Between the lines: re-citing Qur'anic verses in Swahili manuscripts

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Copying Manuscripts:
Textual and Material Craftsmanship

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Table of Contents

Between the Lines: Re-citing Qur'ānic Verses in Swahili Manuscripts[*]

ANNACHIARA RAIA

> 'As I once heard a maalim say in a speech, even if all poets of the world were brought together and provided with all the ink and paper they needed, they would not be able to produce one verse of poetry of the quality of the Qur'ān'[1]

1. Introduction

Quoting the noble Qur'ān in Swahili *tenḏi* (sg., *utenḏi*) narrative poems is a common practice for Swahili scribes, albeit one that has rarely been considered in the study of Swahili poetry and its manuscript production.[2] A considerable number of poems transmitted in Arabic-script

[*] I would like to thank Alessandro Gori, Antonella Brita, and Clarissa Vierke for their helpful and stimulating suggestions, comments, and corrections on the first draft of this manuscript. I am grateful to Kristen de Joseph and Valentina Serelli for proofreading the article and checking some of its transliterations, respectively.

[1] Kresse 2007, 107.

[2] The term, which in Northern Swahili dialects is *utenḏi* (pl. *tenḏi*), is derived from the verb *kutenda* 'to do, to act, to make.' The literal meaning is thus analogous to the French chanson de gestes, a form that it also resembles in length (see Allen 1971 and Gerard 1977). Prosodically, the *utenḏi* is a metrical and rhymed verse form. The noun *utenḏi* has a double meaning: it indicates both the verse form composed in metre (Swahili *bahari*, from the Arabic *baḥr*, pl. *buḥūr*) as well the specific compositions in this form. As meticulously described by Vierke, 'The *utenḏi* is rhythmically divided into stanzas (*beiti*, sg. *ubeiti*) of 64 syllables (*mizani*) each. The stanzas are the biggest independent, prosodically

manuscripts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries feature Qur'ānic verses (Arabic *āya*; plural *āyāt*) quoted between their stanzas (Swahili *ubeti*; pl. *beti*). Such works include the moral fables *Utenḍi wa Ngamia na Paa* ('The Poem of the Camel and the Gazelle'),[3] *Utenḍi wa Kadhi na Haramii* ('The Poem of the Lawyer and the Thief')[4] and *Kisat Mudhari* ('The Poem from Mudhari');[5] epic poems like the *Utenḍi wa Badr* ('The Poem of the Battle of Badr')[6] and the *Utenḍi wa Qatirifu* ('The poem of Ghitrif');[7] *tenḍi* about the prophets, such as *Ayubu* ('Job'),[8] the *Kisa cha Sayyidna Isa* ('Our Lord Jesus'; Dammann 1980), and the *Kisa cha Yusufu* ('Joseph');[9] and didactic poems like the *Utenḍi wa Siraji* ('The Poem of the Lantern').[10]

In terms of sheer quantity, the presence of Qur'ānic verses in the manuscripts of Swahili *utenḍi* poems varies significantly. Their abundance or paucity in a poem may be due to the author or scribe's personal style, as well as careful selection based on the content of the *utenḍi* (be it a fable like the *Ngamia na Paa*, a didactic poem like the *Siraji*, or religious verse like the *Kisa cha Isa* or *Yusufu*). Why did the authors of such literary texts seek to imbue their works with the political and moral values of these holy verses?

and graphologically separate units of the *utenḍi*. A stanza consists of four lines (*vipande*, sg. *kipande* 'piece') of eight syllables each. The four lines are divided into two pairs (hemistichs) or bi-colons (*mshororo*, pl. *mishororo*), so that an *ubeiti* consists of two *mishororo* (which in turn consist of two *vipande* each)' (2010, 25).

[3] Allen 1971, 77–129; Dammann 1940, 285–327.

[4] Dammann 1957, 432–489.

[5] Knappert 1964, 106–163.

[6] Allen 1970, 69; Knappert 1999, 38–39; idem 1985, 245–50.

[7] Hichens 1939; Knappert 1968/69.

[8] Werner 1921–23, 85–115; 297–320; 347–416.

[9] Knappert 1964 , 9–58; Raia 2017.

[10] Miehe and Vierke 2010, 329–393.

2. The Transmission of Knowledge along the Northern Kenyan Coast

The 'talismanic' power of Arabic[11] reaches far and wide: in the world of soccer, for instance, imams recite the Sūrat al-Naṣr ('Victory'), commemorating the Ḥudaybiyya treaty, before every match.[12] In the Sūrat al-Isrā' ('The Night Journey'), verse 82 clearly avows the therapeutic power of Qur'ānic recitation:[13] 'and We send down, of the Qur'ān, that which is a healing and a mercy to the believers.'[14] During the Kenyan general election of 1997, the poet Ustadh Mahmoud Ahmed Abdulkadir opened his political verses—part of his *Kimwondo* ('Shooting Star') collection, recorded on tape and circulated widely—with the Muslim *basmalah*, accompanied by a Qur'ānic verse from the aforementioned Sūrat al-Isrā,' as follows: 'And say: "The truth (*al-ḥaqq*) has come, and falsehood (*al-bāṭil*) has vanished away; surely falsehood is ever certain to vanish".'[15] Only after the recitation of this *āya* do we find the *utenḏi* poem's first stanza.[16] Thus, in political campaigning just as in soccer, *ʿulamā*, especially sayyids and poets, play a prominent role, as Shariff points out. Indeed, it is in the pens and voices of the poets, 'in their emotionally charged verses usually in *utenḏi* form,' that the success of a politician lies: 'after the familiar introductory verses invoking the many attributes of God, the poet begins with quotations of familiar verses of the Qur'an or stories of love and betrayal as experienced by the prophets.'[17] As stated by Brenner, 'the recitation of the Qur'ān, or of selected

[11] Loimeier 2005, 409.

[12] Bausani 2007 [1988], 658 dates the *sūra* to the year 628 or 629. Some commentators believe the *sūra* alludes to the conquest of Mecca.

[13] Bausani 2007, 584.

[14] Arberry 1986, 282.

[15] Arberry 1986, 283, verse 81.

[16] The *utenḏi* manuscript of *Kimwondo* was kindly shown to me by Ustadh Mahmoud Mau. All the handwritten compositions of Mahmoud Mau are currently kept at the DEVA archive in Bayreuth. The *Kimwondo* poem was edited by Amidu (1990).

[17] Shariff 1991, 54.

verses of the Qur'ān, is at the very heart of Islamic religious practice,' and 'such recitations are instilled in Muslims from childhood.'[18]

Although the Qur'ān is the first and most fundamental text studied in *madrasa* classes and at Qur'ānic schools (Swahili *chuo*; plural *vyuo*), devotees often find it valuable to recall its teachings by quoting entire chapters or verses in poetic compositions. In his *Utenḍi wa Mtu ni Utu* ('The Poem on "A Human Being Is Humanity"'), Sheikh Ahmed Nassir, more famously known as Ustadh Bhalo,[19] stresses the value of repetition (*kurudi tena* or *kukariri*), as it encourages reflecting on and reminding each other (*kukumbushana*) how to behave: *na ingawa duniyani / wangi wameyabaini / si vibaya asilani / iwapo 'tayarudiya*, 'Although, in the world, many do already observe [this], it's not bad in principle if I repeat [it]'; *maana kurudi tena / ambayo watu menena / ni kama kukumbushana / kwa hivyo si jambo baya*, 'The sense of repeating what people have [already] said is akin to reminding each other; thus, it's not a bad thing.'[20] Reinforcing the basic pillars of Islam, like how to fast correctly during Ramadan—which anyone can find (and has found) in the holy book—is a theme that Ahmed Sheikh Nabahany also treats in his didactic *utenḍi* poem *Mwangaza wa Dini* ('The Light of Religion').[21] The poem, compo-

[18] Seydou 2008, 13.

[19] Ahmed Nassir Juma Bhalo is a renowned poet, healer, and painter born in the township of Kuze, Mombasa in 1936. He is renowned in Mombasa for his talent in composing verse, which is then sung by his cousin Juma Bhalo. For further details on his intellectual role and poetic compositions, see Harries 1962, Kresse 2007, and Nassir 1983.

[20] Stanzas 37 and 38 of the *Utenḍi wa Mtu ni Utu*, quoted in Kresse 2007, 155.

[21] Ahmed Sheikh Nabahany is a cultural scholar who was born in Lamu in 1927 and died in February 2017. Sheikh Nabahany contributed tremendously to the preservation of Swahili language and culture. To name but a few milestones in his programme of conservation (*kuhifadhi*), it is worth mentioning the poems *Sambo ya Kiwandeo* ('The Ship from Lamu Island,' 1979) and *Umbuji wa Mnazi* ('The Elegance of the Coconut Tree,' 1985), as well as his works on Kiswahili vocabulary, as exemplified in his *Mapisi ya Kiswahili* (1995) and the dictionary *Kandi ya Kiswahili* (2012).

sed in Mombasa in 1976, was welcomed by the community and the district commissioner. The mere fact that the simple concepts it contains—familiar to its audience, but too often taken for granted—were repeated and stressed once more in Swahili and via poetry made even the district commissioner commend the poem for its capacity to enlighten Muslim commoners who were unable to read and understand Arabic on issues of Islamic doctrine and practice.

