of Islam in this area. In fact, without this data, we would probably have constructed an elitist, male-centred, and patriarchal idea of the production of religious meanings, reconfirming the stereotype that in Somalia, as in many other Islamic countries, the Muslim cultural context is a male-dominated one.

Hegemonic or subaltern?

The Italian anthropological tradition descending from De Martino and passing via Gramsci⁴² would impose an analysis on the centrality or subalternity of the cultural representations presented here⁴³.

³⁸ See p. 310ff. for translation and the appendix for copy of the Arabic script in Chimwini.

³⁹ See p. 304ff. for translation and the appendix for copy of the Arabic script in Chimwini.

⁴⁰ Both such photocopies attached as an appendix to this article were taken by Alessandra Vianello in the eighties.

⁴¹ Affection for Bravanese culture led Alessandra Vianello to make every effort to save the material she had collected over the years, even during the difficult period of the civil war that began in 1990. Unfortunately, some originals as well as photocopies went lost.

⁴² Gramsci 1976.

⁴³ See among others Cirese 1973 and Lombardi Satriani 1974.

I believe that our knowledge of the sources is not sufficiently balanced in terms of gender for us to assess the subalternity of women in Muslim discourse during 19th and 20th century Somalia. The point is that much of the Muslim tradition in East Africa concerning and produced by women is not composed in the Arabic language; in fact it is not written down by its creators at all. Would this necessarily mean that feminine religiosity is subaltern? Moreover, how can we establish the extent of the hegemonic character of the Arabic language in a country like Somalia where very few people used to speak it and even fewer knew how to write it? Knowledge of Arabic used to be the preserve of the aristocracy, the elite; the language had little influence on the people living in rural and/or remote areas.

Women's religious role seems to straddle this very neat division. On the one hand, women were permitted to use the "vernacular" for Muslim prayers, which places them with the less-noble; on the other, women appear to be rather active within the Arabic-speaking religious elite.

In order to make statements on the subalternity or hegemonic character of a culture, we should have the means to evaluate its extent, but we cannot assume *tout court* that those who use written language are necessarily part of a dominant group. This should be evaluated case by case. For instance, colonialists could ask clerks to transcribe or write down pieces they wanted to be recorded, but this places the colonialists, not the writers - who are just clerks - in a dominant position. Clerks are labourers who prefer to work for whoever pays better⁴⁴. In this context, literacy bestowed no power or prestige. Nevertheless literacy in Arabic was a skill that allowed appreciation and recognition from colonialists to men, who were literate, but not to women, who were not.

In other words, are we sure that we are not creating the hegemony of that elite of writers in Arabic by emphasizing the social

⁴⁴ An example of this was put forward by Alessandro Gori during the International Colloquium. According to his data, literate *mashekhi* such as for instance in Merca, Ali "Maye", could be very poor in terms of income. Even if Ali "Maye" was able to write in Arabic, his need to sell his skills to support his family means that he would be willing to transcribe poetry under payment by a *maecenas*. Generalising this example from our perspective, this would put male in a better position than women in front of long term literate people like the Italian colonialists.

reality they report simply for the very fact that they write it? Certainly the widespread campaigns promoting literacy in Arabic introduced by the ex-president of Somalia Siyaad Barre, the attempt of Somalia to play the role of mediator between Black Africa and North Africa Islam⁴⁵ and the link with the Arab League - joined by Somalia in 1974, but reinforced following the loss of the URSS support to Somalia after the Ogaadeen war of 1977-1978 - might well have pushed all those poetic expressions composed in Somalia's vernacular languages into a subaltern position.

I would suggest that a more appropriate approach would be an historical one that analyses changes in power and status positions at different historical points in time. Such alterations in power and prestige are often the consequence of precise socio-economic changes and available social technologies for communication such as, for instance, literacy.

