

## Arabic influence on metre in Somali Sufi religious poetry<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

It has generally been assumed that there has not been any direct influence on Somali poetic metre from the metrical forms of Arabic. For the most part, this certainly seems to hold, but this article presents a poem which is of a type on which, it is argued, Arabic influence can be seen. The poem, ‘Taaj Awliyo’ by Sheekh Caaqib Cabdullaahi Jaamac (1920-?) is presented in detail and, although it has been described as being in the *jiifto* metre, it is demonstrated that this description of the metre is incorrect. It actually follows a previously undocumented metrical pattern which is the equivalent of four *maqalaay warlaay* lines. The article also shows how the metrical pattern can be seen as a Somalized analogue of the Arabic *kāmil* metre in its *majzū’* or dimetric form. Evidence is given both from comparison of the line structure itself and from brief comments on reports of what the poet himself had said. The poem considered in detail is part of the Qaadiiriya Sufi tradition in which poetry composed in Arabic plays an important role including poems in the *kāmil* metre.

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<sup>1</sup>The ideas presented in this article were first aired in a paper ‘Is there any Arabic influence on metre in Somali religious poetry?’ in the workshop *Multilingual Locals and Significant Geographies Before Colonialism* (16-18 June 2016) organized by the research project ‘Multilingual Locals & Significant Geographies’ funded by the European Research Council and based in the Centre for Cultural, Literary and Postcolonial Studies, SOAS, University of London. I am grateful to some of the participants in that workshop for comments on the presentation. I am also grateful for comments from two anonymous reviewers.

## Keywords

somali poetry, metre, arabic, ʿarūd

## 1 Introduction

Given the influence of Arabic on the poetry of other languages in the Islamic world such as Hausa and Persian,<sup>2</sup> it is pertinent to ask if the same can be said of Somali given that Somalis are Muslims, that the Horn of Africa is geographically close to the Arabian Peninsula and that there has long been contact between these two areas. The question has been asked previously: Andrzejewski (2011) (a posthumous publication) wrote on this issue and concluded that there was no such influence (see in particular pp. 64-8).<sup>3</sup> Aside from comments in Morin (1999) (see Section 1.1) this has generally been the consensus among scholars since. In this article, however, I present a detailed analysis of a Somali religious poem which, it is argued, does display influence from Arabic on its metrical patterning, specifically the *kāmil* metre in its *majzūʾ* dimetric form. The metre of the poem is argued nevertheless still to conform to the fundamental features of Somali metrical structure and is shown to be related to a well-known metrical pattern called *maqalaay warlaay*.

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<sup>2</sup>On these languages see, among others, Schuh (2011) and Deo and Kiparsky (2011) respectively.

<sup>3</sup>Note that Andrzejewski only considered poetry in Classical Arabic, as is the case here also. The issue of any influence, one way or the other, between vernacular Arabic or any of the South Arabian languages and Somali has yet to be considered.

### 1.1 Morin (1999) and possible influence from Arabic

The only previous discussion that proposes more specific influence of Arabic on Somali poetry generally is presented in Morin (1999). He mentions, with respect to the more prestigious genres of poetry (namely those described as ‘classical’ by Andrzejewski and Lewis (1964)): ‘Les nombreux réemplois de termes venus de la tradition arabe indiquent le rôle historique des milieux bilingues connaisseurs de la tradition du *‘arūd*, dont la puissance et la richesse devaient, ici comme ailleurs, constituer un modèle de référence’ (Morin, 1999, p.45). He continues later to suggest a strong influence on the Somali poetic tradition specifically from the Sufi religious orders:

On peut aussi supposer, sans que l’on en ait la trace précise du cheminement, une propagation à la façon du *ghazal* andalou en Occitanie, au XIIème siècle, par des troubadours qui pourtant ignoraient l’arabe. Le fait que le même mètre ait pu être employé dans tous les milieux en Somalie du nord prouve l’enracinement ancien d’un modèle « haut » initié par la pratique religieuse des cercles confrériques. (p.46)

As he says, there is no trace of this influence and so no trace specifically in metrical structure. His mention of ‘le même mètre’ I take to refer to the main prestigious genres, specifically *gabay*, *masafo* and possibly *geeraar* (though this is not a long form). These forms seem not to show any influence in metrical structure from Arabic, and so his comment might be seen rather to refer to the consistent use of a particular metre as being the reflection in Somali of Arabic practice. Also, his comment on the ‘enracinement ancien’ deserves some comment since,

according to Reese (2008) the Sufi orders came ‘to dominate the religious landscape during the last decades of the nineteenth century’ (p.9) as part of a response to colonial imposition and also periods of drought and famine. Reese goes on to say:

The presence of broad based and highly organized Sufi orders in Muslim East Africa was a fairly recent phenomenon. Sufism was certainly known in the region before that time, but appears to have been the preserve of a few individual ascetics. Its development as a dynamic social movement only occurred with the appearance of a number of charismatic preachers after 1880. (p.9)

We know that the *gabay* form was being composed at this time in the nineteenth century by poets such as Raage Ugaas Warfaa.<sup>4</sup> This poetry was part of the wider cultural sphere of Somali nomadic-pastoralist society and not a part of the Sufi religious culture specifically. The *gabay* form was (and still is) a long-line prestigious form and for such poems to have been made at that time we might assume that the *gabay* and any possible predecessors predate the late nineteenth century. It seems therefore unlikely that influence from the Sufi orders led to the development of the form. Furthermore, the metrical form of the *gabay* displays characteristics which are also found in other, more folkloric genres, such as work-songs (forms for which we don’t know the original poets and which need not necessarily be memorized verbatim).<sup>5</sup> These include the *maqalaay warlaay* form

<sup>4</sup>See also comments in Banti (1996, pp. 184-88).

<sup>5</sup>For more on the distinction between the more prestigious *maaniso* genres and the less prestigious *hees* (in the traditional sense) genres, which might be described as more folkloric, see Orwin (2003) and Banti (2007).

which is discussed in 3.3. This all points to a tradition in which the distinct metrical patterning was well established and so, even if we accept that there is some relation between the ‘high’ forms of poetry and the religious practice, it doesn’t seem to be the case that part of this was influence on metrical patterning as such. I shall not look into this further here, although research which follows up some of the points presented in this article and some of the suggestions by Morin may lead to greater insight one way or another on the issues.

With regard to the terms from Arabic mentioned above, Morin proposes that two important terms in Somali poetics are of Arabic origin. The first is *maanso* which he suggests is derived from Arabic *manzūm*. The meaning of the Somali term might be summed up as ‘poetry’ or ‘poem’ or ‘poems’, it certainly refers only to forms of verbal art which are metrical and alliterative, though tends to be used for such forms which are of greater prestige (see Orwin (2003) for more on this term). This coincides to a large extent with the Arabic term which is the passive participle of the root *n-z-m* and thus means ‘ordered, arranged’ and hence, in the poetry context, ‘metrical’ and can be used for a ‘poem’. The present author is however not fully convinced of this etymology of *maanso* both from the perspective of the sound correspondences not being as close as they might be and the presence of two related verbs *maansee* and *maansood* meaning ‘to compose poetry; to chant poetry’ (see Aadan, 2013, p. 914).<sup>6</sup> The second term he mentions is Somali *luuq*, the term used for the melody to which poetry is traditionally chanted, which he proposes as being derived from Arabic *lugha* which means

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<sup>6</sup>Banti (2007) also disagrees with Morin’s proposed etymology for this term.

It might also be noted that the word *niẓām*, meaning ‘system’, which is from the same root, is borrowed into Somali as *nidaam* or *nidaan* with a verb derived from the noun, *nidaami* ‘systematize, organize, regulate’ though it might be assumed to be more recent than the possible borrowing of *manzūm*.

‘language’.<sup>7</sup> This seems a little more straightforward with respect to etymology but the issue will not be pursued further here. With respect to metre in Somali poetry, he makes some interesting points but there is no discussion of influence from Arabic in this respect. We shall return to Morin (1999) in Section 2.1 on alliteration.

## 1.2 Revisiting the question of Arabic influence

Revisiting this question in the present paper is prompted by mention of this issue in Orwin (2001a) where the possibility of such influence is aired. It was also prompted by comments to the present author from Maxamed Xaashi Dhamac ‘Gaariye’, the first person to publish the principles of how metre in Somali works, who, in private conversation, mentioned on a couple of occasions that he had been thinking about what he called *soo-galeeti* metres, ‘incomer’ metres. Despite my asking, he said he was still thinking about these and sadly died before he was able to offer more insight into his thoughts.<sup>8</sup> There is also an interesting mention in Yaasiin (1980, viii-ix) of poems by Cismaan Keenadiid written in Somali language but using the Arabic alphabet and also Arabic form including end rhyme.

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<sup>7</sup>It is to be noted that (as Morin also points out) the Arabic word is also borrowed into Somali as *luuqad* or *luuqo* for the term ‘language’. The indigenous word for language is *af* which also means ‘mouth’.

<sup>8</sup>With respect to influence more widely, it is interesting to note that Gaariye also mentioned on occasion that he was influenced more generally in some of his own poetry by Arabic-language poets such as Nizār Qabbāni and Abū al-Qāsim al-Shābbī. This was however specific influence on ways in which he addressed certain issues in some of his poems rather than any influence on form in lines. It is also interesting to note here that Gaariye mentioned in conversation how, when he began to try to analyse metre in Somali poetry he began with using the patterns from Arabic. He had learned *‘arūḍ* in school and felt there was something similar going on in Somali poetry. He found though that the Arabic patterns didn’t fit Somali poetry and went on to look at the Somali patterns differently which led to his articles published in 1976. This is further evidence of lack of influence from Arabic on the main metrical patterns of poetry outside the Sufi religious context considered here.

