While a good deal of attention has been paid by linguists to Swahili epic poetry, which in performance is sung and not spoken, the music has received hardly any treatment. This essay is a study of the music of one of these epics. As far as I know it is the first time that an extended transcription of this music has appeared. Only by having available such transcriptions can we hope to solve the various questions of a musical nature which these epics raise.

We are not concerned, in this essay, with the poetic aspects of the Tenzi, in particular the questions of metre, scansion and rhyme. For these matters the reader may consult J.W.T. Allen’s book. Our object is to study the musical problems.

The Swahili name for these epic poems is Utenzi (pl. Tenzi). To set the picture for our study, we quote Dr. Jan Knappert: “Utenzi is the term used by the Swahili-speaking people on the Coast of East Africa for the metre of eight syllables in the line. Since this metre is almost exclusively used for narrative poetry, the word utenzi has come to mean ‘epic’. This utenzi literature is usually found in private possession in the towns along the coast. They have been recorded in the Arabic script at least since the beginning of the eighteenth century.”

We have chosen for this essay part of the ‘Utenzi wa Abdirrahmani na Sufiyani’ – the text of which has been printed together with an English translation by Roland Allen. According to him it seems to date back well into the nineteenth century, though the printed version is copied from a typescript made by Hemed Abdallah's son, presumably fairly early in the twentieth century. The poem has exactly 1,000 verses each of four lines of eight syllables. Dr. Knappert placed at my disposal a tape recording of the singing of this utenzi. The singer was an old lady in Lamu and the tape comes from the East African Swahili Committee’s Library, then (in 1962) in Mombasa. My assistant in dealing with matters arising from the text was Sheik Kassim Hafidh, now at the University of Ghana. I have transcribed 68 verses of this music, (see Fig. 10) which was a time-consuming labour but seemed to me sufficient musical material on which to work. It is important to note the underlined syllables in the transcription. These are the syllables which carry a stress in the music. I have also indicated these stresses on the music stave by suitably tying the quavers. The text, while very close to the printed version, is, as usual in the versions of these tenzi, not always identical.

The questions we have to face arise from two factors. Firstly, the Swahili are a Bantu-speaking people. The utenzi text is in Swahili. Is the music, therefore, African in melodic structure and rhythm? Secondly, as these texts are originally written in Arabic script and as the Arabs have settled for well over a thousand years along the Swahili coast, to what extent does the music, and indeed the poetic metre and lay-out of the utenzi, owe its form to Arab influence? Are we dealing with an essentially Bantu musical form or an essentially Arabic one? And if the latter, as the
music is sung to a Bantu language do we find any Bantu musical practices incorporated into an essentially Arab-style musical form?

Before we can begin to answer these questions we must of necessity know what to look for in order to differentiate the two musical systems. Let us, then, briefly consider the main characteristics of each system.

Africans (and that includes Bantu speakers) have no consciously formulated system of music. It just bubbles out of them. Nevertheless it has certain underlying principles which apply all over non-Moslem Africa. The melodies are nearly all diatonic, accidentals or changes of key being rare. Yet it is by no means always diatonic in the European sense of being based on a key-note, with its dominant as the next note of importance. There is reason to think of it as based on a series of tetrachords—often overlapping, the top and the bottom notes of each tetrachord being the main focal points or points of rest in the melody. Now the word ‘tetrachord’ suggests to the European musical mind the old Greek modes. No one hearing African music could possibly say it was modal in character. It definitely is not. Further, African singing, though in unison in some tribes (homophony) is mostly in organum or a very simple form of harmony.

The rhythm of African singing is, as a rule, highly organised. It is often controlled by handclapping where the total number of handclaps in a song is a multiple of two or three, or a combination of both. The song-tune has its own rhythm, usually irregular, or to use a more apt term, additive, but is nevertheless controlled by the claps. There is thus a tension set up between the rhythm of the song and that of the handclaps. Further, the time-values of the song notes are based on morae, i.e. the length of syllables, the mora being the smallest time unit used in the tune. Each clap usually contains either 2 morae or 3 morae. Short syllables occupy one mora, long syllables and often CCV forms take 2 or more morae. This very inadequate summary must suffice here: for more detailed treatment of this complex subject consult the books referred to.

The Arabic musical system is consciously based on a theoretical framework—both melodic and rhythmic—which has a long history and a large body of theoretical treatises. The Arabs took over the Greek theoretical musical system and so Arabic melodies are fundamentally based on the Greek modes. A mode consists of two tetrachords one on top of the other, and the modes are differentiated by the place where the semitones occur in it. Moreover, the Arabs have greatly elaborated this modal system by the device of maqams, where the predominant use of certain notes in a mode, or a certain sequence of notes, gives a characteristic flavour to the tune such that an Arab musician can say that this tune belongs to such and such a maqam.

