

CULTIVATION OF ARABIC OCCASIONAL VERSES IN YORUBALAND (NIGERIA): A LITERARY STUDY OF SELECTED POEMS

Professor Olayinka Kudus AMUNI¹ & Dr. Mikail Adebisi FOLORUNSHO²

¹Dept. of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Arts

Lagos State University, P.M.B 0001, Ojo

Lagos, Nigeria.

amuni1964@yahoo.com

+2348033315883

²Dept. of Foreign Languages

College of Humanities & Culture (Ikire Campus)

Osun State University, Oshogbo, Nigeria

mikail.folorunsho@uniosun.edu.ng

+2348029184812

Abstract

Arabic literati in Yorubaland, especially the versemakers of Zumratul-mū'minīn tradition have contributed significantly to the various genres of the Arabic literary compositions. Al-munāsabāt (occasional poems) occupy the pride of place within their literary productions. Cultivation of this genre by the Arabic literati of Nigerian provenance commenced in the twentieth century and it has continued to attract patronage since then. The study examined the stimulants for the cultivation of this motif while the need to examine the main features of this genre within the anthology of the Arabic poetry of Yorubaland, especially the versemakers of Zumratul-mū'minīn tradition, also served as the catalyst for the study. It employed both historical and contextual methods in examining the social and cultural contexts which stimulated the production of occasional poems, with two of such poems purposively selected for study. Translation of the selected poems to English as well as the thematic study of the same poems marked a remarkable contribution. Information obtained from the study could be a veritable tool in the efforts to establish the diversity in the contribution of Arabic scholars of Yorubaland, especially the Arabic poets within the Zumratul-mū'minīn tradition to literary activities in Nigeria

Keywords: *Al-munāsabāt, Occasional poems, Poetry, Yorubaland, Zumratul- mū'minīn.*

Introduction

Of the genres or varieties of the Arabic poetry in Yorubaland, *Al-munāsabāt* (occasional poems) are highly cultivated by the versemakers of *Zumratul-mū'minīn* group. They utilize the opportunity of every Islamic event to compose poems in commemoration of such event. Of such events that attract the literary attention of the Arabic poets are like marriage, graduation, commissioning of new houses as well as naming of new child. It is observable that occasional poems form the bulk of the Arabic poetry of this group. Of these poems purposively selected for this study are the ones composed by the products of the Arabic learning centre founded by the late Shaykh 'Abdul-'Azīz Faya, of *Zumratul-mū'minīn* group in Yorubaland. *Zumratul-mū'minīn* as an organization embraces the teachers as well as students of a scholarly religious movement

believed to have been made prominent in Yorubaland by Shaykh Abdul-Salām Bamidele Bada of Amunigun Ibadan. The origin of this group has been traced by Al-Kankawi(2016:528)to Shaykh Yusuf Abubakri of Agbaji quarters of Ilorin in 1907.

A popular saying in Yoruba language states: “*Ise nla ni orin kewu*’ (Great task is the composition of verses in Arabic). This is probably occasioned by the metrical constraints in Arabic poetry. Our observation reveals that products of *Zumratul-mū’minīn* Arabic centres embarked on the composition of poems which is considered a great task and an hallmark of erudition by Yoruba people, to erase the negative impression that they are not proficient in the use of Arabic language. This negative impression arose as a consequence of the one-sidedness of their curricula, which give greater attention to theological studies at the expense of linguistic sciences.

It is noteworthy that the focus of the paper is restricted to introduction, translation and thematic observations on the purposively selected poems. Critical assessment of the poems is an aspect excluded from this study as it is enough an area for further study.

’Al-munāsabāt(Occasional Poems) in Yorubaland: Cultivators and Features

’*Al-munāsabāt* as a term refers to the verses composed to mark specific events like marriage, graduation, commissioning of new houses, naming of new child and offering prayers for the dead ones. Haywood (1971:87) describes occasional poems as the verses composed to celebrate particular occasions of public interest. Cultivation of this genre is not a specialty of the products of *Zumratul-mū’minīn* group as it is equally cultivated by the other Arabic literati whose system of Arabic education differ from the methodology of this group. What really attracts us in this group is the preponderance of this genre within the volumes of their literary productions, in spite of their perceived weakness in linguistic sciences.

