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***Slufay*: Notes on an Iraqw Ritual Prayer**

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The *Slufay* is a prayer recited in the course of *Getlangw*, the Iraqw harvest rite. Being a part of the annual sacred religious observances, it is not recited at other times. It is one of this people's most refined literary compositions among their genres of oral tradition.

The number and order of the lines differs according to the reciter, and mistakes or changes may occur occasionally even in the course of the recitation; but such inconsistencies are not considered particularly objectionable by the listeners. Rather, it is more important to give literary expression to the prayer, reciting it rhythmically so that participants in the rite can easily join in with a response after each line.

The *Slufay* version taken up in this article, too, is only one example of a possible rendition, as it consists of the lines memorized and recited by Mzee Waida Matay, an Iraqw elder. His version is composed of 142 lines, each of which is a skillful expression of Iraqw thought and sentiment. While the form of *Slufay* is simple, fundamental musical principles are respected: the rhythm is based on quadruple time, with each measure consisting of three beats and a rest, and the melody, too, exhibits four basic patterns. This type of oral recitation can be thought of as belonging to the stage preceding the development of professional oral poets, such as the West African griot.

INTRODUCTION

In the past I have made several ethnographical reports on the Iraqw tribe living in northern Tanzania. For the present article, I have chosen the topic of the oral part of their harvest rite—namely, the orally transmitted prayer called *Slufay*.

Through participation in the various Iraqw rites, it can be observed that they have developed "orally performed rituals" that parallel the so-called "physically performed rituals", the institutionalized actions and behaviour, offerings, sacrifices, dancing, etc. Prayers with unique rhythms, and ritual songs, accompanied by weeping, exclamations, whistling, etc., constitute important Iraqw verbal rituals. Among these, *Slufay*, the prayer chant offered to Heavenly Goddess *Loa* at the time of the harvest rite, is an oral tradition deeply rooted in the Iraqw culture. Since it exhibits literary qualities in both form and content, it is more than an example of a religious ritual, and can be considered to have a place as a genre of oral literature. This prayer chant, which is an expression of the Iraqw's most refined thought and feeling, can be regarded as one of the most valuable literary products passed down

from the ancestors. The prayer derives originally from religion, but in the case of *Slufay*, while it does include petitions, wishes, blessings and curses, etc., these are sublimated into literature by means of a unique rhetoric using similes, metaphors, contrast, repetition, etc. In other words, while *Slufay* developed naturally as a prayer to the Goddess, it accumulated more verses and historical implications at each harvest rite, and took on a more literary form as it became widespread among the Iraqw. This is the case all the more because each line has its own origin and significance, and a difficulty of interpretation resembling riddle-solving is characteristic of this oral tradition. In that sense, *Slufay* is not only a precious material for the clarification of the Iraqw thought system and manner of expression, but also a useful key to a knowledge of the past. It is for this reason that I have chosen to deal particularly with the problem of the oral part of the harvest rite.

1. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The investigation was carried out as part of my research of Iraqw ethno-history, while I was staying in the village of Giting in the Hanang district as a participant in the Scientific Mission to the Great African Savannah sent out by the Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, from Oct. 1971 to March, 1972. This sojourn included the November transition period between the rainy season and the dry season, the most convenient time for recording *Slufay*. According to the Iraqw production calendar, the new hoeing season begins in October or early November, at which time each household carries out the *Getlangw*, or blessing rite for the year's harvest, comprising prayers as well as a preliminary celebration and thanksgiving. Since *Slufay* is chanted only at this harvest rite, it provides the sole opportunity for recording the words of the prayer.

In October 1965, I made a tape recording of *Slufay* at the village of Giting, but at that time, due to my insufficient command of the Iraqw language, I transcribed only thirty-six lines which came through clearly in the recording, and reported on them as one part of the harvest rite. Then in 1966, C. B. Johnson, in his article "Some Aspects of Iraqw Religion", took up the subject of this oral ritual and introduced nineteen lines of it. Considering the value of *Slufay* as a source of data, however, it is necessary to write down all the lines and examine the symbolic meaning of each one in detail. Fortunately, on the occasion of my second investigation of the harvest rite, I was able to obtain a precise recording of *Slufay* with the cooperation of Mzee Waida Matay, one of the best reciters in Giting. Subsequently, in response to my request, I received the full cooperation of Mzee Izudori Qwamara with regard to the transcription and investigation of the meaning of the words. Concerning historical personal names, place names not found on the map, and old words not in current use, I respected the judgment of persons such as the tribal elders, and tried to clarify these items as far as possible. It is thanks to the cooperation of these people that I have been able this time to present *Slufay* as a material of oral tradition, and I owe them my deepest gratitude.

2. THE IRAQW LANGUAGE

Based on a somewhat ambiguous impression, the Iraqw language was until 1950 classified as a Hamitic language: recently, however, it is most commonly considered to belong to the Southern-Cushitic group of Afro-Asiatic languages, according to J. H. Greenberg's classification. There are other Southern-Cushitic languages spoken in Tanzania, such as Gorowa (Ufiome), Alawa (Wasi), and Burungi, but the Iraqw language group is the largest of these.

