

ISLAMIC ORAL POETRY IN
WALLO:
A PRELIMINARY DESCRIPTIVE
ANALYSIS

BY
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ABSTRACT

Wallo is the home of *Awlaya* and Muslim Poets. There are numerous Shrines of *Awlaya*, most of which serve as seats of higher Islamic learning, loci of pilgrimage, and centers of poetic composition. This thesis attempts to discuss Islamic Oral Poetry in its Social context. In considering the literary and social aspects of this popular oral tradition, this thesis aims to identify the various poetic genres of Islamic Oral Poetry, their occasion of recital, their contents, functions and stylistic quality. To discuss the tradition and practice of composition, performance and transmission of Islamic Oral Poetry is also another objective of this thesis.

Data were collected from six *wärädas* in Wallo through three successive field trips that are carried out from July 1997 to January 1998. The methods of collecting data include participant observations, interviews and case histories. These three methods enable the researcher to record songs and poem recitals from their actual performance, to elicit information from poets, religious leaders and other believers. Instruments employed to collect data are of three kinds, namely, tape recording, note taking and photographing.

The Wallo Muslims designate their poems collectively as *ajäm*. *Ajäm* is poetry primarily composed to be performed in religious ceremonies. *Ajäm* is composed by specialist and expert poets. Specialist poets have good knowledge of the *Qur'an*, and other Islamic texts and familiar with the miracles of certain *Awalya*. This class of poets bear a title called *Madih* and compose their poems in written forms. The other group of poets is locally known as *häyyä bay*. The *häyyä bay* is an unlettered poet. He practice certain genres like the *qissa* and the *häyyä* which do not necessarily require knowledge of *Qur'an* or involve many Arabic words like other genres. Women poets belong to this class of poets.

The Wallo Muslims grouped their poems in four genres. These are: *tawhiid*, *mälk* (Mälh), *qissa* and *häyyä*. *Tawhiid* is a didactic genre aiming at straightforward religious instructions and moral lessons. *Mälk* is a descriptive poetry, a verbal portrait of the prophets and certain *Awlaya*. *Qissa* is a dramatic narrative dealing with miracles and myth, where *häyyä* is a poetry of self-expression.

The performance of *ajām* takes place in occasions and ceremonies which are agreed to be Islamic. Therefore, Islamic holidays such as, *Eid-al-Fatir*, *Eid-al-Adahaa* (Arafa), *Mäwliid* and the *Ramadan* nights *Du'aa* are events that bring large audience at one place and time. However, ceremonies like the *Wädajja*, and the weekly *hädrat* at the various shrines are the most common occasions and ceremonies of *ajām* recital.

ABBREVIATIONS

Am. Amharic
Ar. Arabic
Or. Oromo

Key to Transliteration

Vowels

ä/á	አ
u	ኡ
e	ኢ
a	ኣ
e	ኤ
i	ኦ
o	ኦ

Consonants

š	ሸ
ḡ	ቀ
c	ቸ
n	ኘ
t	ጠ
č	ጨ

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INTRODUCTION

Despite its being widespread and having deep roots in the day-to-day activities of the people Islamic Oral poetry in the Ethiopian context is one of the least studied areas. Even if some attempts have been made, most of them are mere collections of texts with little interest in relating texts to their social contexts. Therefore, to date we have only little information about the social, textual and cultural values of Islamic oral poetry, the various forms it comprises, the literary and artistic qualities it manifests, the nature of its composition, and the status of the poet in his society. Indeed a close inquiry and analysis of oral literature requires some considerations on literary, social and cultural features. Thus, Islamic oral poetry in the Ethiopian context deserves far more study than it has yet received. This paper, therefore, is an additional attempt to analyse Islamic oral poetry with reference to its social and cultural context. Since the study of oral literature aims at understanding the cultural values of a certain society, considering the people who act within a social context and the social conventions that they both use and create in their poetry are of crucial importance for the student of oral literature. Beissinger (1988:362), lauds the importance of considering context in analysing oral texts: "Analysing text within context effectively illustrates the necessity of relating oral traditional texts to the ceremonies or circumstances in which they function in order to appreciate their significances."

Thus, a detailed description of various occasions and events of Islamic poetry recital and the overall ceremonial process, the type of audience and their role in the process of performance, the purpose of the poems and their significance to the audience constitute part of the present research. More over, the specific objectives of this research include,

- to identify the various genres of Islamic poetry and to describe their cultural and literary features.
- to see whether the role of the Muslim poet is a specialized one
- to see the nature of composition; performance and transmission of Islamic poetry.
- to identify the content of the various poetic genres.

The data of the research are mainly collected through fieldwork in six *wärädas* namely Ambassel, Dessi Zurya, Yajju, Qalu, Boranna and Waraillu.

Methods employed in collecting data are of three types: participant observation, interview and case histories. The method of participant observation enables the researcher to record texts at the moment of their actual performance and to collect information about the ceremonial process. Interviewing poets and other religious leaders also helps to understand about the poetic institutions, local terms and theories. The researcher obtains certain important information about some poets, on their personal experience, and on the view they have about their art by employing the method of case history.

The thesis has four parts. The first chapter provides helpful background. It gives a short historical outline of the introduction and spread of Islam in Wallo. Since the present is hardly separable from the past and since oral poetry considerably involves historical allusions and references, some historical information facilitates the readers' understanding and minimizes the possibility of misinterpretation. It also throws light on the relation of Islamic poetry to the various shrines. The chapter also includes sections on literature review and field experience. The section on field experience describes methods employed and problems faced before, during and after the fieldwork.

The second chapter of the thesis is dedicated to the various occasions and ceremonies in which the recital of Islamic poetry takes place. The second half of the chapter considers the ceremonial process that involves a series of ritual acts. The discussion in this chapter generally helps the reader to understand what actually is said and done in the ceremony, the role of the audience and the functions the poems serve.

The third chapter focuses on issues related to the creation of Islamic poetry and its actualization. Therefore, this chapter considers the poet and the social convention in which he creates and uses his poetry. An attempt is also made to describe the various means of transmission and distribution of Islamic oral poetry in Wallo. This chapter

introduces the four poetic genres and provides their etymological definitions in relation with their current meaning in Wallo.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the descriptive analysis of the four poetic genres of Islamic oral poetry.

And finally, the thesis includes a short conclusion and an appendix. The appendix like most oral literature texts has not comprised a collection of oral texts. This is because of one simple reason. Regulations laid recently by the School of Graduate Studies put a restriction that the length of MA thesis should not exceed the limit of 150 pages in double space.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 General Background

1.1 Religion in Wallo: A Historical perspective

Wallo, as Mesfin Wolda Mariam (1991:18) puts it, is a “veritable melting pot” for various linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and religious belief systems. The presentday culture of Wallo seems to be the outcome of the centuries-long historical process of population movements and religious expansions. The migration of the Oromos and their eventual settlement in Wallo, together with the assimilation of *Tigrina* and *Agäwna* speaking people from the north and the Afar from the east on the one hand, and the coercive expansions of Islam and Christianity on the other create a society characterised by extreme religious and ethnic tolerance. In order to understand the culture of the present-day Wallo, resorting to historical facts might throw light on the process by which the religion and culture of the “*Wälloye*” (Amh. are people from Wallo) came to be what it now is.

Generally, there is a wide public assumption that the *Wälloye* are liberal in matters of religion. This assumption holds a grain of truth since one does not find a substantial difference between Muslims and Christians beyond abstaining from “Muslim” or “Christian” meat. In Wallo, as Mesfin (1991: 18) observes, “not only do Christians and Muslims live next to each other in perfect harmony and absolute peace, even within the same family half may be Christian and half Muslim”. Therefore, intermarriage between members of Muslim and Christian is ‘much more common in Wallo than any other part of Ethiopia’ (Mesfin: *Ibid.*).

Intermarriage sometimes may involve conversion of one party to the other’s religion or the couple may even live together withholding their respective religions. Conversion from one religion to another, for instance from Christianity to Islam and vice versa, is a common phenomenon in Wallo. Poor health condition, marriage and spirit possession, are the most prevalent reasons for conversion from one religion to the other. Even after they have confessed, it is common to see people practising the newly confessed religion

along with their pervious belief , or becoming less strict in the observance of the rules and precepts of the religion they are converted to.

Therefore, in the religious culture of Wallo, most religious practices and rites are not exclusive of the two religious groups. Moreover, Muslims and Christians in Wallo perceive themselves as “true” Muslims or Christians in every sense of the term. But most of their actual practices involve pre-Christian and pre-Islam elements such as the *Zar* cult, the *Atäte* worship, the *adbar* cult, the *Wädajja*; and *Wäli*¹ worship, that have Islamic grounds but have much more developed syncretically with traditional beliefs. The phenomena of syncretism as well as the steadfast adherence of Muslims and Christians to *Wäli* Worship and the *Wädajja* ritual have direct bearing on a research thesis such as like this which deals with the composition, performance and distribution of religious poetry. This may be better explained by considering some historical events, connected with the introduction and spread of Christianity and Islam.

Wallo, had been the battle field of political and military conflicts that took place intermittently in the history of Ethiopia. Some of those conflicts were closely linked or at least had a religious cover. But the actual intent was far from expanding and imposing one's religion over the other (Asnake: 1983:25, Abdussamad: 1997:131). Ahmed Grang's (Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim) Islamization process in the 16th century and the Christianization process of Yohannes IV in the late decades of the 18th century, could be mentioned as military expeditions which have left a perennial effect on the life of the people (Trimingham, 1965; Asnake, 1983:25). Tadesse (1972:125) noted that expansion of the northern Ethiopian Christian kingdom in the fourteenth century “was also a period when the Ethiopian Church exerted its pressure most on the non Christian people.”

However, the introduction of the two religions in Wallo goes back to the early middle ages. According to historical sources, both Christianity and Islam were introduced in Wallo in the ninth century (Tadesse: 1972, Hussien 1990:62). The arrival of 150 priests from Axum and their assignment to teach the Amhara during the reign of Dignal-Jan of Axum marked the introduction of Christianity in Wallo in the earliest period (Tadesse,

1972:125). The prelude of Islam to Wallo according to Hussien Ahmed (1990:62) also dates back from the end of ninth century to the end of thirteenth century. Its penetration is related to the *ulama*² of *Ifat*, (Northern Showa) and the "arrival of Arab emigrants" consisting of preachers, political dissidents and teachers, and their settlement as individuals in the peripheral areas of South Eastern Wallo bordering on *Ifat* and Awsa (Hussien: *Ibid.*).

The spread of Islam however, was slow and less able to organize adequately its members to Islamize the public at large (Hussien, 1990:64). Thus, there was no religious war till the "Christian kingdom of Ethiopia conquered the Muslim of *Ifat*" and exacted tribute from them in 1415 (Parrinder 1969: 193-194).

The diffusion of Islam in Wallo was accelerated further, during the conquest of Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim (*Gragn*) in the second half of the sixteenth century (Trimingham, 1965; Hussien, 1990:62). The conversion to Islam was achieved by "coercive means, i.e., the establishment of Muslim military and political power" and "by peaceful means through the activities of those Muslim preachers" (Hussien, 1990:62). Though the conquest of *Gragn* hastened the process of conversion, the success of Islam in Wallo was consolidated in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by the *Sufi*³ teachers (Hussien, 1990:64).

Both Christianity and Islam were not brought into religious, free spaces, but they displaced the traditional religious systems. However, the displacement process seems unsuccessful, as the older religious practices still remained more or less unbroken. Trimingham (1965: 271), writes: "Islam does no violent uprooting, but shades off into a long series of gradations and the Islam which actually touches the pagan is often little removed from paganism... the new culture gives immediate values without displacing the old."

Trimingham's observation is mainly concerned with two interrelated factors: the influence of *Kushitic* culture, and the willingness of *Sufi* teachers to accommodate non-Islamic elements in Islam. The onset and eventual settlement of the Oromo in Wallo during the last years of sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries brought to the area

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traditional practices and beliefs such as the *Wädajja*, the *Zar* cult and worshipping *atäte* (Trimingham, 1965:265; Hussien 1990:69).

However, in the present day Wallo, practising *Wädajja* is not confined to Muslim Oromos of Wallo, who inhabit some districts such as the present Raaya and Kamisse. *Wädajja* has become the most common practice among the Christians and Muslims throughout the region.

The diffusion and spread of traditional elements into Islam are strengthened with introduction and propagation of religious orders which base their doctrine on Medieval *Sufism*, around the second half of the 18th century.

According to Hussien (1990:64) the success of the indigenous *Sufi* teachers can be explained in terms of three major achievements (1) expansion of literacy and scholarship, (2) introduction and sustenance of new spiritual traditions, (3) and their willingness to tolerate and accommodate non-Islamic elements. The above three factors proposed by Hussien can be taken as valid justifications to the popular attraction and profusion of the various *Sufi* orders in Wallo. So, further explanation of each of the three factors will broaden our understanding of the religious folklore of the region.

Contrary to the *juhadist*⁴ or militant Muslim leaders, the *Sufi* scholars propagated Islam by “persuasion”, rather than by coercion. Thier centres of teaching attracted students and *ulama* from the surrounding villages as well as the distant areas and gradually became “seats of higher Islamic learning.” Moreover the shrines as places for exchange of ideas and experiences, stimulate and facilitate the development, publication and dissemination of local religious texts, especially of Islamic poetry. Teaching the fundamentals of Islam in the vernacular, i.e., Amharic, and adopting the poetic verse as a medium to proselytize the uneducated public are also strong proofs for the remarkable scholarly achievements of the *Sufi Seiks*.⁵

The composition and recital of poetry is closely related to the introduction of a new spiritual dimension to religious experiences and practices. Thus rituals such as the

annual celebration of the *Mäwliid* and the regular *hadrat*⁵ (Ar. sing. *hadra*; religious meeting for mystical orders) which involve poetry and dancing subsequently became major aspects of Islam in Wallo.⁶ Mystical initiation to religious orders related to the ritual chanting of *dhikrs* (Ar. liturgical chants and litanies glorifying God), including the composition and recital of *ajam* (Ar. poetry composed in Amharic but written in Arabic script) and ritual dancing are related to *Wāli* worship and the *Sufi* orders introduced to the area in the second half of the 18th century (Trimingham, 1965, Parrinder 1969, Hussien 1990).

According to Trimingham, (1965: 233) the basis of *Sufism* is 'the belief that the believer who desires to attain communion with God needs the guidance of one who is experienced in the "path" thereto, one who has been blessed by God on *bārāka* (Ar. earthly special Virtue) and who can act as an intermediary between the disciple and God.'

Of the many popular *turiqa* (sing. *tariqa*)⁷, which means "a system of spiritual doctrine and practice given by the founder of the order", the one propagated first in Wallo is the "*Qadiriyya tariqa*" which was founded by *Abd al- Qadir al-Jalani* (1077-1116), the most popular "saint" in Islam. The *Qadiriyya* order was first introduced to Harrar by a certain mystic of Yemenite origin called Sharif Abu Bakr Ibn Abdallah al-Idarus (or Aydarus). Gradually this order propagated to Wallo, through a widely held tradition of *silsila* (Ar. spiritual chain of genealogy), which can be passed on by the *Seik* to his *Murid* (Ar. novice) and to other people (Hussien, 1990:63).

However, the various religious orders were introduced and gained broad mass bases in Wallo with the effort of indigenous Sufi teachers towards the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. According to Hussien Ahmed (1990:63), at the turn of the nineteenth century, some Muslim Ethiopian scholars who visited the "*Hijaz*" (for pilgrimage) or Yemen and the Sudan (for advanced religious training) were inspired with new ideas of Islamic revival and initiated into the newly-emerging and already established *Sufi* orders. Upon their return to Ethiopia, these scholars founded *Zawiyat*

(Ar. mausoleums) that serve as centres of teaching in various parts of Wallo, which later evolved into centres of local pilgrimage.

Another accomplishment of the indigenous *Sufi* teachers is their willingness to tolerate and accommodate non-Islamic elements from the older traditions and beliefs. This may explain the survival feature of older beliefs such as the *Wādajja*, the *atäte* and the *Zar*, which were much more deep-rooted in the life of the people and which developed syncretically with Islam in the present-day Wallo.

The above discussion explains the relation of Muslim poetry to the *Sufi* centres. This relation, as shall be discussed in other chapters, lends credence to the craft of poetry and the social contexts of poetic recitation.

Sufism not only brought the tradition of poetry composition and recitation, mystical orders and rituals related to it, or allow for the incorporation of traditional practices and cults that are otherwise foreign to Islam; but also introduced the popular cults of *Awlaya* (Ar. sing-*wāli*) which have great influence over the masses, as well as over the intellectual Muslims.⁸

The charismatic Muslim scholars of Wällo, who became so popular in their teachings and mystical activities were later on elevated to the rank of *Awlaya* and after their death shrines were established in their honour in various parts of Wällo. The *Awlaya*, as holy men who can perform miracles and possess the *Kārama* (Ar. divine grace), are believed to have been especially favoured by *Allah* during their life time. According to the belief they also continue after their death to provide a connection between *Allah* and men. Therefore, the belief in the *Wali*'s officious power of intercession with *Allah* in order to assist those who invoke his name in seeking help in times of misfortune and the belief in him as a source of *bāräka*⁹ that brings miraculous solution for the physical and psychological problems of the poor and the destitute are some of the reasons for the spread of *Wäli* veneration widely.

Shrines of *Awlaya*, established in religious observance of different *Awlaya* are numerous in Wallo. Every district and village, throughout the region has its favourite *Wäli* to whom the people claim they belong and whom they celebrate regularly (weekly or annually). The glory and respect of most *Awlaya* is confined to specific environs. But some *Awlaya* are worshipped by the entire population, and best known by pilgrims from various ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds. The following are some of the shrines established in commemoration of various *Awlaya*, or founded by the *Wäli* himself as centres of teaching and eventually raised to the status of shrines after the death of the *Wäli*.

1. **Ana in Rayya:** The shrine at Ana in Rayya north Wallo, has been a famous *sufi* center and seat of higher Islamic learning since the late eighteenth century. *Seik* Jamal Al-din-Muhammed, the founder of the centre was considered to have been the most prolific scholar, poet and mystic in the whole of Wallo.

2. **Danna in Yajju:** Danna is located 30 k.m. north east Woldaya. Pilgrimage to this Shrine takes place during the annual celebration of *Mäwliid*. The centre was established by Ahmed b. Adem. Besides its relevance as a site of local pilgrimage, the centre is famous for the preservation and expansion of education since the time of its foundation.

3. **Gaddo in Dawway Rahmato:** Gaddo is the site of the shrine of *Mufti* Dawud b. Abi Beker. Besides the celebration of the annual *Mäwliid* festival *Ziyarat* (Ar. visitings) to the shrine take place in September at the birthday of the respective *Wäil*, *Mufti* Dawud b. Abi Beker.

4. **Däggar in Borrana:** The *Dorih* (Ar. tomb) of Daggar is located about 20 kms west of Kälalla in Borrana in the valley of Bahito. The shrine is founded by Sharaf al-Din Ibrahim, (Sharafadin) and is the most renowned centre of local pilgrimage. *Ziyarat* at the Shrine take place in October¹⁰, in addition to the annual festival of *Mäwliid*. There is also a regular visiting on Thursday evening, and the shrine remains active during the dry season (the end of September to second week of June). Daggar is different from other shrines for two reasons. The shrine has not functioned as a seat for higher Islamic

learning for a long-time and , the bi-annual festivals held at this shrine are largely dominated by highly performed rituals of dancing, exhortation and other related ceremonies of the *Zar*.

5. **Jäma Nigus in Albuko in Qallu:** The shrine at Jama Nigus founded by Seik Muhammed Shafi b. Asqari Muhammed towards the end of the 18th century, is believed to be the first shrine where the annual festival of commemoration of the Prophet's birth day started to be celebrated on a grand scale in Wallo (Hussien 1990: 65). Regular visits to the shrine take place on Wednesdays and Fridays.

6. **Getta in Qallu:** The shrine at Getta was founded by Al-haj Bushira in the early decades of the 19th century. It is a popular centre of local pilgrimage next to Jäma Nigus. *Ziyarat* to the shrine take place during the annual festival of *Mäwliid*. There are also regular visits on Fridays.

The Shrines at Merssa in Yajju, Mejjit in Batti, Maybar in Dessie Zurya, Tatiti in Jamma also serve as sites of local pilgrimage, especially during the annual festival of *Mäwliid* celebration.

In short, the religious tradition of the present-day Wallo can be expressed in the light of "*Wäli*" worship and the "*Wädaajja*" rituals, which are considered now as Islamic religious practices. But such practices practically involve non-Islamic elements, expressed in the form of group drama. The dramatic performance, which includes poetry recital, story narration, group dancing, singing and other spiritual exercises; and the functions they serve and the effects they bring to the audience are discussed in the next chapter.

1.2. Review Of Literature

A considerable amount of research has been conducted on Islamic religious folklore in the Ethiopian context. From the approach they have taken, these works can be classified into two academic disciplines.

The first category of researchers, who show considerable effort to study religious folklore are the students of literature, who attempt to collect and analyse religious oral literature from various social settings. In the last two decades, there has been an increasing awareness of the subject matter among the students of the *Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature* (hereafter DELL) at the Addis Ababa University (hereafter AAU). Many attempts were made to collect religious oral narratives and poems from different Ethiopian ethnic groups, including Oromo (Yoseph 1989, Halima: 1984, Abebe, 1989), Gurage (Kirubel: 1994), and Amhara (for example, Ratta: 1976; Bogale: 1980; Fanta 1997; Tsige 1990). All the works categorized under this group have relations with the present research. However since the degree of relation varies from one work to the other, this review focuses on those works which are closely related to this study while the others are surveyed collectively.

Some writers such as Fanta (1997), and Tsige(1990) collect Islamic Oral narratives, whereas Kirubel (1994) Abebe (1989) Halima (1984), deal with Islamic Oral poetry. These works deal with religious folklore which is concerned with some religious leaders, and have remote, but relevant, connection with this work.

Other works that have relation with the present research are Bogale (1980), Tibabu (1984), Muhammed (1992) and Muhammed (1996). These deal with Islamic oral poetry. Their primary concern, however, is collecting and documenting compositions of individual poets. Except Tibabu (1984) the other three collectors focus on three poets who had lived in Wallo long ago, but are still famous for their prophetic poetry. Despite the fact that he had interviewed the poet, Tibabu (1984) has limited himself to transcribing poems from recorded cassette tapes which are available in the market.

The other group of writers Yoseph (1989), Mekonnen (1990), Umer (1990) and Muhammed (1994) attempt to examine the literary significance of religious oral poetry in various social settings. They differ from the above-mentioned collectors by the effort they made to study religious poetry in its social context. Even though all these writers claim that they have made participant observations in one or more actual performances, non of them gives satisfactory description of the occasion, its intended functions, the

number of participants in the group, or the role of the individual performer at the specific place and time. They also fail to provide detailed descriptions of the situation, the audience, the local meaning or the reaction of individuals enthralled by the performance at the moment of delivery.

The main emphasis in these collections is on literary textual analysis, the focus being on identifying certain themes that are common to the poems they have collected. There is little attempt to interpret texts in relation to their social context, or to elucidate their literary significance. There are many questions, therefore, which these works have not answered. Some of these questions are related to, the nature of composition and distribution of religious poetry. None of the collectors provide information and evidence about the composition of poems, the creative activity of the individual poet and the relationship between composition and performance (Does the process of composition precede performance? Are the acts of composition and performance simultaneous?).

Though the above collectors exhibit many similarities they contradict with one another in various points. Some of these points refer to basic issues like naming, purpose and classification of religious oral poetry. For Tibabu (1984) songs sung in various occasions (*Wādaja*, *Māwliḍ*, *Eid-Al-adhaa*) are generally called “*Ziyara*”. *Ziyara* can be divided into two according to their purpose and content. One category of *Ziyara* involves songs to be sung for the *jinn* and the “spirit” (Tibabu: 1984: 5). The others which praise the “prophets” are called *Mānzumas*. Muhammed (1996) and Muhammed (1992) have also the same observation. For both of these writers, songs could be classified under *Mānzuma* and *Ingurguro*. Another writer Assefa (1987) designates the genre as “*Mānzuma* [which is] the general name given to any song sung in the *Hadra*”. He then classifies it into two categories: “*Mānzuma baqum* (*Mānzuma* by standing up) and *Mānzuma baquccta* (*Mānzuma* by sitting down).” The former is “a song primarily sung to praise Allah, Mohammed, or any other prophet” while the latter is “a song primarily used for meditation” (Assefa 1987: 9-12).

The collectors, while attempting to classify religious songs, have neither obtained poems of considerable amount nor provided sources of their information to back up

their argument by evidence. Among them, only Assefa (1987) has collected 13 pieces of songs, which are relatively more than the others' but, practically insignificant, for a research attempting generic classification. In short, while most of the researchers (for instance Tibabu, 1984, Assefa 1987, Muhammed 1992, Muhammed 1996) deal with one area, Wallo, which has a more or less well established religious tradition, the discrepancies in classification necessitate the need for further investigation.

From the various works reviewed above (all of them are BA theses), Assefa's (1987) M.A. thesis differs as it is the only accessible study in English for foreign readers. Assefa (1987) presents thirteen "*Mänzumas*" from four "provinces" in Wallo and discusses their social background, content and form. The thesis is forty-six pages in double space and appended to it is one hundred and thirty-two pages long Amharic text. Out of the forty-six pages the first nine pages describe the social background of the poems and the myth related to them. The other thirty-four pages are devoted to discussions about the form and content of "*Mänzuma*", together with a short conclusion.

In the introduction, the writer briefly describes how the "*Mänzumas* were collected when being sung [sic] in the *Hadra*" using a "hidden tape recorder". Information he uses as "supporting data" were also "collected through personal discussions with the composers" by tape recorder, but this time covertly. The collector, during his field research, also accomplished a prodigious task in collecting songs. In recording songs he carried out double tasks simultaneously in singing the chorus and clapping his hands "just like the other participants" when "*Mänzuma Bagum* [sic] in [sic] song" and at the same time by "pressing the recording button" of a hidden tape recorder. He does such a staggering task at nine different *hadrat*, without being exposed or suspected even at a single time [see the introduction, PP. I-III].

A close reading of this thesis may give clues for suspecting the researcher for being delusive even at the level of analysis. For instance, on discussing unity of idea and logical relation between verse lines, the writer has amputated a line or two from triplets and quatrains so that they confirm his preconception (see E.g. A, Page 24 and the first example, p. 25 and compare them with the corpus in the Appendix, P. 88, lines 21-24

and P., 111 the last four lines, respectively). In a similar way, while discussing matters related to the structure of the songs, such as refrains and stanzic divisions the writer takes a stanza consisting of ten lines, from a certain poet, and brings about a refrain which dissects the stanza into two stanzas (compare the example on page 14 with the third stanza on page 154, in the Appendix). Whether or not such errors happened due to carelessness or with the intention of coming up with best examples that may serve the writer's preconceived idea, such a kind of data manipulation is unethical and misleading.

Besides an unacceptable level of inaccuracy, fallacious reasoning arises from impetuosity. Regarding the position of women in the "*Hadra*" where "the *Mänzuma* is sung", Assefa (1987: 5) writes, "children and women are not accepted at all". There are even times when a woman may serve as a *Kahadam*, "she is not the member of the *Hadra*". This implies that, the "*Hadra*" ritual as well as the act of composing and performing "*Mänzuma*" is the man's domain and no woman is allowed to sing the "*Mänzuma*". However, though the writer argues in such a way, one of the composers he discusses throughout the study is a woman poet called *Janoye*. Having such incongruity, the writer does not contend to learn how *Janoye* gets such a special status among women to sing in the "*Hadra*". This also makes this paper inaccurate and misleading.

Apart from the above reviewed works, whose primary interest is to analyse religious oral poetry from the point of literature, some anthropologists have also conducted research on Islamic oral poetry in the Ethiopian context.

The first work which discusses Islamic popular religious poetry in the Ethiopian context, in the late 1920's is Enricio Cerulli. Cerulli (1926) has collected 116 lines of poems and discusses the significant role Islamic poetry played in the propagation of Islam. Cerulli marks five themes in Islamic poetry. According to Alula (1994a) these are: episodes from the prophet's life, praise of God and the prophets, aspects of Islam, exhortations to avoid misdeeds and worldly concerns, and anti Christian Polemics.

Except the last one, the other four themes continue to be the dominant features of most Islamic poems even at the presentday Ethiopia.

Another important work which has relation to this thesis is Alula Punkhurst's (1994a) paper, "*Indigenising Islam in Wallo: Ajām, Amharic verse written in Arabic Script*". This work, though it aims at describing the social function of Islamic poetry, it is much more informed about the contexts, contents and composition of Islamic poetry than its predecessors, Tibabu (1984) and Assefa (1987). Thus, Alula (1994a) discovered the work of the first collector Enrico Cerulli and the local term for Islamic poetry, *ajām*. He also gives an interesting description of the Vocabulary of Islamic poetry and a thoughtful recommendation that points out the possible researchable areas in relation to Islamic oral poetry.

Recently Minako Ishihara made another attempt to study Islamic oral poetry in *A Muslim Oromo Society, in South Western Ethiopia*. Like Alula (1994a), she discusses the social function of Islamic poetry, composed in Oromo. Though, the primary interest of the study is to offer textual analysis of two songs, focusing on their aims and effects it presents a detailed description of the historical background and the social context in which the Muslim Oromo people employ the specific poetic genre called "*qasida*"¹¹. Ishihara's (1996) work has close relation to the present thesis for it deals with a genre the present thesis attempts to discuss. Yet, the thesis differs from Ishihara's (1996) because it makes an attempt to bring out the characteristics and poetic qualities of the genre instead of describing the content of particular texts. It also goes beyond a single genre and includes other genres of Islamic oral poetry. Despite the many important points Ishihara's (1996) work offers, it suffers from few generalisations and wrong assumptions such as, "poetic verses are regarded as entertainment which arouses the enthusiastic atmosphere of the "*hadra*" (Ishihara, 1996:212).

Taking "*Mänzuma*" as "entertainment" is an aesthetic mode of perception, which usually is an outsider's view of the religious expression of a certain religious group. However, the same expressions, or a drama of word and gesture are instruments of the

contemplative religious experience that leads to an experience of holiness, which often takes place in the form of a feeling of bliss or peace, for the believers.

Another study that has indirect but relevant relation to my research is Hussien Ahmed (1990). Though his primary concern is historical and anthropological, Hussien (1990) gives an interesting description on the celebration of the Prophet's birthday (*Māwliḍ*) at the Shrine of Jama Nigus. In his description of the main festival of *Māwliḍ*, he points out four types of songs and chants: *Ramsa*, a collection of panegyric poems in praise of the Prophet, *Mānzumat* (didactic poems), *Madh*, or a panegyric, which extol the virtues of the prophet and the "local saints," and some other chants sung at the exorcism performances in the same festival. Concerning the various oral genres, this work does not help much in that it doesn't go beyond dropping names. Yet, it gives historical accounts about the various shrines and the functions they are serving which are very useful in order to understand the religious culture of the region, in particular the relation of Islamic oral poetry to the shrines. Thus, the present research has benefited greatly from this work in learning the history of Islam in Wallo and other facts related to it which otherwise would have been very difficult to obtain.

1.3 Methodology And Problems

1.3.1 Field Work and Collecting Data

The researcher knows very well that the primary intention of this study is to provide description and analysis on Islamic oral poetry and not to make judgements regarding the religious belief. Some questions however, forced him to examine his own spiritual condition and religious experience. Thus, questions such as: "Can a researcher objectively observe and interpret the religious culture of others? Can he suspend his own faith in order to arrive at a balanced judgement? How does he study the possible meanings of the poems from the position of the participants? And can he reach the intended goal without compromising his personal belief?" are crucial points that come to mind from the outset.

Although the researcher comes from an Orthodox Christian family, he is not alien to Islam. He was brought up in a society which is extremely tolerant towards religious matters. Besides, he has had many opportunities to participate in various Islamic rituals and ceremonies because some of his relatives, neighbours and most of his friends were Muslims. During childhood he together with his friends used to fast some days in the Holy Month of *Ramadan* to enjoy the great variety and quantity of food offered only for children who did so. He realized recently that his childhood experience of practising the two religions, together with his reading, have influenced him and have made him reasonably free from prejudice. This realization encouraged him to begin a serious study with the conviction that something can be learned through systematic detachment without compromising one's own faith. These two approaches allow outsider, like the researcher, to enter the world of the insider, the only way one can attempt to probe religious literature, and reconstruct the meanings of religious phenomena from the standpoint of the participants.

Another issue that needs consideration from the outset is related to accessibility of data and participant's attitude towards folklore collectors. In order to get some information about the attitude of the religious folk group, the only means the researcher had was to go through the field experience of his predecessors. However, reading field reports of most collectors, who collect and analyse religious oral poetry makes one feel helpless and disappointed. Almost all of them describe problems they faced in a very similar, discouraging and dire manner. So one cannot learn much by reading those works only.