These have not yet been studied.<sup>9</sup>

### 1.3 The poem ‘Taaj Awliyo’

The focus of this article is one particular poem which is an example of a type of Somali-language religious poetry in the Qaadiriya Sufi tradition.<sup>10</sup> This shares similarities in subject matter and imagery with Arabic-language Sufi poetry by Somalis known as *qasiidooyin* (the plural form of *qasiido*, a loan from the Arabic *qaṣīdah*). Such poetry and other writing in Arabic has been considered in a number of published works: Andrzejewski (1983, 2011); Gori (2003); Reese (2008).

The poem considered here is entitled ‘Taaj Awliyo’ and was composed by Sheekh Caaqib Cabdullaahi Jaamac. The title may be translated as ‘Crown of Awliyā’ or ‘Crown of Saints’.<sup>11</sup> The text is taken from Abdisalam (1977, 169-70) with the present author’s emendations given as footnotes immediately below the text.

These emendations are minor corrections to spelling. They include instances of separating words which are written as one in Abdisalam (1977) such as *sawaab buu* for his *sawaabuu* in which the focus marker *baa* with the 3rd p.m.sg. subject verbal pronoun is separated from *sawaab* which is in-keeping with general practice. There are some instances which affect the metrical patterning: chang-

<sup>9</sup>I am grateful to Giorgio Banti for bringing this to my attention.

<sup>10</sup>Words such as Qaadiriya, although originally from Arabic, are written here in the Somali orthography where they are part of Somali culture and language. Terms specific to the Arabic-language context are given in Arabic transliteration. The word Qaadiriya comes from the name of the founder of the Qādiriyyah order ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.

<sup>11</sup>The term *wali* or *weli* (Somali plural: *awliyo* is the Arabic: *walī* pl: *awliyā*). This word is often translated as ‘saint’, but this may lead to comparisons with saints in the Christian context. Although from a sociological perspective this comparison might be made, etymologically the words are from roots with different meanings. ‘Friend of God’ is also used, but I prefer here to stay with the original Arabic as rendered in Somali.

ing *ku* to *kuu* in line 1, a change which is justified in the textnote; the length of the 2nd p.sg. subject verbal pronoun being changed to *-aad* from *-ad* in lines 14, 15 and 28 in which both possibilities are metrical; similarly with the 1st p.sg. subject verbal pronoun *-aan* in line 24 in the word *inaan*; *shuuntayee* from *shuuntaye* is justified on the basis of the ending being analogous with that in lines 9, 11, 16, 21, 25 and 30; changing *haddan* to *haddaan* in line 25, does make a difference from what is an unmetrical line to a metrical line, but the 1st p.sg. subject verbal pronoun (*-aan*) has a long vowel and so it is assumed to be a typographical error in Abdisalam's text. None of these emendations affect the arguments made here.

Abdisalam himself took the text from Sheekh Caaqib's typescript and made some emendations of his own.<sup>12</sup> He gives the year of composition as some time between 1940 and 1969 (Abdisalam, 1977, 14) and describes the poem as 'an address from a distressed devotee to his master whom he asks for blessings and intercession' (Abdisalam, 1977, 169).

Sheekh Caaqib Cabdullaahi Jaamac was born ca. 1922 just east of Jigjiga and was a member of the Zayliciya branch of the Qaadiiriya Sufi *ṭarīqah*. One of the main motivations for him to compose religious poems such as this one in Somali was to allow people who didn't know Arabic to have a sense of what the Arabic *qasiidooyin* were like. This is reflected in Andrzejewski's comment describing him as 'one of the most ardent champions of using Somali for religious purposes' (Andrzejewski, 1970, 22). Orwin (2001a, 72) also comments on this with reference to an undated recorded interview with Sheekh Caaqib. In the context of the present article it is also interesting to note that Orwin states the following with respect to a poem in praise of the Prophet recited in Somali to which reference is

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<sup>12</sup>See Abdisalam (1977, 10-11) for more details on the background to this.



made in Section 5.3:

Those who could not understand the Arabic spoke to Sheekh Caaqib about this, and he composed a poem in what he describes as the same *baxr*, this was the poem named *Dhalaaliso* in Abdisalam (1977: 129-45). The use of the term *baxr* here is particularly interesting since it means ‘metre’ in Arabic and so Sheekh Caaqib is saying that he used the metre from an Arabic language poem in a Somali poem. (Orwin, 2001a, 72)

The poem is taken from a written source. It might be assumed that when it was first made and performed there was some musical mode which may have been similar to the one in the video mentioned in Section 5.3. It is assumed here that the metrical patterning, as with other Somali poetry, is not dependent on the musical mode of performance, rather is a separate linguist patterning which interacts with the musical performance but is not determined by it. See Banti and Giannatasio (1996) and Johnson (1996) for further on this issue. Research on the performance of the type of poetry presented in this article will shed light on its relationship with musical performance.

The translation of ‘Taaj Awliyo’ in this paper is an edited version of the translation in Orwin (2001a). A number of changes have been made in the translation of certain phrases which help the flow of the English a little. Also the phrases to which the vocative suffix has been added have been written with initial uppercase letters to make it clear that they are nominalized phrases used as address forms. The English vocative ‘Oh’ has not been used as this seems too intrusive in the translation if it were to be used everywhere where the vocative suffix occurs in the

Somali original where it is not intrusive given its common use in Somali in both religious and other poetry. The interested reader can compare the translation with both the version in Orwin (2001a, 70-71) and that in Abdisalam (1977, 171-2).

## Taaj Awliyo

Kiilaaniyow, Kiilaaniyow, kuu yeedhnayee noo kaalayeeey  
 Aqbal iyo ijaabo adaa lehoo, Awliyo dhammaan u Imaam aheey  
 Barakiyo bishaaro adaa lehoon, kuu baaqnayee noo soo burmooy  
 Adigaa tijaaroon ku tuugnayee, taaj Awliyow taageer na sii  
 5 Sawaab buu helaa nin ku soo xusee, kama seexatide Saxal taaj u yeel  
 Jiilaaniyow, jidka khayrka law, kuu jeellayee noo soo jawaab  
 Xubbi kii u qaba ka xannaaniyow, xaajo u gudow xisbigaa na yeel  
 Rabbi khaaliqaa khayrkaa badshee, khalwadaa nin galay khaatumo u  
 yeel  
 Dawlo aan damayn oo dadaal lehow, daaraha jannada nagu daadehee  
 10 Digrigaa badshee weli dooranow, dararkii jannada na dabaaladsii  
 Rugta Awliyee Rabbigay boqrow, raashin aan dhammaan nagu soo  
 rabee  
 Samsam Awliyoonu siyaaranow, sad aan naga dhammaan sahal  
 nooga yeel  
 Sayid Jiilaanow, silig Awliyow, saacii kastaba na salaamad yeel  
 Sharaf Awliyow waan ku sheeganee, lama shaari karo nimaad  
 shuuntayee

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1: 'Kiilaaniyow, Kiilaaniyow' for 'Kiilaaniyow, kiilaaniyow'; 'kuu yeedhnayee' for 'ku yeedhnayee'. This corrects the spelling from *ku* to *kuu* which is needed since the object of the verb *yeedh* is always governed by the preverbal particle *u*, which, when present with the second person singular object pronoun gives *kuu*.    2: 'dhammaan' for 'dhamaan'    5: 'Sawaab buu' for 'Sawaabuu'    9: 'damayn oo' for 'damaynoo'    11: 'dhammaan' for 'dhamaan'    12: 'dhammaan' for 'dhamaan'    14: 'nimaad' for 'nimad'    14: 'shuuntayee' for 'shuuntaye'

15 Sal wax loo hubaa sifo suubbanow, sidqi hadal leh iyo samir inaad  
lahayd  
Dallad Awliyow, darajaysanow, dacwadayda maqal waan ku  
doorannee  
Dayax nuur ku yaal oo la daawadoon, naga doorsamaynow diyaar  
ahaw  
Duhur galay sidiisa u daahiroow, dilli weyn qiyaame dusha nooga  
mari  
Caalimul-culum, cisi Awliyow, Cabdulqaadirow noo ciidaneey  
20 Qaayaha naftiis ku qurfaan helow, qalbigaa ku jecel qammi iiga fayd  
Foqorrada jeclow, farax Awliyow, fakir ii samee diinka aan fahmee  
Qalbi kuu wacee qudbi Jiilaanow, qumi xaajadaan kuugu qayshanay  
Ka ku jecel kollaba kama jeesatide, Kiilaaniyow kurbad iiga fayd  
Layl iyo nahaar inaan kugu lallabo, lillaahaan ku maree libin ii  
samee  
Marabada aan qabo Muxyadiiniyow, mar haddaan ku waco waan

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15: 'leh iyo' for 'lehiyo'; 'inaad' for 'inad'    17: 'yaal oo' for 'yaaloo'    20: 'qammi' for 'qami'    21: *diinka* may seem odd to some readers as in the present author's experience the word tends to be feminine, but is also used as masculine with this meaning as here. This is confirmed by Yaasiin (1976) among others.    23: 'Ka ku' for 'Ku ku': the first 'ku' as written in Abdisalam's text is a pronominal use of the defining suffix and is here in the subject form. Although it is the subject of the following relative clause, as the head nominal it would not be subject-marked hence the change to 'ka'. 'Kii', the remote defining suffix used pronominally, might also be considered, but this would normally require a past tense form in the relative clause with an adjective where we find here a present tense form; 'jeesatide' for 'jeesatid eh'; 'Kiilaaniyow' for 'kiilaaniyow'    24: 'inaan' for 'inan'; 'lallabo' for 'lalabo'; 'lillaahaan' for 'lilaahaan'

- 25 muraad helee  
 Nuuraaniyow nin ku soo xusaa, nafci xoog leh iyo nabad buu helaa  
 Waan ku soo wacee wahankii iga qaad, weligaan jeclaaye  
 wanaagsanow  
 Hor Illaah adaa hela waxaad rabtee, haybadda na saar waan ku  
 haybsannaye  
 Lama koobi karo fadligaad lahayd, ee liibaantaadaan wax ka  
 laacayaa
- 30 Yaabkii yimaadaba Jiilaanow, yasir xaali baan kuugu yeedhanee  
 Rabbanaa fasalli calaa nebi, Axmedan wa Aali, asxaabihii

