

# كِسْوَاهِيلِي

kiswāhili<sup>1</sup>

Mtungaji: Ustadh Mau (Mahmoud Ahmad Abdulkadir), 2003

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
bismi llāhi arraḥmani arraḥīmi  
bismillahi arrahmani arrahimi

كُنَيْمًا نِ مَكْوَكْ	تَانِيَامَا حَتَ لِنِ	1
kunyamā ni mek'ūka	tānyāmā ḥaṭa lini	1b/a
	kunyamaa nimechoka * t'anyamaa hata lini	1a/b
	<i>I am weary of staying silent. For how much longer am I to remain dumb?</i>	
وَنَنْغُ هُنِيْپُوْكَ	كُوَانِ نِ تَمَانِ	
wanangu huniepūka	kuwaona na ṭamāni	1d/c
	wanangu huniepuka * kuwaona natamani	1c/d
	<i>My own children avoid me, though I long to see them.</i>	
وَالْوَبَاكِ كُنِشِكَا	سِيُونْغُ نِ وَ وَندَانِ	
wālūbāki kunishika	siwangu ni wa wendāni	1f/e
	walobaki kunishika * siwangu ni wa wendani	1e/f
	<i>And those who remain to embrace me are not my own, but are the offspring of others.</i>	
مِمِ نِ مَوْتَنْدَانِ	مُبُونْ هُنِيْجَ زَتِ	
mimi ni mewaṭendāni	mbūna hunipija zīṭa	1h/g
	mimi nimewatendani * mbona wanipija zita	1g/h
	<i>What have I done to you? Why do you wage war on me?</i>	

وَنَانْغُ مِمِ وَ دَمُ	وَانِ وَ أُسْوَا حِلِينِ	٢
wanāngu mimi wa ḍamu	wāna wa uswāḥilini	2b/a
	wanangu mimi wa damu * wana wa Uswahilini	2a/b
	<i>My own flesh and blood, the children of Swahililand,</i>	
أَصِلِ هَوْنَ هَامُ	يَا كُنِيُوْ نِ نَانِ	
aṣili hawana hāmu	yā kuniyuwa ni nāni	2d/c
	asili hawana hamu * ya kuniyuwa ni nani	2c/d
	<i>are uninterested in knowing who I am,</i>	
وَمَنْتِي قَوْمُ	نَ وَنَ وَ مَجِرِنِ	
wamenatīya qaumu	na wana wa majirani	2f/e
	wamenatia kaumu * na wana wa majirani	2e/f
	<i>and have left me to other peoples, and to the children of neighbours.</i>	
كُوسَ لَنْغُ كُوسَ غَانِ	مُبُونْ هُنِيْجَ زَتِ	
kūsa langu kūsa gāni	mbūna hunipija zīṭa	2h/g
	kosa langu kosa gani * mbona hunipija zita	2g/h
	<i>What kind of fault is my fault? [O my children] why do you continue waging war on me?</i>	

<sup>1</sup>From Abdulkadir and Frankl (2013).

۳	مِم مَامُنْ سِتَاسَ	وَل سِنَ پُنْغُونِ
3b/a	mimi māmenu sitāsa	wala sina punguwani
3a/b	<i>mimi mamenu sit'asa * wala sina punguwani</i>	
	<i>I am your mother and am not yet infertile, nor has my ability to reproduce diminished.</i>	
	نِ مَزَا وَ مَمْبَاسَ	نَ كُنْغِنَ زِسُونِ
3d/c	ni mezā wa mambāsa	na kungine zisiwani
3c/d	<i>nimezaa wa Mambasa * na kungine zisiwani</i>	
	<i>I have given birth to children in Mambasa, and in the other islands [of the Swahili],</i>	
	نِز وَنَ سِيَّاسَ	نَ زِيُونْغُونِزِ وَدِنَ
3f/e	nize wana siyāsa	na ziyūngūzi waḍini
3e/f	<i>nizee wanasiasa * na ziongozi wa dini</i>	
	<i>to politicians and to religious leaders,</i>	
	مَافُنْدِ وَ كُلِّ فَنِ	نَ مَاشُجَا وَ زِتَ
3h/g	māfundī wa kula fani	na māshujā wa zita
3g/h	<i>mafundi wa kula fani * na mashujaa wa zita</i>	
	<i>to craftsmen in every field, and to war heroes.</i>	