There are several other factors which are characteristic of Arab music. That expert on Islamic music, H.G. Farmer, says, “The chief characteristics of Islamic music were, and are, modal homophony, floritura, and rhythm. The second element in Islamic music, floritura (zawā'id, tahāshīn, zuwwāq) consisted of shakes, grace notes, the drawled scale, appoggiatura, and the taskīb. This last device was the occasional decoration of the melody by striking certain notes simultaneously with their 4th, 5th, or octave (referring to string accompaniment—A.M.J.) Special syllables were set apart for the vocal decoration, such as ta and ya, although the more conventional ya ḥāli would be just as often used.” To this we may add, quoting Curt Sachs, “With the countless possibilities of permutation and combination so dear to Oriental scholars, an incredible number of modal scales was brought about.”
first sight, these nearly one hundred scales seem chaotic . . . " In other words, Islamic music is based on modal scales, has no vocal harmony, the voice often decorates the melody with additional notes, and there is a characteristic rhythmic system.

We are now in a position to examine the music of our Swahili utenzi. The melody is definitely modal — it is, according to Curt Sachs’ classification, in the Dorian mode — what the Arabs call Ṣqqḅba fi ẓajrā al wusta. At the pitch in which we have made our transcription this Dorian mode will be:

Anyone can see that these are notes consistently used throughout the music of the transcriptions. Occasionally the tune goes higher or lower than the octave here given: but that is quite normal as these notes still belong to the mode, being octave notes (higher or lower) of the central notes of the mode as I have given it.

So our first conclusion is that the tune is definitely in the Arab camp. It is modal — it is quite un-African.

Next we note the presence of fioriture. Fioriture are little melodic flourishes, embellishments applied to a syllable which if the tune of the song were strictly followed would carry only a single note, or at most two. Our utenzi abounds in these fioriture:

and this is to quote a few of the many examples.

African music simply does not indulge in these fioriture. Normally in African tunes there is only one note to each syllable. This embellishing of the melodic line is quite definitely a trait of Arabic music. So here we have African (Swahili) people singing in a style foreign to the African idiom. The utenzi music is definitely Arabic both in mode and in its flourishes.

We now must examine the utenzi tune itself, and this turns out to be interesting. It has a very long melody which covers four verses at a time. Starting at Verse 1 it ends at the end of Verse 4. Starting again at Verse 5 it closes at the end of Verse 8 — and so on right through. This long melody consists of 16 separate little phrases — which I shall call ‘Little tunes’ — one for each line.

Now although these little tunes frequently recur, and are obviously the same little tunes, yet nearly every time they recur they are slightly varied, either by the actual notes used, or by the time-values of the notes. What, then, is the original or ur-tune?
By inspection one can more or less tell what must be the basic form of each of these tunes: this, of course, is guesswork, but it will serve adequately for the purpose of this analysis.

There are 12 basic tunes used to construct the whole 4-verse melody: I have given them letters so as to distinguish them. They are as follows:

Each four-lined verse is made up of these little tunes, each one of which exactly fits one line. Now as the complete melody covers four verses, it must be, and indeed is, constructed of 16 of these little tunes. But there are only 12 of them. What happens is that the complete long melody is divided into two halves each covering two verses. There is a clear musical cesura at the end of the first of these halves, and a musical ‘full close’ at the end of the second half, thus rounding off the complete melody.

The second half of each half of the main melody consists nearly always (but see Fig. 5) of the little tunes E, F, G, H, always in that order. In other words this means that the even-numbered verses of the utenzi are nearly always sung to the tune E, F, G, H. The following sketch should make the situation clear:

This might well suggest that I am wrong in saying that the complete melody
covers 4 verses: does it not, in fact, cover only 2, being rounded off each time by the little tunes E F G H? This, however, cannot be so, because of the behaviour of the first half of each half of the main melody. This part, that is, the tune for the odd verses 1, 3, 5 etc. shows great variety in the choice of the little tunes. But it is stabilised by two factors. The first half of the main melody nearly always starts with some variant of little tune A: the second half of the big melody starts with little tune J. Secondly the latter part of each of these first halves is mostly made up of little tunes C and D. It is the alternate use of tunes A and J which betrays the fact that the main melody is in two halves, one starting with A and the other with J, and therefore it covers in toto four verses.

We can now set out the complete transcription in tabular form, showing how the melody is built up with the little tunes. It must be remembered, as we said before, that virtually every time a little tune recurs, it is slightly different either in the actual notes used or in the time-value of the notes. So, if one sees, say, C or D many times, they are never identical. Where the variation is considerable, and yet the tune is still obviously recognisable, it is italicised — A, or J, and so on. The tune B2 is really very different from B, and perhaps I should have given it a separate letter: but both these tunes always occur in the second line of a verse and they both end with the same note. Here, then, is the Table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Verses
| 1 & 2 | K | B | C | D | E | F | G | H |
| 3 & 4 | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H |
| 5 & 6 | K | B2 | K | D | E | F | G | H |
| 7 & 8 | C | B2 | K | D | E | F | G | H |
| 9 & 10 | A | B2 | C | D | E | F | G | H |
| 11 & 12 | J | F | B | D | E | F | G | H |
| 13 & 14 | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H |
| 15 & 16 | J | F | C | D | E | F | G | H |
| 17 & 18 | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H |
| 19 & 20 | J | F | N | D | E | F | G | H |
| 21 & 22 | A | B | C | D | K | F | G | H |
| 23 & 24 | J | F | N | D | E | F | G | H |
| 25 & 26 | A | K | K | D | E | F | F | H |
| 27 & 28 | J | F | K | D | A | F | G | H |
| 29 & 30 | A | K | K | D | K | F | F | H |
| 31 & 32 | J | F | C | D | K | F | G | H |
| 33 & 34 | A | K | K | D | K | F | G | H |
| 35 & 36 | J | F | C | D | E | F | G | H |
| 37 & 38 | A | D | C | D | K | F | G | H |
| 39 & 40 | K | B2 | C | D | E | F | G | H |
| 41 & 42 | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H |
| 43 & 44 | J | F | C | D | E | F | G | H |
| 45 & 46 | A | K | C | D | K | F | G | H |
| 47 & 48 | J | F | C | D | K | F | G | H |