All writers claim that Islamic oral poetry is a locked-up gate for outsiders and an inaccessible area for academic inquiry. Yet, in saying so, the writers did not try to investigate the reason for its being inaccessible or provide detailed descriptions of their field methodology. They do not seem to realise that delineating the various techniques and strategies the researcher employed as well as the problems he faced in the field are part and parcel of the research activity which is as important as collecting and analysing poems. Most collectors have not much to say except 'I can't collect much for most singers are not willing to do so.' Some of them like Assefa (1987), attempt to explain problems he faced in the field, most of them come from the inappropriateness of the methodology they devised and not from the participants in the tradition. Thus, those

discouraging explanations seem to be used as excuses for evading one's responsibilities and doing ethically odd actions such as using a hidden tape-recorder.

However, realising the methodological shortcomings of one's predecessors does help to learn from the experiences of others. In order to ascertain obtaining sufficient data the researcher planned conducting a pilot field survey, when classes ended in the summer of 1997.

The task of conducting the research, however, was taken earlier on, in April 1997. One day the researcher received a casual invitation from a friend to chew Cat. The host is a middle aged Muslim from Harrar¹² who strictly observes his religion and tradition. Amidst discussing other matters, the host suddenly asked his guest whether he would volunteer to listen to "*Mänzuma*". This provided the researcher with an opportunity to discuss his plan of studying the "*Mänzuma*". This time the host showed much interest in the plan and promised to introduce the researcher to a great and renowned poet *Hajji Hussien Madih*, from Kombolcha, Wallo, who used to stay with him whenever he came to Addis Ababa.

The researcher then found it important to be informed in advance about the Poet's preferences, who would be his principal informant. Practising the formal way of doing things in the ritual was also essential to give the poet a good impression during the first meeting. Thus the researcher made three participant observations in three *Wädajja* occasions¹³ held at the homes of relatives and acquaintances in Addis Ababa and Debrezait. This helped him to recall his childhood experience and also reminded him of how he should deal with religious leaders and elders.

Three weeks later, in May 1997 the researcher met *Hajji Hussien Muhammed*, 65, a modern and charming person. He spent some days with the poet before he found out the poet's willingness to be his informant. Having established a good relationship, a day before the poet's departure to his place of residence at Kombolcha the researcher begged the poet for his permission to be an informant. After a long negotiation he responded to the researcher's request in an obscure and poetic way: saying: "My son, that is a good idea, but let me get permission, and do come to my place." This meant

neither permission nor refusal and the researcher could not understand what the poet was really saying. However for the poet was conscientious to read other's feelings he realized soon that he set a puzzle to the requisite. Thus the poet adds, "Berhanu, my son, do not be bewildered. *Seik Hussien's* bird (metaphorically the poet's second self) once sung:¹⁴

ጠባይ እንደ ከለር ተሩቅ አይታይም
ለቁም ነገር ታሉት ሰው ለሰው አይሰይም ።

Unlike colour, character is not visible
from a distance,
A friend is generous to a friend if the
favour he is asked to do is
with good intention

This was a nice beginning in the process of the research. Before he went to the poet's place,¹⁵ the researcher started making long-distance telephone calls from Addis Ababa to Kombolcha once a week. The researcher believes that such efforts made him to be in the confidence of the poet. These are efforts that preceded the actual field work.

The actual task of collecting data from the field began in July 1997. During the first week of his fieldwork the researcher talked to elders and religious leaders in Dessie, Kombolcha and Haik. This helped him to identify possible sources of data like the names and addresses of famous religious poets, and the occasions and events for reciting Islamic poetry.

During his stay in the field, the researcher spent about five days with *Hajji* Hussien Muhammed in his home at Kombolcha. *Hajji* Hussien, apart from offering the researcher shelter and food often introduced him to friends, *Abagars*, *Ulama*, including the custodian of the shrine at Getta, who are admired for their eloquence and knowledge of their tradition.¹⁶ *Hajji* Hussien makes the following introductory remarks every time he introduces the researcher with friends: "He is our son. His behaviour is as beautiful as his appearance. He is a learned man, teaching in a college. The journalists as well as the would be teachers are his students. He is coming to study our tradition, as he takes delight in his tradition and does not belittle it."

These introductory remarks, serve like a pass, assuring that the researcher is harmless. It also makes everyone chat freely in the presences of the researcher. The researcher's stay with *Hajji* Hussien also enabled him to become a friend of the poet's family. This gave him the opportunity to gather important information about the poet's life.

The researcher's being considered as a son by *Hajji* Hussien was very important for the development of this research. For *Hajji* Hussien has strong attachment to the shrine of Getta, his status as a *Madih* (Ar. panegyrist), would allow the researcher to record songs from other poets during the annual *Mäwliid* celebration at the shrine. Since the researcher would follow *Hajji* Hussien as a *därässa* (Ar. young student), the shrine attendants and ushers would not prevent him from entering the building where the *ulama* and the *Madihs* are gathered. In such a way the researcher spent two nights, the *Maqudim* (Ar. eve) and the *Abol* (Ar. main event) at the shrine and recorded some songs.

However, since data drawn from other shrines were important the researcher went to the shrine at Jama Nigus, expecting to make a participant observation. Before he left to this shrine at Getta *Hajji* Hussien gave him a letter to his elder brother *Seik* Ali Muhammed, a *Madih* at the shrine at Jama Nigus. The letter introduced the researcher and requested *Seik* Ali to accord him hospitality and kindness. Yet, at the time of the researcher's arrival the shrine was not as bustling as the shrine at Getta, for the main event had taken place one night earlier than Getta. There were only few *ulama*, some *därässas* and people from the surrounding. Since the researcher arrived late in the afternoon, around four o'clock, he was admitted to the *hadra* held in the mosque. But the meeting broke up after two hours and on this occasion many songs were not sung.

In order to minimise the physical and temporal limitations that hinder the collection of songs from other shrines the researcher sought the assistance of his elder brother, Cheru Gebeyehu and his friend, Seid Yimer¹⁷. The latter, who is a graduate from the *D.E.L.L.* at A.A.U and currently teaching Amharic in a senior secondary school helped the researcher in collecting songs in their live performance from the shrine at Danna in Yajju. Seid did it in his way of performing pilgrimage which he does every year. Unlike

Seid, Cheru's case was a bit different. Since Cheru is a Science teacher working at Kälala in Borana, the only way the researcher could keep in touch with him was by sending letter. Besides a letter of request, to write something that could help him as a guide line was very important. In such a way, Cheru provided the researcher two C-60 cassettes of recorded songs and written notes about the performance and the setting. The songs are recorded at the shrine of Daggar, in Borana, which the researcher couldn't obtain otherwise.

The first round field trip also includes participations in two *Mäwliḍ* feasts sponsored by two people.¹⁸ These occasions held at individual's homes at Dessie and Kombolcha on July 24th and 26th respectively enabled the researcher to notice clearly detailed ceremonial acts, that he did not realize while working at the shrines. The occasions also provided some songs that enriched his collection.

Since the *Mäwliḍ* festival is not the only occasion of Islamic poetry, some other successive field trips were important to record songs that belong to other occasions and ceremonies. Thus, the second field trip took place between August and September, 1997. Doing field work during this particular time was very essential as it provides satisfactory results. The researcher therefore, collected many songs by participating in five *Wādajja* ceremonies. These *Wādajjas* were held at homes, at a nuptial house and at a *Wujjb* (Am. a communal ritual place) at Dessie, Kombolcha, Gobyya (in Ambassel) and Harago (Dessie Zureya). Two of the five sessions that were held in Dessie and Harago were aimed at divine healing while the collective rite at Gobyya aimed at divine rain-making. The other two ceremonies also had some purposes related to the passing of the year and the onset of the new and marriage rite in the nuptial house. The settings of the two *Wādajjas* were urban while the others rural. Those that belong to the rural setting were the rain making rituals at Gobayya, 10km., north east Haik and Harago, 15km., South-west Dessie on the road to Weraillu. The researcher believes that the diversity of the sites enabled him to obtain representative data. The researcher got the chance to participate in the *Čagula bet* (Amh. a nuptial) *Wādajja* by becoming one of the five best men, when a former friend of his got married. The access to do fieldwork

with peasants at Gobayya was also arranged by a friend¹⁹ who is an agricultural extension worker and has a good knowledge of the area.

The third field trip took place in January 1998, during the Holy Month of *Ramadan*. This time the fieldwork was carried out at Dessie and Kombolcha both at home and in the mosque. The researcher collected some poems through participant observations both at home and the mosque. Though the month of *Ramadan* is said to be the time of heightened devotion, collective rites and group gatherings take place once or twice a week. Such occasions may not necessarily involve a group drama. Thus, collecting texts in their natural settings required continued presence of the researcher among the community during the twenty-nine or thirty nights of *Ramadan*.

Two more occasions for Islamic oral poetry are the commemorative ceremonies of *Eid-al-Adhaa* and the *Eid-al-Fatir*. *Eid-al-Fatir* is the festival of the breaking of the fast of *Ramadan*, which occurs at the end of one complete lunar month. *Eid-al-Adhaa /arafa/* is a festival in commemorating prophet Ibrahiim's (Abraham's) obedience to God. For reasons that are similar to the other occasions collecting songs and poems in their natural settings was also essential in these festivals. Yet, despite its exceptional merits, doing fieldwork during the two occasions was not as easy a step as the researcher had wished it. This is mainly because of financial constraints that will be described elsewhere.

In order to include songs and poems that belong to these occasions, the researcher used recordings available on the market at Dessie. The criteria used to identify those specific songs that belong to the two festivals came from interviews made with two poets.

These are the facts regarding the methods employed in collecting songs/poems in their actual settings. The other related issue is concerned with the methods and techniques employed in collecting supplementary data. The data used in this research are collected using three means; tape-recording, photographing and note-taking. Tape recording is the method employed chiefly to collect poems/songs in their natural settings. Supporting data are also collected by using this means. During the course of the field research the researcher made a recordings of 35 C-60 Audio- cassettes on nine

occasions and ceremonies where he made participant observations. These recordings contain 34 songs and poem recitals, with varying degrees of length. The shortest full-length piece is a recital of a 64 - line poem while the longest is a song that has about 1072 lines including the six lines refrain that recur more than ten times.

The researcher's recording also included a number of passages and couplets that come to illustrate and justify a certain subject or to tell something important in relation to the subject at hand. Supporting one's idea or criticising other's action in verse is common in collective rites that involve a speech act. Sometimes, even in the case of *qissa*, a form of oral genre that deals with legendary stories, the narrator or the poet can shift into verse any minute. So, one has to stand by with all eyes and ears alert to record the verse when it comes.

Yet, to minimize the chance of missing the whole performance, which takes at least seven to nine hours it was necessary to record the whole session in order to understand the contextual meaning of the songs/poems. This indeed was a long and tedious task; sometimes a waste. The solution the researcher later devised was to record the whole event, except the scenes that involve the reading of *Qur'an* and other texts in Arabic. This technique added to the researcher's understanding of the belief system and enabled him to record a corpus of various oral genres that are related to the topic of the research. Regarding the techniques of recording the overall ceremonial performance, it becomes very distressing when one is not able to get even a single poem after making sweeping recordings of a five or six hours speech act and performance. This is the case especially for *Wādajjas* and regular collective rites that are held twice a week at the *Abagars* and poets' home.

It may be advantageous to the researcher if he can use a photo camera. He can obtain some important details, like the picture of the poet while he is singing, or the *Abagar* while he is giving his blessing, if he could manage to take a seat in front of his subjects. However, this is not always simple for no one has the right to take a seat without the approval of the *Abagar* (the leader of the ritual). Thus the researcher should be clever enough to convince the *Abagar*, so that he may allow him to take a seat that is reserved

for another person. Because it is forbidden to move from place to place, one only rarely gets a chance of using camera whenever there is a need.

In most cases, the natural setting is not convenient for note-taking for the simple reason that the room in which the ritual is held has no sufficient light. Thus, note-taking is mostly done along with field report the next morning while memories are still fresh. This does not help much to bring all the details the ritual involved. Thus the researcher should be alert to identify the missing details in order that he may pick them up on other similar occasions.

In some cases, the researcher's presence can negatively affect the performance in its natural setting. In the field the researcher met poets who were not willing to be recorded while they are singing. These poets may show their resentment either by raising an objection or suspend the singing performance by making themselves busy in telling *qissa* (Ar. story). Apologising for being spiritless is also another case even if it is common in all forms of artistic performance. The refusal of the poet has direct bearing on the presence of the researcher with a recording machine. Since the songs are the means of livelihood for some, poets are unwilling to give their poems to researchers freely.

Another issue in relation to the fieldwork is the search for local meanings and interpretations. Inquiring into the "local theories", the possible interpretations and the attitude of the participants towards the ritual practice is crucial as it leads the researcher to a deeper understanding of the religious phenomena. This is because these pieces of information help the researcher to reconstruct the meaning of the songs in relation to the context in which they are performed.

When the hadra ends, the participants as well as the poets do not feel comfortable to talk about the songs even when asked on the spot. Most people do not feel at ease during exclusive interviews or are not willing to have their speech recorded. Regarding the *ulama*, the situation seems to be complicated. Whenever they are asked about the ritual and the possible meaning of a certain poem, some *ulama* are ready to bring explanations that completely contradict with their practice. *Ulama*, especially from the

rural areas are aggressive when they are asked to give their comments. Reservations to discuss religious matters with a stranger as the researcher gradually learned is a recent phenomenon in Wallo. Most *ulama* are afraid of the physical and verbal attacks and threats of *Wahabiys*, who promote negative propaganda against “Unorthodox” Islam, including *Wäli* veneration, the *Wādajja* and other forms of rituals. Thus, information on the songs and the overall group drama mainly depends on participant observations and the limited number of informants, some of whom were not recorded in tapes.

There was also a considerable problem in looking for local meanings especially in defining and differentiating between sub-genres. The context and content variation of songs are not noticed by most people. Many people, including those who show steadfast adherence to the various rituals designate every song as “*Mänzuma*”, without any differentiations. Only the poets and the *ulama* (those who are willing to discuss the matter) are able to discuss the various poetic forms. Additional information is also drawn from songs /texts/. These texts inform the genre they belong to either at their beginning or at their end. These texts bring less burden than the others, as they are also well structured and exhibit most of the characteristics of the sub-genre they belong to. However, all the poems are not “self-conscious” and well structured. There are many poems that constitute elements from various genres. These texts which are great in number, and even some others which are well structured but involving experiences that most of the genres do not absorb, negate the authenticity of the local theory. These texts need more analytic explanation than mere descriptions.

When all is said and done, what is puzzling is the amount of time allocated to the fieldwork. The school of Graduate Studies of AAU approves a maximum of one-month fieldwork to conduct a research that involves recording songs, observing live performances and understanding the usage of poems. This is very difficult task that cannot be fulfilled within a short period of time. After doing all these, there is still a demand for more data in order to come to a sound conclusion. Thus the researcher used secondary data, drawn from two sources. The various B.A. theses available in the three archives (the Kennedy Library, IES and ILS) at Addis Ababa University help to make cross-checking on certain doubtful areas that the researcher could not obtain sufficient

texts on Tibabu (1984) and Muhammed (1994) were helpful. Some data are also obtained from an individual collector, Dr. Alula Pankhurst. Alula has provided me with a number of *ajam* texts, (text of poems written in Arabic script but in Amharic language) which he photocopied from some *ulama* from Wallo whom he met at the settlement area in Wälläga, some years ago. The reading of the *ajam* manuscripts, is done with the help of an assistant, who came from Wallo and lives in Addis Ababa since 1992.²⁰ This man, whom I met after I came back from the field trip is also a *Seik*. He is 48, and has a profound knowledge of the tradition. Currently he is working as a herbalist and often sits in open air selling traditional medicines of various kinds at Märkato around the Addis Ababa Grand Mosque.

1.3.2. Transcription and Translation

As it has been discussed in the previous section most of the data for this thesis is collected by employing the method of tape recording. In order to use audio recordings for literary analysis first they had to be converted into a written medium. Therefore, the researcher has decided to reproduce songs and poems in Ethiopic Alphabet which is a syllabic system of writing, much more economical than the IPA transcription.

Most of the transcription was made while the researcher was in the field. This was advantageous in that the researcher could seek help from the poets and other knowledgeable people. But for the duration of the fieldwork was very short some of the cassette tapes were transcribed with the help of assistants after the researcher came back to Addis Ababa. The task of reproducing poems in written medium is carried out on the basis of certain principles. Oral performances recorded in audio medium are naturally linear and are not arranged in a way words in the written medium do. Therefore the researcher has followed certain principles to reproduce the speech words from the audio recordings into the graphological convention of the written poetry. Firstly the arrangement of words and sentences into verse lines confirms to the pauses made by the singers / reciters themselves. Most songs/poems employed rhythmic patterns that can be used as signals for making the ends of lines. Because the poems of the songs are sung in the traditional melody a native Amharic speaker can easily

belief system and the ritual contexts related to it. In order to preserve the spirit and manner of the source language and to provide "natural and easy" translations which "make sense" to the English reader the present writer decided to contextualize the poems. Where the songs are to be cited it is felt appropriate to record them in the very language they have been expressed. Underneath or in front of the source words are directly printed the corresponding receptor words. The translation does not attempt at English verse, but simply parallel versions, as literal as possible and mostly following the original phrase - order, though some punctuations have been added for clarity.

In such a way there are few poems that have been translated with corresponding simplicity and compactness. But, there are cases where expanded and elaborated translations are found to be important. The Amharic poems, mostly in couplet, triplet or quatrain, are not only highly compact but also often culture - sensitive. These poems are reproduced in an expanded and elaborated form so that readers who are not familiar with the tradition of Amharic versification can understand and appreciate them. However, even in doing so translations are not felt to be helpful in the maintenance of the artistic beauty sensed in the original expression which are exclusively Amharic.

Therefore an attempt is made to contextualize the poems to be translated. The process of contextualization thus helps to arrange the message in to the syntax of the English language in the one hand and strives to retain source culture expressions by explaining the full meaning on the other. The explanation of the poems is carried out hand in hand with the discussion in the main body of the thesis rather than in separation in footnotes. Thus, when a poem is cited, its context and meaning is described. This the researcher believes will minimize the difficulty in perceiving the sense and the spirit of the Amharic poems in the English translation.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 SOCIAL CONTEXT AND THE RITUAL PROCESS

2.1. Occasions of Poetry Recitals

In order to comprehend the meaning, function and performance of a certain poetic genre a detailed account of its social context is essential. Considering context is also necessary as it brings information about the composition of Poetry and its effect on the audience.

Recital and performance of Islamic poetry in Wallo takes place anytime throughout the year in communal and group worshipping occasions. Collective rites that involve the entire Muslim community such as the festivals of *Eid-al-Adhaa*, *Eid-al-Fatir*, the *Ramadan* nights and the *Mawlid* can be considered as formal occasions where recital of oral poetry takes place.

2.1.1 *Eid-al-Adha* which is locally called “*Arafa*”, is the festival which commemorates prophet Ibrahim's obedience to God and his sacrifice; and also the steadfastness of his son, Ismaa'ill. This festival takes place on the 10th month of Islamic Calendar (*Dhul Hijjah*).

2.1.2 *Eid-al-Fatir* literally means the festival of the breaking of the fast of *Ramadan*. The festival occurs on the first day of *Shawwal*, the 12th month of Islamic Calendar. The celebration of the two festivals usually takes place before noon at the communal *Masjid* (mosque) or at a shrine on a grand scale. The ceremony involves group prayers and readings of some chapters from the *Qur'an*. A large portion of the ceremonies is devoted to group dramas expressed in the form of group chanting and dancing. Various songs that extol *Allah* and recount the virtues of the prophets and the heroic deeds of early Muslim heroes are recited both in Amharic and Arabic.

2.1.3 *Ramadan*: The holy month of *Ramadan*, in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar is the month of fasting. The month of *Ramadan* is also believed to be the month in which the *Qur'an* was revealed to the Prophet. Thus, the 29 or 30 nights of

Ramadan are the time of heightened devotion among the Wallo Muslims. Most Muslims hold *Du'a* (Ar. call upon God) every night at the nearby Shrine or at their homes. Friends visit each other and have group prayers that involve chewing *Cat*, burning incense, making coffee and reciting poetry all of which almost have much to do with all elements of the *Wādajja*, which will be discussed some where else in this chapter.

2.1.4 *Māwliḍ*: The largest and perhaps the most important religious festival for the Wallo Muslims is *Māwliḍ*, the birthday of Prophet Muhammed during the Islamic month of *Rabi al-Awwal*. *Māwliḍ* in most parts of Wallo is celebrated at shrines, and is a period for *Ziyyara*. Thus, during the week of *Māwliḍ*, all the shrines at Wallo entertain a large number of people coming from different areas. Therefore, in addition to the religious purpose it serves, the festival of *Māwliḍ* provides an occasion for social interaction to people from diverse social backgrounds. *Seik* Ahmed Abubu has the following to say about the alluring *bārāka* (Ar. divine grace) of Sharef-al-Din Ibrahim of Dāgar in Borana, and his Shrine:

ሀድራቸው እንደ ሀሽር
 ሲመጣ ተሁሉ አገር
 ተጎጆም ተበጌምድር
 ተሸዋ ተዳር አገር
 ተጅማ ተባህር ዳር
 ታሩሲ እስተ ሀረር ።

Your *hadra* is like a swarm of bees
 as men and women come from far
 and near;
 from Gojjam and Bagemdir
 from Showa and from the frontier
 from Jimma and Bahirdar
 from Arsi upto Harrar.

Though poetry is not accountable for providing statistical data, the above illustrative lines of *Seik* Ahmed Abubu reflect the reality of the captivating nature of the Shrine at Dagar. They are also true for most Shrines in Wallo. Throughout the year, especially in the Week the celebration of *Māwliḍ* takes place, most shrines, attract thousands of pilgrims from the various corners of Ethiopia, as well as from some neighbouring countries. For instance at the annual celebrations of *Māwliḍ* at Getta in July 1997, we met pilgrims coming from Saudi Arabia, Djibouti, Asmara and Asseb in addition to those coming from the surrounding area and distant places in the region.. However, the number of pilgrims coming from Addis Ababa, Harrar, Jima, Mizan Tafari, Gojjam and Gonder, are much more than those coming from the neighbouring countries.

The annual *Mäwliḍ* celebration at the shrines attracts people not only from diversified areas, but also pilgrims from different ethnic backgrounds. At the annual *Mäwliḍ* celebration at Getta in July 1997, we met Amharas, Oromos, Argobas, Tigres and Afars coming from the nearby towns and villages and distant places. The common denominator for pilgrims from different ethnic groups participating at the festival seems to be *Wäli* Worship. Although the chief aim of *Mäwliḍ* celebration at the shrine is commemoration and recollection in order to fix the birth of the “last prophet” and its significance, it is closely connected with seeking the mediation of a certain *Wäli* in problems associated with sickness, infertility, poverty and the like. For this reason, Christians too perform pilgrimage to the Muslim shrines on the annual celebration of *Mäwliḍ* and other times throughout the year. A certain poet² in praise of the magnetic nature of some shrines and the devotion Christians show for the respective *Awlaya*, whose *bäräka* is believed to have inhabited their shrines says:

እንደምነው አና እንደምነው ዳና
እንደምነው ገታ አድባርና አውጋፋ
አሚመጀንበት አስላም ክርስቲያኑ።

How is the shrine at *Ana*, how is
also *Dana*
How is the *adbar* and *awgar*³ of
Getta in which both Muslims
and Christians make
supplications.

Likewise, *Seik* Ahmed Abubu in praise of Sharef-al-Din Ibrahim of Dagar, says:

ክርስቲያን ሁሉ ባንቱ ጠበቀ
ኮርማ እየነዳ እየታጠቀ።

All Christians adhere and hold on to you
And fully equipped come to your shrine,
driving bulls of offering.

The expressions of the two poets, signify a reality which is common to all the shrines. As has been discussed earlier in the first chapter people in Wallo are latent on religious matters. Many Christians exercise non-Christian practices and do perform pilgrimage to Muslim shrines; Worship Muslim *Awlaya*, make supplications and seek the intercession of the *Awlaya* whenever they faced hardships. Therefore, the Shrines entertain thousands of pilgrims from all social classes from near and far. Several hundreds of peasants from nearby and distant places, students, teachers, housewives,

office workers, bar-ladies, merchants and factory workers form the near by towns who are Christian and Muslim participate in the ceremony enthusiastically.

Generally, the motive for visiting shrines is to seek the *Wāli's* favour or help. It is believed that, by visiting the place of the *Wāli*, the faithful will benefit from the *bār āka* of the *Wāli*. However, the purpose of pilgrimage, and the specific kind of help sought may differ from individual to individual to a certain extent. The above mentioned poet has the following to say about the essence and purpose of pilgrimage. He says:

የርስዎ ሀድራ ምን አለው መሰል
 ብዙው ይመጣል ከደዌው ሊሸር
 ብዙው ሰው ደሞ ልጅ ሰጡኝ ይላል
 ብዙው ሰው ደሞ አስገኜኝ ይላል
 ቀሚሰም የሚል አዛው ይለብሳል
 ድሃም ዝም ብሎ ማእደት ይበላል
 አክሱም ትድረት⁴ አቅኑልኝ ይላል
 አኩለ ጥላት⁵ ገልግሉኝ ይላል
 ለሁሉም ያረጉሉታል
 በልቡ ያለው አስቲደርሰ

Your *hadra* is matchless
 Many come seeking cure for serious illnesses
 And many request for having children
 And many quest for prosperity
 He who hunts investiture will be granted
 The poor would also get food free of charge from your banquet
 Some others go in quest of success in life and marriage
 Others plead to be saved from foes
 And you respond to everyone who appeals
 And supplicate to his heart's satisfaction
 As for his supplications.

As the above lines enumerate, the case of fertility, rapid recovery from sickness and material success are the most dominant purposes of pilgrimage. Besides these, seeking for alms and business are other important motives of pilgrimage in Wallo (Hussien, 1990:63-65), as well as in other parts of Ethiopia (Alula, 1994b:948-49). Shrines as sacred sites often attract men and women who have physical and mental sickness. People possessed by the *jinn* are brought to shrines by their families because it is believed that the mysterious power of the *Wāli* could exorcize the evil spirit. Likewise lepers as well as people suffering from mental disorder (insanity) and those possessed by the *Zar* also come to the shrine seeking for cure.

The most important reason of visiting shrines in the case of women is the problem of infertility. It is common to see a number of women who are crawling, rolling and crying before the tomb of the *Wāli* seeking the *Wāli*'s assistance in order to have children. Seeking the aid of the *Wāli* to achieve success in learning or in occupation and betterment of material life is also one of the most common motives of pilgrims. According to informants in rare cases some people perform pilgrimage in order to be blessed by the power and authority of the *Wāli*. On the other hand, a number of pilgrims come to the shrine to express their gratitude (and gratuity) to the *Wāli* for fulfilled intercession.

Making supplications as well as expressing gratitude for intended or fulfilled intercession of the *Wāli* is conveyed through the act of reclining one's body or by virtual appearance in front of the tomb,⁶ where the remains of the *Wāli* are laid to rest, in the Shrine proper. At some shrines, for example at Getta, women are not allowed to enter the shrine proper, and they perform the ritual at the gate by kissing the wall. The act of prostration and kissing the wall signify love and respect of the devotee to the respective *Wāli*, and this very ritual is considered as actual visitation. At the end of the actual moment of visitation at Getta, a *Seik* offers a handful of *Wārqaḥār* (Am. gold soil) for each pilgrim. Every one has the sacred soil on a piece of cloth or on a hand kerchief free of charge. According to informants,⁷ the sacred soil which is extracted from the *Wāli*'s tomb is believed to be panacea for all ills.

Apart from the above motives, traders and beggars perform pilgrimage. As Hussien (1990:65) reported about beggars at the celebration of *Māwliḍ* at Jama Nigus, likewise at Getta there were a number of beggars coming to seek alms and to share from the superabundance of food. Tradesmen from nearby towns also erect temporary market place and sell varieties of items such as bottled soft drinks, tea, sugar, bread, coffee beans, match, incense, sandal wood, dry cell, fire wood, bambu and *Cat*. It is difficult to generalize whether the beggars and the tradesmen have other spiritual motives or not. Thus; Alula's (1994b:947) conclusion that "at a given pilgrimage there may be people coming with different motives and the same person may be

coming for a combination of reasons” is a valid assessment regarding the beggars and the tradesmen during the annual celebration of *Māwliḍ* festival in Wallo.

Pilgrimage is associated with petitions and vows. Pilgrims whose petitions were fulfilled with the *Wāli*’s intercessory power, as well as those who may be coming for the first time usually bring with them a certain type of *hadiya* or *niya* (Ar. gifts). *Seik* Ahmed Abubu has the following lines to advice those who haven’t been to a pilgrimage

ሂደህ ዘይረው ሳትታመም
በእርጅና ጊዜ ሳትዳከም
ሀድያም ይዘህ ብርም በግም
ልብን አጥርቶ በባዶ አጅም
እሱ እማይረዳው ፍጥረት የለም ።

Visit him while you are healthy
Before you become weak due to
old age
Bring a gift with you, both cash
and sheep.
Come to him even without a gift
with a clean heart;
Since there is none that he would
not help.

Gifts to be offered on visiting are not restricted to specific kinds of items. However, as pilgrims often make vows to give an offering to the shrine if their problems are solved, the quantity as well as the kind of gift a pilgrim offers depends upon his/her promise. Common gifts include coffee, incense, sugar, sandal wood, perfume, *Cat* and cash. Pilgrims from the surrounding and from the distant places also bring a he-goat or a he-sheep or a bull or a rooster to be sacrificed. I am told⁸ that two pilgrims (a male and a female) have offered two vehicles, while other two individuals provided pipe water and electricity to the shrine at Gatta. Some pilgrims also offer modest gifts such as a Persian mat or a microphone. There are also men and women who promise to give service in the form of labour either by becoming permanent life-time *Kahadamis* (Ar. servant) or by giving services during the preparation of the annual feast of *Māwliḍ*.

Presenting gifts to the shrine is a very important aspect of pilgrimage for it gives the pilgrim the chance to make formal visiting to the custodian of the Shrine. The custodian is seated at a certain place, in most Shrines, besides the Shrine proper on a platform receiving the pilgrims, which are considered as his guests. When the pilgrims hand over the *niya* they receive blessings and kiss the hand of the custodian. Kissing

the hand of the custodian is taken as a physical medium through which the blessings of the respective *Wāli* will be transposed to the devotee.⁹

On arrival to the shrine the first task to be accomplished by pilgrims is to look to a convenient or unoccupied space to spend the night. Since most pilgrims travel in groups, consisting of members of the same family, friends and neighbours, they will pitch their camp from a cloth partition or sit in a circle under the trees for the night. Pilgrims who have no acquaintances can easily become friends with other pilgrims. The *ulama* and *dārāsas* from the surrounding areas assemble in the guest houses or in the mosque together with some townsmen. Women folks, especially those who are possessed by the *Zar* also come together to practice the ritual dancing and other related ceremonies of the *Zar*.

The celebration proper or the main event begins early in the evening and proceeds upto day break. The ritual, which involves several interrelated activities for the whole night is dominated by conspicuous consumption of *Čat* and has all the earmarks of the *Wādajja*.

2.1.5 The *Wādajja* *Wādajja* is a multi-purpose “formal group session” largely practised amongst Muslims and Christians of Wallo. The *Wādajja* ritual, however designated by different terms, is commonly practised by Muslims in Darra in North Shawa, Harrar, Worrota in Gonder, Arsi and Addis Ababa (Tibabu: 1984, Yosef; 1989, Umer: 1990, Muhammed: 1994). Despite variations in terminology, the basic elements and activities the ritual involves such as group prayers, collective chants and ceremonial consumption of *Cat* and coffee mark notable similarities. In all those areas the session also serves both religious and social purposes. The *Wādajja* ritual concerns all activities in the life of the people. However, divine rain-making, healing the sick, reconciliation among households, treating friends and celebrating the *qutib* when one builds a new house or opens a new business organization are most common functions of the *wādajja*. For the ritual has such multi-dimentional social function, there are several kinds of *wādajja* in Wallo. The following are the most frequently practised varieties of *wādajja* in urban as well as rural areas in Wallo.

*Dubärti*¹¹ *wädajja* - This variant of *wädajja* is held under the *wujjb* with collective prayers for fending off environmental and natural disasters. Outbreaks of plagues or epidemic is often the cause for holding *Dubärti Wädajja* at a communal level. Malaria, chickenpox, and typhoid are recurrent diseases in Wallo, which may reach plague proportions and cause large mortality. This epidemic is believed to occur due to the engagement of the *qutib* or the *adbär* and is considered as a form of punishment. Therefore, in order to avoid the wrath of the *qutib* by acts of expiation and purification, women who have reached the menopause or (the *Dubärti*) practise *wädajja*. The rites and prayers of supplication usually involve a group of women from one village and may take place under the *adbär* tree or the *wujjb*. On the ritual a mush of boiled cereals (*nifro*), unleavened bread (*qitā*) with pestled Niger seed (*nug*), coffee and *čat* are ceremonially consumed.