۴	نَدِمِ مَامَاكَ مُيَاكَ	بِي مَوْنِغَ عَثْمَانِ
4b/a	ndimi māmāke muyāka	piya mwengo 'athmāni
4a/b	<i>ndimi mamake Muyaka<sup>2</sup> * pia Mwengo Athmani<sup>3</sup></i>	
	<i>I am the mother of Bwana Muyaka, and of Mwengo Athmani also,</i>	
	نَ زَهْدِ كَذَلِكِ	نَ وَنْغِ وَاكِ وَنْدَانِ
4d/c	na zahidī kadhalika	na wengi wāke wendāni
4c/d	<i>na Zahidi<sup>4</sup> kadhalika * na wengi wake wendani</i>	
	<i>and of Zahidi too, and many of his contemporaries,</i>	
	عَالِي كُوتِ نَ مَتَاكَ	وَتِ مَبِوَا مُوَيَ قَرِنِ
4f/e	'ālī kūṭi na maṭāka	wote mbwā mūya qarini
4e/f	<i>Ali Koti<sup>5</sup> na Mataka<sup>6</sup> * wote mbwa moya karini</i>	
	<i>Ali Koti and Mataka, all from just one century,</i>	
	وَلْتُوكِ مَا تُومْبُونِ	وَ كَوَا كَمَ نِيوتِ
4h/g	waliṭūka māṭūmbūni	wa kawā kama nīūṭa
4g/h	<i>walitoka mtumboni * wakawaa kama nyota</i>	
	<i>they emerged from my womb, and shone like stars.</i>	

<sup>2</sup>Bwana Muyaka was the outstanding Swahili poet of 19th century Mombasa. After his death many of his verses were recalled by Mu'allim Sikujua Abdallah al-Batawi (died 1890) and transcribed with annotations by W.E. Taylor (1856-1927). After Taylor's death his papers were acquired by the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London.

<sup>3</sup>Mwengo Athmani: this 18th century poet from Pate composed the *Utendi wa Tambuka* (The Epic of Heraklios).

<sup>4</sup>Zahidi: see El-Maawy (1973).

<sup>5</sup>Ali Koti of Pate: see S. Chiraghdin (1987, pp.31-7).

<sup>6</sup>Bwana Mataka's full name is Muhammad bin Shee Mataka al-Famau (1825-1868). He was ruler of Siyu, as was his father. His mother was Mwana Kuona, famous for the poem of advice written to her daughter. Bwana Mataka died in Mombasa's fort while imprisoned by the Busa'idi.

ه اِنْكِشَافِ نَغْلِي اُكْسُومَ نَ كِدَنِ  
inkishāfi ngaliya ukisōme na kidani 5b/a  
Inkishafi<sup>7</sup> angalia \* ukisome na kidani 5a/b

Look at Inkishafi. Read it attentively

نَدِيُو تَاكَأُو كُولِي نِ كَوَامْبِيَاءُ مُونْدَانِ  
ndipuu takāpuu kweleya ni kwāmbiyao mwendāni 5d/c  
ndipo takapo kwelea \* nikwambiyao mwendani 5c/d  
and then you will understand, my dear friend,

نِ تُونُغَ زِمَسَلِي نَ هَزِفَ أَصِلَانِ  
ni tūngo zimesaliya na hazifi asilāni 5f/e  
ni t'ungo zimesalia \* na hazifi asilani 5e/f

what I am telling you. These verses are of enduring worth and will never die.

وَالْوَزْتُغَ نِ نْيَانِ نِ وَنَانُغَ وَالْوَيْتَ  
wālūzitunga ni nyāni ni wanāngu wālūpita 5h/g  
walozitunga ni nyani \* ni wanangu walopita 5g/h

Who were those who composed them? They were my children who have passed on.