The dissemination of Qur'ānic knowledge as part of the everyday spiritual practice of Swahili *ʿulamā*, as described above, is linked to the underlying idea of *ṯawāb*, the belief according to which 'Muslims believe that the repetition of a good word which propagates the faith results in rewards from Allah, mostly enjoyed in the hereafter.'[22] The Qur'ān and *ṯawāb* are enduring institutions and well-suited to the themes of contemporary Swahili poets (as in the case of the most prominent poet and thinkers mentioned above, such as Sheikh Ahmed Nabahany, Ahmed Nassir, and Ustadh Mahmoud Mau), but can be also traced back through the centuries.

2.1 Kunakili kwa khati, biyadi Muhamadi[23]

The poet and scribe Muhamadi bin Abu Bakari bin Omari Kijuma was born to a family of Arabic origin in the village of Katawa, Lamu, around 1855;[24] he started attending *chuo* classes at the age of six, where he learned the Qur'ān by heart, as well as how to read and write Arabic script. The lectures of his teacher and uncle, Mwenye Mansab, at the ar-Raudha Mosque influenced Kijuma considerably, and inspired him to start composing poetry, painting, and writing in 'his fine hand.'[25] Mwenye Mansab was after all a reputed scholar of Islamic theology and jurisprudence in addition to poetry, and an expert calligrapher of Swa-

[22] Ahmed 1991, 82; for further criticism, see also Shariff 1991, 54–55 and Topan 2001, 107–108.

[23] 'Copying manuscripts in the hand of Muhamadi Kijuma.'

[24] See Egl 1983; Dammann 1968/69, 1980; Miehe and Vierke 2010.

[25] Egl 1983, 25.

hili in Arabic script. This contributed to Kijuma becoming a *mshari mwenye kuwangika kwa kila namna ya mashairi na nyimbo* ('one of the poets of every kind of poetry and songs') and *mwandishi mashuhuri hata khati za kuchonga majiweni katika majiwe ya makaburi katika milango ya nakshi hata leo ibakiye Amu* ('a renowned scribe, even for inscriptions on stones, gravestones, and carved doors, which still remain in Lamu').[26]

Besides his activities as a commentator, translator, and copyist, Kijuma was also a poet. This has made it difficult to draw a line between his role as a copyist and editor on the one hand, and a composer of original works on the other.[27] In the colophon of one copy of the *Utenḏi wa Yusuf*, namely the manuscript DA2[28] (at least three copies of this poem have been ascribed to him), he uses the Arabic verb *ḥarrara* ('to edit') beside his signature. Thus, while this signature might assert his role as 'merely' the editor and/or 'Schreiber'[29] of the poem, in a letter accompanying a later copy of the *Utenḏi wa Yusuf*, namely manuscript DA1,[30] sent to the German scholar Ernst Dammann—for whom the manuscript was written on commission—the statement *na mimi naliandika Utenḏi wa Yusuf* ('and I wrote the Poem of Yusuf') implies that he was also the composer.[31]

[26] Faraj Bwana Mkuu's description of Muhamadi Kijuma (Miehe and Vierke 2010, 330–331).

[27] See Vierke 2010, 41–60.

[28] Seminar 1465 H73, nr. 3 (Dammann 1993, 33).

[29] The label 'Schreiber,' as used here, is due to Muhamadi Kijuma's service as a scribe for the Neukirchen Mission, based in Milimani, Lamu, after the First World War. The mission hosted the German scholar Ernst Dammann along with his wife in 1936 (see Miehe & Vierke 2010, 45).

[30] Hs. Or 9893, nr. 375 (Dammann 1993, 166–67).

[31] Ernst Dammann (1904–2003) took up Carl Meinhof's research activities in the field of classical Swahili literature. During his stay on Lamu in summer 1936, he was in close contact with Muhamadi Kijuma, with whom he first undertook the study of the epic poem *Utenḏi wa Tambuka*. Thanks to the manuscripts that Kijuma was able to provide the scholar even after he left the island, in 1993, Dammann was able to publish his monumental volume on all the Swa-

Quite a bit is known about the Arabic books that Kijuma copied, such as the *al-Sayfu al-Qāti*ʿ ('The Cutting Sword'), which he obtained from Bwana Ali Aman al-Busaidy and which contains Qur'ānic passages (*wird*; pl., *awrād*) and invocations (which I assume are *du*ʿ*ā*ʾ, 'invocations, acts of supplication').[32] Still other Arabic works have served as sources of inspiration and further adaptation, such as the Swahili *al-Arbaini Hadithi* ('The Forty Tales') and *al-Mustaṭraf fī kulli fanni mustaẓraf* ('The Rarity in Every Elegant Art'), by Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Isbaihi,[33] which inspired the *Utenḏi wa Barasisi*;[34] the *Kitāb al-adkiğa*, by ibn al-Ǧawziyy, which inspired the *Hadithi ya Miqdadi na Mayasa*;[35] the *Qiṣaṣ al-*ʾ*Anbiyā,'* by the Shafi'ite al-Ṯaʿlabī, the work on the prophets' lives that is the source of Kijuma's *Utenḏi wa Yusuf* and *Kisa cha Sayyidna Isa*;[36] and even the Sunni book used among Indian Muslims, the *Miškātu al-Maṣābīḥ*, originally composed by Muhamad Husein al-Baghawi,[37] on which the *Utenḏi wa Miraji* ('The Poem of Miʿrāj or of the Ascension') was based.[38]

The use and presence of Qur'ānic quotations in the *utenḏi* manuscripts copied and/or composed *biyadi Muhamadi* ('in the hand of Muhamadi Kijuma') is a phenomenon that has not been investigated so far. Textual relations and affinities have been traced between Arabic *maġāzī* literature and Swahili *utenḏi* poems like the *Chuo cha Herkal* and *Utenḏi*

hili and other African-language manuscripts in German libraries or archives (see Miehe and Vierke 2010, 27–28).

[32] Egl 1983, 168.

[33] Egl 1983, 178.

[34] Harries 1962, 19–24; Knappert 1964, 28–37.

[35] Dammann 1942b, 259. A copy of al-Ǧawziyy's book was found in Zanzibar in the form of a printed brochure (ibid.).

[36] A version of the *Qiṣaṣ* written by Tha'labī might also have existed in Zanzibar at the court of Sayyid Hamoud, Sultan of Zanzibar between 1901 and 1908 (Egl 1983, 36), but it is just as likely that Muhamadi Kijuma consulted it in Lamu. The work is divided into *majālis* and *abwāb*, and includes a considerable number of Qur'ānic quotations.

[37] Harries 1962, 26–27.

[38] Dammann 1940/41, 161–188, 278–287.

wa Haudaji;[39] the narrative cycle of the *Qiṣaṣ al-'Anbiyā'*, where the presence of the Qur'ān is pervasive and provides the framework for every tale,[40] might have inspired the composition of further *utenḍi* poems on prophetic figures such as Yusuf, Isa, Ayubu, Yunus, and Ibrahim. Indeed, the Arabic books that the Lamuan poet transcribed or obtained while serving as poet and scribe under Sayyid Hamoud, Sultan of Zanzibar, between 1901 and 1908 might even have influenced his own, later compositions in Swahili, but the nature of this influence requires further investigation and will not be the focus of this paper.

Looking at the occurrences of Qur'ānic quotations in Kijuma's own texts (both verbatim as well as loose quotations, paraphrases, and allusions), the conscious liberties that Kijuma took in lifting and rearranging verses from the holy book will be relevant in exploring the role of citations in the structure of Kijuma's works, and the nature of his devotion to this sacred text: was his priority to literally preserve the words of the Qur'ān, or to creatively weave them into his own pieces? How does Kijuma, the author as well as the scribe of many manuscripts, embellish the Swahili stanzas with Arabic passages? From which *sūra* does Kijuma quote most often, and why do some poems embody more quotations than others?

What I wish to accomplish in this paper is to (1) provide an initial overview of the instances and forms of Qur'ānic quotations embedded between and within the Swahili lines (*mistari*) in some of Kijuma's and/or other scribes' works, and (2) to illustrate Muhamadi Kijuma's personal style of embedding these quotations within the composition and multiple copies of a specific *utenḍi* text: the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf*, as intertwined with *sūra* 12, the Sūrat Yūsuf.

In the following overview, I will use Dammann's catalogue, Handschriften in Swahili und anderen Sprachen Afrikas (1993), and Allen's Swahili and Arabic Manuscripts and Tapes in the Library of the Univer-

[39] See Abel 1938; Vierke 2014, 416–424.
[40] Klar 2009, 342.

sity College of Dar es Salam (1970) as my chief sources for the manuscripts' details.