Al-munāsabāt is a recent genre introduced into the literary enterprise in Nigeria. Al-Kankawi (2015:520) traces the evolution of this genre on the literary scene in Nigeria to the twentieth century. There is hardly any Islamic event that will not attract the literary attention of our Arabic literati, especially the subjects of this paper. Folorunsho (2020:49) quotes Abubakre and Reichmuth(1997:191)as submitting that poems of ‘salutation’ (*Tarhīb*) or congratulation’ (*Tahni’ah*) sometimes even printed and distributed for the occasion have become common elements in religious celebrations in Nigeria and particularly, amongst the members of *Zumratul-mū’minīn* in Yorubaland.

Nothing marks an occasional poem different from the composition of other genres within the anthology of the Arabic poetry of Nigerian literati in the aspect of style. Features like having doxology as the epilogues as well as the prologues of their poems, usage of chronogram, compliance with metrical rules and expression of humility or self-abnegation are all common elements of their poems, irrespective of genre.

Thematically, an occasional poem is a combination of multiple genres. An occasional poem could therefore be described as a crucible of many genres fused together to achieve many objectives under a single composition. Within the foci of a particular occasional poem, motifs like elegy, eulogy and supplication feature freely. Ironically, we come across satire as a component of occasional poem in some instances, as evidenced in *Lāmiyyah*, a vitriolic satire composed by Mustafā Jumu’ah Adewale, a Nigerian Arabic poet against an un-named opponent under the pretext of elegizing his late father (2019:34). A poem recited at the programme organized for prayer at the eighth day after the death of the his father is expected to be an elegy and supplication for the mercy and forgiveness of Allah for the deceased, in line with the common practice in Yorubaland. It has been observed by Folorunsho (2019:41) that irrespective of whatever the

opponent could have done or said, the bereaved should have devoted the occasion of the gathering to elegize and avoid the temptation to use the occasion to foster antagonism.

Methodology

The study employed both historical and contextual methods in examining the specific social and cultural contexts that spurred the development of this genre in Arabic literature especially in the literary space of Yorubaland in Nigeria, through a critical study of relevant literature., with two of such poems purposively selected for study. The paper examined the predisposing factors for the cultivation of this genre. The study derived information primarily from consultation of relevant literature. This method was adopted because of its reliance on extant sound submissions, which served as background to our analyses in this paper. The method is not empirical, it requires no instruments for data collection and it is not such that is verifiable by means of scientific experimentation. For the reliability and validity of the sources, we ensured the authenticity of every literature consulted.

Nūniyyah of Muhammad 'al-Sa'īd Muhammad al-Jāmi'

The metonymy *Nūniyyah* is derived from *Nūn*– the rhyme letter of the poem, because it was not titled by the composer. *Nūniyyah* is an occasional poem composed to mark the graduation ceremony from a stage and enrolment for another stage within the educational system of the *Zumratul-mū'minīn* group, by the composer in the year 2000. *Nūniyyah* is a poem of 24 lines. It is purposively selected from the compositions of the products of *Zumratul-mū'minīn* to enable us appreciate the worth of literary contributions of the group to Arabic scholarship in Yorubaland. It is also intended to provide an insight into the components of this genre.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الحمد لله الذي زين السماء بالشهب وأنزل الماء من السحب والصلاة والسلام على سيدنا محمد
الكمال وعلى آله وأصحابه العادل وغفرا ورحما لعبد العزيز فايًا وأسأل عوناً لشيخني أحمد اللبيب الريان وبعد، فهذه القصيدة
نظمها إينكم خادم العلم المفتقر إلى رحمة الله تعالى محمد السعيد محمد الجامع لإظهار الشكر على صنائع الله وعلى حفلة
الإستجازه وإفتتاح تفسير القرآن الكريم الواقعة بمشيئته تعالى يوم الأربعاء. بتاريخ ٢٢/٣/٢٠٠٠

