

## SWAHILI EPIC POETRY: A MUSICAL STUDY

by

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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.<sup>1</sup> 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:<sup>2</sup> "*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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

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*.<sup>7</sup> 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, *fioritura*, and rhythm. . . . The second element in Islamic music, *fioriture* (*zawā'id*, *tahāsīn*, *zuwwāq*) consisted of shakes, grace notes, the drawled scale, appoggiatura, and the *taskib*. 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 lqili* would be just as often used.”<sup>8</sup> 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. . . . At

first sight, these nearly one hundred scales seem chaotic . . . .”<sup>9</sup> 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 *Sabbāba fī majrā al wusta*.<sup>10</sup> 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*:

Fig. 2	Verse 1	Line 3	on the syllable	-ke
	10	3	. . . . .	-ye
	13	1	. . . . .	-ta
	13	3	. . . . .	te -a
	15	3	. . . . .	-bu
	17	3	. . . . .	-sha
	18	1	. . . . .	-i-(a)
	19	3	. . . . .	-ri
	21	1	on the syllables	ma-ni
	30	3	on the syllable	-bu
	35	1	. . . . .	-na
	37	1	. . . . .	-na
	37	3	on the syllables	sa -na
	62	1	. . . . .	u -ni

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.

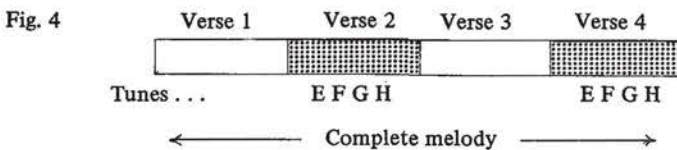
There are 12 basic tunes used to construct the whole 4-verse melody: I have given them letters so as to distinguish them. They are as follows:

Fig. 3 The basic tunes

stress = /     ♩ = 156 approx.

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:

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

49 & 50	J	F	C	D	E	F	G	H
51 & 52	A	K	C	D	E	F	G	H
53 & 54	J	F	C	D	E	F	G	H
55 & 56	A	K	K	D	K	F	G	H
56A & 56B	J	F	C	D	E	F	G	H
57 & 58	A	K	K	D	K	F	G	H
59 & 57A	J	F	C	D	K	F	G	H
60 & 61	A	K	C	D	E	F	G	H
62 & 63	J	F	C	D	E	F	G	H
64 & 65	A	K	K	D	E	F	F	H

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 apparently 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 standard 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:

Fig. 6 Tune F

<p>Verse</p> <p>2 a</p> <p>6 b</p> <p>10 c</p> <p>14 b</p> <p>18</p> <p>22</p>	<p>4</p> <p>8</p> <p>12 b</p> <p>16 c</p> <p>20</p> <p>24</p>	<p><i>a-e-zí-ye a-ka-dhi-li</i></p> <p><i>ne Mo-la wa-ke Wa-du-di</i></p> <p><i>hu-yu mu-za-li-wa na-ye</i></p> <p><i>m-to-to wa sul-ta-ni</i></p> <p><i>pa-si-we m-pi-ta ndi-a</i></p> <p><i>a-ka ngi-a gha-fula-a-ni</i></p>	<p><i>kwa e-xi-ya Su-bu-ha-na</i></p> <p><i>ya A-bu-dir Ra-ha-ma-ni</i></p> <p><i>a-ke-nda kwa Su-fi-a-ni</i></p> <p><i>wa-la a-si-ye mi-tha-li</i></p> <p><i>ka-ti-ka ndi-a-za ba-ta</i></p> <p><i>ki-pe-ndo cha roho ya ngu</i></p>
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26 d *na m-kwe-we Su-fi-a - ni*

28 *na i-bin A - bu Ta-li - bu*

30 *wa-te wa-me ka ta-ra - bu*

32 e *a-li-ye-pa-nda ni-ka-bu*

34 g *a-ka-li-a na ha-bi - bu*

36 d *ku-na ni - ni u-gha-i - bu*

38 e *ni-ji-le kwa-ko ku-su - di*

40 *mwo-ko-a wa-tu na ta - bu*

42 g *na wa-ngi m-ne ri-ja - li*

44 a *ro-ho ya-ngu ha-fi-ki - ti*

46 *ha-sha ha-di-a Mu-u - ngu*

48 *wa-ka-ni-fu - a-ta ya - yo*

50 e *mi-mi na wa-ngu ka-u - mu*

52 *za-wa-di-ye ha-zi-te-nge-za*

54 f *na-li mi - mi na mwa-na - ngu*

56 a *hu-yo A-bdi Ra-ha-ma - ni*

56B a *ha-mba A-bdi Ra-ha-ma - ni*

58 *hu-yo ya - ko su-bi-ya - ni*

57A *e - nda za - ko ti-ja - li*

61 f *ya lu-lu na ma-ya-ku - ti*

63 *na ma-fu-mu ya u - te - fu*

65 f *ha-ta mo - ja si-ja - pa - ta*

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 (arsis) 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