Another common motive of *Dubärti wädajja* is the case of fertility. A newly married couple may sponsor *wädajja* in order to have a child. The case with fertility is believed to have a relation with the *Wuqabi* (Am. personal protective spirit) of women, and the ritual is taken as an initiation to motherhood. The ceremony involves, according to informants, complex interrelated rituals which are exclusive secrets among women folks. Generally, males above the age of seven do not have access to all forms of *Dubärti Wädajja*. *Dubärti Wädajja*, both at the *Wujjb* and at home, takes place in the afternoon.¹²

Dubärti wädajja is also often held at home for a safe delivery of an infant. The ritual may take place a few days earlier or at the expected week of delivery, which comes at the end of the eighth month or at the beginning of the ninth month of pregnancy. In relation to safe delivery, the *wädajja*, also serves as a means of making peace with the *Wuqabi* of the woman to minimize birth pangs and to protect the new-born child from being spoiled to death.

Čagula Wädajja:- *Čagula wädajja* is another form of *wädajja* held at the nuptial house (*Čagula bet*). The ritual could be held a few days after the wedding day. As the first three or four days are occupied with various activities and social occasions, the

wādajja is mostly held at weekends. The people who take part in this occasion are the newly married couple, the bridesmaids and the best men. Friends and relatives or elderly people may be invited to the ritual. The purpose of this *Wādajja* is to wish the couple a life of bliss.

Liqā Wādajja:- Like *Dubārti Wādajja*, *liqā Wādājja* could be held at home or under the communal ritual place (*the Wujjib*). It is the most common and the most formal kind of *wādajja* in Wallo. *Liqā wādajja* held at the *Wujjib* involves the participation of the whole community. Every one should take part in the preparation of the banquet. The purpose of *liqā wādajja* held at the *wujjib* is often related to drought or environmental crises affecting harvests and soil fertility. A similar ritual also takes place at the end of the farming cycle, in October, as a celebration in honour of the guardian spirit of the locality which gives a good harvest.

Sometimes *liqā wādajja* can be used as a communal rite for expressing social resentments and grievances against the divinity. In such a case social protest is expressed in a long and complete silence. For instance, *liqā wādajja* intended to express social protest was held at Gobyya in Ambassel in July 1977. During this time the area of Ambassel was affected by drought as the seasonal winter rain was delayed. In order to make divine rain, communal rites were performed twice, light brown (*qāy*) and white oxen were sacrificed each time, but the *qutib* did not respond to the communal supplication till the middle of July. Thus, another *Wādajja* was held to express social grievances in the absence of speech action. Therefore, except for *Cat*, the other elements, such as burning incense, boiling coffee, singing and ritual dancing, which are common to any *Wādajja*, were totally avoided and every participant kept silent for the whole afternoon.

Liqā wādajja can also be held in individual homes. A family often sponsors *wādajja* when one of its members or an animal, especially an ox, is sick. Besides the rite of healing, installation rites such as inauguration of new residences or private business organizations are expressed through *liqā wādajja*. Businessmen also often sponsor *wādajjas* in order that the *adbar* will help them to have good business and keep away the spiteful.

All these show that in Wallo, *wādajja* is associated with all problems such as sickness, famine, destitution, death - in short, all that endangers life. And it is the rite in which some stain is removed and the correct order of things is re-established. The following popular stanza of a poem expresses best the primary themes and purposes of *wādajja*:

ኹግር አለ ሲሉኝ አልፈራውም አኔ፣ አንደምን ፈርቼ
 ሕመም አለ ሲሉኝ አልፈራውም አኔ፣ አንደምን ፈርቼ
 ኹጋር አለ ሲሉኝ አልፈራውም አኔ፣ አንደምን ፈርቼ
 ለዚህ ሁሉ ሀጅት ታሉ ወንድሞቼ
 እፈታቸዋለሁ አነሱን ጠርቼ ።

When I am told that there is hardship, I will not be terrified,
 Why should I be terrified?

When I am told that there is sickness, I will not be terrified,
 Why should I be terrified?

When I am told that there is famine, I will not be terrified,
 Why should I be terrified?

All these are nothing When ever brothers are around.

I will summon a *Wādajja* and undo them all at once.

Wādajja, as the above verse stanza signifies, is a group session, or a meeting of ‘brothers’ seeking divine help on behalf of a “brother” or the entire community. The word “brothers/ brother” in the context of this poem, as well as from the believers’ point of view, has nothing to do with a specific lineage, family or blood relationship. Yet the word points to the membership of an informal voluntary religious group united by devotion and a transcendental religious group. Thus, people living in a certain area in Wallo, especially those who believe in *Wādajja*, consider themselves as brothers, belonging to one spiritual lineage. When one of the members of the group faces a problem he may summon the *Jama’ah* (Ar. congregation) together to call upon the divinity. It is widely believed that collective and group supplication facilitates the search for divine help or the avoidance of divine wrath.

The minimum number of people a *Jama’ah* consists of is three, and the maximum number depends upon the economic status of the host/hostess who sponsors the

Wādajja. But five and seven are common to most *Wādajjas*. The reason for preferring an odd number of participants is to leave room for the holy spirit, that makes its presence at one point in the ceremonial process.

Though there is no strict procedure, usually the first person the hostess invites to the *Wādajja* is the *Abagar*, (Amh. a merger of two words, 'aba' which means father and 'agar', country or locality. Literally "the village father", and the *Abagars* claim they belong to the *Jābārtiy*, who, according to oral traditions, are Arabian descendants and the first Muslim settlers in Wallo).¹³ The consent of the *Abagar* is very important because he is an authorized person in such a rite. The *Abagar*, as a social and spiritual leader, has to accept the request, or seek to know the other men that the hostess intends to invite to the *wādajja*. If he suspects bad behaviour or has personal arguments or is not at ease with the presence of someone, the *Abagar* may propose some other men be invited instead. Once the hostess has the consent of the *Abagar* on the people invited, then the day will be fixed.

Customarily, there is no payment the hostess is expected to pay for the congregation. But in some towns hostesses who have the means offer their guests some types of gift, in cash or in kind, on departure (after the *Wādajja* is held).

Wādajja can take place on any one of the week days. But Sundays and Mondays are the least preferred to hold *wādajja*. The reason for the preference of one day to the other, according to informants,¹⁴ is related to *Wāli* veneration. Almost every day of the week is dedicated to a certain *Wāli*, with the exception of Sunday and Monday. Sunday is a resting day, for it is a day God completed his creation and took rest. Monday is the day prophet Muhammed was born. Since the status of the *Awlaya* is lower than that of the Almighty and His last messenger, the two days are not named after the name of any *wali*.

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. <i>ināniyā</i> (Tuesday) | : | the day of Nur Hussien and the day of
womens' hadra |
| 2. <i>Jilani</i> (Wednesday) | : | the day of Abdal-Qadir al Jilani,
<i>Sultan</i> of the <i>Awlaya</i> , <i>Emir</i> of
God, light of God.
the day of the Lord of Borana (Ya |

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 3. <i>Kāmes</i> (Thursday) : | <i>Boranaw Geta</i> , Sheref al-Din Ibrahim (Sharafadin) |
| 4. <i>Jumiaa</i> (Friday) : | Islamic Sabaath; also the day of Said Bussera of Getta. |
| 5. <i>Kādir</i> (Saturday) : | the day of Sayd <i>inna</i> Kadir, also the day of <i>Čaločč</i> ¹⁵ (the Lord of Calli in Ambassel) |

Commemorating a *Wāli* and holding *Wādajja* on specific days of the week is common practice in Wallo. Most of the days of the week are dedicated to various *Awlaya* and people in different parts of Wallo usually identify themselves with one or two *Awlaya* and show strict adherence to them. *Wāli* worship in general seems to be a localized practice at large. Accordingly, every locality has one or two favourite *Awlaya* to celebrate regularly. People at Dessie and Warreilu celebrate Wednesday and Saturday, whereas Thursday and Saturday are the days for holding *Wādajja* in Ambassel. People at Kombolcha and the surrounding areas celebrate Friday night whereas peasants around Gerado in Dessie Zurya, Warahimano and Borana worship Sharafadin, the Lord of Borana, whose hadra at Dagar also takes place every Thursday.

The following triplet by Eshetu Argaw recorded on a *Wādajja* ritual at Dessie expresses the relation of *Wādajja* with *Wāli* worship and the purpose sought from it (*Wādajja*).

ሸረኛን ምቀኛን አኛም አወቅንበት	We now know how to deal with the
ሮብ ለጅላኔ እየነገርንበት	mischievous and the wicked
ቅዳሜ ለክድር እየነገርንበት ።	On Wednesdays we cry out to Jillani
	On Saturdays we appeal to Kadir.

The above lines express one of the chief functions of *Wādajja*. In Wallo, a *Wāli* is considered both as a mediator between God and man and as a guardian spirit that protects and guides the believer from any harm that is intended by an enemy or that happens accidentally.

In short, *Wādajja* as a medium of seeking divine help has much in common with all Islamic festivals and rites. It is a rite that expresses purification and expiation of guilt

like the *Du'aa* of *Ramadan* nights. It aims to fix great deeds of *Awlaya* and their significance in mind like the *Māwliid* and the *Arafa* festivals, and of course, it is the medium of expressing all human needs for divine intervention. Besides having some purposes that are common to other holy rites, *Wādajja* involves a ceremonial act that most Islamic rites practise in which words, gestures, and objects are employed to do things.

All collective rites and occasions such as *Eid-al-Fatir*, *Arafa*, *Māwliid* and *Wādajja* may involve a particular ceremonial process called *hadra*. *Hadra* constitutes a series of ceremonial acts that are definite, structured, and repeatable rather than spontaneous. *Hadra* serves as a channel for expressing joy or grief or it can help to facilitate meditation. *Hadra* embodies five ritual elements: *Ġat*, coffee, burning incense and group drama, and through traditional practice each element of the ritual becomes charged with meaning. A description of the overall ceremonial process in relation to the role of the participants who take part in the drama is certainly important to understand the performance and function of Islamic oral poetry and the influence it has on the audience. The description below is largely based on participant observations carried out, intermittently from July 1997 upto January 1998, in Wallo.

2.2 *Hadra*: The Ceremonial process

As *hadra* is a ceremonial process of visible, tangible, and repeatable patterns of action through which the holy spirit is drawn and focused, it needs to be set in places generally believed to be sacred. Shrines, and *Wujjbs* therefore, are self-contained and contrived worlds that invite to a vision and experience of holiness and sacred cosmos. *Hadra* also takes place at home and is primarily corporate. Shrines and *wujjbs* as play grounds for sacred drama performed by a large number of devotees need no special arrangements, for they are already believed to be inhabited by the holy. But, the home where a *hadra* could be held must be arranged and furnished in a way different from the usual, as it involves stepping out of the ordinary in order to entertain a holy presence.

The room where *hadra* takes place should be clean and clear with no furniture in it. The floor may be plastered with dung and covered with freshly cut lush grass. The floor where the participants sit may also be covered with a sheepskin or a mat or a mattress. One end of the room may also be partitioned off for the women to sit in or to be used as a place for making coffee.

In a *hadra* men and women do not sit together. Usually women, including the one making coffee, will gather on the other end of the room beside the curtain. Separation between men and women according to informants,¹⁶ is regarded necessary due to the stimulating effect of *Cat* and the animating climate of the ceremony. However the rule is rarely observed as the chance of misbehaving is becoming rare.

The participants have to purify themselves by a ceremonial washing (ablutions) before they go and sit where the *hadra* takes place. As water is a natural symbol of purification, ablutions symbolically suggest the act of cleansing from guilt or the expiation of sin.

The white long dress the participants wear in *hadra* known as “*Jäläbia*”, or the white cotton toga known as “*gabi*” also signify physical and spiritual cleanliness in preparation for communion with the holy. The white muslin or cap worn on the head also conveys a similar symbolic meaning. Other objects that the participants bring with them that have something to do with the sacred drama are rosaries and scriptures. A rosary (string of beads) a *Wäli* or a *Madih* or the *Abagar* brings with him any time is a prominent tool in Islamic devotional practice, and is also related to the *tariqa*, an initiation to the mystical order. The scriptures are also useful, as the sacred drama (*hadra*) involves recitations from the *Qur'an*.

The *hadra* starts early in the evening, around eight o'clock, after the participants have had their dinner.



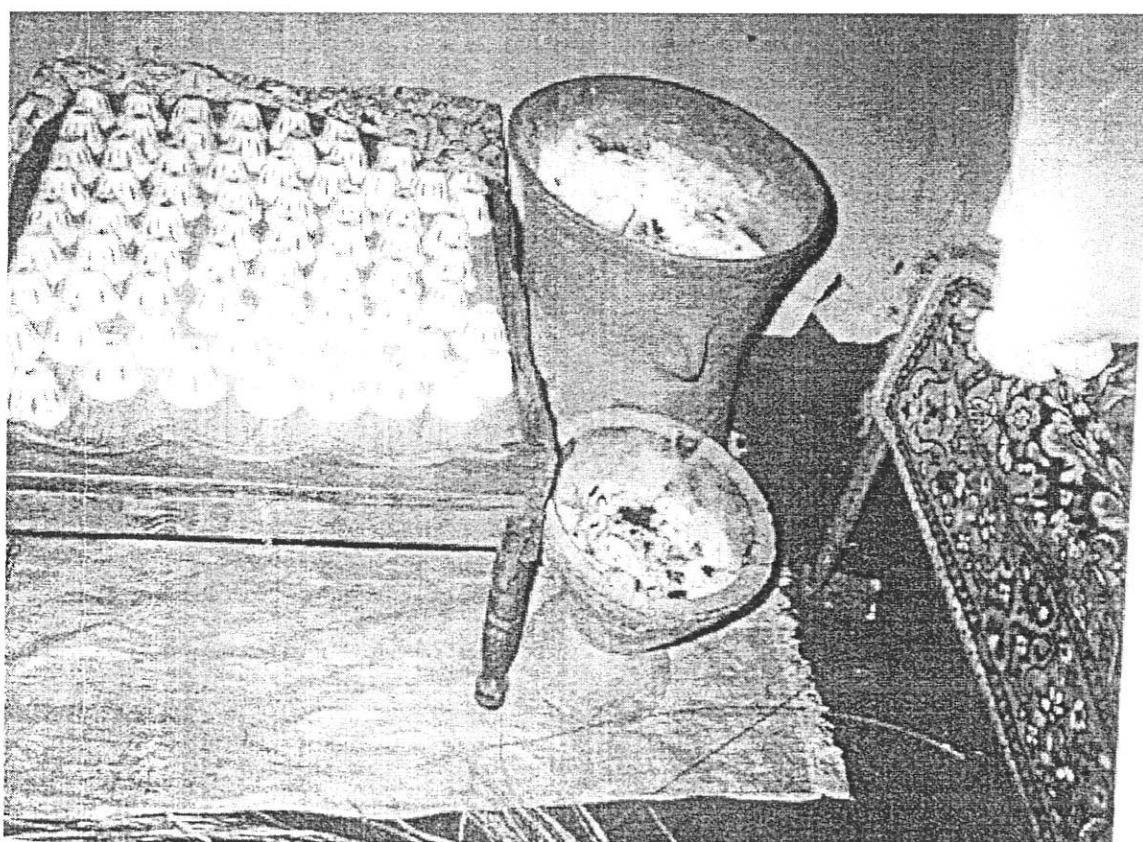
Hajji Hussein telling Qissa



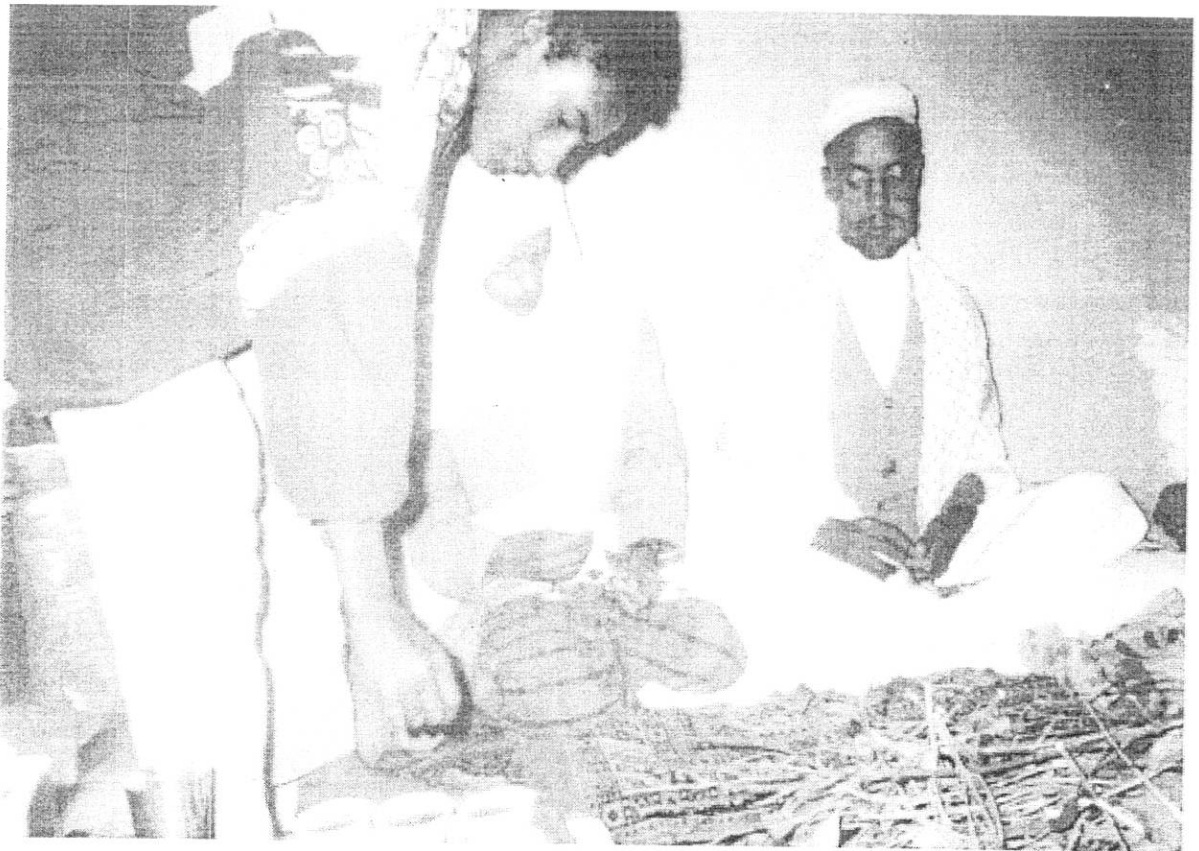
In the hadra (a front view)



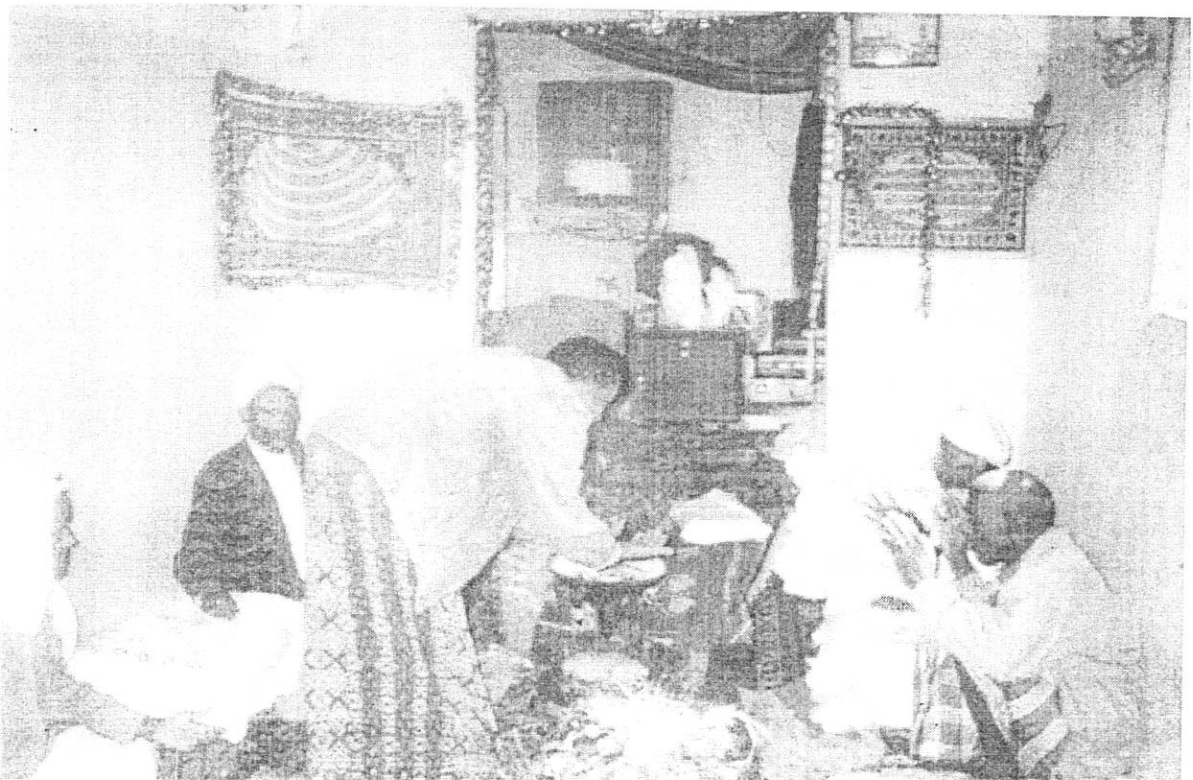
Participants drinking coffee



The Rākābot and the Gaččas



A Kahadam serving coffee



The Abagar giving his blessings to the arawačča

In every *hadra* there is one person the *Abagar* responsible for leading the ceremonial activities. The *Abagar* gets his title genealogically. The title serves in a particular village where his father and grand fathers used to live and where he is living now. He cannot claim to bear the title out of his living place. In *hadra* where there is no *Abagar*, any member of the group, preferably the one who is the oldest can act as *Abagar* for a particular session. The *Abagar* in a *hadra* formally opens the ceremony, gives his *blessings*, *distributes cat* and supervises the overall ceremonial process. He may also invite other members to recite the *Qur'an*, to narrate moralizing tales or to sing religious songs. Principally, neither the *Wāli* nor the *Madih* has the right to give his blessings or to recount his tales unless he gets the permission of the *Abagar*. Yet because the *Abagar* needs not be an educated person like the *Wāli* and the *Madih*, he may not be better than a figure head restricted only to giving blessings.

In a *hadra* there is a man or a woman *kahadam* (Ar. servant) who prepares the coffee. In *Wādajja* usually the one who will be *kahadam* is the host or his wife. In ceremonies involving large numbers of participants there are more than one *kahadams*, carrying out various tasks like preparing coffee or serving *cat* from the *Abagar* to the attendants. On communal ceremonies like the *Māwliḍ hadra* at shrines serving as *kahadam* is voluntary or optimal. People make vows to offer labour services on the other *Māwliḍ hadra* if their petitions are fulfilled. I am told that all the *kahadams* at the Shrine Getta were volunteers, who recovered from physical or mental sickness.¹⁷

The *hadra* begins with a coffee ceremony. The *kahadam* roasts the coffee beans until they become dark brown and then puts the pan on the ground. He/she, then puts the *jābāna* (Amh. coffee pot) on the hearth. On *Māwliḍ hadra* pilgrims bring with them some important domestic appliances such as *jābāna*, coffee cups and water pitchers, but can ask for some objects like a pan and *Muqācca* (Amh. mortar for pounding coffee beans) from the shrines store house.

By the time the water in the coffee pot boils, the *kahadam* finishes grinding the coffee beans. She then puts the coffee powder into the boiling water in the coffee pot and waits for some minutes. By the time the coffee is ready to be served, she takes the coffee pot off the stove and waits until the coffee simmers out. When the coffee boils, the *kahadam* puts some burning charcoal on the *gacca* (Amh. incense burner) and adds some incense over it. Then, the burning incense together with the aroma of the coffee fills the air and the place becomes inspiring. The *rākābot* (Amh. a small flat wooden table on which demitasses are put in rows) that assembles number of *sines* (Amh. coffee cups) is placed in front of the coffee pot.

Once more putting some burning charcoal on the *gacca* and adding some incense over it, the *kahadam* stretches out her hand and bows down in front of the *Abagar* saying, “*Abol jāba*” which literally means “first round coffee service is ready”.

At this moment the *Abagar* starts giving his blessings. In wallo blessings are the most important aspects of any religious and social ceremony. When someone gives something or does something important the receiver expresses his thanks with blessings.

What makes the moment of blessings interesting is its dramatic performance. The words the *Abagar* utters and the physical movements he and the others make are in perfect harmony and make the group performance impressive and attractive. Once the *Abagar* starts uttering words, he continues pouring out his blessings without difficulty. When he gives out his blessings he continuously moves both hands. His right hand seems to take something from his left hand and moves around as in sowing seeds. The *kahadam* and the other participants consecutively say, “Amen! Amen!” with a tone of approval to one’s satisfaction, by opening and closing both of their hands as if they are receiving something.

አበጋር	መርሃባ አላህ ይበልን	<i>Abagar</i>	O.k.! Let Allah be with us
ታዳሚ	አሜን	Audience	Amen
አበጋር	መሰብሰባችንን አላህ ለክዳር ያርገው	<i>Abagar</i>	Let Allah Make our gathering for good
ታዳሚ	አሜን	Audience	Amen
አበጋር	ቅመው ተጠቀሙን አገኙ	<i>Abagar</i>	Let us benefit from chewing

	እምነባል አ ላህ ያርገን		the <i>Cat</i> , Let Allah make us the example of his mercy
ታዳሚ	አሜን	Audience	Amen
አበጋር	ጥረያችን ከፈጣሪ ይሰማ	<i>Abagar</i>	Let our call get answer from Allah
ታዳሚ	አሜን	Audience	Amen
አበጋር	ከዳም አንቺም ሃጃሽ ይሙላ	<i>Abagar</i>	<i>Kahadam</i> , may your supplication (need) be fulfilled.
ታዳሚ	አሜን	Audience	Amen
አበጋር	የሰይድ ቡሽራ አርዳታ ዛሬ ይድረሰሽ	<i>Abagar</i>	May the help of Said Bushira be with you
ታዳሚ	አሜን	Audience	Amen
አበጋር	የወለድሽው ይደግ	<i>Abagar</i>	May your child grow healthy
ታዳሚ	አሜን	Audience	Amen
አበጋር	ያሳደግሽው ይባረክ	<i>Abagar</i>	May the child you raised be blessed
ታዳሚ	አሜን	Audience	Amen
አበጋር	አዎ! እንግዲህ እኛም ጥረያችን ዛሬ ይሰማ	<i>Abagar</i>	Yes! May our call be answered to day
ታዳሚ	አሜን	Audience	Amen
አበጋር	አገሩን አማን	<i>Abagar</i>	May the country be peaceful
ታዳሚ	አሜን	Audience	Amen
አበጋር	ሹሙን አዲል ያርግልን	<i>Abagar</i>	May Allah make the officials just to us
ታዳሚ	አሜን	Audience	Amen

Blessings involve all the activities and concerns of life. The *Abagar* may wish success, long life, health, peace or victory to the host/ hostess. He also curses the enemy, or the one who is in negative terms with the hostes. In order to bless somebody cursing another person is a common practice. Usually blessing is also directed to good harvest, peace and security, a fair governing system and the like which concern the community or the country at large. The *Abagar* or the one who gives his blessings in wishing any good or cursing the enemy can use two modes of presentation. He may act as a channel through which the divinity expresses his will /wrath (in order to condemn the evil) or he may invoke the name of a certain *Wāli*, so that the *Wāli* helps the devotee. In any case the act of blessing calls for a suspension of disbelief. In order to enter fully a rite, the hostess or the participants must be able to suspend the ordinary and conventional.

When the performance of blessing is over, the *kahadam* takes her place and fills out each cup with coffee from the *jäbäna*. Then, beginning from the *Abagar* she serves every member and finally takes her share. In Wallo coffee is served without or with salt and sugar is less customary among the rural people.

Traditionally every coffee ceremony has three rounds. After the *abol* or *awol* (Ar. locally first round coffee) is served, almost an equal amount of water is added over the residue in the *jäbäna* and is boiled to be served again. The second round boiled coffee is locally called *tona* (Oro. next, second) and the third round “*bäräka*”. *Bäräka* in this context means “enough”, “fulfilled” and foreshadows the success of the *hadra*. When the *bäräka* is over, the *Abagar* once more gives his blessings in a manner similar to the first one.

The first round coffee ceremony is succeeded by the *cat* ceremony. When the coffee ceremony is over, the *Abagar* gives out some amount from the *cat* to each member. The first person who takes his share from the *Abagar* is the host whose wife has served as *kahadam*, called *aräwačča*. *Aräwačča* means, locally, the one who brought the instrument of the *hadra*, the *Cat*. In rituals involving several participants like the *Mäwliid hadra*, every one brings *cat* and hands it over to the *Abagar* (or the one who acts as such so). Handing out *cat* to each member the *Abagar* reminds the participants saying “*hulaččihum awfu täbabalu yäbäddäläm yätäbäddäläm awfu yibäll*” which literally means “all of you please forgive each other for any kind of wrong done; he who has done his friend wrong or he who is wronged shall forgive his enemy.” It is believed that the presence of a person who has been nursing a grudge against another, or the presence of two persons who are not in good terms would spoil the purpose of the *hadra*. The holy makes his presence only among brothers who love each other and call upon *Him* in one voice.

Like the coffee ceremony, the *Čat* ceremony begins with the blessings of the *Abagar*. This time the host or the *aräwacca* takes back his share (of the *Čat*) to the *Abagar* and says, “*Cat jäba, qänbät/ lämläm jäba*”, which literary means “here is *Čat*, here is twinge /tender”. The act of presenting *čat* suggests symbolically submission to God

and thanksgiving. *Čat* is believed to be a sacred object through which the divine makes his presence or reveals himself. This time the *kahadam* once more adds some charcoal and incense on the *gacca*. The *Abagar* gives out his benedictions in a similar way described above. Then, he receives the offering and gives it back to the presenter.

This particular rite suggests the transfer of *bārāka* from the *Abagar* to the host. At this moment every person begins chewing the *Čat* from his share, and the house goes into abeyance, until the second coffee ceremony takes place.