Fig. 5 The main utenzi melody. The incidence of the 'Little Tunes'.

**SWAHILI EPIC POETRY: A MUSICAL STUDY**
A glance at the right hand half of this Table shows how comparatively stable the
tunes E, F, G, H are – that is, the tunes for the even-numbered verses. On the left it
shows, first, from Verse 9 onwards, the alternate use of little tunes A and J for the
first line of the odd-numbered verses. When the singer reached Verse 49 she appar­
tently made a mistake – perhaps forgetting she had just finished the long melody at
the end of Verse 48, she starts off with the little tune J, i.e. in the middle of the
long melody. Then she continues according to plan through verses 52 to 54. The
result is that the tune is inside out, with J to start the first half of the long melody,
and A to start the second half. But after verses 56A and 56B she corrects herself and
once again starts off properly with tune A in verse 57 and continues correctly to the
end of the transcription.

The left side of the Table also shows that the tunes for the middle two lines of the
odd-numbered verses are highly variable. The odd verses start and end consistently,
for the most part – A or J for line 1, and D for line 4: there is also a tendency to
sing the third line to tune C, though it varies from time to time. Line 2 is the most
varied of all.

We have just said that tune D, as can be clearly seen in the Table, is the tune used
for the last line of the odd verses. But look at verse 37. What is tune D doing in the
second line (as well as the fourth)? This is the only occurrence of tune D in this
position. Either it is the singer’s mistake, or, if it is purposeful there is some reason
which escapes us, or it may be that lines 2 and 3 of the odd verses are so fluid as to
melody that any of the tunes (except the beginning and ending ones, A, J, G and H)
may be used ad libitum. I think myself that it was a mistake on the singer’s part.

The Table shows up in several other places what seems to be a lacuna memoriae
by the singer. After all, she has to remember not only the text but also a suitable
selection of the little tunes. She does, in fact, seem to have a penchant for tune K
and uses it almost indiscriminately. In the odd verses it crops up in lines 2 and 3:
in the even verses, no less than eleven times it takes the place of tune E. I cannot see
any reason for this: it seems as if the singer has a particular liking for it. There are
other places where she pretty obviously makes a mistake. For instance, in verse 25
she sings K twice successively (for lines 2 and 3): she does the same in verse 29 and
again in verses 33, 55, 57 and 64. Now she may have done this deliberately, but
the general lay-out of the tunes suggests she made a mistake. Such a mistake is
clearly evident in the second parts of the tune, which as can be seen, have the stand­
ard form E F G H. In verse 26 she repeats F in lines 2 and 3, and does this again in
verse 30, and also in verse 65.
On the whole, however, she is remarkably consistent. One can sum up this consideration of the music by saying: (a) There is a definite melodic scheme repeated after each four verses: (b) The tune is very nearly stable in the even verses: (c) The tune is greatly variable in the odd verses. Now the odd verses are the starting points of each half of the big complete melody. Are these variations aimed at giving piquance and interest to the singing? Is the singer at liberty to use any one of these little tunes in any order, provided that she keeps to the main plan of starting with A or J, and ending each half with E F G H? Or is the choice of the little tunes associated with the text — with its meaning, or its emphasis, or maybe with the pronunciation of the text in ordinary speaking? Or is it a typically Arab custom to handle melodies in this way? Certainly it is completely un-African. An African tune is stable right through a song. I do not know the answer to all these questions, though I shall attempt to deal with some of them. If any of them derive from Arabic musical practice, they are beyond me. They will need the attention of an expert in Arabic music.

One question stands out and cries for an answer. Take any one of the little tunes: why does it vary so much both in melody and in note-value? To limit the discussion within reasonable limits let us examine one of the most stable of these tunes, namely tune F, which is consistently used right through the transcription for the second line of the even-numbered verses. (The verse numbered 57A throws the following verse numbers out — what should be even numbers now become odd: but tune F continues consistently.)

