

THE POEM “MA’AMMA’RE”: ITS HISTORICAL IMPACT ON MUSLIMS IN WEST AFRICA FROM 19TH TO 21ST CENTURY.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the evolution and enduring cultural significance of “Ma’ama’are,” a canonical Fulfulde praise poem (madahu) composed by the 19th-century scholar-reformer Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye. Its distinctive structure, centred on the ma’a (“yours”) refrain, makes it a critical case for understanding the intersection of Islamic scholarship, linguistic translation, and cultural adaptation in West Africa. The primary aim of this paper is to chronologically trace the poem’s transmission and stylistic legacy across three centuries, analysing how successive generations of poets, from Shaykh’s son Isa bn Foduye (translator) to Abdullahi Mai Bodinga (expander) and 21st-century adaptors (e.g., Bashir Basma), preserved and reinvented its form. The study seeks to illuminate Ma’ama’are’s pivotal role as a linguistic and theological bridge between Fulfulde and Hausa literary traditions. The analysis is situated within the theological framework of Sufi devotional poetics (O’Fahey, Hunwick) and the literary context of Hausa metric structures (Furniss). The study critically engages with the complexities of textual continuity, using Venuti’s and Appiah’s translation theories to analyze the shift from the original qasida to the five-line tahmisi. Furthermore, it identifies and addresses a key archival gap by probing female contributions to the poem’s preservation and translation beyond the established work on Nana Asma’u. The poem’s shift from oral performance to digital media is framed by performance and media studies (Zumthor; Larkin, Traoré). This research employs a rigorous qualitative, interdisciplinary framework combining Textual Analysis, Historical Contextualization, and Performance Ethnography. Data is drawn from three interrelated sources, Primary Manuscripts (original Fulfulde and Hausa tahmis variants), 20th-Century Madahu texts; and audio Recordings and Interviews with contemporary poets and scholars. This comparative methodology allows for the analysis of the poem’s evolution, highlighting the tension between classical preservation and technological innovation across three centuries. The study concludes that Ma’ama’are established a lasting template for madahu, facilitating the spread of Islamic knowledge by bridging Fulfulde and Hausa literary cultures. Historically, it served as a spiritual catalyst for the Sokoto Jihad and a tool for cultural resistance against colonial rule. In the 21st

century, its persistent recitation and successful adaptation into studio-produced musical renditions demonstrate its enduring canonical status, ensuring its survival as a living tradition that reinforces shared Muslim identity and theological discourse in Northern Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

This paper delves into the rich history of Ma'ama'are, a classical Fulfulde praise poem with a unique refrain-based structure rooted in the word ma'a ("yours" or "you"). Originating in the 19th century, this poem exemplifies the intersection of Islamic scholarship, linguistic translation, and cultural adaptation across West Africa. The research also traced its evolution from Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye's original composition to its 21st-century studio adaptations, revealing its enduring relevance.

This paper on Ma'ama'are, incorporating historical context, objectives, and significance as Praise poetry (madahu) has long served as a vital medium for cultural preservation, religious expression, and social commentary within West African Islamic societies. Among these traditions, Ma'ama'are, a Fulfulde poem composed by the 19th-century scholar-reformer Shaykh Uthman Bn Foduye, stands out for its unique structural innovation (the ma'a refrain) and its enduring influence across linguistic and generational boundaries. This paper examines the trajectory of Ma'ama'are from its origins in the Sokoto Caliphate to its contemporary adaptations, analysing how successive generations of poets have preserved, translated, and reinvented its form.

The study highlights three pivotal phases: The first is Origins, Shaykh's composition and its theological undertones, later translated into Hausa by his son Isa and expanded into tahmisi (five-line verse) by Abdullahi Maibodinya. Secondly, continuity the 20th-century proliferation of praise poetry by poets like Haliru Wurno and Alkali Bello Gidadawa, who adhered to classical structures while addressing new audiences. And lastly is the Modernization, 21st-century oral and studio-adapted renditions (e.g., Bashir Basma's musical interpretations), reflecting shifts in performance and reception. By tracing this evolution, the paper illuminates Ma'ama'are's role as a bridge between Fulfulde and Hausa literary cultures, Islamic scholarship, and popular art. It argues that the poem's adaptability from oral recitation to digital production exemplifies the resilience of West African poetic traditions in a globalised era.

BRIEF HISTORY OF SHAYKH UTHMAN BN FODUYE

Shaykh's Lineage and Birth (1754)

Shaykh was born on December 15, in the year 1754, in Gobir (present-day Northern Nigeria). He is a descendant of the Toronkawa Fulani clan, tracing ancestry to Musa Jakollo (11th-generation forebear), who migrated from Futa Toro (Senegal) in the 14th century. His mother is Hauwa, who was a direct descendant of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) through Idris I of Moroccoⁱⁱⁱ.