3. Along Those Lines: Practices of Inserting and Framing Quotations amid Utenḍi Stanzas

'A quotation is only a quotation when it is inserted into a new context. Thus, in the very act of recognizing a stretch of discourse as having an independent existence, the quoter is re-embedding it.'[41] (See Plate LI, Fig. 1).

3.1 Layout and Language of the Quoted Verses

In each of the manuscripts under study, the quoted Qu'rānic verses are typically confined to one line (two or more if they're longer), just like the Swahili stanzas (*beti*); moreover, both the Arabic-language passages and the Swahili ones are in Arabic script, the latter specifically in a variety known as *'ajamī* script.[42] The text of the quoted verses, however, remains in Classical Arabic (*al-fuṣḥà*). Generally speaking, while 'quoting' is an act that takes place between one textual source and another, it also entails relations between the texts' respective languages. Inserting a Qur'ānic verse or laudation into a *tenḍi* manuscript thus means that the Arabic-language passages are intertwined with Swahili ones. Therefore, despite having the same single-line format and the same script, the Swahili stanzas and Arabic verses (Qur'ānic *āyāt*, *duʿāʾ*, or eulogistic formulas like *basmalah* and *šahādah*) each have their own language and layout.

The presence of *āyāt* that are quoted—either in part or in full—between the Swahili verses is signalled in the physical manuscript paper according to the scribe's personal style and habits. Features such as use of red ink (see Muhamadi Kijuma's handwriting, Plate LI, Fig. 1), a particular star-shaped symbol at the end of the quotation (see the unknown

[41] Barber 2007, 79.

[42] The term *ʿajamī* stems from the Arabic word *ʿağam* (عَجَم) 'foreigner; a Persian; non-Arabic'. Note that, for readers unfamiliar with the text of the Qur'ān, it can be quite difficult to trace every quoted verse back to its native context, namely its *sūra* and specific *āya*, as the Swahili scribes rarely specify which chapter or verse of the holy Qur'ān he or she is quoting.

scribe, Plate LI, Fig. 2), or a sort of closing bracket (see Yahya Ali Omar, Plate LII, Fig. 5) can all contribute to making the quotations more conspicuous to the reader's eye (particularly Plate LI, Figs 1–2). In other manuscripts, the Qur'ān is cited without any sort of embellishment: the same ink (black on Plate LI, Fig. 3, blue on Plate LII, Fig. 5) used for the Swahili stanzas is also used to copy the Qur'ānic passages. The table below compares the copying practices of the same Qur'ānic verse (*sūra* 12, *āya* 5) across four existing manuscripts of the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf*.[43] (see Plates LI–LII, Figs 2–5).

In the manuscripts of *tenḍi* poems, not only do the Arabic quotations, but also the Swahili stanzas each correspond to one manuscript line (*mstari*; pl. *mistari*). This one-line pattern characterizes most *utenḍi* compositions in Arabic script. Accordingly, the *utenḍi* metre has also been described as a one-line verse that is thirty-two syllables (*mizani*) long.[44] In terms of layout, the one-line Arabic quotations can be differentiated from the Swahili stanzas by virtue of their metre: the Arabic verses lack either the *vituo* ('caesuras') that fall between each of the four *vipande* (lines of eight syllables each; sg. *kipande*) or the division into two feet that characterizes the 32-syllable stanzas of the *utenḍi* form. Thus, this regular 'segmentation of language into measure units [such as syllables, caesurae and feet], which is echoed by the layout of the page, is divided into symmetric columns and lines of comparable lengths,'[45] but is interrupted when an Arabic quotation is interpolated amid the one-line stanzas.

In the Swahili verse, depending on the style of the author and/or scribe, the caesura is commonly denoted either with the use of inverted

[43] Plate LI, Figs 2 and 3 are both microfilm copies in Arabic script: the former comes from the University of Bayreuth and is stored in the SOAS collection, while the latter comes from Allen's collection at the University of Dar es Salaam Library. Plate LI, Fig. 1 is taken from a bound volume including 20 folios and 68 pages (ms. 3 in Dammann's catalogue, 1993, 33). Plate LI, Fig. 4 comes from two exercise books of 209 pages (20 x 16 cm) (see Allen 1970, 12).

[44] Shariff 1988, 58.

[45] Vierke 2014, 327.

hearts, or merely by the insertion of extra space between one eight-syllable line and the next.

Within the typical four-column manuscript layout, as illustrated in manuscript 103 below, the distinction between Swahili and Arabic text, however, is not always so evident. In fact, in some manuscripts, as illustrated in manuscript 352 below, the single manuscript lines of the Swahili stanzas and the Arabic quotations may look alike. Nevertheless, a different feature of Swahili's 'visualized rhythm' helps to distinguish the *beti* from the *āyāt* printed on the same page: the final monosyllabic end rhyme, namely the *bahari* (or *kina cha bahari* or *kina cha utenḍi*), which endows each of the Swahili stanzas with the identical end rhyme *-iya*, rendered in Arabic script as *yā'* + *alif* (see Plate LII–LIII, Figs 6–7).

The one-line stanza arrangement of the manuscripts and the visual division of the page into four equal columns is made possible by the Arabic consonantal writing system, in which only the consonants are written while the vowels most often appear only as diacritical signs above or below each consonant.[46] This accounts for the uniform length of eight consonantal characters in each *kipande*. When Roman script was introduced for writing Swahili poetry,[47] the verses began being written one on top of the other, as a quatrain, since the script—which includes both consonants and vowels—contained too many characters for each stanza to fit on one line.[48] The four-line layout, in turn, led to the misleading perception of the *ubeti* as a quatrain based on four equal lines, although it actually consists of two bicolons (*mishororo*), as Shariff and Vierke have shown.[49]

Moreover, how were the quoted Qur'ānic verses adapted into Roman script? In Romanized editions of the *Utenḍi wa Ayubu* and *Kisa cha Sayyidna Isa*, these quotations were reprinted in transliteration, presumably

[46] Shariff 1988, 58.
[47] See Frankl and Omar 1997; Krapf 1882.
[48] Shariff 1988, 58.
[49] Shariff 1988, 51; Vierke 2011, 48–50.

for the convenience of Western readers. On the contrary, in the *Utenḍi wa Ngamia na Paa*, J. W. T. Allen instead opted to cite the name of the *sūra* and the verse number, and to quote the verse only in translation; in stanza 9, for instance, the caption *Ha mim 46* is used to identify the precise quotation, i.e. from *sūra* 41 (Sūrat Ḥā' Mīm), verse 46, while in Dammann's edition, this same verse is printed in transliterated Arabic.[50] Allen's method does not allow the reader to look carefully at the quotation in Arabic. The *Utenḍi wa Yusuf* as edited by Knappert, based mainly on a manuscript in Arabic script and a typescript, does not include any Qur'ānic verses quoted between the poem's lines, despite how significantly these quotations influence the layout and narrative of the *utenḍi* manuscripts. Without these quotations, however, we lose out on relevant material for the study of the poem and its narrative relation to the Qur'ānic chapter, not to mention a sense of the work's quotation practices, all of which are important points in investigating the adaptation and textual function of Qur'ānic passages in similar multiply-copied and travelling texts.

3.2 Textual analysis of the quotations

The *Utenḍi wa Safari* ('The Poem of the Journey')[51] is an example of a work drawn from the composer's personal experience: on August 11, 1356 EG/1937 AD, one year after Ernst Dammann left the island of Lamu, the poet felt the urge to compose a work describing and commemorating the tour of the archipelago that he had taken with Ernst and Ruth Dammann. The poem does not contain even a single Qur'ānic passage amid its sixty-three stanzas. The personal and private reasons that compelled Muhamadi Kijuma, *der Schreiber und Dichter* (as he is referred to in Dammann 1993) to compose this *utenḍi* made this composition quite a sincere homage to the Dammanns; indeed, the *utenḍi* says much about the friendly relationship between Kijuma and 'Bwana

[50] See Allen 1971, 80 and Dammann 1940, 287.
[51] Berlin, SBB Hs. or. 9896 in Dammann 1993, 171.

