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*of Swahili Literature*

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MWANA KUPONA

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THE AZANIAN CLASSICS, II.

MWANA KUPONA

*The Wifely Duty*

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THE ADVICE OF  
MWANA KUPONA  
upon  
THE WIFELY DUTY

*from the Swahili texts*

BY

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*Sometime Professor of Bantu Languages,  
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AND

WILLIAM HICHENS  
*late of the District Administration  
East Africa*

— — —  
"And greatest of all is God's goodly  
pleasure—that is the grand achievement."

*Al-Bara'at.*

— — —  
THE AZANIA PRESS  
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اُتْبَلِ رَا

مَوَانَ كُپُونَا

اَمْتَنَعُ

مَوَانَ كُپُونَا بِنْتِ مَشَامُ

كُوْجِي

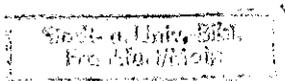
بِنْتِ يَاكِ مَوَانَ حَشِيمَةَ

بِنْتِ شَيْخِ مَتَاكِ

الْفَاوِي

كُنْدُ مَوْرِزِ ٩ ذِي الْحِجَّةِ ١٣٧٥ هـ

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## FOREWORD

The poem *Utendi wa Mwana Kupona* is the work of a Swahili woman of two generations ago. It is well-known along the East African coast between Lamu and Mombasa, where it has been preserved by oral transmission as well as in the form of manuscript copies made by scribes and other literate Africans. From six of these manuscripts this translation has been made.

They are written, as may be seen from the facsimile reproduction from one of them shewn on pages 32-3, in a modified form of the Arabic character adopted by the Swahili (long before Europeans arrived in Africa), as the vehicle of their written language. Certain usages have been imposed by the Swahili upon Arabic script for its convenient adaptation to their tongue. In reading the manuscripts we have followed the conventions observed by the Swahili in reading and writing this script, and the spellings of the scripts and of word forms peculiar to the Lamu dialect, in which the poem is composed, have been preserved in the transliteration.<sup>(a)</sup>

From the facsimile page it may be seen that

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<sup>(a)</sup> No attempt has been made, either in the transliteration of words derived from Arabic, or by changing words and forms peculiar to the Lamu dialect, to conform to the rules laid down

Swahili poetry has adopted the Arabian convention of the *eye-rhyme* — in this instance a line-end flourish of the letters  $\text{ي ا}$  (*ya, alif*). To retain this device the rhyming word ending each stanza has been written *-iya, -eya* (and in some cases, discussed later on, as *-wa*), throughout the transliteration. The *y* and *w* are not necessarily pronounced in all cases. In other places, where  $\text{ي}$  or  $\text{و}$  serve only as silent props to vowels, they have not been carried into the Roman letter.

For assistance in the work of preparing this translation, we are indebted to Professor Carl Meinhof, for the loan of two manuscripts from the Seminar für Afrikanische Sprachen, Hamburg; and to Mr Charles E. Whitton, of Lamu, who has furnished much helpful information with regard to Binti Sheikh, together with her photograph and a typescript of her petition,<sup>(b)</sup> as

for "standard Swahili" by the Inter-Territorial Linguistic Committee. We feel that the rules cannot be deemed to apply to the traditional literature which it is the aim of this series of volumes to preserve, as nearly as may be possible, in its original form.

See note on the Lamu dialect in the Glossary, and for fuller details, Stigand: *Grammar of Dialectic Changes in the Kiswahili Language*, Cambridge, 1915. "The Lamu dialect is freely used in all poetical works as being more suitable to the art." Mbarak Ali Hinawy,

<sup>(b)</sup> Mr Whitton wrote, 4th June, 1933, that the photograph was taken for him in 1923 by a former United States Consul, and that "the Consul, thinking, perhaps, that he was not being treated with proper respect, and certainly not realising that the old lady [Binti Sheikh] had done him a great honour in consenting to be photographed, completed a somewhat bombastic speech by saying, 'And

well as the manuscript of Binti Sheikh's poem, which Mr Whitton obtained from her daughter, Mwana Khadija binti Abubakar."<sup>(c)</sup>

Special thanks are due to our friend Sheikh Mbarak Ali Hinawy of Mombasa, who supplied two manuscripts and transcripts of the poem and much useful information by letter. We have to thank also Bwana Muhammad bin Abubakar bin Kijuma 'l-Bakariyyi of Lamu, well-known as a skilled scribe, poet and musician, and as a wood-carver of distinction, for his manuscripts, letters and notes as well as for the title-pages drawn by him for this book. Swahili manuscripts are often illuminated in this pleasing way.

All the Swahili words in the transliteration are to be found in either Krapf's or Madan's dictionaries or, otherwise, are accounted for in the glossary. The English version is designed as a literal translation of the Swahili, without embellishment, except that it avoids a number of awkward constructions which a slavishly literal translation, ignoring the spirit of the poem and Swahili literary usages, would have presented.

No attempt has been made to give a metrical translation and much of the beauty of rhythm

remember that I am the representative of the great United States !'

The reply came with no hesitation, as she made the most of her few inches; 'And I am the daughter of Sultans!' — with which she walked away." <sup>(c)</sup> For Binti Sheikh's poem see Appendix III.

and rhyme is lacking from the English version.

Of the theme and literary merits of the poem the reader must be left to judge. It is the first literary composition by an East African Native woman to be published in Great Britain.

*Alice Werner*

*William Hichens*

June, 1934.

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## INTRODUCTION

Mwana Kupona, the authoress of the poem before us, was a native of Pate, the principal town in the island of the same name.<sup>1</sup> She lived during the first half of the 19th century, dying in or about 1860. Her husband, a well-known personage in his day, was Muhammad Is-haq bin Mbarak bin Muhammad bin 'Umar I' Famau, commonly known as Bwana Mataka, Sheikh of Siu. The family to which he belonged claims to be of Arab-Portuguese origin. According to Mataka's grandson,<sup>2</sup> a Portuguese lady and her husband escaped from the wreck of the vessel in which they were bound for Goa and settled in Siu, probably during the 17th century.<sup>3</sup> The pair ultimately became converts to Islam; and when, in course of time, the husband died, the widow, still young and beautiful, after refusing several offers of marriage, at length accepted the hand of a young, handsome and wealthy Arab

<sup>1</sup> Siu and Faza, formerly small independent states, often at war with Pate, are included in the same island, which is the largest in the Lamu archipelago. The neighbouring island, Manda, contained two similar city-states, Manda and Takwa.

<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Abdallah Kombo, from whom Mr C. E. Whitton kindly obtained for us many details of the family history.

<sup>3</sup> The Portuguese, under Vasco da Gama, first arrived at Mombasa on April 7, 1498, effecting formal annexation in 1508. Pate, with other towns, was rendered tributary by the middle of the century and was intermittently occupied until 1698.



MWANA HASHIMA BINTI SHEIKH

*drawn by John Shirley Fox, R.B.A., from a photograph.*

belonging to the Banu 'Umair.<sup>4</sup> From that marriage was descended Sheikh Mataka, who was so powerful that Swahili tradition describes him as 'like a Sultan'.<sup>5</sup>

For over twenty years he carried on a kind of guerrilla warfare against Sayyid Sa'id, Sultan of Zanzibar. Burton,<sup>6</sup> upon information derived from Mataka's adversaries in Zanzibar, calls him 'that notorious plunderer, Bana M'takha, chief of Siwi (*sic*), a small territory near Lamu'; but reliable Native and Arab accounts, as reported by Sir Arthur Harding in 1897,<sup>7</sup> throw different light upon Mataka's ambitions. We are told:-

"In the xviii<sup>th</sup> century the aggressions of the Nabhan princes of Pattah upon Siu became so formidable that its people appealed to the Somalis living on the mainland opposite to protect them, promising them half their town and an equal share in their government if they succeeded in repelling the Nabhans.<sup>8</sup> The Somalis agreed, and the Siu people having further invoked the assistance of the Portuguese Governor of Mombasa, the Pattah Sultan was overcome. The Portuguese, however, having come as friends, remained as over-Lords of the country, occupying several forts and exercising all the attributes of sovereignty but not interfering actively in the internal concerns of the subject states. The Somalis were accordingly admitted to a share with the Wafamao,<sup>9</sup> the original Asiatic colonists, in the government of Siu, and a curious dual

<sup>4</sup> Banu(n), بنون, "sons", = descendants, family, clan.

<sup>5</sup> Stigand: *Land of Zinj*, London, 1913, p. 85.

<sup>6</sup> Burton: *Zanzibar*, London, 1872, I, 298.

<sup>7</sup> [C.—8683.] *Report on the Condition & Progress of the East Africa Protectorate from its Establishment to the 20th July, 1897*, p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> The Nabhani, from one of the ruling families of Maskat, are said to have come to the Island of Pate in A.H.600, about A.D.1300.

<sup>9</sup> The Wafamao (sometimes written Wafamao), are said to be of Chinese or, according to some, of Malayan descent. Stigand, *op.*

Administration was established, consisting of a Famao and a Somali sheikh, who jointly ruled the population, each administering justice to his own tribe through a Cadi appointed by himself.

This system survived the withdrawal of the Portuguese from this part of East Africa after the capture of Mombasa in 1698, and lasted till quite recently, when the Famao sheikh, a certain Mataka, attempted to concentrate the whole power in his own hands, and to destroy the separate rights of the Somalis. The latter appealed to Sayyid Säid of Muscat, who was beginning to intervene in the affairs of the East African Coast; but his assistance proved ineffectual, his forces were defeated, and Mataka became tyrant of Siu, and transmitted his authority at his death to his son, Mahomed-bin-Mataka."

Stigand<sup>10</sup> gives, also from Native sources, an account of wars and intrigues preceding Bwana Mataka's rise to power. About 1817<sup>11</sup> he appears to have engaged in a quarrel with Pate in which Hamed, the Mazrui governor of Mombasa was involved; and as the Mazrui were more or less continuously at war with Sayyid Sa'id, the Pate people naturally espoused the cause of the latter.

Sa'id sent an expedition against Siu in 1843 and himself went thither in the following year, but his Amir, Hamad bin Hamad was killed in an unsuccessful attack on Siu and Sa'id left for Maskat. He returned in 1844 and attacked Siu

*cit.* p.49, says, "Some accounts say that the Wafamao are Portuguese [this may be based upon Mataka's family tradition], and others that they are the Arabs originally sent by Abdul Malik" [from Syria]. A branch of the family is still living at Mombasa.

<sup>10</sup> Stigand: *op.cit.*, p. 84, seqq. Cf. Werner, A., *A Swahili History of Pate*, in *Journal of the African Society*, 1915, p. 293.

<sup>11</sup> A.H.1233. The *History of Pate*, supra, gives the date A.H.1236, (A.D.1820), but there are chronological discrepancies between the accounts which cannot, at present, be reconciled.

and Pate but was not permanently successful.

A sort of peace was made in 1846, through the intervention of Muhiyy-ed-Din, Kadhi of Zanzibar, a Lamu man. Burton, who may have got the information from the kadhi himself, says that Mataka sent back the Arab cannon, taken three years before, acknowledging the supremacy of Zanzibar (for a consideration), but retained his power, promising, but never intending, to pay an annual tribute of five thousand dollars.<sup>12</sup>

Bwana Mataka, as nearly as can be ascertained, married Mwana Kupona in or about 1836. He is said to have had three other wives, who bore him three sons, Bakari (or Abubakari), who was killed at Pate in 1855-6;<sup>13</sup> Muhammad, who succeeded Mataka as Sheikh of Siu; and 'Umar; (see *Genealogical Chart*). Muhammad, after carrying on the war for some time, sued to Sayyid Majid for pardon, which was granted; but when he went to Zanzibar (in 1864?), he was arrested and sent to Mombasa where, imprisoned in the

<sup>12</sup> *Op.cit.* p. 300. Burton was at Zanzibar in 1857, the year after Sayyid Sa'id's death.