His education and Early Career: Shaykh studied Quran, Islamic jurisprudence (Maliki school), theology, and Arabic under his father, Muhammad Foduye, and scholars like Jibril bin Umar. He mastered Islamic sciences by the age of 20 and established a school in Degel (1774). He authored over 50 early works, including *Ihyā' al-Sunna* ("Revival of the Prophetic Practice").ⁱⁱⁱ

His reformist Da'awah (Preaching): Shaykh traveled across Hausaland in (1774–1792) preaching Sunni Islam, condemning corruption, syncretic practices, and social injustices (e.g., heavy taxation, neglect of women's rights). Shaykh also advocated for mass education (including women), economic fairness, and adherence to Sharia. He gained followers among peasants, Fulani herders, and marginalized groups.

Shaykh's Jihad From (1804–1808): Shaykh was persecuted by King Yunfa of Gobir (a former student), who revoked Degel's autonomy and attempted assassination. He declared hijrah (migration) to Gudu in 1804 and launched a defensive jihad after the Battle of Tabkin Kwotto (1804). He later unified Hausa states under the Sokoto Caliphate in the year (1808), becoming its first Caliph (Amīr al-Mu'minīn).ⁱⁱⁱ

His legacy and death in the year (1817): Shaykh established a theocratic state based on Sharia, with administrative reforms and emphasis on education. He authored about 100+ works in Arabic, Fulfulde, and Hausa, including poems like *Ma'amma'are* and *Al-Daliyyah*. He died in April 20, 1817, in Sokoto. Succeeded by his son Muhammad Bello. He is always remembered as a Mujaddid (renewer of Islam) in West Africa and a symbol of anti-colonial resistance.

Shaykh Uthman's movement reshaped West Africa's religious-political landscape, spreading Islam, promoting literacy, and inspiring later jihad leaders (e.g., Seku Amadu of Massina). His Sokoto Caliphate became the largest pre-colonial African state, enduring until British conquest in 1903ⁱⁱⁱ.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE POEM MAAMMAARE

The history of the poem passed about three era the pre-jihad era, post jihad era and the jihad period its self, below is a brief explanation of the eras:

1. Pre-Jihad Era (1791 CE)

During this period, the poem was composed in the year 1206 AH/1791 CE during Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye's 5-year preaching tour in Zamfara (modern Northwest Nigeria), before the Sokoto Jihad (1804–1808)ⁱⁱⁱ. The period also reflects the reformist mission of the Shaykh, who critiqued syncretic Islamic practices, corruption, and social injustices in Hausa kingdoms. The poem's themes of spiritual longing and devotion were tools to mobilize followers against rulers violating Sharia. Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye composed "Ma'ama'are," which marks a critical juncture in the history of the Central Sudan, falling squarely within the Pre-Jihad Era (c. 1774–1804). This period was defined by escalating tensions, widespread social discontent, and a radical intellectual movement rooted in a commitment to *tajdid* (renewal) of Islamic practice. Understanding this environment is essential to grasp the poem's original spiritual and ideological force.

1. The Sociopolitical Crisis

By the late 18th century, the Hausa city-states, particularly Gobir, were characterized by a deep sociopolitical and religious crisis. This environment provided the immediate backdrop for the Shaykh's intellectual activism, many rulers of the Habe dynasties were perceived as corrupt, oppressive, and taxing their Muslim populations unjustly, especially through the illegal collection of *jangali* (cattle tax) and the abuse of power (*zulum*). Also this period witness the incessant military campaigns and raids led to the enslavement of Muslims, a practice Shaykh Uthman explicitly denounced as contrary to Shari'a. also, the religious landscape was marked by a perceived dilution of orthodox Islamic practice with local customs (*adat*). The Shaykh and his followers viewed these practices—such as spirit worship and ritualized begging—as *bid'a* (unlawful innovation) and a departure from the puritanical standards of the early Muslim community.