Conclusions

In general, by comparing the Brava tradition with other traditions of feminine religious poetry in Somalia, one obvious conclusion is that a history constructed on the sole basis of sources written in Arabic is likely to erode any complementary feminine vision unless oral sources are explored as well. Therefore, a further analysis of pertinent poetry and poetic traditions are preconditions for avoiding misunderstandings and male-centrism. Yet a number of other perspectives could be taken into account in discussing the evidence from Brava. When, in a Muslim context, women's poetry comes to the fore, authors who report them often lead the argument to the levels of subordination expressed⁴⁶, degrees of resistance to dominant power and/or ways to trace changes of power⁴⁷, or to poetry as a form of impotent resistance⁴⁸. From what has been presented here⁴⁹, however, it can be seen that women in Brava do not interact from a position of subordination within the production/reproduction of poetry and Muslim meaning. On the contrary, they were

⁴⁵ Lewis suggests that Somalia attempted "to usurp the role previously played to good effect by the Sudan" in the occasion of Somalia's chairmanship of the Organization of African Unity in 1974 (Lewis 1994, p.164).

⁴⁶ Messick 1987; Abu Lughod 1985.

⁴⁷ Abu Lughod 1990

⁴⁸ Kaptjeins 1999.

⁴⁹ See also elsewhere about Somali feminine religious poetry F. Declich 1986; 2000.

the ones who, in their role as teachers in Koranic schools, taught and teach nowadays Muslim concepts to children in a formal context outside the “domestic” arena. Women hold the knowledge of religious songs and poems and these are part of their discourse during gatherings and daily work.

The correct approach for future studies on this issue in Somalia, therefore, would be an historical one that includes an analysis of the dynamics within subaltern and hegemonic positions of cultural productions, highlighting the alterations in the bases of power at different points in time and contextualising poetry within a diachronic process.

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* F. Declich, having conducted fieldwork in southern Somalia, has structured and compiled the article, assembled bibliographic references, and provided interpretations. A. Vianello has provided much of the Bravanese poems with translations in Italian and some information about Brava.

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دَا دَ مَاسِيتِ سَوَمِيْلَا دُ عَاوِي ۞
 ۞ نَسَعِيْدِ نَالِ عَدِ نَانِ
 وَيُجِيْكَ لُوْجَهْتِي فُحْمَدِ ۞
 ۞ نَامَانِ يَوَانْتِي اِخْسَانِ
 دُوِي كَزِيْكَايِ پِيْكَ وَزَوِي ۞
 ۞ نَجْدَارِ يَكُلِ اِيْمَانِ
 خِيْبَتِ وَوَاوِي نَفْرَضِ وَجَاهِدِي ۞
 ۞ لِي تَعَالِكَ كَرِيْكَ قُرْآنِ
 شُوْخِيْبَتِ مَوْتُوْشُوْ دِيْنِ ۞
 ۞ نَجْمَا هِلِ وَيْتِي عِضِيَانِ
 خُصِفَاوِي سَخَا دِرِ صَفَرُو ۞
 ۞ نِكْتِيْرَتَرِيْمُ بُلْدَانِ

شَرِيفَهُ عَفِيفَهُ صَالِحَهُ مَا وَ
 وَ نَ وَ سَادَاتِ نِسْلَطَانِ
 مَوْجَاهِ كَيْبَاهِي نَاوِي مَمَائِي
 وَ نَوَالِ خَتَامِ اِيْمَانِ
 حُسَيْنِي قُلَا يَا رَبِّ سَيِّدِي
 وَ نَسَبِي اَزْزَاقِ نَبَا نَا
 شَرِيفَهُ مَا سَتِ مَا نَوَا
 وَ مَا نَ فَا طَمَّةَ حُسَيْنَا
 دِي خَيْرِ تَوْحُسُلُو بَرَكَا
 وَ مِ سَرِي سِي كِي وَي نِي مَانِ
 شَيْخِي وَ وَي نَشِيخِ اَسْتَايِي
 وَ كَرَمَايِي نَشِيخِ حَيْلَايِي

كَم وَ تَوْبِيحُو

كَمْ وَلِيٍّ لَوْ كُنَّ عِيُونَ
 دُعَايَ وَمَقْبُولِ شَرَفَانِ
 نَصَلَاةً نَسْلَامَ دَائِمٍ يَا
 زَوْرَ نَاوِيٍّ الْوَيْعَدِ نَانِي
 طَهَّ خَيْرِ خَلْقٍ وَوَنِّي نَانِي
 نَصْحَانِ نَسَابِ عَيْنَانِ
 فِي نَكْمَتِ نَجْمِ مَبْنِي
 اِسْتَكْرِيئُوا أَيَّ زَقْرَانِ
 اِسْتَكْرِيئُوا جَبْرِ بِلِصَابِ الْوَجِي
 اِسْتَكْرِيئُوا مَعْنَى مَعْدِ نَانِي
 دِيُونِكُمْ مَعْجَزَاتِ يُونْتِي
 سُورَ مَا يَدُ نَاكُمِ نَانِي