Dammann' and his wife 'Bi Ruthi.'[52] In the *Utenḏi wa Badri*[53] ('The Poem of the Battle of Badr'), ascribed to Kijuma but not composed by him, Dammann's catalogue notes the occurrences of five Qur'ānic lacunae and only one quotation.[54] In this particular (and by no means unique) case, it must be asked whether the lacunae are the product of Kijuma's hand, or have to be attributed to the author. In the latter case, Kijuma simply copied them as they had already appeared in the autograph. The 4,500 stanzas of the epic poem, which has never been published, recount the Battle of Badr, an event that had a tremendous impact on the life of the prophet Muhammad. Although I have not been able to consult a physical manuscript of the unpublished poem, it is most likely that the one Qur'ānic verse quoted in the *Utenḏi wa Badr* comes from the third *sūra* of the Qur'ān, particularly *āyāt* 123 to 126, which focuses on the scene depicting the angels sent by God in support of Muslims.[55] Indeed, this Qur'ānic scene, along with other miraculous episodes intertwined with the historical narrative, is featured in the *utenḏi* plot. In other poems, like the *Kisat Mudhari*[56] ('The Poem from Mudhari') and the *Utenḏi wa Ngamia na Paa*,[57] Kijuma is not only referred to in Dammann's catalogue as the *Schreiber* ('scribe') but also the *Zeichner* ('illustrator') of three drawings: the *Kisat Mudhari* counts ten quoted verses and two drawings, while the *Ngamia na Paa* has three quoted verses and one drawing, the latter occupying an entire page.[58] Although Kijuma is not alleged to be the author of either poem, to whom should the quotations be ascribed? Were they included by the author, or added by the fine hand of the scribe, to whom, after all, the drawings have already been attributed? In fact, Dammann's catalogue lists the quoted verses as

[52] Dammann 1942a/b; Miehe and Vierke 2010, 141.
[53] Hamburg, SUB Cod. Afr.90 4° Kps. Nr. 5 in Dammann 1993, 67–8.
[54] Dammann 1999, 67.
[55] Knappert 1999, 39.
[56] Hamburg, SUB Cod. Afr. 90 4° Kps. Nr. 9 in Dammann 1993, 66–7.
[57] Hamburg, SUB Cod. Afr. 90 4° Kps. Nr. 10 in Dammann 1993, 65–6.
[58] Dammann 1993, 65.

embellishments, like the drawings, but which nonetheless serve as extra textual components and count towards the total number of stanzas comprising every poem. An additional distinction is made in Dammann's catalogue, namely in that quoted Qur'ānic verses (*Koranzitate*) are differentiated from eulogistic formulas (*Eulogien*). The 396 stanzas of the *Utenḍi wa Qatirifu*[59] ('The Poem of Qatirifu'), for instance, contain verses from the Qur'ān along with five eulogies. Before embarking on a comparison of the Qur'ānic quotations in a specific *utenḍi* poem, the final paragraph of this first section will examine the types of eulogies, such as the opening *basmalah* and the *šahādah*, that are embedded *within* the *tenḍi* stanzas (*beti*) rather than between the lines (*mistari*).

Although none of the above-mentioned *utenḍi* claims Kijuma as their author, only their scribe and illustrator, it is nonetheless worth looking at the Qur'ānic quotations in the *Kisat Mudhari*, attributed to the poet Mariamu Binti Yusuf, not only because of their substantial presence in the poem—ten verses quoted over 766 stanzas—but because of their peculiar position in the text.[60] The poem, which is set in Medina one year after the prophet has died, recounts the arrival of Mudhari in Medina, where he meets Ali, to whom he addresses twenty questions that he wishes to ask to the prophet. For some of these questions, which deal with pre-Muhammadian figures and general existential issues (e.g. 'Which man had a mother but not a father?' 'Nabii Isa,' the prophet Jesus; or, 'What is the best and the worst thing to see?' 'The appearance of a human being'), Ali's replies are accompanied by Qur'ānic references. For the fourth question—about which prophet was neither human nor angel, neither devil nor jinn, neither mammal nor fish—Ali's answer is supported by Qur'ān 5, verse 34, about the raven who showed Cain how to bury Abel. For the sixth question—about the ants, the ani-

[59] Berlin, SBB, Hs. or. 9898, nr. 382. In Knappert's edition of the poem, it is stated that ms. H, stored in Marburg and being the oldest manuscript by far, cites the name of the composer at verse 448: Abu Bakari, son of Bwana Mwengo of Pate (Knappert 1968/69, 99).

[60] Allen 1970, 30.

mal that that is most frightening —Ali alludes to *sūra* 27, verses 18 to 19, on Solomon's wisdom. The question inquiring about the staff of the prophet Moses forges a link with other *sūra*s of the Qur'ān (7:117, 20:66–69), as well as with Exodus 7:12. Similarly, in the inquiry about the Red Sea, the Qur'ān and Exodus are both taken into account (*sūra* 7:138, 10:90; Exodus 12:28). The reply to the ninth question—about Mary, who was pregnant for three hours—is also supported by quotations, mainly from *sūra*s 4 (verses 156–7, 171) and 19 (verses 16–33), but also *sūra*s 3:36, 21:91, and 66:12. Finally, in reply to the enquiry about the history of the mountain where the prophet Saleh made a camel appear, the text of *sūra*s 7, 11, 26, 54, and 91 are quoted.[61]

Thus, as this short summary of the *Kisat Mudhari* already insinuates, the quotation of Qur'ānic verses within the poem is not incidental. The study of quotations in *tenḍi* compositions cannot be isolated from the consideration of the stanzas that surround such quotations. In fact, although quotations are considered extra lines beyond the total number of stanzas—as Dammann has treated them in his catalogue—their meaning and wording are closely entangled with the Swahili narrative.

In Kijuma's *Utenḍi wa Siraji* ('The Poem of the Lantern'), for instance[62]—a didactic poem that aims to enlighten and instruct a young boy (Kijuma's son, Helewa) on how to behave in his Swahili Muslim society—Kijuma, as scribe and author, advises the boy not to seek intrigues (Swahili *fitina*; Arabic *fitnah*), nor to go spreading rumours (*ukinong'ona*) (stanza 36). While doing so, he recommends that his son Helewa read a precise verse: *Itwae hilo dalili / kurani huratili / isome aya ya pili / maana yatakweleya*, 'Take this sign: the Qur'ān says it clearly; read the second *āya* — the meaning will be clear to you.'[63] The verse quoted soon after this stanza reads as follows: *Al fitnatu āshaddu min al-qatli*, 'And *fitnah* is worse than killing.' The verse quoted in this case, as the poet says, is clearly intended to support his own Swahili instructions. The quo-

[61] See Knappert 1999,123–126.
[62] SOAS, ms. 380066; ms. 380761.
[63] *Utenḍi wa Siraji*, stz. 37 (Miehe & Vierke 2010, 329–393).

tation comes from *sūra* 2, and is an excerpt (circled in red in the illustration below) extrapolated from the long *āya* 191.

Selected quotations

Qur'ān, Sūra 191 [see Plate LIII, Fig. 8]	
(translation)	'And kill them wherever you overtake them and expel them from wherever they have expelled you, and *fitnah* is worse than killing. And do not fight them at al-Masjid al- Ḥarām until they fight you there. But if they fight you, then kill them. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers'[64]
Utenḍi wa Siraji, stanzas 36, 37 [see Plate LIV, Fig. 9]	
(transliteration and translation)	*Usizingwe kwa fitina* *Uchend'a ukinong'ona* *Ziumbe wakapambana* *Kwa moto wakakutia* 'Don't seek intrigues; don't go spreading rumours; if people fight with each other, they will put you in the fire' *Itwae hilo dalili* *Kurani huratili* *Isome aya ya pili* *Maana yatakweleya* 'Take this sign: the Qur'ān says it clearly; read the second āya — the meaning will be clear to you'[65]
Qur'ānic quotation (2191) inserted in the	

[64] Translation quoted from Sahih International (https://quran.com/2; last accessed 20 September 2017).

[65] Miehe and Vierke 2010, 338.

Utenḍi wa Siraji [see Plate LIV, Fig. 10][66]

(translation) '[…] and *fitnah* is worse than killing […]'

As this verse already hints, Kijuma has 'automatically' lifted and re-embedded a part of the Qur'ānic *āya* without citing it in its entirety. He deliberately selected the Qur'ānic verse he needed for the context of that specific stanza. Making the *āya* shorter reflects the conscious choice to phrase the message in a more direct way and let it resonate with the reader. In fact, quoting just a tiny portion of a verse shows—rather than infidelity to the source—a considerable mastery on the part of the poet-quoter. Muhamadi Kijuma is indeed implicitly inviting his own readers to read into and beyond the quoted *āya* by retrieving and reminding them of the full meaning and relevance of that verse.[67]

Contrary to the *Utenḍi wa Safari*, which has no traces (Swahili *dalili*) of quoted Qur'ānic verses, the *Siraji* poem aims at showing how to behave according to Swahili Muslim principles. Thus, rather than being a personal account, its agenda is imbued with a sense of commitment. The author-scribe finds it necessary—amid the 208 stanzas of the poem—to include nine verses from the Qur'ān, which are indeed used as 'the moral instance,'[68] a textual reference used to endow his poetic guidelines on moral behaviour with extra authority. The *āyāt* quoted in the poem come from different chapters of the Holy Qur'ān (*sūra*s 2:194, 191, 195 and 216, 3:26, 42:25, 49:12, 33:53, 7:57). Besides the Qur'ānic quotations, the poem also features a quotation of a verse taken from a popular song (*wimbo*) (stanza 188), as well as an Arabic invocation,

[66] The *Siraji* manuscript extracts here are from Ustadh Mahmoud Mau manuscript collection, as edited in Miehe and Vierke 2010, 378.