نَ مَالَنْغَ وَ مُفَتَ نَ پِي كِرَاغُ دِنِ  
na mālenga wa mvita na piya k'irāgu dīni 6b/a  
na Malenga<sup>8</sup> wa Mvita \* na pia Chiraghdini<sup>9</sup> 6a/b

And the Bard of Mambasa, and Chiraghdin too,

نِيَايُو وَلِزِفُوتَ هَاوُكُكِرِ اُدُنِ  
nyāyuu ūlizifuwata hāwakukiri uduni 6d/c  
nyayo walizifuata \* hawakukiri uduni 6c/d

they followed in my footsteps, they did not submit to lower standards.

نَنَابَهَانِ هُتَتَ لَكِنِ هُفَلِيَانِ  
nnābahāni huṭeta lakini hufaliyāni 6f/e  
Nabahani<sup>10</sup> huteta \* lakini hufaliyani 6e/f

al-Nabhany reproves, but to what effect?

نَدِي پُوكِ اُونْدَانِ اِنْغَا اَمِيَكِتَ  
ndiye pweke uwandāni ingā ameikita 6h/g  
ndiye pweke uwandani \* ingawa ameikita 6g/h

He remains alone in the field, yet he stays strong.

<sup>7</sup>The *Inkishafi*, according to W.E. Taylor (Stigand 1915, pp96-105), is “a great, if not the greatest, religious classic of [the Swahili-speaking peoples]”. The poem, concerned with the decay of Pate (formerly a flourishing town in northern Swahililand), may remind some readers of Thomas Gray’s *Elegy written in an English churchyard* (London 1751).

<sup>8</sup>The Bard of Mambasa refers to Ustadh Ahmad Nassir Juma Bhalo, see S. Chiraghdin (1971).

<sup>9</sup>Shihabdin Chiraghdin (1934-1976). See the biography by his daughter – L. Chiraghdin (2012).

<sup>10</sup>In an unpublished commendation from 12 June 1974 J.W.T. Allen writes about Ahmad Sheikh Nabhany: “I am privileged to have a wide circle of friends and acquaintances among Swahili scholars of Swahili. I have some knowledge of their rating of themselves and I can name perhaps half a dozen (still living) who are always referred to as the most learned. To me they are walking dictionaries and mines of information and Ahmed is unquestionably one of them. He comes of a family of scholars whose discipline is as tough as any degree course in the world. They have no time for false scholarship or dilettantism. That this profound learning is almost wholly disregarded by those who have been highly educated in the western tradition affects almost everything written today in or about Swahili. When I want to know some word or something about Swahili, I do not go to professors, but to one of the *bingwa* known to me. One of these could give a much greater detail of assessment, but of course his opinion would not carry the weight of one who can put some totally irrelevant letters after his name”. For a biography see Said (2012).

سَيَاكُومَ اُكِنُغُونِ	بَادُ كُزَا نَ وَزَ	٧
siyākūma ukingūni	bādo kuzā na weza	7b/a
bado kuzaa naweza * siyakoma ukingoni		7a/b
I am still able to give birth. I have not yet reached the limit,		
مُمَيْتُو فُونِ	لَكِنِ مُمَيْنُوزَ	
mumeitowa fuwoni	lakini mumenipūza	7d/c
lakini mumenipuuza * mumeitowa fuoni		7c/d
but you have all despised me. You have left me high and dry,		
كُنِيَانُغِي كَانُونِ	وَنُغِنِ مَيْتُوكَزَ	
kunipāngiya kānūni	wangine meitūkeza	7f/e
wangine meitokeza * kunipangia kanuni		7e/f
now others have come forward to regulate me,		
نِينِي مُلِيُونُوتَ	مُسَمِيَاتِ كُبُونِ	
nyinyi mulipūniwata	musamiyāti kubūni	7h/g
musamiati kubuni <sup>11</sup> * nyinyi muliponiwata		7g/h
compiling standardized dictionaries.		