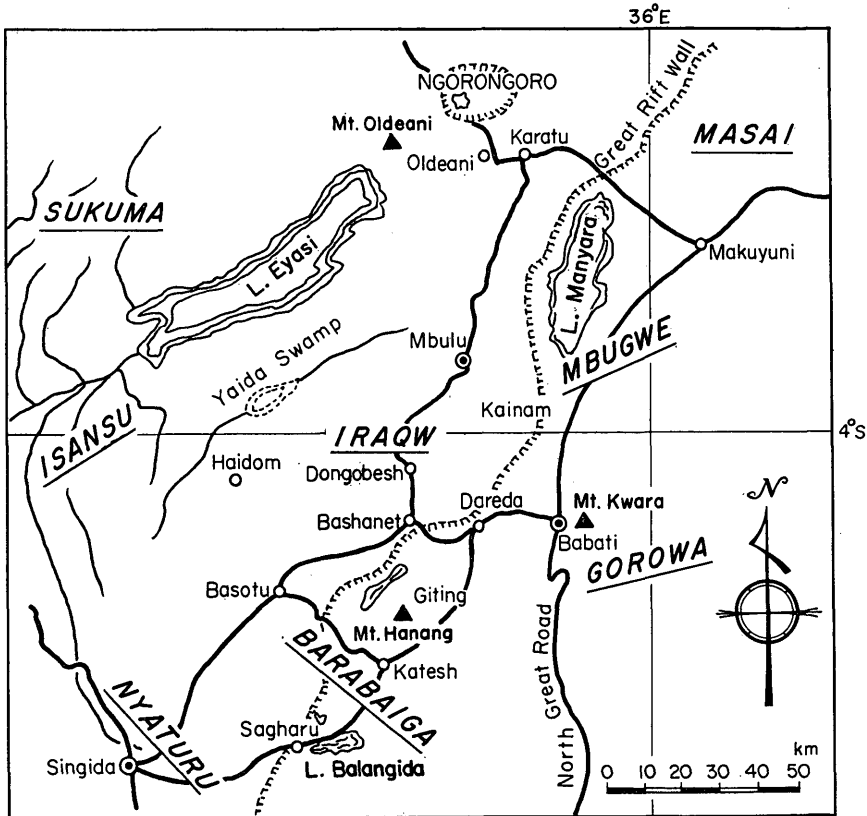


Figure 1. Map of the Mbulu Rift Highland and its surrounding area.

This language is spoken at present by more than 200,000 people, distributed widely throughout a strip of territory extending from the plateau at the top of the escarpment of Lake Manyara in the north to the entrance of the so-called Mangati Plain at the foot of Mt. Hanang in the south. Although regional differences in the language are basically unrecognized, there are cases of comparatively archaic words still in use in the mother land of Kainam, and some regional differences in certain types of vocabulary could be taken into consideration. With regard to the effects of linguistic contacts, the influence of the Datoga language has historically been

considerable, and several Iraqw expressions concerning pastoralism and rituals are direct loan words from Datoga. In addition, after the end of the German colonization, the Swahili language became popular inland as well, and Swahili words for products and occupations newly introduced into this region were adopted gradually as additions to the Iraqw language. Some of these Swahili words had their beginnings or endings modified as they took on the form of Iraqw words. Other than this, there has undeniably been some influence from Bantu languages in the vicinity, but I was unable to find any loan words or other such concrete evidence of this influence in the course of my investigation of the basic vocabulary.

3. A SHORT HISTORY OF RESEARCH IN THE IRAQW LANGUAGE

The first systematic research in the Iraqw language was carried out by W. H. Whiteley, who did several field studies from December, 1949 to September, 1952. These studies provided a clear description of aspects of the language, such as the characteristics of its phonetic and grammatical structures. Until that time, there were few materials that were useful as linguistic data, and those which existed were limited to items such as Iraqw Bible translations carried out by Christian missions as part of the work of evangelization. In 1960, for example, the Catholic Church at Tabora issued a publication called *ÂYAMAR SLAFINĠ AR MUNGU XOROROS*, which constitutes a valuable item of grammatical data, but it offers no explanation of the orthography, which might have provided the groundwork for translation work, thus serving as an illustration of the methods of linguistic research carried out by the mission. There were other cases such as that of Mrs. Leatherman of the Mennonite Mission, who wrote a report called "The Structure of the Mbulu Language", which however was never published and was thus not made public as a material for linguistic research.

Consequently, it was after W.H. Whiteley had established a phonetic alphabet for the Iraqw language that in the 1960's Miss Froydis Nardbustad of the Mbulu Lutheran Church published her pamphlets on Iraqw folktales, riddles and so forth, called *Iraqw Folklore Series*, and others began to furnish materials on the genres of oral literature. In his publication of 1954, *Studies in Iraqw: an Introduction*, issued from Kampala, Whiteley showed clearly that the Iraqw language contained at least seven vowels and twenty-nine consonants. As a result of this report, the arbitrary transcriptions of the Iraqw language by missionaries, etc., came to be carried out with reference to a linguistic standard. In my own case as well, my linguistic investigation began out of an anthropological concern, and I relied completely on methods based on Whiteley's research. Miss. Norbustad's method of transcription, however, which partly modifies Whiteley's phonetic alphabet, has come to be widely used and is more practical than the other when using a typewriter without diacritical marks. According to her method, I was able to transcribe the entire text of *Slufay* using the Iraqw phonetic alphabet. The Iraqw language has 29 consonants: *p, b, t, d, k, g, q, ʾ, ph, th, kh, b, d, f, s, sl, sh, x, h, hh, ts, tl, m, n, ng, r, l, w, y*, and 7 vowels: *i, e, a,*

ö, ä, o, u, ', ph, th, kh, b, d, sl, sh, th, tl, ng, y, ö, ä correspond to the I. P. A. ʔ, p, t, k, b, d, t, ʃ, h, tʃ, ɲ, j, v, ə.