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25: 'haddaan' for 'haddan'    28: 'Illaah' for Ilaah; 'waxaad' for 'waxad'    30: 'yimaadaba'  
 for 'yimaada ba' since '-ba' is a clitic.    30: 'Axmedan' for 'Axmeddan'

‘Crown of the Awliyā’ ’

Kiilaani, Kiilaani, we call you, come to us

Concern and granting [of requests] is yours who are the *imām* of all  
the *awliyo*

Blessings and glad tidings are yours, we hail you, become a refuge  
for us

You are wealthy and we entreat you, Crown of the Awliyo, give us  
succour

A man who commemorates you finds recompense, you are not  
5 extinguished from him, give him a crown like Saturn  
Jiilaani, Follower of the Path of Goodness, we long for you, answer  
us

One Who Cares for the One Who Has Love for Him, who travels  
through the night for a matter, make us one of your  
number

The Lord who is Creator has multiplied your blessings, endow a man  
who has entered your retreat with a [fitting]  
conclusion

Reign Which Does not Extinguish, Striver, take us by the hand to the  
homes in Paradise

One Whose Remembrance Has Been Great, Chosen *Weli*, make us  
10 swim in the water troughs of paradise

Location of *Awliyo*, One My Lord God Made King, shower us with  
endless provisions

Samsam of *Awliyo* to Whom We Go on *Ziyaaro*, grant us a share  
easily which will not end for us

Sayid Jiilaani, Wire of the *Awliyo*, grant us peace every hour

Eminence of the *Awliyo*, we claim you for ourselves, a man whom  
you have honoured cannot be banished

15 One Fundamentally Known for Certain, Righteous One, that you in  
character have truthfulness of speech and patience

Shade of the *Awliyo*, One Set on a Level, hear my appeal, we choose  
you

Moon in which There Is Light Which Is Seen and Which Never  
Changes against Us, be ready

One Who Appears like the Arriving Noon, on the day of resurrection  
make a large shade pass above us

Knower of the Fields of Knowledge, Power of the *Awliyo*,  
Cabdulqaadir be of service to us

20 Receiver of Pardon for Your High Esteem, remove anxiety from me  
for the heart which loves you

One Who Loves the Poor, Happiness of the *Awliyo*, give me thought  
that I might understand the religion

To a heart which calls you, Pole Jiilaani, grant the request for help  
we cry out to you

The one who loves you, you never turn away from, Kiilaani remove  
worry from me

That I call you night and day, I swore to God, grant me success

The wishes I have, Muxyaddiin, if I call you once I find [your]

25

concern

Luminous One, a man who celebrates you finds great benefit and  
peace

I call you so take distress from me, The Good *Weli* I Love For Ever  
Before God it is you who finds what you desire, put the prestige upon  
us we ask you

The grace you have cannot be made concise, and so I reach out [my  
hands] for something of your success

30

Each time perplexity comes, Jiilaani we call on you with 'Ease my  
plight'

And our Lord bless the Prophet Axmed and his family and his  
companions

#### 1.4 Previous comments on the language of the poem.

Abdisalam (1977) makes three textual comments on the poem in his thesis. The first relates to the epithet *Kiilaani* for Cabdulqaadir Jiilaani of which he says it is derived from the Arabic *kāla* 'measure' with a meaning 'usually interpreted as the one 'who metes out blessings to his devotees'' (Abdisalam, 1977, 172). The other notes refer to the use of the words *dawlo* in line 9 commenting on his translation of this as 'ruler' given the context, rather than as 'government' or 'state'; and *silig* in line 13 of which he says: 'The wire rope of the saints' is a metaphor expressing support which 'ABD AL-QĀDIR gives to other saints. He thus, metaphorically, pulls them out of difficulties.' (Abdisalam, 1977, 173). An-



other point that Abdisalam makes with regard to the text is that the poem is in the *jiifto* metre (Abdisalam, 1977, 14) which will be discussed further below.

Orwin (2001a) gives a detailed commentary on the use of language in the poem. On the metre, he mentions that, despite the fact that Abdisalam says the poem is in *jiifto* metre (and his article mentions that such native-speaker intuition is not to be dismissed lightly) the poem is not actually in this metre and the following comment is made: ‘Looking again at the poem with Arabic metrical structure in mind, we see that the metre of this poem does bear a resemblance to the *kāmil* metre of Arabic in its dimetric form’ (Orwin, 2001a, 73). The discussion of the metre is not taken further and it is the substance of this comment which will be pursued in detail in the present article.

## 2 Alliteration and metre in Somali: general comments

### 2.1 Alliteration

Alliteration is a feature of all Somali poetry apart from some very few examples of what is called *jacbur* in which alliteration is deliberately avoided for specific artistic purposes, mostly comedic. Alliteration in Somali poetry refers to the same sound at the beginning of a word. The same alliterative sound is found throughout the poem and each line or half-line (according to the metrical pattern) must have an alliterative word beginning with that same sound.<sup>13</sup> In both *jiifto* and *maqalaay warlaay* metres which are presented below, there is just one alliterative word to fulfil the requirement since these are both short-line forms. The word

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<sup>13</sup>In some examples of *buraambur* poems, a form almost exclusively composed by women, alliteration may change from one section of a poem to the next whilst still being consistent within each section.

must be a noun, adjective, verb or adverb, that is to say a word of some lexical substance; using pronouns, grammatical particles and similar words for alliterative purposes would be technically very weak.

Aside from this alliterative patterning, there are some religious poems which are in the form of an *abecedarius*. Rather than the whole poem alliterating in one sound, the alliterating sounds of successive lines are those of the Arabic alphabet with each line alliterating internally with the sounds following the order of the Arabic alphabet. The poem under consideration here is one such example. Interestingly the first line of this poem breaks this pattern and alliterates in ‘k’. Orwin (2011) provides further details on the use of alliteration in Somali poetry and Somali culture more widely.

### 2.1.1 The link between alliteration and rhyme in Arabic

Morin (1999, p. 45) mentions a conceptual link—‘un lien *conceptuel*’ (emphasis in original)—between alliteration in Somali and ‘le principe monorime classique de la *qaṣīda*’ (p.45). The comment is not pursued, neither is it taken up elsewhere in the literature on Somali poetry, though it is quite significant. Although this issue is not directly related to the immediate concern of this article, It is mentioned briefly here given that it is a very interesting and important point when considering the possible relationship between Arabic and Somali poetic form.

When we consider alliteration in Somali, one of the terms used to describe this stands out: *qaafiyad* which is a loan from the Arabic *qāfiyah*, a term generally rendered in English as ‘rhyme’ in work on Arabic poetic form.<sup>14</sup> At first sight,

<sup>14</sup>Another term for alliteration in Somali is *xarafraac*, a compound noun from *xaraf*, the Arabic *ḥarf* meaning ‘letter [of the alphabet], consonant’ and *raac* a verb meaning ‘to accompany’.

the fact that a term for rhyme is used for alliteration seems a little incongruous (at least when we are using English for the discussion). However, when we consider *qāfiyah* in Arabic there is a significant characteristic which makes it seem a good term for alliteration in Somali. One of the key words in the analytical literature in Arabic on *qāfiyah* is *rawiyy*. This refers to the consonant which is at the core of the rhyming syllables at the end of the line in Arabic.<sup>15</sup> As Sperl (1989, p. 216) says in the entry on *qāfiyah* in his glossary: ‘Term denoting the monorhyme of the Arabic poem. A *qāfiya* is made up of a rhyming consonant (*rawiyy*) with or without vowel and stays unchanged throughout the poem.’ When a poem is labelled according to the rhyme, it is the *rawiyy* after which it is named, for example, *bā’iyyah* for a poem in which the *rawiyy* is *bā’* or *lāmiyyah* for a poem in which the *rawiyy* is *lām*. This emphasis on the consonant in the rhyme and the fact that it is consistent throughout the whole poem reflects the consistent consonantal alliteration in Somali. I do not wish here to suggest specifically that one led to the other, whichever way, between these two languages, but Morin’s notion of a conceptual link does seem to be important in some way and I leave it to further work to consider this issue in greater detail.

## 2.2 Somali metre: some general comments

Metre is represented here in the manner of a matrix which shows in an abstract way the possible patterns in which a metrical line may be formed. It is, of course, possible to provide a theoretically informed account of metre, but since the main point of the present article is to ascertain the metre of the poem under consideration and to follow up Orwin’s suggestion that there is influence from Arabic *kāmil*

<sup>15</sup>Rhyme is also present at the end of the first half-line in Classical Arabic poems.

metre it is felt that the approach of using a simple matrix is preferable in order simply to present a pattern against which lines may be compared in order to determine whether or not they are metrical. This, of course, ignores possible preferences for certain line patterns that appear in practice, something which will be left to future research.

Somali poetry has a quantitative metrical system in which long- and short-vowel syllables are patterned. Also syllable-final consonants and word-breaks are constrained with regard to where they may appear in a line. However, in the context of this article's discussion of influence from Arabic, it is crucial to understand that syllables with final consonants behave differently in Somali metre to how they do in Arabic metre. In Somali, consonants at the end of short-vowel syllables are constrained in that they may occur at the end of some syllables in a line and not at the end of others. It is not the case, however, that such syllables are metrically equivalent to syllables with a long vowel as is the case in Arabic. In Arabic a CVC syllable is metrically equivalent to a CVV syllable.<sup>16</sup> In Somali on the other hand a CVC syllable is the metrical equivalent of a CV syllable but is nevertheless constrained with respect to where it can occur in lines in certain metres, including the ones considered here.