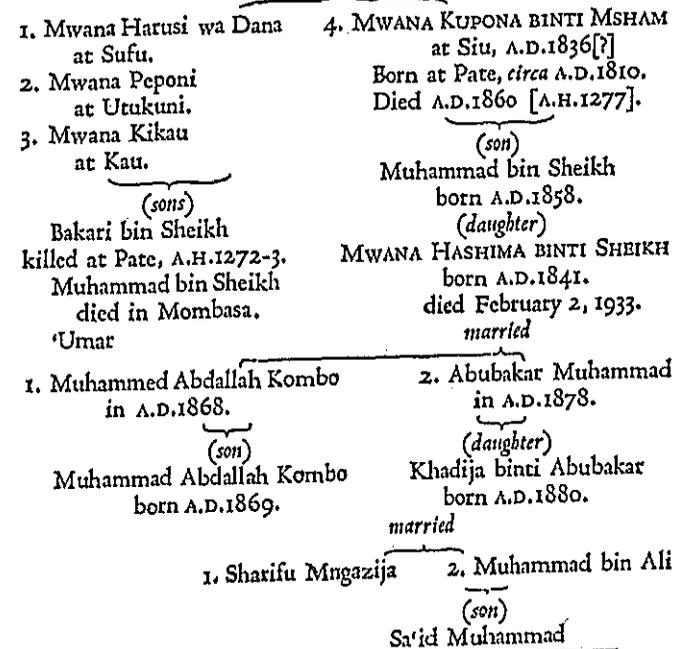
<sup>13</sup> *History of Pate*, p. 305: "They [Mataka's sons] submitted to the suzerainty of our lord Sa'id bin Sultan, both Abubakar and Muhammad. Sayyid Sa'id gave Abubakar some troops, together with Sultan Fumo Bakari, and they went to attack Sultan Ahmad at Pate.....They entered Siu during the night and fought till morning and Abubakar bin Sheikh Mataka and his men were utterly routed; and Abubakar was seized and taken to Pate, to Sultan Ahmad, and killed." Cf. Stigand: *op.cit.*, p. 94.

Mataka (Ishaka) bin Mbarak—*m.*—Mwana Hadiye binti Mataka

MUHAMMAD IS-HAQ BIN MBARAK BIN MUHAMMAD BIN 'UMAR  
L'FAMAU (BWANA MATAKA)

Born at Siu, A.D.1799. Died at Pate, A.D.1856.  
Succeeded his father as Sheikh of Siu, A.D.1826.

*married*



The above table is based mainly upon data given by Muhammad Abdallah Kombo, Mwana Kupona's grandson.

It thus appears to be approximately correct that Mwana Kupona, born *circa* 1810, married at about the age of 26, composing her poem in 1858, [A.H. 1275], about her 48th year by our, or her 51st by Muhammadan reckoning. Binti Sheikh would have been 16 to 17 at that time. Although Mwana Kupona states in the poem (*st.51*) that she was married for *ten* years, that need not, perhaps, be taken literally, as *kumi* (ten) is often used as a kind of typical number,

Fort, he died.<sup>14</sup> Umar also opposed Majid who ordered his arrest at Faza.<sup>15</sup> He was imprisoned at Lamu, but he survived and was concerned in the Witu rising of 1890.

Mwana Kupona had two children by Mataka, a son, Muhammad bin Sheikh, and a daughter, Mwana Hashima binti Sheikh,<sup>16</sup> to whom this poem is addressed. Mataka died, according to his surviving grandchildren, in his 57th year, at Pate in 1856.<sup>17</sup> Mwana Kupona outlived him for some years, dying in 1860 (A.H.1277) of an internal complaint.<sup>18</sup> She appears to have begun composing her poem some two years previously, though evidently in expectation of death. One

<sup>14</sup> [C.—8683] supra p. 14: "Muhammed bin Mataka.....an energetic prince, interfered in the affairs of Pattah [Pate], deposed the Sultan, Ahmad bin Sheikh, and placed a kinsman, Ahmad bin Fumo Luti, on the throne in his room: but becoming involved with his Pattah ally in trouble with Sayyid Sa'id, Sultan of Zanzibar, they were both eventually defeated by the Zanzibar forces, and while Ahmad bin Fumo Luti fled to Kau on the Ozi, Muhammad made submission to the Sultan. The latter, however, distrusting him, inveigled him to Zanzibar, where he was seized and sent to die in Mombasa Fort." Cf. Stigand: *op.cit.*, p. 96; and *History of Pate*, supra, p. 313.

<sup>15</sup> *History of Pate*, p.313. Stigand; *op.cit.* p.97.

<sup>16</sup> In local pronunciation, *Shebe*.

<sup>17</sup> *History of Pate*, p.303; "And the news [of Amir Hamad's defeat and death at Siu] reached our lord Sa'id bin Sultan at Faza, and he.....went to Maskat. Next year he returned, and placed Fumo Bakari at Faza and attacked Siu and Pate. At this time Sheikh Mataka died of disease." His grandson states, "*alikufa kwa marathi ya bawasiri*" i.e. he died of hæmorrhoidal disease.

<sup>18</sup> A note on the Friedrich Ms., reads: "Dieses Gedicht wurde

gathers from her own words that her illness was a long one and caused much suffering.

Of her son, Muhammad bin Sheikh, no particulars are forthcoming. Her daughter, Binti Sheikh, however, was a well-known character in her day. During the Witu rising of 1890-91,<sup>19</sup> she rendered valuable service to the British Administration by inducing some insurgents who had taken to the bush (among them her half-brother, Umar) to surrender and give up their arms. Sad to say, no suitable acknowledgment of her services was ever made by Government.<sup>20</sup>

She was twice married, first to Muhammad Kombo, by whom she bore a son, Muhammad

von Mwana Kupona binti Schamu vor etwa 50 Jahren verfasst nach der Geburt ihres Kindes in Erwartung ihres Todes." Her grandchildren state that "*Alikufa kwa marathi ya tumbo kutowa damu kwa mbele*," that is, she died of an hæmorrhagic ailment. The poem was completed, according to MSS., MB<sup>1</sup>, K<sup>2</sup> and K<sup>4</sup>, on 9th Al-Haj 1275 A.H. = 10th July 1858 A.D. See Appendix I.

<sup>19</sup> Colonial Reports—Annual, No.1463, Kenya, 1928, p.8. Cf. *History of Pate*, p.313; "There arose trouble between [Fumo Bakari, Sultan of Witu] and the Germans. Küntzell shot the porter at the gate and killed him, and the porters of the town gate who were there, fell upon Küntzell and the Europeans who accompanied him and killed them without asking for orders from Sultan Fumo Bakar.....and the people of Ndamuyu and of Mkonumbi, when they had received the news, they, too, killed the Europeans who were there.....the English demanded those people in order to bring them to trial, Sultan Fumo Bakar did not consent to deliver them up. The English Administration attacked Fumo Bakar, on the night of the 11th Rabi 'Auwal, 1308, and at eight o'clock in the morning they got possession of the town and drove him out of Witu." Cf. Stigand, *op.cit.* p. 99.

<sup>20</sup> For her Petition for recognition, see Appendix II.

Abdallah Kombo, and 20 years later to Abubakar bin Muhammad, to whom she bore a daughter, Khadija binti Abubakar. Binti Sheikh died at Lamu on February 2, 1933 at the age, according to her reckoning, of 95; but as the Muslim lunar year is shorter than our solar year by some eleven days, we would count her age as 92-3. Her two children are still living at Lamu.

I first heard of this poem at Lamu, in 1912, when I was shewn a manuscript copy by Mwana Chema binti Diwani, a lady belonging to the ancient royal house of the Nabhani. Mwana Chema entertained me and some of her friends by reading aloud passages from the poem, and I remember that she passed over one or more lines with a remark to the effect that they were *kutukana*, or indelicate. It is probable that their omission from the copy subsequently made for me by Muhamadi Kijuma,<sup>21</sup> (and perhaps from all authentic copies), may be held to account for the discrepancy between the number of stanzas, 'miate wa wahedi na mbili' (one hundred and three), counted by the poetess, and the number, ninety-eight, which appears to be authentically extant.

Other verses, forthcoming upon our enquiry in Lamu, seem to be of questionable authorship.

<sup>21</sup> This script is reproduced in facsimile in *Harvard African Studies*, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A., 1917, Vol. I, pp. 146-181. The six manuscripts with which it is now collated, are described in Appendix I hereto, with notes on their variations, together with six extra stanzas purporting to be the "omitted" verses.

## II

This *utendi* may most properly be described as a didactic poem.<sup>22</sup> It opens with an affectionate address to the daughter, somewhat in the style of the best passages in the Proverbs attributed to Solomon, which might be paraphrased thus:-

"My daughter, come and sit beside me—the end is not far off—receive instruction more precious than jewels, an ornament of grace about thy head, and chains about thy neck, profitable both for this world and the next. For man's life is but a vain shadow; yet if thou hold fast to the counsels of righteousness, thou wilt pass on to a better life hereafter."

Religious duties are dealt with at some length (*st.* 22 seqq.), and the poem removes some misconceptions, still occasionally repeated, as to the position of Swahili women. It has been said that they are 'remarkably indifferent to their religion and often unable to repeat the *Fathah*,'<sup>23</sup> but, although that may be so in some cases, this poem and my experience on the Coast support a contrary view.<sup>24</sup> Swahili women whom I met at Lamu were extremely well instructed in matters of the Faith. They do not, as a rule, attend the mosques, except during the *maulidi*,<sup>25</sup> but many are well read in the Quran, and devout women

<sup>22</sup> The term *utendi* covers religious subjects and epic themes.

<sup>23</sup> Baumann, O., *Usambara und seine Nachbargebiete*, Berlin, 1891.

<sup>24</sup> Stigand: *op.cit.* p. 114, "Although some of the Swahili women are as well or better read in the Koran than men.....they must never visit the mosques, except.....at Siu [where] women go to the mosque covered up in the *shiraa*." Cf. *St.* 46, and glossary.

<sup>25</sup> *Maulidi*, the celebration of the Prophet's birthday.

observe the hours of prayer in their own homes.

Many of them are adept at composing verse and are fond of reading and hearing poetry. Girls are taught to read and write and receive religious instruction at schools, usually kept by the wives or widows of *walimu*; or a woman teacher may attend at the girl's home.

Woman's obligatory and optional religious duties are specifically mentioned in *st.* 11-14.

Mwana Kuponu, however, disclaimed (*st.* 91) any technical precision in Islamic theology, and it is not quite clear whether by *faradhi*<sup>26</sup> she means prayers and fasts, or, in a more general sense, the Five Pillars, or Foundations, of Islam.<sup>27</sup> The

<sup>26</sup> The *faradhi*, *st.* 12, are duties explicitly enjoined by the Quran or by unquestioned tradition; their omission and transgression are regarded as acts of definite infidelity. The *wajibu*, *st.* 12, is the body of religious duty obligatory to observe, but not explicitly enjoined by the Quran; its contravention is sinful, but does not constitute denial of the Faith. *Mubah* is a further class of acts, not referred to in the poem, the omission of which is not sinful, but the commission of which is praiseworthy; their inclusion in the term *sunna*, *st.* 12, may be inferred. The *Sunnah*, the traditional relation of what the Prophet and his Companions regularly did, said or sanctioned, contains both optional and obligatory duties. It is supplemented by the *Mustahhab*, the relation of what the Prophet occasionally did or refrained from.

This whole body of Moslem law is divided into five branches dealing with matters of belief, morality, devotion, deeds, punishments; and a sharp distinction is drawn between that which is lawful and unlawful in matters of faith and acts secular and religious.