4. THE HARVEST RITE

A simple examination of the sequence of the harvest rite (*Getlangw*) will serve to clarify the place of the oral recitation within the context of this rite. The schedule of the rite is decided appropriately by each household according to the fermentation of beer. The preparation of beer is carried out for the purpose of offering thanksgiving to the Heavenly Goddess *Loa* for the harvest, and for inducing her to grant the request for a plentiful harvest in the next season; but the beer serves also as an offering to console the spirits of the ancestors, neglected at ordinary times, who might otherwise become angry and inflict damage on the crops. In other words, a harvest ritual without beer would be inconceivable to the Iraqw, and it is their fixed custom to make an offering to *Loa* of the first beer, brewed from the newly-harvested sorghum. To make beer without carrying out this ritual is considered an act in defiance of *Loa*; and it is said that such behaviour formerly met with severe criticism from the elders, as well as disciplinary action in some cases.

All preparation for the rite is carried out by the head of the presiding household, but the rights to the beer are given rather to the neighbourhood elders who are invited to participate. For this reason, the beer is commonly referred to as the 'Elders' Beer'. Since the rite is performed openly, young people may participate freely; but the seats for beer-drinking are segregated, with the young people customarily seated on the opposite side from the elders. One large decorated earthenware vessel is placed in the centre, filled with the sacred beer. The young man in charge of distributing the beer pours it into two calabashes, which he places one each on the elders' and the young people's sides. The elder who is to recite the prayer stands in front of this ritual beer and chants *Slufay*. While the role of reciting the oral ritual is not limited to a specific elder, it is preferable to have someone who has memorized the lines correctly and can express them in a sonorous voice. Before the chanting of *Slufay*, the person in charge of starting off the rite takes a sheaf of grass picked from the right side of the house by the head of the household, dips it first twice in the beer on the elders' side, and sprinkles it in the room. He then repeats the same procedure with the young people's beer, and the recitation of *Slufay* begins.

5. TEXT AND TRANSLATION WITH NOTES

The recitation of Mzee Waida Matay consists of 142 lines. Each line is here followed by its translation,¹⁾ and the lines have been grouped into stanzas according to content, with each stanza accompanied by the necessary anthropological explanation. In the original all lines are rhythmical, but their poetic character is lost in the literal translation. It should be possible, however, to perceive the literary style by

1) I have adopted free translation rather than word-for-word translation.

examining the original text. Below, we shall proceed to examine the verses according to the order followed in the recitation.

Text ²⁾	Translation
1. <i>Matleer matlo bar ti.</i>	1. Tomorrow morning will be like this morning.
2. <i>Ar baloqa bar ti.</i>	2. The morning of the day after tomorrow will be like this morning.
3. <i>Loa-r hho tis tleer.</i>	3. Wake up refreshed.
4. <i>Hhaa pindu kir sliik.</i>	4. Let the crossbars be smeared.
5. <i>Aten ta sluufan.</i>	5. Let us grow fat.
6. <i>Ba'ar naamsu basoro</i> ^{*3)} .	6. Like millet being boiled.
7. <i>Doo-re wabhari.</i>	7. Let our household grow big.

The word *pindu* in line four refers to the crossbars that open and close the entrance to the Iraqw house (*tembe* in Swahili). The entranceway is closed by laying the crossbars one on top of the other; the Iraqw have the custom of smearing the top crossbar with honey at honey-carrying time as a petition for good fortune. The word *Basoro* in line six refers to bulrush millet (*Pennisetum* so.), which is grown in large amounts in the mother land of Kainam, but is not much in evidence in Giting. The first seven verses are a petition for divine favour in granting prosperity to the household.

8. <i>Iykwī difiti.</i>	8. Press to the left.
9. <i>Iykwa do Sandew.</i>	9. To the left is the country of <i>Sandew</i> .
10. <i>Gwaamta do-in ka alan</i> ^{**} .	10. We will take over the <i>Gwaami</i> trees on their land.

The word *Iykwī* in the eighth line means 'left', and refers to the land of the north, i.e. the Masai tribe. *Sandew* in line nine is the Masai medicine man, well known among the Iraqw, and *Gwaamita* in line ten indicates a place where *Gwaami* trees grow, which serves as an assembly ground for the Masai. Psychologically the Masai have been the principal enemies of the Iraqw, who were under constant exposure to the threat of cattle raids. To repel this oppression and regain their power was the long-cherished desire of the Iraqw, and the way to peace and prosperity. "Left" refers to the north, and symbolizes the direction of the enemy.