[67] The *āyāt* 190 and 191 from *sūra* 2 embody and expand upon the *ǧihād* and its definition. As shown by Bausani, the word *fitnah*—left untranslated in the *Utenḍi wa Siraji*, quoted above—hints at the idea of 'proof; temptation; persecution; scandal; confusion; anarchy.' See Bausani 2007, 51.

[68] Miehe and Vierke 2010, 329.

which is the last quotation before the end of the poem. In general, the Qur'ānic quotations in these stanzas are introduced with the 'instructions' to carefully heed their message; these kinds of quotative instructions are crafted as either eight-syllable lines (*kipande*; pl., *vipande*) or entire bicolons (*mshororo*; pl., *mishororo*), as follows:

	'Instruction' Lines: *Utenḍi wa Siraji*	
Stanza 34 16-syllable *mshororo*	*Kurani imenena / nimesoma nawe ona*	'[…] the Qur'ān has said; I have read it, and you should note [it] […]'
Stanza 37 16-syllable *mshororo*	*Itwae hilo dalili / Kurani huratili*	'Take this sign: the Qur'ān says it clearly […]'
Stanza 70 16-syllable *mshororo*	*Kurani hutwambia / nawe soma hiyo aya*	'The Qur'ān tells us, and you can read this *āya* […]'
Stanza 82 8-syllable *kipande*	*Nawe soma hiyo aya*	'And you can read this *āya* […]'
Stanza 142 8-syllable *kipande*	*Haya Chuo hutwambiya*	'This what the book tells us […]'
Stanza 185 8-syllable *kipande*	*Mfano wa hiyo aya*	'[Follow] the example of this *āya* […]'
Stanza 188 8-syllable *kipande*	*Angalia hono wimbo*	'Look at this song […]'

What the *Siraji* particularly shows is the recurrent reference to the act of reading (*soma* 'read') or seeing (*nawe ona* 'and you see') a specific passage (*hiyo aya* 'this verse'). Verses like those listed above reinforce the poet's invitation to thoroughly read what the noble text (*kurani* or *chuo*) tells us (*hu-tw-ambiya*). The invitation to read and view the text also applies to textual authorities besides the Qur'ānic text, like for instance the *wimbo* that the poet invites us to look at by using the verb *-angalia*, 'to look carefully' rather than 'to hear.'

The *Utenḏi wa Ngamia na Paa*, a poem whose plot is of Arabic origin,[69] quotes three Qur'ānic verses over its 384 stanzas, plus the *šahādah*. The quotations are taken from three different chapters of the Qur'ān (Sūrat Ḥā Mīm 42, al-Isrā' 17, and an-Nūr 24), are re-entextualized within three different narrative episodes of the *utenḏi*'s plot, and each separated from the other quotations by 100 stanzas. In this poem, the relation between stanza and quotation is made explicit by the poet-quoter himself. As in oral contexts that commonly feature proverbs—in which, by means of prefatory formulas like 'as our elders used to say …,' the speaker deliberately shows 'that [it] is a text that has been used before, in other circumstances, and will be used again'[70]—the Swahili poet, in mentioning the reference (*kwa aya ya Qurani* 'in a verse of the Qur'ān') and quoting it, intends to afford his words the same authority and value that elders do their accounts. The quotation from the Holy Qur'ān is 'assessed for relevance, commented on or narratively expanded: it is treated as an object of attention.'[71]

'Rephrasing' lines: *Utenḏi wa Ngamia na Paa*

Stanza 8

Mtenda zema nkwambiye
Utendee nafusiye
Na ambao uaswiye
Enda kuona muhaa

'He who does well, I tell you, does so unto himself, and he who is disobedient leads to his own disgrace'

Stanza 9

Ulinenee Manani
Kwa aya ya Qurani
Ili kwamba tubaini
Insi na Mursaa

[69] Dammann 1940, 285.
[70] Barber 2007, 22–23.
[71] Ibid.

'God has spoken thus in a verse of the Qur'ān, so that the prophets and all men may know it'[72]

Quotation of Qur'ān 41:46

Kauluhu taʿālā: man ʿamila ṣāliḥan fa-li-nafsihi, wa man 'asā'a faʿalayhā wa-mā rabbuka bi-ẓallāmin li-l-ʿabīdi[73]

'Whoso does righteousness, it is to his own gain, and whoso does evil, it is to his own loss'[74]

As the table shows, the part of *āya* 41 inserted soon after stanza 9 echoes what has already been said in Swahili words and prosodic form in stanza 8, where *mtenda zema* (Swahili *m-*, third-person singular subject marker; *-tenda* 'to do, to act'; *zema*, Kiamu dialect form of standard Swahili *vyema* 'good') seems to be the precise translation of the Arabic verse *man 'amila ṣāliḥan* (Arabic *man*, independent pronoun 'who'; *'amila*, third-person singular of the first-form verb 'to do'; *ṣāliḥ*, 'good'). Still, the Swahili *nafusi-ye*, with the possessive *-ye* suffixed to the noun, corresponds to the Arabic *fa-li-nafsihi*, which literally translates to 'for his own soul.'

Extrapolating *āyāt* from the sacred context of the *sūra* and quoting them between the Swahili lines reflects the editor-scribe's double intention: while, on the one hand, the mere act of citing the Qur'ān symbolically confers authority on the story, it also allows the author to expand on what the Qur'ānic verse only hints at. In fact, as pointed out by Topan, 'although the Qur'ān is sacrosanct as a holy text, poets and storytellers have not felt inhibited from adding features to their narrative as long as these do not contradict the essentials of the Qur'ānic story, or compromise its teaching. A story is thus embellished with details which make it more meaningful in the local context and hence better recepti-

[72] Translation, Allen 1971, 80–81.

[73] This full Qur'ānic quotation, transliterated, is taken from Dammann 1940, 287, while in Allen's edition (ibid.), it is only quoted as 'Ḥā mīm 46,' which stands for 'Sūrat Ḥā Mīm, verse 46.'

[74] Translation, Arberry 1986, 496.

ve to its audience.'[75] In the case of Kijuma's *Utenḍi wa Yusuf*, for instance, the author paraphrases and amplifies it in order 'to entertain with knowledge' and transfer every single detail to his audience of Swahili Muslim commoners, unable to read or understand Arabic.[76]

3.3 Laudations within the Lines

In Yoruba oral texts, we encounter many formulaic phrases, 'recurrent utterances which are repeated every time the situation warrants it,' but which are not not framed as quotations , since 'no comment is elicited by [their] utterance' nor is their use 'is intended to invite attention.'[77] In Swahili *tenḍi* manuscripts, Arabic formulas such as the *basmalah* not only open the manuscripts of a considerable number of poems—such formulas are usually retained in Arabic, centre-aligned, and printed at the top of the page; they can even occur on the first line of the manuscript, if the title of the poem is lacking[78]—but indeed, can also be entextualized within the Swahili stanza and made to fit the rhyme scheme. In the latter case, they count as formulaic utterances that are repeated in the *utenḍi* stanza but not noted as such beyond the stanza. They occur at the beginning of *utenḍi* compositions and set the framework for the poem's prologue (*dibaji*):

	Utenḍi wa Yusuf
Title, enclosed in a triangular design[79]	*Hadihi Qasidati Yusuf*
Centre-aligned opening (Arabic *basmalah*)	*Bismi 'l-Lahi al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*

[75] Topan 2001, 11.

[76] As pointed out by Kresse, 'making the Qur'an accessible—in Swahili—to the commoners and non-specialists, it potentially opens up the existing social-religious hierarchy to criticism' (Kresse 2007, 120).

[77] Barber 1999,19.

[78] This is for instance the case of manuscript A1.

[79] The manuscript is in Arabic script, but is transliterated here.

Stanza 2

Bismillahi Awwali
*Pweke asio mitha**li***
*Bwana amezotawa**li***
Wafalme na duniya

'First of all, in the name of God, the one and only,
the Lord who has been reigning over the kings of the world'

Stanza 3

*Bwana huyu mbwa kuche**wa***
*Ndiye wa kuabudu**wa***
La ilah illa huwa
Yeye amezoeneya

'He is the one to be feared; He is the one to be worshipped;
There is no God except for Him: He permeates everything'[80]

Kisa cha Sayydina Isa

Stanza 1

*Naanda **bismillahi***
*Pweke asio shabi**hi***
*Asoshirika Ila**hi***
Pweke t^{h}akaosalia

'I start with a bismillah to the One who has no equal; the God
who stands alone; the only one who will endure'[81]

Stanza 3

Salla allahu aleihi
*Masaa na asubu**hi***
Ya fatahu afutahi
Kheri nyingi ikingia

'God's blessings upon him, every hour of the morning. O Opener,
reveal [your bounty] so that much goodness finds its way'[82]

[80] Raia 2017.

