

THE IMAGE OF TEMPORAL WORLD, DEATH AND ETERNAL LIFE IN HAUSA HOMILETIC VERSE

Stanisław PIŁASZEWICZ

ABSTRACT

Although the Hausas are classified as Sudanic African people, due to a long influence of Islam their outlook upon life, death and the Hereafter differs considerably from those typical of traditional *Weltanschauung*. In fact they all but *Maaguzaawaa* and *Arnaa* have adopted and adapted Muslim ideas about earthly and eternal lives, as well as about the Islamic apocalypse, colouring them with images of their own environment and culture.

One of the most important sources on those matters are homiletic songs and poems which have been composed both orally (*waa kooƙin gārgāɗii*) and in the written form (*waa kooƙin wa'āzii*). *Waa kooƙin gārgāɗii* have some common features with the other oral songs, e.g. *waa kooƙin yāboo* or praise songs. *Waa kooƙin wa'āzii* are gloomy and terrifying verses which might be considered as a far-away offspring of the Arabic classic poetry, although it is more directly and manifestly related to the post-Islamic devotional and legal literature, especially that of Maghreb and Egypt. Whereas the majority of the Hausa poetic genres strictly follow their Arabic prototypes, the homiletic verse has no visible model in the Arabic poetry. It seems related most closely to *zuhdiyya*, mystical Arabic poetry which originated in the 8th century A.D. Still it testifies to genuine literary talent of the Fulani-Hausa poets.

The composition of the *wa'āzii* poems is loose. The fragments of the different thematical groups are interspersed throughout them, and the order of their sequence is not governed by any discernible rule. As the homilies describe various aspects of the daily life of the different strata of Hausa society, both in their motherland and in diaspora, they display much of the *couleur locale* which makes them sound quite different from their prototype known as *zuhdiyya* and from the Arabic sources.

Keywords : Hausa, homiletic poems, muslim eschatology.

RÉSUMÉ

LES IMAGES DE LA VIE TERRESTRE, DE LA MORT ET DE LA VIE ÉTERNELLE DANS LES POÈMES HOMILÉTIQUES HAUSA

Bien que les Hausa appartiennent au groupe des peuples soudanais, l'influence de longue durée de l'Islam a considérablement changé leur point de vue sur la vie terrestre, sur la mort et sur la vie éternelle. En réalité, à part les *Maaguzaawaa* et les *Arnaa*, ils ont abandonné le *Weltanschauung* traditionnel en adoptant les idées islamiques et les images apocalyptiques musulmanes. Une des plus importantes sources sur ce sujet provient des chansons et poèmes homilétiques qui ont été composés à la fois comme genre oral *Waa kooƙin gārgāɗii* ou sous forme écrite *Waa kooƙin wa'āzii*. Tous les deux rejettent la vie terrestre en la considérant comme une étape préparatrice à la vie réelle dans l'autre monde. Tous les deux considèrent le monde temporel comme éphémère et mauvais, au contraire de l'autre monde qui est éternel, pur et en qui on peut avoir confiance. Dans cette étude, nous nous limitons aux poèmes *wa'āzii*. Ils

proviennent principalement de sources hausa originales qui ont été publiées par les chercheurs polonais. Comme ces poèmes présentent des aspects de la vie quotidienne des différentes couches sociales de la société hausa, du pays hausa même ou de la *diaspora*, ils contiennent beaucoup d'éléments de couleur locale qui les distinguent de prototypes arabes.

Mots-clés : hausa, poèmes homilétiques, eschatologie musulmane.

*
* *

INTRODUCTION

The Hereafter or an eschatological reality composed of Heavens/Paradise - places of reward for the earthly life and for all its vicissitudes, as opposed to Hell, a place of divine or ancestral punishment, are rather uncommon concepts in the traditional religious thought of Black Africa. The majority of African peoples do not expect in the Hereafter any divine judgment. So they neither count upon a reward for the exemplary conduct during their lifetime nor are afraid of a posthumous chastisement for the earthly offences. It is exceptionally that we encounter the ideas which carry forward the responsibility of a man for his deeds to the sphere of the after-life, the place of final punishment or reward. The destiny of his soul depends mainly on the attitude of his relatives and inheritors, and is a function of a proper fulfilment of the funeral rites which might last long or be very costly.

The Hereafter is usually looked upon as a true copy of the earthly life. In some religious systems it is quite easily reachable, in some others one has to overcome many unpleasant obstacles before he reaches his destination. It means that his progress depends not only on the proper fulfilment of the funeral rites by his relatives, but also it is conditioned by the quality of his early life. In such cases one can speak about a germ of posthumous judgement known from the universalistic religions.

In the traditional religious thought, the dead preserve in the Hereafter their earthly social and political status. In many aspects their posthumous life is shaped like the worldly one. The psychical and social features are reflected in soul/souls which take them over from the body being subject to annihilation.