			2 short notes							
Variant a	Verse 2	a	- e	- <b>zi</b>	- ye	a	- ka	- dhi	- li	
	44	ro	- ho	<b>ya</b>	- ngu	ha	- fi	- ki	- ri	
	56	hu	- yo	<b>A</b>	- bdi	Ra	- ha	- ma	- ni	
	56B	ha	- mba	<b>A</b>	- bdir	Ra	- ha	- ma	- ni	
			1 long note							
Variant b	Verse 6	na	<b>Mo</b>	- la	<b>wa</b>	- ke	Wa	- du	- di	
	12	a	- ke	- nda	<b>kwa</b>	Su	- fi	- a	- ni	
	14	m	- to	- to	<b>wa</b>	Sul		- ta	- ni	
			1 long note							
Variant c	Verse 10	hu	- yu	<b>mu</b>	- za	- li	- wa	na	- ye	
	16	wa	- la	<b>a</b>	- si	- ye	mi	- tha	- li	
			1 long note							
Variant d	Verse 26	na	m	- kwe	- we	Su	- fi	- a	- ni	
	36	ku	- na	<b>ni</b>	- ni	u	- gha	- i	- bu	
			1 long note							
Variant e	Verse 32	a	- li	- ye	- pa	- nda	ri	- ka	- bu	
	38	ni	- ji	- le	<b>kwa</b>	- ko	ku	- su	- di	
	50	mi	- mi	na	<b>wa</b>	- ngu	ka	- u	- mu	
			1 long note							
Variant f	Verse 54	na	- li	<b>mi</b>	- mi	na	mwa-na	- ngu		
	61	ya	lu	- lu	na	<b>ma</b>	- ya	- ku	- ti	
	65	ha	- ta	<b>mo</b>	- ja	si	- ja	- pa	- ta	
			2 short notes							
Variant g	Verse 34	a	- ka	- li	- a	na	ha	- bi	- bu	
	42	na	wa	- ngi	m	- no	ri	- ja	- li	

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 anapaests in each line (they are actually 'Third Paeons'):  $\cup\cup-\cup \cup\cup-\cup$ .<sup>11</sup> 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 *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 *arsis* – an unaccented syllable leading to an accented one, the first three syllables having therefore the scansion  $\cup-\cup$  (an amphibrach): it has two accents in the second half of the line, on *morae* 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 *mora* each) this would be musically impossible. The singer solves this by giving two *morae* 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 *morae*. 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 *morae*)? 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  $-\cup-\cup$ . 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 *morae*? 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 *morae*. 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.<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> 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 *fioritura* 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.