- ١ حمدا وشكرا لمحي الخلق مولانا# هو المميت كذا بالملك ربانا
- ٢ ولم أزل شاكرا لله أنعمه # لأنه نعم رب الخلق رحمانا
- ٣ ما كلّ ناو لشيء وهو فاعله # على تبالغنا لله سبحانا
- ٤ يا رب لا تجعل هذا احتفال لنا# بداية ويختتم رب ديانا
- ٥ وأنت قلت أزد من كان لي شكرا# زيادة ربنا علما وربحانا
- ٦ جلّ الصلاة لمن جاء لينذر بالقرآن وهو أعلى كتب صنانا
- ٧ محمد خير كلّ الخلق قاطبة # هو المنزه من أدناس شيطاننا
- ٨ تسليم ربّي على آل وأصحابه# والعالمين خلوا في خير أديانا

- ٩ نور إلهي قبور العالمين ال# ذين أرخصوا دين خير الخلق عدنانا
- ١٠ عبد العزيز أيا رحمان فارحمه#أسكنه ربّي من الجنان العدنانا
- ١١ لهو الشجاع كأسد في الإله فني#أعماراه بدل دنيا بقربانا
- ١٢ ويهتدي كلّ من ضلّ بهديته#لهو المفتك الشرك ليس جبانا
- ١٣ لذا أسائل ربحانا ومغفرة#تنقل إلهي له في حشر ميزانا
- ١٤ وقاية الله والإمداد أسأله #للشيخ أحمد من بالعلم يزدانا
- ١٥ شيخ نجيب الذي لا زال قائدنا# إلى العبادة والتقوى والإيماننا
- ١٦ قد خصه الله بالأخلاق والعمل# بالعلم أهمه في قول سبحانا
- ١٧ وكل من كان مناعا بعلم له #لم يقتفي قول خير الخلق منانا
- ١٨ لا زال درّك يروي كلّ عطشان# كذا شفارك مرهوقا لظمانا
- ١٩ يا ربّ فاقض له كل حوائجه#ملكه ربّي تملك سليمانا
- ٢٠ والحاضرين أعينهم أنت مولانا#والحاضرات جزاكم الله إحسانا
- ٢١ إن سيل عن ناظم هذه قصيدات#سعيدكم أمليسى لهو علمانا
- ٢٢ وإنه كان من خريج مركزنا#حرّسه دوما جميع كيد الإنسانا
- ٢٣ اللهم وافق مرادي بمرادك يا#من قد تقدّس عن أوصاف عجزانا
- ٢٤ دك لعدة هذى القصيدلت#مستفعلن فاعلن مستفعلن فعلن

Translation of the Poem

In the name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful. Thanks to Allah Who beautified the sky with stars and brought downpour from cloud. May the blessing and peace be on our perfect leader -Muhammad and his just household and companions. May the forgiveness and blessing of Allah be on ‘Abdul-‘Azīz Faya. I seek for succour from (Allah) for Ahmad my intelligent and handsome teacher. This ode was composed by your son, servant of knowledge (who is) in need of the blessing of the Almighty Allah, Muhammad ‘al-Sa‘īd Muhammad ‘al-Jāmi‘, to thank Allah on His deeds. Also on the graduation

ceremony and commencement of the studying of Qur'ānic exegesis holding by Allah's wish on Wednesday 22/3/2000,

1. Praise and thanks be to our Lord Who enlivens mankind, He is the One Who takes lives and provides us sustenance with His sovereignty.
2. I remain thankful to Allah for His blessings, so Wonderful is His provision of blessing for mankind
3. Not every aim is achieved, Allah is Praiseworthy as we get our aim achieved
4. O! Lord, the Judge do not make this ceremony the first and the last for us
5. You have promised the multiplicity of blessing and smelling of sweet scent of (paradise) for whoever is thankful, increase our knowledge O! our Lord
6. (I seek for) an abundance of blessing on the one that came to warn us with 'al-Qur'ān, the highest of the books sent by the Bountiful
7. Muhammad, the best of mankind all together, the one purified from satanic dirts
8. May the peace of my Lord be on his household and companions, and the learned ones who practised the best of religions while alive
9. Provide illumination in the tombs of the scholars who simplified the religion brought by the best of mankind, of 'Adnān tribe
10. O! The Beneficent bless 'Abdul-'Azīz, and lodge him in Eden, one of the gardens
11. A brave man like lion, he spent his life serving God, he replaced the pursuit of worldly things with (seeking for) closeness to Allah
12. The lost one received guidance from him, he waged war against idolatry, never was he a coward