<sup>27</sup> The Swahili call these *nguzo*. They are: (1) the repetition of the creed; (2) the five daily prayers; (3) the Fast of Ramadhan; (4) annual almsgiving; (5) the Pilgrimage to Mekkah. Ahmadi bin Abubakar affirmed that the fast of the Ashura, which is not kept as a fast in some Moslem countries, is one of the obligatory

allegation of an Islamic doctrine to the effect that 'women have no souls', is of interest in relation to *st.* 25-29. There is no warrant in the Quran for the statement (*st.* 26-27) that a wife's chance of entry into Paradise is dependent upon her husband's will, though there appears to be a popular belief to that effect,<sup>28</sup> as, for instance, an old dame at Lamu on learning that I was not married, asked, 'Then how do you expect to get

*faradhi*, there being sixteen reasons for its observance, i.e., that it is the anniversary of the day upon which God consented to forgive Adam; the Apostle Idris entered into rest; the Prophet Noah came out of the Ark; God saved the Prophet Abraham from the fire (Quran xxi, 68, 69.); God sent down the law; the Prophet Joseph was released from prison; God gave his right to the Prophet Jacob (Quran, xii, 96); God healed the Prophet Job; God took the Prophet Jonah out of the whale's belly; God divided the sea for the Children of Israel; God forgave David; God gave the kingdom to the Prophet Solomon; God forgave Muhammad his former and his latter sins; God created the world; God caused the first rain to fall; God caused mercy to descend to earth for the first time. Ahmadi added that the apostles kept the fast of Ashura. Cf. Douffé, E. *Magie et Religion dans l'Afrique du Nord*, Algiers, 1908, p. 526. It is not improbable that Mwana Kuponu had performed the Pilgrimage. Muhamadi Kijuma states that his mother had been to Mekkah five times.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Davey: *The Sultan and his Subjects*, London, 1907, p. 94, "The good wife", the Koran further asserts, 'has a chance of eternal happiness only if that be her husband's will'. The Imam Abdul Majid of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, states, "Davey attributes to the Quran a verse which does not exist." [Letter of May 3, 1933.] Implications of the inferiority of women amongst the Swahili must have come in with the Arabs; but a good deal of Islamic "popular" belief may be dregs left over from the Days of the Ignorance. African animism seems to make no distinction in the afterlife of the sexes, except, perhaps, that the Zulus believe that some old women come back after death as lizards rather than as snakes, the form usually taken by spirits (*amadhlozi*).

into Paradise?', though in that case there was no actual suggestion that a husband could keep me out, if he so desired. Indeed, the notion is distinctly negatived by 'Allah has promised to the believing men *and the believing women*.....goodly dwellings in gardens of perpetual abode'; and elsewhere in the Quran.<sup>29</sup>

As regards conduct; truthfulness, discretion and courtesy are especially insisted on (*st.* 13, 14.), as is the fivefold duty, to God, to His Prophet, to father, mother and husband (*st.* 22-23).

Directions for household management, social intercourse, and kindness to the poor, follow the main argument of the poem—advice upon the duties of a wife. It certainly does not inculcate the notion of slavish obedience.

Mwana Kuponu dwells on the happiness of her married life and on the grief of her irreparable loss. Then, turning to the contemplation of her 'approaching separation from this world', she commends to the care of the Eternal Goodness,<sup>30</sup> her younger brother, her sisters and their children, and her own. In *st.* 57 she directs Binti Sheikh to look after her brothers.<sup>31</sup> The poem

<sup>29</sup> Muhammad Ali: *Translation of the Holy Quran*, Lahore, 1928, ix.72, xiii, 23, and p. cxiii. See also Sale, *Prelim. Discourse*, p.80.

<sup>30</sup> For details of the Divine Attributes, (the Hundred Names of God), see *Islamic Review*, Feb. 1931; Khwaja Kamal ud-Din: *Islam & Civilization*, Woking, 1931; Muth. Ali, *op.cit.* p. xlviii seqq.

<sup>31</sup> Her surviving brothers, 'Umar and Sheikh Muhammad II.

concludes with the very touching confession of faith of a devout Moslem woman.

The future life is not dwelt on to any great extent, but it may be noted that Paradise, *Peponi*, is mentioned twice, Hell, *Motoni*, only once.<sup>32</sup>

### III

The poem throws some interesting sidelights on the life of a well-to-do Swahili household.

The warning against undue familiarity with servants (*st.* 20), suggests that relations between mistresses and slaves, apart from individual cases of hardship and cruelty, were easy rather than otherwise; and this was borne out by instances which came under my own observation.<sup>33</sup>

The more personal attentions bestowed by a Swahili wife upon her husband are described in *st.* 30-35. They include the gentle rubbing of the muscles, *kupapasa*, to relieve fatigue;<sup>34</sup> anointing, *kusinga*, with perfumes and aromatic substances, such as sandalwood; shaving, *kunyoa*, done first from the nape of the neck, upward and forward, and then from the forehead backwards, *kupaliliza*; ablutions and shower-baths, *kukiza*, and fumiga-

<sup>32</sup> For references in the Quran, see Muth. Ali, *op.cit.* p. lxii.

<sup>33</sup> When Britain assumed the mandate over German East Africa (now the Tanganyika Territory), numbers of slaves brought to the Administrative offices to receive their *khati za uhuru*, or certificates of freedom, protested vigorously, much preferring the shelter and comfort of slavery in indulgent Arab or Swahili households to the doubtful sweets of liberty in the field of free labour.

<sup>34</sup> As distinct from the more vigorous massaging, *kukanda*.

tion with frankincense, *ubani*, aromatic aloewood, *udi*, and fragrant resins, *wvumba*.<sup>35</sup>

The toilet of the Swahili wife is described in st. 38-41 and includes bathing and cold showers,<sup>36</sup> the care of the hair,<sup>37</sup> hands and feet, the uses of cosmetics, scents<sup>38</sup> and jessamine blossoms.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *Uvumba* = galbanum, a resin extracted from an umbelliferous plant, *Galbanum officinale*, of the nature of fennel. *Uvumba* is also the name of a labiate, balm-like herb, scented like lemon verbena.

*Liwa*, Madagascar sandalwood, from the shrub *Osyris tenuifolia*, is also used; cf. Velten, *Suaheli-Worterbuch*, I, pp. 216, 488, II, 608.

<sup>36</sup> Swahili bathrooms contain either a cistern built into an angle of the roof and walls and fitted with a plug, by removing which the bather can obtain a douche; or a cemented tank, from which water is dipped out with a *kata*, a coconut-shell ladle.

<sup>37</sup> Usually Lamu women part their hair in the middle, twisting it into a knot at the back. Farther south the hair is plaited into ridges from the forehead to the nape of the neck.

<sup>38</sup> *Marashi* (st. 40), is a term applied to any liquid scent. Rosewater is made from the dried buds and leaves of *Rosa gallica*, var. *damascena*, powdered, and mixed with perfumes, such as cloves, sandalwood and ginger, shaken up in water. The Persian rose used for distilling *attar* of roses, is the only one grown on the Swahili coast, and that not very freely. One kind of *marashi* is a spurious geranium oil from *Andropogon Martini*; cf. Velten, *op.cit.* II, 597, 843. *Dalta*, prepared from the wood of the *mdalia* tree, is usually mixed with *tibu*, which is a mixture of powdered sandalwood, rose-leaves and cloves. Henna is usually imported, but local henna is made from leaves or flowers of the *mkokowa* tree. *Wanda*, lit. antimony; but a local substitute is made by burning almond-shells and resins or rice, which are then powdered and mixed with sesamum. Lampblack is also used; cf. Velten, *op.cit.* I, p. 507, s.v. *wanja*.

<sup>39</sup> At least two kinds of jessamine, *afu* and *tundaufu*, grow wild in East Africa. The Indian variety, *Jasminium sambac*, is cultivated. Jessamine blossoms are hawked for sale in Lamu and Mombasa, either loose on brass trays, or made up with other sweet-scented substances and tied with strips of pandanus-leaf, *mkadi*, into little

## IV

The metre of the poem is the same as that of *Hadithi ya Mikidadi na Mayasa*,<sup>40</sup> *Utendi wa Ayubu*,<sup>41</sup> and other poems of this type.

It consists of four-line stanzas, each line having, in theory, eight syllables (*mizan*). But this arrangement, borrowed from Arabic poetry, cannot be applied strictly to the Swahili language, where the rule of the penultimate stress gives rise to a fundamental difference of rhythm.<sup>42</sup>

Swahili verse, like our English verse (when not fashioned too closely after classical models), is measured by beats or stresses and not by the quantity of the syllables, as in Arabic, and (like our old ballads and the freer kinds of modern poetry), allows considerable latitude in the number of unstressed syllables intervening between the stresses. As a rule, the lines in this kind of

bunches known as *vikuba*. Cf. Madan, s.v. *kiguba*. Single blossoms are often worn in the hair or in the lobes of the ears; the women also make them into chains, to be worn around the neck, or hung up in the house to scent the rooms; and they may be threaded upon little sticks, or strewn upon the coverlet after the bed is made.

For the parts of the bed, see Madan: p. 165, s.v. *kitanda*. The *firasha* or coverlet is usually made of stout quilted cotton. Better-class households own one or more four-post beds with a frame to support a mosquito-net (*ehandarua*). Elaborate beds were in use in the golden days of Lamu, when it is recorded that the beds were entered by means of silver ladders (*History of Pate*, supra, p. 161).

<sup>40</sup> *Mikdad & Mayasa*, (The Azanian Classics, Vol. I.) 1932.

<sup>41</sup> Werner, A. in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, Vol. II, 1-3.

<sup>42</sup> For the rules of Arabic prosody, see Thornton and Nicholson, *Elementary Arabic Grammar*, Cambridge, 1905: pp. 217-223.

stanza have three stresses, though occasionally they appear to have only two. The following is fairly typical:-

St. 39 Náwe ipámbe libási,  
Ukúe káma 'arúsi,  
Magúu tía kugési,  
Na mskonóni makówa.

St. 19 contains eight syllables to the line:-

Wa-la si-tu-ku-e dha-na,  
Kwa ma-mbo u-so-ya-o-na,  
Na kwa-mba na ku-no-ng'o-na,  
Ta-ha-dha-ri na-kwa-mbi-ya.

They are quite correctly counted but, if read with sole attention to their number (in which case one tends to glide into an iambic rhythm), the verse would probably be unintelligible to a Swahili.

The arrangement of rhymes is that lines 1-3 rhyme together, with a different rhyme for each stanza, while line 4 carries the same final rhyme throughout the poem. In this instance the final rhyme is intended to be *ya*, which covers all words ending in *-ia*, *-ea*, as well as those actually ending in *-ya*. But this rhyme is not carried out consistently. Six stanzas have the final rhyme in *-aa*, seventeen in *-wa*; but in the circumstances in which the poem was composed, these small inconsistencies are scarcely surprising.

*Alice Werner*

London, 1934.





UTENDI WA MWANA KUPONA  
THE ADVICE OF MWANA KUPONA  
*upon* THE WIFELY DUTY

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UTENDI WA  
MWANA KUPONA

Baiti 1 - 4

*Negema, wangu binti,  
Mchachefu hasanati.  
Upulike wasiati.  
Asaa ukazingatiya.*

*Maradhi yamenishika,  
Hatta yametimu mwaka  
Siyapata kutamka  
Neno lema kukwambiya.*

*Ndoo mbee ujilisi,  
Na wino na karatasi.  
Moyoni nina hadisi  
Nimependa kukwambiya.*

*Kisake kutakarabu,  
Bisumillahi kutubu.  
Umtaye na habibu,  
Na sahabaze pamoya.*

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THE ADVICE OF  
MWANA KUPONA

Stanzas 1 - 4

*Attend to me, my daughter,  
Me, unworthy of God's award.  
Let you heed my last instructions.  
Be it hoped that you follow them.*

*Sickness has seized upon me.  
It has now lasted a whole year,  
As yet I have not had chance to utter  
A word of good advice to you.*

*Come forward and seat yourself,  
With ink and paper.  
I have matters at heart  
That I have longed to tell to you.*

*Now that you have come near,  
Write, "In the Name of God".  
Let you name Him and The Beloved,  
Together with His Companions.*

*Ukisa kulitangaza  
Ina la Mola Muweza,  
Basi, tuombe majaza,  
Mngu tatuwafikiya.*

*Mwana Adamu si kitu.  
Na ulimwengu si wetu.  
Walau hakuna mtu  
Ambao atasaliya.*

*Mwanangu, twaa waadhi,  
Pamoya na yangu radhi.  
Mngu Atakubifadhi,  
Akepuane na baa.*

*Twaa, nikupe hirizi,  
Uifungeto kwa uzi,  
Uipe na taazizi,  
Upate kuyangaliya.*

*Nikutungie kidani  
Cha lulu na marijani.  
Nikuvike mke shani,  
Sbingoni kikizagaa.*

*When you have thus acknowledged  
The Name of God the Mighty,  
Then let us pray for His bounty,  
As He the Lord shall deem fit to us.*

*A son of Adam is nought,  
And the world is not ours.  
Nor is there any man  
Who shall endure for ever.*

*My child, accept my advice,  
Together with my blessing.  
God, He will protect you,  
That He may avert evil from you.*

*Take this amulet that I am giving you.  
Fasten it carefully upon a cord,  
Regard it as a precious thing,  
That you may cherish it with care.*