The phonology of Somali allows for the following syllable structures: CV, CVV, CVC and CVVC. As a corollary to this, geminate consonants can only be analysed as comprising the final consonant of one syllable and the initial consonant of the following syllable and so are constrained to occur in only those positions in which a syllable-final consonant may occur (for further details see Orwin,

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<sup>16</sup>In the rest of this article we shall use C to stand for 'consonant', V to stand for 'short vowel' and VV to stand for 'long vowel' when referring both to Somali and to Arabic.

2001b; Orwin and ‘Gaariye’, 2010). Furthermore, there is a set of consonants which have been shown to behave like geminate consonants and which are also constrained in a manner analogous to geminates. They have been termed *virtual geminates* and are discussed in Ségéral and Scheer (2001) and Barillot (2002) in relation to the phonology of Somali and are discussed in Orwin and ‘Gaariye’ (2010) with respect to metre in Somali poetry. The set of virtual geminates is: ‘t’, ‘k’, ‘j’, ‘s’, ‘sh’, ‘f’, ‘w’ and ‘y’.<sup>17</sup> Note it is only short-vowel syllables with a final consonant which are constrained, all long-vowel syllables with a final consonant may occur wherever a long-vowel syllable is allowed.

Related to the issue of syllable-final consonants is the matter of word breaks. A word may begin only where it is preceded by a position in which a syllable-final consonant may occur. A further corollary to this is that the alliterative consonant can only be found in these positions since it is the sound at the beginning of the word which alliterates.

To turn to diphthongs, open-syllable diphthongs are generally considered to count as either long or short in Somali metre i.e. *těgāy* or *těgǎy*.<sup>18</sup>

Also considered as counting long or short are the vowels in certain morphemes. According to Banti and Giannattasio (1996, 86-7) these are the subject verbal pronouns *aan*, *aad* and *uu*, the remote defining suffix *-ii*, the subordinate negative particle *aan*, the focus marker *baa*, the mood classifier *waa* and the con-

<sup>17</sup>There are instances of ‘y’ (such as the medial consonant in the conjunction *iyō*) which are sometimes found in positions where virtual geminates are disallowed, but there are assumed to be phonological reasons for this which will not be pursued here.

<sup>18</sup>The metrical symbols used above Somali text in this article are the following: a vowel which counts as long is indicated by a macron above the vowel (written with a digraph as in the standard Somali orthography): *āā*, *ēē* etc.; a vowel which counts as short is indicated by a breve above the vowel *ǎ*, *ě* etc.; a phonologically long vowel or diphthong which is considered also to count potentially as short is indicated by a breve above a macron *ǎy*, *ě* etc.

junctions *ee* and *oo*. There is more to be said about open-syllable diphthongs and these grammatical particles as it seems to the present author that their behaviour is constrained to some extent. Their presence in the poem ‘Taaj Awliyo’ will be mentioned in section 4.3.

Finally on general aspects of metre in Somali, we find the use of contraction of certain vowels in metrical contexts and also the use of interesting aspects of word order that are not found in general language use. These will be pointed out in the discussion of the poem where relevant. I shall now turn to discussion of metre in the poem specifically.

### 3 Metre in ‘Taaj Awliyo’

#### 3.1 *Jifto* metre

Given that Abdisalam (1977, p. 14) says that this poem is in the *jifto* metre, that pattern will be presented here in detail in order for it to be shown clearly that it is not the pattern used in ‘Taaj Awliyo’, whether in the short-line or long-line form. Somalis distinguish between short line (*beyd gaaban*) forms and long line (*beyd dheer*) forms, and the difference between these rests in the characteristic of long lines comprising two half-lines, each of which contains an alliterative word whereas short lines are single integral metrical entities with one alliterating word.<sup>19</sup> *Jifto* is a term which has been used for both a short-line form and a long-line form for which the term *masafo* is also used, details of which can be

<sup>19</sup>Note the Arabic term *bayt* being used, in its Somalized form *beyd* (also written *bayd*) for ‘line’. There are other Somali terms which are also used in other contexts, but in referring to long- and short-line types, in the present author’s experience, this seems to be the more commonly used term.

found in Banti and Giannattasio (1996, 89-98). In more recent times *jiifto* refers specifically to a short-line form which is, more or less, half of the long-line form; it is the short form which will be presented here.<sup>20</sup>

The fact that Abdisalaam says the poem is in the *jiifto* metre is particularly curious since he presents an overview of this particular metrical patterning as given in ‘Gaarriye’ (1976) (Abdisalam, 1977, pp. 59-61).

The matrix of the *jiifto* is shown in (1).

(1) *Jiifto* matrix

$$\left\{ \left( \cup \right) \right\} \overline{\cup} \left\{ \left( \cup \right) \right\} \underline{\cup} \cup \underline{\underline{\cup}} \underline{\underline{\cup}}$$

The symbol  $\cup$  indicates a position in which only a short-vowel syllable may occur with a syllable-final consonant or not. The symbol  $\underline{\underline{\cup}}$  indicates a position which can be realized as a long-vowel syllable or two short-vowel syllables, in which case the first short-vowel syllable *cannot* end in a consonant. The symbol  $\overline{\cup}$  indicates a position which can be realized as a long-vowel syllable or two short-vowel syllables, but in which case the first short-vowel syllable *can* end in a consonant.<sup>21</sup> The short-vowel syllable symbol within parentheses,  $(\cup)$ , indicates the two positions in which an ‘extra’ short vowel syllable may occur (either CV or CVC), but only one such syllable can occur, hence the curly brackets to indicate mutual exclusivity.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Describing in detail the difference in metrical patterning between the half-line of the *masafo* and the single *jiifto* line is not necessary here as will be apparent.

<sup>21</sup>The symbols thus indicate the following possible syllable structures:

$\cup$ : CV or CVC

$\underline{\underline{\cup}}$ : CV CV, CV CVC, CVV or CVVC

$\overline{\cup}$ : CV CV, CV CVC, CVCCV, CVCCVC, CVV or CVVC.

<sup>22</sup>There may be further constraints on patterning when such a syllable is present. This is currently under investigation by the present author.

To demonstrate this pattern a few lines from the beginning of the poem ‘Fad Galbeed’ by Maxamed Xaashi Dhamac ‘Gaariye’, which is in this metre are given in (2) along with the scansion symbols above the syllables.

- (2) First lines of ‘Fad Galbeed’ by Maxamed Xaashi Dhamac ‘Gaariye’
- a. Gǎbbǎł dhǎcǎ cǎdceēđ yǎhǎy
  - b. Ũ sīī fāānǒ gūrǎtēē
  - c. Cǎsǎř gāābǎñ līīqīī
  - d. Gǒdkǎ wēērǎrāysāā
  - e. Gǒ’ě fūlēy mīyāād tāhǎy

We see instances of open-syllable diphthongs counting as short according to the requirements of the metrical pattern: *yahǎy* counting as *yahǎy*, for example, and also an instance of *-ū* counting as long in *liīqīī*. We also see an instance of a geminate consonant in the first metrical position (◡) in (2a) *gabbal*, a virtual geminate in that position in (2c), *casar*, and in (2d) a word with two short-vowel syllables the first of which ends in a consonant, *godka*.<sup>23</sup> In (2b) we see an example of an optional short-vowel syllable at the beginning of the line in the preverbal particle *u*.

Having outlined the *jiifto* metre let us turn now to the poem ‘Taaj Awliyo’ and consider its metrical patterning.

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<sup>23</sup>Translation: Oh setting evening sun / Gathering up your pride / In the fade of evening / Heading for your hole / Hey! Are you a coward? All translations are by the present author unless stated otherwise.



### 3.2 ‘Taaj Awliyo’ and the *jiifto* metre

If we scan even just the first two lines of ‘Taaj Awliyo’ with the *jiifto* matrix in mind we see that this poem cannot be considered to be in this metrical pattern. The lines are repeated in (3) with the scansion marked above the text. Given what has been said above about open-syllable diphthongs and certain grammatical particles counting as either long or short we allow for both possibilities and so these are marked by the symbol introduced above, as in Kīlāāniyō̃.

(3) First two lines of ‘Taaj Awliyo’

- a. Kīlāāniyō̃, Kīlāāniyō̃, kuū yēēdhñāyēē nōō kaālāyēēy
- b. Āqbāl̃ iyō̃ ijaābō̃ ādāā lēhō̃, Āwliyō̃ dhāmmaān ũ Īmaām āhēēy

If we abstract the metrical symbols from the words we have patterns in (4).

(4) Metrical symbols abstracted from the lines in (3)

- a. — — ∪ ∪ — — ∪ ∪ — — ∪ ∪ — — ∪ ∪
- b. ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ — ∪ ∪ — ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ — ∪ ∪ — ∪ ∪

No matter how we try to parse the sequence, we find no trace of the *jiifto* metre in the vowel patterning of these lines and conclude that Orwin (2001a) was correct.

This, of course, leads to the question of which metrical pattern is used in the poem. Orwin (2001a) suggested the *kāmil* Arabic metre and we shall look at this in more detail below in Section 5. From a purely Somali perspective, however, there is a metrical pattern which does stand out as a possibility for the basis of the metre in ‘Taaj Awliyo’ namely *maqalaay warlaay*. This is closely related to *jiifto* and is presented below in Section 3.3.

### 3.3 *Maqalaay warlaay* metre

This metrical pattern is one which is traditionally used in a worksong performed by young people and children when they are herding young sheep and goats, hence the name, which means ‘oh young sheep and goats who have no news’.<sup>24</sup> The same metrical pattern is also used in a worksong type performed when watering camels at a well (specificially when they are given water for the second time after having rested after the initial drink), though it is performed with a different *luuq* (melody).

The pattern is related to the *jiifto* in that if we remove the final metrical position given as  $\underline{\underline{\cup}}$  we are left with the *maqalaay warlaay* pattern. All other characteristics of the *jiifto* pattern as given above also apply to the *maqalaay warlaay* pattern, namely the constraint on syllable-final consonants and the possible ‘extra’ short-vowel syllables at the beginning of the line. We can therefore present the matrix for the *maqalaay warlaay* as in (5).