Out of the 68 verses in the music transcription, tune F occurs 51 times, with many slight variations. Of these 51 occurrences, in 19 of them exactly the same variation occurs more than once. Why is this? To attempt an answer let us first set the music out. Here is the music for all the occurrences of Tune F:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Fig. 6 Tune F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Swahili Epic Poetry: A Musical Study

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Out of the 68 verses in the music transcription, tune F occurs 51 times, with many slight variations. Of these 51 occurrences, in 19 of them exactly the same variation occurs more than once. Why is this? To attempt an answer let us first set the music out. Here is the music for all the occurrences of Tune F:
It is obvious that this is the same essential tune in every case. But what an astonishing display of subtle variations! They are of two kinds — melodic and rhythmic. Look at verses 2 and 4: the tune is almost identical, but not quite — and this applies to them all. Either a note is added, or altered, or stretched in value so that a quaver becomes a crotchet. Compare the third note (A) in verse 2 and verse 58: in verse 2 it is a quaver (unit beat), in verse 58 it is a crotchet (two unit beats), and apart from this small change the two tunes are identical.

The rhythm of the tune is also constantly changed. Look at verses 6 and 18. The notes of the tune are the same, but the rhythm is not. Verse 6 starts with an unaccented note (aris) and then two tied quavers, the first of which is accented. Verse 18 starts with a triplet so that the first note carries the accent.
There is too much material here on which to focus attention. Fortunately we can limit the field. It will be noticed that there are seven variants of Tune F which turn up more than once. I have lettered them from a to g. Let us examine the words which are sung to these variations. Maybe there is a clue here. The bold syllables are those which when sung, carry a stress. Where I have indicated ‘Two short notes’ each syllable takes one quaver, i.e. its length is one mora: similarly ‘One long note’ means a crotchet, i.e. the value of two quavers—so that this single syllable is lengthened to the value of two morae.

Fig. 7 Tune F — The same variant carrying various words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variant</th>
<th>Verse 2</th>
<th>a - e - zi - ye a - ka - dhi - li</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>ro - ho ya - ngu ha-fi - ki - ri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>hu - yo A - bdi Ra - ha - ma - ni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56B</td>
<td>ha - mba A - beir Ra - ha - ma - ni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variant</th>
<th>Verse 6</th>
<th>na Mo - la wa - ke Wa - du - di</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>a - ke - nda kwa Su - fi - a - ni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>m - to - to wa Sul - ta - ni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variant</th>
<th>Verse 10</th>
<th>hu - yu mu - za - li - wa na - ye</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>wa - la a - si - ye mi - tha - li</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variant</th>
<th>Verse 26</th>
<th>na m - kwe - we Su - fi - a - ni</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>ku - na ni - ni u - gha - l - bu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variant</th>
<th>Verse 32</th>
<th>a - li - ye - pa - nda ri - ka - bu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>ni - ji - le kwa - ko ku - su - di</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>mi - mi na wa - ngu ka - u - mu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variant</th>
<th>Verse 54</th>
<th>na - li mi - mi na mwa - na - ngu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61</td>
<td>ya lu - lu na ma - ya - ku - ti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td>ha - ta mo - ja si - ja - pa - ta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variant</th>
<th>Verse 34</th>
<th>a - ka - fi - a na ha - bi - bu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>na wa - ngl m - no ri - ja - li</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It seems to me that there are three factors governing these variations. The first is musical, the second is the pitch of the syllables as spoken (and not sung): the third is the rhythm (accentuation) of the words as spoken.

The musical factor is this. There are four musical accents to each line. This is absolutely consistent, not only in tune F but right through the whole transcription. As there are eight syllables to each line, one would naturally expect the four accents to fall on every alternate syllable — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8. While this sometimes occurs it by no means always does so. The accents are unevenly distributed in many different ways, but — and this is the important point — there are always four accents to each line. I can only conclude that this is a musical rhythmic feature which is at the back of the mind of the singer. Whatever the words, and whatever their spoken accents, he must ensure that there are four musical stresses in each line. I know that Allen will probably not agree with this. He warns us not to scan the lines as if they con-
sisted of four trochees as in my example above, but rather to read them as two anapaest in each line (they are actually 'Third Paeons'): \textit{ooo-o ooo-o}.\textsuperscript{11} This may be all right where the accents happen to be evenly spaced apart, but it simply does not apply where the musical accents are irregularly spaced, and anyway it upsets the 4-to-a-line rule I have just suggested, which, as it is so entirely consistent in my transcriptions, does seem to be a fundamental factor. But if one grants, as I would be prepared to do, in lines such as these, that the second and fourth accents in a line are stronger than the first and third, then we shall both be satisfied. He virtually gets his Third Paeons and I still have my four stresses per line.

Take Variant a in the above Table. The scansion is regular, so the line has one syllable to each \textit{mora}, and surely the tune itself indicates there are four stresses in the line. The same applies to the rhythms of Variant g.

Variant b is quite different. The tune shows what is happening here. Alone among the variants it starts with an \textit{arsis} – an unaccented syllable leading to an accented one, the first three syllables having therefore the scansion \textit{uvo} (an amphibrach): it has two accents in the second half of the line, on \textit{mora} nos. 5 and 7, so it needs another accent to complete the four, and this can only fall on syllable number 4. This means that both nos. 4 and 5 are accented. If these two notes are each quavers (one \textit{mora} each) this would be musically impossible. The singer solves this by giving two \textit{mora} to syllable no. 4.

Variant c starts with a dactyl and therefore three stresses have to be accommodated in the remaining five syllables. The singer uses the same technique as in Variant b. She accents both the 4th and the 5th syllables, giving the 4th syllable two \textit{mora}. She does precisely the same with Variant e.