*Let me string for you a necklace  
Of pearls and red coral,  
That I adorn you as a notable woman,  
When it shines upon your neck.*

*Penda nikupe kifungo  
Kizuri kisicho ongo.  
Uvae katika shingo,  
Utaona manufaa.*

*Yangu utakaposhika,  
Mwanangu, butosumbuka.  
Duniani utavuka,  
Na Akhera utakiya.*

*La kwanda, kamata dini.  
Faradhi usiikhini,  
Na Suna ikimkini,  
Ni Wajibu kuitiya.*

*Pili, uwa na adabu,  
Na ulimi wa thawabu,  
Uwe kitu mahabubu,  
Kulla utakapongiya.*

*La tatu, uwa sadiki,  
Ushikalo ulithiki.  
Mtu asoshika haki,  
Sandamane naye ndiya.*

*For love let me give you a clasp,  
A beautiful one, without a flaw.  
Let you wear it upon your neck,  
And you shall perceive benefits.*

*While you shall hold to my counsel,  
My child, you shall escape trouble.  
You shall pass through this world,  
And cross over to the life beyond.*

*In the first place, hold fast to the Faith,  
Do not neglect to fulfil the Faradh,  
And the Sunnah, when they are possible,  
And the Wajibu, to perform them.*

*Secondly, be of good behaviour,  
With a discreet tongue,  
That you be as one beloved,  
Wheresoe'er you shall enter.*

*Thirdly, be truthful,  
What you undertake, take pains to do.  
A person who holds not to justice,  
Let you not follow in his path.*

*Tena, mwanangu, idhili,  
Mbee za makabaili.  
Uwaonapo mahali,  
Angusa kuwainukiya.*

*Wangiapo wenukie,  
Na moyo ufurahiye.  
Kisa uwapeke mbee,  
Watakapokwenda ndiya.*

*Ifanye mteshiteshi  
Kwa maneno yaso ghashi.  
Wala sifanye ubishi,  
Watu wakayatukiya.*

*Nena nao kwa mzaha,  
Yawatiayo furaha,  
Yawapo ya ikiraba,  
Kheri kuinyamaliya.*

*Wala situkue dhana  
Kwa mambo usoyaona.  
Na kwamba na kunong'ona,  
Tabadhari, nakwambiya.*

*Further, my child, learn how to behave  
Before people of rank.  
When you see them at any place,  
Hasten to pay them respect.*

*When they enter, do you rise up,  
And let your heart rejoice.  
Afterwards, conduct them forth,  
When they wish to go their way.*

*Let you make yourself entertaining,  
By words that have not guile.  
But do not make impertinent jokes,  
Which people dislike.*

*Talk with them cheerfully  
Of things which give them pleasure,  
But when words might give offence,  
It is better to hold oneself silent.*

*Neither maintain opinions  
On matters you have not perceived,  
As for gossiping and whispering,  
Be upon your guard, I tell you.*

*Sitangane na watumwa,  
Illa mwida wa khuduma.  
Watakuvutia tama,  
    Labuda nimekwambiya.*

*Sandamane na wayinga,  
Wasoyua kuitunga.  
Ziumbe wasio changa,  
    Wata kuwakurubiya.*

*Mama, pulika maneno.  
Kiumbe ni radhi tano,  
Ndipo apate usono  
    Wa Akhera na duniya.*

*Nda Mngu na mtumewe,  
Baba na mama wayue.  
Ya tano nda mumewe.  
    Mno imekaririwa.*

*Nawe radhi mumeeo.  
Siku zote mkaao.  
Siku mukhitariwao,  
    Awe radhi mekuwiya.*

*Do not associate with slaves  
Except during household affairs.  
They will draw you into disgrace,  
    As, perhaps, I have told you.*

*Do not go about with foolish people,  
Who know not to control themselves.  
As to persons who have no modesty,  
    Avoid having contact with them.*

*Little mother, listen to this counsel.  
For a woman there are five blessings,  
Whereby she may obtain the peace  
    Of the next world and this.*

*They are of God and His Prophet,  
Her father and mother, she must know.  
The fifth is of her husband.  
    Much has this been affirmed.*

*Let your husband be content with you,  
All the days that you dwell together.  
On the Day on which ye are chosen,  
    May he be happy and hold it due to you.*

*Na ufapo wewe mbee,  
Radhi yake izengee,  
Wende uitukuzie.  
Ndipo upatapo ndiya.*

*Na siku ufufuwao,  
Nadhari nda mumeo,  
Taulizwa atakao,  
Ndilo takalotendewa.*

*Kipenda wende Peponi,  
Utapekwa dalibini.  
Kinena wende Motoni,  
Huna budi, utatiwa.*

*Keti naye kwa adabu.  
Usimtie ghadhabu.  
Akinena, simjibu;  
Itahidi kunyamaa.*

*Enda naye kwa imani.  
Atakalo simukhini.  
We naye sikindaneni,  
Mkindani buumiya.*

*And, should you die before him,  
Do you seek his blessing,  
That you may go forth exalted.  
Thus shall you find the right road.*

*And on the Day of Resurrection,  
The award is with your husband;  
He will be asked what he shall wish,  
And as he wishes, it shall be done.*

*If he wish that you go to Paradise,  
You will forthwith be brought thither.  
If he says that you go to the Fire,  
Without escape you will be put there.*

*Live with him befittingly.  
Do not provoke him to anger.  
If he rebukes you, do not answer back;  
Endeavour to control your tongue.*

*Keep faith with him.  
That which he desires do not withhold.  
You and he, dispute not together.  
A quarreller always is hurt.*

*Kitoka, agana naye,  
Kingia, mkongowee.  
Kisa, umtandikie  
Mahala pa kupumua.*

*Kilala siikukuse,  
Mwegeme, umpapase.  
Na upepo, nasikose  
Mtu wa kumpepeya.*

*Kivikia simwondoe,  
Wala sinene kwa yowe.  
Keti papo, siinue,  
Chamka kakuzengeya.*

*Chamka siimuhuli,  
Mwandikie maakuli.  
Na kumtunda muili,  
Kumsinga na kumowa.*

*Mnyoe, umpalilize,  
Sharafa umtengeze.  
Mkukize, mfukize,  
Bukurata wa ashiya.*

*When he goes out, take leave of him,  
When he returns, pleasantly greet him.  
Then let you set ready for him  
A place of ease-taking.*

*When he rests, do not betake yourself off.  
Draw near to him, caress him.  
And for cooling air, let him not lack  
A person to fan him.*

*When he sleeps, do not arouse him,  
Nor let you speak with a loud voice.  
Stay there; rise not from your place,  
That, waking, he need seek for you.*

*When he awakes, delay you not  
To prepare for him a meal.  
And to take care of his body,  
Perfuming him and bathing him.*

*Shave him, that his skin be smooth,  
Let his beard be trimmed.  
Let him enjoy ablution and incense,  
Morning and evening.*

*Mtunde kama kijana  
Asioyua kunena.  
Kitu changalie sana—  
Kitokacho na kungiya.*

*Mpumbaze apumbae,  
Amriye sikatae.  
Maovu kieta yeye,  
Mngu atakuteteya.*

*Mwanangu, siwe mkoo,  
Tenda kama uonao.  
Kupea na kuosha choo,  
Sidharau marra moya.*

*Na kowa na kuisinga,  
Na nyee zako kufunga,  
Na yasimini kutunga,  
Na firashani kutiya,*

*Nawe ipambe libasi,  
Ukae kama 'arusi.  
Maguu tia kugesu,  
Na mikononi makowa.*

*Look after him like a child  
Who knows not how to speak.  
One thing you must look well to—  
The household expenses and income.*

*Be gay with him, that he be amused,  
Do not oppose his authority.  
If he brings ill to you,  
God will defend you.*

*My child, be not a sloven.  
Do as you see done.  
To sweep and wash out a bathroom,  
Do not scorn to do it at once.*

*As to bathing and perfuming yourself,  
And plaiting your hair,  
And stringing jessamine blossoms,  
And strewing them upon the coverlet,*

*Do you adorn yourself with finery,  
That you remain like a bride.  
Put anklets upon your ankles,  
And bracelets upon your arms.*

*Na kidani na kifungo,  
Sitoe katika shingo.  
Miwili siwate mwengo  
Ya marashi na daliya.*

*Pete sitoe zandani,  
Hina sikome nyaani,  
Wanda siwate matorni  
Na nshini kuitiya.*

*Nyumba yako i nadhifu,  
Mumeo umsharifu,  
Wakutanapo sufufu,  
Msifu ukimweteya.*

*Moyowe alipendalo,  
Nawe ufuata lilo.  
Yambo limtukialo,  
Siwe mwenye kumweteya.*

*Ukutiwapo kutoka,  
Sharuti rubusa taka.  
Uonapo meudhika,  
Rudi na kuiketiya.*

*And the necklace and clasp,  
Remove them not from your neck.  
To your body deny not the fragrances  
Of rosewater and dalia powder.*

*The rings remove not from your fingers,  
Nor lack henna on your fingernails.  
Cease not to put wanda below your eyes  
And upon your eyebrows.*

*Let your house be well kept,  
That you honour your husband  
When people foregather there,  
And then you will bring him praise.*

*That which he desires in his heart,  
You, also, let you follow that.  
As for a matter offensive to him,  
Be you not the one to indulge it.*

*Whenever you need to go out,  
Be sure to ask leave.  
When you see that he is vexed,  
Return and sit you at home.*

*Fuata yake idhini,  
Awe radhi kwa yakini.  
Wala sikae ndiani,  
Saa ya 'ne ikasiya.*

*Wala sinene ndiani,  
Sifunue shiraani.  
Mato angalia tini,  
Na uso utie haya.*

*Rejea upesi kwako,  
Ukaka na bwanako.  
Utengeze matandiko,  
Mupate kuilaliya.*

*Na bwanako mtukuze,  
Sifa zake uzeneze,  
Wala simshurutize  
Asoweza kutukuwa.*

*Akupacho mpokeye,  
Na moyo ufurahiye.  
Asilotenda kwa yeye,  
Huna haja kumwambiya.*

*Wait upon his permission,  
That he may truly be content.  
Do not loiter by the way,  
When the fourth hour has passed.*

*And do not gossip by the way,  
Nor uncover from within the shiraa.  
Let your eyes be downcast,  
Your countenance let it be modest.*

*Return quickly to your home,  
That you may sit with your lord.  
Let you make ready cushions and rugs,  
That you may take your ease together.*

*And your lord, let you exalt him,  
His praises, spread them abroad,  
But do not make obligations for him  
Which he is unable to fulfil.*

*That which he gives you, accept from him  
With a heart which rejoices.  
What he does not of his own accord,  
You have no need to tell him.*

Uonapo uso wake,  
Funua meno, uteke.  
Akwambialo lishike,  
Illa kuasi Jaliya.

Mama, sinoe ulimi,  
Nioleza wako umi.  
Naliowa nyaka kurni,  
Tusitete siku moya.

Naliowa na babako,  
Kwa furaha na ziteko.  
Tusondoleane mbeko,  
Siku zote twalokaa.

Siku moya tusitete.  
Ovu langu asipate,  
Na lake lisinikute,  
Hatta akakhitariwa.

Yalipokuya faradhi,  
Kanikariria radhi,  
Kashukuru kafawidhi,  
Moyo wangu katushiya.

When you look upon his face,  
Reveal your teeth in a smile.  
That which he tells you, hold to it,  
Except to rebel against the Highest.

My child, be not sharp-tongued.  
Be you like me, your mother.  
I was married ten years,  
Yet we did not quarrel one single day.

I was wed by your father  
With happiness and laughter.  
We did not abase our mutual respect  
All the days that we lived together.

Not one day did we quarrel.  
He met with no ill from me,  
And from him none did I encounter,  
Unto the time he was chosen.

And when death came,  
He repeatedly told me of his content,  
And resigned himself to God in peace,  
While my heart was filled with grief.