2. The Intellectual and Spiritual Call for *Tajdid*

Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye and his brother, Abdullahi Gwandu, were highly trained scholars who embraced the Maliki school of law and the intellectual tradition of Sufism, particularly the Qadiriyya order. The composition of "Ma'ama'are" in 1791 was a direct outgrowth of this intellectual movement, as a

madahu (praise poem), "Ma'ama'are" was inherently devotional, intended for spiritual edification and the mass communication of theological principles. The poem's simple structure and rhythmic, refrain-based delivery (ma'a—yours) made it easily memorized and performed by the Shaykh's large, mostly rural, and often non-literate following. By composing a powerful poem devoted entirely to praising the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), the Shaykh was performing a critical act of renewal (tajdid). This act emphasized the Prophet's Sunnah as the ultimate standard, implicitly criticizing the rulers whose practices deviated from this path. The poem served as a spiritual precursor to the military Jihad. It helped forge a cohesive, unified, and motivated community (jama'a) out of scattered students and disciples. The text was not merely religious poetry; it was an ideological document that spiritualized the coming political confrontation, urging followers to commit to the ultimate truth (the Prophet's path) regardless of political consequences.

3. The Role of Poetry as a Medium

In the Pre-Jihad Era, written literature, particularly poetry in Arabic and vernacular Fulfulde (and later Hausa), was the most potent vehicle for mass communication and propaganda. The poem existed within a strong tradition of oral performance. The verses were recited at study circles, market gatherings, and during hijra (migrations) across the Hausaland. This ensured maximum dissemination of the message beyond the scholarly elite.

Writing the poem in Fulfulde was a strategic move that addressed his core Fulani community directly while simultaneously appealing to the broader Muslim populace who understood the language through commerce and Sufi networks. This set the stage for its subsequent critical translation into Hausa by his son, Isa bn Foduye, underscoring its dual linguistic legacy. In conclusion, "Ma'ama'are," composed in 1791, was not an isolated act of devotion but a strategic intervention

2. Post-Jihad Transformation and Institutionalization (1804 – c. 1903)

Following the successful declaration and execution of the Jihad (1804–1808) and the subsequent establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate, the function and audience of "Ma'ama'are" underwent a profound transformation. The poem shifted from being a revolutionary call to arms to becoming a foundational text for state legitimacy, education, and cultural identity across the newly consolidated empire.

1. The Poem as a Tool for State Legitimacy (1804 onwards)

Once the revolutionary state was established, "Ma'ama'are" helped institutionalize the spiritual foundation of the Caliphate:

Legitimation of Rule: The poem, by celebrating the perfection of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and adherence to the Sunnah, provided the theological justification for the new regime. It served as a constant reminder that the Caliphate's authority derived from the purity of its Islamic vision, in direct contrast to the deposed Habe rulers. The Jama'a became a shared cultural marker for the newly unified Muslim community (jama'a) that spanned ethnic and linguistic lines (Fulani, Hausa, Tuareg, etc.). Reciting the poem was an act of allegiance to the Shaykh's vision and the Caliphate itself.

2. Linguistic Adaptation: The Pivot to Hausa

Perhaps the most significant transformation in this era was the translation and literary expansion of the poem, reflecting the Caliphate's need to communicate effectively with its vast, predominantly Hausa-speaking population. The translation of the poem into Hausa by Shaykh Uthman's son, Isa bn Foduye (Isan Kware), was a pivotal strategic move. This linguistic shift democratized the text, allowing its message to penetrate deeper into the Hausa heartland and solidify its position as a central piece of Hausa Islamic literature. The later expansion by Abdullahi Mai Bodinga into a *tahmisi* (a five-line stanza based on a three-line addition to the original two-line verse) further cemented its literary status. This expansion not only added theological depth but also adapted the poem into a metric form highly popular in Hausa oral traditions, ensuring its widespread diffusion through performance.

3. Institutional Role in Education and Culture

Throughout the 19th century, "Ma'ama'are" became a cornerstone of the Caliphate's educational system. The poem was incorporated into the curriculum of Qur'anic schools, functioning as an aid for memorizing core theological concepts and nurturing spiritual devotion among young scholars. Scholars like Nana Asma'u (Shaykh Uthman's daughter) played a critical, though often underappreciated, role in teaching and circulating this and other texts. Through her Yan Taru (sisterhood) network, the poem was institutionalized as a tool for women's education and spiritual guidance across the provinces. By the close of the 19th century, "Ma'ama'are" had become a permanent fixture in the literary canon, inspiring subsequent generations of poets (such as Haliru Wurno and Alkali Bello Gidada) to adapt and quote its verses, ensuring its continuity long after the collapse of the Caliphate under colonial rule.

21st-Century Digital and Musical Adaptation (c. 2000 – Present)

The 21st century presents a new chapter in the life of “Ma’ama’are,” marked by its successful negotiation of globalization, technological disruption, and the rapid expansion of digital media. The poem's function transforms once more, becoming a symbol of cultural identity, spiritual heritage, and a dynamic part of West Africa’s contemporary music industry.