Variants d and f frankly puzzle me as to their rhythm. By the lay-out of their accents one would expect them to be, musically, like Variant a, with a tune consisting of six quavers ending with the usual two crotchets. Why, then, does the third syllable in each of these variants carry a long note (two \textit{mora})? I cannot answer this.

Rhythmically, Variant g is the same as Variant a and presents no problems here. But musically it shares with Variant e the peculiarity that instead of ending, as all other variants do, with two crotchets both on the note E, the first of these crotchets is raised a semitone, so Variants e and g end with the notes F, E.

Summing up, we see that in all variants the tune carries four stresses per line. The second half of each line (syllables 5, 6, 7 and 8) is consistently in the same rhythm \textit{u-u}. But the rhythm in the first half of the lines (syllables 1, 2, 3 and 4) varies considerably.

In every variant the notes of the tune are slightly different.

Putting these two statements together, one rhythmic and the other melodic, we have to ask, ‘What causes these variations?’ And we at once suspect the words as being responsible. Is it the natural rhythm of the words when spoken (not sung) which accounts for the varying rhythms? It looks as if this is often the case. Or are there rules of prosody which determine the scansion and account, for instance, for the syllables which carry two \textit{mora}? This may be partly so, but if one looks at those syllables, it is difficult to see why, on prosodic grounds, they should carry two \textit{mora}. There is a third possibility to be considered, which would vitally affect the actual notes of the tune and account for their variation. This is the matter of syllable-pitch in speech. Does the rise and fall of the tune reflect the way the syllables rise and fall in speech? In which case, as Swahili is held by linguists to be a
language which, unlike Bantu languages, is not a speech-tone one, is the rise and fall merely a matter of customary pronunciation reflected in the tune, or can it be that the tune preserves some indications that Swahili was indeed at some time a tonal language and that in singing these unconscious tonal memories reassert themselves? After all, just south of the Swahili-speaking coastal strip of East Africa which runs down to about 8° South, there are — around 10° South — the Shambara, who are a Bantu-speaking people. Professor Malcolm Guthrie told me that they have many words in their language which also occur in Swahili, but the Shambara still preserve the tonal system in speaking them. To these matters we now address ourselves.

For our investigation we take the first three verses. We know the tune — it is in the transcription. I asked Kasim to speak the words, in his ordinary speaking voice, into my Tonometer, which records the rise and fall of speech-tones. The rise and fall of the speech and of the melody are shown on the following graphs. The figures up the left-hand side are taken from my Tonometer: from one figure to the next is a gap of a semitone. The letters to the right of them are for the melody — they are the note-names.

To appreciate what the graphs have to say, one really needs to be a musician familiar with the relationship of speech-tone and song melody in African music. Within the limits of this essay, one can only summarise the matter.

It is most important to grasp that we are not concerned with the absolute rise and fall, but with relative rise and fall both of speech and tune. In speech the voice is free to go where it likes and it can leap up or plunge deep down at will. But melody is subject to the constraints both of the scale, or mode in which the tune is composed, and also of the musical fitness of moving from one note to another. So we are looking for the general tendency of the words as spoken and sung in their movements up and down.

The tune of a song is further restricted on musical grounds by its cadences. Our tune falls into two halves: the first half comes to a musical feeling of semi-repose (half close) and the second half ends obviously in full repose (full close). I have marked these cadences on the graphs in places which are significant for our analysis. Now in African music, when a tune gets to a cadence, the tune takes priority over the words, and therefore whatever the speech-tones of these words, they are obliterated by the rise and fall of the tune. Therefore at these cadences we shall not expect a very close correlation between the rise and fall of speech and tune.

One further musical point: a melody sometimes changes its tonal centre during a song: this is not a change of key but merely a change in the note around which it moves. Thus it may suddenly drop or leap up four or five notes. At the junction where this happens, it may appear that the movement of the melody is in conflict with the speech-tones: this is not the case — it is purely musical convention.

We now look at the graphs. Verse 1, except for the first word, shows a quite remarkable agreement in general up and down movement between speech and tune. This first word Bismillahi is Arabic and therefore outside our argument. The third line of the tune follows the speech-tones pretty faithfully except at the end where a little floritura is added — and this, as we have seen, is an Arabic and not African melodic device. The melodic cadence at the end of the fourth line is set to the word tuletea which, being on four fairly low tones, is highly suitable and nearly agrees with the general outline of the cadence.
Verse 2 on the whole also shows a good general agreement. I suspect the first word *Allahu* to be Arabic and it therefore does not concern us except as another illustration that the speech-tune agreement does not seem to apply when Arabic words are present. Both cadences have a word which has a low-toned syllable at the end and so is highly suitable to the tune. At the end of line 3, while the word *piti* is pronounced high-low, the tune goes low-high: but the singer adds a little descending *fioritura* as much as to say, 'I know *piti* falls, but as the tune rises, I will add the falling *fioritura* so as to include a fall somehow'—a very ingenious solution.