The second coffee ceremony proceeds in a similar way to the first one. Then comes the chanting of what is called *ramsa*, a collection of panegyric poems in praise of prophet Muhammed and the *Awlaya*. *Ramsa* is a series of many short poems, which come successively without order or taking a tempo. The panegyrist may change his tune or shift to another language and rhythm anytime without giving a signal and the drummer adjusts his beat following him. The recitation of *ramsa* is both in Amharic and Arabic either orally or from certain local manuscripts. I have made recordings of *ramsa* which last 25 and 30 minutes from *Hajji Hussien Muhammed* and *Seik Muhammed Tuahir* on the *Māwliid* festival held at Getta and Dessie. The two versions show close similarities except some differences in voice quality and speed of recital. Many of the pieces in my recordings are in Arabic with only three short poems in Amharic, one of which is composed in praise of the Prophet and the other two extol virtues of the *Awlaya*. Regarding the performance, the participants take part in chorus in singing the refrains which are said in Arabic, but familiar to everybody as they are words and phrases in the daily prayers. The panegyrist who recites *ramsa* is a specialist poet usually different from the *Abagar*.¹⁸

While singing *ramsa* the panegyrist and the participants stand up from their seats and clap their hands. The hand clap as well as the act of standing up add emphasis and weight to the meanings the words of the song convey to their intended audience, the *Awlaya*. The following short piece in Amharic, taken from our recordings, may provide some information about the nature and purpose of *ramsa* in addition to what has been said above. Shifting suddenly to Amharic (from the Arabic) the panegyrist goes on saying:

አርሂቡ ነቢ አርሂቡ	Come in my beloved Prophet come in.
አርሂቡ ነቢ አርሂቡ	Come in my beloved Prophet come in
Chorus: ሰላማለይኩም	<i>Salaamu alaykum</i>
አርሂቡ ነብዬ	Come in my beloved prophet
Chorus: ሰላማለይኩም	<i>Salaamu alaykum</i>
አርሂቡ ጌታዬ	Come in My Lord
Chorus: ሰላማለይኩም	<i>Salaamu alaykum</i>
ከንጉሶች ጋራ	Together with the <i>Nigusocc</i>
Chorus: ሰላማለይኩም	<i>Salaamu alaykum</i>
ከነዳነይ ጋራ	Together with <i>Dany</i> .
Chorus: ሰላማለይኩም	<i>Salaamu alaykum</i>
ከነጫሊ ጋራ	Together with Čali.
Chorus: ሰላማለይኩም	<i>Salaamu alaykum</i>
ከነገትይ ጋራ	Together with <i>Gatye</i> .
አሰላማለይኩም	<i>As Salaamu alaykum</i>
Chorus: ሰላማለይኩም	<i>Salaamu alaykum</i>
ሱለላ አለ ሙሀመድ	<i>Sullala ala Muhamed</i>
ሱለላ አለ ወሰለም ::	<i>Sullala ala Wasalaam</i>

And he shifts to singing in Arabic. The song as well as the tone of the panegyrist echoes the culture it comes from. It resembles the usual way of inviting a friend coming to one's place to say hello as he is passing by. The repetition of the word "please come in" for about six times and adjectives such as "My Prophet" (or the beloved Prophet) and "My Lord" suggest the pleasure of the host for inviting the respected Prophet and his fellow men. Calling the Prophet's companies by the name of their shrines, which are of course founded by them, show the eagerness of the host to have the company of the *Awlaya* as well as his readiness for hospitality. It is locally believed that the Shrines are; inhabited by the *bārāka* of the *Wāli* even after his death. Thus the name of the place where his Shrine is found becomes synonymous with the name of the *Wāli*. As the above poet mentions, *Nigusocc* refers to Šeik Muhammed

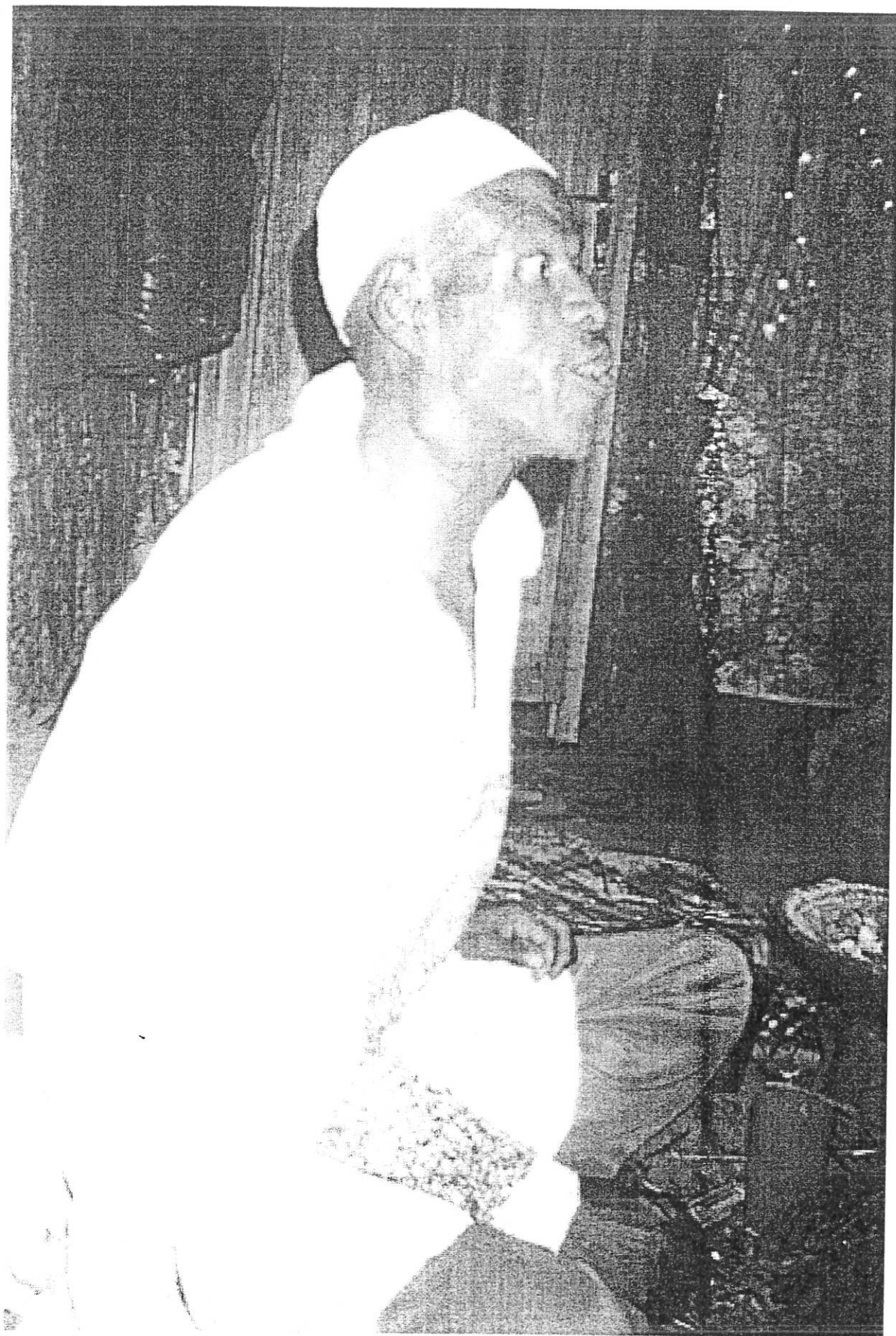
Shafi of Jäma Nigus, where *Daniy*, *Čali*^{vi} and *Gätiy* stand for Ahmed b. Adam of Dana, Said Ibrahim of Cali and Saied Bushira of Getta respectively.

The discourse uttered by the chorus, "*salaamu-alaykum*" (Ar. let the peace of God be with you) which is a common expression of greeting among the Wallo Muslims suggests that the arrival of the guests is expected and not an accidental one.

In short, *ramsa*, as well as the other activities preceding it, blessings, the *cat* and the coffee ceremonies are actions, gestures, postures, words and objects that are believed to evoke or manifest a holy presence. In other terms, *ramsa* is a gate way to the *hadra* through which people supplicate some sort of divine help or re-establish the correct way of things. In the language of dramatists, *ramsa* and the other activities described above can be considered as "exposition" of the plot of a *drama* that consists of three acts.

The chanting of *ramsa* ends with a short blessing and there follows a long-lasting silence. The *Abagar* also once more gives out the *Cat* to each participant. Consequently the house falls into a complete silence except for the sound made by the leaves of the *Cat* when they are rubbed or cut with the fingers. Gradually every participant begins assuming an ecstatic and a hypnotic mood and appears to be completely absorbed in the ritual devotion and meditation. The state of meditation involves looking inward and each participant loses himself in exploration of his inner space. Life and death, gain and loss, love and hatred, wrong and right are powerful images that emerge from looking inward. Some participants may also be absorbed in repeated pronouncing of the ninety-nine names of *Allah*. The names of *Allah* are uttered, and the worshipper runs a rosary through his fingers, one bead for each name, but the hundredth name remains hidden and "reminds the devotee of the mystery and inexhaustible depth of the holy" (Schmidt, 1980:66).

This moment of complete silence and tranquil contemplation intermittently breaks with enthusiastic outpourings of joy and bliss. Suddenly at one point the *Wäli* or the *Abagar* claps his hand so as to bring the participants to the next devotional activity. This moment marks the beginning of another important rite called *qissa*.



A poet singing Qissa

Qissa (Ar. narration or story) deals with legendary tells about the lives and activities of Prophet Muhammed and other *Awlaya*. Episodes from the life of the prophet, miraculous deeds of various *Awlaya* and the majestic power they had during their lifetime. Mysticism and mystical experiences are also the chief subject matters of *qissa*. *Qissa* may also incorporate other forms of sacred story such as myth and parable that provide people with models of authentic action as well as an understanding of their position in the world. In short narratives that serve as reminders of exemplary and normative actions performed by venerated people are believed to be true are usually recounted in the *qissa* session.

Qissa can be told either by the *Abagar* or by a *Wäli* or by the *Madih* or by three of them, one after the other. However, the playground is usually dominated by one narrator, for he can tell several anecdotes and stories successively. Once the narrator starts telling a *qissa*, he goes on without any difficulty and one *qissa* triggers the memory of other *qissat*, and narratives are told by random association rather than by any scheme of causation. The narrator enjoys complete freedom to pick any subject that interests him, but with a conscious effort selects a *qissa* that fits the circumstance. Generally, most *qissat* are products of imagination, the degree and flexibility of narratives depend on the personal abilities of the *qissäñña*. The *qissäñña* (Amh. the one who tells *qissa*) can bring from the religious tradition or may recite anecdotes from the scriptures, i.e. from the *Qur'an* or *Hadith* and adds his interpretations. He can also quote a passage from the *Qur'an* or the *Hadith* and relate it to his *qissa*.

Despite the freedom they have to pick any sacred story, most *qissäññočč* (Amh. singular, *qissäñña*) seem to prefer recounting the miracles of *Awlaya*. For instance, on a *Mäwliḍ hadra* held at home in Kombolcha, *Hajji* Muhiden, the custodian of the Shrine at Getta recounted many superhuman *qissat* about his teacher *Šeik Čali* who was a distinguished mystic, *Wäli* and poet who died fifty years ago. Out of the twelve *qissat* he told that night, the first eight narratives deal with *Šeik Čali*, whereas the other four are related to *Al-Hajji* Busera of Getta, his great grandfather. Similarly, on a *liqa Wädajja* held at Harago, in Dessie Zurya, a certain poet¹⁹ recounted ten *qissat*

that tell the wondrous deeds and miracles of different *Awlaya*, such as *Saref-Al-din-Ibrahim* of Dagar, *Al-Hajji* Busra of Getta, *Sek* Ali of Gerado and some other *Awlaya*. The following *qissa* by *Hajji* Muhiden is an example of its kind:

Zare irdataččaw lañña yihun inna Daniyo Sane bā hayyat talu indeh honā bilāw abate qissa senāgru sāmiccallāhu [Let their/his help be with us today: My father taught me a qissa that tells what happened while Danyo Sane was alive.

[Amin!] said the audience

Yimam Gallaw, the governor of Tahuladare (in Ambassel) came to inna Daniyo Sane [His excellence Daniyo Sane] and begged (him) to save his wife who was on the verge of her grave. Daniyo Sane, you may know he was a very compassionate man [Audience says, indeta! indeta! (of course, of course)] delegates three of his dārässās (Ar. students) *Getaw* (the lord) Šeik Adem Darqa, Čalli. (Šeik Seid Ibrahiim), my father (Ahmed Getta) and Šonke to the place of the governor. By the time the delegation arrived at the governor's home, the woman had already passed away and her corpse was in a mosque receiving *jinaza saalat* (Ar. funeral prayer). So many people were crying over the deceased woman, addressing her by different names: my heart, my dress (under wear), my mother... Among the four dārässas representing the wāli (Danyo Sane), *Getaw* Šeik Adem who was certainly the senior, addressed his colleagues: "Sārif", he said, "we have come here on an errand of mercy for Danyo Sane, so why are we (standing still and) looking on while all of these people are crying over the dead body of a wise woman! let's try to wake her up!". And then, he said, "Allahu Muslim! bring us *cat*."

The name of the deceased woman is Sofia. The four dārässas sat beside the corpse and began to perform *Du'a* (Ar. prayer). In the meantime, *Getaw* Šeik Adem addressed the dead body of the woman: "Sofia," he said, "imahākālaččin ballā muhāba yizānišal, bā Danyo sane yizānišal, tānāšē ("we implore you in the Love among us! we implore you in the name of Danyo Sane! wake up!") At that moment the dead body of the woman which had been lying on its back changed its position to its right side. And *Getaw* Šeik Adem said to my father, Ahmed Getta, "as you see I have completed my mission, you are to persume, now."

"Sofia", said he, "we implore you in the Love with us, we implore you in the name of Danyo Sane! Raise and sit!" The woman moved her body to a sitting position. And my father addressed the third delegate, Čali, "I have also completed my mission. It is your turn now."

Čali who was known by the name Seid Ibrahiim by then, addressed Sofia, to standup and stand still, in the same manner his colleagues did. She stood in her feet.

"OK!, hasn't the third *ajaaeb* (Ar. miracle?) performed now?"

["Of course, yes, Marhaba", the audience replied]

The fourth Abiyyā Šonke persumed. "Sofia, we implore you on the Love with us! we implore you in the name of Danyo Sane! speak!"

At that moment she raised her hands and said, "*Al hamdu lillah* (Ar. all praise is due to God).

[Ajāba! Ajāba! Ajāba!]

Accordingly all of the *dārässas* completed their mission successfully. Then the senior *dārässa*, Seik Adem, started to speak again.

Sofia", he said.

"lābäyk" (yes sir)

"where have you been?"

"I have been far away, in a remote place. Four men brought me back."

"Can you identify them, if you see their faces?"

"Yes, I can!"

"who of the people in this mosque are they? Are they these?" he asked her, indicating to some men sitting at the left side.

"No, they are not among them."

"Look back here." He pointed to the three *dārässas* sitting behind the partition.

"Yes! you, you, ... four of you are the ones!"

[Ajäba! Ajäba...]

Seik Adem summoned on her husband (the governor) and asked him how many oxen he had slaughtered.

"Six", he replied.

"Send some one to Wuqru to bring our Šeik the honourable Danyo Sane, so that we will celebrate Mäwliid."

Qissa is considered as invocation to a certain *Wäli* or *Jammi Awlaya* (Ar. congregation of *Awlaya*) so his/their *bāräka*, may make presence in the *hadra*. Since invitation to the *Awlaya* is already carried out through chanting *ramsa*, the opening discourse of every *qissa*, "*irdataččäw zare läiñña yihuninna*", which means "Let their/his help be with us today", points to the primary purpose of the session.

Qissa can be delivered in prose or in verse. The two forms do exist as distinct modes of expression in the tradition, but since poetry needs wit and sharp memory, most people tell *qissa* in prose. However, the two forms often overlap, for they serve similar functions and use similar materials. *Qissa* tellers often use couplets and even more lines of poetry to support their narration or to make it more colourful. A *qissa* session mostly takes from two to three hours of the night. The captivating nature of the tales together with the stimulating nature of Čat^v and coffee submerges the sense of space and time (for further details see the section in *qissa*).

Soon the place takes a new character. Every participant is captured in the mood of intoxication and effervescence, expressed in the form of physical agitation and emotional outburst locally called *Mirqana*. *Mirqana* may turn out well in *Madad* (Ar. invocation or inspiration) which is a state of an inspired exhortation expressed by

singing. This very moment turns the beginning of another prominent *hadra* element that is common in most Islamic worshipping occasions.

The Soloist starts humming at one point. For instance, this may happen the moment the *qisāʾīya* finishes one *qissa*, without giving any signal or having the permission of the *Abagar*. Spontaneous and enthusiastic outpouring of songs as bliss and liberating peace ensue from the overpowering and exalting character of the *Awlaya*'s *bāraka*. The singer, then goes on producing a humming low melodious tune for some minutes so as to bring the house into liveliness and alertness. When he feels he has the attention of the participants, the poet begins singing one of his songs that fit that specific occasion. For various forms of songs demand various kinds of participation, the degree and kind of response the poet seeks from the participants varies according to the specific form he picks up. In order to give a hint to the participants about the character of the song he is going to sing, he keeps repeating the opening lines for some time. He does not need to tell the details, for the participants have rich experience that enables them to anticipate what is coming.

The performance of Islamic poetry varies largely from one form of poetry to the other. Different forms demand different kinds of audience participation. Some forms need to be recited whereas others need to be delivered in declamation or songs. Some require the participation of the audience in singing the refrains whereas others are purely solo. Some are accompanied by hand claps and drum, whereas others do not need this.

Besides, the performance of Islamic poetry depends on occasions. Various religious occasions and rites demand different forms of poetry that correspond to the specific purposes and functions a certain ceremony intends to achieve. Thus, content and appropriateness govern the actualisation of every genre of Islamic poetry. Therefore, different genres involve different types of activities that need detailed descriptions of their own. That will be treated in chapter four separately.

Generally, the session of songs is the climax of the sacred group drama. It is a moment where the participants feel outside of themselves. Some participants may also show uncontrolled behaviour and breakout in dance, toss their heads, or whirl around

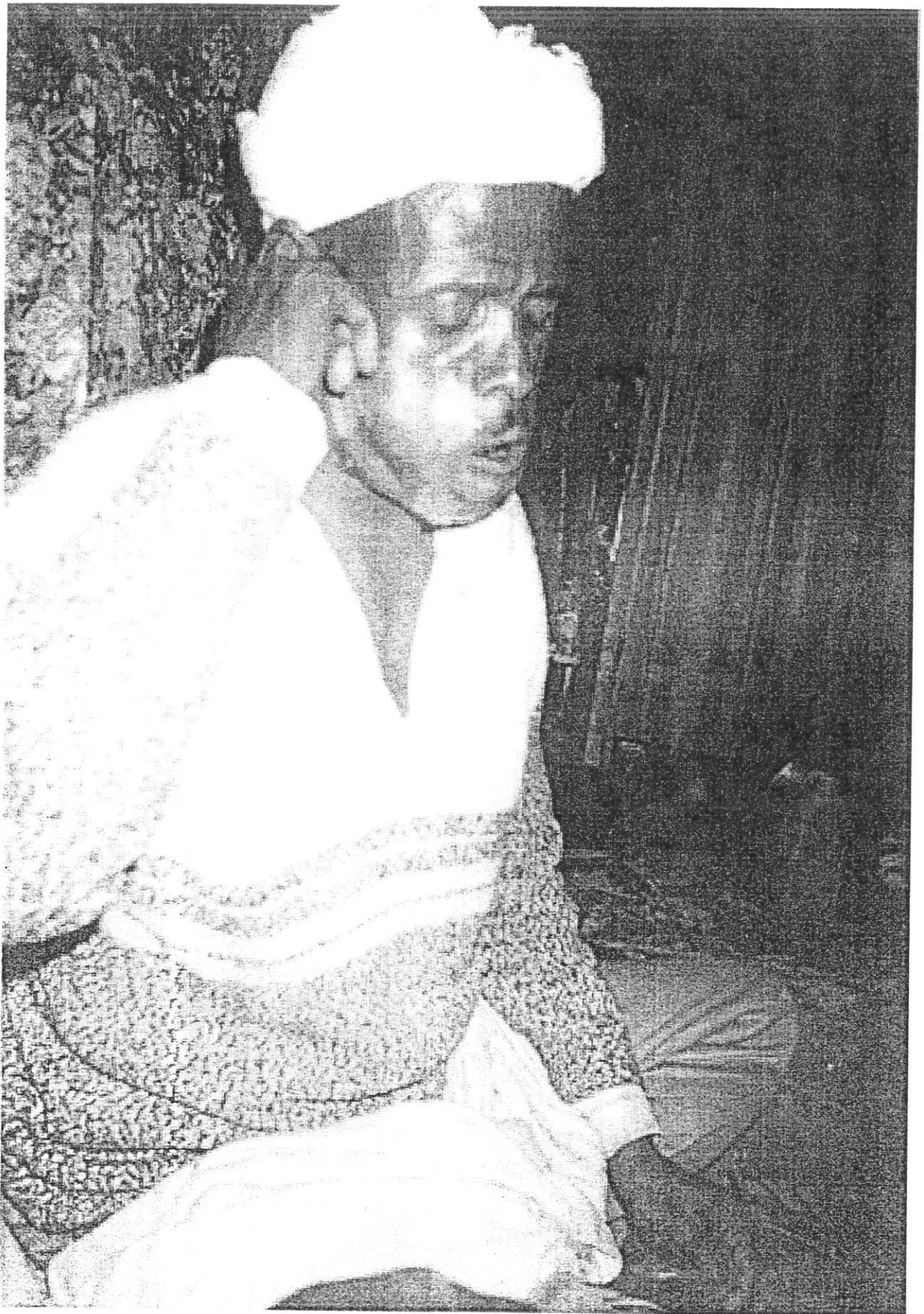
and around. People, who are believed to be possessed by the *Zar* consume fire or drink perfume or speak in incoherent spirit-filled tongues. Some others may cry or unconsciously move jerking or shaking their bodies. Some other songs, especially the “*hăyyă*” genre, may export participants to the state of mediation that leads to serenity, a joyful calming of one’s total being and a peace that passes beyond all understanding. The moment eventually cleanses and heals the soul and leads the devotee to the grounds of humanity or restores the one possessed by the *Zar* to health by calling upon the benevolent spirit.

The overall ceremonial process comes to an end at this moment, with absolute relief and tranquillity, or putting the possessed in trance and deep sleep. And finally around five in the morning every one goes out from the *hadra*.

Following the practice of the structural anthropologist the *hadra* can be considered as a three act play. The triadic structure of *hadra* is therefore one of separation, transition, and incorporation. In act one the participants of the *hadra* perform abolition and separate themselves from the profane world. They make contact with sacred objects, such as *Čat*^{vi}, coffee and incense, in which the holy spirit is manifested, and invokes the presence of the *bārāka* of *Awlaya*, and gradually they lose themselves. Thus, the participants are placed in a special enclosure where sacramental contacts will be made.

Act two involves two interrelated actions. The first one is the state of silence, which is a time of transition during which the participants are suspended between the condition of life they were leading and the changes they are seeking or what is being left behind and what they are not yet fully part of. The second phase, which involves *qissa*, is an activity that facilitates the presence of the *bārāka* among them, in order to represent the meaningful or the exemplary past. It is an indirect way of seeking some solution to the crises or disorders with the help of the *Awlaya*.

Act three is the climax. The *bārāka* has already made its presence, and the participants are filled with the holy spirit. In dancing the participants feel transported as if they were standing outside of themselves. In the case of participants possessed with the *Zar* or the jinn, the moment is the time of struggle between the *bārāka* and



A poet singing häyyä

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A poet singing häyyä, possessed by the madad

the evil spirit. Thus, there will be a dialogue between the evil spirit and the authorized spirit which expresses itself through the *Wäli* or the *Abagar*. Finally, the sacred drama brings its denouncement in the form of purgation or trance.

In conclusion, *hadra* is a ceremonial process that involves narration of stories, recital of poetry, blessings and dances. The ceremonial acts as well as the performance of the various forms of verbal art take place one after the other with definite structural arrangements.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0. POETS, COMPOSITION, PERFORMANCE, TRANSMISSION AND CLASSIFICATION OF ISLAMIC POETRY

In chapter two the social background of Islamic poetry is discussed. The discussion focused mainly on identifying and describing the major rituals and occasions where the performance of Islamic poetry takes place. An attempt is also made to discuss the overall ceremonial process, the *hadra*, and the various ritual elements involved in it. In this chapter the focus is on composition, actualization, transmission and classification. It may be helpful to start with a preliminary illustration of the variety of Muslim poets. The first part of the chapter, therefore, gives some idea on how poets themselves see their work, and of their interpretation of their role. The second part considers the tradition of composing Islamic poetry in relation with its actualization and transmission. The other part deals with issues related to its classification

3.1 Muslim Poets in Wallo: A case Study

The nature and process of composing poetry have caused much controversies in the study of oral poetry. Such questions are related with authorship, memorization, spontaneous composition and oral and written composition. On the views they are promoting about composition and authorship, scholars of oral literature could be categorized under two schools: namely the populist and the specialist school.

Schools promoting the populist view assume that oral poetry is a communal creation with no acknowledged individual author. Their primary concern is the sociological value of oral literature. Scholars from the populist school approach oral poetry as "the possession of the people" (Finnegan, 1977:45). Accordingly, terms and phrases such as "folk literature," literature that "belongs to all the people" or "the wisdom of the people" underlies the assumption that every member of the community is a poet or at least has the potential to be one (Finnegan, 1977:161).

In relation to the communal nature of oral poetry another group of scholars suggest that oral poetry is produced anonymously. Scholars that belong to this school admit that every poem is originally composed by an individual or a group of individuals. But, since for oral poetry is mainly transmitted through the word of mouth, it spreads like "bush fire" from one person to another. In learning and delivering a certain piece, the original composition involves some changes so that it will not be the same song any more. Another more strong point of the "Romantic writers" is related to "simultaneous performance and composition." In performances that involve composition, it is true that the audience plays a more directly influential part in the creation or composition of a piece of poetry. For this reason there is no just one original composer but many poets play a part in the process of composition (Finnegan, 1977:200-201).

Though the communal creation of oral poetry is natural, researchers in oral poetry have recently come up with an alternative view, which proves that oral poetry is not generally anonymous or communal creation but a specialised one with a named poet. One of the main proponents of specialization in oral poetry is Ruth Finnegan. Finnegan (1970:91, 1977:188) gives us many lucid examples of specialization in the art of poetic composition and performance from different countries including Ethiopia. Recently, some scholars from Kenya, for instance Miruka (1994) and Bitek (1994) observe instances that involve specialization in oral poetry.

Ruth Finnegan (1977:200) identifies four types of poets, in the tradition of societies where poetic composition is the domain of specialists. These are:

- (1) professional poets with official and permanent position (perhaps organized into a self-perpetuating and powerful group)...
- (2) free-lance and unattached poets who are nevertheless often highly specialized and effective...
- (3) less specialized experts who practise mainly in particular genres and contexts ...
- (4) unspecialized poets who emerge when poetry is diffused widely through society and poetic craft expected in a measure from everyone.

The first and the third categories of poets discerned by Finnegan exist in the tradition and practice of Muslim poetry in Wallo. In Wallo, Islamic Poetry is largely the domain

of the *ulama*, who have received the highest level of Islamic education. However, for poetic composition needs special talent and skill, every *alim* does not have the genius that enables him to compose poetry. Only few *ulama*, locally called *Madih* (Ar. the one who praises) possess qualities and skills which the art of poetry requires. The title serves as an official and permanent mark the poet bears in all his life time.

The *Madih* is a knowledgeable person who is familiar with religious texts and the history and deeds of certain influential *Awlaya*. He also need to have a good knowledge of Arabic, good memory, and melodious voice.

The *Madih* learns the art of musical and poetic composition at any one of the shrines. This is not to say that the shrines like the Ethiopian Orthodox Church have special schools designed to train young men in poetic and musical compositions. The shrines, however, are seats of higher Islamic learning, they do not offer formal training to the would be poets. Thus, specialism in the case of Islamic Poetry can be viewed from the point of view of apprenticeship and institutional attachment.

As already discussed in chapter one, the *Sufi*-centres which later evolved to shrines of certain *Awlaya*, are credited for the introduction and preservation of new religious practices that are mainly expressed in songs and dances. This implies the affiliation of Islamic Poetry to such institutions. Most of the early Muslim Scholars and *Awlaya*, who founded various *sufi*-centers in different parts of Wallo were themselves prolific writers and prodigious poets. Their followers and successors, initiated to the mystical orders and received the *tariqa*, and some of them who latter became *Awlaya*, are also best known for their prophetic poetry. Students who collect poems from individual poets note that those poets have been introduced to the craft of poetry during their stay at the various shrines (Tibabu: 1984, Muhammed: 1992, Muhammed 1996).

After completing elementary (basic) Muslim education in one of the many *Mädärsa* (Ar. School) the *därässa* (Ar. Student) spends some years as an itinerant student travelling from one shrine to the other. At a certain shrine he may have access to “formal” training through apprenticeship or through self-teaching to the art of

composing poetry. In the shrines there is usually close relationship between the *dār ässa* and the *Šeik*. The bond between the two many times becomes so *tight* and strong than the usual, so that the *Šeik* takes a certain student as *murid* (Ar. novice adopted as a son). The *murid* accompanies the *Šeik* in all his activities and the *Šeik* provides him with food and the necessary facilities. Due to his closeness to the *Šeik*, who may be a poet also, the *murid* will receive guidance and training from the *Šeik*.²

Another method of learning, perhaps the most usual is self-teaching. During their stay at the shrine young students have ample opportunities to listen to songs. Because of the strong influence of written literature, texts of poetry in the shrines that are composed by contemporary poets as well as their predecessors are available. Students memorize written passages first and then learn how they are composed. The chance to scribe texts is also as common as memorization. Writing the already available texts of poetry also helps the student to improve his handwriting in Arabic. The tradition of reproducing texts of poetry at the shrines has at least two merits. First it serves as a mode of transmission of poetry among the *ulama* without the original being involved in any change, and second it helps to preserve texts. A student writing certain manuscript is expected to acknowledge the original poet.

In both cases learning the craft of composing poetry needs prolonged training. Before a poet can recite to the public, he needs to spend many years to acquire and to practise the skill, till he is capable of composing poetry both in Arabic and Amharic. Besides the mastery of the art of poetry the poet has to be initiated to the mystical orders and has received the *toriqa*, a written permission to sing in a *hadra*.

In addition to the need for prolonged training many *Šeiks* and poets associate the art of composing poetry with divine inspiration and mysterious gift. *Hajji Hussien Madih* says:³

It is not by training; of course training to some extent can help the poet. But if it was by learning too much all the *ulama* can compose poetry. As to my case it is rather a mysterious gift. I was born by the blessing of *Šeik* Cali. As my mother had told me, *Šeik* Cali told her that she would give birth to a man-child,

who spoke prophecy... My younger brother is also a poet, he too got his inspiration from the blessings of *Šeik* Cali.

It is not only among the poets and the *ulama* that poetry is believed to be a mysterious gift. Believers also accept it. Informants emphasize similar incidents about *Šeik* Muhammed Amin, (d. 1975/1976?) of Madinah in Dana at Yajju who was a *Wāli* and reputable poet, still famous for his songs. He inherited the mysterious gift of poetry and became a poet upon his arrival from the Middle East where he travelled to perform *Hajji* and spend some years there.⁴

On his arrival *Seik* Muhamed directly went to visit the Koram *Šeik* who was the *murid* of Ahmed b. Adam of Dana (locally known as Danyo Sani). The Koram *Šeik* who was blind from birth was a person to whom Ahmed b. Adam was entrusted (in charge of his sons as his last will). Thus in a *hadra* one day the trustee announced that, that it was time to discharge his responsibility. Then he asked *Šeik* Muhmmmed to recite his own poetry. He says: "You are awarded an eloquent tongue. Now give us a song. Boys (his *murids*) hurry up bring an ink and a sheet of paper... Go around the grave yard and try it, you will find yourself with inspiration." After some minutes the young *Šeik* delivered his first composition. The blind *wāli* then passed the mysterious gift from a father to a son and directed the initiate to make his dwelling place at *Warqe*, near Robit in Yajju.

In the above two cases, the career of the two poets is prophesied long time before they became acquainted with the art of poetry. The latter case can be taken as inheriting (transferring) the mysterious power or *bārāka* of a father to a son via another *Wāli*. The case of the former poet is different in this regard. *Hajji* Hussien describes how he learnt the art of poetry.⁵

First I was familiarised with poetry and dancing at Getta. During my stay as a *dār ässa* at the *Mäddärssa* I was attracted by the ritual dancing. I decided to learn the art of poetry. Thus I copied some *Kitabs* and memorized them. At the same time I kept on rehearsing them. But I was not bold enough even to try out among my friends. In order not to attract the attention of others I always did my rehearsal in the bushes. But, one day when I was totally immersed in my performance in the bush my *Šeik* (the successor of the shrine Geta) caught me. Incidentally he together with his company was passing by. He was astonished by my efforts and he allowed me to be his *Murid*. This turned all my

destiny. Later on I was attached to a certain *Madih* and learnt the craft of poetry. Until I recited it in public independently I used to be dictated by others and sung their verses. But gradually I insisted on doing it all alone. Yet, the poets were not willing to recognize me as a poet. One day my *Šeik* accidentally asked me to offer my *ajām* (poetry composed in Amharic). And from 1960 G.C. up to now I have no specialization other than composing songs.

Hajji Hussien then is initiated to the mystical orders and received the *toriqqa*, a written permission to sing in *hadra* from *Šeik Šeril Kalim*, a poet who was living at Dagan, near Bati.

The above two instances show the relation of Islamic Poetry to the mystical orders. The claim to mystical inspiration in poetic production enables poets to retain their position of power or prestige. Poets as well as other informants strongly believe that, if somebody sings in a *hadra* without being initiated to the mystical orders or without receiving the *toriqqa*, he will be visited by illness or become an insane person. Initiation by the mystical orders not only enables poets to become *Awalya* and being powers in their own rights, but also helps them to keep a firm attachment to certain shrines in order to uphold the authority of the religion.

Specialization is related to economic status. Yet, with regard to Islamic poetry in Wallo there are only few evidence ascertain whether or not poets accept patronage as part of the religious institution (the shrine) and make a living from their songs. Some poets are working as *Imams* and are permanent employees at various mosques. Others, for instance *Hajji Hamid* (Tibabu, 1984), and *Hajji Hussien* make their living from patronage from friends. There are also pieces of evidence that show some poets earn their income only by their art. Yet even one cannot be sure how the poets manage to make their livelihood without permanent occupation and career. However in Wallo specialist Muslim poets usually are found at relatively better economic position than the less specialized ones.

Experts, according to Finnegan (1977) are poets practising mainly in one particular genre. Such poets are numerous in Wallo and are found in every village. They practise

mainly in *häyyä* genre, which is most popular in *wādajja* ceremonies. Most expert singers are uneducated or at most least educated persons. They practice mostly in ceremonies where *Madihs* are not found. For attending and performing in such ceremonies the poet may receive generous hospitality or some small amount of money from the host.

Experts often have no attachment to a certain shrine or formal training. The method they use to acquire the art of poetry is the informal process of listening and watching. Yet, many of them claim direct supernatural inspiration. This has been forcefully pointed out by Eshetu Argaw:⁶

I am a *Sämi* (Am. listener) who does not read; but is able to sing from memory. I can recite or sing some poems, word for word, just as the singer had sung it.

Usually I do not remember from whom I had picked up a certain poem. I really do not know. When I become capernoited with *cat* (*simäräqin*), when I am intoxicated with *Muhaba* (Ar. Love) I will be caught by the *madad* (Ar. Inspiration) and the *madad* tells me what I would say.

Divine inspiration in poetry is widely accepted among both types of poets. Both types of poets usually associate their success as well as their failure in composition with *madad*, a spirit for poetic inspiration. When the poet is possessed with *madad* he finds himself filled with prophetic insight or enables to praise the *Awlaya* and when he is without *madad* he suspends his performance. In reciting poetry and whirling of the *Sufi* dance, the poet experiences a disorientation, a loss of self, in which he feels transposed, as if he were standing outside of himself. In the rhythm of the song, the self is obscured so that his soul can be filled with the *Muhaba*, Love of the divine, that manifests itself through poetic eloquence and dance.