كَنُغَلِي جَرَدَنِ	هُلِي كِسِكِيَتَا	٨
kʰangaliya jaridani	huliya kisikitika	8b/a
hulia kisikitika * changaliya jaridani		8a/b
I weep and lament when I look at the learned journals,		
سَوَانُغِ نِ وَغِنِ	وَنُغِ وَنَاءُ اَنَدِكِ	
siwanāngu ni wageni	wengi wanau andika	8d/c
wengi wanaoandika * si wanangu ni wageni		8c/d
for many of those who contribute are not my children, they are strangers [to me].		
وَيْكَ تُنُغِ نِ نِيَانِ	اِذَاعَانِ كَذَلِكِ	
wapeka tūngo ni nyāni	idhā'āni kadhalika	8f/e
idhaani kadhalika * wapeka t'ungo ni nyani		8e/f
It is much the same with the media. Who are the ones who send in their compositions?		
لِكَا كُو مَبَا مَفِتَا	وَنُغِ هَاوُتُوكِ پَوَانِ	
lik'a kuwa mbwā mvita	wengi hāwatūk pwān	8h/g
wengi hawatoki p'wani * licha kuwa mbwa Mvita		8g/h
Many do not come from the coast, although they may have a Mambasa address.		

زِسُومَشَوَاءُ شُلِنِ	اَنُغَلِي نَ زِتَابُ	٩
zisūmeshwao shuleni	angaliya na zitābu	9b/a
angalia na zitabu * zisumeshwao shuleni		9a/b
Look at the textbooks which are studied at our schools.		

<sup>11</sup> For almost a century the principal publisher of standardized Swahili dictionaries has been the Oxford University Press (OUP). Clearly OUP has to be profitable, and profitable is what, over the years, their dictionaries of standardized Swahili have been. However, if one considers excellence in research and scholarship not one of the OUP's standardized Swahili lexicons can begin to compare with the Oxford English Dictionary ('more than 600,000 words over a thousand years'). Fortunately for Swahili and for Swahili studies there exists the monumental *Dictionnaire swahili-français*, compiled by Charles Sacleux (Sacleux 1939). Sacleux's chef d'oeuvre ('unprecedented in historical depth, dialectological detail and philological knowledge') can now be accessed electronically, courtesy of *Swahili Forum* ([uni-leipzig.de/~afrika/swafo/index.php/sacleux](http://uni-leipzig.de/~afrika/swafo/index.php/sacleux)). Heartfelt thanks are due to Thilo Schadeberg and Ridder Samsom.

هَازَانْدِكُون رَجَبُ	سِ سُودِ وَلَ سِ شَانِ	
hāzāndikwī na rajabu	si sūdi wala si shāni	9d/c
hazandikwi na Rajabu * si Sudi wala si Shani		9c/d
	They are written neither by Rajabu, nor by Sudi nor by Shani.	
نَجُورُغِ نَدِي كَتَبُ	أَشِشِيُ سُكَانِ	
njūroge ndiye katibu	ashishiyeo sukāni	9f/e
Njoroge <sup>12</sup> ndiye katibu * ashishiyeo sukani		9e/f
	The author is Njoroge, he is the helmsman.	
كَارُ نَ وَالْ وَندَانِ	نَاءُ نِيَوْمَ هُفُوتَ	
kjāro na wāke wendāni	nao nyūma hufuwaṭa	9h/g
Charo <sup>13</sup> na wake wendani * nao nyuma hufuata		9g/h
	Charo and his colleagues follow.	