Verse 3 shows less general agreement of speech and tune than the other two, but even so, on the whole it is not bad. The tune illustrates one point which has to be borne in mind. If the tune moves up or down by only one note, while the speech-tones stay level, this is not a conflict. After all, the tune has to follow the aesthetic dictates of music, and a small move in pitch such as this does not mean that it is not following the speech-tones. For instance, in line 1, the syllable *Ra*- which in speech is level with the preceding -*ka*, drops one tone in the tune. But the tune is on a descending course towards the next syllable -*bhi*, and so this fall on *Ra-* does not violate the tone-tune agreement. But the first two syllables of *Mannani* do violate it: the speech goes up but the tune comes down. At the end of line 3, the rising tune takes priority over the steep fall in speech. In line 4 except for the first syllable, the tone-tune agreement is good.

Reviewing these graphs there is no doubt in my mind that the singer is trying to put into practice the African custom of making as far as possible the rise and fall of the tune agree with that of the spoken words. The rise and fall agreement of speech and tune is not as close as it would be in African music. However it seems to me that in all probability this fairly good agreement accounts for the variants in the melodies. I suggest that the singer instinctively modifies the tune to suit the speech-tones as other Africans would. More-
over, in these Tenzi she is having to adjust to a prosodic scheme with its metre and rhymes which she does not have to battle with in African songs. This only strengthens the point that there is a remarkable tie-up between speech-tone and melody movement. The graphs indicate that speech-tone agreement is a feature of Tenzi singing.

There is another way of testing this statement. Let us return to Tune F and test the variants of the melody against the speech-tones of the words. We will confine our review to those seven cases where exactly the same variants are used more than once — the variants marked from a to g on the score in Fig. 6. Now Tune F is one of the 'cadence' tunes which occurs exclusively on the second line of the verses and therefore acts as an intermediate cadence. The tune, therefore, will tend to be more important than the speech-tones, and there is therefore likely to be less correlation than elsewhere in the melody. It is one of the three most difficult tunes we could have chosen for our purpose, the other two being tunes D and H which also are both cadential. We will further restrict the survey by looking only at the even verses, where tune F is always used for the second line — there are no exceptions. The line, therefore, is very stable: it must be there. If this particular tune shows evidence of being adjusted to the speech-tones it is striking testimony to our thesis.

I asked Kasim to speak the words in his usual speaking voice and marked the speech-tones by horizontal dashes placed at various heights to show the approximate pitch: I used about four levels: — — — — . The result is this:

Fig. 9 (a). Tune F, word speech-tones. Variant a
Verse 2  
---\  a- e- zi- ye a- ka- dhi- li
---\  
Verse 44  
---\  ro- ho ya- ngu ha- fi- ki- ri
---\  
Verse 56  
---\  hu- yo A- bdi Ra- ha- ma- ni
---\  
Verse 56B  
---\  ha- mba A- bdir Ra- ha- ma- ni

For verse 2, Variant a is the only one which fits close to aeziye. For the other verses, the singer could have used Variant d except for its long third note. So a is the best variant to use for all four verses. So the words have dictated which tune to use.

Fig. 9 (b) Variant b Verse 6  
---\  na Mo- la wa- ke wa- du- di
---\  
Verse 12  
---\  a- ko- nda kwa Su- fi- a- ni
---\  
Verse 14  
---\  m- to- to wa Su- lta- ni

In each verse the line starts with an unaccented syllable — so that the first three syllables are an amphibrach. b is the only variant which starts with an unaccented note and makes it possible to sing an amphibrach. Therefore the choice of this variant here is clearly determined by the text.
There is nothing special here. The tune fits quite well. For some reason the singer gives two morae to -za- (v. 10) and -si- (v. 16). Were it not for this, Variant a is the nearest alternative, but it won’t do: it would give a high tone instead of a medium one in Verse 10 on mu-: and it upsets both the rhythm and the speech-tones if used for Verse 16. The words demand Variant c.

If in verse 26 the syllable -kwe- could occupy only one mora, Variant a might have fitted, except that it would cause the first syllable of Sufiani to rise. The same applies to verse 36. The singer has chosen the variant which fits the words best.

The words — with the possible exception of v. 38 — start with a dactyl: in verse 57A this dactyl is produced in the tune by giving two morae to the first syllable. If one looks at the other variants, clearly this Variant e is the only one which suits the words. Therefore it seems that the singer must have had her mind on the text and chosen a variation to suit the words.

This is the only possible tune for verse 54. In verse 61 it reverses the first three speech-tones but fits nicely after that. For verse 65, variant d would fit better at moja si-, but there is very little in it. No other variant except d would fit.
The tune fits the text of verse 34 very well. In verse 42 it reverses the speech-tones of the first two words – na wangi: it may be that the singer wanted a variant with a high note followed by falling tones at mno rijali. Note especially what we pointed out above, that the last two notes of Variant g are falling and not level. This final fall suits the words of both verses whose last two syllables require it. The only other variant whose end falls is e, but this starts with a dactyl and will not fit here. Variant g is the best match to the words.