Although the Hausas belong to the typical African (Sudanic) peoples, their ways of life have been strongly influenced by the Islamic religion and the Arabic culture as a whole. The presence of Islam in their leading city-states has been noticed since as early as the 14th century. Nowadays the Hausa people are considered as almost entirely islamized except for some *Maaguzaawaa/Arnaa* communities which will not be considered in this paper. It means that their thoughts on the earthly life, death and the Hereafter are quite different from those typical of the traditional religious concepts.

Hausa Islamic verse and its sources

One of the most important sources of information on death and eternal life in the Hausa culture are the versified homilies belonging to both the oral literature and to the stream of the learned poetry.

Popular homilies known as *waa kookin gārgādi* did not attract due attention of scholars so far. They were usually performed by traveling mallams and by their students known as *ālmā jīrai*. Those homilies contain numerous motifs typical of learned, written verses and share with them the same inspirative sources belonging to the earlier Islamic literature. For instance, they instruct the believers that every human being has to follow a long, difficult and dangerous way. Therefore everyone should make provisions (*gūzurii*) in good time. *Waa kookin gārgādi* usually remind of fearful Day of Judgement when a man is forced to render account of his earthly deeds and merits: his further destiny does not depend on his social and political status during the temporal life. A recurrent motif of those songs is the transient nature of this world and the instability of the human life (Piłaszewicz 1988:53, 1972:113-117).

Beside those and some other motifs, one can come upon many others which make *waa kar gārgādi* similar to some other oral songs, like *waa kar yāboo* "praise-song". In both of them the same stylistic and structural features can be found. One of them is, for example, a refrain which is repeated after mallam's solo performance by *ālmā jīrai*. It may be overloaded with praises of the mallam, whereas the solo performance may abound in self-praises which would be unthinkable in the learned homily. A certain Mallam Takunta boasts in the following way. Mallam Takunta is a well water:

The one who has no bucket will not drink of it.

[...] Neither the ruler, the more so the courtiers

Are able to break me - Mallam Takunta (Prietze 1917:16).

The learned homilies constitute one of the major categories of the Hausa Islamic poetry. The Hausa generic term for the homilies is *waa kookin wa'azii* which literally means "the song of preaching". The Hausaized word *wa'azii* comes from Arabic *wa'az*, "warning, admonition" and this category of verse has much in common with medieval Christian verse genre known as *Memento mori*. The essence of its content may be generally described by the two Hausa words: *han̄i* "prohibition, dehortation" and *hōroo* "hortation" (Hiskett 1982:417). So the content of *waa kookin wa'azii* turns about the Muslim religious law known as *shari'a*. The "do's" and "don'ts" of Islam can be expressed through the use of five main themes:

- *halin duuniyāa*, the "character of the world",
- *tūnā mutuwāa*, "remember death",
- *alaamomin saa'aa da fitōwar Mahdi*, the "Signs of Hour and the appearance of the Mahdi",
- *Taashin Kīyaamāa*, "Day of Resurrection",
- *āzaabār wutaa dā daadin Aljannāa*, the "torment of the (Hell) fire and the joys of Paradise".

Those themes caused a local researcher, Abdulkadir Dangambo (1980), to distinguish five sub-categories of the wa'āzīi verse. Some others used to define them with various terms like waa kookin Laahirāa ("songs of the Next World"), waa kookin zuhdī (from Arabic zuhd meaning "ascetism") and waa kookin tasawwufii (from Arabic ṭasawwuf meaning "practice of Sufism"). It is, however, not infrequent to find wa'āzīi verse which comprises several, if not all the themes in the same poem. Therefore the distinction of sub-categories does not seem to be justifiable.

Hausa Islamic verse may be considered a far-away offspring of the Arabic classic poetry, although it is more directly and manifestly related to the Islamic post-classic devotional and legal literature, especially that of Maghreb and Egypt. Indeed, waa kookin wa'āzīi constitute the end-product of the centuries-long process of assimilation of the Islamic religious literature by the generations of native scholars and writers (Herman 1982:147).

Whereas the majority of the Hausa poetic genres (e.g. waa kookin madahū) strictly follow their Arabic prototypes, the homiletic verse has no visible model in the Arabic poetry. It seems related most closely to zuhdiyya, which originated in the 8th century A.D. as a reaction against the luxurious life of high society and preached retirement from worldly pleasures and meditation about the Next World. Renowned for this kind of verse were, for example, Ḥusain (died 710) and Abdūl Ḥatāhiya (748-828). In Kitāb al-zuhd wa'l-waṣiyya (A Book of Ascetism with Admonition) Ḥusain explains the instability of worldly life, calls on people to abandon earthly pleasures and to stop gathering riches, instructs believers about the inevitability of death and the importance of human being who is a tool in the hands of the merciless fate. The favourite image used by both authors is the grey hair, a symbol of the coming end of lifetime and warning for the young people. Abdūl Ḥatāhiya unmasks the corruption of the ruling class, charges them with non-observance of the Qur'anic regulations and foretells a total destruction. The works of both authors were known and even elaborated by the Hausa poets who have overtaken their admonitory and puritan tone, as well as some images and symbols (Piłaszewicz 1981:75ff.).