11. <i>Ama-r do-in tlawu gur slax.</i>	11. Let their mothers' leather skirts fall to the ground.
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2) Note that when the final vowel of the preceding word and the initial vowel of the following word are the same, these two words are pronounced as one word, for example: *nango os* (line 57)—*nangoos*. Hyphens mark the morphological divisions.

3) * shows the repetition of two times, ** of three times.

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| 12. <i>Toren ngu naai-r umin.</i> | 12. Let our mothers pick them up and use them to bind their children to their backs. |
| 13. <i>Ako do-in, sixmo fur slax</i> | 13. Let their elders' bracelets fall, |
| 14. <i>bara nanu.</i> | 14. Into the sauce. |
| 15. <i>Nanu dixte,</i> | 15. The rotten sauce, |
| 16. <i>ako do-ren gur kwaslemuut.</i> | 16. Let our elders hold a conference about that. |

Tlawu in line eleven is a leather loinskirt, which is the most important traditional article of clothing for pastoral women. The implication here is that they should plunder and take over the entire Masai culture. *Sixmo* in line 13 refers to brass bracelets, personal ornaments worn by Masai medicine men and wealthy persons. The falling of the bracelet into the sauce signifies that the Iraqw and the Masai would eat together, a way of stating that the Masai should be assimilated into the Iraqw tribe and submit to all their customs, which is the Iraqw assertion towards other tribes.

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| 17. <i>Gwaamta do-in ir kat.</i> | 17. Let their <i>Gwaami</i> tree wither. |
| 18. <i>Yaqambu do-ren ir wahhar.</i> | 18. Let our bulls grow fat. |
| 19. <i>Ko-in ir kangaut.</i> | 19. Let their possessions dwindle away. |
| 20. <i>Aten ta wahharane.</i> | 20. Let us grow fat. |
| 21. <i>Aten ta wahharan, bar tsiri-r gwanda*.</i> | 21. Let us grow fat, like a sheep's tail. |
| 22. <i>Tsiri-r gwandu Kayto*.</i> | 22. <i>Kayto's</i> sheep's tail. |
| 23. <i>Mun di-ren iwwahhat.</i> | 23. Our neighbours, grow fat. |

The idea of the *Gwaami* trees dying, in line 17, signifies that the representation of the Masai assembly would no longer exist, and that their land would become the property of the Iraqw. These words make a kind of curse against the Masai, with the Iraqw requesting that their own prosperity might increase as the strength of the Masai declined.

The idea of prosperity is often expressed with words meaning 'grow fat', and is symbolized by a sheep's tail. *Kayto*, in line 22, is the name of a person well-known as a prosperous sheep herdsman.

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| 24. <i>Hikwa ham na tlaye,</i> | 24. Now as the cattle set out to pasture, |
| 25. <i>getu hho ngur tlaye.</i> | 25. Let no danger lie in their path. |
| 26. <i>Kar lo ngur daafiya,</i> | 26. Let their homecoming too be without mishap, |
| 27. <i>gitsimi-r qarqar.</i> | 27. And as for the bitter grass, |
| 28. <i>Ngi sla'ati geexaye.</i> | 28. Let them leave it discarded in the underbrush. |

The expression 'bitter grass' in line 27 actually refers to a kind of grass called

tata'ani in the Iraqw language. When a cow eats this grass, gas is generated in its stomach, causing death. The head of the household prays that the cattle which were let out to pasture might return safely in the evening, with no broken bones, diseases, thefts, etc.

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| 29. <i>Yaqambu sakaroo, ne koren ta alxwaari,</i> | 29. The male guinea fowl and we human beings dig up the ground together, |
| 30. <i>ne o hikwa ta al xwaari.</i> | 30. And let the ox and the guinea fowl also dig together. |
| 31. <i>Qwaru nir tlatla'a dafi**.</i> | 31. Whatever was lost will be found in the daytime. |
| 32. <i>Deeme ngir hhaysheeri slaxir.</i> | 32. When the cattle come back from pasture. let them not put their tails on the herdsman's shoulder. |
| 33. <i>Alay gir alboluus**.</i> | 33. Cattle-bird, perch on the cattle. |
| 34. <i>Ko'am kur wa layin.</i> | 34. Let the front wall be used for branding. |

The guinea fowl and the ox are considered the representatives of birds and hoofed animals respectively; the idea that they and mankind go around kicking the earth and amusing themselves together has the meaning that all living creatures should not fight, but live together on the earth in peace. In line 31 we find a kind of precept: namely, that when something has been lost one should inquire among the people in the vicinity, and the one who has found it will surely come to return it. For the Iraqw, a person who finds something and appropriates it as his own cannot escape being considered an evil witch. For a cow to lay its tail on the herdsman's shoulder is considered an evil omen, while the cattle-bird is welcomed as a good omen that brings forth various information about the fortunes of the cattle. The word *ko'am* refers to the front wall of the *asmo*-type house; when the mark of the clan is branded onto the cattle, the hind legs of the animals are tied to the wood of this wall. Thus, to use the *ko'am* is an expression of prayer for a plentiful increase of cattle.