Fig. 8 a Verse 1

— = Sung  
 — = Spoken

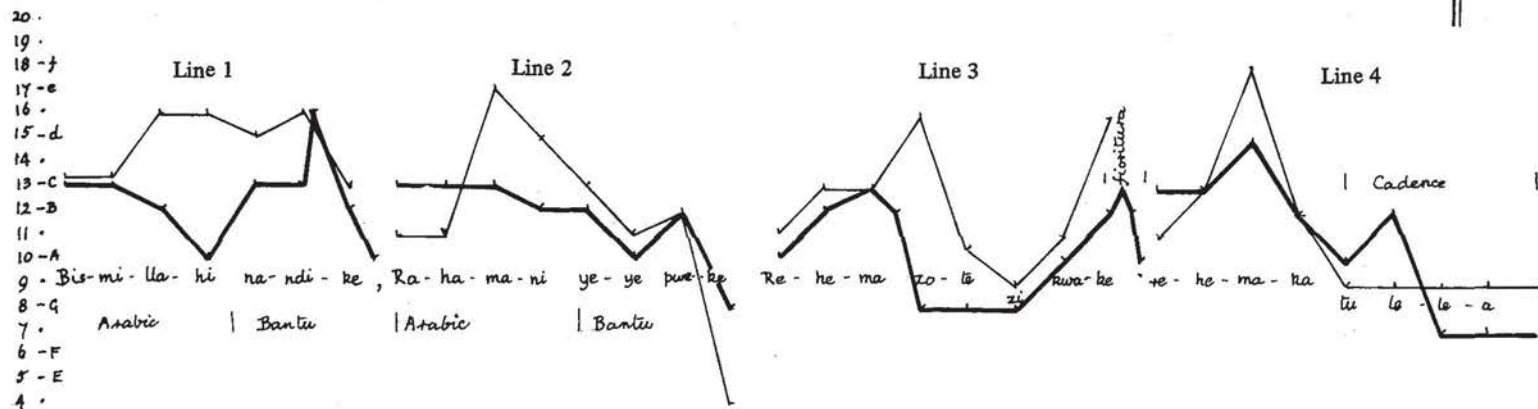
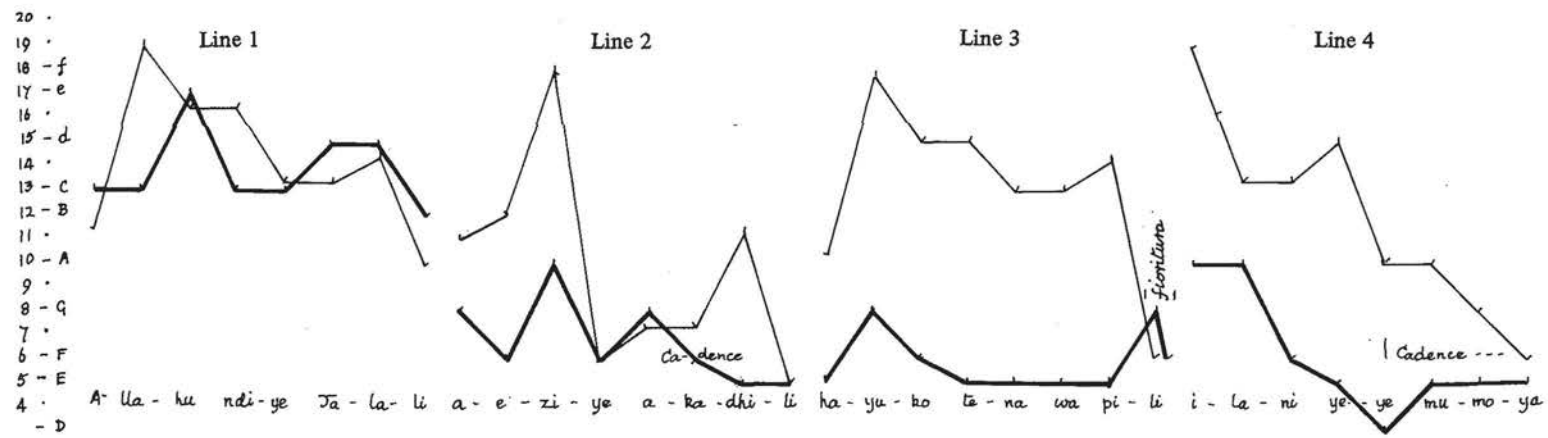


Fig. 8 b Verse 2





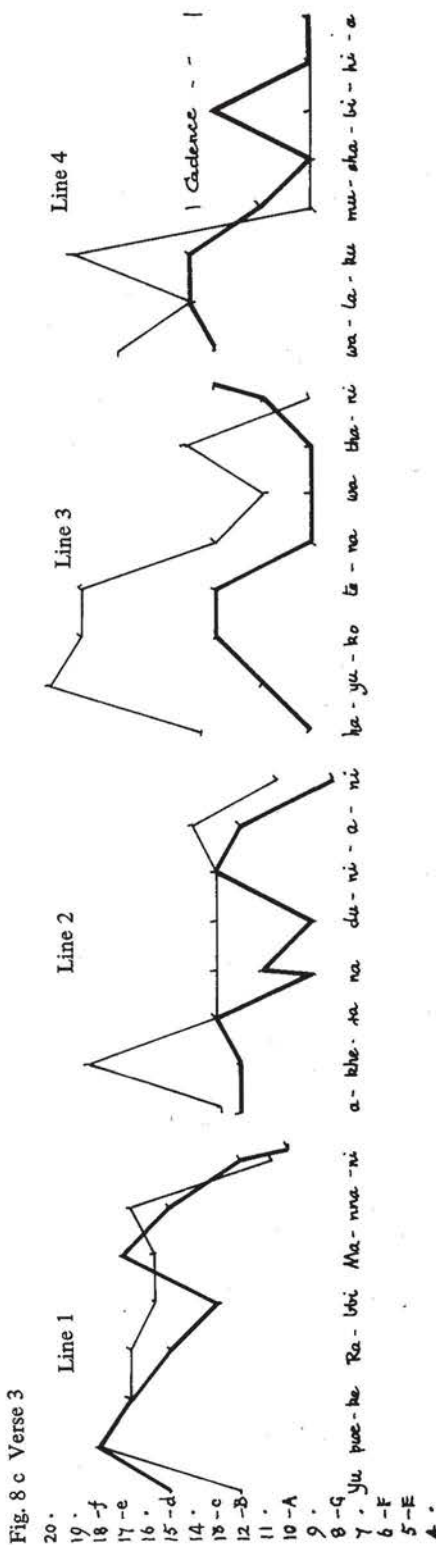


Fig. 8 c Verse 3

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 *-bi*, 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:  $\overline{\quad}$   $\overline{\quad}$   $\overline{\quad}$   $\overline{\quad}$ . 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 - ke - 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.

Fig. 9 (c) Variant c	Verse 10	hu - <sup>—</sup> yu mu - <sup>—</sup> za - <sup>—</sup> li - <sup>—</sup> wa na - <sup>—</sup> ye
	Verse 16	wa - <sup>—</sup> la a - <sup>—</sup> si - <sup>—</sup> ye mi - <sup>—</sup> tha - <sup>—</sup> li

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.