If zuhdiyya may be considered a remote prototype of the Hausa homiletic poetry, the bulk of its themes and motifs are drawn from other sources. The Qur'an, the commentaries to it (tafsīr) and the traditions of the Prophet (ḥadīth) provided the authors of the homilies with the eschatological ideas. *Al-Qurtubi's Manẓumat fi'l-Ḥibādāt* (Versification on Religious Duties) and Ḥabd al-Rahmān Raq'ī's *Muqaddima Ibn Rushd* (The Introduction to Ibn Rushd), and many other versifications of this type served as the source-books of information on the religious and legal obligations of a Muslim, while Aṭ-Ṭabarī's famous *Chronicles* provided information on legendary and historical personalities of the Islamic tradition.

So the Hausa homiletic verse appropriated the form of *naẓm* "versification", as opposed to the Arabic *shīʿr*, which means "original poetry". *Naẓm* is a sort of elaborate but rather little original versification, which is based on the material drawn from existing verse and prose sources (Hiskett 1975:21).

The image of the temporal world

In the homiletic verse the temporal world and the earthly life are invariably described as vile, transient, fickle, etc., in contrast to the Hereafter which is pure, eternal and reliable. The reality of the Hereafter will be experienced by everyone any moment one crosses the boundary between the two worlds, i.e. when he dies. The abstract ideas like life, world, eternity are illustrated by very concrete images quite often taken from the everyday life of an African. So the homiletic verse seems to be less characterized by semantic depth, more by semantic focus (Hiskett 1982:432). That is to say, its imagery is not so much affected as sharply visual. Metaphor, personification and simile belong to the most common poetic devices. For example, when comparing the temporal life with the eternal one a certain Mallam Cidia recurs to the concept of "reward" which must be very sensitive to the heart of every Hausaman, usually renown as a gifted trader in the Sudanic belt.

*The one who chooses this world and rejects the Hereafter,
He takes one kauri shell and looses two thousand of them.*

(Robinson 1986:poem C)

The character of the temporal world is mainly described by those poets who were under the influence of mystical ideas. Both words *duuniyāa*, "world" and *mācē*, "woman" are feminine in Hausa. Thus the world becomes a fickle harlot or a ruthless woman who finds pleasure in marrying and divorcing gullible men, as well as in leading them astray. Aliyu ɗan Sidi (1841-1925) in his poem *Waaƙar Saudul Kulubi* (Song Whipping the Hearts) explains the deceitful character of the world in the following way:

*Oh you, good husband, look at her will to divorce,
She marries readily and then divorces,
She is fickle and makes you gasp for breath,
You [the world] bewilder men and make them pant,
If you rely on her, you won't drink of Kausara.*

(Piłaszewicz 1988:70)

In stanza 33, he brings a metaphor of the world calling it *ɗaakɪn karaa* - "hut of stalks". In his another poem entitled *Waaƙar ajuzaa* (Song of the old hag) the world becomes an old and farded harlot, foul and diseased.

Similar personification of the temporal world has also been used by Alhaji Hamidu Zungur (born 1906), a brother of the well-known poet Sa'adu Zungur. His poetry, almost entirely of the *wa'aẓi* genre, has never

been published and only recently was transliterated into Latin script and commented by one of my Maiduguri students (Tela:1984). The character of the world has been pointed to in the very title of his poem: *Duuniyāa būdurwar waawaa* (The World is a Girl-friend of a Fool). Beside the description of the world as an aged woman, Hamidu Zungur introduces vivid similes in which he compares woman-the world to the Ruppel's griffon and to a broken calabash which should be thrown away on a dung-heap.

In the poetic vision of Yusufu Kantu Isa, the temporal world takes the shape of *mootar hayāa*, "a car for rent", whereas Afilu Aliyu (born 1918) entitles one of his poems *Duuniyāa rawar 'yam maataa* (The World is like Girl's Dancing). This poem reflects the Muslim Hausa philosophy of life. Hausa girls usually form a circle when dancing, and one by one enter it to dance inside. They can also form two lines: girls from both lines one by one dance between rows whereas the others clap their hands and dance where they stand until their own turn comes. In this way the first girl becomes the last one, and the last girl takes place of the first one. This metaphor of the temporal world reminds people of the instability of human existence. Changeable and mutable character of the world made the poet use a simile of a chameleon, as "its colours are more than a hundred". Its transitoriness has been expressed in a metaphor *gidan aroo* - "house for hire". Everyone is to be evicted by its owner one day or the other. Beside some other descriptions of the temporal world like a skittish mare, she-ass or a ring, in some oral songs it is described as a monster with a single eye in the middle of head or as *rūmfar karaa* - "grass-shed". Its transitoriness has been explained by Dan Maraya Jos (born 1946) in a simile of a ball which goes from hand to hand, and that of a solo dance which is short-lived, as one dancer is to be replaced by another one. The world is not a permanent house, but merely *zangdo* - a camping place of caravan (Muhammad Balarabe Umar 1977:35).