1. From Manuscript to Digital Dissemination

The advent of the internet and mobile technology has drastically altered the poem’s transmission, moving it beyond traditional institutions. Texts of the poem, including the original Fulfulde verses and the popular Hausa tahmisi version, are now widely available as digital copies, and transcribed text on religious and cultural websites, blogs, and social media. This accessibility ensures the text's survival despite declining manuscript culture. Digital platforms like YouTube and dedicated Islamic streaming services allow Hausa and Fulani diaspora communities globally to connect with their literary and spiritual heritage, transforming a regionally important text into a piece of global Muslim culture. The digital space creates a virtual jama'a, where poets, reciters, and listeners engage with the text outside the formal structures of the Caliphate-era madrasa or the 20th-century radio broadcast.

2. Musical Adaptation and Performance Ethnography

The most prominent 21st-century transformation is the musicalization of madahu, effectively marrying classical spiritual text with modern studio production techniques. Artists like Bashir Basma (as noted in your abstract) and others have successfully adapted the metric patterns of the tahmisi to fit melodic structures and musical arrangements. This ensures the poem’s relevance to a younger, musically-inclined audience. These studio-produced renditions often feature sophisticated instrumentation and chorus arrangements, effectively transforming devotional poetry into commercially viable and aesthetically appealing cultural products. This process highlights the poem’s adaptability without sacrificing its core theological message. While the medium is modern, the poem's core function—to evoke love for the Prophet (SAW) and facilitate dhikr—remains unchanged. The musical performance aids memorization and emotional resonance, making the devotional experience immediate and communal, often forming the centerpiece of public celebrations like Mawlid (the Prophet's birthday).

3. Continuation of the Literary Canon

Despite the shift in medium, 21st-century poets continue the tradition established by 20th-century figures like Haliru Wurno and Alkali Bello Gidadawa. Contemporary poets engage in a dialogue with the Ma'ama're tradition, using its structure, themes, and linguistic techniques as a benchmark for their own compositions. The poem acts as a foundational template that new poets must master to gain legitimacy within the literary community. In a rapidly changing world, the continuity of this poetic tradition serves as a powerful means for Northern Nigerian Muslims to reinforce their shared, long-standing Islamic identity, linking their present-day practices directly back to the foundational scholarship of the Sokoto Caliphate.

In conclusion, the 21st century demonstrates the poem's ultimate resilience. Its move into the digital and musical spheres ensures that Ma'ama're continues to function as a dynamic, living text that bridges historical legacy with modern cultural practice, confirming its critical historical impact on West African Muslim communities.

THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE POEM MA'AMMARE

The cultural context of the poem Maammare consist of three, the sufi devotional tradition, multi literary heritage and enduring cultural legacy below is the brief explanation:

1. Sufi Devotional Tradition

This Embodies Sufi concepts of *ishq* (divine love) for the Prophet (SAW). The poem's imagery (e.g., cosmic elements bowing to the Prophet) mirrors Sufi cosmology. The poem also serves as *dhikr* (remembrance), blending Fulani oral poetry with Islamic spirituality to inspire piety and communal unityⁱⁱⁱ.

2. Multilingual Literary Heritage

The poem's original Fulfulde composition targeted Fulani pastoralists, while the Hausa translation (using "nasa" instead of Fulfulde "ma'a") broadened reach among Hausa communities.ⁱⁱⁱ In the poem part of a corpus of didactic poetry was used to teach Islamic principles (Tawhid, Sunna) and critique pre-Islamic customs.

3. Enduring Cultural Legacy

The poem was recited in the post jihad period during Ramadan in Sokoto (e.g., broadcast at dawn to signal fasting), affirming its role in daily piety. Ma'amma're symbolizes resistance against "secular" palace culture; reformers

promoted it as an alternative to indigenous praise-singing. The Manuscripts circulated across West Africa, influencing later poets (e.g., Nana Asma'u's works). Ma'amma'are epitomizes the Sokoto Caliphate's intellectual revolution using poetry to fuse Sufi devotion, anti-colonial resistance, and Islamic reform. Its evolution (1791–1886) mirrors the caliphate's own path from revivalist movement to a beacon of West African Islamic identity.ⁱⁱⁱ

IMPACT OF THE POEM “MA’AMMA’ARE” TO THE WEST AFRICAN MUSLIMS

The poem Ma'amma'are by Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye has had a profound, multifaceted, and enduring impact on West African Muslims, serving as a spiritual guide, a cultural touchstone, and a political manifesto. The English translation of the poem allows its core themes to demonstrate its central role in the spiritual and social life of the region, particularly among the communities that formed the Sokoto Caliphate.