*Tangu hapo hata yeo,  
Siyanyamaa kilio.  
Nikumbukapo pumbao,  
Na wingi wa mazoeya.*

*Watu wakupulikana,  
Milele bukumbukana.  
Illa wenye kushindana,  
Milele huiyutiya.*

*Mausio ya mvuli,  
Allah Allah ya'amili.  
Na nduguzo na abali,  
Wapende nakuusiya.*

*Uwaonapo sabibu,  
Ambao wakunasibu,  
Wakikwambia karibu,  
Angusa kukurubiya.*

*Na wachandika chakula,  
Uchambiwa nawe nla.  
Wala siweke mubula,  
Nyuma nyuma kurejeya.*

*From that time unto this day,  
I yet cease not lamentation,  
When I remember the ease,  
And plenty of our accustomed life.*

*If people heed one another,  
For ever they share fond memories.  
But those who strive against each other,  
Regret it for eternity.*

*The instructions of your husband,  
With faithful care discharge them.  
And your kindred and relations,  
Love them, I adjure you.*

*Whenever you see friends,  
Who are your equals by birth,  
If they bid you welcome,  
Hasten to visit them.*

*And if they lay out a meal,  
And you are asked, let you eat too.  
But let you not leave a long delay,  
Before returning to your home.*

*Wala sifanye kiburi,  
Nla batta ushakiri.  
Usiyakuta sikiri,  
Ukambwa na kondolewa.*

*Watu wote wa umini,  
Kwako na wawe wendani.  
Sipende masalatini,  
Washinde ukiwepurwa.*

*Sipende wenye jamali,  
Na utukufu wa mali,  
Fukara ukawadhili,  
Cheo ukawavundiya.*

*Akupendao mpende,  
Akuizao mwenende,  
Kwa zema mvundevunde,  
La'ala akaridhiya.*

*Na ayapo mubitaji,  
Mama, kwako, simuhuji.  
Kwa uwezalo mbuji,  
Angusa kumtendeya.*

*And do not be discourteous,  
Eat until you are satisfied.  
If not yet content, do not confess it,  
When told that the dish be removed.*

*All people who are safe to trust  
At your home, then let them be friends.  
Do not be fond of quarrelsome people,  
Overcome them by avoiding them.*

*Do not love those who affect elegance  
With the arrogance of wealth,  
While it despises the poor,  
And disparages to them their lot.*

*She who loves you, love her.  
She who dislikes you, go to her,  
By kindness disperse her ill-feeling,  
Mayhap she will be appeased.*

*And when there comes one in need,  
My child, to you, do not embarrass him.  
With what skill you are able,  
Hasten to assist him.*

Mama, baya yasikize,  
Tafadhbali sinipuze.  
Utaona nafuuze,  
    Za akbera na duniya.

Tamati maneno yangu,  
Kukuusia, mwanangu.  
Sasa tamuomba Mngu,  
    Anipokelee dua.

Kwani yote tunenao,  
Mwana Adamu ni puo.  
Mola ndiye Awezao,  
    Kupoteza na kongowa.

Nakuombawe Manani,  
Unitilie auni,  
Ninenayo ulimini,  
    Na yote nisoyatowa.

Yote nimezoyanena,  
Rabbi, takabali minna,  
Na yasalieyo tena,  
    Nakuomba nitendeya.

My child, hearken to these words.  
I pray you, do not ignore me.  
You will behold the advantage of them,  
    For the life to come and for this.

This is the end of my words,  
Directing you, my daughter.  
Now will I entreat God,  
    That He receive of me a prayer.

For all that we may say,  
A child of Adam is but empty folly.  
The Lord, He it is Who is Powerful,  
    To destroy and to preserve.

I pray Thee, O Beneficent One,  
Grant to me aid,  
For the words that are upon my tongue,  
    And for all that are in my heart.

All things of which I have spoken,  
O Lord, receive in trust for me.  
And as to those which remain unsaid,  
    I pray Thee, grant to me favour.

*Niwekea wangu wana,  
Na umbu langu, mnuna,  
Yakue yao maina,  
Yenee majimbo piya.*

*Rabbi, waweke nduzangu,  
Na wana wao na wangu,  
Wenee na ulimwengu,  
Kwa jamali na sitawa.*

*Na jamii Isilamu,  
Mola wangu wa Rabamu,  
Matakwa yao yatimu,  
Nyoyo zikifurahiya.*

*Ya Allabu! Wangu wana,  
Nimekupa ni amana.  
Watunde Mola Rabbana,  
Siwate kuwangaliya.*

*Nimekupa duniani,  
Watunde Uwabizini,  
Unipe kesho Peponi,  
Mbee za Tumwa Nabiya.*

*Take for me into Thy care my children,  
And my kinsman, a young brother,  
That their names may endure,  
And spread abroad in all lands.*

*O Lord, preserve Thou my kindred,  
And their children and mine,  
May they increase in this world,  
With grace and prosperity.*

*And the company of Islam,  
O my Lord of Mercy,  
May their needs be fulfilled,  
That their hearts may rejoice.*

*O Lord God, my children  
I have given to Thee in trust.  
Protect them, O Lord and Master,  
Cease not to look upon them.*

*I have given them to Thee in this world,  
That Thou protect and cherish them,  
Grant them to me hereafter in Heaven,  
In the presence of the Holy Prophet.*

*Wangalie kwa buruma,  
Uwongoze ndia njema,  
Uwepulie na tama  
Za akhera na duniya.*

*Kwako kuomba sikomi,  
Wala sifumbi ulimi.  
Ya Mufarrija 'l Hammi,  
Nikomesheza udhiya.*

*Nisineme muhitaji,  
Nipa hima, sinihuji  
Ajili bi'l faraji,  
Ya afua na afiya.*

*Nondolea ndwee mbovu,  
Yaloningia kwa nguvu.  
Dbambi zangu na maovu,  
Ya Rabbi nighufiriya.*

*Kwetu yangawa mazito,  
Kwako Wewe ni matoto.  
Nepulia uvukuto,  
Unepuke marra moya.*

*Look upon them with compassion,  
Guide them in the right path,  
Remove them from the troubles  
Of the next life and this.*

*To Thee I cease not to pray,  
Nor still I my tongue.  
O Comforter and Protector,  
Bring me to the end of my sufferings.*

*As I stand, a suppliant,  
Yield to me readily, force not upon me  
A death without the blessings  
Of pardon and salvation.*

*Remove from me the evil malady,  
Which has forcibly seized upon me.  
My sins and ill-doings,  
O Lord, forgive to me.*

*Although things be hard for us to bear,  
Yet to Thee they are but small matters.  
Take from me the fever of sickness,  
Mayest Thou relieve me speedily.*

*Nakuombawe Latifa,  
Unondolee mikbafa,  
Kwa Yaumu li' Arafat,  
Na Idi ya udhibiya.*

*Kwa siku hizi tukufu,  
Za kuhiji na kutufu,  
Niafu, Rabbi, niafu,  
Unishushize asuwa,*

*Ya Allabu! Ya Allabu!  
Ya Rabbahu! Ya Rabbahu!  
Ya Ghayata Raghbatabu!  
Nitika hukwamkuwa.*

*Nakuombawe Rabbana,  
Bi' asmaika 'l Husuna,  
Tis'aa wa tis'ina,  
Mia kupungua moya,*

*Nipulishie walimu,  
Wakinambia, "Fabamu:  
Dua hini Isilamu,  
Akiomba burudiwa."*

*I pray to Thee, the All-Kind,  
Ward off from me fears,  
By reason of the Day of Arafat,  
And the Festival of the Sacrifice.*

*By these glorious days,  
Of the Pilgrimage and the Kaaba,  
Save me, O Lord, save me,  
Send down to me deliverance.*

*O God! O God!  
O Lord! O Lord!  
O Fulfilment of all desire!  
Answer me as I call upon Thee.*

*I call upon Thee, O Lord God,  
By Thy beautiful Names,  
Nine and ninety,  
One hundred less one.*

*So let me hearken to the learned  
As they tell me, "Know thou:  
This prayer of the Faith,  
If one prays, ever is it granted."*

*Nami mjao dbaifu,  
Mwenye nyingi takalufu,  
Nakuomba takhafifu,  
Rabbi nitakhafifiya.*

*Nakuomba taisiri,  
Mambo nisoyakadiri,  
Unegeshe kulla kheri,  
Ovu Ukinepuliya.*

*Ya Rabbi, nitimiliza,  
Mambo nisiyoyaweza,  
Wala moya nisowaza,  
Amba yatasikiliya.*

*Rabbi, Unifurahishe,  
Mambo mema Unegeshe,  
Maovu Uyagurishe,  
Tusikutane pamoya.*

*Unitweke duniyani,  
Miongo ya wabusini,  
Nifapo nende Peponi,  
Makao ya hafidhiya.*

*And I, who am Thy poor handmaiden,  
One burdened with many troubles,  
I pray Thee, lighten them,  
O Lord, do Thou unburden me.*

*I pray to Thee in haste,  
As to matters of which I cannot judge,  
Do Thou bring to me every happiness,  
Mayest Thou deliver me from evil.*

*O Lord, fulfil for me,  
Matters which I cannot accomplish,  
Nor can I think of even one of them,  
That they shall come to pass.*

*Lord, do Thou cause me to rejoice,  
The good do Thou bring near to me,  
The evil mayest Thou remove from me,  
That we meet not together.*

*Do Thou keep me safe in this world,  
Among the number of the Faithful,  
That when I die, I may go to Paradise,  
The abiding-place of the Saved.*

*Tungile utungu hunu,  
Kwa zabimu na zitunu,  
Kwa kadha yako Dayanu,  
Na bukumuzo Jaliya.*

*Tungile nilisakimu,  
Moyo usina fabamu.  
Usomeni Isilamu,  
Mukiongozana ndiya.*

*Na sababu ya kutunga,  
Si sbairi, si malenga.  
Nina kijana muyinga,  
Kapenda kumuusiya.*

*Kapenda kumnabibi,  
La'ala katanababi,  
Kamfuata Illahi,  
Pamwe na wake rijaa.*

*Somani nyute buramu,  
Maana muyafabamu.  
Musitukue laumu,  
Mbee za Mola Jaliya.*

*I have composed this poem  
Amid trouble and grief,  
By Thy dispensation, O Judge,  
And by Thy decrees, All High.*

*I have composed it in sickness;  
My heart without understanding.  
Read it, O True Believers,  
That ye may follow the true path.*

*And the reason for composing,  
Is not poesy nor minstrelsy.  
I have a young innocent child,  
And I wish to instruct her.*

*And I desire to warn her,  
That, mayhap, she shall realise,  
And follow the Lord God,  
Together with her man.*

*Read ye, all ye women,  
So that ye may understand;  
That ye may bear no blame,  
In the presence of God the Highest.*

Somani mite ya nganu,  
Mtii waume wenu,  
Musipatwe na zitunu,  
Za Akhera na duniya.

Mwenye kutii mvuli,  
Ndake jaha na jamali,  
Kulla endapo mahali,  
Hutangaa na kweneya.

Mwenye kutunga nudhumu,  
Ni gharibu mwenye hamu.  
Na ubora wa ithimu,  
Rabbi tamghufiriya.

Na baitize idadi,  
Ni miata wa wahedi,  
Na mbili za mazidadi,  
Ndizo zimezozidiya.

—  
Tamat aun Illabi.

Read ye, who are as sprouts of wheat,  
Obey ye your menfolk,  
That ye be not touched by the sorrows,  
Of the after-life and of this.

She who obeys her husband,  
Hers are power and the gift to please.  
Wheresoe'er she shall go,  
Her fame is published abroad.

She who composed this poem,  
Is one lonely and sorrowful.  
And the greatest of her sins,  
Lord, Thou wilt forgive her.

And the number of its verses,  
Is one hundred and one,  
With two in addition,  
Which are those which are added.

—  
Completed with the help of God.