Although both types of poets, the *Madih* and the *häyyäe bay* (the poet who is expert in the *häyyä* genre) associate poetic composition and performance with divine inspiration there are also wide differences among them in the socio-religious position they hold in their society. The *Madih* as a person initiated to the mystical orders and as a certified poet has legitimate grounds for his positions. But the *ulama* as well as the society at

large expect less, and often put direct sanction on the uneducated uninitiated and uncertified poets.

Expert poets, who may or may not have some degree of Islamic education are associated with the main religious establishments of the area. Some of them even identify themselves with a certain *Šeik* or *Wāli* and claim legitimate position and acceptability. Their claims obviously affect how their poetic performances are received by their audience. Attributing to some divine power beyond themselves also helps them to approve the “magico-religious” practices they are best known for. Poetry for such people is primarily a means to exercise power over things. Using their poetry they treat patients possessed by the *jinn* or by the *Zar*. These poets are also believed to communicate with spirits or tell prophecy. They are usually considered as *Fuqira* (Ar. Seer) and condemned by the *ulama* and the *Awlaya*, as hypocrite, impostor, and cheat. In most cases these poets attempt to heal by *wādajja*, and in severe *jinn* action, they rely on their poetry. Expert poets participate in *Wādajja* with invitations, but in towns usually for a fee that is understood rather than demanded.

Women singers belong to this expert group rather than among the *Madih*, the more specialized ones. Women who are mostly illiterate in Islamic education frequently recite poetry in ceremonial occasions associated with the *Zar* cult, and at the *dubārti wādajja* which are exclusive to them. On the *Māwliid* celebration at the shrines, rituals of orgiastic dancing and other related ceremonies of the *Zar* cult are performed especially by women. A group of women possessed by malignant spirits sing and dance in order to keep on appeasing them so as to avert any misfortune that might befall on them. A certain woman, sings songs that call-up on the spirits. She also invokes the name of the various *Awlaya*, both to reactivate the malevolent spirit, and to seek the help of the *Awlaya* to restore the possessed to health by exorcizing the offending spirit. The same practice may also be carried out at *dubāariti wādajjas* held at the home. Women-poets usually practice in genres that do not necessarily require religious education. Thus, usually they compose poems of mixed genres that involve features from the genres of *hāyyä* and *qissa*.

In very rare cases can women hold the position of poets at the shrines. Informants mention the names of two women poets, who were attached to two shrines. These are Zinat Anna of Agamssaa at Koram in Yajju, and Janoyye of Daggar, at Borana. Zinat Anna who passed away two decades ago was a poet who was converted from Christianity into Islam due to poor health. She devoted herself by becoming a permanent *Kahadam* at the shrine for obtaining complete cure from a chronic mental sickness. She began her carrier as a singer by reciting other poets' composition through dictations. Gradually, she acquired the skill and composed *qissa* in praise of the *Šeik* of Dana.⁷ Many people admire her songs even today. Janoyye is another woman poet attached to the shrine at Dagar. She is also famous for her songs, which are available on market at Addis Abāba Märkato as well as in the music shops throughout Wallo. Currently, no other woman poet receives acclamation like Zinat and Jonoyye. Men still predominate Islamic Poetry and women usually take the lead in songs designed for ceremonial occasions related with the *Zar* cult and the *dubärti Wädajja*, which are exclusive to them.

* The above discussion can be summarized under five points: (1) Among the Wallo Muslims the skill of composing religious poetry is not expected of everyone. (2) It requires some degree of training and a considerable amount of skill and knowledge. (3) Based on the “formalization” of their training and their attachment to religious institutions poets can be divided into two categories; namely specialists and experts. (4) specialists poets bear a title called *Madih*. They compose poetry both in Arabic and Amharic; usually in writing and they also hold official religious authority and are initiated to the mystical orders. (5) Experts are less educated and practiced in the *häyyä* and *qissa* genres. They may associate themselves with institutions or practice on their own. These poets perform or sing in ceremonies that lack the *Madih*. They use their poetry to exercise power on things.

3.2. The Composition of *ajām*

Islamic poetry is composed in Arabic and Amharic and is generally called *Manzuma* (derive from the Arabic term *nazom*, which means order, arrangement, rhyme, *Manzoom*, arranged, rhymed, rhyme).⁸ Poems composed in Arabic are locally termed

Arabiy (Arabic) and those composed in Amharic are called *ajäm*. The two terms, *Arabiy* and *ajäm* might have been derived from the literary tradition of the Middle East, particularly of “pre-Islamic poetry” of Persia, “al’ *Adjam*’ in contrast with the “refined culture” of Arabia, “al’- *Arab*.” Thus, in conformity with the basic meaning of the root from which the term is derived “*adjam*” means people qualified by “*adjma*”, “a confused and obscure way of speaking regardless pronunciation and language” (Gibb, 1960:206)

Therefore, here the concern is with the two terms, *Arabiy* and *ajam*, terms used by Wallo Muslims to name religious poems composed in Arabic and Amharic respectively.

The first writer to explain the term *ajäm* in the Ethiopian context is Alula Pankhurst (1994a). Alula (1994a:257) defines *ajäm* from its current use as a “language, and more specifically [a] poetry, otherwise referred to as *manzuma*, the Arabic word for poem.” The writer’s explanation of the term “*ajäm*’ as poetry in Amharic is a valid assessment. His remark that “*ajäm* is used for the benefit of those who do not understand [Arabiy]” (Alula 1994a:257) is also a valid evaluation of the essence and purpose of Islamic poetry in Amharic.

The term *ajäm* appears in some genres of Islamic Poetry in contrast with the term *Arabiy*. In one of the didactic poems *Hajji* Hussien Madih, after encountering the five pillars of Islam in relation with the firm belief and trust in god concludes his recitation with the following lines:

**ይህ እንግዲህ በአጀም በኔ ሲነገር
ሌላው በአረቢያ ለሚያውቀው ነው ገር።**

While I am using *ajäm* for the advantage of the illiterate.
The learned can benefit from the *Arabiy*.

Šeik Adem Indris of Jama Nigus begins one of his songs in praise of Muhammed, with such introductory remarks:

የወንጀሌውን ጎራ በሰሙ ልናደው
 እንዴ ነቢ የለም አላህ የወደደው
 አረቡ አጅሙ ሁሉ ያከበደው፤
 እንዲ ተለከፈ ፍቅሩ አሜያሳብደው

In his name, let me crash the heap of
 crime
 No one is loved by Allah like the
 prophet
 The *Arabi* and the *ajam*, all
 glorifying Him.
 Once He Loves, His Love maddens

The meaning of the term in the above context seems to be ambiguous. The two terms can be interpreted as two contrasting concepts. *Arabi*y and *ajām*, on the one hand, can refer to the Arabs and the non Arabs, particularly to the Muslim community in Arabia and out of Arabia. On the other hand, the two terms can be taken in relation to the literary culture of the Arabs and the non Arabs. Since culture and people are metonymically interrelated concepts, attempting to interpret one of the two aspects demands attention be given to the other.

However, informants emphasize *ajām* as a term that refers to poetry or song composed in Amharic but written in Arabic Script.⁹ The term does not include *qissa* (story) narrated in prose, or *tafsir*, commentaries and interpretations of the Qura'n translated in Amharic.

The similarity of *ajām* with the Arabic concept *al-adjam* is not a mere linguistic coincidence. The term as well as its current function as a literary register in the literary tradition of Wallo Muslims seems to be related to the introduction and expansion of *sufism*. This assumption may become evident in the light of certain aspects of cultural influences, apparent in Islamic Poetry of Wallo. These are: (1) The use of Arabic Orthography; and the attempt to modify some symbols in order to accommodate sounds that exist in Amharic and are alien to the Arabic. (2) The diffusion and application of Arabic literary registers to name the various poetic genres such as *qissa*, *Mādh* (*Mālk*) or *tawhiid* and other concepts like *Manzuma*, *Madih* or even *ajam*.

According to oral sources *ajām* was introduced in Wallo by the *Sufi* teachers.¹⁰ The *Sufi* teachers have made some necessary modifications on some letters to accommodate the sounds that exist in Amharic. The effort of modification is basically carried out by using additional diacritical markers on the Arabic letters. Three consonants and a vowel

which are specific to Amharic but foreign to Arabic are C (ሮ), Z (ሯ), n (ኸ) which are palatal speech sounds and the vowel i (እ).

In addition to altering the Arabic letters, the Muslim scholars also devised a means that helps the beginner to remember or discriminate between those sounds easily. This method works by a contrived sentence that enclose the four sounds and reads “*incci c’äw gizillin* (take (you female) and purchase some salt (for me)”. The newly modified letters that absorb the Amharic sounds are basically letters that stand for Arabic sounds and have close linguistic similarity with the sounds they later represent.

The use of Arabic script to write down Amharic suggests the existence of strong literary tradition among the *ulama*. Though not exclusive, the tradition of writing becomes predominant in the composition of religious poetry, the *ajäm*. Of course, *ajäm* is largely composed in writing, but there are also instances of oral composition especially among the illiterate poets or experts who mainly practice specific genres. The reliance on writing in poetic composition and the oral performance and delivery, pose theoretical problems that need descriptive analysis at this juncture. Interaction between oral and written literature and cases that involve overlap or mix the oral and the written mode are common in oral poetry. (Finnegan, 1970, 1977; Knappert, 1970, 1982; Miruka, 1994).

By considering many instances from different cultures Finnegan (1977:17) discusses the nature of oral poetry and the various assumptions forwarded by scholars of oral literature about the “Orality” of oral poetry. She then suggests three criteria on which that a poem can be said to be oral. These are:

In terms of (1) its composition, (2) its mode of transmission and (3) related to (2) its performance. Some oral poetry is oral in all these respects, some in only one or two. It is important to be clear how oral poetry can vary in these ways, as well as about the problems involved in assessing each of these aspects of “oralness”.

The three criteria mentioned above may not necessarily coincide. Yet, Finnegan (1977: 17) further suggests the importance of separate explanation and greater clarity in which

case a certain poetic genre is said to be oral. Therefore, an attempt at descriptive analysis on the composition, performance and transmission of *ajām* provides better understanding.

Regarding composition, *ajām* poets largely rely on writing, with the exception of those specializing in specific genres. The *Madihs*, who are professional and literate mostly write their composition down in Arabic script sometimes prior to the act to performance. Informants as well as students who collect religious poetry from Wallo (for instance, Tibabu (1984) Muhammed (1992) and Muhammed (1994)) write that the poems they have studied were primarily composed in writing and then performed orally. Some songs are also self-conscious about the process of their composition. For instance a song composed by *Šeik* Ahmed Abubu of Dagar embodies the following stanza at its opening scene.

እስቲ ቀለሜን ላጥቅሰው
 እወረቃ ላይ ላፍሰው
 እሱ ነው መቸም ደግ ሰው
 ወንጅሌን በደንብ አበሰው ።

Let me insert my plume into the ink
 pot and then pour the ink on
 paper
 No benovelent man but He
 Purifies me from my Crime

The *Madih* in the above lines voices his motive in writing verses of thanksgiving or praise for the clemency and kindness he has received. He also affirms the composition undergoes the act of writing that indirectly suggests the act of performance which will take place some time after completion.

Some poets also state that they had laboured for days or even for weeks and months over their compositions before they recite for public performance. Such kinds of statements are common in poems that exhibited extraordinary features. For instance, *Hajji* Hussien *Madih*, in one of his songs entitled *Mānafiḳ al-Hajji* (Yearning for Hajji) describes his personal experience of the *Hajji*, a pilgrimage to Macca. This song can be taken as admiration, a statement of an eye witness or an attempt of sharing one's experience. Thus by encountering a detailed description of the event of pilgrimage the poet comes to end up his song in the following manner.

ለፍቅር እንዳይመስል ይህንን ሳበጅ
 ለትይታ እንዳይመስል ይህንን ሳበጅ
 ለማስታወስ ያህል ሒማውን ነው እንጅ ።
 አመስግኑኝ ብሎ አዞናል ባዋጅ
 በቀልብም ሳይረሱ በምላስም በእጅ
 አገሬ አበጀኋት አያየሁ ሒራጅ
 የሚለው አያጣም መቸም የሰው ልጅ
 ስሟን ብያታለሁ መናፍቅ አልሀጅ
 እንዳይል እጅ እጅ
 ላቁም ይህን ዜና
 ያሸግጃል መዲና

Think not it is for loving others' country
 when I make this.
 Not for pretention as well; do I make this
 poem
 It is for impression, just to remind all the
 goodness.
Thee ordered us to praise Him
 Not forgetting all the time;
 In heart, by tongue and hands;
 Surely to *Thee* is all praise
 I make this poem at home; (coming back
 from Hajji)
 Using (from) imagination.
 Of course people have a lot to say.
 Let them say so;
 I name it Yearning for *Hajji*
 As not to be boring
 Let me stop the news here
 Madinah is the beloved.

The poet's statement about the place of making (composing) suggests ideas on emotional tranquillity and recollection of experiences more than do spontaneous compositions. His position as meritorious, and the mode in which he expressed or shall express his appreciation is pointed out. Thus, appreciations in heart, by tongue or by hand metaphorically suggest the act of meditation, singing and writing respectively.

Hajji Hamid also explains the process of making one of his poems in a manner similar to *Hajji* Hussien. The poem, likewise provides the experience of the poet as a pilgrim visiting Mecca. The poem comes to an end:¹¹

ተሆነ በኋላ የሂጅራው ሰነት
 በመርከብ ላይ ሆኜ መልኋን ጀመርኳት
 ሽ ከሶት መቶ ዓመት ሰማኒያ ሰባት
 ሐበሻ ሰንገባ ሞላኋት በቤት
 ገሰታ ይድረሰው ለረበል አዘት

Undertaking the task of migration to the
 House of God
 I begin this *mālḥ* (*Malk*) on the Ship
 (while coming back home)
 In the year thirteen hundred and eighty
 seven
 Let *Thee* be blessed, Lord the Greatest;
 It (the poem) takes its full shape, at home
 on our arrival at the *Habssa* Land.

The point here is that, in most cases, most *ajäms* involve a conscious process of creation that takes place prior to the act of performance. Strictly speaking, with regard to specialist poets the act of composition and the act of performance take place separately. However, this seems to be the truth we do not know much whether the poet is engaged in an act of mental composition which is later committed to writing or not. The problem is complex, and not peculiar to oral poetry. It is also difficult to draw a clear line between the act of thinking and writing, or to tell the psychological process which is going on during composition from the moment of conceiving the first gleam of emotion to the moment the poet writes down the first couplet.

Let's consider the experiences of some poets. One of the principal informant, *Hajji Hussien Muhammed Madih* has the following to say about making poetry.¹²

I have no specific time to make poetry. While I am in bed or playing with friends, but mostly sitting in *hadrat*, suddenly, the *Madad* (Ar. inspiration, invocation) comes and makes me sing. That is all, how can I tell you? It seems untrue unless one has experienced it. Once I am motivated, I can not be at peace with myself unless I do something. If I am in a *hadra*, no problem. I can sing out on the spot and make a recording of it, or write it down when the *hadra* is over. If it comes while I am in bed, I just go to the *Kalawa* (Ar. Partition, or private sitting room) and put it on paper. Do you know how a prey is caught? It is by using a trap. So the same to knowledge. Knowledge should be kept in a *Kitab* (Ar. book). Knowledge and a prey are similar, unless both of them are caught at their appearance they disappear. You see these days I am getting older and forgetting things easily. However, thanks to civilization, it provides us with the easiest means of preserving knowledge. I have a portable recording machine. I keep it with me every time. Whenever the need arises I make use of it, and transcribe it later. I do believe that writing is the most convenient, the most durable and the most advantageous means for keeping one's knowledge.

Here the composition is oral. Yet, we cannot be certain whether the poet alters words, modifies the syntax or rearranges words or phrases, or lines during the process of transcription. Both acts, writing from memory or transcribing an earlier performance are a susceptible nature, for the poet may easily change his mind.

In cases related to the unlettered poets the act of composition is oral. One of the subjects, a poet, Eshetu Argaw,¹³ a man with the lowest degree of education composes his verses orally and spontaneously. His composition seems to be more imitational than original. One who is familiar with different poets can easily identify some couplets and passages one has listened to before. Yet, it is not easy to pin-down or pick them out for they involve a certain degree of variation or alter their original structural position, or merge with verses taken from other poets. Eshetu many times claims originality or divine inspiration for most of his songs, even for those echoing back to other sources. Yet, sometimes he acknowledges some poets or simply mentions their names at the beginning of the recitation. This was done usually during narrating *qissa* in prose. In summary, because of the overlapping character of the two media, it is not easy to pin-down or draw clear distinction between written and oral composition regarding *ajām*. However, there are clear instances that indicate oral composition is more common among the unlettered poets than the *Madihs*.

3.3. The Performance Of *ajām*

Generally speaking oral poetry is composed to be performed in the presence of audiences, and *ajām* is not an exception. It is sung at a *hadra* which involves little or a large number of people. Mostly the poet memorizes and rehearses his song beforehand and performs at a *hadra*. Most poets usually do not need to use their manuscripts while they are performing. Thus it seems that poets are delivering their art after the composition is completely or largely finished in private. Informants¹⁴ told also in songs that involve choral participation the poet carried out the rehearsal with friends and others near him. Some of them even discuss their art with friends before they face the public with new songs.

Although performance is mostly preceded by memorization and carried out orally, sometimes the practice is different. Since various forms of *ajām* are sung in ceremonies and occasions appropriate to them, some forms do not have the chance to be sung more than once in a year. In such cases, the poet needs to revitalize his memory in order to be on firm grounds. This is common in songs that belong to the *tawhiid* genre. Because

this genre involves religious lessons derived from scriptures that are considered as words of God the poet needs to be careful not to miss, or alter words, and not to violate facts or sequence of facts. Thus, the poet may revitalize his memory before hand or can use his manuscript during the moment of recital.

The latter may sound strange; yet it sometimes occur in Islamic Poetry. At the festival of *Māwliḍ* at Getta, *Hajji Hussien Muhammed Madih* makes use of his manuscript while he is performing his last song for that night. Although he is keeping the manuscript with himself he does not depend on it. He goes on singing and turning each page without looking at it. The reason for keeping a manuscript ready at hand is for fear of memory failure due to overwork and exhaustion.

Although the above two cases are mentioned to show the chance of overlap between the two modes of delivery, putting a manuscript close to oneself is a common practice among the literate poets. Although one is confident enough with his memory, and realizes that the light is too poor to read by, every poet we met while working in the field keeps his manuscript near him whenever he is in the *hadra*. Most of them also bring with them while moving around or travelling from place to place. They usually write down poems in exercise books or on sheets of paper cut in the size of a book and bound with hard cover.

So far the overlapping nature of written media on the composition and performance of Islamic Poetry has been considered. Moreover the practice of some professional and non-professional poets, and the aims and effects of written and oral media have been looked at. Now the third aspect, transmission will be considered.

3.4. Transmission of *Ajām*

The predominant mode of transmission in oral poetry is oral discourse and the face-to-face interaction of the poet with his audience. *Ajām* is not exceptional. Yet, the criterion of "oral transmission" is not an easy and straightforward yardstick that can be used with confidence since the theoretical dispute among scholars from different schools over the meaning and mode of transmission does not seem to have been settled

yet (Finnegan, 1977). Issues such as “pure oral transmission”, face-to-face interaction of the poet with the audience, the use of modern electronic media and the interaction of written and oral modes of transmission turn out to be complicated and undependable for differentiating between oral and written literature. Therefore since our purpose is limited to studying the facts about *ajām* in a specific social context, Wallo, rather than playing with theoretical constructs attempting to describe what people are practising will be of great importance. In doing so, facts can call up on theories that fit them or speak about themselves.

Ajām is poetry primarily composed to be performed in a *hadra*. Like all sacred stories and actions, *ajām* is valued by those who believe that truth is expressed through it. It has important things to say and its subject matter revolves around the deep and abiding concerns of human life and destiny. Thus in the context of faith, that the songs are God-given and the belief that they are divinely inspired validates their authority and makes them true rather than simply entertaining. Their functions as well as their essence presupposes a definite ceremonial act in which words, gestures, and objects are employed and acted upon to do things. In this regard religious poetry in general, *ajām* in particular is a work of art designed to be performed in the ritual setting and in the presence of audience. The ritual that manifests *ajām* and the various ingredients are also like drama primarily intended to be performed. In such a way, *ajām* is like a script of a play written for performance, either by reciting or by declaiming or by singing. Yet as a play can serve as a piece of literature for personal enjoyment or for academic purpose, *ajām* could also exist as script or being read as a piece of poetry, out of ceremonial contexts.

The various religious occasions, and ceremonial processes where and when *hadrat* may be held is the stage where *ajām* is actualized. They may involve a large or a small number of people who may act as an audience or play a certain role in the performance. The process of communication between the poet and the participants is carried out orally. The poet has no means to reach the participants except employing a speech act. The participants also have no other means to receive the poet’s art except through listening. Whether he performs orally or uses his manuscript, the poet must convert

those written songs into verbal media in order to reach the audience. Thus in *hadrat* the poet cannot avoid confrontation with participants.

Therefore, festivals such as *Eid-al-Arafa*, *Eid-Al-Fatir* and *Māwliḍ* are occasions that bring together a large audience at a specific place and time. Other occasions like the *Ramadan* night gathering and the popular *wādajja* are also contexts that involve relatively a small audience in the performance of *ajām*.

However, there are exceptional cases to be considered in other contexts. In rare cases, and most often in contexts out of performance, *ajām* can be transmitted through written media. At the shrines where the tradition of writing and reading is strong *ajām* manuscripts circulate among the *Ulama* and the *dārässa*. At the shrine one may copy a manuscript or have it copied for him by a scribe, usually his student, or may borrow and memorize it. In order to know the degree and frequency of circulation, one should conduct intensive field research. But, except very few Muslims who are *ulama*, no one possesses *ajām* manuscripts. Three reasons explain the narrow circulation of *ajām* manuscripts. Firstly, all the manuscripts are written in Arabic and deciphering them is a laborious task that requires knowledge of Arabic as well as Amharic grammar and phonology. Secondly, for fear of imitation and plagiarism poets tend to be secretive about their art. Therefore the number of different copies circulating at the shrines among the *ulama* are very small. Thirdly, at the shrine, and generally in Wallo the tradition of publishing has not started yet. Despite the long history of writing there are no professional scribes who make their living out of writing and duplicating local manuscripts, especially *ajām* compositions. No attempt is also made to publish *ajām* collections in the modern printing technology. Consequently popularization and distribution of *ajām* has been more dependent upon the ear than the eye.

Still another point should be clear at this juncture. The concept of oral transmission, and the various modes of transmission and distribution are more complex than we used to believe. Finnegan (1977:169) has an interesting piece of advice for practitioner students of oral poetry. She writes:

The many contributory means of distribution are thus [in the twentieth century] now even more complex than in earlier centuries; one must look not only at interaction between a written text and word-of-mouth forms, but also at the involvement of mechanically reproduced oral means by which large audiences can (on occasion) be reached, and multiple identical versions of the same poem produced and distributed.

The points made here concern the use of non-folk instruments like microphone and tape recorder. The involvement of such electronic devices in transmission and distribution of *ajām* is worth some discussion at this point.

At the shrine, like the mosques and churches at Addis Ababa, *azzan* (Ar. a call to prayer) and prayers are broadcast by megaphones. At events and rituals where a large mass of people gather, public announcements, notices, prayers and *Qur'an* recitals are broadcast from the mosque, where the *ulama* and the ceremonial leaders have seats. The same is true of songs. The *Madih* reached thousands of participants around the shrine by using a standing megaphone. During the festival of *Eid-al-Fatir* and *Ed-al-Arafa*, at the mosques where the events take place, poets make use of megaphones of varying capacities to deliver their songs. The use of such non-folk instruments does not make participants suspect the sacredness of the songs.

Currently the modern tape-recorder has much more influence on the distribution and transmission of *ajām*. This is attested by the numerous tape cassettes sold in Music Shops at many towns. The tradition of recording *ajām* in tape-recordings seems to have dated since the late 1950's and continued to the present time. Poets, especially professionals seem to be aware of the advantage of using tape recordings to reach large audiences. On two of his cassettes *Hajji Hussien* begin his songs with the following lines.

ክፈትና ቴብህን
ሰማ በለው ልብህን።
አድርገህ አሳብህን የጠራ ዲን መንገድ።

Let you turn on the record player.
Have your heart set on the songs
Keeping your mind on the true *Dinn*

It is not clear whether the intention of the poet using the electronic media, especially the cassette tapes is commercial or not. From the information I collected from various towns in Wallo I have learned that some poets sell their songs in the same way the lyric singers do. This kind of recordings are usually easily identified because they hold information and copyright notices. The recording is also relatively of better quality and usually exhibits little noise and disruption. It also seems to be professional studio recording rather than direct recording at a ritual performance. However, these types of recordings are very few in number when compared with the non-professional recordings available on market.

From Dessie, Kombolcha, Haik and Merssa, the name of thirty- three poets whose songs are on the market have been listed down. Five of these poets have three cassettes each, while six of them have two each. The highest number of different recordings is composed by *Hajji Hussien Madih* of Kombolcha. Nineteen cassettes of *Manzumat*, a collection of *ajäms* and *Arabiy* are on market bearing his name. All the poets are men and Janoye is the only woman poet in Wallo whose songs are on the market (see appendix 1).

Some music shops have collections from the earliest period upto the present time. Anwar Music Shop at Jibruk in Desse has a rich collection of *Manzuma* from early 1960's upto the recent time. The earliest recording, perhaps the first *ajäm* on tape cassette is a *häyyä* composed by *Šeik Adam Darka* who was *Abagar*, *Wäli* and poet throughout Wallo. According to informants¹⁴ these *ajams* are recorded at *hadrat* with the permission of the poet. Since sound reproducing instruments were rare during those days, the recordings were not made with commercial motives. Informants also¹⁵ have similar view about some other poets of the earliest times. The songs of *Šäik Muhammed Amin* of Agamsa in Yajju, *Šeik Siyraj Batho* of Jama Nigus and some other poets of the 1960's are some of the earliest recordings which have become much commercialized in recent years.

Commercialization and wide distribution of *ajäm* are the outcomes of the recent spread of tape recorders and cassette tapes. The demand for *ajäm* cassettes has increased since

the late 1970s due to the spread of tape recorders and as a result multiple identical versions of the same song are produced and distributed in towns and rural areas.

Although a number of *ajām* is flourishing and there is a great demand on the market, little is known on how those songs appear in the market. Both poets and shop owners in various towns in Wallo are not interested in discussing the matter openly. As mentioned above one can only guess about those songs that are published by certain music shops and bear some information on the cover papers of the cassette cases. Some of these poets, *Hajji* Hamid is one example, confess openly that they make their living by selling their songs (Tibbabu 1984). If Tibbabu's (1984) information is dependable it is the only case we have regarding the commercial motive of *ajām* poets. Ishihara (1996:216) also observes similar situations from Jimma. She offers names of "*qisida*" composers of two categories. The first type of poets are poets "whose cassette tapes had never appeared in shops". The second group concerns poets with business motives and she more boldly mentions a name of a poet who "put five cassette tapes of *qasidas* on the market." Despite its being interesting, Ishihara is sceptical about how those songs were put on the market and why the other poets didn't put on their songs on the market.

According to the researcher's observation there are at least three ways in which a certain *ajām* can be put on market. Professional recording and the need to make money is the obvious, but a rarely happening case, as described above. But to conclude that all poets used to put their songs for motives related to business seems to be an oversimplified generalization. Thus it is important to consider the other two factors related to the issue.

Three of our informants (poets)¹⁶ are irritated by the greed of the Music shop owners. The poets claim that their songs are put on market without their wish and consent. *Hajji* Hussien *Madih*, a contemporary poet, whose 19 cassettes are put on the market has the following to say about the commercialization of his songs:¹⁷

I do not know how the shopmen got the songs. I am not interested and it is not ethical to make money with the sacred songs as the lyric poets

used to do. I never go to any of the shops and negotiate a sale. But every performance of mine is on the market. Since I can't protect it these days I let it go. I do suspect one thing though. Whenever I compose a new *ajam* I use to make a record of it and offer it to some friends. You know, because most people often appreciate and like them, they can borrow and/or make copies of them. In such a way they circulate from one person to another and at one time they may reach the shop owners. They make multiple versions and spread them throughout Ethiopia.

There are also more irritating conditions. From the early 1960's, the time I began giving (singing) *ajām* to the present day, some people used to record my songs from the actual performance by using hidden recording machines. This has been done from the time of phonographs up to this very time of modern pocket-size tape recorders. One thing, but different - some year ago I stayed some months with friends in Jeddah. This time some Ethiopians living in Jeddah were in a very difficult situation. You know they were in a foreign country, and as a Muslim I have a moral obligation to help brothers and sisters. Thus, I provided them with two cassette tapes of songs, one *ajam* and the other *Arabiyy* so that they sell them and make use of the money. The songs are published and distributed by *Najjaht* Music Shop at Jeddah.

Hajji Hussen mentioned points, which *Šeik* Muhammed Tuahir, the *Imam* of Haik Mosque, in Ambassel and also a poet, and *Šeik* Muhammed Arba a poet at Getta, strongly emphasized. Some music shopmen also admit being involved in corruption and theft.

Two shop owners¹⁸ one in Dessie and the other in Kombolcha, told me that they usually purchase one cassette tape and make identical versions. But those shopmen confess that they also put on the market about four different cassettes of songs which were given to them by the poets in the form of gifts. Later, upon a claim from the poets, they paid some amount from the sale as a compensation.

In connection with hidden recording the claims of the poets are not far from the truth. At the annual festival of *Māwliḍ* at the Shrine at Getta, a number of young men were recording songs and competing to have the best collections. Although the poets tried to stop these young men from recording, they continued with their business irrespective of the poets' objections. Yet, after some days, some music shops at Dessie and Kombolcha were playing the tape of that particular performance loudly on the streets,

and put them on market with brands, “Šeik Hussien Getta, 1989.” After a friendly conversation a shop man at Kombolcha told me that he made the recording of that particular new “*Mänzuma*” from Getta on the main event of the *Mäwliid*. If not a sceptical attempt, the description of Assafa Mamo's (1987) field methodology is another evidence for a large possibility of hidden recording, if not the worst.

To sum up, currently *ajam* is widely transmitted through cassette tapes. The large number of different versions of songs composed and sung by many poets, become a market commodity since the late 1970's. However, it is difficult to say that the composition of *ajäm*, in the past or currently is influenced with the commercial motive of the poets. Though some poets publish their recordings in order to earn some money from poetry, the majority of *ajam* poets have still less or no economic benefit out of it.

The spread of tape recorders and the distribution of *ajäm* by cassette tapes is positively affecting the transmission and popularity of *ajam* in the present-day Wallo. Currently, listening to *ajäm* cassette tapes at *wadäjjas* and *Cat* ceremonies is a common practice in towns and rural areas. Men and women both Christians and Muslims gather together at one of their homes and chew *cat* once or twice a week. Office holders, students, teachers and businessmen practice chewing *cat* in weekends especially on Saturday afternoon. Such gatherings are usually recreational activities and do not necessarily involve all elements and ceremonial acts like the *Wädajja*. As an activity of entertainment such group sessions have nothing to do with religious rites, or may involve features from both, but without the participants totally being able to suspend the ordinary and the conventional and fully delve into ritual devotion. Thus the session is more of ordinary and secular nature without the attempt to entertain a holy presence, and without a compromise of one's belief. The session, therefore, usually involves discussions related to secular and religious matters.

The most common type of song listened to in such informal group sessions is the *häyyä*. Because the *häyyä* songs do not necessarily deal with powerful religious statements and religious lessons they appeal to personal emotions. They also expresses various attitudes, feelings and values. Therefore, these songs facilitate meditation and lead one

to the unstructured sources of our beings, to the unknown, and return us to our structured selves refreshed. In short, like any piece of good poetry, the *häyyä* touches the depth of our humanity. It cleanses, heals, restores and transcends the realm of the soul: and it is religious.

Listening to the cassette tapes on other relatively formal occasions is also a common experience. A certain class of women, the bar girls, living in the same room or working together usually arrange a group session once or twice a week. The session mostly takes place on Thursday or/and Friday evenings. The session differs from the conventional *Wādajja* ceremony because it lacks experts or religious leaders and the authentic ceremonial acts performed by them. Otherwise it shares the purposes and major elements of the *Wādajja*. Women practising such a regular group sessions usually listen to songs that belong to *häyyä* and *qissa* genres. Here the cassette tapes replace the poet who lacks that particular context. These types of group sessions mostly aim at seeking divine help and are considered as rites of supplication, purification or both.

The above instances point to the fact that transmission of *ajām* currently depends more on cassette tapes than the face to face communication of the poet with his audience. The spread of cassette tapes and the practice of listening to them facilitate memorization and recital at large. Many people in presentday Wallo can recite some couplets or passages of *ajām*, and many other men and women can sing a full song along with the cassette tapes. Sometimes one can even find some men and women reciting *ajāms* that they memorize by heart. The reciters can learn a poem after frequent hearing. Sometimes the learning process seems to be unconscious for some reciters cannot tell how, where and from whom they learned them. But the comparison of different versions of poems usually shows high degree of similarity and word-to-word correspondence with the original.