هُوَلِكُوَا كُونْغَمَانُ	كَندَ هُرْدِ نَدِيَانِ	١٠
huwalikwā kūngamāno	k'enda hurudi ndiyāni	10b/a
hualikwa kongamano * chenda hurudi ndiani		10a/b
	When I am invited to conferences, I turn back before I arrive.	
هُونَ أَتْنُغْ مَنُو	كُو نِينِي سَوَانِ	
huwona utungu mnuu	kuwa nyinyi siwaoni	10d/c
huona utungu mno * kuwa nyinyi siwaoni		10c/d
	I feel exceedingly bitter that I do not see you all there.	
نَ هِرَامَ زِتَانِ	لَكِنِ نِتْنَدِ نِنِ	
na huziuma zitāni	lakini nitende nni	10f/e
na huziuma zitano <sup>14</sup> * lakini nitende nini		10e/f
	I bite my fingers in frustration, but what can I do?	
وَنَانْغُ مُمَيْخِنِ	مَامَنُ مُمِنَوَتَ	
wanāngu mumeikhini	māmenu mumeniwaṭa	10h/g
wanangu mumeihini * mamenu mumeniwata		10g/h
	My children, you have missed your opportunity. You have abandoned your own mother.	

نَ هُلِي كُوَا مَاتُوزِ	كَتْغَلِي مِتْحَانِ	١١
na huliya kwā mātūzi	k'angaliya mitihāni	11b/a
na hulia kwa matozi * changaliya mitihani		11a/b
	And I shed tears when I look at the results of the school exams.	
وَنَفُنْدِ وَ كِبُوزِ	نَ وَ كِسُومُ زَوْنِ	
wanafundi wa kibwezi	na wa kisūmu ziwani	11d/c
wanafundi wa Kibwezi * na wa Kisumu <sup>15</sup> ziwani <sup>16</sup>		11c/d
	Students from Kibwezi, and from Kisumu by the lake,	

<sup>12</sup>njoroge: a name representing those who have their origins in the East African interior (the bara).

<sup>13</sup>charo: a name representing those who have their origins in the coastal hinterland (the nyika).

<sup>14</sup>These words echo the words of the *Inkishafi*: “wakauma zanda na kuiyuta”. Readers unfamiliar with this Swahili gesture of regret could consult Eastman and Omar (1985).

<sup>15</sup>Kibwezi and Kisumu are places in the East African interior.

<sup>16</sup>The lake is Lake Nyanza, also known as Lake Victoria.

وَلْيُكُوْ كِلَلِنِ	نَدُوْ وَنَاءُ بَارِزِ	
waliyūkuu kileleni	ndiwo wanao bārizi	11f/e
ndiwo wanao barizi * waliyukuu kileleni		11e/f
they are the ones who are ahead, who are at the top;		
مُكُوْ تِنِ هُكُوْكُوْتَ	مُلُوْتُوْكَ كُوْتِ پَوَانِ	
mukuu t̄ini hukūkūṭa	mulūtūka kwetu pwāni	11h/g
mulotoka kwetu p'wani * muko t'ini hukokota <sup>17</sup>		11g/h
and you, students from the coast, you lag far behind.		

وَأَزْمِلِ كُونِ	وَفَانِيَاءُ أَتَفِتِ	١٢
wa uzamili k'uwoni	wafānyao utafiti	12b/a
wafanyao utafiti * wa uzamili chuwoni		12a/b
Amongst those who are researching for degrees at the universities,		
أَوْ هَوَپَاتِكَانِ	وَسَوَاهِلِ نِ كَاتِتِ	
aw hawapātīkāni	waswāhili ni kātiti	12d/c
Waswahili ni katiti * au hawapatikani		12c/d
Swahili students are few or non-existent.		
مُونِي مَآكُوْسَ نِ نِيَانِ	نِ نِيَانِ نِ مَلِئِتِ	
mwenye mākūsa ni nyāni	ni nyāni ni mlaiti	12f/e
ni nyani ni mlaiti * mwenye makosa ni nyani		12e/f
Who is to be blamed? Whose fault is it?		
مَغْنِ هَامُكُپَاتِ	مِمِ هَامُنِثَمِينِ	
mgine hāmukupāṭa	mimi hāmunithamini	12h/g
mimi hamunithamini * mgine hamukupata		12g/h
You esteem me not at all, yet you have not replaced me by another.		