## APPENDIX I.

## CONSPECTUS OF THE MANUSCRIPTS

Six manuscripts of *Utendi wa Mwana Kupona* have been collated for this translation. They are:-

Reference	Source and Description
K <sup>1</sup> 98 stanzas	Ms., written by Muhamadi Kijuma and believed to have been copied by him from a Ms., in the possession of Nana Chema binti Diwani, of Pate, shewn and read by her to Prof. Werner at Lamu in 1912. This Ms., is reproduced in facsimile in <i>Harvard African Studies</i> , Vol. I., pp. 146-181; Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A. The Ms., was sent to America in 1916, and its present whereabouts are unknown. For the purposes of this collation the facsimile print has been referred to. Title: <i>Utendi wa Mwana Kupona</i> .
K <sup>2</sup> 98 stanzas.	Ms., written by Muh. Kijuma, subsequently to K <sup>1</sup> , and now in the archives of the Seminar für Afrikanische Sprachen, University of Hamburg, loaned to us in 1933 by the courtesy of Professor Carl Meinhof. Title: <i>Utendi wa Mwana Kupona</i> . On title-page: <i>Hini ni khabari ya mwanamke alizaa kijana mwanamke akamwandikiya mausiyo kumuusiya kuketi na mume sana pamoya na watu wangine na ina lake Mwana Kupona - alotunga utendi huu.</i> [These are <i>distā</i> of a woman who bore a child, a daughter, and wrote for her instructions, instructing her to live well with her husband and with other people; and her name was Mwana Kupona, she who composed this poem.]
K <sup>3</sup> 104 stanzas.	Ms., obtained from Lamu by Sheikh Mbarak Ali Hinawy, in an effort to trace the "missing" verses; written by Muhamadi Kijuma in 1933, with a transliteration by Sheikh Mbarak Ali Hinawy. Title: <i>Hadisi ya Mwana Kupona binti Sheikh Muhammad Mataka</i> .
K <sup>4</sup> 103 stanzas.	Ms., with interlinear annotations and thumb-nail sketches, and end-pages of notes. Written by Muh. Kijuma in 1933. One stanza (f. 8), seems to have been omitted accidentally by the scribe in process of copying. Title: <i>Utendi wa Mwana Kupona</i> . A note at end reads:- <i>Sheikh Mubammad Mataka (halis Mubammad bin</i>

*Is-haq bin Mbarak*), alizikwa Siu katika mashhad ya Sheikh Abubakar bin Salim; na kufa alifiya Pate." [Sheikh Muhammad Mataka (correctly Muhammad bin Is-haq bin Mbarak), was buried at Siu in the mausoleum of Sheikh Abubakar bin Salim: but he died at Pate.]

M. Ms., written by or at the direction of Sheikh Mbarak 98 stanzas Ali Hinawy, with a transliteration, 1933.

Title: *Utendi wa Mwana Kuponu ametunga Mwana Kuponu binti Mshamu kumuusiya binti yake Mwana Hashima binti Sheikh Mataka l'Famau katika mwezi 9 dhu 'l-Haj 1275.* [The poem of Mwana Kuponu composed by Mwana Kuponu binti Msham to instruct her daughter Mwana Hashima binti Sheikh Mataka l'Famau on 9th Dhu 'l-Haj 1275 (10th July 1858).]

F. Ms., and transliteration made circa 1890-91, as to the 97 stanzas. Swahili script, by Kombo bin Msham, or by Josef Friedrich, a German engineer then at Lamu, and as to the transliteration, by Friedrich. Loaned by Professor Carl Meinhof. The Ms., from which this was copied appears to have been obtained from Muhammad bin Abdallah bin Muhammad l'Jahdhumiya of Lamu, now deceased, commonly known as 'Boki' and referred to in a note, "erhalten von Boki," on Friedrich's MS.

No title, but the line:-

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ اَرْحَمِن اَرْحَمٍ وَّ بِهِ نَسْتَعِيْن

with the transliteration:-

*Bismi'llah arrahman arrahim wa bihi nastalnu.*

At end:- *وَكَلِّكَ بِحَسْبِكَ رَبِّكَ عَ لِيْبَاق*

for *wa kadhalika yajtabika Rabbuka wa ya'allimaq. Quran, 12.6.*

All these MSS., agree with the version here printed except in the following more important individual variations:-

St. 1.2.	<i>Mchachefu wa hasanati</i>	F.
	... <i>wa sanati</i>	K <sup>4</sup> .M.
St. 1.4.	<i>La'ala ukazingatiya</i>	K <sup>2</sup> .
	<i>Mara ...</i>	F.
Sts. 7, 8, 9, 10,	are 11, 7, 8, 9, in	F.
St. 8.	<i>Nikutungie hiri zi</i>	K <sup>1</sup> .
	The entire stanza omitted.	K <sup>4</sup> .

St. 43.4. *Siwe mwenye kulingtya.* K<sup>1</sup>.M.  
... *kulekya.* F.

St. 45.3.4. Omitted F.

St. 55.4. *Na wema wa mazoeya.* K<sup>1</sup>.M.  
... *wagi ...* F.

St. 56.4. *Daima huiyutiya.* K<sup>4</sup>.

St. 64.3. *Kwa uwezalo mpaji.* F.

St. 65.4. *Zisizo kutindikiya.* F.

St. 69. After this st. in F., follow the lines:-

رَبَّنَا لَا تُرْغِ قُلُوْبَنَا بَعْدَ اَنْ هَدَيْتَنَا  
وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً اِنَّكَ لَوَهَّابٌ

with a transliteration:-

*Rabbana latusia kulubana bada ishalei tana wahab  
lana min la duka rabamata inaka intalo wababu.  
[for Rabana la tuzigh kulubana ba'da izhadaitana wahab  
lana min ladunka rabmatan innaka antal wabhabu. Quran, 3.6.]*

This is underlined, with a pencil note, "rot", indicating that in the original Ms., it was written in red, as is usual with Quranic quotations. We have to thank Sheikh Abdul Majid, of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, for his kindness in identifying these lines.

St. 70.4. *Yatangaye na duniya.* F.

St. 73.4. *Kwa riziki na ajiya* F.

St. 74.2. *Wabifadhi wabizini.* F.

St. 79a. After st. 79 the following stanza occurs in F.  
*Mja kutumwa bachoki, [Thy] slave of serving tires not,  
Wala haneni sitaki, Nor does she say, "I do not wish."  
Illa baada ya dbiki, But, after trouble,  
Sasa faraji Jalia. Now comfort, All High.*

St. 93.3. *Kitikiya kwa Ilabi* F.

St. 93.4. *Jala wa 'ala jalia* F.

On this expression see Glossary, s.v. *Jalia*.

Sts. 95 & 96 Omitted F.

St. 98. *Na battize 'idadi* F.

*Ni miate ma'dadi  
Na zingine za mazidadi,  
Fahamuni zimengya.*

After *st.* 98, in *Mss.*,  $\kappa^3$  and  $\kappa^4$  are the following verses:-

99. *Akhera kuna zilzali,* In the next world, where are terrors,  
*Ukintii mwili,* If you obey your husband,  
*Huna buddi utanali,* You cannot but obtain [a blessing],  
*Itanyoka yako ndiya.* Your way will be straightened.
100. *Wanangu Waislamu,* O my children of Islam,  
*Ninenayo ubikimu,* Attend to the words that I speak,  
*Mutimzapo yatimu,* If you fulfil them completely,  
*Na Peponi mutang'ya.* Then into Paradise you shall enter.
101. *Mvuli kulla namna,* A husband — in every circumstance,  
*Sikhalifu akinena,* Do not oppose him when he speaks,  
*Na Mola wetu Rabbana,* Then God our Lord,  
*Radbi atakueleya.* Favour will show to you.
102. *Na humu wasia wangu,* And this exhortation of mine,  
*Kwa nduzangu na wanangu,* For my kindred and my children,  
*Atawajazi Mngu,* God, He will requite them,  
*Kwa Akhera na dunya.* As to the life to come and this.
103. *Mola tatusabiliya,* The Lord will yield ease to us,  
*Kwa baraka ya Nab'ya,* Through the blessing of the Prophet,  
*Na Sahabaze pamoya,* And of his Companions as well,  
*Dini waloteteya.* Who defended the Faith.
104. *Tarikh'ye kwa yakini,* The date of this correctly,  
*Alifu wa miyatani,* Is one thousand two hundred  
*Khamsa wa sab'ini,* And seventy-five,  
*Hizi zetu hijriya.* Of these years of ours to the Hejra.

It will be noted that whereas *st.* 98 states that the verses of the poem number '*mate wa wahedi na mbili za mazj'adi,*' which has been taken to mean a total of 103 verses, yet *Mss.*,  $\kappa^1$ ,  $\kappa^2$  and *M.*, have 98 verses only, *F.*, contains 97 (actually 96½), while the above verses (purporting to be the five verses that would appear to be missing), make a total of 104, or one more than the required number.

As already explained (p.22), the omission of an indelicate passage may account for the discrepancy between 103 and 98. The redundant *st.* 104, also, may be merely a "date-line" added by a copyist. Even so, it seems unlikely that the missing verses would follow consecutively at the end of *st.* 98. Moreover, the style of *st.* 99—104 suggests that they are of different authorship. They must be regarded as of doubtful authenticity.

## THE PETITION OF BINTI SHEIKH

LAMU, 30/9/30.

I have already informed Mr Whitton, Justice of the Peace, to send my news to the great officers of the Government regarding my work, which I did with my clear heart in the Government, when I was in great hope that the Government would recognise my work which I offered to them. My work I did as under:-

Two young men were imprisoned, and they were the sons of Sheikh Omar bin Mataka; their names were Muhammad bin Omar and Sheikh Mataka bin Omar. They were imprisoned by Mr Rogers in Lamu Fort. Their father, Sheikh Omar bin Mataka, had run away to the mainland with a great number of people and he had made much trouble at the mainland to the inhabitants, as same as the Siu people; the Liwali of Siu, Omar bin Isa, could not stay at Siu and he came to Lamu, and one Akida Abdullah bin Selim was sent to Siu. The late Provincial Commissioner, Mr Rogers, had sent people to the mainland several times to Sheikh Omar bin Mataka in order to make peace with him. Afterwards he instructed the late Liwali of Lamu, Abdullah bin Hamed, to go to the mainland and make peace, and he failed to go owing to great hostility. Mr Rogers came to my house and said that he came in order to send me in purpose of the Government's work.

He said that he knew that I could not afford this as I was a woman, but there was no help but to send me, and as Sheikh Omar bin Mataka is my brother, there was no one who could talk with him as well as I. He had prepared a boat to take me to Siu and from there to send some men to the mainland with my letter to my brother asking him to come and make peace. And he said that if peace was made and guns were returned to Government and he [Omar] came to Siu, the Government would be glad because they did not want trouble to be made on the mainland—"so if this is done and the Government becomes grateful, you will be given a reward." I followed Mr Roger's requests and I left with my son and husband for Siu and from there I sent my husband and son and my nephews to the mainland with my letter to my brother Sheikh Omar bin Mataka who wanted his sons to be released from prison and I sent a letter to Mr Rogers asking him to release the sons of Sheikh Omar from prison and let them stay at Lamu

until Omar returned to Siu; and to take away Akida Abdullah bin Salim from Siu because *fitina* [intrigue] increased when he was at Siu, and many people had moved from Siu to the mainland owing to his *fitina*. Mr Rogers released the sons of Sheikh Omar b. Mataka and allowed them to stay at Lamu, and he took away Akida Abdullah b. Salim from Siu. I informed my brother that his sons were released, and that they would stay at Lamu till he came back to Siu and gave up all the guns; that was the Government's request. He agreed with my advice.....so I came back to Lamu and he sent me all the guns and I handed them over to Mr Rogers who had them broken and put them all in the sea in front of the Customs House, and Sheikh Omar bin Mataka came back to Siu. Mr Rogers gave me a certificate for my work which was taken by the Interpreter to Mr Harding, Salim bin Azan, to shew to Mr Harding. Afterwards Mr Rogers called me to go to take my certificate as it had been returned by Mr Harding and he informed me that he would start soon from Lamu for Zanzibar.

But at that time I was ill.....and my son was away, and when Mr Rogers went away I kept quiet because I had means. My husband was alive and my son was employed..... but now I am an old woman, I am ninety years of age and ill; my husband has died and my son lost the Government's work owing to illness and he cannot do any other work; so I became poor. For this reason I have communicated to the Government my request and I hope that the Government will remember me and give me something.

The above mentioned information was known to all the people of Siu and others who have served the Government since they were young men till they became old men and retired. Also I made peace at Jongeni but failed to complete it because the inhabitants were bad people. As far as I know if anyone serves the Government, he is usually given something as reward or pension, and I did a great work for the Government and I hope that the Government will not cast me aside, for I am an old woman now, of old age and poor.

#### BINTI SHEIKH MATAKA

[Mr Whitton states that the above translation (slightly abridged), was made by an Arab clerk, and adds, "I had frequently urged her case, but unfortunately she did not begin to press until after Mr Rogers' death, and so lost the services of her best advocate."]