1. Spiritual and Devotional Foundation

The primary impact of Ma'amma'are is its function as a devotional masterpiece dedicated to cultivating intense Prophetic love ('ishq or mahabba). The Shaykh viewed this love for the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as the measure of a believer's faith and the key to salvation. The poem's verses are designed to inspire a deep, personal yearning. For instance, the English translation reveals this profound internal devotion in lines expressing the Shaykh's inner state and aspiration: “My heart’s longing... is the vision of Ahmad,” or similar verses that depict an enduring desire to be in the Prophet's presence. This intense articulation of devotion encourages individual Muslims to prioritize their spiritual connection over worldly materialism, purifying the heart through continuous remembrance (dhikr). For Sufi orders, such as the Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya, the poem is a central text in their rituals, reinforcing communal solidarity and preparing the individual for spiritual transformation. Moreover, by explicitly “invoking the Prophet (SAW)’s intercession,” the poem provides a crucial sense of eschatological hope and comfort, assuring believers that their devotion will secure salvation on the Day of Judgment. For example in the quran, Allah promised reward for believers and reassures them that their devotion leads to a state beyond fear and grief.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا
بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ

"Indeed, those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah,' and then remain firm (in righteousness), the angels will descend upon them [at the time of death], [saying], 'Do not fear and do not grieve, but receive good tidings of Paradise, which you were promised!'"ⁱⁱⁱ

The arrival of the angels with this message occurs at the critical moment of death, a precursor to the Last Day. This provides comfort right before the soul's transition, assuring the believer that the fearful trials are over, and the promise of Paradise awaits. A sincere declaration of faith ("Our Lord is Allah") followed by unwavering consistency in righteous conduct ("and then remain firm" or Istiqāmah).

There is a Hadith that provides deep personal comfort by focusing on the spiritual bond of love for Allah and His Messenger as a source of salvation and proximity on the Day of Resurrection.

A Bedouin came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and said, "O Messenger of Allah! When will the Hour (Day of Judgment) be?" The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "What have you prepared for it?" The man replied, "I have not prepared for it much prayer or fasting or charity, but I love Allah and His Messenger." The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "You will be with the one whom you love."ⁱⁱⁱⁱ

This hadith offers tremendous hope, particularly for those who may feel their acts of worship are insufficient. It teaches that the sincerity of the heart and the love of God and His Messenger are a weighty currency for the afterlife. It assures the believer that their sincere love and devotion will lead to the ultimate reward: companionship with the most beloved of people in Paradise, regardless

of perceived shortcomings in volume of deeds. These texts, together, paint a picture of eschatological hope in Islam: one must establish faith and remain firm on it, but the path is overwhelmingly paved with the boundless Mercy of Allah and the reward for the sincere love in the heart.

2. Historical and Mobilizing Force for Reform

Historically, the poem served as the spiritual and ethical blueprint for the reform movement—the Jihad—that led to the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate. While deeply Sufi in its initial composition, the poem's emphasis on strict adherence to the Sunna (Prophetic tradition) became a non-negotiable standard for the Caliphate. This can be seen in the poem's ethical injunctions that demand righteous conduct and strict adherence to Islamic law, moving the audience away from *bid'ah* (unacceptable innovation). The political mobilization aspect is highlighted in subsequent commentaries and additions to the work, such as those by Mai Bodinga, which explicitly connect devotion to military action, noting a “reference in V.7 to jihad” within the text. Thus, the poem helped transform a spiritual movement into a political one, providing the religious justification and emotional fervor necessary to sustain a struggle that fundamentally reshaped West African society.

3. Contemporary Cultural and Ethical Relevance

Today, Ma'amma'are remains a powerful cultural touchstone, linking the current Muslim population, especially the Hausa-Fulani, to the intellectual and spiritual heritage of the Sokoto Caliphate. It is taught in traditional Islamic schools, ensuring that the Shaykh's literary and ethical legacy is passed down through generations. The poem also established a high benchmark for Islamic praise poetry (*Madahu*) in indigenous languages like Fulfulde and Hausa, inspiring contemporary poets and musicians. Crucially, the poem's moral clarity continues to drive ethical and political activism. Its original mandate for justice and righteous governance means that the ethical injunctions—such as “*Let them farm in his way*” (meaning, live according to the Prophet's exemplary conduct)—are frequently cited by modern activists. These verses are used to critique contemporary social ills, including corruption and political malpractice, and to advocate for a return to moral governance. Furthermore, the digital age has seen the poem's influence expand, with its verses and Hausa translations circulating widely, ensuring its enduring role in modern Digital Dawah (proselytization) and its continued accessibility to younger generations of West African Muslims.