هُنَانُغُونُغَ مُوِيُونِ	كِوَسِكِي هُنِينِ	١٣
huniongūnga mūyūni	kiwasikiya hunīna	13b/a
kiwasikiya hunena * huniungonga moyoni		13a/b
When I hear those who are not mother-tongue speakers speaking, I feel sick at heart.		
نَحُوْ نِ تِيْمَانِ	صَرْفَ هَكُنَ تِنِ	
naḥau na itāmāni	ṣarfa hakuna t̄ena	13d/c
sarufi hakuna tena * nahau naitamani		13c/d
Inflection is no longer employed, while grammatical [Swahili] is what I desire!		
كَمْ مَشَآپُوْ كَانُوَانِ	نَ حَتَ لَدَ هَيَانِ	
kama mashāpuu kānwāni	na ḥaṭa ladha hayāna	13f/e
na hata ladha hayana * kama mashapu kanwani		13e/f
Even [their speech] is wanting in flavour, like a plug of tobacco in one's mouth.		
هُئِمْبَ أَوْ هُتَتَ	سِيْلُوْ هُنِنَانِ	
huimba aw huteta	sielewi hunenāni	13h/g
sielewi hunenani * huimba au huteta		13g/h
I do not understand what they are saying. Are they singing? Are they complaining?		

<sup>17</sup> Over the years young people on Lamu Island (and indeed elsewhere in northern Swahililand) have received a raw deal in their primary and secondary education. They have 'lagged far behind' their counterparts from the interior, and so Mother Swahili grieves for her marginalised children.

لَوْ مُيَاكَ تَارُدْ	أَيَّ تَنَ دُنْيَانِ	14
law muyāka tārudi	ay tena duniyāni	14b/a
	lau Muyaka tarudi * ae tena duniani	14a/b
	<i>Were Bwana Muyaka to return, were he to come back to the world,</i>	
مَوَانَانُغُ إِتْمَبِدْ	كُونَنْدَ مَحَكَمَانِ	
mwānāngu itambidi	kwenenda mahakamāni	14d/c
	mwanangu itambidi * kwenenda mahakamani	14c/d
	<i>it would be necessary, my child, for him to go to a court of law,</i>	
أَيْتَ نَ مَشْهَدِ	وَيُيَوَاءُ يَقِينِ	
aete na mashahidi	waniyuwao yaqini	14f/e
	aete na mashahidi * waniyuwao yakini	14e/f
	<i>and he would need to call witnesses who know me well,</i>	
نُيُوتَ مُونَدَ غَرَزَنِ	كُوَا حَتِّي كُوپَاتَ	
nyūte mwende gerezani	kwā ḥaṭiya kuwapāta	14h/g
	nyote mwende gerezani * kwa hatia kuwapata	14g/h
	<i>and all of you would go to prison for the offence which you have committed against me.</i>	

وَاللَّهِ هُمُنَ غَيْرَ	وَلَّ هَامُونَ إِمَانِ	15
wallāhi hamuna gēra	wala hāmūna imāni	15b/a
	wallahi hamuna ghera * wala hamuna imani	15a/b
	<i>Truly you have neither zeal nor self-confidence.</i>	
هَمُنَ لَكُوكِرَ	كُو هَمُنِثَمِنِ	
hamuna lakuwakerā	kuwa hamunithamini	15d/c
	hamuna la kuwakerā * kuwa hamunithamini	15c/d
	<i>It irritates you not at all that you do not esteem me.</i>	
مِمِ نِ كَامَ مِپِيرِ	هُتَزَوَ أُوْنَدَانِ	
mimi ni kāmā mpiwiri	hutezewa uwandāni	15f/e
	mimi ni kama mpwira * hutezewa uwandani	15e/f
	<i>I am just like a ball in the play-ground,</i>	
هِيَجُوا تَكْنَدِيَانِ	نَ كُلَ مُونِي كُپِتَ	
hipijwā tekendiyāna	na kula mwenye kupita	15h/g
	hipijwa teke ndiani * na kula mwenye kupita	15g/h
	<i>I am given a kick in the street by anyone who passes by.</i>	