Some reciters also memorize by selecting couplets and stanzas that they consider sufficiently beautiful and important from different poets. These reciters imitate the structural frame and tune of one poet and juxtapose the verses that they picked up from different poets or different songs of the same poet. Poems that involve juxtaposition can

be considered as original compositions for they show departure from the style of a particular poet, or inhibit a considerable degree of possible changes or involve omission or transposition of lines and addition of new elements.

In the field we have met some reciters who are endowed with high power of memory and can learn a poem after hearing it only once. Some poets with such high memory power, for instance Eshatu Argaw at Harrago, Dessie Zurya, are not only capable of memorizing a long poem but at a ripe age they could recite many poems that they learnt many years ago. Such an extraordinary talent enables such men to specialize in certain genres of *ajam*, and become an expert in matters related to the *jinn* and the *zar*.

In conclusion, the above discussion has been focused on issues related to composition, performance and transmission of *ajam*. *Ajäm* is mostly composed by specialist or otherwise expert poets. Specialist poets are locally called *Madih*. The *Madih* has the skill to compose *Manzuma*, a collection of songs in Arabic and Amharic. Poetry composed in Arabic is locally called *Arabiy* the one composed in Amharic is *ajäm*. *Ajäm*, in the case of specialist poets is composed in written forms. But, because experts are mostly little learned or illiterate, they often compose their songs orally. Thus the written form of composition predominates the composition of *ajam*. The performance of *ajäm* is to a great extent oral. The *Madih* memorizes his script and delivers his song at the *hadra*. Except in some cases most *Madihs* deliver their composition orally. But some times, when the poet suspects memory failure due to overworking and the like, he may use his manuscripts. The same is true with transmission. At Shrines there is some chance for circulation of manuscripts. Yet, *ajäm* greatly depends on oral media like the cassette tape recordings which play the most important role in dissemination and transmission.

3.5. Classification

Categorizing things in terms of the similarities and differences they show is a commonly shared experience in all types of scientific investigations. But in literature there are no precise criteria for the distinction of universal categories as there are in the sciences.

In an effort to classify the various forms of Islamic Poetry the first and the necessary step I have tried to take is to elicit the local terms and to define all these terms according to the tradition under study. Local names are not useful only as starting points but also reflect the cultural conception and significance of each form. As Ben-Amos (in Lindfors: 1977:3; 1982:134) precisely puts it “the semantic components of such terms constitute sets of features which the speakers of a language regard as the primary qualities of each verbal form. These are the characteristics of a genre which signify the symbolic meaning of a given form in a culture.” Thus, since our aim is to discover what literary forms occur within the specific genre *ajām*, which is practised in a specific religious culture we shall focus on the indigenous generic terms as recognized by the people themselves.

Essentially then, we shall present a preliminary description of the various forms of Islamic Poetry and brief account of the etymological meaning of the terms and their current use since it provides us with the key to understanding the significance of the forms.

× Muslims in Wallo categorize their poems into four forms and describe them as *tawhid*, *madh* (*mālk*), *qissa* and *hāyyä*. All these four terms derive their etymological root from Arabic. But the semantic components of the terms reflect the religious experience and life of the *Walloye* than the language and culture they are derived from. However, we don't have sufficient evidence to confirm whether these Arabic terms are used in other cultures, where Islamic tradition is dominant. But some of these Arabic terms, particularly, *madh* and *qissa* signify two distinct literary forms. In the Arabic tradition *qissa* is the general term for any narrative, equivalent to the English term “story” and the traditional Arabic narrative poetry is *qissda* (Preminger 1993:86). The Wallo Muslims however, apply the term *qissa* for all forms of narratives, expressed in prose and verse. Unlike the Arabs, the latter use the term *qissa* for narratives that deal with religious subject matter only.

Madh, in Arabic means praise. The Wallo Muslims use the term *Madh* interchangeably with *Mälh* and *Mälk*. In Arabic as well as among the Wallo Muslims the terms designate the type of poems that praise some one. But among the Wallo Muslims poems categorized under *Malh/Mälk* are in their strict sense religious. The other two terms in which the Wallo Muslims name their poems are also derived from Arabic. *Tawhiid* in Arabic means “saying or affirming that God is one”, where *häyyä* means he rivificate, he animates or he excites.

Obviously, the above discussion illustrates how the names of the forms reflect their meaning and suggest their connection with the culture and the belief system they are used in. In the following chapter, however, each form of Islamic poetry and its characteristics will be discussed in details in term of some selected features such as content, function, structure context and style of delivery.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0. THE FOUR GENRES OF ISLAMIC POETRY IN WALLO: A PRELIMINARY DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

In the pervious chapter an attempt has been made to introduce the four poetic forms in which the Wallo Muslims categorize their poems. Efforts have also been made to define terms that are used to name each category of poems. Our definition involves etymological meaning of the terms and their current use among the Wallo Muslims. Our itinerary is now mapped out.

This chapter, then provides an extended account of the four poetic genres of Islamic poetry. Each poetic genre will be described separately, in terms of occasion, content, function, performance and structure which are the criteria we adopt to classify Islamic poetry. These criteria consider both textual and cultural aspects of oral poetry and are integral parts of the poetic tradition under discussion. But it is hard to discuss one element without the involvement of the others since a genre is more than the sum total of its attributes. For such a reason, and more importantly, in conveying a coherent descriptive analysis, holistic approach, we believe, enable us to provide much information on each genre.

4.1. Tawhiid: A didactic poem

Tawhiid, relatively speaking, is a permanent genre of Muslim poetry in Wallo. In early 1920's Enrico Cerulli (1926) has collected 116 verse lines that exhibit many corresponding features with the present-day *tawhiid* poems.¹ Cerulli's collection suggests the stability of the genre through the years. These poems are identified with their contents and their explicit didactic interests.

Tawhiid poems are marked by conventional openings, a praise of God and His Prophet and religious instructions. These poems typically open with some invocations that convey identical meanings. The following three openings which appear in five poems are typical of their kinds.

A/ አላሁ አከበር አላሁ አከበር ሱብሃን አላሁ አከበር።	God is most great God is most great Glory be to God!
B/ አላሁ ሙስሊም፣ ወአላ ሙሀመዴ ሰይዲና አላ ሙሀመዴ።	In the name of God, the Compassionate May the peace of God be upon him, Muhammed His Messenger.
C/ አላሁ አላህ፣ አላህ ጆሊሉ ያሰብነው ሀጃ ይውጣ በሙሉ።	Our God; God the merciful Grant us all that we sought.

The openings of *tawhiid* poems, appear as refrains and are recurrently repeated word for word at the end of every stanza.

Tawhiid, with no exception, is the sphere of specialist poets. In this category of poems the emphasis is on the religious knowledge of the poet, particularly of the Qur'an and *hadith* than the individual creativity of the performer. He is thus required to have a deep knowledge of the scriptures, as well as a considerable skill of music and poetry.

The performance of *tawhiid* is antiphonal and involves mixed delivery style. As with many antiphonal performances the refrain is assigned to a chorus while the verses are recited by the performer. The conventional style for delivering verses in this particular genre is recitation where refrains are sung. Therefore, the reciter says his verses with a tune marked by a pace faster than ordinary speech and accompanied by regular rhythms and heightened pitch of voice. Content, in *tawhiid*, dominates over music and dancing, and the performance is accompanied neither by drum beating nor by hand clapping. Only the refrain is sung by the audience.

The occasion for the performance of *tawhiid* poetry varies from place to place. However, *Ramadan* evening prayers and *Dua'as* at the mosque or at the Shrines and the festival of *Eid-al-Fatir* are occasions that bring a large number of audience in a particular setting.

Tawhiid poems are intended to give religious instruction and often directed at the younger and the unlearned members of the community. Therefore, at the mosque, during the month of *Ramadan*, the performance of *tawhiid* poetry takes place, when

the evening *Salaat* is over. The audience of the performance are usually young Muslim boys and girls who come to the mosque to attend religious ceremonies and to perform religious duties. Similar performances are also take place in the mosque, at the presence of a large audience on the celebration of the end of the *Ramadan*. This time the performance is not directed exclusively to the youth, but also includes every Muslim coming to the Mosque.

These occasions are different from the other occasions of presenting Islamic poem for they do not involve chewing *cat*, making coffee and burning incense. Events that could involve those elements of the *hadra* are the *Ramadan* nights *Du'aa* and the *Eid-hadra* held at the mosque, at shrines and at home. On such occasions, *tawhiid* recital involves the participation of even the best educated Muslims, the *Ulama*. Poems recited in the presence of the *Ulama* contain the same subject matter and are still didactic, but marked with indirect instruction and better poetic quality. Therefore, *tawhiid* poems can roughly be divided into the much straight forward religious lessons and the moralizing poems.

Those poems aiming at indoctrinating the younger and the uneducated members show higher degree of dependence on the *Qur'an* and *hadith*. The contents of such poems are selected from the two scriptures and are graded on principles of continuity and the degree of complexity. These poems focus on selected domains of themes such as the Five Pillars of Islam, the six articles of *Imaan*, and the *Shariih*. These three areas of Islamic doctrine, and the detailed points each involves, are arranged before hand in the sequence they appear above. The poet always tries to do his best to present his lesson to the audience in the simplest and clearest expressions.

Since the theme of *tawhiid* poems are drawn from identical sources, the chance for verbal and thematic variation is insignificant, especially in poems designed to teach the youth and the illiterate. Therefore, we will examine a well-known didactic poem by *Hajji* Hussien Madih of Kombolcha, as a representative sample.

The poem begins by counting the Five Pillar's of Islam according to their degree of significance. It presents facts in such a manner as:

ሙስሊም ከተባልን ያለውቁም ነገር
እስልምና አምስት ብሎ ነው መንገር።

የመጀመሪያው ተአምስቱ ቁጥር
ጌታ የለም ነው ተጀሊል ቢቀር።

ሙሀመድ አሚን የከውኑ ጀምበር
ለኛው ተልኳል በራሀመቱ በር።

ደሞም ሶላት ነው ታሉ የማይቀር
እብድና ሕፃን ታልሆኑ በቀር።

ሶስተኛው ዘካ ላገኘ ገበር
የእንሰሳም የእሕል የወርቅም የብር።
ቀጥሎም ያም ነው በሮመዳን ወር
አቅሉን ላወቀ አመቱ ሲዞር።
ደግሞም ሀጂ ነው መካ መሻገር
ደርሶ ለመምጣት ለማይቸገር
ፈላጊ ተሆን የእውቀትን ነጥር
እዚህ ላይ ሞላ ያምስቱ ቁጥር።

Since we are Muslim, the dutiful
We have to teach others: that
Islam comprises five orders.
Among the five, but first and for most
There is no god but God only.
Muhammed the true Messenger is
Chosen by God to provide
guidance to us (people)
The other is *Salaat*, compulsory to every
living except the mad and the kid
(who do not assume
responsibilities of the healthy and
the adult)
The rate of *Zakaat* is the third pillar for
he who has wealth.
to pay in any kind including,
Agricultural produce and Jewellery.
The next is Fasting in the month of
Ramadan
Every year, for one complete lunar
month.
Pilgrimage to the House of God,
ones in life time is also
compulsory for those who have
the means.
Here is completed the Five pillars of
Islam
For he who seek the true knowledge.

In the above lines the poet enumerates the doctrine of Islam. The poet at this and similar contexts considers himself a teacher, and uses the art of poetry as an appropriate and a convenient medium to convey his message and lesson. The intention of the poet to act as a teacher as well as his act of teaching through poetry is quiet natural and is rather a *Fard* (Ar. compulsory duty) in Islam. The poet especially the *Madih*, as a learned man who possesses *ilm* (Ar. knowledge), has a responsibility to teach other men and to propagate the messages of the *Qur'an*. An informant² emphasises the obligation of the *Mumin* by quoting a passage from the *hadith qudsi*. According to him, and of course according the *Qur'an*, at the *Day of Judgment*, a person will be judged by the preponderance of good over evil in him. *Hadith qudsi*, illustrates that, the second man in whose favour Judgment will be pronounced on the *Day of Resurrection* “will be a man who has acquired knowledge and has taught it and who used to recite the *Qua'an*.” The one who committed a sin

of omission is therefore, blameworthy and “he will be ordered to be dragged along on his face until he is cast into Hell-fire” (cited in Hamid, 1989:168).

Choosing poetry as a convenient means to discharge one’s responsibility of teaching seems to be unnatural, as poetry basically is compact, and usually involves obscurity and ambiguity of thought and language. But being aware of such problems most *tawhiid* poets have devised some mechanisms that enable them to achieve simplicity and clarity. Consequently they successfully have attained their goal by considering the nature of the subject to be communicated, the nature of the audience and the mode of communication to be employed.

The basic aim of the poet in composing *tawhiid* is to teach *Ihasan* which means in Arabic, goodness, excellence or proficiency. This can only be done by aiming for and being committed to doing things that are right and excellent. Thus in order for one to do things that are right one needs to acquire knowledge. And it is the responsibility of any Muslim to teach the youth and others who have difficulty to read and understand the *Qur’an*, which is accessible only in Arabic. The lesson usually accompanies *Islam* (Ar. submission to God), *Imaan* (Ar. faith) and *taqwa* (Ar. deep consciousness of God). Each of these three aspects of Islamic teaching are recorded in the *Qur’an* and are believed to have originated from Allah. Accordingly the words as well as the contents of the *Qur’an* are regarded as revelation and not as conscious human creations.

The revelatory character of such religious knowledge presupposes the unchanging nature of the words and phrases. The poet has no right to change or substitute the words of the *Qur’an*. Not only sticking to the words of the *Qur’an* is required, but keeping the natural sequence of the commandments as appeared in the *Qur’an* is also as essential as the words and the phrases. Therefore, the poet enumerates the Five Pillars of Islam one by one without altering their natural order. He first introduces the subject he is going to describe in such clear and vivid manner saying: “Since we are Muslim, the dutiful/ We have to teach others that the religion of God (Islam) comprises Five orders.” This introductory statement, informs the audience why they are listening and what they are listening for. Then he isolates the Key features and

presents them one by one, each time by stressing the sequence markers. Words and phrases such as “The first is, the other is, the third is” help the audience to focus on the sequence as well as the importance of each feature. Moreover each of the five basics of Islam are described in isolated couplets with end rhymes in order to avoid confusion. After stressing each feature in this manner the poet then provides a concluding remark before he counting elements of *Imaan* which are the second aspect of Islam. The end of one lesson and the beginning of the other is marked with a recurring refrain which also serves as a transitional phase. The recurring refrain invites the audience to take part in choral participation, and reduces the difficulties of comprehension, fatigue and the resultant inattention.

In the next section a new motif enters into the poem, and the poet makes his audience familiar with it: the six articles of *Imaan*:

ሙስሊም ከተባልን ያለው ቁምነገር
እንደ እስልምና ኢማን እንንገር

Being Muslims and being dutiful
Let us tell *Imaan* according to Islam.

ስድስት ናቸው የኢማን ነገር
ግድ ነው ማወቅ እንዳንችል።

Imaan comprises six things
It is a must to know all, in order not be
troubled.

ባላህ ማመን ነው አለጥርጥር
ጥርት አድርገን ሳንሆን ድክር።

We have to believe in God
And convinced beyond the least shadow
of a doubt.

መላኢከቶችን አምነን እንኑር
የፈጠራቸው ጌታችን ተኑር።
በኪታቦቹም ባላቸው ቁጥር

We have to believe in the Angles
As God created them from Light.
We have to accept the numerous
Scriptures

አውርዷል ብለን አለጥርጥር።

As they being given and attributed to God.
In order not to be the last one (to enter
in heaven) even the *Mu'min*,
must believe in the Messengers of
God.

በሙርሰሎቹም ማመን ነው ተምር
ኋላ እንዳንሆን ተሞእሚን ጭምር።
ደግሞም ማመን ነው በአሚላሂል።

We also have to believe in resurrection;
The joy coming on the Last Day.
The sixth is believing in the Divine
Justice;
The act of just recompense, of reward and
punishment

መጨረሻ ቀን ያለው ያሂል።

ስድስተኛው ነው ማመን በቀድሮ
ችሎት ባላህ ነው ብሎ መሀደር።

The poet in the above stanza presents the articles of faith in isolation and sequence as to believe in God with all His attributes, in His angles, His scriptures, His messengers and the coming of Hereafter that involves resurrection and judgement. These are presented by indicating each point clearly and by organizing them with independent rhyming couplets sequentially. Such a method of organizing information will facilitate effective listening and help the audience at least to pick the main points up.

Most *tawhiid* poems are instructive in tone. They usually present instructions or communicate information in a carrot-and-stick approach. Therefore, most poets emphasise the phrase "should not" or add lines of warning that tell the unpleasant consequences which result from being *Kaafir* (Ar. one who rejects *imaan*) and in omitting or failing to perform duties such as *Salaat*, or Fasting in the month of *Ramadan*.

As it has been described above, the aim of *tawhiid* is instructing the youth and the illiterate who have no knowledge of the *Qur'an* and *hadith*. Since basic knowledge and information need simplicity and clarity, poets aiming at indoctrinating the youth usually organize their lessons by focusing on general areas and by grading texts.

However, *tawhiid* poems are not exclusive to the unlettered Muslims and the youth. They are also recited during the *Ramadan* nights *Du'aa* at the mosque, or at the Shrine or at home, where the *mu'min* and the *ulama* are taking part. Poems recited at such group gatherings usually aim at rectification of errors and establishment of deep consciousness of God. Nonetheless, poems of this kind are not much different in purpose or subject matter from poems designed to teach the youth. Both types of poems use the same material, derived from the same source, but they differ in the way they make use of the material. Therefore the difference is rather in the degree of treatment, and depth. Poems aiming in ratification in general, have a duty to cultivate good and desirable qualities, and give lessons about living according to the highest moral standards which man is capable of. Some of these qualities which are stressed in such poems are truthfulness, honesty, politeness, generosity, compassion, forgiveness and thankfulness. On the other hand, these poems condemn noxious

qualities and habits such as lying, dishonesty, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, conceit and the like.

In general, the purpose of this kind of *tawhiid* poem seem to have giving guidance, particularly in moral and ethical precepts other than offering straightforward religious instructions. Although these poems attempt to preserve and develop the innate goodness of man morally and spiritually as religion does, the main emphasis of these poems is still Islamic. In relation to these, *tawhiid* poets, yearn to advise the learned or the grown-up on good and bad. They blame, for example, pride, attire, consulting soothsayers, drinking alcohol, and alien individual behavior and social practices which they feel are *haraam* (Ar. unlawful) and *fassad* (Ar. corruption or chaos). Since their main focus is on proper behavior these category of *tawhiid* poems are religious in tone and content and draw there lessons from the Scriptures. But the poets are free to treat these materials as they wish.

Another significant and common theme of *tawhiid* poetry is the "desirability" of the Hereafter. All *tawhiid* poets emphasize that all men must die, that the glory of *Dunya* (Ar. the present world) passes away, that judgments awaits them in the *Al-Aakhirah* (Ar. the next world). Directly or indirectly they teach us that our position in the *Al-Aakhirah* is shaped by our present life and all of us will be judged on the basis of our deeds.

The theme of the Last Judgement, however, dominates those poems directed to the *ulama* as well as the faithful. Such poems usually involve eschatological materials from the *Qur'an* and some conventional images and scenes of the Last Day. An example is "*ya qābir hāded*" (Am. The Highway of Death) by Šeik Muhammed Toahir. This is a long *tawhiid* poem which runs to over twenty pages in the Amharic text. The poet begins with a prelude and meditates on the transitoriness of life, the vanishing nature of the glory of this world, the danger of eternal domination and looks into his own heart. The poet then, changes the narrative voice of the poem and brings a dead friend, buried recently, to tell us his experience of the grave. The persona of the poem then, provides the audience with detailed accounts of events related to the suffering of the *ruhh* (Ar. Soul) by the time we are asked to write down

the record of our deeds on earth on the Day of Judgement. He also mourns over the destruction of the parts of his body, the loss of his wealth, his loneliness in the grave and goes on to instruct us to carry out our religious duties. After a long but touching description of personal experience the persona makes his exit and the poet begins speaking in his own voice.

The epilogue, then considers the description of the Last Day. In a very vivid, awe-inspiring language, the poem sketches the outline of the Last Day. By the time the Last Day comes, the poem tells us, the world as we know it will be brought to an end in a terrifying cosmic cataclysm. By the complete upset of the present cosmos and the dislocation of the heaven and the earth, *Al-Aakhirah* begins with the resurrection of man. Then the Day of Judgement follows. Just as each person is born as a single individual, so he will be raised up and judged individually. Each of us will be recompensed for our deeds either with reward in Heaven or Punishment in Hell.

In contrast with the other poems in the genre, this poem exhibits creativity and imagination. The poet draws most of his images from the *Qur'an*. The story of the dead friend is imaginative. Thus depicting the poet as being is more inventive and fanciful than those other poets cited in this section.

4.2. *Mālk* (*Mālh*): A Verbal Portrait

Mālk is a descriptive poem, a verbal portrait or more seemingly a verbal icon that praises the name, the physique and the personal qualities of prophet Muhammed and certain *Awlaya* and expresses invocations and supplications of the devotee. Therefore, the genre mixes features from hymn and panegyric. Like hymn it deals with expressing religious emotions, pious feelings and religious aspirations, and like panegyric it eulogizes a person for his physical and emotional qualities.

Mālk, composed by Muslim poets, bears notable resemblances to the *Mālk* narratives of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in formal features and contents. But, it is in the literary tradition of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church that the genre is developed in its

most specialized form. In both literary traditions, though the degree of specialization may vary, the genre is concerned with keeping pantheon of saints /*Awlaya*, their power of intercession, their iconography, their symbolic association and their legends and myths in the memory of the believers.

In both traditions, the genre concentrates more on rendering the portrait of holy men than recounting the lives and heroic achievements by them. Yet, as qualities are revealed best through a person's action, the *Mälk* often refers to events of historical significance, incidents from the life of the person and to a related incident in other scriptures.

Generally, poems and narratives included in this genre are short and are broken up into smaller units, chapters and stanzas. *Mälk* narratives, belonging to the Ethiopian orthodox church are written in prose with no exception and divide the text into chapters. For instance, *Mälk-a-Georgis*³ (Am. the portrait of St. Gorege) is a narrative of 1,265 words and 35 chapters where as *Mälk a-Maryam*⁴ (Am. the portrait of St. Mary), the longest narrative of its kind, has 2,179 words and is divided into 61 chapters.

On the contrary *Mälk* poems written by Muslim Scholars seem to be much more shorter. In comparison to other genres in Islamic poetry, the *Mälk* is also the shortest one. It may range from 65 to 160 verse lines and from five to forty stanzas.

For the Orthodox Christians and the Muslims of Wallo, *Mälk* texts are considered sacred texts by means of which a believer would seek the help of saints. Since saint/*Wäli* veneration is a common practice in Christianity and Islam *Mälk* texts addressing the various saints/ *Awlaya* and the two prophets, Jesus and Muhammed, are used in prayers by the followers of the respective faith. Each of these texts, for example, *Malk-a-Iyasus*⁵ or the *Portrait of Jesus*, a collection of laudations and hymns dedicated to Jesus Christ, is read on the sixth day of the Ethiopian month, in commemoration of Him. These *Mälks* are read in private, usually before or after mass.

Among Muslims *Mälk* is sung in rituals and group worship occasions. *Mälk*, dedicated to Muhammed, is sung in the Arabic month of *Rabee'a el-Awwal*, the month in which Prophet Muhammad was born, and particularly in the week of *Mäwliid*, in ceremonies held at shrines and homes. Informants⁶ told that these poems are also sung at the first week of the Arabic Month of *Moharram* on the commemoration of the *Hijrah*. The *Hijrah* refers to the Prophet's journey from Makkah to Madineh in the twelfth year of his mission, corresponding to June 622 A.D, (the Islamic calendar begins from this event) (Hamid, 1989:178). Thus, in order to fix the importance of the event in the first seven days of the Month of *Moharram* certain Shrines arrange special *hadrat* that accommodate the *ulama* and certain believers from the surrounding localities.

Muslims in Wallo have only few *Mälks* dedicated to the *Awlaya*. The most common among them are *Mälks* dedicated to Sharif-al-Dinn Ibrahim of Daggar, the most prolific *Wäli* and mystic throughout the region. Poems dedicated to Sharif-al-Din Ibrahim are sung on the annual celebration of his day in October, on Thursday night *hadra* at his shrine in Daggar, and at *Wädajas* held in individual homes.

As a combinations of eulogies, prayers and hymns dedicated to a specific saint/*wäli* or Prophet, the *Mälk* is always ordered according to certain conventions. A *Mälk* begins its operation by invoking the name of the particular *wali* it addresses. For instance, *Mälks* lauding Muhammed open with invocations that contain many Arabic words such as:

ሕወሐድ ስሙ
አላሁ ሙሴሴም አላሙሀመድ
ሰይዲና ወሐላ ሙሀመድ

In the name of God, the compassionate,
 May peace of God be upon Muhammed.

Mälks alluring the *Awlaya* are also contain invocations in their opening lines. The following two examples appear as opening lines in four *Mälk* poems addressing Sherif-al-Dinn Ibrahim:

ሺሊላ ቁጥበ ሀበሻ

Šillila the *qutib* of *Abašša* (the pole
of Ethiopia)

ሸሪፋ የኛ መሸሻ

Šarifu Our Saviour

The other is:

አርሂቡ ጌታው መስጦፋ

Come in Lord Mustofa;

አርሂቡ ጌታው መስጦፋ

Please come in our Lord

The opening lines, then, like hymns address an absent man by using a figure of speech, the apostrophe. Invocations in *Mälk* are marked with repetitions that come in the form of refrain at the end of every stanza, and remains constant throughout the text. Refrains in *Mälk* are in general “carole” refrains, a completely separate stanza sung as a chorus at the end of every stanza. Repetitions in *Mälk* are employed by deliberate design which add force and clarity to the invocation so that it result in effective persuasion.

The performance of *Mälk*, in Islamic tradition in Wallo is essentially antiphonal. The focus is on the performer who sings the largest part in solo. The audience takes part in singing the refrain and accompany the performance by hand clapping and by drum beating. While singing the *Mälk*, the soloist and the audience take a standing position. The only man allowed to squat down is the one who beats the drums. The drummer is usually an experienced *Šeik* or an apprentice who has established a bond with that particular poet at performance.

The soloist introduces the audience with the refrain of the song in the way the *tawhiid* poet does. The audience also pick the words up easily for those words are common in the daily Islamic worships and prayers. Since most participants have participated several times in *hadrat* they know when and how to respond to the songs. Yet sometimes the soloist will be forced to repeat the opening lines over and over again until the “orchestra” becomes coordinated.

Having familiarized the audience with the refrain, the soloist continues singing lines of the first stanza with slow melodious tune. The slow speed of the performance gives more weight to the verbal contents of the song than to the melody and the

rhythm. Contents sung by the soloist also cover much time as these songs involve developed verbal contents.

The grouping of lines in a stanza is regulated by qualitative measures. The *Mälik* poet depicts a series of pictures related to each other to form a consistent series. Each stanza presents a verbal picture of a certain part of the body of the hero. There is nothing random about the ordering of the details. Infact, one can tell that the poet enjoys producing symmetry and harmony thus effectively portraying the physical and moral significance of the poem or genre.

In every stanza, pictorial description takes the form of self-contained sections and develops images in consistent continuity. And this enables the audience to focus on one aspect at a time. The effect is strongly cinematic. The eye of the camera moves into poem-space, showing the details of one body part in close-up, and then follows and enters into another body part. Thus we follow the horizontal axis of the human body, seeing the size, shape and colour of each body part as it would be seen in reality, and thereby confirming its three dimensional solidity.

Of all the poems in our collection the most splendid description is found in a poem by *Seik Adem Indris*. A description of Prophet Muhammed and an eulogy dedicated for him occupies over eighty lines. The poem is carefully planned to combine the reverence the poet has for the prophet, on the one hand and his personal prayer on the other. After introducing the refrain of the song the poet then describes a god-like image of the prophet. He says:

የወንጀሌን ጎራ በሰሙ ልናደው
እንደ ነቢ የለም አላህ የወደደው
አረቡ አጅሙ ሁሉ ያከበደው
አንዴ ተለከፈ ፍቅሩ ያሳበደው
ድግምት እንዲበሉ ዝህድና እሚሰደው
ሊሃድር ቲል እንዲህ እሚለው ዘገዴው

In his name, let me crash the heap of
crime
No one is loved by Allah like the
prophet
The Arab and the non-Arab, all
glorifying him.
Once, He Loves, His Love maddens
It inspired asceticism, as if one were
under a spell
It comes in Suddenly, when the
hadra is in the ascendant

The motif of “Love” is a dominating feature, and appear almost in each line in the stanza. The repetition is both at the lexical and semantic level. The beloved is the Prophet, and his lovers are all human beings, the Arabs, the non-Arabs and God. The repetition then provokes thoughts about an extra ordinary magical Love that maddens everybody. By doing so, therefore, the poet joyfully expresses his feeling, Love, commitment and wonder, to/get redemption in return. Therefore, the poem has more than one functions. It serves as a praise and adoration for the Prophet on the one hand, and as a prayer, petition or penitence on the other. By implication both cases mark the poem as something holy and valuable in itself. The legitimate values then provide the poet with a secure position from which he can be understood. They also position the audience to accept and endorse the discourse of the legitimate voice of the poet, as being inspired by the Love of the holy prophet.

Once he has established a legitimate position the poet continues singing his joyful praise. He begins his praise by introducing the name of the hero and his mother’s name:

መልክዎ እንዲህ ነበር ሙሀመድ አሚን
አሚናት ልጅ ወልዳ ቀልብ እሚያባክን
ወዱ ቀልብ ያሳጣል ያስለቅሳል አይን።

Here is the picture of Muhammed
Amin
Amenat gave birth to a
lovely and attractive child
His Love makes one imprudent and
caused (him) cry.

In the above three verse lines the poet does not only introduce the hero, but also makes a strong impression on his audience. The structure of thought in these lines seems unusual for it is not put in the logical order. Logically the position of line one is in the position of line three, as a person will get his name after being born. However the arrangement of these lines as they are put by the poet suggests the part which has to be focused on. Thus, by ordering the lines the poet emphatically calls the attention of the audience to the concern of the poem: the physical appearance of Muhammed Amin. Ordering lines in such emphatic position also informs us that the physical attributes to be described refer to prophet Muhammed during his adulthood

than his child-hood days. This idea is suggested by the poet's deliberate choice of the word *Mälkiwä*, *thy* appearance than *Mälku*, *his* appearance.

The above lines, besides the significance they have as introduction, provide a kind of frame image into which we can fit the details of the physical and moral attributes to be described. Thus, after providing the identity of the person to be described, the poet then, proceeds to give the details to be set in the frame given.

አሰረግጦ ላየው ቅንድቦችዎን	Thy eyebrows appear beautiful
ተውሃት የፈሰሰው ይመስላል ኩሉን	It is blak like kohl
ጠጉሩ ሣሣ ያለ እጅግ ብዙ አይሆን።	Thy hair is fair.

These three lines render an elaborate picture of the eyebrows of the hero. The eyebrow described by comparison with kohl, cosmetic powder used to darken the eyebrow. The nature of the hair is also suggested as fair and impressive.

ዓይኔ ማማሩ ሣይኳል ተከሏል	Thy eye appears ornamented
እዳርዳሩ ያለው ጠጉሩ ያህጅባል።	with kohl
	For <i>thy</i> eyelash is remarkably attractive.

The description of the eye is largely traditional, and it does not stir the imagination nor help us visualize the image suggested. Therefore, the comparison of the kohl, and of course its appreciation, do invoke an image before the minds of the audience, if only by considering the attribute to the whole; the eyelash to the eye. The imagery of the kohl is indirect and suggestive and the poet deliberately retreats from saying the eyelash is made up with kohl.

In the tradition, kohl is used by women and when the term is applied to men it suggests a negative meaning. It is also uncommon to praise a person's eye in public. Therefore, the act of praise by itself suggests metaphorical meaning, and reminds us the common Amharic idiom *aynamma* which means literally "one with bright eye". Bright eyes, then, culturally symbolize perceptiveness, virtue, prophecy and vision. It is only in its symbolic sense the praise becomes meaningful.

Following the eye image the poem presents the image of the nose.

አፍንጫው ይመስላል አሊበል ተራራ
ረዘም ብሎ ጥቂት አያስጠላ
ስርጉድጉድ የለበት መሀሉ የሞላ
የጅነት ሽታ እንጂ አያሸትም ሌላ።

Thee nose is as high as Mount
Aliball
A bit longer, but not at all ugly
Plain, and without blemish
Smells only the heavenly fragrance

The nose is compared with a mountain, not known for most of us, but well known to the local audience. Even for those who know it imagining a nose as high as a mountain brings an ugly and unpleasant image. But the obscurity, becomes lucid in line two. The word *rāzām* which means “a bit longer” is employed in order to neutralize the suggested nose image that appears to be rather strange and ugly. The neutralizing effort is also conveyed by using a phrase “becoming not ugly” which is formed from two negative terms. The use of double negative, bring a meaning more forceful than the single word “beautiful”. Therefore, the poem depicts the image of large and straight nose, clean from any blemish. Such a perfect nose image, points to something not ordinary. In association with the imagery of the heavenly fragrance suggested in line four, the mountain metaphor becomes a significant image in relation with moral qualities.