Alhaji Umaru (1858-1934) in his homily *Kalmoomii miyāaguu* (Evil Words) deals not only with the motif of contempt of the world, but dwells also upon the notion *Sic transit gloria mundi*:

*You know that the world is not residence for anyone,
Oh, its habit is to metamorphose - like a cameleon!
As for this world - it is a ghost, be conscious of it!
Today it belongs to So-and-So, tomorrow - to other one.
A party which had conquered the world and exercised power,
It perished in great disorder, they even were not interred!
A party which had obtained all here, in this world,
It lost all in a short time and was reduced to beggary.
You know that the one who mounts a quadruped -
Its lameness affects him, even if he were an expert.*

(Piłaszewicz 1981:100)

This notion is often illustrated in great detail by reference both to general Islamic history and to local events:

O friend, know that the world is a place for strolling;
Behold the Prophets, there is no one [left]
Both Adam and Seth and Noah, too, remember!
They are where the Almighty is, Who has power over all.
Saleh together with Abraham, both of them
Have returned to the Almighty King.
Where are Isaac and Ishmael, either?
They are where He is, Who has power over all.
[...] Consider, even the great kings, too,
Are in the Next World, today they are nothing.
Where are Hulaghu Khan, he and Nebuchadnezzar, either?
Where is Nimrod - those all great heathens?

(Piłaszewicz 1978:60-62)

The author of the "Song of Bagauda" reminds us also of rises and downfalls of great peoples like Nebuchadnezzar, Nimrod or Alexander the Great and takes some examples from the local history mentioning names of the rulers of the Gobir kingdom: Yunfa, Bawa Jan Gwarzo, Dan Soba and Yakubu.

The image of Death

Waa'kookin wa'azii are gloomy and terrifying verses because of the descriptions of diseases, death and horrible Last Judgement, as well as owing to the presentation of punishment that awaits people for their sins. It is the intimidation of the believers that is supposed to be the most effective way of making them return to the road shown by the Qur'an and the *Sunna* of the Prophet. The very common theme *tūna mutuwāa* - "remember death" dwells on the uncertainty of life, the sudden onslaught of sickness and often describes the terminal illness and the death-bed scene. If the temporal world is illusory, transient and useless, then what is the human life and what is its sense? Those questions are answered univocal by the use of metaphors and simile. The human lifetime should be used as a period of preparation for a long journey into the Hereafter. It is a time of sowing which will bring the harvest in the eternal life. The temporal and eternal lives are like mother and her daughter who cannot be married at the same time (Herman 1980:51).

If in the Western, Christian culture Death is personified as a "Grim Reaper", the Muslim Hausas have first made a woman of her and then personified her as the "Indiscriminate Archeress" who shoots the arrows blindly and is deaf to all pleas for patience. Death usually carries off the old people, but everybody should be ready for her visit. When one leaves the house in the morning, he never knows if he comes back alive in the evening. Many people depart in good health and they are met upon their return by the lamentations of the mourners. The "traps of death" are many and of various kinds:

*There is no difficulty to break down an old, aged man:
 Neither for harlot, shameless person, nor for the quarrelsome.
 Traps of death are so numerous - be conscious of it!
 Headache is among them, biliousness, as well as diarrhoea.
 Dyspepsia, kidney, as well as blackwater,
 Viper, black-hooded cobra, as well as the war.
 Large termit may bite you, and thunder may strike,
 Index-finger chill, as well as woman's cough.
 Woman in labor may die and turn up her toes -
 Baby is lost, as well as his mother.*

(Piłaszewicz 1981:99)

The eschatological description usually starts with the scene of a man on the death-bed:

*Because pain of departing life is awful, for sure,
 Thinking alone of it would be sufficient for us!
 If it befalls God's slave, he forgets everything,
 Nothing is tasty for his mouth, even the water.
 Meat does not taste him, neither honey,
 To lie down is difficult for him, as well as to stand up.
 A bitterness is felt in mouth, and stomach is painful,
 Head becomes heavy, whereas neck is weak.
 He does not wish to talk to anyone - even to his wife,
 Even to greetings he answers with groan.
 Pains are felt by him, beginning from toes,
 Through neck and chest to fontanelle and occiput.*

(Piłaszewicz 1981:98)

In further verses the poet explains that neither prayers nor medicines will be of any help for the patient who has the seal of death on his face. The picture of death turns into the image of the family's despair, and then into a more general description of funeral, when everybody is anxious to carry the deceased to the grave and bury him in order to rest. The transient nature of the temporal life makes us believe that it does not make any sense to attach importance to the worldly values and earthly wealth. Even the closest relatives and friends forget the deceased soon and link their fate and hopes with others:

*Even if you save shillings and two-shilling coins,
 Even if you fill up a corn-bin with them,
 There will come a day that the Angel
 Will take your soul and leave your body.*

(Herman 1982:165)

*Your eyes will be clouded over, the life will depart;
 All those who love you will be merely able to go away.
 Some will be praying, some will lament;
 The men will say: "The power of the Almighty".
 The children and the wives will be weeping;
 The men will say: "The power of the Almighty".*

*[...] Some will arise and go to dig the grave,
 The wood will be cut down for the grave.
 Water is brought for you, ablution is completed,
 You are washed and prepared for resting in the grave.
 They will stop praying for you - alas!
 But you shall not know what is done, for sure.
 When praying is finished, they take you,
 They carry you and thrust you into the grave.
 The disciples are brought and arranged in a row,
 Some people put the [broken] pots here and there.
 They mix the earth and knead it up, too;
 Dry bark is brought and put upon the tomb.
 They wash their hands and then the feet;
 They exchange condolences between themselves.*

(Piłaszewicz 1978:63)

*He leaves behind for others the property he gathered,
 His friends will profit by it, even his enemies will profit.
 Whatever he leaves behind, this day he will not care for it:
 Be it his coined money, jewels, or even camphor.
 People assembled at funerals will break loose quickly:
 Everyone will go his own way from the tumbledown compound.
 His wives will remarry, servants will go away,
 Small children will be taken up by his relatives.*

(Piłaszewicz 1981:99)

First examination in the grave and signs of the Hour

After the description of funeral and mourning, the scene of the interrogation in the grave follows. Munkar and Nakīr, two angelic interrogators visit the deceased soon and ask him questions concerning God, his Prophet Muhammad and his faith. To the examination in the tomb the infidel and the faithful, the righteous as well as sinners are liable. If necessary, the angels punish the dead in their tombs. The poets use this build-up to urge the necessity for immediate repentance. In addition to the classical Arabic sources, this theme seems to draw on folkloristic data. When the examination turns successful, the prosperity of God will overflow the tomb. It will be filled up with all the perfumes of Heaven. The houris or maidens of Paradise will be strolling within the tomb. The interrogators themselves will illuminate the darkness of the grave. If the deceased fails to answer those questions, Nakīr and Munkar will circle around him and cause him to go deeper and deeper into the grave. They will beat him furiously with the iron cudgels. Scorpions and snakes will gather and bite him without a pity. He will remain there without a possibility to turn round until the Resurrection Day.

Before the End of Time comes, the people will witness portents of the Islamic apocalypse. The poets try to show that these divine events are already around the corner and to use this to persuade the believers into repentance. Among the signs which will announce this great event are civil strife, mass migrations, drought and famine in the middle of the rainy

season and the approach of the hordes of Yajuju and Majuju (Gog and Magog). A mountain of gold will appear on the banks of the Euphrates, to tempt men to damnation. A thousand young women will come out of the sea to seek men for fornication. A monstrous creature, sometimes a huge white bird, sometimes a white she-camel of the Righteous One (i.e. Prophet Saleh) will appear, usually out of the sea. Law and order will break down, judgement will no longer be given according to Qur'anic law, bribery and corruption will be rife and only the rich will receive favourable judgements. The Antichrist (Dajjali) portrayed often as a lame man or one-eyed man will appear and he will be destroyed by Jesus. Muslims will migrate to Mecca, there to await the appearance of Mahdi (the Deliverer). Slaves will become free and in consequence, ill-mannered, undisciplined and irresponsible. Scholars will cease to pursue learning for its own sake but only for profit. Wives will disobey husbands and answer them back. There will be numerous astrological and cosmic events. For instance, the sun will rise in the west and set in the east (Hiskett 1982:422ff.; Jaworski 1968:54-63).

The Last Judgement

The main events of the Day of Resurrection as portrayed in *wa'āz i i* are the trump, the standing, the receiving of the book, the weighing in the scales, the crossing of the bridge and the intercession of the Prophet Muhammad. The sound of the trump (more often, a horn) will rise all the dead. Then they will gather at the standing place. Hypocrites and adulterers will rise with the crowd of heathens. The true believers and their families will rejoice, as they will rise with the group of Prophets. The people assembled in rows will be standing and waiting for the Last Judgement. During this long standing (some poets speak about fifty thousand years) the sun will come down upon the sinners and will burn them to blisters and cause their skulls to split. Everywhere one will hear weeping and painful complaints. People will accuse each other of depravity and misdeeds. Quarrels will be bitter and bitter between father and son, husband and wife, ruler and the commoners. In accordance with Qur'an (III, 106) faces of some evil-doers will be blackened with sins:

*On the Day of Resurrection, people
Spirits and the likes of them,
And the Angels of God -
All of them will be staring at him.
He will be so much blackened with sin,
That you will say: "What a black fool!"
Attended will he be by his accomplice,
Whose bosom will be all ulcers.
She will be excreting pus among people,
Like a waste water-pot that has been pierced through.
There will be odour and great heat!
It is just there that he will approach her
And start licking his lips
With a dog-like licking, a fool!
She has been waiting there, in the Hell,
For a shameless slave to be brought to her.* (Herman 1982:164)

The sinners ask for the intercession of all the prophets, from Adam to Muhammad, but only the Best of Mankind is able to help them:

When they go to Jesus, he will say: "Return, please.