[81] My translation. Dammann translates it as it follows: 'Ich beginne im Namen Gottes, der allein ist, der nicht seinesgleichen hat, mit dem Gott, dem keiner beigesellt ist, dem alleinigen, zu dem ich beten werde' (1980, 15).

[82] My translation. Dammann translates as it follows: 'Gott spricht den Segen über ihn am Abend und am Morgen. O Öffner, öffne, indem viel Gutes eingeht!' (ibid.).

What is 'proclaimed' in the stanzas above are formulas attested in the Qur'ān. The *basmalah* opening stanza 2 of the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf*, for instance, is recited in *sūra* 96:1, proclaiming the name of God and his oneness; the *lā ilāha illā huwa* uttered in stanza 3 recurs in the famous *āya* 255, namely the *Āyat al-Kursī* ('Throne Verse'), of the *Sūrat al-Baqara*, and is commonly used as a prayer or fashioned into an amulet.[83] Similarly, in the *Kisa cha Sayyidna Isa*, as Dammann points out,[84] stanza 3 also draws from the Qur'ān (*sūra* 33:56), reading as follows: *Inna Allah wa malāʾikatahu yuṣallūna ʿala a-l-nabīyy yā ʾayyuhā alladhīna ʾamānū ṣallū ʻalayhi wa-sallimū taslīman*, 'God and his angels bless the Prophet. O believers, may you also bless him and pray for his peace.'[85] The Swahili stanza thus rephrases the Qur'ānic *āyāt*, adapting them to its prosodic pattern.

The most recurrent eulogy, the *basmalah*, is either centre-aligned on the manuscript page, embedded within the stanza or, as in the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf*, found in both positions. In the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf*, the *šahādah* is quoted literally in the line itself and adapted to the syllable and rhyme patterns: ***la i-la-ha i-lla hu-wa*** (*Utenḍi wa Yusuf*, stz. 3); the same is true of the *basmalah* in the *Kisa cha Sayyidna Isa*: *na-a-nda* ***bi-s-mi-lla-hi*** (stz. 2). Both of these examples contain eight syllables and respect the end rhymes in *-wa* and *-hi* (note that the end rhymes are marked in bold in the stanzas above). In the case of in stanza 3 of the *Kisa cha Sayyidna Isa*, there is no formula quoted literally in the stanza, but rather a paraphrase of a Qur'ānic *āya* entextualized within the lines: ***salla al-Lahu ʿalayhi*** recalls just a small excerpt from *āya* 56 with the keywords *sallū ʻalaihi* ('bless Him').

These formulas are invested with authority, since they are attested in the noble Qur'ān and feature in the everyday life of Muslims, who utter the name of God before any important activity. Given this, by adopting *basmalah* and *šahādah* formulas in the prologue (*dibaji*), the poet-narra-

[83] Bausani 2007, 4–36; 503–518.
[84] Dammann 1980, 56.
[85] Arberry 1986, 434.

tor endows the text of the *utenḍi* with a symbolic value, which in turn foreshadows the authority of the narrative he is about to tell.

Moreover, comparing Qur'ānic quotation practices in texts from the Lamu archipelago with those from the distant Malay Archipelago reveals an important trend, namely the variability of the actual quotations: what is worth being presented and highlighted as a quotation in one version of the text need not be stressed in another. Taking the Muslim profession of faith (*la ilaha illa 'l-Lah wa Muḥammad rasūlu 'l-Lah*) as an example, Ronit Ricci points out that when the phrase is found in the Javanese textual tradition of the *One Thousand Questions*, it appears both in Arabic and in Javanese translation (sometimes even without the Arabic original), while in the Malay text, the *šahādah* appears untranslated and left as is. Ricci shows how the literary meaning of the same Arabic formula is not perceived in the same way by the quoters: 'whereas in Javanese texts special care was taken to parse and translate the confession of faith that allows one to embrace Islam,' in Malay it appears 'as a mantra with its power unrelated to semantic meaning [and] offers salvation to anyone who commits an act of faith by uttering it.'[86] As we see in the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf* stanza quoted above, in most Swahili *tenḍi*, the Muslim profession of faith is not only left untranslated, as in the Malay example, but is also not really marked as a quotation: it is considered part of a common Swahili repertoire, and its occurrence within the poem is not underlined or highlighted graphically; it rather forms an organic part of the fixed Swahili prosodic unit of eight syllables per verse (*kipande*).

This recalls a similar case from the *Utenḍi wa Ngamia na Paa*. As hinted above—and as stated in Dammann's catalogue[87]—this poem includes not only excerpts from the Holy Qur'ān, but also the *šahādah*, inserted between stanzas towards the end of the narrative poem, in contrast to the opening *basmalah* in the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf* example above. The *šahādah*, testifying the uniqueness of Allah and the specific mission ascribed to the prophet Muhammad, is recited in stanza 319, where it is un-

[86] Ricci 2011, 144–45.
[87] Dammann 1993, 65.

derstood as God's words, which have been handed down in books (*zuwoni*), inscribed in the poet's heart (*fuadini*), and recited in his own tongue/words (*ulimi*):

Utenḏi wa Ngamia na Paa

Stanza 318	*Kauli yakwe Manani* *Atizieo zuoni* *Tʰaitiya fuadini* *Ulimi ukitongowa*
	'The word of the Lord that he has caused to be written, I will place in my heart and speak in my tongue'
Stanza 360	*Sikiani tʰashahidi* *Mungu kuwa Wahidi* *Nawe tʰumwa Muhamadi* *Kiwadhukuru pamoya*
	'Listen while I testify that God is one, and at the same time I remind you that Muhammad is his prophet'[88]
Šahādah quotation	*Qawluhu taʿāla: ašhadu ʾan lā ilāha illa 'l-Lāhu wa-ašhadu anna Muḥammadan rasūlu 'l-Lāhi*[89]
	'He said to God: I testify that there is no God but He and that Muhammad is God's Messenger'

In stanza 360, the poet utters the *šahādah* in his own tongue, Swahili, letting it function as a reminder (see the verb *-dhukuru* 'to remember; to recall') while moulding it to the 16-syllable prosodic pattern: the words *tʰashahidi*, *Wahidi*, and *Muhamadi* are all clearly of Arabic origin

[88] My translation. Dammann's translation reads as follows: 'Das Wort des Gütigen, das er in den Büchern niedergelegt hat, werde ich in Herz aufnehmen, wobei die Zunge es bekennen soll'; 'Höret, ich werde bezeugen, daß du, Muhammed, der Gesandte bist, indem ich euch zusammen erwähne!' (1940, 324–325).

[89] The Swahili stanzas, along with the Arabic quotation, are taken from Dammann (ibid.).

and lend the end rhyme *-di* to the stanza. Immediately after this stanza, the *šahādah* is repeated in the form of a quotation in its 'original' language, Arabic. If one of the principles of quoting is literary fidelity, it goes without saying that the quoter (if he or she has the linguistic skills and textual references to do so) should quote the pre-existing formula in its original language, as a way of preserving and paying tribute to the formula's integrity and authority. In comparing the Arabic *šahādah* to the one repeated in the stanza, the reader can easily see that the Swahili form is contracted for the sake of the metre and the principles of *kutosheleza* ('cause to be sufficient,' 'satisfy'),[90] which require the poet to commit to the prescribed number of eight syllables (*mizani*) in each verse (*kipande*). In order to stick to this rhyme scheme, the opening of the 'original' Arabic *šahādah*, *qawluhu taʿāla*, is omitted in the Swahili stanza, while the Arabic verb form *ašhadu*, from the verb *šahida*, is rendered as a future tense of the Swahili verb *-shahidi* with elision of the subject marker *ni-* (*nitashahidi* > *thashahidi).*

4. Authorial Intervention: Copying (and Misreading?) the Noble Qur'ān

The close relationship that the plots of Swahili *tenḍi* may have with episodes of the Qur'ān is without a doubt palpable in the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf*, where the Swahili narrative poem is interwoven with *āyāt* taken exclusively from *sūra* 12. The Sūrat Yūsuf is unique in its genre, since it is the only *sūra* of the Qur'ān that features just one narrative in a continuous fashion.[91]

[90] Abedi 1979, 19.

[91] The intertextual relation between *sūra* 12 of the Qur'ān and narrative compositions on the story of Joseph in vernacular languages is a phenomenon also found in other literatures: for example, the existing Aljamiado manuscripts of *El Contamiento de Yuçuf* ('The Tale of Yusuf') that spread throughout Muslim and Morisco communities. This rich manuscript version, adapted in prose form (Ms. BNM 5292, currently held at the Biblioteca Nacional de Espagna), is based on the Qur'ān: '[…] la referencia coránica sirve de fondo para la inserción de numerosos motivos y episodios de la vida del patriarca bíblico' (Tottoli 2010, 200–201).