The next stanza in the same poem depicts the picture of the cheeks.

ጉንጭዎ ይመስላል የወይንን እሽት
መሀከሉን ቅላት የፈሰሰበት
ዙሪያውን ከቦታል ሀይባና መብራት።

Thy cheeks are like ripe grape fruit
Ruddy glow at the middle
Encircled with glow and glare.

The above three lines provide the audience with elaborate descriptions of the face. The ripe grape fruit image in line one depicts a round, soft, fresh and lovely face. The image of ruddy cheeks in line two suggests a fresh healthy complexion. The imagery of glow and glare in the third line, however, steers the whole meaning of the stanza to the ethical. This is because light imagery symbolically signifies divine glory, splendor, holiness and sacredness.

The illuminating complexion of the hero, then, is supplied with a picture of the mouth.

የተቆላመመው ከንፈሩ እንደሚሆን
ዳርዳሩን ይመስላል የወርቅ ቅምቅም
ተውስጡ ይወጣል እሚያምር ቀለም
አያል እሚፈርድ ለብዙ እሚጠቅም።

Thy lips are bent over (round) like
the letter mim ()
And seems embroidered with gold
thread
Out of it comes impressive
wisdom
That serves many; and helps much

The lip in the above lines represents the mouth. The shape of the upper and the lower lips is compared with the shape of the Arabic letter “Mim” (). The colour, as well, is suggested with the metaphor of embroidery of gold. The imagery of gold as applied to describing the lips is obscure and awkward. This holds true when we try to apply the literary meaning of the word *kālām* in line three, which means colour that comes out from the mouth. From our experience we know that it is speech that comes out of the human mouth, not colour. The metaphor of *kālām* which means lesson, or knowledge or wisdom could supply an evidence for our intuition. Therefore, the image of gold in connection with the *kālām* metaphor convey heavenly utterance and divine words that are truly sacred and helpful to every human being. This idea gets more force when we consider the first three lines of the succeeding stanza.

ምላስኦ እርጥብነው አንድ ቀን አይደርቅም
ጌታውን ተመዝከር ፍጢራውን አናውቅም
የትንፋሹ ሽታ ልኩ አይታወቅም።

Thy tongue is wet, it never becoming
dry
Except invoking its Lord, we don't
know about its error.
And the balsam of its breath is
inestimable

The tongue is presented in direct and plain but deeper manner. It also does not stir the imagination. Some of the phrasings, for instance, “the tongue is wet/it never becoming dry”, sounds rather a gauche style. Similarly, the association of the tongue with “the balsam of its breath”; in line three comes to be an inept phrasing for there is no direct relationship between the tongue and the breath. We assume, however, the tongue is described in terms of its most natural function, the speech act, in line two. The tongue-speech association is suggested explicitly in its use for invocation, “Except invoking its Lord”. The possessive noun marker “its Lord” does not refer to

specific subject, human or super human. But, the deliberate choice of words, that is, the specific religious register “invoking”, provide an access to identify the “Lord” as a superhuman power, he who that is to be contemplated, propitiated, or worshipped. This particular phrasing and its religious connotation, invites us to reorganize our thoughts. Therefore, the application of the adjective “wet” and the phrasing ‘never becoming dry’ to the tongue evoke another level of meaning drawn from the tradition.

In Wallo, as well in most Amharic speaking areas, the two contrasting terms "wet" and "dry" come in association with certain parts of the human body, for instance the hand, the leg and the tongue, and signify fortune and misfortune, good luck and bad luck, respectively. Therefore, the "wet tongue," that "never becomes dry" has connection with good omen and with prophecy of fortune and providence that is proved to be correct. Here, the idiom is not original. The value resides in the richness of the associations evoked, the aptness of the phrasing, and the power of significance developed.

And therefore, the tongue metonymically represents the person, more exactly his moral and emotional qualities. The hero, therefore, appears to our mind’s eye as being virtuous, trustworthy, pure and perfect.

The motif of perfection and splendor occur in the picture of the neck. The picture of the neck, depicted in the poem as:

አንገቱ ማማሩ ሳይወፍር ሳይቀጥን
አዲስ ሉል ይመስላል የወጣ ከሳጥን
ለነቢ አድርጎታል ከሁሉ መብለጥን።

*Thy neck not too fat and not too lean
It seems a new pearl Put out from a
case
The Lord has made the prophet with
unequalled beauty*

The neck in line two is compared with a pearl. The simile compares the two things, the neck and a pearl. At first the comparison seems far-fetched. But the explicit statement in line three, provides us with a clue regarding the analogy of the neck with a pearl. The clue suggests that we make comparisons in terms of value and quality. A pearl, as a gem, has great value and it is often employed in speech to describe a

person's quality, just as the English say "a pearl among women". The analogy made in this context is in quality and value rather than resemblance of colour, shape or size. The same holds true with the representation of a pearl for the neck.

The neck, mythonymically, the part for the whole, represents the person. Therefore, Muhammed, in connection with the idea of his being chosen among the whole of the human race, as stated in line three, is a pearl among human beings. The idea of proportion, in line one, adds force to the comparison and suggests the idea of a perfect and splendid design which is the result of wisdom.

The motif of perfection and beauty is supplied by, and comes with perfect harmony in the description of the build.

ዛትዎ ማማሩ ግልጽምዎ ጋራ	<i>Thy build in the skrit;</i>
ሳይወፍር ሳይቀጥን በልክ የተሰራ	<i>Not too fat and not too lean, shaped splendid;</i>
አደፍ እይነካውም ሁልጊዜ ጥረራ።	<i>Clean every time, with no stain.</i>

The poem doesn't render a detailed physical attribute. The focus is only on the build and the related physical features. Of course, all *Mälks* are not like this. Some of them describe the arm, the hand, the finger, the chest and the like. But none of them describes the *awrah* (Ar. body part from the navel to the knee) of the hero. In Islam a man should cover his *awrah* with a dress, and should not see the other person's *awrah*. For this a reason *Mälek* poets focus on the face and leave their audience to imagine the rest.

The above lines are suggestive. The overall build of the hero is stated as splendor and well-framed. Perfection and splendor, harmony and rhythm in design are suggested by repeating some words, i.e, "not too fat not to lean" from line one of the preceding stanza in the second line of this stanza.

The skirt is clean and stainless. The statement cautiously states that the suggested cleanliness goes beyond the physical attributes, and points to purity of moral and character.

In conclusion, from the description of each part of the body, we catch a glimpse of something beautiful, splendor, fresh and pure which is true of only a god-like figure. And that is the primary intent of the *Mälik* genre.

Mälks that praise the *Awlaya* do not provide us with detailed description of physical attributes. Most poets seem to have little interest in physical qualities, and even those who attempt to do so do not depict the portrait of their hero in detail.

ሸሊላ ጌታው ሸሊላ
 ስምዖን ማር ነው ወለላ።
 ጉተናው ሀር ዘንፋላ
 አይኑ እንደ ኮከብ፣ ለዛው ነው ሌላ።
 እጅዎ ረጅም በክርን የሞላ።
 አርሂቡ ጌታው ሙስጦፋ።

Šillela Getaw Šillela
 Sweet, as honey is thy name
 Wavy and smooth, *thy* hair is like silk
 Bright, *thy* eye like a star
 And big *thy* hand, arms long
 Come in Lord Mustofa

This brief description of Sherif-al-Dinn Ibrahim's appearance focuses on certain selected physical attributes. The name of the hero is compared with honey. The honey metaphor suggests the attractiveness of the hero's name and appeals to our gustatory sense. The hero's hair is also compared with silk and the eye is compared with a star. The hands are also described as big. The description renders vivid images that are appealing to our various senses. Apart from exploiting figures such as metaphor and simile, the poet employs adjectives of various kinds, that contribute to the vividness of the picture.

The hero's attractive name, his bright appealing eyes, long arms and big hands are cultural symbols that signify loveliness, prophetic quality and generosity. These qualities and other moral characters appear repeatedly in these poems. *Mälks* of *Awlaya* focus on building series of pictures about the moral qualities of the hero rather than on detailed descriptions of the physical appearance.

4.3 Qissa: A Dramatic Narrative

Qissa is a dramatic, narrative, oral genre that deals with the miracles of the Prophets and the *Awlaya*. The most important feature of *qissa* poetry is the miraculous character of its content. By miracle we mean extra ordinary events or phenomena

that suspend the natural or normal order of things, such as divine conception, raising the dead, metamorphosing one thing into another and so on. *Qissa*, in general deals with miraculous achievements in all human concerns and it is considered to be true and sacred.

The chief characters of *qissa* are no ordinary men. The central figures, the heroes, are always personalities of outstanding integrity and genuine moral greatness, Prophets and *Awlaya*. For instance, Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) is the father of the Arabs. He is the first Islam, obedient to the will of God to sacrifice "his oldest son Ismaail". Muhammad is the last of the prophets, "the seal of prophets" to whom "God's true" message, the *Qur'an* was revealed. Like wise, the *Awlaya* are credited with special *bārakat* (divine graces) and *Kāramat* (favours). Besides, *qissa* is based on legends and imaginative accounts rooted in historical events, and the hero who is real, is held in high esteem by the devotee.

However, *qissa* also involves non-human characters and divine powers. Angels, *Ibils*, the devil and animals are often personified, so that they exemplify certain religious and moral values. Non-human characters manifest themselves, as villains whose evil actions or motives are important to the development of the plot or as beneficiaries who receive some kind of good from the benevolent hero. Thus, in the context of faith, the personal qualities of the hero of *qissa* validates its authority and makes the narrative true rather than fictitious.

Qissa, therefore, as a sacred story takes place in a sacred setting. The performance of *qissa* takes place on specific occasions and festivals that involve *hadra* such as *Māwliid*, *Eid-al-Adaha*, the annual and regular *Ziyarat*, and the *Wādajja*. The first two occasions are commemorative and self contained. Their chief aim is to establish the exemplary historic event in the mind. Accordingly *qissa* recited on these occasions has direct connection with commemoration. Hence, the *Māwliid qissa*, that presents the miracles of Muhammed is recited in the month of *Rabee 'ael' Awwal*. The *qissa* of prophet Ibraahim is recited at *Eid-al-Adaha*. It serves as a reminder of the establishment of the "*Kaaba*" as a historical event and of its significance as *Allah's* plan of salvation.

Annual and regular visiting days related with the tradition of certain specific shrines are also other occasions of *qissa* performance. On such occasions, *qissa* related to *Awlaya* is performed. *Qissat* which recount the miraculous achievements of the *Awlaya* may also be performed at *Mäwliid hadra*. However, they are usually performed in prose, even that is rare. The other and the most usual occasion of *qissa* performance is the *wādajja*. In the *wādajja*, *qissa* recital has a central place and covers the largest portion of the night.

Another important feature of *qissa* is story telling. Apart from the other features, *qissa* is clearly distinguishable with its narrative nature. *Qissa* poems deal usually with narrating more than one story. There are tendencies to combine incidents having a central theme or revolving around the superhuman deeds of a certain *wāli* in a single *qissa*.

Qissa is sung by men and women, by lettered and unlettered poets. Generally women and most unlearned expert poets sing *qissa* songs that encounter the miracles of the *Awlaya*. *Qissat* related to the Prophets, however, contain much Arabic words and require a certain degree of literacy, and are exclusive to the *Madih*, the specialist poet. This is true for these stories also sometimes involve quotations and passages from religious texts and most often allude to Arabian life and Arabic sentiments.

Qissa is usually chanted, with the accompaniment of drum beating and hand clapping. In such a way the performance is antiphonal where both parties take part. The soloist leads the performance and the audience participate by singing the refrain, by clapping their hands or by beating the drum. But, there are some *qissat* performed by women poets which are pure solo and the audience remain being listeners. Usually these songs mix other genres such as the *häyyä* which is solo by its nature.

These are the most general and most important features of *qissa* poetry. Some of these features such as occasion and performance style are features common also to other genres. But the entire content of *qissa* and its dramatic and narrative nature are the most peculiar features inherent to it.

By considering the subject of its narration we can roughly categorize *qissa* into two sub-groups. These are *qissa* related with the Prophets and *qissa* related with the *Awlaya*.

Qissa, like *tāwhiid* and *Mälk*, opens with invocations. The *qissa* of Prophets, in general begins with common statements of the Islamic prayer. These are:

አላህ ሙስሊም አላሙሀመዴ የጁብሪል ወዳጅ ያላህ ባለሟል ሰይዲ ጀማል፣ ውብ ጀማል።	In the name of God and His Messenger The servant of God, and the friend of Jibriil Seid Jamal, the beautiful Jamal.
---	---

In the same manner *qissa* recounting the legend of Ibrahim and his son Ismail open with:

አላህመሶሌ አላ ሙሀመዴ ሙስጠፋ ያዘይኑ ባንቲ ጠናዲኑ።	In the name of God; and His Messenger Mustofa the beloved, who established the true religion of God.
---------------------------------------	--

Qissa that tell the stories of *Awlaya* also opens with invocations to a certain *Wali*. A typical example is a *qissa* by Šaik Ahmed Abubu. This *qissa* opens with the following lines:

ሸሊላ የደገር ንጉሥ ሸሊላ ደገር ንጉሥ አልብሱን የሀይባ ቀሚከ።	Šillila the king of Daggar Šillila the king of Daggar May you bless us with the dress of grace (invisiture)
--	--

As it has been discussed in the previous sections, the opening lines of *qissa* poetry becomes the refrain of the poem without involving any change. After introducing the refrain, the soloist then introduces the name of the central figure, the purpose of the song and the subject matter of the story. This can be done in different ways.

All *qissa* poets also begin their stories with introductory passages. The following passage is a typical example of *qissat* counting the miracles of the prophets. The poet introduces the protagonist in the following manner.

እስኪ ላነሳሳው በሃድል ጀሊል
የሀሊቁን ወዳጅ ኢብራሂም ከሊል።
የይስሃቅን አባት የእነ እስማኤል
ተኸሊቁ ትእዛዝ እማያጋድል

ጌታችን የሰጠው በትልቅ እድል።
ነቢዩ ኢብራሂም ከሊሉ ረሀማኑ
ሙስጦፋ ዘይኑ ባንቱ ጠና ዲኑ።

Let me praise the one chosen by God,
The friend of the Creator, Ibrahim
Kalill, (the sincere)
The father of Issac and Ismail
He who is strict in observing the Law
of the Creator
He who is chosen (by our Lord) for
higher esteem
Prophet Ibrahim, the sincere and the
merciful (forbearing)
Mustofa the beloved who establish
the true religion of God.

The above lines are praising in tone and introductory in function. Tone in a poem, expresses the poet's attitude toward his subject. The tone of the poet in the above lines indicates his enthusiastic feeling and respect to the hero. In one sense every poem is a little drama or an utterance, or a discourse. There is provocation in utterance. A drama begins by exposing the characters, the relation between the characters, or by disclosing the characters' motive. Similarly in a discourse there is a shared assumption between the speaker and his interlocutor. Thus the stanza quoted above serves exactly similar functions. The protagonist is pointed out, his qualities are indicated and the relations he has with God and the other characters is identified. More interestingly, the subject of the narration, the central notion, or the theme is foregrounded by employing the technique of repetition. The protagonist is identified, and rendered more emphatically according to the relation he has with God, the Creator, than by the relation he has with his two sons. The story of the whole poem is summarized in the above few lines.

The story is about Ibrahim and Ismail. God commanded Ibrahim in his dream to sacrifice his son, Ismail. Ibrahim said: "I surrender to the will of God". Then he built the *Kaaba*, and told his son what God demanded of him. Ismail said, "I surrender to the will of God". But when Ibrahim raised his knife to cut Ismail's throat it became blunt. Then the knife speaks to Ibrahim that God has changed his orders. Thereupon a ram appeared by God's command and was slaughtered instead. This is the main plot of the poem. But it includes other narrative elements. For instance, *Iblis* was

trying successively, but in vain, to persuade Ibrahim and Ismail not to comply with God's command.

The theme of the poem is Ibrahim's courage, his obedience to God, and the preference he shows to God over his son. This idea is suggested by repeated reference to God in the stanza quoted above.

Of all the prophets Muhammed occupies a very prominent place in *qissa* poetry. There are a number of versions that portray the miracles of Muhammed. These works are collectively referred to as *Māwliḍ qissa*. *Māwliḍ qissa* represents a number of miraculous incidents such as the conception of Muhammed, his birth, his childhood, his marriage and his *ascension*. Many poets focus on one or two of these incidents while others try to recount more. However, most poets give due emphasis to the miracles done at Muhammad's conception and at the time of his birth. *Māwliḍ qissa* has the same subject but differs in the development of the plot. To attempt a comparative analysis or to describe the contents of some versions of *Māwliḍ qissat* is beyond the scope of this study. However, one can find two popular versions in Alula (1994a:261-262) and Knappert (1970:66-85). Knappert's *Māwliḍ qissat* are collected from East Africa, in Swahili, but show much resemblance to the *Māwliḍ qissat* of the Wallo Muslims.

To arrive at a scholarly conclusion about the origin and diffusion of *Māwliḍ qissa*, one should make further investigation and a thorough study. But it seems that written literature has much influence over *Māwliḍ qissa* than the *Mālk* genre. For instance Šeik Ali Muhammed of Jema Nigus, acknowledges a certain written text as his source. He Sings:

ከተብኳት ትህሊጽን በኛ ጦሂያሊን
ተሚባለው ከታብ ሸረረል አለሚን
የመውሊዱን ትርፍ ቂሳ ተሚያበይን

I write down this poem in our language
From the book called *Šār āfāl al āmen*
That explains the story of the Birth (of
Muhammed) and its significance.

Knappert (1970: V) also notes that the "majority" of the "religious legends" in his collection are obtained from unpublished materials written down by Swahili scholars.

Alula's (1994a:262) observation is not so different, as well. Such instances invite interested scholars for further investigation.

Qissa dealing with *Awlaya*, like those recounting the miracles of the Prophets, begin their story by dramatic expositions. These usually involve triadic structure. The first phase of the poem tells the background, portrays the hero's great physical and moral strength, alludes his great *kārāma* and his great *hadra*, and admires his prowess to the highest degree. A typical example of this group of poems is a *qissa* praising Sharif-al-Dinn Ibrahim sung by *Šeik* Ahmed Abubu. Towards the end of the first phase, this poet sings:

እስከ ላውራልህ ከራማውን	Let me tell you the greatness of his <i>Kārāma</i>
ታሉ በሀያት የሰሩትን	The greatest miracles He has accomplished
እኔ አንኳ ባልደርሰ ያወሩትን	before His ascension
ኡመር አቡዬ ያለልኝን።	Though I was not born then;
ይሻዳ አድርጎ አይነን የቂን	That I learned from Umer Aboye;
ማሀን ሴት ማስወለዱን	For he taught me with complete faith and trust
ማሻሩን እብድ መጅኑን	That He, granted fertility to a barren woman
ሽሮ ማግባቱ ቆማጣውን	That He cured an insane person
ማናገርዎን ዲዳ አፊቱን	That He refigured and reformed the leper
ተናገርኩ እንጅ ትክክሉን	That He enabled the mute to speak
ማንም አይዘልቀው ተዋህሏቱን	These are only few, and I tell the truth
ቸርነቱ ነው ትልቁ ፈን።	But still there are many and infinite;
	All His deeds are marked with ascending
	generosity

The above lines convey three significant things. In the first four lines the poet declares the source of his story, the setting and the purpose. Firstly, the purpose is to tell the miracles of Sharif-al-Dinn Ibrahim. Secondly, those line serve to acknowledge the source and to convince the audience. The audience accept it because they know that the acknowledged poet lived during the time the miracles happened. Thirdly, the favours encountered below are performed while the hero was living on the earth. Then from line four onwards, the poet provides the outline of the story or displays the highlights of the most important miracles accomplished by the hero. Introducing the highlights the poet then proceeds to the main part of the poem. This phase, being the continuation of the introduction, deals with treating the details in a fantastic manner.

The number of incidents narrated in *qissa* poetry are unspecified. Each incident is a complete story on its own. For instance, in the above quoted passage, the poet mentions four miraculous incidents, accomplished by Sharif-al-Din Ibrahim, and suggests that there are others as well. He then presents each incident turn by turn. Each incident involves a certain new character, a seeker, the seeker is tested, interrogated and finally acquires the *bārāka* of the hero. In such a way the narrative incorporates six incidents, each a complete story on its own, and treated in a fantastic manner.

The first scene depicts the story of a barren woman, from Debre Markos, East - West Gojjam. The woman comes to the hero's place seeking maternal fertility. She brings with herself a fattened ox as a gift. At her arrival, the hero, "Sharfadin" asks the reason of her coming to his place. She tells him that she and her husband had no children. Then the hero says, "Woman you are blessed with a child, now you can go back home, you shall visit us with the child coming year." But the woman refuses the proposal. She strongly insists on having a child at that spot for he has the power to do so. She adds; "I have brought this *anqälba* (Am. a small leather for carrying infants on the back) because I feel confident of succeeding. If I go back home bare handed my neighbours will ridicule me." The hero becomes astonished with the trust she has upon him. Then, he enters to the *Käläwa*, a private room, and after few minutes he comes back holding an infant in his arms. The woman happily goes back home carrying the infant.

However, after a couple of years have passed, the child dies. When she learned of the death of the child she goes to Daggar, where the hero is living, carrying the dead body on her back. Yet when she arrives at Daggar, the hero is not at home. The woman, in the hope of finding the hero, goes following the direction he has taken. She meets him on his way back home and tells him the great misfortune that has befallen her. The hero feels sympathetic towards her and asks if she has brought him the dead child. He then holds the deceased in his hands and washes its body with the water he has brought with him for *Wuddu* (Ar. ablution) and the dead boy rises just then.

Other stories take place when the hero leaves home and travels to Addis Ababa. In the course of his journey the hero accomplishes five miracles. First, he performs by healing a leper he meets at *Midda*. The meeting of the hero and the leper was not accidental, but miraculous, with divine arrangement. At another place, Jirru, the hero meets a dumb lame man sitting alone along the roadside. The hero feels sympathetic with the conditions and cures that person from all the physical concomitants he has had. On his arrival at Addis Ababa the hero is received with warm applause. The man who accused the hero, disappears from the court, and has not been heard of since. On his return home the hero once more meets a woman who was about to separate from her husband due to infertility. He blesses the womb of the woman with a child and she gives birth to a child in that same year.

The narrative describes another miracle even after the hero's return home. A certain devotee leaves home to visit "Sharafadin", carrying a gift of *Cat*. While he is crossing the Nile, he is caught by an alligator. At this spot "Sharafadin" is in a *hadra* narrating a certain *qissa*. Suddenly he keeps silent. When he comes back to his senses, the hero asks his attendants squeezing his cloth. Everyone in the *hadra* watches each other in bewilderment. They had no idea about his flying to the Nile until he told them the story.

These are the synopses of the various micro-stories included in one *qissa* poem. Incidents are arranged mechanically one after the other, but the hero is the same. The hero is the central focus; and the aim is to depict his qualities.

Each micro-narrative has a plot. The basis of the plot is action and the action of *qissa* poetry is miracle. *Qissa* poetry usually revolves around the highest concerns of human beings. Raising the dead, healing the sick, curing the incurable and inducing maternal fertility are the most frequent motifs in the *qissa* genre. These poems contain the most important and fundamental problems of man. The hero, thus, has a majestic power to help those who face problems and calamity. These miracles appear in different *qissat* with a slight variation. We can find a barren woman seeking fertility or a person seeking recovery from chronic illness in *qissat* attributed to many

Awlaya. The name, address or age of the seeker may vary, but the motif remains the same, and at the end of the story the seeker's desire will be always fulfilled. However, there are also *qissat* that deals with origin myths. Among the many myths, some versions telling about Shirif-al-Din-Ibrahim are related with metamorphosis. Sharif-al-Din Ibrahim in many *qissat* is praised by his accomplishment of moving the land mass from Gojjam to Daggar, Wallo. He makes the land mass pass under the Nile without the houses and even with the church of St. Mary being destroyed. He also metamorphoses the donkey into a cow.

Qissa singers usually are not confined to specific texts. The reason for text variability seems to be the spread of the genre through space and time. *Qissa* is the most spread and the most popular oral genre spreading in space and time like *hāyyä* (a genre to be discussed in the next section). The most popular *qissa* song for instance, the *qissa* of Shierif-al-Dinn-Ibraahim is sung by different men and women singers, not only in Boranna, the region his shrine is located, but also in Desse, Ambassel, Wereillu and Yajju. *Qissa* songs collected from some of these areas involve the same subject but vary in the development of the action, in the organization and sequences of actions, in the style of delivery in length. For instance, the story of the barren woman from Debre Markos, summarized above, occurs in two versions: in one of them, sung by *Seik* Ahmed Abubu, the cause of the death of the child is not told. In the other, sung by Eshatu Argaw, it is told the child is dead because of being baptized. The later version also incorporates the myth about the transposition of the mass of land from Gojjam to Boranna, Daggar, but leaves out the story of the man caught by an alligator in the Nile. Eshatu, and more importantly the famous woman *qissa* Singer Janoye, add many new elements which do not occur in the other version by *Seik* Ahmed Abubu. This suggests the freedom the poet has to select the number of incidents to be incorporated in a specific performance. Therefore, *qissa* text varies from one singer to another. For instance, three *qissa* versions about Shrif-Al-Din by Janoye, *Seik* Ahmed and Eshatu, exhibit variation in length. The version sung by Janoye is the longest one consisting 470 verse lines whereas the other versions by *Seik* Ahmed and Eshatu ranging from 260 to 380 lines. The aversion by Janoye

differs from the other versions in style of delivery also. It is a purely one person performance while the others are antiphonal.

Qissa is chanted, usually in the accompaniment of the drum. The singer and the participants dance, by moving forward and backward while remaining on their seats. But, in the presence of some one, possessed by the *Zar*, the dancer can be male or female. The possessed person kneels down at the centre of the circle, and jerks backward and forward in quick succession, his/her head nearly touching the floor behind and in front. He/she continues jerking in the same manner till he/she falls prostrate on the floor.

The dancing of the possessed negatively affects the *qissa* performance. This is because, the singer is tempted to exorcise the possessing spirit. Consequently the singer may turn to speak to the spirit at one point, and continue the same song after some minutes. One cannot be sure whether he starts from where he stopped singing. But usually, this kind of performance involves unnecessary repetition of refrains, so that the musical rhyme is more important than the verbal contents of the song. For this reason, the singer directs, and lets the audience chant the refrain over and over again and the beatings of the drum and the clapping of the hands go on so that the possessed person keeps dancing. The singer may also cut the *qissa* short and turn to singing another genre, the *zar* song for example, or may give the turn to another singer.

In summing up, *qissa* is a dramatic narrative song telling the miracles of a *wāli* or a Prophet. It involves always more than one miracle, and each of them is a complete story on its own. The relation between the pieces is maintained by focusing on the hero. *Qissa*, that tells about a prophet usually involve divine intervention. So the hero is the receiver of the act of God. But, the hero, in *qissa* dealing with the *Awlaya*, is an actor and a donor, rather than a seeker. In these types of *qissa* God and other supernatural forces are implied rather than presented. The hero is thus, an unselfish, servant of God, the defender of the oppressed, and the helper of the poor and the

needy. Therefore, miracle telling and dramatic presentation of characters, both animal and human, are the earmarks of *qissa* poetry.

4.4. Häyyä: A poetry of self expression

Häyyä is a contemplative, serious, musical and personal expression sung by both men and women. Its most common occasions are *wādajja* and regular *hadrat*. But, it is also sung in the other Islamic occasions too. Its composition seems to be improvisation, though conscious creation is also a common practice.

Häyyä is, a one-man performance, a solo song. The audience has no other role in the production of the song except listening to the soloist attentively.

The *häyyä*, like the *tawhiid*, the *qissa* and the *Mälk*, does not follow a certain specific opening formula. The performance of *häyyä* is not designed sometime earlier to the actual event. It is an incidental, optional and an indeterminate genre. The Soloist begins singing *häyyä* when he feels he is possessed with *Mädäd* (Ar. inspiration). Otherwise, the audience continues meditating, or turn to telling *qissa*, in prose.

In the middle of the silence, as everyone's thoughts wander hither and thither, the soloist suddenly breaks the silence by humming in a loud melodious tune. The humming may last some minutes until everyone comes out of his deep thought. Then, the soloist begins singing with the opening lines, which vary from one soloist to the other. Different poets can begin with different phrases and sentences. For instance, *Hajji* Hussien starts three of his performances with the following lines:

Ex. 1

ገላላው ስላሴ
አላህ መሰሌም ወሰሊም፤
አላህ መሰሌም ወሰሊም,
አላሙሀመዴ የአሊም።

In the name of Allah, the
compassionate
May the peace of Allah be upon
Muhmmmed after him there is no
prophet.

Ex. 2 ክፈትና ልብህን
ሰማ በለው ልብህን
አድርገህ አሳብህን የጠራዲን መን
ገድ።

Let you turn on the record player,
Have your heart set on the songs
keeping your mind on the true *Dinn*.

Ex. 3 አሰላማለይክ፣ አሰላማላይክ፣
ኧረሱልላ አሰላማለይክ

As-salaamu alayk, as-salaamu alayk
a-Rasuul Allah as-salaam alayk

Examples one and three are common statements and invocations in Islamic religious rites. As it has been discussed above they occur in other genres too. But, example two is quite different and seems to be unusual and unique to the genre. It is mentioned here to show the freedom the poet has to choose his opening lines. In the opening lines we find elements which reveal the personal character of the composer. For instance, Eshatu Argaw, an expert poet, mostly known as *häyyä bay*, in Dessie and Harago, is a man of unpredictable character. Eshatu, is a gentle and silent person outside the *hadra*, particularly before noon. But in the *hadra*, especially when he becomes "intoxicated" with *Muhäba* (Ar. Love), he becomes an agitated restless man. The opening lines of his songs reveal his emotions, rather than convey his thoughts. He usually begins with outbursts of emotion and sorrow in the following manner

እህህ! እህህ! እህህ! እህህ! እህህ! ihih! ihih! ihih! ihih! ihih!

These utterances have no lexical meanings. They are subdued outcries of a broken heart responding to deep grievance. In another occasion the same singer, begins his song with;

አሚን፣ አሚን፣ አሚን፣ አሚን፣ Amen! Amen! Amen! Amen!

Amen! is a religious register, that expresses one's acceptance or wish for anticipated petitions and supplications.

Häyyä, except in some cases, seems to have no structured poetic text. The Soloist begins with a certain melody, and shifts his tune to another, and goes back to the previous one. Some singers, sing for one or two hours continuously. Some others

take a rest for some minutes to have a sip of water or to put some *cat* in their mouth and start afresh. Incidents like coughing could disrupt the performance any moment.

Long *häyyä* performances are usually marked with repetitions, which are sometimes unnecessary and boring. But the soloist can also use repetitions for different purposes. The first and the most natural kind of repetition is the repetition of the refrain. Unlike the other Islamic genres, *häyyä* has no stanzaic divisions. The soloist can bring the refrain any time he wishes. If he wishes he suspends the refrain and goes on singing the verses or he repeats the refrain over and over in a very short span of time, but chiefly in a place that fits most his composition. The refrain is repeated, in part or in full. The repetition of a word, a phrase, a line or lines of a verse is usually sung in a slow leisurely, and gentle tempo. This allows the soloist more time for spontaneous creation and to exploit his memory or select and evaluate the verse that comes next. For instance, *Hajji Hussen* uses the following line as a refrain to many of his *häyyä* compositions. The sentence reads:

Indet nähu-indet nähu Muhammad Yä läy gāndaw zāmacc.

This sentence does not come intermittently in the songs. Whenever he brings this particular sentence, the soloist repeats the phrase “*indet nahu*” over and over again for six or seven times, and sings the rest only once. The same is true of the word “amen!”, mentioned in an example given above. Such self-rhyming short phrases and words can make the melody memorable and stamp it permanently on the mind.

The question arises: is the composer conscious of these principles or does the melody simply happen that way? the answer is yes. The soloist learns to think spontaneously through a combination of talent, training and practice. Here, intuition and planning, rapturous version and technical skill are inextricably intertwined. Giving musicological analysis of *häyyä* is neither in the interest nor within the competence of the present researcher. But one thing is clear, one has to have a glimpse of musical insight in order to appreciate this particular genre, as melody is the heart of *häyyä* performance. Words alone, could convey specific ideas only, but with melody the words become charged with emotion and suggest a very different meaning.

The subject matter of *häyyä* genre is not easily reduced to some specific items and terms. Of course, the main object of this genre is the self - expression of the poet. However, the songs which have reflective character could give us thoughts that might influence our life and conduct. They present us with the artist's personal interpretation of human destiny, the essence of his experience both as artist and man, his accent of joy and sorrow and his feelings of tension and release.