حَتَ كُونِي أُشَعِرِ	وَاسُو وَنُغُ وَمَبُونِ	16
ḥaṭa kwenye usha'iri	wāsuu wangu wamebūni	16b/a
	hata kwenye ushairi * waso wangu wamebuni	16a/b
	<i>Even in the field of Swahili prosody, those who are not mine have invented</i>	

زِلِزْ حُرُّ بَحَارٍ      كُؤَا كُؤَلَزْ وَغَنٍ  
 zilizo ħuru baĥāri      kwā kuwoleza wageni      16d/c  
 zilizo huru bahari \* kwa kuoleza wageni      16c/d  
*free verse, imitating foreigners.*

مِمَّ هَآيُو سِيَاكِرٍ      سِ مَآشَعِرِ كِفَنِ  
 mmi hāyuu siyākiri      si māsha'iri kifani      16f/e  
 mimi hayo siyakiri \* si mashairi kifani      16e/f  
*For myself, I cannot accept that. That is not Swahili poetry.*

هَآوُ نُؤْتِ نِ كُؤَا نَنْ      هَزُ نِ مَبْنُ زَا زَتْ  
 hāyuu yūt ni kwā nn      hzo n mbnu zā zta      16h/g  
 hayo yote ni kwa nini \* hizo ni mbinu za zita      16g/h  
*What is the point of it all? These are preparations for war.*

١٧      هَمَبِيُو مُؤَبِيُو سِنَ      هِنِ نِ عَجَابُ غَانِ  
 hambiwa mwenyewe sina      hini ni 'ajābu gāni      17b/a  
 hambiwa mwenyewe sina \* hini ni ajabu gani      17a/b  
*I am told that I belong to nobody in particular. How extraordinary!*

هُوَآءِ كَاكُؤَسَ شِنَ      كَاوُ نِ تَانْدُ يَانْغَانِ  
 huwae kākūsa shina      kāwa na tāndu yāngāni      17d/c  
 huwae kakosa shina \* kawa na tandu yangani      17c/d  
*How can I be rootless below ground and yet have branches above?*

نَيَانِ الْوَنِبِ ئِنَ      الْوَنَانْدِكِ نِ نَيَانِ  
 nyāni alūnīpa ina      alūnāndika ni nyāni      17f/e  
 nyani alonipa ina \* alonandika ni nyani      17e/f  
*Who gave me my name? And who are they who wrote me down?*

كَوُ سِ أَسْوَا حِلِينِ      نِ وَبِ نَالِيُؤِيَاتِ  
 kiwa si uswāḥilini      ni wapi nālīpūpāta      17h/g  
 kiwa si Uswahilini \* ni wapi nalipopata      17g/h  
*If I do not hail from Swahililand, then whence do I come?*

١٨      كُؤُ وَنْغِ هُنِنَنَ      سِدَلِيلِ أَصِلَانِ  
 kuwa wengi huninena      siḍalili aṣilāni      18b/a  
 kuwa wengi huninena \* si dalili asilani      18a/b  
*That many speak me, [Swahili], is not of itself proof of origins,*

يَاكُؤُ مُؤَبِيُو سِنَ      كِنْغِرَزَ هَامُؤُونِ  
 yākuwa mwenyewe sina      kingereza hāmuwoni      18d/c  
 yakuwa mwenyewe sina \* Kiingereza hamuoni      18c/d  
*or that I have no owner. What of the English language?*

هُنِنُؤَا نِ وَنْغِ سَانَ      پَمْبِ زَتْ دُنِيَانِ  
 hunenwā na wengi sāna      pembe zote ḍuniyāni      18f/e  
 hunenwa na wengi sana \* pembe zote duniani      18e/f  
*It is spoken by very many, in all corners of the world,*



مِزِي هَيْكُكَاتَ

miziye haikukāṭa

كِنْ نَ كُؤَاءُ سِنَانِ

kina na kwao sināni

18h/g

kina na kwao sinani \* miziye haikukata

18g/h

*yet the language remains firmly established in its homeland, its roots have not been severed.*

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