13. For this I seek (for him) forgiveness and sweet scent of paradise, let his good deeds be weighty on scale on the day of resurrection
14. I seek for Allah's protection and his assistance for Shaykh 'Ahmad, our teacher
15. An excellent scholar, our persistent guide to the worship (of God) with piety and faith
16. Allah has granted him moral uprightness and virtuous deeds, erudition and truthfulness in utterances
17. Whoever denies his erudition is definitely not following the path of the best of mankind
18. Your incessant downpour is ever-satisfying to the thirsty ones, just as your sharpened sword is to the ones thirsty (of self defense)
19. O Lord provide all his needs, grant him sovereignty like Prophet Sulaiman
20. Grant your succour to both men and women in attendance O Lord, may Allah reward you all
21. If they seek to know who the composer of this poem is, he is your Sa'idAmolese
22. He is one of the products our centre O! Allah, protect him always from human craftiness
23. O Allah, the pure One beyond human description let my aims tally with your wish
24. This poem is made up of DK^{**}, *Mustaf 'ilunfā 'ilun mustaf' ilunfa' lun*

The Content of *Nūniyyah*

Nūniyyah is preceded by a prose prologue embracing religious doxology and seeking of blessing and peace on Prophet Muhammad, his household and companions. Prayer for forgiveness and blessing of Allah for the deceased teacher of the composer as well as his *Khalīfah*(successor) also formed part of the prologue. It also features introduction to the composer and reference to the occasion for which the poem was composed, as well as the date of its composition. Religious doxology features in lines 1-3 of the poem. The medium was used to thank Allah for His blessings and for making it possible for the occasion to hold. While examining the components of prologues

in the Arabic literary productions in Nigeria, of which Yorubaland occupies an integral portion, Abdul-Azeez (2016) observes that:

Nigerian traditional Arabic scholars saw themselves, first and foremost, as scholars of Islam, which gives Arabic language the place of honour it occupies in their minds. So, in whatever they write, religion influences them. To the Nigerian Arabic writers, preamble serves as a portion of the writing where religious doxology, expressions of humility or self-abnegation and the writer's affiliation (to his tribe, teacher, school of thought or association) are mentioned (p.406).

Line 4 contains supplication to the Almighty Allah to grant the celebrants the opportunity of witnessing many more joyous occasions in life. Line 5 is derived from the Qur'ān (Q4.147) where Allah promises an increase for whoever is grateful to Him. It stresses the significance of expressing gratitude to Allah for His bounties

Eulogy and prayer on the Prophet are contained in lines 6-8. Eulogy as a genre embraces the celebration of the sterling qualities – such as scholarly erudition, generosity, religiosity, impeccability of character, humility and various activities on religious propagation as well as panegyric on Prophet Muhammad.

Supplication for illumination of the grave and accommodation in paradise for Shaykh 'Abdul-'Azīz Faya features in lines 9 -13. The sterling qualities of Shaykh Faya are also expressed in that portion (lines 9 -13). Lines 14-19 centre on Shaykh 'Ahmad 'Abdul-'Azīz Faya, the *Khalīfah*. Allah's protection and assistance are sought for him in line 14. Lines 15-18 pay glowing tributes to him, stating his sterling qualities such as erudition, moral uprightness, virtuous deeds, truthfulness, generosity and bravery. Line 19 is supplicatory as it seeks for Allah's provision of all the needs of the *Khalīfah*. Line 20 is an extension of line 19 as it includes people in attendance in the prayer offered for 'Ahmad in line 19.