(5) *Maqalaay warlaay* matrix

$$\left\{ \left( \cup \right) \right\} \underline{\underline{\cup}} \left\{ \left( \cup \right) \right\} \underline{\underline{\cup}} \cup \underline{\underline{\cup}}$$

It has been used by some modern poets in their own compositions such as the example lines in (6) by Axmed Aw Geeddi (Axmed, 2011, 72-4) in a poem which very much reflects the folkloric character of the form. The lines are given with the scansion marks above the vowels.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup>The word *maqal* is ‘young sheep and goats’ here with the feminine vocative suffix *-aay* and *warlaay* is the word *war* ‘news’ with the suffix *-la* ‘without’ and the feminine vocative suffix repeated.

<sup>25</sup>Translation: Oh able Ram! / Herd the lambs / To the river beds / The shade of the *damal* tree.

- (6) First lines of ‘Sumalow Darbane’ by Axmed Aw Geeddi

Sūmālōw dārbānē

Nāylāhā dūduuc

Ōo dōoxā gēe

Ōo dāmāl hādh gēlī

If we turn again to the first two lines of ‘Taaj Awliyo’ we see that it follows a pattern which can be presented as a sequence of instances of the *maqalaay warlaay* line as shown by the vertical dots between each such sequence in (7).<sup>26</sup>

- (7) First lines of ‘Taaj Awliyo’ showing *maqalaay warlaay* units

a. Kīlāāniyōw ∴ Kīlāāniyōw ∴ kuū yēedhnāyēe ∴ nōo kāalāyēy

b. Āqbāl iyō ijāa- ∴ -bō ādāā lēh oō ∴ Āwliyō dhāmmaān ∴ ũ Īmāam  
āheēy

If we abstract the metrical symbols from the words then we have the patterning in (8).

- (8) Symbols abstracted from the lines in (7)

a. — — ∪ — ∴ — — ∪ — ∴ — — ∪ — ∴ — — ∪ —

b. ∪∪ ∪∪ ∪ — ∴ ∪∪ — ∪ — ∴ — ∪∪ ∪ — ∴ ∪∪ — ∪ —

This shows us clearly that on the surface ‘Taaj Awliyo’ may be analysed at some level as four *maqalaay warlaay* units in the line. We shall consider this in more detail in the next section.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup>These symbols will be considered more precisely below.

<sup>27</sup>The repeated rhythm of each of the *maqalaay warlaay* units in the first line of the poem is interesting to note, especially given the alliteration in ‘k’, as mentioned above. This, along with the repeated epithets may be a reason why it is used as a sort of introductory line, something analogous

## 4 Metrical analysis of the poem

In the rest of this article, the metre of the poem ‘Taaj Awliyo’ will be called simply the *taaj awliyo* metre to distinguish it from *maqalaay warlaay* metre *per se*. It will be demonstrated that the poem is not simply in *maqalaay warlaay* metre itself but is a metrical pattern related to this.

The first obvious question is why do we not simply assume the poem to be in the *maqalaay warlaay* metre? A response to this question can be found by looking at the junctures between the *maqalaay warlaay* units.

### 4.1 Word breaks in the metre of ‘Taaj Awliyo’

In the second line of the poem, given in (7b), the juncture between the first and second *maqalaay warlaay* units can clearly be seen to be within a word. The first instance of the *maqalaay warlaay* pattern ends with the first two syllables of the word *ijaabo* (*ijaa-*) with the next *maqalaay warlaay* unit beginning with the rest of the word: *-bo*. There are no metrical patterns in Somali which allow for a line, or indeed a half-line, to end within a word, thus these first two instances of the *maqalaay warlaay* pattern cannot be considered to be two separate lines, rather must be considered to constitute an integral line or half-line. The first part of line 3 is syntactically parallel to line 2 and displays the same characteristic, further confirming this observation of a word crossing the juncture between two *maqalaay warlaay* units; the first part of this line is given in (9).

(9) First part of line 3 of ‘Taaj Awliyo’

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to lines of vocables which introduce the performance of some forms of poetry, especially when the *luuq* is used.

Bărăkiyō bishaā- ḥ̣ : -rō ādāā lēhōon

Looking elsewhere in the poem we see clear examples in lines 18 and 30 which further confirm this observation, see (10).<sup>28</sup>

(10) First parts of lines 18 and 30 of ‘Taaj Awliyo’

a. Dūhūr gāl āy sīdī- ḥ̣ : -sā ũ dāah-īrōw

b. Yāābkī yīmāā- ḥ̣ : -dābā Jīlaānōw

Other examples are lines 4 and 12, though these are not quite as straightforward. Line 4 begins *Adigaa tijaaroon ku tuugnayee*, the first part of which can be analysed as in (11a) in which case the break is less clearly within a lexical item but is still within the word *tijaaroon* which, because of the metre cannot be broken down, though it might be argued that there is a natural break between *tijaar-* and *-oon*. Line 12 is analysed in (11b) in which case the break is analysed to be within the 1st p. pl. exclusive subject verbal pronoun *aanu*.<sup>29</sup>

(11) a. Adigaa tijaar- ḥ̣ : -oon ku tuugnayee

adiga+baa tijaaro ah oo aan ku tuugno ee  
you+FOCUS wealthy are CONJ. we you entreated CONJ.

b. Samsam Awliyoon- ḥ̣ : -u siyaaranow

Samsam Awliyo oo aanu siyaarano+ow  
Samsam *awliyo* CONJ. we (excl.) visited+VOCATIVE

<sup>28</sup>The metrical pattern is not sustained by the word *Jiilaanow* in line 30 in (10b). This will be discussed in Section 4.4. Also the status of *-āy* will be mentioned in Section 4.3.

<sup>29</sup>Note in (11a) the 1st p. pl. pronoun is the same as the singular 1st p. pronoun, this is a regular usage in Somali. Note also the assumption of *tuugno* (present tense) rather than *tuugnay* (past tense). The verb in *tuugnayee* could be analysed as either but, with respect to the argument made here on metre, choosing one or the other makes no difference.

Given clear examples of the juncture between the first two *maqalaay warlaay* units in the *taaj awliyo* metre being bridged within a word we conclude that the first half of the *taaj awliyo* line is an integral metrical sequence.

Looking further in the line we see that there are no instances of the second and third *maqalaay warlaay* units being bridged within a word. This is reflected in the way Abdisalam, in his written version, has a comma between the second *maqalaay warlaay* unit and the third (used here also).

This leads us to consider whether or not this point is a line ending or a half-line ending. In other words, is the whole line, as written by Abdisalam a single metrical entity, with a caesura (such as is the case with the *gabay* and *masafo*) or is it two separate lines? The fact that the alliteration runs across the whole suggests it is a single metrical entity with a caesura between the two halves. Also, the reader familiar with Arabic will recognize a pattern analogous with the relationship between the *bayt* and *miṣrāʿ* (full line and half-line respectively) in Arabic metre. Here we shall consider the lines as written to be full lines comprising two half-lines with a caesura between the second and third *maqalaay warlaay* units.

Let us turn then to the second half-line and consider the integrity of this as we have with the first. Half-lines which display a single word that bridges the juncture between the two *maqalaay warlaay* units are found in lines 17, 18, 27.<sup>30</sup> Line 17, shown in (12), is a clear example.

(12) năǵă dōorsămāy- ḥ : -nōw dīyaār ăhāw

The word *doorsamaynow*, made up of the negative verb form *doorsamayn* and the vocative ending *-ow*, forms a single word which crosses the juncture such that

<sup>30</sup>Line 29 might seem to share this characteristic, but the metre is odd and is discussed in Section 4.4.

the vocative ending is metrically part of the second part of the half-line. Although a separate morpheme, I suggest that the boundary between this and the word to which it is suffixed cannot be considered a word boundary. This is shown in (12).

The second half of line 18 presents another example as shown in (13).

(13) dǐllǐ wēyn qǐyāā- : -mě dǔshǎ nōogǎ mǎrǐ

Although at first sight the more obvious place for the juncture is between the words *qiyaame* and *dusha* this would lead to an ‘extra’ short-vowel syllable at the end of the first part which breaks the metre as we assume it to be here. On the other hand with the word-break within the word *qiyaame* we arrive at the analysis shown in (13) in which the syllable *-me* is analysed as an extra short-vowel syllable at the beginning of the next *maqalaay warlaay* unit, something which is allowed by the *maqalaay warlaay* metre. These examples show that the second half-line, like the first, can be considered an integral metrical unit rather than two separate *maqalaay warlaay* units.

In conclusion, the metre of this poem is assumed to be formed of two half-lines each of which comprises a sequence which can be analysed as equivalent to two *maqalaay warlaay* lines in a single integral metrical unit. It must be mentioned that this does not imply that the metrical pattern was consciously built from *maqalaay warlaay* metrical sequences. We cannot know if this was the case or not, the important point is that the metre follows principles we find in another well-known Somali metrical pattern, however it came about. We shall now consider some of the other metrical characteristics.

## 4.2 Syllable-final consonants in ‘Taaj Awliyo’ metre

In this section, we shall consider the way in which the constraint on syllable-final consonants works in this metre as used in ‘Taaj Awliyo’. We saw in (5), in conjunction with the comments in Section 3.1, that syllable-final consonants (and by corollary geminate consonants, virtual geminates and word breaks) can only occur in certain positions in the *maqalaay warlaay* line. In particular, it is to be noted that for metrical positions which may be realized as either two short-vowel syllables or one long-vowel syllable, it is only the first of these in which the first short-vowel syllable can end in a consonant: the position represented in the matrix with  $\overline{\cup}$  rather than the positions represented as  $\underline{\cup}$ . (14) shows where syllable-final consonants may occur with a raised ‘c’ (°) in the positions in the line where a syllable-final consonant may appear when all vowels are short (this does not include the ‘extra’ short-vowel syllables at the beginning of a line). It does not imply that this is a common pattern but merely shows the logically possible sites of a syllable-final consonant.