It is Muhammad, Amina's son, who excells all.

For it is he who saves, there is no doubt:

Muhammad, the apostle of God is superior to all.

When they go there, they will say: "O Muhammad!

Seek salvation for us from the Almighty King".

He will fall down and prostrate himself before God;

He will say: "These are my people, oh Almighty God!"

He will say: "These are my people, o Glorious God!

Your promise will be kept, there is no doubt"

It will be said to him: "Raise your head, oh Muhammad!

Do not prostrate yourself, for it is you who excells all".

He will answer: "I desire salvation, oh God!

The Most Glorious, Having power over all".

It will be said to him: "It is granted to you.

Let us judge all of them and allot them places".

(Piłaszewicz 1978:65ff.)

One has to bear in mind that in some Muslim brotherhoods the role of intercessors is also ascribed to their founders. For instance, Shaykh Ahmad al-Tijānī (1737-1815) is the eschatological Saviour of the Age. He is supposed to lead into the Paradise all his followers who were living during his life span (around 80 years), as well as those who lived for twenty years after him (Piłaszewicz 1990:270).

During the Last Judgement, God will inquire people concerning their earthly deeds and the angels will write them down in special books. Then the good and bad deeds are put into the weighing scales. The books or lists of the faithful will pass to the right hand side, whereas those of the hypocrites and heathens will be put on the left hand side. The last stage of the judgement is the passage of the "defendants" through the bridge (*sirāt*) which will be stretched over the Hell chasm. This bridge, as narrow as the edge of a sword, has to be crossed by the souls in order to enter Paradise. It is portrayed as having seven peaks, upon each of which the resurrected will be subjected to an interrogation before they are allowed to proceed to the next peak. At the far end of the bridge is Paradise. Beneath it the chasm of Hell will be ready to receive all those who fall off because they fail to answer the questions correctly. The souls of saints cross the bridge in a moment, those of ordinary righteous people take a longer or shorter time to cross it, while those of the unrighteous do not reach Paradise but fall into the gulf:

We have heard that the bridge has mounds to overcome;

At each of them everyone is asked different questions.

On the first mound you will be asked

Whether you believe in the oneness of your God.

On the second mound, we have heard, it is ablution;

Everyone will be questioned [concerning it].

On the fourth mound, too, we have heard, it is fast;

Everyone will be questioned here [concerning it].

*On the fifth mound it is alms, as we have heard;
 Everyone will be questioned here [concerning it].
 On the sixth mound it is obedience;
 The questions will be asked about it, no doubt.
 Have you pushed men to goodness or kept them from evil?
 Everyone will be questioned on the seventh mound.
 [...] Some will pass the bridge as fast as a wind,
 Some will pass it as fast as a lightning.
 Some will go over running, others will go slowly;
 Some will pass it crawling on their bellies.
 The assembly of the faithful will pass over it;
 The assembly of the heathens will not cross, for sure.
 The heathens will slither down to Hell.
 For all of them, there will be iron chain for each.
 They will be brought to Jahīm, Saqar, and Hutamā
 They will enter Lazan, Sa^cīr, there is no doubt.*

(Piłaszewicz 1978:66ff.)

According to Islamic tradition, Hell is composed of seven sections: **Jahannam** - to wicked Muslims; **Lazan** - to the Jews; **Hutamā** - to the Christians; **Sa^cīr** - to Sabians; **Saqar** - to the Magians; **Jahīm** - to idolators; **Hāwīya** - to hypocrites.

The image of Hell and Paradise

The Hausa poets excel in the description of the divine punishment. As for the Paradise, they content themselves with a few allusive references to the lakes of Kawthara and Salsabīl, to the dark-eyed maidens and to some other pleasures.