Fig. 9 (d) Variant d	Verse 26	na m - <sup>—</sup> kwe - <sup>—</sup> we Su - <sup>—</sup> fi - <sup>—</sup> a - <sup>—</sup> ni
	Verse 36	ku - <sup>—</sup> na - <sup>—</sup> ni - <sup>—</sup> ni u - <sup>—</sup> gha - <sup>—</sup> i - <sup>—</sup> bu

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.

Fig. 9 (e) Variant e	Verse 32	a - <sup>—</sup> li - <sup>—</sup> ye - <sup>—</sup> pa - <sup>—</sup> nda ri - <sup>—</sup> ka - <sup>—</sup> bu
	Verse 38	ni - <sup>—</sup> ji - <sup>—</sup> le kwa - <sup>—</sup> ko ku - <sup>—</sup> su - <sup>—</sup> di
	Verse 50	mi - <sup>—</sup> mi na wa - <sup>—</sup> ngu ka - <sup>—</sup> u - <sup>—</sup> mu
	Verse 57A	e - <sup>—</sup> nda za - <sup>—</sup> ko ri - <sup>—</sup> ja - <sup>—</sup> li

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.

Fig. 9 (f) Variant f	Verse 54	na - <sup>—</sup> li mi - <sup>—</sup> mi na mwa-na - <sup>—</sup> ngu
	Verse 61	ya lu - <sup>—</sup> lu na ma - <sup>—</sup> ya - <sup>—</sup> ku - <sup>—</sup> li
	Verse 65	ha - <sup>—</sup> ta mo - <sup>—</sup> ja si - <sup>—</sup> ja - <sup>—</sup> pa - <sup>—</sup> ta

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.

Fig. 9 (g)	Variant g	Verse 34	a	-ka	-li	-a	na	ha	-bi	-bu
		Verse 42	na	wa	-ngi	m	-no	ri	-ja	-li

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 posited 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 limitations 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 overridden by the tune which mostly allots 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 *tenzi*. We need many more lengthy and reliable transcriptions: 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 confusing 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 available for singing the *tenzi*. 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 *tenzi* 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 pronunciation? If so, this feature of *utenzi* music would turn out to be not so completely 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 *tenzi* 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 – preferably on the spot in East Africa. This *tenzi* 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 Abdirrahmani na Sufiyani. Verses 1 - 12

*♩ = 156 approx.*

1 Bismillahi na-ndi-be... Reka-mani ye ye pua-be Reka-ma zote zi kupa-be... tekumu-ka (ka) - (ka) - (ka)

2 A la-ku ndiye za-ka-li e-e-ziyu aka-dhi-li kuyu-ko (ka) wa pa-li (ka) i-la ni ye ye mu-mo-ya

3 Ya pua-be Rabibi Manng-ni akhera na dani-e-ni huyu-ko (ka) na wa (ka) cha-ni wa la-ku mu-sha-hi-ka

4 M-fa-ne wote ha-ku-na kupa-ezi-ya Sulu-ka-na ni lu-mu-ye wote a-mu-na ndiye lu-mu-ye wa A-di-ka

5 Muka-mm-adi m-pede-za kupa-Mu-ye wa-ke A-zi-za ndiye alo-ye muwa kupa-za huyu-ye vi-ye bi-ka

6 A li-umru-wa Muka-ma-di na Mola wa-ke Wa-ku-di kaba-ka wa-ku-nu-di ndia a-ka-la-ngu-ka

7 A-ke-ake ka-m-chu-ku-tu A-ka-hu Ra-digha-ku-tu na Muka-ma-adi ba-shi-tu -- muwaga-ka-di thi-e-ja-ka

8 Pa-ni hadi-chu-ka-ni ye A-bu-dur Raka-ma-ni kupa-ndi-ka kaba-ma-ni nanyi-m-ka-ka sibi-ka

9 Huyo Al-dur Raka-ma-ni Ni sheme-giya-ke A-mi-ni A-bu-Ba-ka-ti ya-ku-ni Ni N-diye a-lye m-za-ka

10 Muzana-i-sha ni ndu-ya-ye huyu mu-ye-ka-ye ye ye kupa-m-mo-ye na ye-ye na mama ya-o m-mo-ya

11 Muzana-ye A-ye Ba-ka-ni huyu ki-na-ye ye kupa-ki-ka-ji-ti-ka za-mani-ka kapa-ka-ka

12 A-li-ka-ka-e za-ma-ni a-banda kupa-Sufi-ka-ni kupa-wa-ye e-ka-ku-ni e-li-ki-ka-na sibi-ka



Verses 25 - 36

25 - Keta-ma-la-ki-a-ke-sha mambo a-ka-yizi-di-sha ni-ki-zo-ka-sha-buho mambo ya-ke mabo-ye