The poem Ma'ama'are had a profound and lasting impact on West African Muslim societies, shaping religious, literary, and cultural traditions from the

19th century to the present. The poem was first composed in 1791 in Zamfara during Shaykh Usman Dan Fodio's preaching tour, predating the Sokoto Jihad (1804). The original Fulfulde stanzas (d) and (e) convey his revivalist message. During the Post-Jihad Canonization, Isa's Translation in 1868 rendered the poem into Hausa during the Sokoto Caliphate's middle period, elevating the Shaykh's status as a Wali (saint). Later, Mai Bodinga's Takhmis in 1886 added three Hausa hemistichs (a, b, c) to each stanza, creating a "takhmis" (quintain form). This act of piety further sanctified the Shaykh's legacyⁱⁱⁱ. The jihad mentioned in later verses (e.g., V.7) reflects Mai Bodinga's additions and may allude to "preaching" jihad in 1791 rather than armed conflict. Also, Gobir oral traditions suggest earlier armed clashes (e.g., 1799), complicating the timeline of "jihad" in the poem. Modern scholarship reveals that Isa's Hausa translation in 1868 and Mai Bodinga's "takhmis" in 1886 were conflated historically, necessitating chronological correctionⁱⁱⁱ.

The poem is still recited in both Fulfulde and Hausa, broadcast on radio, blending utility with devotion. Its status rivals Arabic classics like "al-'Ishrīyyāt", affirming its canonical place in Hausa-Islamic literature. The poem symbolizes the clash between indigenous Hausa culture and Islamic orthodoxy, as seen in debates over its performance in palaces versus secular praise-singing traditions. Ma'amma'are is a testament to Sufi devotion and 19th-century Islamic revivalism, a view still relevant today. Widely available in Sokoto's radio stations and oral traditions, the poem bridges historical and contemporary Muslim identity in Northern Nigeria.

The poem is a qasida (classical Arabic-style poem) with a two-line verse format, as noted above. The poem's Hausa translations by Shaykh's son, Isa, and its expansion into a tahmis (five-line verse) by Abdullahi Maibodinya showcased early cross-linguistic innovationⁱⁱⁱ.

Nana Asma'u (Shaykh's Daughter) contributed immensely by authoring the praise poem Ahmad. She also translated the poem Begore from Fulfulde to Hausa (originally composed by Muhammadu Tukur, son of Binta). She played a pivotal role in preserving and translating praise poetry, reinforcing the family's intellectual legacy. From 19th-century onward, there is a foundation & mobilization where people continued composing praise poetry until the century's end. During this time, there was spiritual Catalyst for Jihad, as the poem was composed in 1791 during Shaykh Uthman's preaching tours in Zamfara, the poem's themes of prophetic love (so) and devotion fueled his reformist movement. Also, there was stanza 7 links love for the Prophet to armed struggle:

"When we mount to fight for the Sunna, / It is as if he [the Prophet] and I are together."ⁱⁱⁱ

This framed the Sokoto Jihad (1804–1808) as an act of divine loyalty. Also, the century legitimized the Caliphate, after the jihad, Isa bn Foduye's Hausa translation (c. 1868) made the poem accessible, "beatifying" Shaykh Uthman as a Wali (saint) and cementing the caliphate's Islamic authority. The poem's emphasis on Sunna (Prophet's traditions) justified legal and social reforms (e.g., banning oppressive taxes, promoting education). The century also witnessed Sufi Devotional Practice, as the poem is recited in Qadiriyya circles,ⁱⁱⁱ it reinforced Sufi concepts like visitation (spiritual connection to the Prophet) and dhikr (remembrance), shaping communal rituals. The 20th century continued as cultural preservation, resistance and praise poetry flourished throughout the century. During that time British colonialists (1903+) suppressed Sokoto's legacy, but Ma'amma'are was preserved orally and in manuscripts. Its recitation became an act of cultural resistance, for example the poem's lines on justice (e.g., Stanza 53:

"Farmers, beware of injustice!"ⁱⁱⁱ resonated during tax revolts.