كَفْضِيلَزُو مَوْجَانِزِ حَيْمَانِي ۞
 ۞ آخِرَ مَوْجَانِدَ نِيَانِ ۞
 نَكَبْرَكَ زَبِينِي وَجِي دِي ۞
 ۞ حَبْرِي نِي شِي سِرِ اِيْمَانِ ۞
 نَكَبْرَكَ زَا طَه سَيِّدِ نَانِ ۞
 ۞ مَنِي وَيِي شِي سِرِ غُفْرَانِ ۞
 ۞ يُو كُوِي نَعْدُو وَيِي زُو تِي ۞
 ۞ نَحَا يِي دِ مَآ جَا جَا ۞
 ۞ شِي مِآلِ بَكَبْرِي لَامَكَه ۞
 ۞ مَدِينَه نَائِلِيَانِ ۞
 ۞ اَتَمِي كَفْضِيلَزُ مَجِيَّتِ ۞

هدی

بِضَلِّ السَّمِ الْكَلِّ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِقَدِّ حَيِّ عَمَوَاتِ	شَيْخِي جِفَا سَاوَفَهْ
بِسْمِ الْكَلِّ الْكَلِّ الْكَلِّ	نَاوَلِي بَكْرُو وَوَهْ
رَبِّ رَحْمَانَ رَحِيمِ	رَحْمِي هَلُو مَسُو وَهْ
جَلُو مَسِينِ رَحْمِي	شَيْخِ كَحْرَسُو وَهْ
بِأَكْلِي وَسَكْرَاتِ	شَيْخِ كَحْرِي كُو تُو وَهْ
بِشَيْخِ نَوَاسِ سِيمِ	رَحْمَهْ مَسَلُو مَسَلُو وَهْ
تَلُو مَسَلُو وَهْ رَحْمِي	دَرَحِي كَرْدُو وَهْ
كَنْزِدِ لُو وَهْ دَرَجِ	تُكَلُو اِكْفَطِ هُو وَهْ
بِأَكْلِي مَحْتَارِ	خَبْرِي كَشِرِ لُو وَهْ
بِشَيْخِ نَا مَحَارِ	أَوْتِكَلُو لِي سُو وَهْ

لَوَانِ يَا وَفِي تَكَاوُ	جَنَهْ كَبْرِي كُو وَهْ
يُنْكُو جَنَهْ الْعَدِينِ	دَاوُو دِيمِ هَيْدَا وَهْ
دَوِيمِ وَيَنْزِلَانِ نُو	رَفُوحِ زَاوُو هَتُو وَهْ
جَمْعِ مَقَرِّ بَيْنِ	دَوْنِي وَبِكَا كِي وَهْ
لِصَّحْبِ بَيْنِ	قَرِينِي كُو تُو وَهْ
مُجَلَا يَا وَوَاوُو عَيْنُو	مِي هُو رَادِ كِي وَهْ
مِي هُو رَادِ كِتَابِكِ	بِلَامِ زَاوُو كُو وَهْ
بِأَيِّ كَرِكِ زَاوُو	هَلُو مَسْ كَعْفِي وَهْ
هَلُو مَسْ مَوْحِ كِنَاوُ	ذَنْبِ كَعْفِي لُو وَهْ
مَوْحِ سَامِيحِ ذَنْبِ	نَرِي كَاوُو وَوَلَدُو وَهْ
هُوسِ يَمَانَ فَاطِمَهْ	أَرُو مَسَلَانِي كُو تُو وَهْ

Dada Masiti's poem: Ba'di ya hay ni mowti.