The moral of this analysis is clear enough. Tune F may, and probably does, have an ur-shape, if one may use the term – a basic fundamental tune – though we do not know what it is. What is evident however, is that the singer manipulates this Tune F to suit the rhythm and speech-tones of the words she is singing so far as she can, bearing in mind that this is a cadential tune, and whatever the speech-tones, she has got to preserve its shape towards the end of it so as to bring it to a point of rest on its final note. It seems to me an astonishing achievement to be able, while actually singing, to think ahead and modulate the basic tune to fit the words both in rhythm and in speech-tones. But this is quite obviously what the singer does.

One could pursue this enquiry on speech-tone/tune relationships in much more detail, by taking single words and seeing how the tune behaves. For instance does the singer treat Arabic words as she does Bantu ones? But such a study would produce so many exceptions to any posted rule as to be fruitless: I know – I have tried it. The reason is that if one takes single words there are too many factors involved when considering the tune. Any tune worthy of the name must be governed by musical aesthetics which will tend to govern its movement at any given point. It is the general, overall movement of the tune vis-à-vis the words which shows us what is happening. And surely we have given enough evidence to establish the close relationship between melody and speech-tones in this utenzi.

It only remains, therefore, to summarise the conclusions of this investigation. The utenzi, as sung, shows both Arab and Bantu influence. The tune is in an Arabic mode: the words are in an Arabic poetic metre (eight syllables to a line), with an Arabic system of rhyme – three lines of each verse rhyme: the fourth line has a rhyme right through the exactly 1,000 verses of the utenzi. Both metre and rhyme are totally foreign to Bantu practice.

The tune has a basic overall shape covering four verses at a time, with a cadence (half close) at the end of the second verse.

The tune consists of a series of musical phrases each exactly covering one line of text. They are used for the most part in the same order, but there are a good number of exceptions in the first half of the tune, that is, in the odd-numbered verses.

Each musical phrase, while preserving its musical identity, is subject to a large number of subtle variations both in the notes used and in the rhythm.

These variations are thoroughly in line with African (including Bantu) musical
practice where in tonal languages the tune must as far as possible agree with the
rise and fall of the speech-tones.

The tune of the utenzi follows this African practice and in spite of the limit-
ations imposed by its Arabic framework, succeeds to a surprising degree, by the
choice of musical phrases, and the melodic variations in the phrases themselves,
in rising and falling together with the speech-tones.

The rhythm of the tune is characterised by consistently having four musical
stresses to each line, but these stresses, though sometimes regular — falling on
alternate syllables — are by no means always so. More than half of them are irregularly
spaced. Out of 272 lines of verse, only 108 of them have regularly spaced
stresses in the music. The incidence of these stresses is for the most part dictated by
the natural stresses in the words when spoken — which again is typical African
practice, but is to some extent modified by the Arabic prosodic framework in which the
poem is cast.

The normal African practice in singing, of assigning one unit of time to each
short syllable (one mora) and two or more units to long syllables (double vowels or
CCV forms) is used in the utenzi, but in a rather loose way: it is frequently over-
ridden by the tune which mostly allocates two crotchets (two morae each) to the last
two syllables of each line of text — making it impossible to follow the African rule.
It is true that in African music the CCV forms do not always carry two morae but
tend to do so if the first consonant is a nasal. In the utenzi this rule is more broken
than observed.

This is the sum of our conclusions so far. Much work needs to be done on the
musical aspects of these utenzi. We need many more lengthy and reliable transcrip-
tions: without these an ethnomusicologist can do nothing. It is no use just listening
to tape recordings. The ever-changing varieties of the melody are completely confus-
ing until one can see them in black and white and analyse them systematically.
Further we need to know if there is a limited or unlimited number of tunes avail-
able for singing the utenzi. We also want to know what and how many of the Arabic
musical modes are employed. The utenzi of this essay is in the Dorian mode: I have
another transcription of a different utenzi in the Hypodorian mode — which is
quite a different scale. Are all utenzi musically organised in the way this one is? They
probably are, given the un-African prosodic form in which Swahili — a Bantu
language — is cast. But we need more evidence before we can be sure.

On the linguistic side we still want to know if utenzi music preserves vestiges of a
tonal speech system in Swahili. To this end I suggest that linguists should collate the
Shambara words which occur in Swahili, noting their speech tones, and then asking
musicians to see if these speech tones are reflected in the utenzi tune. We also want
information from scholars of Arabic music about Arab practice in singing a text. Do they
themselves make the melody follow the rise and fall of the usual speech pro-
nunciation? If so, this feature of utenzi music would turn out to be not so com-
pletely African as I have stated. Nevertheless it would be a characteristic at once
appreciated and seized upon by any African singer.

In short, to solve properly the musico-prosodic problems of utenzi we need a task-
force — an ethnomusicologist and a linguist on the African side, and a similar pair on
the Arabic side. I can imagine such a team working under university auspices — prefer-
ably on the spot in East Africa. This utenzi music is not at all easy. As far as I know,
the transcriptions I give mark the first time that transcriptions of any length have
appeared. Both Dr. Knappert and the Allens, father and son, have given us plenty of printed texts. I have tried, in this essay, to break the ground. It is up to ethnomusicologists to carry the work forward. Considering how well-known Swahili and its literature is, it is remarkable that the study of the music should hardly have started. It is high time we did something about this.