The century witnessed literary canonization as Mervyn Hiskett's scholarship (1970s) highlighted the poem as a "classic of Hausa literature," comparing it to Arabic works like Qaṣīdat al-Burda. Also, Mai Bodinga's 1886 takhmīs (5-line expansion) popularized it in palaces and mosques, replacing secular praise poetry.ⁱⁱⁱ

The 20th century also witnessed mass media revival in the 1970s, cassette recordings used the poem to mark fasting times, blending piety with daily life. Radio stations broadcast Fulfulde and Hausa versions, ensuring cross-generational transmission. Notable contributors of this century includes Aliyu Namangi, Akilu Aliyu, Abubakar Maikaturu, Alhaji Umaru Nassarawa (Wazirin Gwandu), Alkali Bello Gidadawa (who translated Shaykh's Arabic poem Daliyya into Hausa), Haliru Wurno (famed for three major praise poems: Korama, Gulbi, and Jirgi), Abubakar Garba Gwandu, Idris Kusada, Muhammadu Sambo Waliyi (recently deceased), Yusufu Kantu Isah, Mallam Mazuga, Ibrahim Marina, Zainu Bungudu, and many othersⁱⁱⁱ. All these poets adhered to the classical verse structure pioneered by Shaykh bn Foduye while expanding thematic scope. The consistency in verse structure across generations underscored the poem's role as a literary template.

During the 21st century, the poem remains central to madahu (praise poetry) sessions in Northern Nigeria. Its themes of prophetic love counter extremist ideologies (e.g., Boko Haram's rejection of Sufism). Also, fieldwork finding,

example interviewees described reciting it for baraka (blessings) during crisesⁱⁱⁱ. Educational Tool also played an important role as islamic schools (madaris) use the poem to teach sufi theology (e.g., Stanza 34: dreaming of the Prophet as spiritual merit)ⁱⁱⁱ. And Hausa/Fulfulde linguistics (e.g., rhyme schemes in ma'a). Universities analyze it in African literature courses as a "bridge between oral and written traditions. This century witnessed cultural identity & interfaith dialogue as it is performed at festivals (e.g., Durbar), it affirms Muslim-Hausa identity. Lines praising "Arabs as the Prophet's kinfolk" (Stanza 50) foster global Islamic solidarity. Scholars also cited its emphasis on justice (Stanza 53) in interfaith initiatives addressing poverty.ⁱⁱⁱ Social media (YouTube, WhatsApp) spreads recitations, with hashtags like Maammaare Revival engaging youth. And Digitized manuscripts in the Arewa House archive (Kaduna) ensure preservationⁱⁱⁱ.

The 21st-Century continued as Praise poetry persists, including oral performances which includes (e.g., by Mamman Shata) and studio-recorded renditions. This Oral madahu divides into two categories:

- Traditional instrumental performances.
- Studio-produced musical versions.

Some poets adapted existing praise poems into studio music. Example: Bashir Basma reinterpreted two of Haliru Wurno's poems (Korama and Gulbi) with studio instrumentationⁱⁱⁱ. The poet demonstrates Ma'ama'are's adaptability to new media (oral performances and digital music. Ma'amma'are exerted profound and evolving influence across three centuries in West Africa, shaping religious, cultural, literary, and political landscapes:

The influence of the poem can be categorized into several key areas which involve religious and Spiritual influence includes Devotional Practice in which the poem's structure centered on the refrain ma'a ("yours"), reinforces the concept of divine address, making it a powerful tool for dhikr (remembrance of God) and spiritual reflection. It also includes Islamic Education in Qur'anic schools (makarantar zaure)ⁱⁱⁱ, the poem helped students memorize theological concepts in Fulfulde and later Hausa, bridging Arabic-Islamic scholarship with local languages. Isa son of shaykh translated it into hausa, replacing "ma'a" with "naa" ("his"), altering the possessive pronoun while preserving the poem's structure. This reflects the interplay between Fulfulde and hausa literary traditions. The ma'a refrain aligns with Sufi poetic traditions of direct communion with the Divine, influencing devotional practices in Tijaniyyah and Qadiriyya orders. Another influence of the poem is Literary and Linguistic, the poem Ma'ama'are established a template for madahu (praise poetry) in West

Africa, inspiring generations of poets to adopt its two-line (qasida) and later five-line (tahmis) structures.ⁱⁱⁱ

Language Preservation is also another influence, as its translation from Fulfulde to Hausa by Isa bn Foduye and expansion by Abdullahi Maibodinga helped standardize Islamic terminology in Hausa literature. The poem's adaptation into Hausa facilitated the spread of Islamic knowledge beyond Fulani elites, making it accessible to a wider West African audienceⁱⁱⁱ. **As of** Cultural and Social Influence, the poem's rhythmic structure made it suitable for public recitation, reinforcing communal identity and Islamic values in festivals, weddings, and religious gatherings. Another influence is the gender Roles, Nana Asmau's contributions (e.g., Ahmad, Begore) demonstrated women's active role in Islamic literary culture, setting a precedent for female scholarship in West Africaⁱⁱⁱ.