(14)  $\overline{\cup}^{\circ} \overline{\cup}^{\circ} \underline{\cup}^{\circ} \underline{\cup}^{\circ} \underline{\cup}^{\circ}$

Given that we are assuming the ‘Taaj Awliyo’ metre to be an integral whole comprising two half-lines, the question arises as to whether this constraint on syllable-final consonants applies only at the beginning of the whole line or half-line or whether this characteristic of the *maqalaay warlaay* metre is brought into each part that equates with a *maqalaay warlaay* line. We do indeed find examples in each part as shown in (15) in which the relevant syllables are underlined.

(15) Syllable-final consonant example lines



- a. Aqbal iyo ijaabo adaa lehoo, Awliyo dhammaan u Imaam aheey (line 2)
- b. Sawaab buu helaa nin ku soo xusee, kama seexatide Saxal taaj u yeel (line 5)
- c. Rabbi khaaliqaa khayrkaa badshee, khalwadaa nin galay khaatumo u yeel (line 8)
- d. Ka ku jecel kollaba kama jeesatid eh, Kiilaaniyow kurbad iiga fayd (line 23)

Line 2 (15a) gives an example in the first *maqalaay warlaay* unit; line 5 (15b) gives an example of this in the second *maqalaay warlaay* unit; line 8 (15c) gives an example in the third part (as well as a geminate in the first part in the word *Rabbi*) and finally line 23 (15d) gives an example in the fourth part. As we might expect, we find virtually no examples of syllable-final consonants, geminate consonants, virtual geminates or word breaks in positions where they cannot occur given the *maqalaay warlaay* pattern.<sup>31</sup>

To some extent this seems to run against the assumption that the *taaj awliyo*

<sup>31</sup>There is in fact only one example, the word *haybadda* at the beginning of the second half-line in line 28. The word is a loan from Arabic *haybah* which ends in *tā' marbūtah* and the geminate 'dd' is standard in defined words of this type in Somali. Although this is a counter-example to the constraint on syllable-final consonants, such examples, in the author's experience are very rare and it will be assumed not to detract from the main argument presented here.

In a similar vein it is to be noticed that in line 7 what seems to be a word break occurs between *xaajo* and *u* in the second metrical position (one of the  $\underline{\quad}$  positions): *xāājō ũ ġūdōw*. The second part of this is the preverbal particle *u* and the behaviour of these metrically is such they don't seem to behave as separate words in their own right. Also with respect to pronunciation, the sequence *-jo -u* would most likely be pronounced as a diphthong which might be written *xaajow*. This does not therefore seem to be a counter example to the constraint on word breaks in such positions. Another line which possibly displays this is in line 27: *wahankii iga qaad* in which the preverbal cluster *iga* (the 1st p. sg. object verbal pronoun and the preverbal prepositional particle *ka*) follows the anceps syllable *-kī* giving the scansion *wāhānkī īgā qāād*. This might also be analysed however as coalescence of the two vowels giving *wahanki-iga*.

line or half-line is an integral unit in its own right rather than four *maqalaay warlaay* lines in a sequence. If we compare the *gabay* metrical pattern, a long line comprising two half-lines, we find that the constraint only allows the syllable-final consonant pattern in the first metrical position of the whole line. However, I suggest that the fact that in each half-line we find the juncture between the *maqalaay warlaay* units within words is stronger evidence of their integrity. What we see with the patterning of the syllable final consonants is interesting in that it does seem to reflect some sense of each part of a half-line to be somewhat independent which I return to below as evidence of influence from Arabic in that each of the units is analogous with an Arabic *juz'* (see Section 5.1).

### 4.3 The 'extra' short-vowel syllable in 'Taaj Awliyo'

The final metrical characteristic which we see in the *maqalaay warlaay* and which needs to be considered in relation to the *taaj awliyo* metre is the 'extra' short-vowel syllable which can occur at the beginning of the *maqalaay warlaay* line, that is before or following the first metrical position ( $\overline{\cup}$ ) (see (5)). Do we find this only at the beginning of the *taaj awliyo* line as a whole, only at the beginning of a half-line or at the beginning of each of the *maqalaay warlaay* units? Before answering the question we need to consider the syllables which have been considered to count as long or short in the literature, the anceps syllables (see Section 2.2) since this phenomenon interacts with how we might analyse potential instances of an 'extra' short vowel syllable.

Consider, for example, the fourth *maqalaay warlaay* unit in line 15 given in (16) with the metrical symbols above the vowels of each syllable.

(16) sā<sup>̣</sup>mī<sup>̣</sup>r ī<sup>̣</sup>nā<sup>̣</sup>ād lā<sup>̣</sup>hā<sup>̣</sup>y<sup>̣</sup>d

The long vowel in *-aad* (the 2nd p. sg. subject verbal pronoun) is one of those morphemes which is assumed to count as long or short (indicated by the presence of both the macron and the breve symbols above the vowel: ā<sup>̣</sup>). This means we can metrically parse this line in two ways. Firstly, assuming *-aad* to count as long gives us the analysis in (17).

(17) sā<sup>̣</sup>mī<sup>̣</sup>r ī<sup>̣</sup>nā<sup>̣</sup>ād lā<sup>̣</sup>hā<sup>̣</sup>y<sup>̣</sup>d

◡ ◡ ◡\_ ◡\_

In this case the short-vowel syllable *in-* can only be accounted for as being the ‘extra’ syllable allowed at the beginning of the line. Here it is in the second of the two possible positions.

Alternatively if we assume *-aad* to count as short we have the analysis in (18)

(18) sā<sup>̣</sup>mī<sup>̣</sup>r ī<sup>̣</sup>nā<sup>̣</sup>ād lā<sup>̣</sup>hā<sup>̣</sup>y<sup>̣</sup>d

◡ ◡ ◡ ◡\_

This follows the basic *maqalaay warlaay* pattern with no ‘extra’ short-vowel syllable.

All examples of potential ‘extra’ short-vowel syllables with the exception of three are of this ambiguous type and are found in all four of the *maqalaay warlaay* positions in the line. The three examples which are unambiguous are the first part of line 5 in which the ‘extra’ short-vowel syllable is in the first of the two possible positions (see 19a) the fourth part of line 18 in which it is also in the first of the two possible positions (19b, see also 13 and associated discussion for more

on this line) and the fourth part of line 30 in which it is in the second of the two possible positions (see 19c).

(19) Unambiguous ‘extra’ short-vowel syllables

a. sāwāāb buū hēlāā

∪ \_ \_ ∪ \_

b. -mē dūshā nōōgā mārī

∪ ∪∪ \_ ∪ ∪∪

c. kūūgū yēēdhānēē

\_ ∪ \_ ∪ \_

We have a clear instance of the ‘extra’ short-vowel syllable at the beginning of the whole line in line 5, which is to be expected, but we also find a clear example in the final *maqalaay warlaay* unit of line 30 which, it could be argued, is the part where it might least be expected. We also have ambiguous examples in all four units: line 23 in the first position, line 4 in the second position, line 12 in the third position and line 14 in the fourth position.

Before leaving this issue it is interesting to note that in the poem as a whole all instances of anceps syllables with the exception of one (the first part of line 25: mārābādā ān qābō)<sup>32</sup> occur in contexts which involve a potential ‘extra’ syllable. This is noted here, further details and discussion on the anceps syllables in this poem and others are currently being investigated by the present author.

In conclusion it has been shown that the *taaj awliyo* metre is a Somali metrical pattern in its own right. It is a long line metre divided into two equal halves, each of which is analogous with a sequence of two *maqalaay warlaay* lines. Although

<sup>32</sup>The word *aan*, which is the anceps syllable here, is the 1st p. sg. subject verbal pronoun.

these two parts of the half-line do not form independent lines given that the juncture between them can occur within a word, they do nevertheless independently display the characteristics of the beginning of the *maqalaay warlaay* line with respect to syllable-final consonants and the possible ‘extra’ short vowel. The matrix for the half-line is presented in (20).

(20) *Taaj Awliyo* half-line matrix

$$\left\{ \left( \underset{\cdot}{\cup} \right) \right\} \overline{\cup} \left\{ \left( \underset{\cdot}{\cup} \right) \right\} \underline{\cup} \cup \underline{\cup} : \left\{ \left( \underset{\cdot}{\cup} \right) \right\} \overline{\cup} \left\{ \left( \underset{\cdot}{\cup} \right) \right\} \underline{\cup} \cup \underline{\cup}$$

A short-vowel symbol in parentheses indicates that this may or may not occur, the fact that each of these is within curly brackets also indicates that only one or the other may occur at the beginning of each part of the half-line. The symbol ‘ $\dot{\cup}$ ’ indicates the boundary between the two parts of the half-line which can be bridged by a word. It is assumed that in each of the *maqalaay warlaay* units we find the possibility of an ‘extra’ short-vowel syllable and also the metrical position type indicated by  $\overline{\cup}$  in the matrix. If we take the whole of the *taaj awliyo* line, we have the two half-lines divided by a caesura, which cannot be bridged by a word.

#### 4.4 Lines which seem unmetrical

There are a number of lines in the poem which seem not to be metrical given what has been said in the previous section. I shall consider these here. To begin, lines 13, 22 and 30 all include the word ‘Jiilaanow’ which is not consistent with the metrical pattern. This word is the name Jiilaani of Cabdulqaadir Jiilaani (in Arabic *jīlānī*) with the vocative suffix *-ow*. It is impossible for this word to fit the metre in any position in the line given the sequence of three long vowels but,

given the significance of the name and the nature of the poem its presence does not seem out of place. It is interesting that the final vocative is the final part of a *maqalaay warlaay* unit in each instance of its use and it is possible that in performance the syllable which is expected to be short metrically in each instance (-*laa-*) is performed as short.<sup>33</sup>

The second half-line of line 29 is ‘*ee liibaantaadaan wax ka laacayaa*’ in which the word ‘*liibaantaadaan*’ seems not to fit the metrical pattern; we expect the word to be ‘*liibaantadaan*’. The parts of this word are given in (21).