#### APPENDIX III.

##### THE POEM OF BINTI SHEIKH.

The following is a transliteration of a manuscript obtained by Mr Whitton, after Binti Sheikh's death, from her daughter Khadija binti Abubakar. The Ms., is indifferently written and the words given in brackets below must be regarded as conjectural readings.

*Nana binti Sheikh Mataka alitunga masbairi kuomba Mngu alipokuwa kijana nyaka thamaniyataasbara ikapita kabuli kwa masbairi haya nimezoyandika.*—Nana binti Sheikh Mataka composed verses praying to God when she was a girl; eighteen years passed before my writing down these verses.

*Bismila nda awali na hindi yako Rabu,  
Na sala ya Murisali na Ali na Asibabu,  
Ilabi min fadhili Fatihya abuwabu,  
Adu'uni fastahibu bikauliyo kudusi.*

*Naliposikhya aya na kauli ya asabi,  
Kula alokuweleya kaona akifurabi,  
Nami nakulifaniya ya Razaki, ya Fatahi,  
Naomba kula sababi sikimtu wala stkost.*

*Adu'uka Maulaya wa azali na abadi,  
Ya Was'a 'l'Ataya nipa yangu makusudi,  
[Latubatba] rajaya nituliya nami mwendi,  
Mjao usinirudi naomba uninafisi.*

*Ya Sami'a lughati mjao na kwankuwa,  
Zito Kwako ni katiti huna la kukusumbuwa,  
[Kwa ya] baramu [Mpeti] na Mkubwa la mtuwa,  
Niafu Mwenye afuwa Upendapo ni rabisi.*

*Mola nikushubudiye huna shirika Wabidu  
Na Mtumwa nikubaliye ni Rasuli Mubamadu,  
Kisa nikulifaniye Ilabu ya samadu,  
[Mata badha] l'Wa'adu atulubuo bakosi.*

Ndiwe Mubuye kidhama [ilito fili] kuburu,  
Na jeledi na labama piya ukazijuburu,  
[Na 'aluka ya] kalima mtuye alikusuru,  
Enye masanii ya dburu naomba unikasisi.

Ya Jabira P'Kasiri moya kwako hayakosa,  
Ndiwe Mwenye kukadiri na upendalo kupisa,  
Neteya nami sururi saa hini isitsa,  
Niafu Mwenye kutesa na mawi yawe upesti.

Blasmat husuna na 'ezi yako na shani,  
Kwa baraka ya maina na baki ya Qurani,  
Allahuma Sahilana kwako nimezotamani,  
Nasa'lo r-Rabimani nipa nistiyoyahisi.

Nipa dunia hasana na akbera untjazi,  
Yalo mema masakana nami na wangu wazazi,  
Na wote Musilmina umati wa Muombezi,  
Milango na twe wazi tungie Firdausi.

Na Hasani na Huseini pamwe na [kbburi] taibu,  
Na Binti el-amini na zausati Habibu,  
Kwa Mngu ufombeani dua zenu bakusibu,  
Zikapasua hijabu na 'artsht na kurusi.

It will be noted that, like the *Utendi*, this poem consists of 4-line stanzas, but with the difference that the line contains 16 *mizan* or syllables (as compared with 8 in the *Utendi*), and also carries a secondary internal rhyme, thus: -[a]b, [a]b, [a]b, [b]c, which adds to the attractiveness of the verse as well as to the difficulty of composition. As in the *Utendi*, the fourth lines carry a final rhyme, in this case *-st*, throughout the poem.

## GLOSSARY

The Glossary is intended to explain all those words occurring in the poem, the definitions of which are not given in one or other of the following works of reference:-

Krapf: *Swahili-English Dictionary*, London, 1925.

Steere: *Handbook of the Swahili Language*, London, 1928.

Madan: *Swahili-English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1928.

These and other authorities consulted are acknowledged thus:-

Kr.—Krapf. M.—Madan. St.—Steere.

Mb.—Mbarak Ali Hinawy.

Ahm.—Ahmad Abubakar es-Siwi.

Abd.—Abdul Alim bin Abderrahman Bakthir.

Stg.—Stigand: *Grammar of Dialectic Changes in the Kiswahili Language*, Cambridge, 1915.

M. Ali.—Muhammad Ali: *Translation of the Holy Quran*, Lahore, 1928,

Tlr.—Taylor: *African Aphorisms*, London, 1891.

## NOTES ON THE MANUSCRIPTS

A conspectus of the chief variations between the Mss. is given in Appendix I. The following notes are upon points arising in the course of transliteration and translation.

st. 2. *Yanetimtu* must agree with *maradhi* (here taken as a plural in *ya*), unless some word as *mambo* or *majira* be understood. But *timtu* is an intransitive verb and it would seem that the causative form, *timiza*, should have been used. *Umetimtu*, agreeing with *mwaka*, the reading of  $k^3$ , and  $k^4$ , is grammatically unexceptionable and may be a conjectural emendation by the scribe.

st. 8, 9, 10. "Amulet", "necklace" and "clasp" are figures of speech for "good counsel, advice, &c."

st. 12. For the *Sunnah*, *Faradh* and *Wajibu*, see p. 24, footnote 26.

st. 13. *Kitu*, in the Mss. كَيْتُ, may be *kito* = "a precious stone, a gem, jewel."; (cf. Kr. M.) used figuratively, as in Proverbs, xx. 15, "midomo ya maarifa ni kito cha thamani" ["the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel."] in *Zaburi na Mithali*: London, 1925; p. 206.

st. 20. *Tama*. Muh. Kijuma glosses this word as *aihu*, disgrace, shame, a meaning possibly related to the expression *kushika tama*, to hold the face in the hands (Kr.), to sit in a dejected or brooding attitude (M.); lit., hold the cheek: a common gesture indicating grief or perplexity and, perhaps, embarrassment or shame.

st. 37. *Uonao*, lit., "that which you see." Kijuma glosses this line with "*Fanya kama umezoona kwangu*," i.e. "do as you have seen done at my home."

st. 44. *Ukutiwapo* is the passive of *kutta*, the applied form of *kuta*, to meet, with the locative relative affix *-po-*, 'when you are met by'.

st. 50. *Jaliya*. This word occurs frequently in Swahili poetry as a Divine appellation. Cf. *Utendi wa Ayubu*, 6, 69, 157; *Utendi wa Shufaka*, 263. The late Sir Thomas Arnold has suggested that it might be "a designation derived from جلاله جَلَّ جَلَّ جَلَّ *jalla jalalahu*, 'His Greatness is exalted,' and not of itself actually an Arabic word."

(Cf. the Swahili use of *subhana* as a proper name, e.g. *Utendi wa Ayubu*:—"Ibilisi akanena: 'Niamru, Sububana! Ayubu utamwona...'"")

It might also be an adaptation of جليل *jalil* "great, majestic, exalted", one of the Attributes of Allah often used in Swahili poetry.

st. 54. *Kashukuru kafawidhi*. *Shukuru* means primarily 'give thanks', but *shukuru Mngu* is commonly used to mean 'resign oneself to one's fate' (M.) *Fawidhi*, from فاضل means 'to entrust a matter to one' and here may be understood of 'leaving worldly affairs in the hands of God.' *Katushlya*, in the Ms., كَتَشِيَا, could be read *katosheya*, from *tosha*, suffice, which might be rendered 'and was comforted'.

st. 68. *Nisoyatowa*, lit., 'which I have not uttered'. Kijuma glosses this line '*yaliyomo moyoni*'—'which are in the heart', and this has been preferred as nearer to the sense than a literal translation.

sts. 80-81. These lines relate to the rigours and rituals of the Pilgrimage to Meccah, the circumambulation of the Kaabah, the journey to Mount Arafat and the sacrifices in the valley of Muna.

st. 95. *Mite ya ngano*, lit., 'sprouts of wheat', but Muhammad bin Abdallah explains the phrase as '*mfano ya maneno*', a figure of speech, meaning '*watu safi katika mbegu*', people of clean stock, i.e. of pure descent; in this instance, 'young gentlewomen'.

## NOTE ON THE LAMU DIALECT

The following are the chief differences as exhibited by the poem, between Kiamu, the older and purer Swahili spoken in Lamu, and the dialects, Kimvita, Kiunguja and Kimrima, of Mombasa, Zan-zibar and the coast of the Tanganyika Territory respectively.

For fuller details the reader should consult Stigand: *A Grammar of Dialectic Changes in the Kiswahili Language*, Cambridge, 1915.

	Kiamu	Kimvita &c.
1. <i>Y</i> answers to <i>j</i> in Kimv. as in:-		
st. 2.	<i>siyapata</i>	<i>sijapata</i>
st. 44.	<i>yambo</i>	<i>jambo</i>
st. 21.	<i>wayinga</i>	<i>wajinga</i>
2. <i>I</i> - likewise answers to <i>ji</i> , as in:-		
st. 5.	<i>ina</i>	<i>jina</i>
st. 17.	<i>ifanye</i>	<i>jifanye</i>
st. 33.	<i>siimubuli</i>	<i>sijimubuli</i>
3. <i>Nd</i> - answers to <i>nj</i> -, and <i>-nd</i> - to <i>-nz</i> -, as in:-		
st. 14.	<i>ndiya</i>	<i>njia</i>
st. 12.	<i>kwanda</i>	<i>kwanza</i>
4. Dental <i>t</i> answers to <i>ch</i> , as in:-		
st. 19.	<i>situkue</i>	<i>stebukue</i> (Z.)
st. 46.	<i>ttui</i>	<i>chui</i>
5. <i>L</i> is omitted between vowels, as in:-		
st. 3.	<i>mbee</i>	<i>mbele</i>
st. 36.	<i>kietā</i>	<i>kileta</i>
6. <i>L</i> answers to <i>y</i> , as in:-		
st. 55.	<i>yeo</i>	<i>leo</i>
7. <i>Z</i> - answers to <i>v</i> - or <i>vy</i> - in plurals of Class 8, as in:-		
st. 52.	<i>ziteko</i>	<i>vicheko</i>
st. 41.	<i>zandani</i>	<i>vyandani</i>
8. Relative pronouns take the forms:-		
st. 14.	<i>asoshika</i>	<i>asiyeshika</i>
st. 49.	<i>asilotenda</i>	<i>asilolitenda</i>

## VOCABULARY

The numbers of the stanzas appear in the right-hand column.

The following abbreviations have been used:-

Ar.—Arabic.	v.a.—active verb.	
adj.—adjective.	v.n.—passive verb.	
adv.—adverb.	Kiam.—Kiamu dialect of Lamu.	
s.—substantive.	Kimv.—Kimvita dialect of Mombasa.	
syn.—synonym.	Kiung.—Kiunguja dialect of Zanzibar.	
st.—stanza.	O.Sw.—Old Swahili.	
AMBA, v. to speak, used as a relative pronoun; cf. M. p.8. In this case one would correctly read <i>mambo</i> (l.2.)... <i>ambayo</i> (l.4.), but here the relative suffix, <i>-yo</i> , is elided for the sake of the metre.		87
ANGUSA, v.n. O. Sw. to hasten.		15
ASAA, adv. perhaps, it may be. Ar. عسى. Used here in the sense of "let it be hoped"; cf. <i>La'ala</i> .		1
'ASHIYA, s. late evening. Ar. عشيّة		34
BI-ASMAIKA, Ar. باسمائيك, by Thy (beautiful) names.		83
BUKARATA, s. early morning. Ar. بكر "rise early".		34
CHAMKA, v.n. = <i>ki-anika</i> for <i>aktamka</i> , when he awakes.		33
CHANGA, s. = <i>haya</i> , modesty, restraint, control; cf. Kr. s.v.		21
DALIHINI: Glossed by Muh. Kijuma as <i>papo bapo</i> , 'just there' or 'just then' = 'forthwith'.		27
DAYANU, s. the Judge, the Recompenser; from ديان, <i>dayyanu</i> , from ديان, v. borrow, become a debtor.		90
FIRASHA, s. bedspread, coverlet. Ar. فرش "spread out".		38
GHARIBU, s. a stranger, traveller; Ar. غريب from غرب to depart.		97
GHASHI, s. deceit, guile; Ar. غش <i>ghashsha</i> , deceive: cf. Kr.		17
GHAYATA, s. goal; Ar. غايت = "the fulfilment"; Abd.		82
HABIBU, s. the Beloved, the Friend; an appellation of the Holy Prophet. Ar. هبيب from هب <i>habb</i> , love.		4
HADISI, s. = <i>hadith</i> , a narration.		3