شَيْخِ شَانِي عَظِيمٍ وَيَسْعُ نَوَاحِي شَوْكَةٍ
 وَأَرْيَاوِي نَوْجَاجِي نَارُ وَنَوَاحِي مَوَدَّةِ
 نَارُ وَهُوَ مَنُورُ خَبْرُ دَاوُدَ هِرْزُودَةِ
 أَوْ نِيَّ شَانِ يَشِيخِ أَسِيلِينَ تَحِيُّوَةٌ
 تَحِيُّوَةٌ أَسِيلِينَ مَوْجِ مَهْمَشُورَةٍ
 مَوْجِ كَالِي هَامِلِ طَبَعِ نَكَلُ مَوَدَّةِ
 أَوْ نِيَّ شَانِ يَشِيخِ أَوْ نِيَّ شَانِ هَاوَنُورِ
 أَوْ نِيَّ شَانِ هَاوَنِ وَتَكْوِي جِلْوَةٍ
 شَيْخِ فَطِيي نَفَائِدِ نَكَاوَمُو هَيْسُورَةٍ
 كَالِي هَيْسُورَةٍ دِينِ كَنْ يَكْفِظُورَةٍ
 كَالِي هَيْسُورَةٍ عِلْمِ أَمْنَعِ كَمَلُورَةٍ

كَالِي هَيْسُورَةٍ عَقْلِ نَجْوَهْرِ هَيْسُورَةٍ
 حَيِّ يَشِيخِ يَشِيخِ دَايِمِ هَايَسُورَةٍ
 دَايِمِ هَايَسُورَةٍ كَوَ أَيْتَقُورَةٍ
 كَوَ يَانِ دَايِسِعِ أِنْكَأُورِ وَرُورِ نَوَدَّةِ
 كَوَ يَهَايِ كَانِ كَلِ نَفْسِ هَيْسُورَةٍ
 كَوَ يَنْكُو مِيَّانِي يَشِيخِ خَامَةِ أَلُو مَسُورَةٍ
 أَلُو مَسُورَةٍ خَامَةِ نَدَالِ يَكَلُو لَوَدَّةِ
 شَيْخِ كَوَ مَهْمُورِ لَوَمَانِ كَرُورِ
 لَوَمَانِ شَيْخِ كَرَالِ عَمْرُويِ كَرِ دَوَدَةٍ
 عَمْرُويِ أَحْرِيَدِ عِلْمِ أَيْتَقُورَةٍ
 عِلْمِ أَيْتَقُورَةٍ أَلِيْنِ أَيْتَقُورَةٍ

Dada Masiti's poem: Ba'di ya hay ni mowti (cont.).

سَوَلِ كَلَفَلَوْهَ	سَخِجِ هَلُوَوَايِ	مَوْتِ وَخَفِرَكُوَهَ
زِسُوَمَقْنِ كَلَتُوَهَ	دَرَمَوْتِ وَقِرَحِ	اَتَكَلَلِرِيسُوَهَ
نِيخِ زِنَتُوَتُوَهَ	هَلِلِرُوَهَ هَرُوسِ	كَلَارِوَهَ هَقِيَتُوَهَ
مِي بَايِرِ كَرِيَتُوَهَ	كَلَارِوَهَ اَنفَانِ	سَخِجِ اَبْرِكُوَهَ
مِي بَاهَدِرِ رُوَمُوَا	اَتَاوَنَا وَجُوَتَقْنِ	سَخِجِ هَمَلِ كَسُوَهَ
مَقْنِ مَبَكَلِوَهَ	سَخِجِ سَقَلِ هَمَلِ	نَكَانِ يَكْمِشُوَهَ
هَطِخِ كَبْرِشُوَهَ	جَمَلِ كُوَوَنَكُوَمِ	سَانَدِ تَكَلِسُوَهَ
سَوَلِ كَلُوَمِيَاوَهَ	تَكَلِسُوَوِ سَانَدِ	مَرَاشِ خِتَلُوَهَ
كَوَاوَرِ كَلَتُوَهَ	يِنَكُوَوِ سَانَدِ لَطِيْبِ	نِيَامِبِ نَكَلِ كُوَهَ
اِنَكَلِ كَرِشُوَهَ	هَانِرِ رُوَمِيَنِ قَبِيصِ	نَسَالِ يَكْتَرِ كُوَهَ
اِنْقَرَانِ حُسُوَمُوَهَ	بَشَمَكِ اَلِيْمَا	نَاكُوَوِ كَفِيَكُوَهَ

Dada Masiti's poem: Ba'di ya hay ni mowti (cont.).