In line with the common features of the epilogues in the traditional system of Arabic writings in Nigeria, line 21 introduces the composer while the next line (line 22) refers to him as a graduate of Shaykh 'Abdul-'Azīz Faya Arabic centre. The composer uses the next line (line 23) to pray for himself while line 24 contains the number of lines and the poetic metre adopted, using *Abjadiyyah* (dating or numbering with letters). *Abjadiyyah* is one of the common features of the Arabic writings of Yoruba Arabic literati. Sanni (2017:42) discusses the propensity for the tradition of using *Abjadiyyah* in the Sudanic African literary productions and indeed by Yoruba authors in Arabic.

From the above, we may safely conclude that what constitutes an occasional poem is the combination of a number of themes including elegy, eulogy and supplication merged into a poem

Qasīdat haflat mawlid of 'Ishāq 'Abd 'al-'Azīz Faya

This poem was composed by one of the biological children of Shaykh 'Abdul-'Azīz Faya - 'Ishāq 'Abdul-'Azīz. He was trained in the Arabic centre established by his father 'Abdul-'Azīz. It was composed to mark the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet. It is selected for us to appreciate the ingredients and the foci of the various types of occasional poems from the stable of *Zumratul-mū'minīn* in Yorubaland. It comprises 37 lines.

قصيدة حفلة مولد النبي التي تتعد فناء أيينا المرحوم عبد العزيز فايا يوم السبت ١٩٩٢/٧/٣١ م أقول في بحر الطويل.

- ١ حمدت إلهي لإفتتاح قصيدتي # ملود من أرسل بنصح مفيدات
- ٢ يجوز لنا أن نشكرنّ لرنا # على نعم فاضت علينا غزيرات
- ٣ وأبقى لنا عيدا لمولد أحمد # وخصّ لنا أحمدنا في رسولات
- ٤ هو المرشد الهادي إلى من يشاءه # وأرشدنا عن كل نهج غوييات
- ٥ وأسأل ربّ العرش أن يجمعه # مع العلماء العاملين الرشيدات
- ٦ وأسأل إعطاء زيادة رشده # على أمة الإسلام طرا الشريفات
- ٧ ولا واصف أن يبلغن وصف ربنا # لفرد وحيد لم يزل من قديمات
- ٨ صليت صلاة سرمدية لأحمد # ثمال اليتامى بل شفيع البريات
- ٩ له القدوة الحسنا وما زال غازيا # جزيل العطايا خالصا في سريرات
- ١٠ فطوبى لمن كان جماعة مصطفى # بخلد وتأثير من الله المفريادات
- ١١ وأجعل رب الخلق أحمد رحمة # ولا زال بين الخلق طرا أمينات
- ١٢ وأبعثه الرب إمام رسوله # وأهدي جميع الكون صاروا كريمات
- ١٣ أيا رامي الإسباق دم بصلاته # تفرز بجزء الخير عند الرشيدات
- ١٤ أيا قاصدا للعفو قم لصلاته # تجد بصلاة الهاشمي الشروفات
- ١٥ صلاة سلاما دائمين لأهله # وأصحابه الأتباع نصح الحبيبات
- ١٦ ثنيت عنانا لدعاء لشيخنا # أبي عائشة عبد العزيز الفضيلات
- ١٧ وما زال فينا واعظا لكفارنا # لماحي الردى مروى الصدى لوجيهاات
- ١٨ ويزجر كل المشركين بنصحه # له الزهد والإيمان بين البريات
- ١٩ عمامته التحنيك عمّ بلادنا # وزمرته الأبرار كانوا منيلات
- ٢٠ ومن قال لم يعرف حقيقة جهده # لكان عميق العمق عاش ذليلات
- ٢١ وأسأل ربّ العرش أن يجمعه # مع العلماء العالمين السعيدات
- ٢٢ وألحقه ربي مع جماعة مرسل # وغفرا ورحمه ثمّ عفوا جزيلات
- ٢٣ فيا ربنا لا تنس أولاد شيخنا # وأزواجه الحسناء كن قنيعات
- ٢٤ وإنا لله وإليه نرجع # وندري بأن الموت كأس عميمات
- ٢٥ وأسأل طول العمر ثمّ بقاءه # لأحمدنا عبد العزيز الخليلات
- ٢٦ وما زال فينا واعظا ومرّبا # وللغرباء والحضار الجميعات
- ٢٧ له العلم فاق العالمين بعلمه # وأهدى له الربّ جميع الفنونات
- ٢٨ يدرب أولاد البلاد وغيرهم # بعلم الشقافات وعلم الدنييات
- ٢٩ لكان ظريفا لم يكن متعجبا # لدى الكبراء والصغار المدينيات