26 - Keta A-bidi Baha-ma-a-ni na m-buho wa Sufi-a-ni Kurudi nyuma yu-a-ni... niwa-mbi-e moya moya

27 - Siku moja Mha-ma-a-di sugu (U-hu-asa-i-di ya nda-m-ye ma-sji-di ne saba-ba wata-pi-a

28 - U-mari ku Khatwa-bu na Ikin A-bu Ta-li-bu kulu-ma-ni buho Habi-bu ndiko wa-li-ko Keli-a

29 - Na A-budi Baha-ma-ni ye ku A-u-fi yu-a-ni na Sayyid A-thuma-ni wame-kaa shima-li-a

30 - Na wengine asi-ha-bu... wote wae-meke-to-ze-bu hape bana-po Habi-bu buho na-bi-a

31 - Wali-ka-ka-ji-ya-zi... waka-mu-a-na-ji-ze-si eka-je m-ye u-je-si... hata-ka-zi-bi-a

32 - Iku kama Mwa-ze-bu e-ye-pe-udo-ti-ze-bu kufi-ke bu-ze-ka-zi-bu jama-zi-ka-zi-bi-a

33 - Aka-shu-ha-farasi-ni-a-enda m-siki-zi-ni ha-m-kebi-ami-di e-ka-ngu-ka-na-ku-li-a

34 - Kuli a-hwe Mwa-ze-bu eka-ji-a na habi-bu na jami-asa-ke-byi waka-li-a buho u-mo-ye

35 - Mchima ku-li-ze-na e-mo-wa-ka-ze-na e-ka-ze-na e-mbi-zi-bi-a... m-ye-ze-bu s-mbi-a

36 - Se-na-eve Mwa-ze-bu ku-na-ni-ni ugho-i-bu li-ke kutwa-a-ji-bu... kangi-a-na-ku-li-a



## Verses 37 - 48

37  
Ma-a-ne-bu-a-ka-ne-na  
zi-ka-lu-mu-a-mi-wa  
na-ku-a-ma-li-se-na  
Mu-ngu-ni-li-ku-ba-ka

38  
E-we lu-mu-a-mu-ma-di  
ni-je-le-kwa-ke-bu-bu-di  
na-mi-yangu-zina-ka-ke  
zi-ka-wa-dhe-ku-bu-mbi-ke

39  
We-wa-n-dia-wa-mu-ma-zu  
ke-sho-mi-le-ya-a-zi-zi  
na-ka-na-na-mu-ma-ke-ke  
ku-ben-do-cha-ke-zi-li-ye

40  
Wa-we lu-mu-a-ha-lu-bu  
mu-ko-ke-wa-ku-na-bu  
ku-sho-mi-le-ya-wa-bu  
ku-ma-ha-ye-na-ya-ju-ke

41  
Ki-sha-cha-ku-bu-bu-ye-ye-ye  
na-ku-bu-bu-bu-ye-ye-ye  
mi-mi-na-na-na-ye-ye-ye  
ku-ma-ke-ke-ke-ke-ke-ke-ke

42  
Ku-wa-ngu-na-na-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye

43  
Ho-ke-li-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye

44  
Na-li-la-zi-li-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye

45  
Ho-ye-ni-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye

46  
Ha-ke-ni-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye

47  
Ni-li-po-ku-sha-sha-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye

48  
Ni-li-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye  
na-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye

Verses 49 - 58

49 Wote wabwaha hodi - a hedi-be yongwaha si - a pesi m - be kuba - ki - a njali wa - la nisa - a

50 Niti - po - kwitsha sili - mu mimi na wa - ngu ba u - mu zoho yangu a - zi - mi kuya kwake kwawu - ki - a

51 Ke - a - zimu kuya kwako - kwe hama ye dani ya - ho kwe ku (de) ni cho na - cho hangia ku - ji - enda - a

52 Hangia ku - ji - enda - za zowadiye hezi - ngw - za pebu - ngu - a - po ho - ngw - za zimu nyingi na hida - ya

53 Hafu ngwye mangi ma - li kuya kwako muni - sa - bi ku - m - zi - kwe a - ya - ti m - to - to wo - ngu m - mo - ya

54 Hafu ngwye kafa - ni ye - ngu neli mi - mi na mwana - ngu kuya kwako ku - mu - wa - wa - ngu kuya zidi ku - bu - li - a

55 Bassi enda ma - sa - ta - ni mimi na wangu sa - ghi - ni ku - ka - ye - le - ba - ba - ni kipa - ta - ke ti ka - ndi - a

56 Hamuna Suli - ba - ni kuyo Abdi Raha - ma - ni na mabwawe Sufi - ye - ni ndiani ka - ni - zidi - a

56A A - ki - Gaka kuni - y - a na mwana - a - ngu ku - mu - a - ma - li o - pa - ba - chuku - a mi - gwa - ni hangw - ki - a