Fig. 10 Utenzi wa Abdirrahman na Sufiyani. Verses 1-12
Verses 25 - 36
Verses 37 - 48
Verses 59 - 65

NOTES

3. Hemed Abdallah, Utensi wa Abdirahman na Sufyani, 4th Eagle Press, Dar es Salaam, 1961. The text on the tape I used is nearly identical with that printed here, but varies slightly from place to place.
10. Curt Sachs, p. 225, and H.G. Farmer, 'Arabian Music' in Grove's Dictionary of Music, 5th edition. I came to this conclusion before reading J.W.T. Allen's Tendi, where on p. 31 Mrs. Parker finds the same mode. But I have another utensi which is in the Hypodorian (Aeolian) mode.
11. J.W.T. Allen, Tendi, pp. 27-28. Note: Trochée = - Ο -
Anapæst = Ο - Ο -
Third Pæon = - Ο - Ο -
Dactyl = - Ο - Ο -
15. See A.M. Jones, Studies in African Music, Vol. I, p. 245: "At the end of a song-line, the melody moves to a note of repose, around which the speech-tones may fluctuate."
1. Bismillahi nandike 17. Nti zote akatisha
2. Allahu ndiye Jalali
3. Yupo weke Rabbi Mannani
4. Mnano wake hakuna
5. Muhammadi mpendeka
6. Alumbwa Muhammadi
7. Akesha kamdhukuru
8. Peni hadithi chunoni
9. Huyo Abdir Rahamani
10. Mwanahasa ni nduguye
11. Mwana wa Abu Bakari
12. Alipotea zamani
13. Babaye akamusta
14. Kaoa mwana nyumbani
15. Akime kumuhtutubu
16. Kawa shuja muksili
17. Nti zote akatisha
18. Nti akazizia
19. Kazidereka amri
20. Akanvinja misaafara
21. Ndi a zikoata mani
22. Kuonakwe Sufiani
23. Akanena Sufiani
24. Maana ndiwe muanguni
25. Katamalaki akesha
26. Kata Abdi Rahamani
27. Aliپotea zamani
28. Alipotea zamani
29. Na Abudi Rahamani
30. Na Abudi Rahamani
31. Wall katika julusi
32. Wall katika julusi
33. Abashuka faraani
34. Kuliakwe Muarabu
35. Wakima kulizana
36. Akalia na habibu
37. Maarubu akanena
38. Ewe tuuma Muhammadi
39. Kwa Abdir Rahamani
40. Wewe tuuma habibu
41. Kisha chakutuka kwangu
42. Kwangu n'na muungu
43. Kwangu n’na muungu
44. Kwangu n’na muungu
45. Haona ni kupotea
46. Wewe n'na muungu
47. Wewe n'na muungu
48. Wewe n'na muungu

THE TEXT

UTENZI WA ABDIRRRAHMANI NA SUFIYANI
49. Wote wakashahadia
Katika yangu karia
Pasi mtu kubakia
Rijali wala nita

50. Nilipokwisha silimu
Mimi na wangu kaumu
Roho yangu azimu
Kuja kwako kwambia

51. Kuzimu kuja kwako
Kwa humu ya dini yako
Kwa kulla milicho nacho
Hangia kujiana

52. Hangia kujiwandaza
Zawadiye hazitengesa
Papunguapo hongeza
Tunu nyangi na hidaya

53. Hafunganya mangi mali
Kuja kwako marisali
Hamtuka kysili
Mto wangu mmoya

54. Hafunga safari yangu
Nali mimi na mwanangu
Kuja kwako tumwa wangu
Kuja zidi kutubia

55. Bassi andama safari
Mumi na wangu sagiri
Tukayelekea bari
Hipata kati kandia

56. Hamuona Sultani
Huyo Abdi Rahamani
Na mukwewe Sufyani
Ndiani kanizula

56A. Akikata kuniua
Na mwanangu kumua
Mali apate chukua
Miguuni hangukia

56B. Hanguki miguuni
Hambe Abdur Rahamani
Niafu ni masikini
Mimi na ukanwiwata

57. Niafu sinukutuli
Mimi na wangu tifili
Ni kheri utwae mali
Mimi ukaniwata

58. Kamba Abdu Rahamani
Hayo yako subiyani
Mimi nashika rahani
Hata ulete fidya

59. Hamuusa Bwana wangu
Watakanani huku kwangu
Kanijibu kwa matungu
Na ghadhabu kumwingia

60. Kanijibu kwa ghadhabu
Fidia ya Muarabu
Ni mitembo ya dhahabu
Kumi shati kutia

61. Ni mitembo ya fedhati
Ya lulu na mavakuti
Ama hivi humpati
Mwanao atapeta

62. Na nguo nema launi
Za kamashina Ammini
Zitimie kusanzini
Na darai ya kuua

63. Na farasi takatifu
Na mafumu ya urefu
Na turusi na uafu
Panga kali za kuku

64. Na muda wako takupa
Siku kumi uwe bapa
Na pindi uasipipa
Mwanao nitaumu

65. Na siku leo ya sita
Hata moja njapaata
Mwanangu alakeketwa
Ewe tumwa ni fidia