As far as Hell torments are concerned, the Hausa poets share some images with A. Dante: the Hell fire as ravaging beast, the concept of "fire of the intense cold" and the scenes of the torment of snakes and scorpions. Those last scenes can be found in a poem entitled **Baƙin mārii** (Black Leg-irons) by Muhammadu Tukur:

*Your drinking water is the snakes, behold, they are rumbling,
 The snakes will be brought down, each of them will bite at random.
 They will bite a man, the pain will last a thousand years,
 They will return and do again, because they bite at random.
 A scorpion will sting a man, its poison is jet black,
 It will last for seventy years, the poison will not go away.*

(Hiskett 1982:429)

It has been suggested that both Dante and the Hausa poets are indebted in this respect to the same Islamic sources. In a poem attributed to Alhaji Umaru, which is quite similar to the work recorded by Ch.H. Robinson (1986:68-101) and originally composed by Shaykh Uthmān ḍan Fodio, the Hell torments are shown in even greater details:

*The big serpents will gather in abundance
 Spitting and also attacking everyone.
 And there will be big dogs in the fire;
 They will be barking, tearing and growling.
 The fire, too, will fly into rage and burn the liver
 And the fire will scorch [them] also.
 The fire will come out through the eyes and nostrils;
 Likewise through the mouth will the fire be emerging.
 The fire will consume them and burn them completely up:
 Some will be like charcoal, namely the heathens.
 The Glorious One will keep the fire burning.
 It will never die down, there will be no death for anyone.
 The sour drinks will be brought to them to slake their thirst;
 The boiling water will be poured into [their] intestines.
 They will be forced to drink poison, blood and urine.
 A drop of water will be desired much by the heathens.
 They eat also the Hell tree's fruits, there is no doubt,
 The thorny fruits will be desired much by the heathens.
 It is because they were accustomed
 To follow the voice of the world, and to hate the Prophets.
 There are also locked shackles in the fire;
 There are stocks to put the heathens in.
 The locked rings encircle the fire:
 The big and solid ones, there is no doubt.
 The fire kills them and punches hardy:
 All of them, they utter curses, kick and scould.
 There is hunger in the fire and thirst, too.
 There are scabies and eczema, no doubt.
 [...] If only one of the Hells starts to roar,
 It will surpass the thunder-claps, no doubt.
 I warn you, their fire blazes violently,
 It will never die down, there is no doubt for anyone.*

(Piłaszewicz 1978:68ff.)

According to the *wa'āzi i* verse the inhabitants of *Hāwiya* are allocated in various towns. So those who have stolen tithes are placed in Mansina. The proud ones enter Bukhlisa. The whisperers of evil will be brought to Jifiya, a town of carrion. The liars will stay in Wadan Gain, whereas the adulterers will be taken to Habhabu. Those who neglect ablution will enter Zamhari, a town of destroying coldness, and they will be oppressed by Maliki, the angel in charge of the Hell fire.

Although the image of the Paradise is usually less sensitive, there exist also more colourful descriptions of the delights that await the good Muslim:

*They will drink from Kauthara, the lake of Muhammad,
 The water will be cold and tasty, there is no doubt.
 Its whiteness surpasses the light, ye my brothers!
 It tastes like honey, there is no doubt.
 If it is drunk, one will become immortal,
 As well as immune against sickness and old age, no doubt.
 From this place they will mount the horses,
 Everyone will be running when approaching the Paradise.*

*In truth, their families will come out there to meet them,
 Everyone will be given spear at the time of meeting.
 Indeed, a house will be beautified for everyone,
 It will wait open and swept for everyone.
 When they come, they will rest on beds,
 In the entrance-porches prepared for everyone.
 All the wool-rugs, shining like sun, will cover the beds;
 Your cushion is comfortable, there is no doubt.
 The houris will be strolling and scenting the air,
 There will be no dirt inside there, without doubt.
 There is also a stream filled with honey and beer,
 With milk likewise, and with good water for everyone.
 There is neither death in the house of Paradise,
 Nor weakness of body, there is no bad luck.
 There is no old age, no quarrel and no slavery,
 There is no abuse and beating of anyone.
 [...] Their excrements are like sweat;
 They disperse fragrant smell, there is no doubt.
 [...] In truth, they will go where the Powerful is,
 They will see the Almighty, there is no doubt.
 Seeing Him surpasses everything, any pleasure;
 It will delight us, the Qadiri order people.
 It was said that in Paradise everyone is young,
 The women are virgins, there is no doubt.*

(Piłaszewicz 1978:69ff.)

CONCLUSION

These different *wa'āzī* poems picture death and the eternal life as imagined by the Hausa Muslims. According to Islamic dogmas, the whole human life should be oriented towards the Hereafter which is the proper and desired place for human beings. The earthly life is merely a preparative stage which should be wisely utilized for future benefits.

The composition of the *wa'āzī* poems is loose. The fragments of the different thematic groups are interspersed throughout them, and the order of their sequence is not governed by any discernible rule. The themes under discussion, i.e. death, the Day of Judgement, Hell and Paradise are quite common but by no means present in every Hausa homily. There are such ones in which the poets seem to be concerned much more with convincing and comprehensive exposure of various details of ethical and legal nature than with the elaborating of their poetic vision of the final thing.