56B Hangwika mi - gwa - y - ni kamba Abdir Raha - ma - ni tulo - fe ni masi - ki - ni mimi na wa - ngu dhuri - ye

57 Nira - ju sinu - kuba - li mimi na wangu Sufi - li ni bhiri y - lwa - e - ma - li mimi u - ka - ni - wa - li - a

58 Ka - mba Abdu Raha - ma - ni kuyo ye - ho zubi - ye - ni mimi na - shi - ka - zaha - ni kuba u - ka - ni - ba - fi - di - ya

Verses 59 - 65

59  
 Hamuuzo Bwana wa-  
 ngu waLobele-ni buku  
 kuzo-ngu keni-jiibu  
 kuzo ma-<sup>3</sup> ngu na ghadha ku  
 kumwangi-<sup>2</sup> a

57A  
 Keni-jiibu kuzo-  
 ku- li ne-nda za-ko  
 ni-ja- li wa a-mo ya-ko  
 a ya- li - siwezi ku-  
 muwele- a

60  
 Keni-jiibu kuzo  
 ghadha ku- ni mi-<sup>2</sup> mbro  
 ya dha ku- bu ku-  
 mesha ku- bu-ki-<sup>2</sup> - a

61  
 Ni mi-<sup>2</sup> mbro ya fe-  
 dha- li a ma-ki-<sup>2</sup> vi  
 bu-m- pa- ti muana o-  
 la- pa- o

62  
 Na ngug njema la-  
 u- ni - na kumashi na A-  
 mni- ni ziti-<sup>2</sup> mie  
 ku-m- si- ni na daro-<sup>2</sup> i  
 ya ku- va- a

63  
 Na fe-<sup>2</sup> rasi ta-ka-<sup>2</sup> li-  
 fu na ma-<sup>2</sup> fu- mu ya-<sup>2</sup> u-  
 se- fu pa ngo ku- li za-  
 ku- o

64  
 Na mude wa-ko ta-  
 ku- pa - si ku- ku- mi  
 uwe ku- pa - na pin-  
 di ya- si - pa- mu-  
 na- ni - ta- mu- u- a

65  
 Na si-<sup>2</sup> bu le- o ya-  
 si- ku- ha ta- mo-  
 ja si- ja- pa - ta mu-  
 ana ngu a- ta- ha-  
 ku- Lu- a

65A  
 gwe ku- mu- na- ni  
 fi- di- a

NOTES

- 1 J.W.T. Allen, *Tendi*, Heinemann's Educational Books, London, 1971.
- 2 J. Knappert, *Four Swahili Epics*, p. 6, Leyden, 1964.
- 3 Hemed Abdallah, *Utenzi wa Abdirahmani na Sufiyani*, The Eagle Press, Dar es Salaam, 1961. The text on the tape I used is nearly identical with this printed version but varies slightly from place to place.
- 4 M.A. Bryan, *The Bantu Languages of Africa*, pp. 126-129, Oxford University Press for International African Institute, 1959.
- 5 A.M. Jones, *African Music*, Occasional Papers of the Rhodes-Livingstone Museum, No. 4, p. 10, Livingstone, 1958.
- 6 A.M. Jones, *Studies in African Music*, Vol. I, pp. 216-228. Oxford University Press, 1959.
- 7 A.M. Jones, 'African Metrical Lyrics', in *African Language Studies*, No. V, publ. by the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1964. A.M. Jones, *Studies in African Music*, Vol. I, chap. 2, and notes on the dance songs throughout the book. Note: CCV is a linguists' sign, meaning a syllable composed of two consonants (C) plus one vowel (V).
- 8 H.G. Farmer, 'The Music of Islam' in *The New Oxford History of Music*, Vol. I, Chap. XI, pp. 447 and 450, Oxford University Press, 1957.
- 9 Curt Sachs, *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World East and West*, pp. 281 and 282. New York, 1943.
- 10 Curt Sachs, p. 225, and H.G. Farmer, 'Arabian Music' in *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, 1954 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 *utenzi* which is in the Hypodorian (Aeolian) mode.
- 11 J.W.T. Allen, *Tendi*, pp. 27-28. Note: Trochee = - U -  
Anapaest = U U -  
Third Paeon = U U - U  
Dactyl = - U U
- 12 Malcolm Guthrie, *The Classification of the Bantu Languages*, pp. 48-50. Oxford, 1948.
- 13 For a description of this Tonometer see A.M. Jones, *Studies in African Music*, Vol. I, pp. 234-236. Also 'A Simple Tonometer' in *Zeitschrift für Phonetik*, Heft 5/6, Berlin, 1955: and under the same title in *Nature*, No. 605, London, 1956.
- 14 See A.M. Jones, *Studies in African Music*, Vol. I, chap. 10.
- 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."