شَيْخٌ نَكِيرٌ جَمَالٌ جَنْ هَشَوٌ تَلَوَةٌ
 شَيْخٌ سَخْلٌ مَلِيرِي تَيْدَنْ كُورِ شَوَةٌ
 وَسَمِيهُو كُورِشِ مَا تَوْنِ تَكْوَةٌ
 يَتَكَبِّكُ مَا تَوْرِي كُورِ تَسَاوُ لُورُوَةٌ
 تَيْنِ سَوْمَانِ فَاتَكَهْ شَيْخٌ خُومُو لُورُوَةٌ
 تَيْنِ شَيْخِ نَكَاوُ رَادِ اِنَاوُ مَبَنُوَةٌ
 رَادِ هَاوُ مَبُو وَوِي جَمِيعِ كَفِشِيوَةٌ
 رَادِ هَاوُ مَبُو وَوَانِ رُحْمِ يَكْرَلُوَةٌ
 وَنَاوِلِ وَلِيْرِيْلِ بَحَاوُ وَشِيْنِدَاوَةٌ
 رَادِ هَاوُ مَبُو وَوَاكِي بَحْسِ وَحِطْخَتُوَةٌ
 وَطَخِيْنَاوُ كِيوَا مَبُو فُو وَجِرُو لُورُوَةٌ

وَوِي وَتَكْمُرَاشِ مَوِي اَتَكَلُوَةٌ
 وَنِيِي مَوِي نُو كَيْنِ نَكَاوُ خَمَلُوَةٌ
 تَكْبِيْرِي زَكُوْمِيْلِي مِيْرُو اِنَاوُ سَوُوَةٌ
 وَتَكَاوُشِ مِيْرُو اَن اَتَكُو فَوُوَةٌ
 وَشَكُوْمِ نِيْرَانِ تَيْنِ اِنَاوُ تَلُوَةٌ
 كَلْتَانِ مَلَانِ اَت شَيْخِ جِرِكُوَةٌ
 شَيْخِ نَكْرِكُو وَوَايِ اِكَلِيْتِ كَلْرَبُوَةٌ
 وَكَلِيْتِي كُنِيْرِي جِيْرُ تَكْتِكَلُوَةٌ
 هَمْتِكَلُوْمِ لَائِكِ مَكَايِي تَكُو يُوُوَةٌ
 تَكُو يُوُوَ مَكَايِي نُو كِيُوِي تَخِيُوَةٌ
 وَكِي وَخُوْرَالْعَيْنِ شَيْخِ تَخِيْلُوَةٌ

كَالْوَيْ وَجْهٍ وَجَوْهَرٍ
كَأَكْوَابٍ وَوَيْرَاحٍ
شَيْخٍ أَوْ مَوْهَرٍ سَيْنٍ
زَمِيرَانَ إِنْ سِيرَانَ
نَاكَوَاتِكُورٍ نَادٍ
وَتَكْوَابُومِ لَائِكٍ
وَتَكْوَيْ تَوَابٍ
أَتَاكَوَرُفُ لَوْ كُونٍ
أَتَاكَوَرِدَ كَانٍ
وَجَاوَيْ وَجِهَلٍ
وَجِكَلِكُ كُرُودٍ
وَنَحْفَلُودٍ

وَتَكْوَلُودِ شَكِّ
هَجْرِيكَوْمِيَقِيَلِي
هَجْرِيكَوْنِدِرَسِ
مَسْكَةٌ هُوْمِيَسْرُ
تَلَاوَالِكُوَيْسِي
صَوْرَقَانَ تَلَانَ
شَيْخِ كَلِيْتِي جَانٍ
وَتَكِيَسْرُورِ رَاضِيَةِ
وَكِي وَيَسْرُ رَاضِيِ
أُمَّةٌ مَحْمَدٍ
هَيَاوُودِ كَوِي ١٥٦
يَا طِلْ هَلْتَوُف

يَا طَلِّ التَّيْنِ | إِنَّ لِي هَيْوَتِي لَوْفًا
قَصِيدِي ائْتِي | فَاحِ السُّومُوفًا
السُّومُوفَا كَهْ | إِنَّ لِي يَكْلُونُوفًا
تمت وبالخير عمت