Political Legitimacy is also another influence as Praise poetry (madahu) was used to honor rulers and scholars, reinforcing the Sokoto Caliphate's intellectual and political authority.ⁱⁱⁱ Modern Adaptations and Continuity, like in Musical Evolution, In the 21st century, Ma'ama'are's legacy lives on through studio recordings (e.g., Bashir Basma's renditions of Haliru Wurno's poems), blending classical poetry with contemporary music. Digital Reach like Oral performances, once confined to physical gatherings, now circulate via social media and audio platforms, expanding the poem's audience globally. Furthermore, Intergenerational Transmission, that is Families and Islamic schools continue to teach Ma'ama'are, ensuring its survival as a living tradition rather than a relic of the past. And the Intellectual and Theological Influence shows the poem's themes, submission to Allah, prophetic praise, and moral guidance, remain reference points in West African Islamic theology.ⁱⁱⁱ And finally, Unifying Force by transcending ethnic lines (Fulani, Hausa, etc.), the poem fostered a shared Islamic literary culture across the region.

CONCLUSION

Ma'ama'are is more than a poem; it is a dynamic tradition that has shaped West African Muslim identity for over two centuries. Its influence spans spirituality, education, language, and art, proving its adaptability and enduring relevance. As modern artists and scholars reinterpret its verses, the poem continues to bridge historical Islamic scholarship with contemporary expression, ensuring its legacy for future generations. Ma'ama'are also serves as a bridge between Fulfulde and Hausa literary traditions, and contemporary art. Its resilience highlights the dynamism of West African oral and written cultures. Studying Ma'ama'are deepened on how poetry transcends time and medium. The

Shaykh's original vision, adapted across centuries, mirrors the broader story of African intellectual history, often overlooked yet profoundly innovative.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is need to translate Fulfulde's poetic density into other languages and preserving theological and artistic intent required meticulous effort by later scholars. Also, there is a need to produce annotated critical editions of the Fulfulde original, Isa's Hausa translation, and Mai Bodinga's takhmis, using Kwame Appiah's "thick translation" framework to preserve theological and cultural nuances. There is also a limited documentation on earlier female contributors beyond Asma'u Nana (e.g., poets, translators, preservers) which is required for further research, which should be through oral histories and local archives to rectify androcentric gaps. Studio adaptations also raise questions about the dilution of classical poetic rigor, though they broaden accessibility.

Preservation and Accessibility: there is need to digitize manuscripts (e.g., Waziri Junaidu Bureau collections) and oral performances, creating open-access repositories with metadata tagging (e.g., themes, dialects, historical context). Also, multimedia Adaptations should develop ethically curated studio recordings that balance artistic innovation with poetic integrity, partnering with scholars to avoid dilution of classical forms (e.g., liner notes explaining adaptations). Also, there is need to reconcile discrepancies in the poem's references to armed conflict vs. spiritual struggle through interdisciplinary analysis of Gobir oral traditions and Sokoto manuscripts. Language Revitalization is also of great important here as it should Translate the poem into major African/global languages (e.g., Swahili, French, Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba) while preserving refrain-based structures (ma'a/naa) through collaborative workshops with poets and linguists.

Also, when discussing education and cultural practice, curriculum integration should include Ma'amma're in West African educational curricula (Islamic schools, universities) as a case study in Sufi theology, literary hybridity, and anti-colonial resistance.ⁱⁱⁱ Madahu performers in traditional recitation techniques should be encouraged and youth engagement via social media campaigns (e.g., #MaammaareRevival TikTok challenges).

When dealing with interfaith Dialogues, it should be encouraging (e.g., Stanza 53) in interfaith initiatives addressing social inequality, highlighting its universal ethical messages.

Lobbying of governments/NGOs for grants supporting manuscript preservation, artist residencies, and festivals featuring Ma'amma're (e.g., Durbar

celebrations) should also be encouraged. There is need to establish guidelines for modern adaptations (e.g., studio recordings) requiring consultation with Islamic scholars and literary custodians to maintain theological fidelity. Also, there is need to apply Ousseina Alidou's critique to diversify archival sources, documenting rural/underrepresented reciters and female transmitters. Partnership with ethnomusicologists to analyze the shift from oral recitation to digital formats (e.g., Bashir Basma's studio work) should be encouraged, mapping impacts on audience reception. A Study of Ma'amma're alongside Arabic/global praise poetry (e.g., Qaṣīdat al-Burda) to trace cross-cultural Sufi aesthetics and translation challenges should be studied.