The *Utenḍi wa Yusuf* contains the highest number of Qur'ānic quotations of any *utenḍi*: 57 (based on manuscript DA1) of the *sūra*'s 111 verses are quoted in the manuscript and interwoven with the *utenḍi*'s plot. In no other *utenḍi* do we find more quotations from the Qur'ān. The symbolic link created through these quotations, which by their very presence affirm the *utenḍi*'s proximity to the holy book, is quite evident. Beyond the general function of legitimizing the work, the quotation's function is also determined by its position amid the text of the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf*. On the one hand, a quotation can serve as a concluding summary of what has already been stated in the text; in such cases, quoting implies 'echoing,' and such quotations generally occur at the end of a paragraph or episode. On the other hand, if the act of quoting occurs at the beginning of a text, it may serve as a hint of what is about to be said; in this case, the quoted text is 'foreshadowing,' while the text proceeds to explain what the quotation only hints at. Another case is that in which a quotation forms part of the discourse to the extent of comprising an active voice in the dialogue. In such cases, the quotations may be fashioned as reported speech, and although they continue to be differentiated graphically from the rest of the text, they are integrated into the dialogic scenes of the narration: they become part of the main narration rather than being additional lines.

In the following, I will focus on four Swahili manuscripts copied by the same alleged author, Muhamadi Kijuma, and discuss the general principle of literary fidelity in quoting: is quoting in the Swahili case a real act of mimicking, aimed at reproducing every single holy word as it is, or should the practice rather be understood as the interior self-dictation of a poet who is recalling the text from memory and is not bound to the 'original' source? In support of this second thesis, we shall examine whether the quotations in the four manuscript copies share exactly the same Qur'ānic selections, variations, and even spelling and grammatical inaccuracies.

What will be demonstrated in the following is that it is exactly in the poet's rearranging, splitting, and (in some cases) misquoting the Qur'ānic *āyāt* that we find the power of quotation—which, after all, is meant not only to repeat, but also to say something new. Although the

verses are taken from the source par excellence, the Qur'ān, the author is repeating these verses simply by relying on his own memory and criteria for selection. This twofold power is eloquently expressed in Becker's words: 'Everything one says has a history, and hence is, in part, a quotation. Everything anyone says is also partly new, too.'[92]

In the Malay manuscript of the *Ḥikāyāt Miʿrāj Nabiyy Muḥammad*, orthographic variations and obvious errors have led to the assumption that the author of the *Ḥikāyāt* 'did not know Arabic particularly well or at least did not know how to spell it properly.'[93] In the Swahili case, the alleged author of the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf*, Muhamadi Kijuma, was reputed for 'knowing the Qur'ān as only few do on Lamu.'[94] Despite this, it is nevertheless important also to recognize a sort of inaccuracy in his use and reading of Qur'ānic quotations: he was not, after all, among those *qurrā,'* professionals who have learned the Qur'ān by heart.[95] On the other hand, however, he is also surprisingly masterful at rearranging quotations and interweaving them within the Swahili lines.

In order to illustrate Kijuma's practices of re-formulation, freedom, and faithfulness with respect to the Holy Qur'ān, in the following I will provide an overview of Qur'ānic quotations in the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf* and focus on some instances of imprecise Qur'ānic quotes and new *āyāt* embedded in the four existing manuscripts of the work: H, DA1, DA2, and A1.[96]

[92] Becker 1995, 286–287.

[93] Van der Meij and Lambooij 2014, 20.

[94] See May's letter in Miehe and Vierke 2010, 41–42.

[95] Although in the Arabic world, scribes specialized in copying down the Qur'ān already appear from the eighth century, it is famously known that the holy book, as a written text, featured 'slightly varying readings.' The accepted 'readings' (namely those of Arabic *qirā'āt*) were only codified much later by Ibn Mujāhid (Gruendler 2015, 93).

[96] **Ms. A1** comes from the microfilmed manuscript collection founded by J. W. T. Allen in Dar es Salaam, where it is listed under the title of *Utenḍi wa Yaqubu*. The manuscript counts 63 pages and is 716 stanzas long, but is missing at least two pages at the beginning. The manuscript's date of creation, which is printed in the colophon, qualifies A1 as Kijuma's earliest copy. Indeed, A1 is

Roughly 57 of the *sūra*'s 111 *āyāt* are embedded in the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf*. The poet has selected and copied either full verses or parts of them; substantially reworking the *sūra* into his own composition, he has created a pastiche of stanzas plus quotations. Through this practice of 'collage,' Kijuma has taken every single *āya* out of its 'original' context (i.e. *sūra* 12) and adapted it to a 'new' one (the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf*). The poet optionally subverts the original order of the *āyāt*, or he may cut out parts of a verse so that the *āya*'s content is reduced, contracted, or split in two. Based on their position in the *utenḍi* and the context of the stanzas between which they are inserted, two main functions can be ascribed to these quotations: by means of quotation, the *sūra* is both present in

so far the earliest manuscript ascribed to Kijuma (1309 EG/1892 AD) which make us feel confident in assuming that it is the 'original' autograph.

Ms. DA1 is entitled *Qiṣṣati Yusufu* and kept in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, from which I obtained a copy. The manuscript is listed in Dammann's catalogue (Hs. Or. 9893, DAMMANN 1993,167 no. 375). Although the manuscript is not dated, we can determine the date from a letter Kijuma sent to Ernst Dammann in 1937: '23rd Jumada al-Ukhra 1356/Aug. 1937' (Miehe and Vierke 2010, 82). DA1 counts 762 stanzas, plus one verse that was written but deleted (located between stanzas 567 and 568) as well as 57 *āyāt*, all included in a volume of 71 pages. The title is well-decorated with green and red ink, and the Arabic *basmalah* follows directly below.

Ms. DA2, which also comes from Dammann's catalogue (Seminar 1465 H73, no. 3), is currently kept in Hamburg, where I obtained a copy of it. It was written for Carl Meinhof by Muhamadi Kijuma in 1332 EG/1913 AD. The manuscript comprises a volume of 66 pages, including 708 stanzas and 55 Qur'ānic *āyāt*. The title, *Hadithi ya Yaaqubu na Yusufu*, is not followed by the dedication 'in the name of Allah.'

Ms. H is 72-page manuscript in Arabic script, referred to as *Kisa cha Yusufu*; it is 724 stanzas long and includes 34 Qur'ānic verses (*āyāt*). Originally, it comes from the Hichens Collection at the School of Oriental and African Studies (ms. 22862, vol. 1). I have relied on a microfilm copy from the University of Bayreuth. The closing colophon gives its date of writing as 1356 EG/1937 AD. The ductus is clear, although not always well defined, probably because of changes in the ink or the scribe's inadequate skills in writing Arabic script; stylistic and orthographic conventions, while being reminiscent of Sheikh Yahya Ali Omar's *usus scribendi*, prove that the manuscript was not from Kijuma's hand.

and represented in the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf*. Indeed, the poet never completely abandons the *sūra* in the course of the poem, and is always able to pick up its 'thread,' even after long narrative amplifications in which the *sūra*'s own voice is silent. The last *āya* quoted in episode 1, for instance, is 12:10; afterwards, in episode 2, recounting Yusuf's fall into the pit (*kisimani*), there is no trace of the *sūra*, which nevertheless returns in the next episode, number 3, the first scene of which sees *āyāt* 16, 17 and 18 intertwined with the *utenḍi* stanzas. Therefore, despite the fact that the two storylines do not unravel hand in hand, the quotations establish points at which the 'quoting' poet makes an effort to reunite the plots of the *utenḍi* and the *sūra*.

Given that the same *āya* is often quoted in a fragmentary way and split into two or three parts, the total number of quotations in each manuscript differs from the number of *āyāt* that are present. In manuscript H, 50 *āyāt* occur, but the total number of quotations is 58; DA1 counts 49 *āyāt* (compared to H, only 12:63 is missing) and 57 total quotations, while DA2 includes 45 *āyāt* (compared to H, *āyāt* 12:9, 18, 61, 63 and 93 are missing) and a total of 58 quotations; A1 counts 43 *āyāt* and 52 quotations. Thus, despite their different lengths (H is 724 stanzas; DA1, 763; DA2, 708; A1, 760), the manuscripts contain a similar number of Qur'ānic verses. Furthermore, they all quote the same *āyāt* from *sūra* 12, with the exception of one difference at the very beginning of the text: at roughly the same point in the texts, while manuscript H quotes *āya* 12 (after stz. 56–65), DA1 and DA2 quote *āya* 8 (DA1 after stz. 56–61, DA2 after stz. 49–54). Half of the verses comprising *sūra* 12 are missing (e.g. 12:1–3, 6, 12, 15–16, 22–23, 25, 30, 34–35, 38–40, 45–55, 57, 68, 71–76, 78–80 82–92, 95–96, 99, and 102–111). However, despite the absence of these *āyāt*, the entangled plots of *sūra* 12 and the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf* unfold smoothly from beginning to end. The longest stretches of missing *āyāt* (45–55, 82–92) allow the *utenḍi* poet to skip from *āya* 12:44 to 56 over stanzas H 363 to 436, as well as from *āya* 12:70 to 77 (H stz. 561–595) and from *āya* 12:81 to *āya* 94 over stanzas 596 to 623.