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| 35. <i>Dama-y ne hikwa*,</i> | 35. Calves and cows, |
| 36. <i>dama-y ne hikwa, kabemo kir nanaq.</i> | 36. Let calves and cows fight over the milk. |
| 37. <i>Amena ne dama-y, kabemo kir nanaq kabemo kir nanaq.</i> | 37. Let women and calves fight over the milk. |

'Fight over the milk' refers to the situation where a cow gives birth, the calf demands a large amount of milk, and people too join in the competition by milking the cow.

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| 38. <i>Tsirisiima ngur wa taarina,</i> | 38. When cattle paths are made around our house, |
| 39. <i>masomba gur wa duuxun.</i> | 39. Let the young men pay the bride price and get married. |

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| 40. <i>Masomba guhhu na'a gur geger,</i> | 40. Young men, denounce all wrong- |
| <i>gur naa gur geger*,</i> | doing, |
| 41. <i>dawa dirangw giri iwit.</i> | 41. And sit on the lion's breast. |
| 42. <i>Sage-r masomba indilay.</i> | 42. Let crowns be placed on the heads |
| | of the young men. |

When there are several cattle paths around a house, it is a sign that the household has acquired a large number of cattle, and the young men of the family are then encouraged to get married.

'Wrongdoings' refers to crimes such as murder, arson, and raid committed by the Masai and Datoga peoples, etc.; the young men are being exhorted to bravery in denouncing these misdeeds. In line 41, 'sit on the lions breast' is a symbolic expression for a victor, and the 'crown' is the supreme head ornament, indicative of a hero who has defeated a long-standing enemy. The presentation of the brass crown, however, can be considered a fairly new procedure among the Iraqw, adopted from the culture of the Datoga people. Actually, the Iraqw would order all crowns of this type from the Datoga blacksmiths.

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| 43. <i>Sage-r barise tlakaaro.</i> | 43. Elders, plait and shape your hair. |
| 44. <i>Biritsito aamena ir na'a.</i> | 44. Women, increase your offspring. |
| 45. <i>Ama ir tlakaaro-r wa umina**.</i> | 45. Grandmothers, take care of your |
| | grandchildren. |

Line 43 refers to the hairstyle of the elders: from this verse, we know that about one hundred years ago, the elders of the mother land of Kainam used to let their hair grow long, and stiffen it with mud. Lines 44 and 45 are petitions for increase of the tribe and longevity respectively.

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| 46. <i>He diri ga wak, kar hhar tos intsi.</i> | 46. As for the person despised in this |
| | land, let his stick be thrown out |
| | behind the house. |
| 47. <i>Kaharta fela gar tsit**.</i> | 47. Let him wear the skin of a por- |
| | cupine. |
| 48. <i>Ar intsangw garar waraqan.</i> | 48. Make the skin of a jackal into a |
| | patchwork for his clothing. |
| 49. <i>Farta maytsi gur mut,</i> | 49. Let him be pierced by the bones of |
| | a cat, |
| 50. <i>ar see'ay guri alud**.</i> | 50. And after that, let him be pierced |
| | by the bones of a dog. |

Both the porcupine and the jackal are thought to be incarnations of evil witches. The metaphors in lines 46-50 constitute a curse of suffering and death on the evildoer and his clan.

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| 51. <i>O hhoer slaa, hhoa ka eeman.</i> | 51. Live in love, share love. |
| 52. <i>Matlo ne baloga, kar lo i ate</i> | 52. Tomorrow and the day after |
| <i>laqwali.</i> | tomorrow, let us increase the |
| | posterity of good men in our land. |

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| 53. <i>Kar bar ameeni,</i> | 53. As for an evil person, if it is a woman, |
| 54. <i>maha gar gaas,</i> | 54. Let the arrow shoot and kill, |
| 55. <i>maha xwayliite.</i> | 55. The arrow of pregnancy. |
| 56. <i>Bar amamaa, unto gar gexeer.</i> | 56. If it is an old woman, she need not look after |
| 57. <i>Ar delo nango os.</i> | 57. Her own grandchildren. |
| 58. <i>Bar ako*,</i> | 58. If it is an elder, |
| 59. <i>hul ir awahn**.</i> | 59. Make him renounce the men's room. |
| 60. <i>Bar masomo,</i> | 60. If it is a young man, |
| 61. <i>xoosla qari ngir watl**.</i> | 61. Let his weapons be taken away by his age-mates. |
| 62. <i>Bar dasi-r ma'ai,</i> | 62. If it is an unmarried girl, |
| 63. <i>xoosla i thuwaat, xatsatawaale,</i> | 63. Let her clothing be found in the wilderness, |
| 64. <i>bunge ros ka niin, ne make hayo**.</i> | 64. With vultures feasting over meat there. |
| 65. <i>Mindi wa ateni kiih,</i> | 65. Do not come back among us, |
| 66. <i>Kar he dada tlakw.</i> | 66. You evil person. |

In the Iraqw rhetoric, the expression 'evil person' often suggests a witch, and lines 53–66 are a petition that any witch, regardless of age or sex, might be destroyed by death. In other words, the cutting off of a woman from the arrow of pregnancy, an old woman from the care of her grandchildren, an old man from the men's hut, a young man from his weapons, and a young girl from her clothing, is in each case symbolic of death.