(21) *liibaantaadaan*

*liibaan- -taada baa- -aan*  
victory your FOCUS I

Although not one of the anceps syllables, it is to be noted that it is in the second person possessive suffix that we find the long vowel where we expect a short vowel metrically. Given that the 2nd person subject verbal pronoun is an anceps syllable it may be that in this instance the possessive suffix is behaving in an analogous manner. This is not, as far as I am aware, a regular characteristic but might be one way of accounting for this line.

The final line is interesting. If we scan the line according to Somali metrical principles we have what is given in (22a) and the scansion doesn’t work.<sup>34</sup> The line though is actually a formulaic line in Arabic and if we scan it according to Arabic principles, that is, scan CVC syllables as long (heavy in the Arabic-related terminology) then we have the pattern given in (22b) which does follow the *taaj awliyo* metrical pattern.

<sup>33</sup>Note that in line 6 the name is at the beginning and is metrical as *Jiilaaniyow*.

<sup>34</sup>A ‘best attempt’ has been given in (22a), but it is hopefully clear that it is not possible to scan this line correctly.

- (22) a. Rābbānā fāsāllī cālāā nēbī, Āxmēdān wā Āalī, āsxaābīhī  
 ? 00\_000:0\_0\_ | 0000\_:00\_0\_
- b. Rābbānā fāsāllī cālāā nēbī, Āxmēdān wā Āalī, āsxaābīhī  
 \_0\_0\_:00\_0\_ | \_0\_0\_:0\_0\_

## 5 Arabic influence in the *taaj awliyo* metrical pattern

Having provided an account of the *taaj awliyo* metre that follows principles which we know hold for Somali metrical patterning in general, we might ask why we would consider the possibility of Arabic influence. It has been mentioned above that Sheekh Caaqib wanted to make poems in Somali which reflected *qasiidooyin* poems in Arabic so that people who didn't know that language could experience something similar to them in their own language, Somali. We might assume that in doing this he had the wish not simply to present something of the imagery and themes in the poems but also something of how they are constructed and how they sound given the Classical Arabic stylistic characteristics of metre and, possibly, rhyme. Whether or not Sheekh Caaqib was the first to make a poem in this Somali metrical pattern is not known by the present author, though I have not come across any poem outside of the Sufi context which uses this metrical pattern suggesting that, whether Sheekh Caaqib was the first or not, it is restricted in its use to this particular context. Given all this and the fact that, as we shall see in this section, Arabic *kāmil* metre seems to be so close to the Somali pattern, it is reasonable to suggest that this is a case of influence from Arabic or at the very least, there is some resonance of the Arabic in the Somali.

## 5.1 Arabic *kāmil* metre

Before looking at analyses of the *kāmil* metre in Arabic, some lines from a famous poem allows for the opportunity of seeing the similarities. A famous early poem in this metre is the *muʿallaqa* of Labīd bin Rabīʿ, the opening lines of which are given in (23).<sup>35</sup>

(23) First lines of the *muʿallaqa* of Labīd bin Rabīʿ

ʿafati d-diyāru maḥalluhā fa-muqāmuhā  
 bi-minan taʿabbada ghawluhā fa-rijāmuhā  
 fa-madāfiʿu r-rayyāni ʿurriya rasmuhā  
 khalaqan kamā ḍamina l-wuḥyiyya silāmuhā  
 dimanun tajarrama baʿda ʿahdi ʿanīsihā  
 ḥijajun khalawna ḥalālulhā wa-ḥarāmuhā

If we abstract the metrical patterning from these lines and represent it using the symbols used above for Somali (though following Arabic principles) the result is given in 24. I have also indicated the caesura with the symbol ||, and division between the Arabic feet with the symbol |.

(24) Scansion of the lines in (23)

u \_ u \_ | u \_ u \_ | u \_ u \_ || u \_ u \_ | u \_ u \_ | u \_ u \_

<sup>35</sup>The text is taken from Jones (2011, p. 455-6) and the translation given there is: ‘There is almost no trace of those abodes, either halting-places or longer encampments, at Minā, and Ghawl and Rijām have become desolate, / And the water-courses of al-Rayyān: their traces have become worn, [so that] it looks as though the stones there contain writings, / — Blackened traces. Years have elapsed since someone who knew them well was there; their ordinary seasons and their sacred seasons have elapsed.’

An example of a poem in the *kāmil* metre in Arabic by a Somali is ‘Sirāj al-ʿuqūl wa al-Sarāʿir’ by Sheekh Cabdiraxmaan Axmed Zaylici which is published in ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin Ahmad al-Zayliʿi (1972, pp. 116-119).



و \_ و \_ | \_ \_ و \_ | و \_ و \_ || و \_ و \_ | و \_ و \_ | و \_ و \_  
 و \_ و \_ | و \_ و \_ | و \_ و \_ || و \_ و \_ | و \_ و \_ | و \_ و \_

It should be clear already that the metrical pattern presented shows strong similarities with that of the Somali *taaj awliyo* metrical pattern. In the metrical abstraction, each of the *ajzā'*, the Arabic feet, in the poem looks on the surface like a *maqalaay warlaay* unit in the *taaj awliyo* metre.<sup>36</sup> The biggest difference in the line being the presence of three feet in each half-line in the Arabic poem and two *maqalaay warlaay* units in the *taaj awliyo* though the *majzū'* or dimetric form also exists (see below). If we go on to look at representations of *kāmil* metre in work on Arabic metre we see the pattern confirmed.

As is well known, work on the metrical analysis of Arabic poetry began in the 8th century of the Common Era with the work of al-Khalīl bin Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī, who was the first to analyse the Arabic metrical system. In the Khalilian system the *kāmil* metre may be represented by the well-known mnemonics in (25).

(25) Khalilian mnemonics for *kāmil*  
*mutafā'ilun mutafā'ilun mutafā'ilun*

This clearly shows resonances of the Somali *taaj awliyo* metrical pattern. Wright, in the 19th century, gives a matrix for the *kāmil* metre which will make this even clearer since he used the same symbols as we are using in the present work. (26) shows the matrix he presents for the 'normal form of the dimeter' (Wright, 1898, p. 363).

<sup>36</sup>I use the term 'Arabic foot' here to distinguish the units labelled in Arabic *juz'* (pl. *ajzā'*) from the notion of foot in European metrical studies and also the use of the term in more recent theoretical approaches such as Golston and Riad (1997).

(26) *kāmil* dimetre matrix in Wright (1898, p. 363)

⏟ — ∪ — | ⏟ — ∪ — || ⏟ — ∪ — | ⏟ — ∪ —

What Wright calls the ‘dimeter’ is the form referred to as *majzū*’ in Arabic, that is the form which comprises two *ajzā*’ rather than the more common three. It is this *majzū*’ form which is, for obvious reasons, closest to the *taaj awliyo* half-line.

Golston and Riad (1997) present a theoretical approach to metre in Arabic which is based on the restrictive foot typology of Kager (1993) and optimality theory as presented in Prince and Smolensky (1993). Part of this approach is representing different levels of constituency in the line. The lowest level is the ‘metrical position’. The sequence of metrical positions is then structured into binary constituencies at three levels above the metrical position as shown in (27) for the *kāmil* metre in its dimetric form. In this, the Greek letter  $\phi$  represents the class of feet which are bimoraic, namely the set {H, LL},<sup>37</sup> which in Arabic includes both the monosyllables CVV and CVC and the bisyllabic sequence CVCV.

(27) *kāmil* matrix in Golston and Riad (1997)

[ ] half-line  
 [ ] [ ] metron  
 [ $\phi$  H] [L H] [ $\phi$  H] [L H] verse foot  
 $\phi$  H L H  $\phi$  H L H metrical position

If we replace the abstract symbols in one metron in (27) with the possible Arabic syllable structures we have the pattern in (28).

<sup>37</sup>H stands for heavy syllables (CVV or CVC) and L for light syllables (CV).

(28) Possible syllables in Arabic in one metron from (27)

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{CVV} \\ \text{CVC} \\ \text{CVCV} \end{array} \right\} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{CVV} \\ \text{CVC} \end{array} \right\} \text{CV} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{CVV} \\ \text{CVC} \end{array} \right\}$$

If we then take the matrix in (27) and, instead of substituting the possible syllables in the Arabic metrical system, insert the possible syllables according to the principles in the Somali system which match the metrical positions we have the pattern in (29).<sup>38</sup>

(29) Possible syllables in the Somali system in one metron from (27)

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{CVV} \\ \text{CVVC} \\ \text{CV CV} \\ \text{CVC CV} \\ \text{CV CVC} \\ \text{CVC CVC} \end{array} \right\} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{CVV} \\ \text{CVVC} \end{array} \right\} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{CV} \\ \text{CVC} \end{array} \right\} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{CVV} \\ \text{CVVC} \end{array} \right\}$$

This is more or less the same pattern as *maqalaay warlaay*, the only difference being the fact that the positions analogous to *kāmil* H positions may not only be realized as CVV in Somali but also as CVCV. If we add these to the pattern in (29) we have the pattern in (30).

(30) All possible syllables in the Somali system in one metron from (27)

<sup>38</sup>This might seem a bold thing to do (as pointed out by one anonymous reviewer). The aim here is to point out the similarities between the pattern of the Arabic metron and the Somali *maqalaay warlaay* pattern and to show that when the different systems of syllable weight or length are taken into account the underlying pattern is essentially the same.

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{CVV} \\ \text{CV CV} \\ \text{CVC CV} \\ \text{CV CVC} \\ \text{CVC CVC} \end{array} \right\} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{CVV} \\ \text{CV CV} \\ \text{CVVC} \end{array} \right\} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{CV} \\ \text{CVC} \end{array} \right\} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{CVV} \\ \text{CV CV} \\ \text{CVVC} \end{array} \right\}$$

There is more to be said of the approach of Golston and Riad, but the intent here is to present enough of what they give to further confirm the strong similarity between the *kāmil* metre in Arabic and the *taaj awliyo* metre in Somali.