أيا ربنا عوناً ورزقاً لشيخنا	#	خليفةتنا أحمد قه من مصيبات	٣٠
وانقده ري من غموم وكربة	#	وحارزه من كيد العدو المكيدات	٣١
ولم انس آبائي الحضار حبيبتكم	#	بأفضل من تسليم خير المذحيات	٣٢
يجزي لكم ري جزاء نبيته	#	سليمان بالإبن الكريم النجيبات	٣٣
وإن قيل عنها لإتبال فقل لهم	#	لمولفها إسحاق ذو القصيدات	٣٤
متى ما وجدت فيه عيباً فأصلحه	#	لكل إمريء عيب ولو بقليلات	٣٥
أسائل علماً وعناية ربنا	#	وذئلتها طيراً بلفظ الحميدات	٣٦
فعولن مفاعيلن فعولن مفاعيل	#	وأنظمتها بحراً طويلاً فدونكم	٣٧

Translation of the Poem

This poem (was composed) to mark the birthday of the Prophet held at the premises of our late father, ‘Abdul-‘Azīz Faya on Saturday 3/8/1992. I employed *Tawīl* metre in its composition:

1. I commence my composition with the praise of Allah, to mark the birthday of the one sent with beneficial admonition
2. It is pertinent for us to thank our Lord, for granting us an abundance of his succour.
3. He made the celebration of the Prophet’s birth like a festival unto us, He made our ‘Ahmad special among the messengers.
4. He was raised as a guide unto whom (He) pleases, He guides us from the path of destruction
5. I implore the Lord of the seat to place him among the learned ones, the guide whose deeds are good
6. I implore Allah to increase His guidance on the generality of Muslims
7. No one can provide an appropriate description of our Lord, the only One, remaining One from eternity
8. I seek for eternal blessing for Ahmad, the guardian of orphans and mediator of the sinful ones
9. He was a role model and constant conqueror, highly generous, free from shortcomings

10. Blessing is for whoever follows Mustafa, for him is
perpetuity (in paradise) and affection from Allah, the Only
one
11. O! Lord of mankind, bless 'Ahmad who remained
trustworthy among the generality of the people
12. Allah raised him up as the leader of the apostles, he guided
the generality of beings and they became
honourable
13. O! the one seeking for progress seek for blessings for him
regularly, you will achieve better reward from the Guide
14. O! The one seeking for forgiveness stand up for his
blessing, you will be dignified by seeking blessing for the
Hashmite
15. Blessing and peace on his household and followers, those
who follow the clear path
16. I praised him (Muhammad) to seek for succour for our
teacher, 'Abdul-'Azīz, the honourable father of
'Āishah
17. He was a persistent caller, inviting the infidels to
(Islam) during his lifetime, he erased the evil acts and
provided water for the thirsty ones
18. He rebuked the idolaters with admonition, he
distinguished himself among the people with
asceticism and faith
19. He made the practice of turbaning popular, his good fellows
were achievers
20. Whoever denies the reality of his endeavours such a person
is foolish, living wretchedly
21. I pray that the Lord of the seat place him among the
successful scholars, whose deeds are commendable
22. O! my Lord raise him up in the category of the
messengers, forgive him, bless him, grant him your
pardon