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| 67. <i>He hhoer slaa hhoo ka eeman*.</i> | 67. You who live in love, let us share our love. |
| 68. <i>Tumbo Mand ku alan.</i> | 68. Let us inherit the beer-strainers of the Mbugwe people. |
| 69. <i>Barise ti tumbar dif*.</i> | 69. Let the elders have a contest with the tubes of the beer-strainers as weapons. |

The word *Manda* in line 68 refers to the Mbugwe people who live at the south end of Lake Manyara, with the cliffs of the rift valley as their boundary with the Iraqw. Comparing land to a beer-strainer, this part of the prayer encourages an advance into the Mbugwe territory.

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| 70. <i>Bohongw ko uhootatimaan,</i> | 70. Let us live in caves, |
| 71. <i>Bohongw Iraqw-ar daaw**.</i> | 71. In the eastern Iraqw valley. |
| 72. <i>Kar lo ku mu-k wa laqwali.</i> | 72. There let us increase our offspring. |
| 73. <i>Aten ngu wa tiitan.</i> | 73. We came from there. |
| 74. <i>Homo i ki aalane.</i> | 74. Let us live together with other tribes. |

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| 75. <i>Ngi yaami kalaane.</i> | 75. The power is with us. |
| 76. <i>Awa kahiren nga yaane.</i> | 76. Let them respect our customs. |
| 77. <i>Nanu dixte ngu eeman.</i> | 77. Share out the rotten sauce. |
| 78. <i>Digemi ki nanaquun.</i> | 78. Dispute the boundary line. |
| 79. <i>Awa kahiren nga siiye,</i> | 79. As for the men who reject our customs, |
| 80. <i>luwla daqay ngi fitsay tlehhir.</i> | 80. Let us make gifts of their spears to our young men. |

Iraqw daaw in line 71 is the name for Eastern Iraqw, but now this expression is broadly used to designate the mother land. *Bohongw* refers in this particular case to the underground caves of the mother land, where the Iraqw would live in hiding to prepare for the attacks of the Masai people. As seen in line 73, it was from here that they gradually expanded their tribal domain, and established an Iraqw land in the Mbulu plateau. The section starting with line 74 is a declaration of tribal expansion by the Iraqw to nearby tribes, in which the tribal consciousness is clearly expressed.

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| 81. <i>Wa'ang fir gewa tsatid,</i> | 81. Let the evil person fall to the bottom of the valley, |
| 82. <i>belu do Angwe'ay*.</i> | 82. From <i>Angwe'ay's</i> cliff. |
| 83. <i>Awa wa'ang ngwa waakutir.</i> | 83. When he reaches the valley, |
| 84. <i>Tsaro da'aten gir guuh**.</i> | 84. Valley, swallow up the red grass. |
| 85. <i>He diri ga wak,</i> | 85. Oh, man who hates us, |
| 86. <i>kar lo do-os ir xoslosloot,</i> | 86. May a disaster befall his household, |
| 87. <i>ador Antsi-r Endanog**.</i> | 87. Like the withering away of those trees of <i>Endanog</i> . |

Angwe'ay in line 82 is the name of a person living near a valley so deep that one cannot climb back out of it; The name has thus come to be used as a curse word. 'Red grass' in line 84 is an ominous word suggesting a grave; the expression of falling and being swallowed up in the valley is a most severe Iraqw curse.

Endanog in line 87 is the name of a place in the mother land. The withering of the fig trees there connotes the destruction of all one's belongings.

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| 88. <i>Aten ta wahharance.</i> | 88. Let us grow fat. |
| 89. <i>Ta iwkwí findisan*.</i> | 89. Let us press to the north. |
| 90. <i>Basa ku i findisan**.</i> | 90. And also press to the south. |
| 91. <i>Kar lo ta slufan**.</i> | 91. And let us increase our power. |
| 92. <i>Tloma-i ki yaami adahane.</i> | 92. Let us trod the mountains under our feet. |

It was stated before that the north was the direction of the Masai territory. The land to the south was held by the Barabaiga, the most warlike sub-tribe of the Datoga, but the north-south line of the Rift Highland is indicated as the direction in which the Iraqw should advance. In other words, this entire stanza is a declaration of territorial expansion, and to trod the mountains underfoot means to conquer.

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| 93. <i>Dasu homa duuxan.</i> | 93. Let us take the young women of other tribes as brides. |
| 94. <i>Dasi-r amo wa hiit, tsaatay gur aya-re gas.</i> | 94. Young women, come from afar, and give birth in our land. |
| 95. <i>Ameni-r amo wa hiit, tsaatay gur aya-re gas.</i> | 95. Women, come from afar, and increase the offspring in our land. |
| 96. <i>Slee-r amo wa hiimit, tsaatay gur aya-re gas.</i> | 96. Cows, come from afar, and increase the offspring in our land. |
| 97. <i>Beei-r amo wa hiimit, tsaatay gur aya-re gas.</i> | 97. Sheep, come from afar, and increase the offspring in our land. |

As expressed in line 93, the Iraqw have been involved with other tribes and have absorbed them into their tribal organization chiefly through marriage. All living creatures which settled in Iraqw territory, even past enemies, are equally blessed as childbearers.