One further approach to mention is Paoli (2009), who also presents a matrix, including one specifically for the *kāmil majzū'* (Paoli, 2009, p. 205) which is given in (31). In this what is represented by X is a 'free metrical position (◡◡ or ◡)' (Paoli, 2009, p. 204) (this is the same as the set of bimoraic metrical positions in Golston and Riad (1997)).<sup>39</sup>

(31) *kāmil* matrix in Paoli (2009, p. 205) for the first half-line of *kāmil majzū'*  
 X [◡◡◡] X [◡◡◡]

Again, there is more to be said about Paoli's approach to metre in Arabic and his criticisms of other approaches, but the intention here is to show that within his approach we also see confirmation of the strong similarity between *kāmil* metre in Arabic and the *taaj awliyo* metre.

In conclusion it is hoped enough detail has been given in this section on the similarity between the *kāmil* and *taaj awliyo* metrical patterns to support some relation between the two. This similarity extends to the way that in the *taaj awliyo*

<sup>39</sup>Paoli's pattern is from a table which 'contains all the verse-patterns employed by ancient Arabic poets during about two centuries, between 450 and 670 A.D.' (Paoli, 2009, p. 204).

metre, the first part of each of the *maqalaay warlaay* units, the parts represented as  $\overline{\cup}$ , reflect the distinct analogous part of each *juz'* in the *kāmil* (represented as *muta-*,  $\underline{\cup}$ , [ϕ H] and X in the approaches presented above). Moving from the half-line to the full line, we see an analogous pattern in the full Arabic line comprising two half-lines and the two half-lines in the Somali *taaj awliyo* metre providing further support to the argument.

Having ascertained this strong similarity, the question is raised as to why these lines might be similar. There are a number of possible reasons: coincidence, influence from one language to the other or independent realization of what may be more fundamental metrical principles in the two languages which may also reflect deeper phonological underpinnings to metrical systems generally. Whilst any such phonological principles may motivate both the *kāmil* line in Arabic and the *maqalaay warlaay* line in Somali, having considered the *taaj awliyo* metre in detail, having compared it with the Arabic *kāmil* line and taking into account the reported comments by Sheekh Caaqib himself, I suggest that a major part of the similarity is influence from Arabic.

Having said that, the fact that the *maqalaay warlaay* metre *per se* shares so much with the *juz'* of the *kāmil* also raises the question as to whether there is some relation there also, independent of the influence on the *taaj awliyo* pattern. The fact that the *maqalaay warlaay* metre is used in two work songs (see 3.3) suggests that its roots in Somali verbal culture are deep and not necessarily associated with the learning that has, presumably, assisted the influence of *kāmil* in the Sufi poetry context.

## 5.2 Rhyme

Before leaving the issue of influence from Arabic, there is one big part of the poetry in Arabic which is not present in Somali, namely line-end rhyme (*qāfiyah*). The issue of whether rhyme in Somali poetry exists at all, even in some special instances, is one which has not been looked at in the literature on Somali poetry. The present author has had conversations occasionally with poets in the Horn of Africa who have said that there is very occasionally rhyme but this has not been pursued. If we look at ‘*Taaj Awliyo*’ we find that there seem to be some hints at rhyme in the poem. At the end of each of the line-endings of the first half-lines we find certain sounds predominate. The following is a list of all the syllable codas (the syllable without the onset consonant): -ow, -oo, -oon, -ee, -ee, -aw, -ow, -ee, -ow, -ow, -ow, -ow, -ow, -ow, -ee, -ow, -ow, -oon, -ow, -ow, -ow, -ow, -ow, -ide, -abo, -ow, -aa, -aad, -ee, -ayd, -ow, -ii. And the following is a list of all the syllable codas at the end of the second half-line: -eey, -eey, -ooy, -ii, -eel, -aab, -eel, -eel, -ee, -ii, -ee, -eel, -eel, -aye, -ayd, -ee, -aw, -ari, -eey, -ayd, -ee, -ay, -ayd, -ee, -aad, -aa, -ow, -aye, -aa, -ee, -ii.

The codas have been deliberately taken in order to see the actual sounds, separate from the words and parts of speech they are part of since rhyme is a sound parallelism and not—though it may coincide with—syntactic parallelism. There is a predominance of certain sounds: -ow (17 instances) and -ee (5 instances) at the end of the first half-line whereas in the second half-line, the end of the whole line, we find a strong tendency to assonance with, for example, 20 lines ending in either -eey, -eel, -ee, -e, -ayd or -ay.<sup>40</sup> What is noticeable to the reader who knows

<sup>40</sup>The precise pronunciation of unrounded, front mid to high diphthongs in Somali varies so it doesn't seem unreasonable to group those written with *ey* with those written with *ay*.

Somali is that the line endings are strongly syntactically parallel. All the instances of *-ow* at the end of the first half-line, for example, are masculine vocative suffixes (see Orwin (2001a) for more on syntactic parallelism in the poem and other aspects of grammatical structure).

It is suggested here that rhyme as such is something which might be considered to be reflected in the lines, but not in any systematic manner. To someone who knows Arabic, there may be a sense in which rhyme resonates in the poem. To someone who knows only Somali on the other hand, it is suggested that it is the syntactic status of many of these instances that is perceived as being parallel rather than their acoustic properties abstracted from that syntactic context. More work obviously would need to be done to ascertain how precisely such line endings are perceived but in the context of the present article, there is nothing which counters the main argument on metrical patterning.

### 5.3 Other poems?

In Section 1.3, a quotation from Orwin (2001a) mentioned the poem ‘Dhalaaliso’ which Sheekh Caaqib Cabdullaahi referred to specifically as having been composed using a *baxr* from Arabic. This poem is also in Abdisalam (1977). Having analysed in detail ‘Taaj Awliyo’ and assumed there to be Arabic influence in the metrical patterning, it is interesting to consider ‘Dhalaaliso’ and see if it provides any further evidence of this. Without undertaking a full analysis of the poem here, the present author has been through it and it is clear that it follows the same metrical pattern as ‘Taaj Awliyo’. Lines 27-31 from the poem are given in (32) with a scanned version in (34) which also shows the word breaks with hyphens. This is a much longer poem and displays all the same metrical characteristics which have

been discussed for ‘Taaj Awliyo’.

- (32) Lines 27-30 of ‘Dhalaaliso’ by Sheekh Caaqib

Xikmo kii leh ee wax xasuusanow, xaraf dhigan ilaali xaqiisa eey  
 Xigtadaa xabaasha la geeyay iyo, xalay iyo shalay wax u xeeriyay  
 Xiddigaa samada ku xariiran iyo, xarakada dabaysha xisaabiyay  
 Xoolaha nimcada laga xoorinnee, ninba qaar xeraysan xisaabiyay  
 Xasad iyo xumaan xaqdii kii qabee, aan xishoonin waa la xisaabiye

- (33) Translation of first five lines of ‘Dhalaaliso’ by Sheekh Caaqib<sup>41</sup>

If you are sensible and can discern things, observe His words  
 Consider last night and yesterday, and your relatives who were taken to  
 their graves  
 Consider the movement of the winds and the stars of the sky which beau-  
 tify it  
 Consider the bounty which is received in the form of the animals, and  
 how each man is offered a share  
 Whoever is envious, wicked and corrupt and does not shy away from such  
 things, will be judged for his actions

- (34) Lines with scansion

Xikmō kīī lēh ēē : wāx xāsūsānōw | xārāf dhīgān īlāal- : -ī xāqīsā ēēy  
 Xigtādaā xābāa- : -shā lā gēeyāy iyō | xālāy iyō shālāy : wāx ū xēeriyāy  
 Xiddīgāā sāmadā : kū xārīrān iyō | xārākādā dābāy- : -shā xīsāabiyāy  
 Xoolāhā nīmcādā : lāgā xoorīnnē | nīnbā qāar xērāy- : -sān xīsāabiyāy

<sup>41</sup>The translation is as given in (Abdisalam, 1977, p. 137).



Xāsād iyō xūmāan ḥ : xāqdī kī qābēe | āan xīshōonīn wāa ḥ : lā xīsaābiyēe

One other example which came to the present author's attention during the writing of this article is a Youtube video in which Sheekh Cabdullaahi Cali Aar and a congregation perform a poem which uses the same metre. This and other such examples will be interesting to consider from the perspective of text-setting and performance but this will be left to future research.<sup>42</sup>

## 6 Conclusion

In this article a detailed analysis of the poem 'Taaj Awliyo' has been presented and it has been shown that the metrical patterning is one which has not been documented before in the literature on Somali metre. It can be described as a long-line metre with a caesura between the two equally long half-lines. Each half-line is the equivalent of two *maqalaay warlaay* lines but considered a single metrical entity given that words may cross the boundaries between the two *maqalaay warlaay* units. It has been argued that the features which are found at the beginning of a *maqalaay warlaay* line are allowed in any of these units in the line, and that this is based on, inspired by or motivated by the Arabic *kāmil* metrical pattern in its dimetric form. The evidence for this comes from the analysis of the metrical pattern itself and also the comments by the poet, Sheekh Caaqib Cabdullaahi Jaamac. It seems not unreasonable to assume this Arabic influence given the evidence and also the fact that influence from Arabic is something which is evident in other languages in the Islamic world, given the significance of Arabic lan-

<sup>42</sup>The video can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RAVKpW2tWE4> (last accessed 21 November 2018). I am grateful to Maxamed Cali Xasan 'Alto' for bringing this to my attention.

guage in Islam. Further work will hopefully find other examples of such poems and may refine the comments made in this article. In the mean time, I suggest that in answer to Andrzejewski's original question, we do actually find some influence from Arabic on Somali poetry, albeit in a very specific genre.

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