## THE TEXT

## UTENZI WA ABDIRRAHMANI NA SUFIYANI

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Bismillahi nandike<br>Rahamani yeye pweke<br>Rehema zote zi kwake<br>Rehemuka tuleteta   | 17. Nti zote akatisha<br>Apasiyengia kupisha<br>Na ambaye ajapisha<br>Kwa vita akamu uwa         | 33. Akashuka farasini<br>Akenda msikitini<br>Kamkabil' amini<br>Akanguka na kulia                |
| 2. Allahu ndiye Jalali<br>Aeziye akadhili<br>Hayuko tena wa pili<br>Ila ni yeye mumoya      | 18. Nti akazizua<br>Pasiwe mpita ndia<br>Na ambaye asikia<br>Hawezi mkaribia                     | 34. Kuliakwe Muarabu<br>Akalia na habibu<br>Na jamii ashabu<br>Wakalia kwa umoya                 |
| 3. Yupweke Rabbi Mannani<br>Akhera na duniani<br>Hayuko tena wa thani<br>Walaku mushabihia  | 19. Kazidereka amri<br>Za sakaarana jeuri<br>Warumi na Wamisiri<br>Wote waka mkimbia             | 35. Wakima kulizana<br>Tumwa wetu akanena<br>Nambia uliloona<br>Muarabu nambia                   |
| 4. Mfano wake hakuna<br>Kwa eziya Subuhana<br>Ni tumwa wake amina<br>Ndiye tumwa wa Adia    | 20. Akaavunja misafaara<br>Katika ndia za bara<br>Akiwapoka tijara<br>Zao walizotukua            | 36. Sema ewe Muarabu<br>Kuna nini ughaibu<br>Lililo kubwa ajabu<br>Kangia na kulia               |
| 5. Muhammadi mpendeza<br>Kwa Mola wake Aziza<br>Ndiye aloumbwa kwanza<br>Kusijawa vitu pia  | 21. Ndia zikaota mani<br>Pasi mpita njiani<br>Kwa Abudir Rahamani<br>Alivyo kuwazua              | 37. Maarabu akanena<br>Sikia tumwa amina<br>Natokea mbali sana<br>Kwangu nilikotokea             |
| 6. Aliumbwa Muhammadi<br>Na Mola wake Wadudi<br>Kabula watu junudi<br>Ndia alitangulia      | 22. Kuonakwe Sufiani<br>Akangia ghafulani<br>Akampa buldaani<br>Na wenzi asuwatia                | 38. Ewe tumwa Muhammadi<br>Nijile kwako kusudi<br>Nami yangu sina budi<br>Sitawacha kukwambia    |
| 7. Akesha kamdhukuru<br>Allahu Radhigha furu<br>Na Muhammadi bashiru<br>Mwenya hadithi ajaa | 23. Akanena Sufiani<br>Ya Abudir Rahamani<br>Ukae wewe kitini<br>Enzi ni yako jamia              | 39. Wewe ndiwe muombezi<br>Kesho mbele ya Azizi<br>Na tena ndiwe mpenzi<br>Kipendo chake Jaliya  |
| 8. Peni hadithi chuoni<br>Ya Abudir Rahamani<br>Kuyandika hatamani<br>Nanyi mpata sikiya    | 24. Maana ndiwe mwanangu<br>Kipendo cha roho yangu<br>Na katika enzi yangu<br>Kwa utakavyo tumia | 40. Wewe tumwa habibu<br>Mwoko wa watu na tabu<br>Kesho mbele ya Wahabu<br>Kama hayo nayajua     |
| 9. Huyo Abdir Rahamani<br>Ni shemegiyake Amini<br>Abu Bakari yakini<br>Ndiye aliyemzaa      | 25. Katamalaki akesha<br>Mambo akayizidisha<br>Nti zote akatisha<br>Kwa mambo yake mabaya        | 41. Kisha cha kutoka kwangu<br>Nis'kia tumwa wangu<br>Mimi n'na enzi yangu<br>Na mali mangi ajaa |
| 10. Mwanaisha ni nduguye<br>Huyu muzaliwa naye<br>Baba mmoya na yeye<br>Na mama yao mmoya   | 26. Kata Abdi Rahamani<br>Na mkwewe Sufiani<br>Turudi nyuma yuani<br>Niwambie moya moya          | 42. Kwangu n'na mangi mali<br>Na wangi mno rijali<br>Na wangi mno iyali<br>Rijali na nisaia      |
| 11. Mwana wa Abu Bakari<br>Huyo tinaye dhukuri<br>Lakin' al' hajiri<br>Zamani akapotea      | 27. Siku moja Mahammadi<br>Swala 'Llahu assaidi<br>Yu ndani ya masijidi<br>Na sababa wote pia    | 43. Haketi nyingi ayamu<br>Ni katika kula tamu<br>Hata sikuwa fahamu<br>Ni nyumbani nimekaa      |
| 12. Alipotea zamani<br>Akenda kwa Sufiani<br>Kwa babaye akahuni<br>Ali kijana sabia         | 28. Umari bin Khatwabu<br>Na ibin Abu Talibu<br>Kulumeni kwa Habibu<br>Ndiko waliko kalia        | 44. Nali laili nahari<br>Roho yangu hafikiri<br>Hauona ukafiri<br>Si kitu cha manufaa            |
| 13. Babaye akamuata<br>Akenda akafuata<br>Akamuabudu hatea<br>Na muke akamuoa               | 29. Na Abudi Rahamani<br>Ye bin Aufi yuani<br>Na Sayyid' Athumani<br>Wamekaa shimalia            | 45. Haona ni kupotea<br>Kuifuata dunia<br>Na dini isiyo ndia<br>Wala isiyo shofaa                |
| 14. Koa mwana nyumbani<br>Mtoto wa sultani<br>Ni binti Sufiani<br>Ndiye aliyemuoa           | 30. Na wengine ashabu<br>Wote wamekatarabu<br>Hapo panapo Habibu<br>Kushotoni kwa nabia          | 46. Hakiri moyoni mwangu<br>Hashahadia Mungu<br>Na wewe mtume wangu<br>Muhammadi murisaa         |
| 15. Akime kumuhutubu<br>Kakaa katakarabu<br>Akawa mtu haribu<br>Kwa ushujaa na kuwa         | 31. Wali katika julusi<br>Wakamuona farasi<br>Akaja mbio upesi<br>Hata kawakaribia               | 47. Nilipokwisha shahadi<br>Hawakusanya junudi<br>Wana na wangu abidi<br>Wa kaja kushahadia      |
| 16. Kawa shujaa mukali<br>Wala asiye mithali<br>Azizumbuke rijali<br>Mwenye kumtaadia       | 32. Juu kuna Muarabu<br>Aliyepanda rikabu<br>Kufika kwake karibu<br>Farasini kachelea            | 48. Nilipowambia hayo<br>Wakanifuata yayo<br>Wakakiri zao nyoyo<br>Pasiwe mtu kukata             |