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| 98. <i>Tsinqu tis qaasiye.</i> | 98. May we be blessed with abundant streams. |
| 99. <i>Tloma-i hayohan.</i> | 99. Let us capture all the mountains. |
| 100. <i>Dulen ku hayohan.</i> | 100. Let us capture <i>Dulen</i> . |
| 101. <i>Aya Sandew ku hayohan.</i> | 101. Let us capture the land of the <i>Sandew</i> . |
| 102. <i>Aten bar Angka,</i> | 102. We, as Mount Angka, |
| 103. <i>aten bar Haru,</i> | 103. We, as Mount Haru, |
| 104. <i>aten bar Guwang,</i> | 104. We, as Mount Guwang, |
| 105. <i>aten bar Kawus,</i> | 105. We, as Mount Kawus, |
| 106. <i>aten bar Kwara,</i> | 106. We, as Mount Kwara, |
| 107. <i>aten bar Anang,</i> | 107. We, as Mount Anang, |
| 108. <i>tloma-i ki alane*.</i> | 108. Let us take over the mountains. |

Mountains are revered objects to the Iraqw, and the idea of expansion of territorial power is expressed with the words 'capture the mountains'. Angka, Haru and Kawus mountains are located in the mother land of Kainam and prevented invasions by foreign enemies, while Guwang, Kwara and Anang mountains are located in Mbulu, Babati and Giting respectively, areas which were prospective objects of territorial expansion.

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| 109. <i>Kar lo ta wahhara.</i> | 109. Let us grow fat. |
| 110. <i>Bolo ir hhahhayin.</i> | 110. Let our population increase. |
| 111. <i>Sage-r masomba indilay.</i> | 111. Let crowns be placed on the heads of our young men. |
| 112. <i>Masomba ir al-xawin,</i> | 112. Let our young people pair off, |
| 113. <i>kar lo ir duxuun.</i> | 113. Let them be joined together. |
| 114. <i>Dir mu-ko ar, masomba gar dog.</i> | 114. Let the number of people lost be recovered through the young people. |

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| 115. <i>Dir hikwa wo ar, yaqamba gar dogi.</i> | 115. Let the number of cattle lost be recovered through the cows. |
| 116. <i>Yaqambu tla'afi o matlaang kur bai.</i> | 116. May the multiplication of our cattle, and still more the births of our people, be greatly increased. |
| 117. <i>O tla'afi ir giririn.</i> | 117. The birth of human beings has first priority. |
| 118. <i>Tsaatay wos ir tlegun.</i> | 118. Let us honour the birth of human beings. |
| 119. <i>O matlaang ir alud,</i> | 119. The birth of animals will follow after that, |
| 120. <i>ad gwanda ne beei,</i> | 120. Like bulls and cows. |
| 121. <i>ditoo ka qwatli**.</i> | 121. Seek refuge in the sheep's room. |
| 122. <i>Dama ne Awu, matlaang qwatli.</i> | 122. Calves and bulls, seek refuge in your room. |
| 123. <i>Dasi ne garma, tla'afil ka qwatli.</i> | 123. Young women and young men, meet each other in their room. |
| 124. <i>Ti quntseeri ayiye.</i> | 124. Kiss each other. |
| 125. <i>Dasu ne dagay, ti slaaslaiye.</i> | 125. Young women and young men, make love with each other. |

The crown, the sign of a hero who has conquered an enemy, was the highest honour that could be conferred upon a young man. The Iraqw do not have an age-set system, but in the event of raid, attack by foreign enemies, etc., the young men would organize a warrior's band to strike back.

Lost persons and domestic animals must be replaced through the birth of new lives, but this is a petition for still greater increase. In telling the animals to take refuge in their rooms, there is a suggestion of sexual activity. Among the Iraqw, sexual intercourse is an indoor activity; cattle and donkeys, small domestic animals such as goats, sheep, calves etc., as well as people, are allotted their places, called 'rooms', which are kept strictly separate even if all under one roof.

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| 126. <i>Barise qatuhar duxun.</i> | 126. Let even the oldest of the elders marry. |
| 127. <i>Barise ti mu-k sa dog*.</i> | 127. Let them fill the earth with their descendants. |
| 128. <i>Aten lo ta wahharan.</i> | 128. Let us grow fat. |
| 129. <i>Barise lo tis laqwal.</i> | 129. Let the elders too strive to beget children. |
| 130. <i>Hhae ki slawan.</i> | 130. Let us acquire brothers. |
| 131. <i>Aten lo ta wahharan*.</i> | 131. Let us grow fat. |
| 132. <i>Bolo ir hhahhayin**.</i> | 132. Let us increase the population of our land. |

The 'marriage' of the eldest elder is a euphemistic expression having the concrete meaning of sexual intercourse: for the sake of the prosperity of the tribe, the elders

are encouraged along with the young men to beget new lives on the earth. Here, however, the prayer is more for the abundant good health of the elders.