The keynote of this genre is intense seriousness. Each performance is filled with heartfelt thankfulness with the blessings of the past, present prayers for spiritual strength, and anticipated achievements. It includes mournings, grievances, outward social criticisms or convey the pain of loneliness. Each copulate or stanza, therefore, leads us step by step to a short earnest prayer. Most above all *häyyä* is worth remembering for it expresses, in a quaint way, the thoughts and feelings of many a man and a woman.

There are some important themes and motifs in *häyyä* that worth discussing at this juncture. *Häyyä*, like *Mälk* and *qissa* involves invocation. It always invokes certain *Awlaya*, usually more than one, so that their *bärakat* make presence. *Hajji* Hussien *Madih*, for instance addresses about ten *Awlaya* so that they may make a mystic presence. He sings:

ሙሀመድ አመዴ፣ ሙሀመድ አልሃድ

Muhammed Amede, Muhammed
Alhad

ጌታው ሰይድ ቡሽራ፣ ንጉሥ ሙጃዚድ

Lord Seid Bushira, Nigus
Mujahiid

ቁርቁር ሸህ ቡሽሂር፣ ማይባሩ ሰይድ

Šeik Bushahir of Qurqur, Seid of
the Maybar

ሸንኬ አባዩ ድሀር፣ የተውሂድን መድ

Father Dihar of Šonke, the
tawhiid Madih

Lord Seid of Calli, Ahemed of the
Danna

ጌታው ሰይድ ጫሊ፣ የዳናው አሀመድ
ግብፈኝ ጌቶቹ ባለንበት ዘንድ።

Please get in My Lords, make your
presence among us.

The primary intent of *hadra*, particularly the *wādġja* is to entertain the *bārāka* of the *Awlaya*. The *bārāka* of the *Awlaya* is believed to manifest itself through successive ritual acts and objects. Those acts, utterances and objects serve as an invitation to a sacred audience, the *Awlaya*. Therefore, some genres such as the *häyyä* involve straightforward entreaty, supplication and plea to the *Awlaya* to make their mystic presence. In the above quoted lines the soloist invites a congregation of *Awlaya* into that particular *hadra*.

The number of *Awlaya* invited to join the *jamma'h* in that particular *hādra* is about ten. The number may vary from poet to poet, but in *häyyä*, unlike the other genres such as the *qissa* and the *Mälk*, the singer will not limit his invocation, praise or supplication to a specific *Wāli*. There is a belief that, the *Awlaya* are traveling in group. Muhammed is said to be the *ammiir* (Ar. Leader) of the *Jami Awlaya* (Ar. group of *Awlaya*), and the group runs its affairs on the basis of mutual consultation or *shurra*. Therefore, the *häyyä* singer, makes reference to Muhammed whenever he praises or invokes a certain *wāli* or a group of *Awlaya*. The relation between Muhammed and the *Awlaya* is constantly expressed in Love metaphor.

The Love, between the *Awlaya* and the prophet, as the poet forcefully expresses, is the Love that kills the Lover. The Love is depicted as a baffling disease which is painful and affective but liberating and transcending at the sametime. This is suggested in the *häyyä*, it is not described explicitly. The tone of the poem takes the form of prayer. The tone of the song is joyful. When the poet sings the above lines one feels that he has been possessed by Love.

Häyyä lets one's imagination run riot; reminds one's personal condition and arouses uncontrollable emotion. Some participants dictate their new composition or the one they learnt from another poet to the soloist. They often express their personal suffering and grief. But there are circumstances where the poet and the singer are different individuals. Due to old age and sickness a poet may be unable to sing his poems. In such cases, he dictates his poems to another singer. Informants agree that *Šeik* Adam Darka used to dictate his poems rather than sing them himself. The

same is true of *Šeik Cali* of Warababo, and such a practice is common at the shrines even today.

The main purpose of invoking the *Awlaya* to make their presence in the *hadra* is to beg them to intercede between God and Men. Therefore, the next thing to do, believing that they make their presence, is to submit a formal complaint.

Then, the soloist starts singing in a slow tempo that has come to express pathos and heaviness of the heart, tender felling and elegy. *Häyyä*, particularly, the parts that express the complaint of the poet, is sung in a mournful tune. The poet mourns over the world that he sees as unsatisfactory. The way he sings and the sufferings he complains about appeal to our sympathy. Suffering, we know, is one of the common feature of human existence. We know sickness, hunger and physical disabilities are painful. We know loneliness, anxiety, and dependency are other forms of suffering. Most of us know how harming others or being harmed by others is painful. These are outpourings of emotion which appeal to our feelings. And we unconsciously, but emphatically, enter the world of the poet, identify ourselves with the mourning poet, and cry over the human condition.

Häyya, thus, as outpourings of emotion involves all forms of human suffering, man made and natural. The poet as a suffering man, or as the spokesman of the sufferers complains over the unjust act of man and God. In general terms *häyyä* is a literature of protest that appeals to a wide circle of men and women since the frequent themes encountered in *häyyä* are grief, suffering, dislocation from one's home, hopelessness and desperation. Therefore, the *häyyä* poet expresses painfully his anger and bitterness at the heartlessness of God and men. The God portrayed in some songs is pitiless, tyrannical or indifferent to human suffering. For instance, Eshetu Argaw laments over God for He does not pay attention to his (the poet's) supplications. He sings:

እንደ በኔ አደም ሰጥቶ እንዳለቀበት
ከቶ ለምን ድኅው ዝም ያልከበት።

Like Son of Adam who run out of supply after giving away everything he had;

Why do you turn a deaf ear hearing upon my request?

Another singer, Šeik Ali Muhammed also rebukes God for being unfair and biased. He says:

እያረግህላቸው እያየሁህ ባይኔ
የበደል መሰለኝ ሹረምኑ ለኔ።

I know you (God) favoured other men

None of them told me, but I see for myself

So, why? Why my prayers are not heard?

My wishes are not fulfilled?

It seems to me unjust;

Why do I be mistreated?

Bitterness, pathos, and complaints in *hāyyä* are much more pointed to the undue partiality of God rather than the temporal authority.

In *hāyyä* the desire for brotherhood is another most important subject. The *hāyyä* poet often makes a call for mutual aid. The poet summons upon friends to plead God on behalf of him. Some times the faith the poet has in brotherhood surpasses the faith he has in God. For instance, the following triplet by *Hajji Hussien Madih*, shows the faith the poet has in human beings.

እስኪ አወል ቀዳሙን ድሬ ደህና ይሁን
ችግር አቧራ ነው ይራገፋል አሁን
ወንድም ሸማኔ ነው ይሰራኛል አሁን።

Let my *dir* be well first
Surrender not for a problem
For it is like dust that will brush off soon
A brother is a weaver he will make a man out of me.

A “brother” according to the context of the above lines is the one who has a solution for all kinds of problems. As described somewhere in the previous chapters, brotherhood refers more to spiritual bond rather than blood relation. Hence the comparison of a 'brother' with a weaver suggests the desire for a highest value than

provincial material or financial aid. Therefore, a brother is not only the one who supports but also the one who is trustworthy and willing to come together to a *hadra* in order to pray on behalf of a brother. Such a “brother” is referred in most *häyyä* songs as *yä hadra wändim* (Am. a *hadra* brother).

Unlike his urge for having a “brother”, or his faith in human beings the *häyyä* singer also complains over the darkest sides of human relations. In the real world too, friendships are not always blissful and trouble free. Human relationship involves not only trust, care taking, sincerity and generosity, but also betrayal, guilt and ill will. Therefore, the poet who is longing for sincere friendship and brotherhood, he who sings touching and mournful songs about his loneliness is also the one who mourns when he becomes aware that men are not as they should be. So he often makes bitter complaints about the company of the wicked. For instance, *Hajji Hussien Madih*, expresses his dissatisfaction by saying:

ፊጣሪ አንተን ማመን ሞኝ ያስብላል አንዴ	Does trust in <i>Thee</i> make one foolish?
አንድዬ አንተን ማመን ሞኝ ያስብላል አንዴ	Does clinging to <i>Thee</i> make one naive?
ቀጣ የሚያረጉን በከህደት ጎራዴ።	That they punish us with the sword of betrayal.

For all that, the over all message about human relationship in most *häyyä* songs is thoughtful and paradoxical. Most poets value to be alone than to be in the company of the wicked, and suggest to be in the company of the good than to be alone. The profound truth about human relation and friendship is always expressed in paradoxical terms in *häyyä*.

Unlike being the self expression of the poet, and a genre practiced by expert poets, *häyyä* is a genre through which the *wāli* expresses his *fird* (Am. Judgement but more likely equivalent to the English Prophecy). It is believed to have prophetic function. The *Awlaya*, as it has been discussed elsewhere in the previous chapters, claim their poetry, particularly the *häyyä* as a gift from divine inspiration. This divine source of inspiration then, provides the poet with prophetic vision, spontaneous awareness, and an extraordinary knowledge of the hidden present and of the mystery of the future

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that would be expressed in poetry. And such a prophetic utterance of exalted expression and sublime mood, which is locally known as *fird* is an earmark of *Wäli*-hood. Thus in Wallo the *häyyä* genre often has close association with prophetic and visionary utterances.

In Wallo, almost all the *Awlaya* are recognized as poets, and some of them are best known for their prophetic poetry. Among them *Šeik* Hussien Jibril of Warahimano, *Šeik* Cali of Warababo and *Šeik* Adam Darka of Dessie are the most celebrated *Awlaya* through the whole region. Even though all of them passed away many years ago their prophetic poems still remain in the minds of many people, and are still believed to be prophetic. For instance, *Šeik* Hussien Jibril, who died in the third half of the 19th century, according to oral sources, was able to dip into the future political history of Ethiopia. Many people, the *ulama* and the uneducated, memorize the long poem attributed to him, and some singers recite it in the presence of audience. The *fird* of *Šeik* Hussien Jibril is a political prophecy and people are not willing to recite those chapters telling about the present time and the future. We have only chapters that tell about the past. The poem starts by telling the fall of the regime of Yohannes IV and his death in a battle field at Matamma. It tells about the regime of Minilik II, the success of his military campaign to South Ethiopia and his victory over the Italian Army at Adawa. The chapter on Minilik II is concluded with the *Wali*'s, (the poet's) curse upon the king and his family. Oral sources, as well as the poem itself indicate that *Šeik* Hussien Jibril lived during the time of Yohannes IV and Minilik II. But, his poem involves chapters telling about the regimes of Iyasu, Tayitu, Teferi and Derg and are prophetic utterances that foretell the political and economic realities of the future. These prophetic statements involve valid historical facts. This time we know best about the past and the chapter on the present is partially becoming popular among the *ulama*. Some of the details portending the present seems to come true and no one knows whether the poet's vision of tomorrow will come to be true or not.

But how much true is it that Seik Hussien Jibril penetrated such poetic statements? Are these versions are truly prophetic or current political commentaries composed by living poets? Two basic features of this poetry point towards the current nature of

the poem. Firstly, all the reciters do not recite the chapter on the future. Secondly, words, statements and ideas, for example, the reference to a jet fighter or armoured fighting vehicle makes us doubt the authenticity of the poems. Since, these things were not invented by the time the poet was alive, it is doubtful to accept that such words, and the idea suggested by them were told by a person who lived in the 19th century. We have also the same doubt on the authenticity of the references to political and socio-economic concepts like communism, capitalism, decentralization and the like which are foreign to the Ethiopian experience. However, to produce a generalization on the time of the composition from such scattered evidence is to over-generalize. For a satisfactory study both its date of composition and content need to be researched.

Apart from the poetry of *Šeik* Hussien Jibril, another, most popular “prophetic poetry” is attributed to *Šeik* Adam Darka, a reputed poet, *Wāli* and *Abagar*, who died in the late 1960’s. Throughout Wallo, it is common to find men and women who attribute every *hāyyä* song to *Šeik* Adam Darka. These people and many others, often recite some lines from his verse. Out of their natural setting the *hadra*, verse of *Šeik* Adam, are often recited by men and women to comment upon another person’s action or to support their views with authentic sayings. Besides the function they serve in informal contexts, many poets even the specialists, sing some stanzas composed by *Šeik* Adam Darka. Most poets give their acknowledgment particularly when they use a couplet or a quatrain in a conversation. Many soloists also supply the name of the original poet when they are asked whether the poem is composed by them.

Since the song is on the market in tape cassettes and the popular one, most people could easily identify *Šeik* Hussien Darka’s verses when sung by another soloist. This poetry gets its popularity from its “prophetic statements” and from the underlying deep thought in it. Accordingly many current poets, even the most popular ones, for instance *Hajji* Hussien, include some verses of *Šeik* Adam in their recent compositions.

Unlike the versions attributed to *Šeik* Hussien Jibril the authenticity of the poems of *Šeik* Adam is not questionable. These pieces embody the poet's personal, visionary experiences. These emotive utterances are statements of value rather than statements of facts that portray the images of a corrupted, confused and wicked age. The poet does not employ any specific or definite time, but told prophecy that presents a vivid image of the future. The lines quoted below are some of the most popular versions, by *Šeik* Adem Darka.

ወቅት አለ ብላችሁ እንዳትታለሉ	Do not play the fool, the good old days
ተደባልቋልና ሐቅና ባጢሉኛ	are over
እብዱ ተወደደ ተጠልቶ ለቂሉ	In these days truth and falsehood are,
አውራው ዝም ብሎ ኩኩ አለ እንቁላሉ	but, confused
ወንዱ ገረድ ሆኖ ሴቱ ሆኗል ባሉ።	Sobriety is abominated when madness is
ያንደኛው ንግግር ላንደኛው መኾ ጣመ	adored
ከቶም ያጠፋዋል እየቆለመመኛ	The cock becomes quiet but the egg
ሁሉም ሰው ነኝ ብሎ ጥምጣም ጠመጠመ	crowed
አፈኛው ዝም ብሎ ዳዳው አጣጠመ።	The man is now a maid, and the woman
ወሽቱን ሊናገር አፋን አጣመመ	is a husband.
ሁሉም ተጎዳ እንጂ መቼ ተጠቀመ።	One's speaking is crude for
	his interlocutor
	And the later incriminated him by
	twisting in to guilt every word he
	said;
	Every one acquitted himself like a
	man,
	He come to be loquacious for telling lies
	But no one is benefited from telling lies,
	every one becomes a looser.

These lines portray a vision of the future, but are potentially unlimited to one period. The poet expresses his prophetic vision with extended use of metaphors and symbols drawn from nature and his culture. By doing so the poet invites us to step out of our common sense and normal world into a dream world where the natural order of things and social conventions are limp and broken. The disputation of natural and social orders suggests a confused and blurred vision of the future. The images are highly rich, lucid and multivalent, capable of standing for a variety of things. Therefore, the symbols provide access to different interpretations. One can relate this poem to the past, the present or the future, and interpret it as an outward political commentary, or a social protest.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis is to describe some of the prominent features of Islamic Oral Poetry and to identify the various genres incorporated in it. The Wallo Muslims designate their songs as *Manzuma*. *Manzuma* is composed and sung both in Arabic and Amharic. Poems sung in Arabic are generally termed as *Arabiyy*, while those composed in Amharic and written in Arabic script are known as *ajām*. *Ajām* is the interest of this thesis. The composition of *ajām* is carried out both in written and oral forms. However, the written form of composition dominates the composition of *ajām*. The overlapping nature of the written media does not make *ajām* fall in the category of written literature. This is because *ajām* is primarily composed to be performed orally in the presence of an audience. Except in some cases the poet does not use his manuscripts. He memorizes his script and delivers his song Orally. Like all forms of oral traditions, the transmission of *ajām* is largely carried out by oral media. The face-to-face interaction of the poet with the audience is the most dominant method of transmission. But recently the spread of recording tapes and cassette tapes have become accessory means of producing and distributing multiple identical versions of the same song/poem.

There are three distinctive features in which *ajām* differs from other forms of oral poetry. Firstly, *ajām* is composed and recited or/and sung by people who are regarded as religious leaders. From the opportunities and duties they have, their relation to the local religious institution, and the kind of training they received *ajām* poets can be practically categorized into two classes; namely the *Madih* and the *hāyyā bay*. The *Madih* is a specialist poet. He is a knowledgeable person, with the highest level of Islamic education, and is familiar with the history and miracles of certain influential *Awlaya*. He also has a good knowledge of Arabic and a melodious voice. The *Madih* learns the art of poetry and dancing at a certain Shrine by serving an apprenticeship with a certain *Madih*. After prolonged training, the *Madih* initiates the novice into the mystical orders and gives him *tariqa*, a permission to sing in *hadra*.

In the other class of poets is the *häyyä bay*. Poets in this category mostly do not have Islamic education. They are practicing in some genres, mainly in *häyyä* and *qissa* which do not require some knowledge of Arabic and reading the *Qur'an*. These poets may attach themselves with certain Shrines or practice by their own. Women poets usually belong to this group of poets. In *wādajjas* and *Zar* ceremonies the *häyyä bay* uses his poetry to treat patients possessed by the *jin* or the *Zar*. Most *Ulama* ^{arab m} condemn the *häyyä bay* as a hypocrite, an impostor and a cheat.

The Second distinctive feature is related to occasion. *Ajäm* is sung in religious ceremonies and occasions that are generally considered to be Islamic. Islamic holidays such as *Eid-al-Adahaa (Arafa)*, *Eid-al-Fater*, *Mäwliid* and the *Ramadan* nights *Du'aa* are occasions for *ajäm* recital. These are formal occasions which take place according to the Islamic calendar. Besides, the *wādajja* ceremony and annual *ziyyarat* that take place according to the tradition of some shrines are other most important occasions of *ajäm* recital. These occasions involve a series of ceremonial acts called *hadra*. *Hadra* comprises five interrelated acts such as, chewing *Cat*, making coffee, burning incense, telling miracles and singing songs. *Hadra* can be held at Shrines and at home.

The high point of *hadra* is often singing and ritual dancing. *Ajäm* recital can also take place out of the *hadra*. The *Ramadan* evening prayers in the mosque and celebration of the two *Eids* which bring large number of people together involve poetry recital without incorporating other elements of the *hadra*.

The third characteristic feature of *ajäm* is its religious content. Various genres of *ajäm* involve different subject matters. However, religious instructions, mythical actions, praising Prophets and *Awlaya*, invocations and supplications are most important subject matters common to most genres of *ajäm*.

The Wallo Muslims categorize their Poems under four poetic genres namely: *täwhiid*, *Mälk (Madih)*, *qissa* and *häyyä*.

Tawhid: Religious poems categorized under the form of *tawhiid* generally concerned with religious lessons. The contents of these poems are usually drawn from scriptures, in particular from the *Qur'an*. They aim at indoctrinating the youth and the illiterate, who are unable to read the *Qur'an* in Arabic. Basic Islamic rules, moral lessons, and scenes of the Hereafter are the chief contents of the *tawhiid* form. These poems are common on *Ramadan* evening prayers at the mosque.

Madh or *Malk*: poems grouped in this form are generally praise poems. The primary aim of the form is eulogy to the Prophet, or to a certain *Wali*. Structurally these poems are descriptive. The recital of such poems takes place on commemorative festivals such as the birthday of the Prophet or a certain *Wäli* and the festivals of *Eid-al-Fatir*, and *Eid al-Adlh*.

Qissa: *Qissa* is a dramatic narrative poetry that presents the heroic activities and miraculous deeds of the *Awlaya*. It also can present historical incidents and exemplary tasks accomplished by Prophets. The subject matter of *qissa* is usually drawn from indigenous materials and experiences. This form of poetry is common on commemorative festivals and on the *Wädajja* ceremony.

Häyyä: *häyya* is a solo song, related with the state of vivaciousness, and bemoaning. *Häyyä* involves a number of themes related with day-to-day life. Sometimes *häyyä* is the form in which the poet expresses his prophecy. *Häyyä* most often takes place at the *Wädajja* ceremony.

Notes On Chapter One

1. Wāli, Ar. a friend of God or a holy man. Many writers prefer the term "saint". But the present writer prefers to use the term wāli as referred by the Wallo Muslims. The plural form is Awlaya.
2. Ulama (Sing alim) Ar. one who knows, a learned person. The term is commonly used to refer to someone who has a through knowledge of Islam and its sources, the Qur'an.
3. Sufism, a religious doctrine and practice founded by a class of Ulama in the 10th century. For details on its emergence, philosophy and institutional practice, see Rahman (1968:154-202).
4. Jihadist (Ar. jihad) strive, struggle. In this context "Jihadist" refers to militant Muslim leaders who involve armed struggle to spread Islam and to defend the Muslim community from oppression and try any.
5. Encyclopedia of Islam (1960:206) define the term hadra as "hudur, being in the presence of [Allah] Dervishes call their regular Friday service hadra." The term, thus, seems has derived its current meaning in Wallo from the Arabic, in particular the Dervish tradition.
6. In most cultures, Sufism freely indulged in practices of singing and dancing and other orgiastic rituals. Music and dancing are said to have been introduced in the Qadiriya order at the end of the 13th and at the beginning of the 14th century. See Rahman (I bid).
7. The doctrine and practice vary from place to place. However. Quadriyya, the first sufi order is said to be strong in Northern Ethiopia (parrinder, 1969:209). Moreover. Tijaniyya order founded by the Algerian Mystic, Ahmed al Tijani (1737:1815) is also the Most African religious order (Rahman Ibid 182:202). Some of the Wallo Muslim Scholars for instance Seik Seid Bushira and Seik Cali were the proponent of Sammani order (Hussien 1990:63), Hajji Hussien Madih, interviewed 24th Oct. 1997.
8. Wali worship is a common practice in Sufism. According to Rahman (Ibid, p.185), the belief in Miracles of Awaya has become wide spread since the 11th century. Gradually, the belief in the bārāka of the Awlaya led to veneration and worship of Awlaya tombs and "other alleged relies"
9. bārāka (Ar.), blessing, benediction. The term is usually associated with the belief in the Miracles of the Awlaya. There is a belief that the spiritual power of the Awlaya is transmitted through their successors. The power emanated from the spiritual leader and affected both the spiritual and material destinies of his followers.
10. The bi-annual pilgrimage to the shrine at Daggar takes place on the Mawlid festival, and from October 22nd -24th (G.C.). The later festival is specific to the Shrine at Daggar. The event is celebrated in commemoration of the "ascension" or departure of Sherif-al-Din Ibrahiim, according to the myth and the belief among his adherents. Māls dedicated to Sherif al-Dinn praise him as a prophet, created even before Adam. The following stanza by Ahmed Ababu depicts the mythology about Sheref-al-Din:

የሳቸው ነገር አደናጋሪ
ተአደም በፊት በጧት ተሰሪ
ምድር ሲቀፈር አውታር ገታሪ
እንደ መለይካ ፊት ተቆጣሪ
አደም ቲኸለቅ ውሃ ጨማሪ
ቁጥቡ ነባዲ ሸረፋዲን
ኸልቅ ጠብቆ በላ አሚያድን።

11. It seems that Ishihara (1996:230) brought, qasida from the Arabic literary tradition. She defines qasida, as an ancient Arabic poetic form having, as a rule, a rigid tripartite structure. In Jimma area, she adds "People customarily use ...qasida only for poetic verses in praise of Sayyid Ahmed Umar." In employing the term, she neither tries to make justifications nor to back up her attempt with local theories. However, the actual practice, in the culture she studied, contradicts her argument. The text cited by her, which is transcribed faithfully involves the generic term qissa rather than qasida. Thus, text 3(p,218) line two reads, "ennuman dhaga'u qissa Kheir al-Waraa," translated as "just from listening to the historical tales of the goodness of mankind". Therefore, her preference to the alien foreign term seems to be an unjustifiable attempt.
12. The name of a friend (of the researcher) is Muhammed Ahmed, 42, Addis Ababa, Worada 17, Kabele 19.
13. The first two wādajja ceremonies are held in Addis Ababa, at the home of Ato Yassin Mola, 49, married, with 2 children, Warada 15, Kabele 05, on 23rd April, 1997, and W/ro Gimja Alemu, 54, a widow, with 5 children. She lives in Warada 17, Kabale 17. The date the Wadajja was held is 4th May, 1997. The third participant observation at Dabre Zaiet, at the home of Legesse Desta, on 15th May, 1997.
14. This couplet appeared in some of his häyyä songs. Hajji Hussien often speaks in a poetic manner.
15. Hajji Hussien lives in Kombolcha, Shawabar, Kebele 09.
16. The men with whom the researcher have been introduced are, Abagar Ahmed Yasuf, 72, Lives in Kombolcha, Kebele 05; Hajji Muhidin, 60, the custodian of the Shrine at Getta; Seik Abdu Faris, 64(?). Alim, lives in Dessie, Warada 2, Kebele 02.
17. Seid Yimer, 38, Working as a teacher in Oromya region. He came to Dessie to stay the vacation with his parents and to celebrate his marriage ceremony.
18. The Māwliḍ wādajja held at Kombolcha was sponsored by Hajji Hussien Muhammed in his residence. The other one at Dessie, was sponsored by Seik Abdala Assen, Warada 1, Kebele 07.
19. Ato Belayhun Assefa, 36, a senior agronomist, agricultural extension worker. He is well known to the peasants in Ambassel. He has introduced the researcher with Abagar Jamal Ahmed and has assisted him during fieldwork at Ambassel.
20. These manuscripts are written in Arabic Script. But the verses are in Oromo & Amharic. Our interest was in the Amharic poems, but reading them is a laborious process. Moreover, many of these poems mess up each other. Since most poets do not write page numbers, most of the collections are jumbles of paper. Therefore, we benefit very little, despite our laborious effort.

Notes On Chapter Two

1. Most Shrines in Wallo have one or two regular visiting days in a week. Ulama, dārāssas, Abagars and believers from the near by localities gathered and perform hadra. Pilgrims from near and distant areas may also perform pilgrimage on these occasions.
2. This particular stanza is recorded at Getta on the Mawlid celebration. Since this event involves thousands of pilgrims who gather in hundreds of small groups, inquiring the name of the poet from every group was a difficult task. For such a reason, and more importantly to save time to record as many songs as possible from many poets, we fail from learning the name of some poets.

3. Adbar and Awgar are spirites of the land. In Wallo such spirits including qole and qutib are often occur in daily prayers as well as in invocations and songs. The meaning and function of the spirits often overlap.
4. IN Amharic, particularly in Wallo success in life and marriage have close relation. The Amharic term *tidrät* or *tidar*, thus referes to both concepts in this context.
5. *tilat* in the Wallo Amharic dialect means *tälat*, foe.
6. The act of prostration and kissing the wailing wall are common also to other religious traditions such as the Christian and the Jewish. See also Schmidt (1980:64).
7. Informant Seik Hamza Rashid, 37, a Shrine attendant at Getta, (interviewed at Getta in July 17th, 1997).
8. Ibid
9. Kissing the palm of the person who gives his blessings is a common phenomena in Wallo. Hussien (1990) also arrive at the same conclusion.
10. Alula (1994a:262) in describing the contents of the "Manzuma", observes that, "People who sponsored Mäwliids are said to have been seen in heaven.... and those who did not are seen in Hell." As to the knowledge of the present writer sponsoring Mäwliid is voluntary or optional rather than required.
11. Dubärti is an Oromo Word which means elder woman.
12. Information on Dubärti Wädajja is collected by interview. (Informants: W/ro Fatuma Muhammed, Kombolcha; W/ro Ansha Ebre, Sululta in Ambassel; and W/ro Alamitu Yimer, Dessie).
13. Informant: Abagar Jamal Ahmed Mussa, 75, the Abagar of Gobayya in Ambassel. (Interviewed, 8th, Sept. 1997 at his home Gobayya, 012 Kebele). He tells, along genealogical narrative about the Socio political role of Abagars in Wallo.
14. Informants: Ato Yimer Hailu, 65 Dessie; Hajjii Hussien Madih, and Abagar Jamal Ahmed Ibid.
15. Cali is the name of the place the wäli had been lived. His name is seik seid Ibrahiim (d.1960?).
16. Informants agree upon this Idea
17. Informant: Seik Hamza Rashid, Ibid.
18. See Hussien Ahmed (1990:68).
19. Eshatu Argaw, Ibid.

Notes on Chapter Three

1. Hussien Ahmed (1988:94-106) describes the contents of traditional Muslim Education in Wallo. His description does not include poetry and music.
2. Apprenticeship in larning the art of poetry and music, as well as initiation to the mystical orders, are common characteristics of Sufism in other Muslim societies. For details see Fazlur Rahman (1968:190-192)

3. Interviewed, 21st, Oct. 1997, Addis Ababa
4. Informant: Hajji Muhammed Tuahir, 69, a poet and immam of the Haiq Mosque (interviewed 1st, Sep. 1997, in Haiq). Seik Muhammed Seid (interviewed, 15th Oct. 1997, Addis Ababa)
5. Hajji Hussien, Ibid.
6. Interviewed 7th, Sept. 1997, at Dessie
7. Informant: Seik Ahmed Abasha, 65, currently working as imaam of Robit Yajju; Seik Muhammed Seid 53, currently working as a harbist in A.A. Both knew Zinat while the former was working as a Madih, and the latter was a dārässä at the Shrine of Danna.
8. Cameron, 1979. Some writers, for instance Ishihara (1996:230) and Hussien (1990:68) reffer the term as "didactic poem". While Alula (1994a) takes it as poetry in general. However the term doesn't appear in other writings dealing with Arabic poetry (for instance Preminger, 1993) . According to Preminger, Arabic term for poetry is "Shir" which also mean knowledge. Therefore, it seems that the term Manzuma refers to music and song, or poems to be sung than poetry .
9. Informants: Hajji Hussien Madih, Ibid, Hajji Muhammed Tuahir, Ibid
10. Ibid
11. This lines appear in one of Hajji Hamid's songs which the researcher bought from a Music shop at Dessie.
12. Hajji Hussien, Ibid
13. Eshetu Argaw: interviewed in Dessie 2, Sep. 1997, before noon. Yet he was not willing to answer this question at that particular moment. He suddenly picked the issue up while we are at wādajja. Most of the issues discussed about him are recorded while he was telling qissat about a certain Seik, whom he claims spiritü.
14. Informant: Abdi Abol, 65, the owner of Anwar Music Shop in Dessie. Hajji Muhammed Tuahir also agrees with the Shopman.
15. Ibid.
16. Hajji Hussien, Ibid; Hajji Muhammed Tuahir, Ibid; and Seik Muhammed Arba, 69(?), a poet at the shrine of Getta, (interviewed 3rd, Sep. in Kombolcha, at Hajji Hussien's residence).
17. Hajji Hussien Madih (interviewed in Addis Ababa,) Ibid
18. Abdi Abol (Ibid) and Muktar Sefu, 40(?) the owner of Säwabär Musicshop, in Kombolcha.

Notes On Chapter Four

1. The article is available in the Library of Ethiopian Studies in micro film section. The poems are written in Amharic while the analysis is in Italian.
2. *Hajji Hussien Madih* (interviewed 21st, Oct. 1997, Addis Ababa).
3. I use the Amharic Version, published in 1985 (E.C) Tesfa Gebre Silasse printing press.
4. I use the Amharic Version, Published in 1987 (E.C) Tinsie the Gubae printing press.

5. This text appears in one volume with Malk-a-Ma riam, *Ibid*.
6. *Hajji Hussien Madih, Ibid.*
7. *Hajji Hussien Madih, Ibid.* Seik Muhammed Abasha, (interviewed 25th Jaun, 1998, in Dessie).
8. *Ibid*

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Appendix-1

List of Poets Whose songs are on the market

<u>Name</u>	<u>Nō of cassettes</u>
1. ሀጂ ሁሴን መሀመድ ዑመር (መዲህ)	19
2. ሼህ አደም ደርቃ	2✓
3. ሁጂ እርገዬ	2✓
4. ሸህ ሲራጅ መዙ	2✓
5. ሀጂ ሀመዲ	3✓
6. ጃኖዬ	1
7. ሸህ ቃሲም	
8. ሸህ ሀሰን ኢብን ዑመር	3✓
9. ሼህ ሃሰን ከሊል	3✓
10. ሼህ ኡመር ሀሩን	1
11. ሀጂ ሙሀዲን	1
12. ሼህ ሰይድ ቡሽራ	1
13. ሼህ አህመድ አቡቡ	3✓
14. ሼህ መሀመድ አወል	2
15. ሼህ መሀመድ አርባ	1
16. አያዩ ማን ያዘዋል	1
17. ሼህ መሀመድ ፈድሉ	1
18. ሼህ መሀመድ ጣሂር	2✓
19. ሼህ መሀመድ ረሽድ	1
20. ሸህ ሲራጅ መሀመድ	1
21. ሸህ መሀመድ ታጂ	2
22. ሼህ መሀመድ ውሴ	3
23. ሼህ ሀሰን ጋዜጣ	1
24. ሼህ ሁሴን ገንበራ	1
25. ሼህ መሀመድ ሰዋሊህ	1
26. የራያ መንዙማ (ኦሮምኛ)	1
27. የባቲ መንዙማ	1
28. ሼህ አደም እንድሪስ	1
29. ሼህ አሊ መሀመድ	1
30. የአሩሲ መንዙማ (ባአማርኛ)	1
31. ረሺድ ሃምዛ	1
32. የመጀት መንዙማ	1
33. ሼህ ኦሩ ወሴ	1

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my work and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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Signature *Berhanu Gebeyehu*

place and date of Submission

Addis Ababa University