As the homilies describe various aspects of the daily life of the different strata of Hausa society, both in their native country and in the diaspora, they display much of the *couleur locale* which makes them sound quite different from their prototypes and the other Arabic sources. We have stressed already the beauty of images of the temporal world. Metaphors and other poetic devices like arrows of death that are more penetrating than spears, the picture of a sinner on the Resurrection Day who is burdened like a squeezed bag, an image of a dead man imprisoned in the grave like a fish in a net or a

comparison of inconsiderate people to camels on the plain testify to the poetic sensibility of the Hausa authors. Some other examples of the peculiar local colour are the following: statement that giving alms is tantamount to gathering food which will resist both ants and mices (local "plagues"); or comparison of prayer without the introductory sura (Ar. *fāṭiḥa*) to the situation when clay was heaped up (the basic building material of Hausas) for the construction of a house but no water was provided to mix it up. Besides, the prayer without *fāṭiḥa* is compared to a baobab tree (which is so characteristic of the savanna extending over the Hausaland) whose trunk is eaten by worms.

Some poems illustrate vividly what the encounter between Muslim missionaries and the "pagan" population of the Hausaland may have been like. They show the strong attachment of *Maaguzaawaa* to their customs and ancestral beliefs, as well as their unbending opposition towards the alien religion (Herman 1982:152). Hausa mallams have always focussed on the confrontation of Islam with "paganism", and the fight with relics of tribal religions, particularly with polytheism (Ar. *shirk*), have often found its expression in homiletic poems. The homilies composed in diaspora reflect the competition of Islam with some local religious ideas like the notion of *Deus otiosus*, "care-free God", the belief in reincarnation, mythical explanation of some physical shortcomings of people and inevitability of death. This aspect of the Hausa homilies has been strongly neglected so far and requires an urgent treatment as it may shed some light on the Hausa pre-Islamic views on death and the Hereafter.

University of Warsaw, Pològne

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ABDULKADIR Dangambo, 1980. *Hausa Wa'azi Verse from ca. 1800 to ca. 1970: A Critical Study of Form, Content, Language and Style*, London, Ph.D. Thesis.
- HERMAN J., 1980. "Homiletyczna poezja Hausa" (Homiletic Poetry of the Hausa People). *Euhemer* 2(116):47-58.
- HERMAN J., 1982. "In the Name of God, I, a Slave': A Hausa Homily in Verse from the Manuscript IASAR/334", *Africana Bulletin* 31:147-214.
- HISKETT M., 1975. *A History of Hausa Islamic Verse*, London, School of Oriental and African Studies.
- HISKETT M., 1982. "Towards a Comparison of Theme and Style in the Hausa Verse Categories of Wa'azi and Madahu", Ibrahim Yaro Yahaya, Abba Rufa'i, Al-Amin Abu-Manga (eds), *Studies in Hausa Language, Literature and Culture*. Kano, Bayero University : 417-448.
- JAWORSKI T., 1968. *Anonimowy poemat w języku hausa z rękopisu IASAR/225 (An Anonymous Poem in Hausa from the IASAR/225 Manuscript)*. Warszawa, M.A.Thesis.

- MUHAMMAD Balarabe Umar, 1977. *Dan Maraya Jos da waƙoƙinsa* (Dan Maraya Jos and his Songs), Zaria, Hausa Publication Centre.
- PIŁASZEWICZ S., 1972. *Wypisy z literatury Hausa* (An Anthology of the Hausa Literature). Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
- PIŁASZEWICZ S., 1978. "We Thank the Lord God': A Hausa poem from the IASAR/160 Manuscript". *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* XXXIX/2:57-95.
- PIŁASZEWICZ S., 1981. "Homiletic Poetry of Alhaji Umaru". *Africana Bulletin* 30:73-109.
- PIŁASZEWICZ S., 1988. *Historia literatur afrykańskich w językach rodzimych. I. Literatura Hausa* (History of African literatures in local languages. I. Hausa literature). Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego (second edition).
- PIŁASZEWICZ S., 1990. "In Praise of Shaykh Ahmad al-Tijani. A Hausa poem from the IASAR/134 Manuscript" (for volume in honour of Prof. H. Mukarovsky).
- PIŁASZEWICZ S., 1992. "In Praise of Shaykh Ahmad al-Tijani. A Hausa poem from the IASAR/234 manuscript", E. Ebermann, E.R. Sommerauer, K.É. Jhomanek (eds), *Komparative Afrikanistik. Sprach-, geschichts- und literaturwissenschaftliche Aufsätze zu Ehren von Hans G. Mukarovsky*. Wien, Institut für Afrikanistik und Ägyptologie: 269-286.
- PRIETZE R., 1917. "Gesungene Predigten eines fahrenden Haussa-Lehrers". *Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen* XX, Dritte Abteilung-Afrikanische Studien: 16-31.
- ROBINSON Ch. H., 1896. *Specimens of Hausa Literature*. London.
- TELA AHMED Baba, 1984. *Nazari kan waƙoƙin Hamidu Zungur* (Research on Hamidu Zungur's Poetry). B.A. Thesis, Department of Languages and Linguistics, University of Maiduguri.