- |     |  |      |   |     |  |
|-----|--|------|---|-----|--|
| 49. | Wote wakashahadia<br>Katika yangu karia<br>Pasi mtu kubakia<br>Rijali wala nisa              | 56.  | Hamuona Sultani<br>Huyo Abdi Rahamani<br>Na mukwewe Sufiyani<br>Ndiani kanizuia             | 60. | Kanijibu kwa ghadhabu<br>Fidia ya Muarabu<br>Ni mitembo ya dhahabu<br>Kumi shati kutia |
| 50. | Nilipokwisha silimu<br>Mimi na wangu kaumu<br>Roho yangu azimu<br>Kuja kwako kwambia         | 56A. | Akitaka kunia<br>Na mwanangu kumua<br>Mali apate chukua<br>Miguuni hangukia                 | 61. | Ni mitembo ya fedhati<br>Ya lulu na mayakuti<br>Ama hivi humpati<br>Mwanao atapotea    |
| 51. | Kaazimu kuja kwako<br>Kwa hamu ya dini yako<br>Kwa kulla nilicho nacho<br>Hangia kujianda    | 56B. | Hangukia miguuni<br>Hamba Abdir Rahamani<br>Niafu ni masikini<br>Mimi na ukaniwatia         | 62. | Na nguo ngema launi<br>Za kamashi na Ammini<br>Zitimie khamsini<br>Na darai ya kuva    |
| 52. | Hangia kujiwandaza<br>Zawadiye hazitengeza<br>Papunguapo hongeza<br>Tunu nyingi na hidaya    | 57.  | Niafu sinukutuli<br>Mimi na wangu tifili<br>Ni kheri utwae mali<br>Mimi ukaniwatia          | 63. | Na farasi takatifu<br>Na mafumu ya urefu<br>Na turusi na asefu<br>Panga kali za kukoa  |
| 53. | Hafunganya mangi mali<br>Kuja kwako murisali<br>Hamtukua ayali<br>Mtoto wangu mmoya          | 58.  | Kamba Abdu Rahamani<br>Huyo yako subiyani<br>Mimi nashika rahani<br>Hata ulete fidiya       | 64. | Na muda wako takupa<br>Siku kumi uwe hapa<br>Na pindi usipolipa<br>Mwanao nitamua      |
| 54. | Hafunga safari yangu<br>Nali mimi na mwanangu<br>Kuja kwako tumwa wangu<br>Kuja zidi kutubia | 59.  | Hamuza Bwana wangu<br>Watakani huku kwangu<br>Kanijibu kwa matungu<br>Na ghadhabu kumwingia | 65. | Na siku leo ya sita<br>Hata moja sijapata<br>Mwanangu atakeketwa<br>Ewe tumwa ni fidia |
| 55. | Bassi andama safari<br>Mimi na wangu saghiri<br>Tukayelekea bari<br>Hipata kati kandia       |      |   |     |  |