23. O! our Lord remember his children and good wives who exercised restraint
24. We are from Allah and unto to Him is our return. We are sure that everyone shall taste death
25. I seek for longevity and even eternity for Ahmad
'Abdul-'Azīz , the successor
26. He remained among us a preacher and teacher – to known and unknown faces in general
27. He possesses erudition that is unequalled, Allah granted him the knowledge of various disciplines
28. He teaches indigenes and non-indigenes both linguistic and theological sciences
29. He is humble and he is loved by old and young people in the town
30. O! our Lord make your assistance and sustenance available unto our Shaykh, our *Khalīfa* –'Ahmad protect him from calamity
31. Save him from distress and affliction, protect him from craftiness of treacherous enemy
32. I do not forget my fathers present at this occasion, I offer you the best of greetings
33. My Lord will reward you like his Prophet Sulaiman, by giving you kind and intelligent children
34. If they seek to know the composer, do not worry just tell them he is 'Ishāq
35. Whichever fault you find therein, please correct, for no human being is free from committing error
36. I seek for more knowledge and assistance from our Lord, I rounded it up with thanks to (Allah).
37. It is composed on *Tawīl* metre, take it *Fa'ūlun mafā'īlun fa'ulūn mafa'īl*

Content of *Qasīdat haflat mawlid*

The *Qasīdah* was composed to mark the birthday of Prophet Muhammad. A brief introduction to the poem shows that it was composed on the 3rd August 1992 and it was presented at the premises of late ‘Abdul-‘Azīz Faya. Just like the previous *Qasīdah*, it was also meant to celebrate an Islamic event

Lines 1- 3 contain religious doxology and a pointer to the purpose of the composition – being the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet. Lines 4 – 7 go further to describe Allah as the Guide and One whose appropriate description cannot be achieved by any mortal. The portion is theological.

Eulogy of the Prophet features in lines 8 – 15. This is accompanied with supplication for peace and blessing on the Prophet as well as encouragement to the people to seek for blessing on him so as to get Allah’s nearness and forgiveness. Folorunsho (2020:50) draws our attention to the fact that these verses in the anthology of the Arabic poetry of Nigerian ‘*Ulamā*’ are not meant to earn the poets a living or help them to acquire wealth, but to celebrate the sterling qualities of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Hiskett (1975:43) informs us that the origin of the cultivation of encomiastic verses can be traced to the days of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself. Writing in the same vein, Yahya (1997:12) states that though the origin of panegyric on Prophet Muhammad dates back to the days of the Prophet himself, it did not develop into an independent genre of Arabic literature with its own motifs and class of exponents, until about seven centuries later

Supplication for succour for Shaykh ‘Abdul-‘Azīz Faya comes up on lines 16 – 24. The portion also contains panegyric on this scholar, focusing on his unforgettable role in religious propagation as well as prayer for his household. Lines 25 – 31 are devoted to the *Khalīfah*, Shaykh ‘Ahmad ‘Abdul-‘Azīz. The portion centres on the enumeration of his sterling qualities as well as prayer for him. Prayer is also extended to the people in attendance (lines 32, 33)

Lines 34 – 37 contain the closing of the poem. Name of the composer accompanied by an expression of humility as well as poetic metre employed are all mentioned in this portion. Like the preceding occasional poem; this one is also a combination of many themes including elegy, eulogy and supplication.

Conclusion

The study has revealed the participation of the Arabic literati of Yoruba extraction in the cultivation of the various genres Arabic poetry. Specifically, it has discussed the composition of occasional poems as an area where they have made significant contribution. Due attention was paid to *Zumratul-mū’minīn*, a group of scholars whose educational curricula concentrated on religious at the expense of linguistic sciences, which could have aided the accuracy of their contributions. Ironically, however, we obtained their literary productions on various genres out of which their occasional poems received our attention in this paper. An occasional poem is a crucible of various genres fused together in a singular poem, recited at a particular occasion. Arabic scholars of *Zumratul-mū’minīn* group in Yorubaland have made significant contribution to this genre as observable in the specimen studied in this paper

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**D=4 and K=20 (meaning : The poem is of 24 lines) in *Abjadiyyah* system .for details on the system ,please consult H.I. Gwarzo,(1976) The Theory of Chronogram as expounded by the 18th Century Katsina Astronomer – Muhammad b. Muhammad, *Research Bulletin*, Vol. III, No.2, 1976