HAFIDHIA, ( <i>hifadhiya</i> ) preservation, from Ar. حفظ, preserve.	89
HINI, pron. dem., Kiam., = <i>hit</i> , this.	84
HIZINI, ( <i>khizini</i> ) from خزن, store, treasure up.	74
HUNU, pron. this; Kiam., for <i>huu</i> ; cf. <i>hini</i> .	90
HURAMU, s. women; Ar. حرم <i>buram</i> , pl. of حرمة <i>hurmat</i> .	94
HUSUNA, adj. beautiful; Ar. حسن <i>husn</i> .	83
IDI, s. festival; Ar. عيد 'id, from عود <i>awada</i> , recur, — i.e. a celebration recurring at stated times. The festival meant is the <i>Idu'l Addba</i> , عيد الاضحي, the feast of sacrifice, also called <i>Idu'l Kabir</i> , عيد الكبير, and in Turkey and Egypt <i>Bairam</i> . It is held on the tenth day of <i>Dhu'l Hijab</i> , "and is part of the rites of the Muslim Pilgrimage, although it is observed as well in all parts of Islam, both as a day of sacrifice and as a great festival" ( <i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , s.v. <i>Addha</i> ). Cf. <i>Quran</i> xxii, 33-38.	80
ITHIMU, s. sin; Ar. اثم, <i>ithmu</i> .	97
IZA, v.n. Kiamu, = <i>kataa</i> , refuse, reject, decline. Stg. p. 52.	63
JILISI, v. "sit", from جلس	3
KADHA, s. Ar. قضى, sentence, decree of a judge or of God.	90
KIUMBE, s. a created thing, a mortal. Cf. proverb, " <i>Kiumbe mwisho n'nini?</i> " Tlr. 161. In this st. to mean "woman".	22
KIVIKIA = <i>akivikia</i> ; <i>kuvikia</i> , Kigunya, to sleep.	32
KONGOWEE, v.a. subj. of <i>kongowea</i> , apparently an applied form of <i>kongoa</i> , an obsolete word surviving in the custom of greeting a person returned from a journey with ' <i>Kongoni!</i> ' to which the answer is ' <i>Kongoni we!</i> ' Cf. <i>kongo</i> , saluta- to the new moon, welcome given to a stranger. Kr. s.v. Tlr. p. 70, note 2.	30
KUKIZA, v.a. to pour water over.	34
KUGESI, s. anklets; = <i>bugesi</i> , <i>mavurungu</i> , <i>mitali</i> .	39
KUTA, v.n. to be satisfied, (as of hunger appeased). Cf. <i>khuta</i> , in Chinyanja (Scott & Hetherwick: <i>Diff. of the Nyanja Language</i> , London. 1929; p. 214), and <i>'kuta</i> , be satisfied, in Luganda (Kitching: <i>Luganda-English Dict.</i> London, 1925.)	60

KUTUBU, v.imp. "write", from Ar. <i>uktub</i> , imperative of <i>katab</i> .	4
LA'ALA, adv. perhaps. Ar. لعل, cf. <i>asaa</i> . Appendix I. <i>St.</i> 1.4.	63
LATIFA, s. the Benignant; one of the Divine Attributes.	80
'L-HAMI, "the One who careth for you"; Ar. <i>hamma</i> , think of, be intent upon, be anxious to do.	76
MAHABUBU, s. beloved; Ar. محبوب. A passive verbal noun from حب to love.	13
MAMA, s. mother; but also used as a term of endearment. Children are commonly addressed as <i>mama</i> , or <i>baba</i> , (father), <i>bwana mkubwa</i> , (master), <i>bibi</i> , (mistress), &c., and although the Swahili attach no special significance to the custom it is evidently derived from inland tribes who confine it to children named after their grandparents, a usage resting on the early belief that the grandparent is reincarnated in the grandchild.	22
(MA)ZIDADI, s. increase, surplus; from Ar. زدیان, with the addition of the Swahili plural prefix <i>ma-</i> .	98
MCHACHEFU, s., a person of little account. <i>Mtu mwenye mamba madogo</i> . Ahm. A personal noun formed from <i>-chache</i> adv., (a little, a few, not many), with the adj. terminal suffix <i>-fu</i> . Cf., <i>-takatifu</i> , <i>-pungufu</i> , <i>mwongofu</i> ; <i>-refu</i> , adj., long, is similarly from <i>-re</i> (= <i>-le</i> ), the common Bantu stem, "long"; cf. <i>maji male</i> = <i>maji marefu</i> = spring tides: Tr, p. 80-1, and p. 86, note.	1
MIKHAFI, s. pl. of <i>mkhafa</i> , Kr., "a thing to fear, danger." From Ar. خوف, fear. <i>Mwafa</i> , (Kr. and M.) seems to be the same word in a more Bantuised form.	80
MINNA, "from us"; Ar. منا	69
MIONGO, s. assemblages (of people), pl. of <i>mwongo</i> , M.	89
MKINI, v.n., "be possible"; from Ar. امكن (مكن iv.)	12
MNUNA, s. Kiam. younger brother. Stg. p. 53.	70
MUHULA, v.n. to set a period of time; from Ar. مهل to act slowly.	33
MUYINGA, s. Kiam. for <i>mvinga</i> , M, q.v., but here used in the more restrained sense of "one inexperienced, innocent".	92

MVULI, s. Kiam. = <i>mume</i> , man, male; cf. <i>mvulana</i> , a young man, one of the few instances of this diminutive suffix in Swahili.	57
MWENGO, s. scent; syn: <i>harufu nzuri</i> , <i>manukato</i> . Abd.	40
MWIDA, s. Kiam. = <i>muda</i> , space of time.	20
NABAHI, see <i>nabibi</i> .	93
NABIHI, v. to warn; from Ar. نبي, perceive, pay attention to, of which the second form, <i>nabbaba</i> , means "warn".	93
NASIBU, v. to be related to; Ar. ناسب 3rd form of نسيب, "trace a pedigree". Kijuma glosses this word "sawasawa na wewe", to be understood here as "of equal birth".	58
NDWEE, s. for <i>ndwele</i> , pains of sickness; Kr.	78
NLA, eat; Kiamu, imperative form of <i>kula</i> , v. to eat.	59
NUDHUMU, s. poem, from Ar. نظم <i>nadhama</i> , compose, arrange.	97
NYUTE, Kiamu for <i>nyote</i> , all of you.	94
ONGO, s. flaw, blemish; cf. "nguo zizo ongo, . . . na zisuto zisizo zitango," v.3 of Liongo's song, The Liongo Saga, Vol.I.	10
OWA, v.n. Kiamu = <i>oga</i> , bathe, but here used as a transitive verb = <i>osha</i> = <i>ogesha</i> .	33
RABBAHU, s. "O Lord!" from Ar. ربّ "He is The Lord".	82
RABBANA, s. our Lord; Ar. ربنا; -na is the possessive suffix of the 1st pers. pl.	73
RABBI, s. from Ar. <i>Rabb</i> , the Divine Being; cf. Muh. Ali, p. xlix.	69
RAGHBATAHU, Ar. رغبتك, "thou hast supplicated him". Here used in the sense of "He who is supplicated".	82
RAHAMU, s. The Merciful: Ar. <i>Rahim</i> .	72
RJAA, s. 'man', Ar. rijal, pl. of <i>ragul</i> , man.	93
SAHABA(ZE), s. the Companions of the Prophet. The suffix <i>-ze</i> (= <i>zake</i> , his) shows that the word is plural; from Ar. اصحاب 'ashab, pl. of صاحب <i>sahib</i> , companion.	4
SAKIMU, v. Ar. سقم <i>sagima</i> , be ill.	91
SHAKIRI, v. = (ku-)shiba, to be satisfied (with food). Possibly from شكر <i>shakara</i> , to thank.	60

- SHIRAA, s. a walking-out canopy used by women at Lamu. 46  
Possibly from شراع, sail of a ship. The *shiraa* is a kind of light tent supported from the inside on poles or on light canes, two at the front and two behind. A servant walks holding up the fore part, a pole in each hand and another servant likewise supports the rear, while the lady walks in the space between them. In former days, silken *shiraa* borne on silver-shod poles, were carried by slave-girls over their mistresses; now cotton print is used. A woman without slaves will walk in a *shiraa* supported by two sticks held fanwise in her hand. The first sight of a *shiraa* in a narrow Lamu lane suggests a small vessel in full sail. It seems peculiar to Lamu, where it takes the place of the veil, without which no strict Muslim woman would formerly appear in public. St. 46 embodies the Quranic injunction, "Say to the believing women that they cast down their eyes..." *Quran*, xxiv.
- SIKILIA, v. Kiamu, = *fikilia*, come to pass, arrive, happen. 87
- TAKALUFU, s. troubles; from Ar. تكلف, to take up a burden; 85  
5th form of كلف
- TAKARABU, approach; Ar. تقرب 5th form of قرب, be near. 4
- TAMATI, v.n. the end; Ar. تم. 66
- TOTO, adj. Kiamu, = -*dogo*, Kimv. Kiung., small. Here used 79  
with *mambo* understood.
- TUFU, v. go round, (i.e. circumambulate the *Kaaba*); from 81  
Ar. طوف *tawafa*.
- TUKUFU, adj. exalted, majestic, glorious. *Siku hizi tukufu* here 81  
implies the "sacred days set apart for the pilgrimage to Mekkah"—"The pilgrimage is performed in the well-known months", *Shawwal*, *Dhu'l-Qa'adah*, and the first nine days of *Dhu'l-Hijjah*. Cf. Muh. Ali, p.34.
- TUNGILE = *nitungile* = *nitmetunga*, I have composed; Kiam. old 90  
perfect tense in -*le*. See Tlr. p.166.
- UDHIHIYA, s. "victim", here meaning "sacrificial victim"; Ar. 80  
ضحية from ضحى "slaughter a victim in the forenoon.

- UMI, s. mother, from Ar. أم 51
- USONO, s. rest, peace, security, safety. An archaic word. It 22  
occurs in a song of the Manda people:-  
Tuli kwetu Manda twali tukitenda,  
Yeo tukitendwa twakataa kwani?  
Matupa ukuta watupetapeta,  
Kutvaa ni kuteta hatuna usono.  
Stigand reproduces this song in his *Land of Zinj*, p. 43,  
but the final line of his couplet reads:-  
Kutwa ni kuteta hatuna amani. [peace]  
thus bearing out the meaning.
- UVUKUTO, s. feverishness in illness, "moto wa ugonjwa, jasbo 79  
*la moto*"; cf. Kr. and M.
- VIKE, subj. of *vika*, v. wear. Properly a neuter passive, but 9  
often used in the sense of "to clothe". *Visha* has the specialised meaning "to clothe with new clothes".
- WAFIKIA, v. suit to or for. Applied form of *wafiki*, Kr. q.v. 5
- WENDANI, s. (thy) friends: pl. of *mwandani*, old poetical form 61  
of *mwenzi yako*: cf. Tlr. p.116.
- WASIATI, s. injunction, last will; Ar. وصية *wasiyyat*. 1
- WAYUE, 3rd p. sing. subj. of *kuyua* (Kiam.) = *kujua*, to know: 23
- YASIMINI, s. jasmine; two kinds are *afu* and *tundaufu*. 38
- YAUMU-LI-ARAFAT, "the day of 'l-'Ararat", i.e. the 9th day of 80  
*Dhu'l-Hijjah* on which pilgrims visit the hill 'Ararat, six hours east of Mekkah. Cf. Sale: *Koran*, p.93; and Muh. Ali: *Quran*, ii.198.
- ZAHIMU, s. oppression, distress; from ضحم, to press, confine. 90
- ZANDA(NI), Kiam. pl. of *chanda* = *vyanda*, Kimv.; fingers. 41
- ZINGATIA, v.n. follow diligently, apply oneself to; "ukagenka, 1  
*ukafikiri*" (Muh. Kijuma); cf. Seg. pp. 73, 78, 86.
- ZITUNU, s. Kiamu, pl. of *kitumu*, pain, distress; cf. Tlr. p. 87, 90  
No. 375, *ku-tunua*, to scarify; cf. M. *chunua*.