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| <p>133. <i>Tloma-r ka a luumamisan ang.</i>
 <i>Tloma da a Harar. Ham deemuka</i>
 <i>aga iloohan, masomba ga i laqwal,</i>
 <i>barise ga i laqwal*. ne loo da</i>
 <i>amor hhoo.</i></p> | <p>133. There a mountain where we once
 made a vow. It is Mount Harar.
 Now we have settled there, the
 young people have produced
 children, and the elders have left
 descendants there. Our vow has
 been fulfilled, and now we pray
 that God's blessings will be
 many in this land.</p> |
| <p>134. <i>Aama-r hiyo koo-m, hiyay lo gur</i>
 <i>slax, dir doo-re ale lo.</i></p> | <p>134. Travelling mother, take off the
 leather clothes you are wearing
 and leave them in our house.</p> |
| <p>135. <i>Aama-r do-ren lo gur tsiit.</i></p> | <p>135. Let our mother wear those leather
 clothes.</p> |

Mount Harar is located in the Haydom area, about 60 kilometers southwest of the homeland Kainam, and was the territory of another tribe. A desolate natural land, it was looked upon by the Iraqw at that time as an undeveloped frontier. The vow that was taken here was a curse on the other tribes, and the Iraqw, who had carried out territorial expansion in this region since 1920, were praying anew lest the curse fall back upon themselves.

In the next line, the 'mother wearing leather clothes' symbolizes all the hostile pastoral tribes, and the taking off of the clothes they are wearing means that they are to cast off their previous customs and be assimilated into the Iraqw tribe.

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| <p>136. <i>Aten ti slaaslaan,</i></p> | <p>136. We will love each other,</p> |
| <p>137. <i>la ne saga,</i></p> | <p>137. As the arm and the mouth,</p> |
| <p>138. <i>adoor dawa ne afa,</i></p> | <p>138. As the shoe and the heel,</p> |
| <p>139. <i>ya'ati ne koolo,</i></p> | <p>139. As the ear and the head,</p> |
| <p>140. <i>tlawu ne danda**,</i></p> | <p>140. As clothing and the body,</p> |
| <p>141. <i>ma'ay ne degwa,</i></p> | <p>141. As water and a razor,</p> |
| <p>142. <i>nuu ne nuu.</i></p> | <p>142. As a woman's thing and a man's
 thing.</p> |

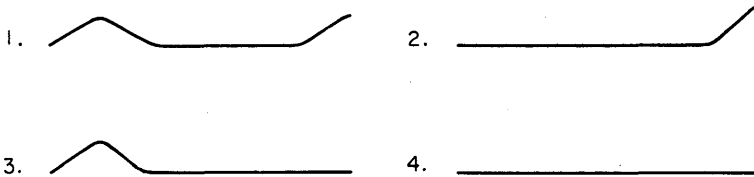
Finally, the poem comes to a formal conclusion with six comparisons expressing male-female harmony, the basis of an abundant harvest. Each line is composed according to a conception of pairs reflecting the Iraqw's dualistic cosmology, and the oral prayer reaches a climax with a heightening of poetic effects.

CONCLUSION

By means of the above translation of the 142 lines comprising the *Slufay*, and of the commentaries on the 21 stanzas into which the lines were grouped, I believe the reader can have a fairly clear idea of the meaning content of this oral prayer. To

summarize, it may be safely said first of all that *Slufay* developed out of various curses and chants which existed among the Iraqw since ancient times, and probably started out as a simple prayer for an abundant harvest. The increased number of lines and literary form of expression were most likely developments that took place around the time when the Iraqw escaped from the Barabaiga aggression and entrenched themselves at Kainam in the Eastern Rift Highland, about 150–200 years ago. This conclusion can be drawn from the fact that all the names of places and people appearing in the prayer refer to the history of that period. In short, we may consider that the taking on by the *Slufay* of the character of a chant or incantation was closely related to the spiritual life of the Iraqw in Kainam; in this period, they arranged the poem in a form that lent itself well to oral transmission, and that presented in appropriate sequence the values they were seeking.

With regard to the techniques of recitation, there is simplicity but also a respect for fundamental musical principles. Each verse is based on a rhythm of four beats grouped as three and one, with a pause in between. When the beats were recorded, variations on the basic rhythm could be seen (see Appendix), and five patterns were discovered, according to the number of syllables. Similarly, a basic form was seen in the melody, in which the following four patterns were discovered:



The tonal intervals are short, and are consolidated into major seconds.

Accordingly, while *Slufay* has not developed to the point of being a song, the musical emotion can be heightened by means of these rhythmic and melodic groupings, resulting in a unifying effect on the audience. Furthermore, the technique of repetition, characteristic of this type of orally transmitted tradition, is used frequently. Fourteen lines are repeated twice (6, 21, 22, 35, 40, 48, 58, 67, 69, 82, 89, 108, 127, 131) and nineteen lines are repeated three times (10, 31, 33, 45, 47, 50, 59, 61, 64, 65, 71, 84, 90, 91, 121, 132, 133, 140). The reciter may vary his presentation of repeated verses by changing the melody and tone of voice, or sometimes by shortening or lengthening the end vowel of the last word in the repeated line. The number of repetitions is not necessarily fixed, but may vary with the mood of the reciter. In other words, it is permissible to heighten the effectiveness of the recitation of *Slufay* by improvisatory techniques, and the reciter often adds his own original touches. The reason for this is that in general the longer the recitation, the more favourably it is received; the tendency is for the reciter to be looked upon more and more as a skilful master as the number of lines increases. On the other hand, occasional mistakes or changes in the chanting of the words do not arouse criticism.

As a part of the important annual religious observances, the *Slufay* acquired a

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