Such 'fragmentation' regularly occurs in cases in which the Qur'ānic verse is split into two or even three parts. However, the presence of a later part of a verse, for example, does not always imply that its earlier

part has been quoted in the previous stanza, as is the case for verses 26, 28, and 29 in H, DA1, and DA2. Moreover, an *āya* being split into two parts in manuscript H does not necessarily imply the same practice in other manuscripts.

4.1 The Reproduction of Stretches of Discourse: Āyāt 12:26–27 and Āya 31

The love story of Yusuf and Zulaikha, the wife of the Egyptian Potiphar, at whose house Yusuf was employed, is a widely known story, variously adapted and amplified, from Persian literature to Thomas Mann's *Joseph und seine Brüder*, in the chapter 'Die Damengesellschaft.'[97] In the Swahili *utenḍi* version, it is an episode that contains a particularly high number of quotations from the Qur'ān: 12 quotations across some one hundred stanzas, particularly concentrating on the narrative scene in which the Egyptian Potiphar (*Katufiri*) enters to find the two lovers and asks for an explanation. Before delving into the plot, whose stanzas are intertwined with *āyāt*, it is worth citing a short summary of the story as told over five *āyāt* in *sūra* 12:

> 12:23 Now the woman in whose house he was solicited him, and closed the doors on them. 'Come,' she said, 'take me!' 'God be my refuge,' he said. 'Surely my lord has given me a goodly lodging. Surely the evildoers do not prosper.'
>
> 12:24 For she desired him; and he would have taken her, but that he saw the proof of his Lord. So was it, that We might turn away from him evil and abomination; he was one of Our devoted servants.

[97] Early pioneering works like *Die Josephsgeschichte in der Weltliteratur* (Priebatsch 1937) or *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife in World Literature* (Yohannan 1968) have highlighted the worldwide popularity and reception of the story since the first half of the twentieth century. The Qur'ānic story of Yusuf, particularly the love story of Yusuf and Zulaikha, has been reformulated as one of the most popular romances by Persian poets. It was a topic treated by a variety of Muslim poets in Punjab over some three centuries, up to about 1950 (see Schackle 1995, 153–154).

> 12:25 They raced to the door; and she tore his shirt from behind. They encountered her master by the door. She said, 'What is the recompense of him who purposes evil against thy folk, but that he should be imprisoned, or a painful chastisement?' Said he, 'It was she that solicited me'; and a witness of her folk bore witness, 'If his shirt has been torn from before then she has spoken truly, and he is one of the liars;
>
> 12:26 but if it be that his shirt has been torn from behind, then she has lied, and he is one of the truthful.'
>
> 12:27 When he saw his shirt was torn from behind he said, 'This is of your women's guile; surely your guile is great.'[98]

In the long *utenḓi* episode set at Katufiri's house (stanzas 219–305), the scene in which Katufiri seeks a witness who might prove the liaison between Yusuf and Zulaikha also takes a slightly different turn as compared to the *sūra*. While in *āya* 26, 'witness of her folk bore witness,' in the *Utenḓi wa Yusuf*, there are additional witnesses: the first ones to testify are some children (stanzas 270–272), and afterwards a wise man. Thus, although *āya* 26, concerning the testimony reported by a relative of Zulaikha, is embedded in the *Utenḓi wa Yusuf*'s narrative, the *āya* is split in two (the witness and his suggestion). While DA2 quotes only a small excerpt from the first part of verse 26, A1 quotes first part in full; it is completely absent from H and DA1.

DA2 stanza 272, page 25	A1 stanza 255, page 20
Kawauliza zijana	*Yusufu akaṯamka*
Kawaṯamsha Rabbana	*Akajibu kwa haraka*
Kwa fasaha wakanena	*Ni yeye aloniṯaka*
Kawakanya woṯhe piya	*Mimi sikumtaiya*
'The husband asked the children,	'Yusuf spoke;
So God made them talk;	He replied in haste:
They spoke very well;	"She is the one who wanted me;

[98] Arberry 1986, 228–229.

She (Zulaikha) denied all of them'	I did not mention her'"
Qur'ān 12:26	Qur'ān 12:26
'[…] *wa šahida šāhidun min ahlihā* […]'	'*Qāla hiya rāwadatnī ʿan nafsī šahida šāhidun min ahlihā* […]'
'[…] and a witness of her folk bore witness […]'	'Said he, "It was she that solicited me";
[see Plate LIV, Fig. 11]	and a witness of her folk bore witness […]' [See Plate LIV, Fig. 12]
[…] *wa šahida šāhidun min ahlihā* […]	*Qāla hiya rāwadatnī ʿan nafsī šahida šāhidun min ahlihā* […]
'[…] and a witness of her folk bore witness […]'	'Said he, "It was she that solicited me"; and a witness of her folk bore witness […]'

In A1, the *āya* is quoted a few stanzas earlier—not after stanza 272, but 269. (Stanza 269 corresponds to stanza 255 in manuscript A1). The stanza foreshadows the *āya* which, despite its different position compared to DA2, is nonetheless still in harmony with the surrounding plot. The first *kipande* of the second *mshororo*, *ni yeye alonitaka*, ('She is the one who wanted me'), exactly rephrases and echoes the first part of the Qur'ānic verse *qāla hiya rāwadtnī* ('Said he, "it was she who solicited me"'.)

Thus, the poet-quoter has taken some liberty in the later manuscript DA2 as compared with the earlier A1, which he copied down, changing and rearranging the *āya*: not only did he quote a smaller part of the verse in the later DA2 manuscript, but he also embedded the *āya* between different scenes of the *utenḍi* poem. In both scenes (A1 stanza 255, DA2 272), however, the 'edited' *āya* fits the narrative.

Some stanzas later, the second part of *āya* 26 is quoted in order to depict the witness's suggestion for how to find the guilty party. According to the plot of the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf*, this suggestion is advanced by a wise man, rather than a member of Zulaikha's family (*min ahlia* 'of her folk') as in the *sūra*. Thus the same verse and testimony attested in verse 26 of the *sūra* is split and intertwined with two different scenes, voiced by different people: while the 'one from her folk' corresponds to the

children (*zijana*; see stanza 272 above), whom God made testify in the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf*, the *āya*'s suggestion–'if his shirt has been torn from the front then she has spoken truly, and he is one of the liars'–is attributed to the wise man. The poet-quoter thus has not only interrupted the unity of the *āya* by splitting it into two parts and retaining just a tiny portion (see DA2 as compared to A1), but has also readapted the *āya*'s content to serve different plot points. The poet made the new parts of the *āya* fit into the narrative of his own *utenḍi*.

274 *Na Azizi kiyaona*
Mtʰu walifuatana
Mwelewa kula maʻana
Naye aliyatokeya

'While 'Aziz was looking [for a witness], there was a man with him, a very insightful man. He also saw what had happened'

276 *Kandʳu yake yangaliye*
Kwa mbee irarushiye
Alomshika ni yeye
Yusufu nimekwambiya

'Look at his kanzu: if it is torn from the front, he is the one who caught her. Yusuf is the one, I am telling you'

277 *Ikiraruka kwa nyuma*
Ni Zalikha wetʰu mama
Ishike ndʳiyo alama
Aibu mekutiliya

'If it is ripped from behind, it is Zulaikha, our mother. This is a sign of passion; she has brought shame on you'

DA2, page 26, Qur'ān, 12 : 26 (fragment 2) + Qur'ān, 12 : 27 [see Plate LIV, Fig. 13]	*In kāna qamīṣuhu qudda min qubulin fasaḍaqat wa-huwa min al-kāḍibīna* 'If his shirt has been torn from the front, then she has spoken truly, and he is one of the liars' *Wa-in kāna qamīṣuhu qudda min duburin fa-kaḍabat wa-huwa min al-ṣādiqīna* 'But if it be that his shirt has been torn from behind, then she has lied and he is one of the truthful'

Furthermore, as the table shows, *āya* 26, which comes after stanza 277, is followed by another new verse, *āya* 27 (corresponding to the second red line on the manuscript page). The poet makes them appear as one unique *āya*. The two verses, 26 and 27, which are two separate but consecutive verses in the *sūra*, are grouped together as one single quotation in the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf*. This concatenation of *āyāt* 12:26 and 12:27, united in the same quotation, occurs in all the four manuscripts taken into consideration here (also in DA1, page 29; H, page 27; A1, page 21).

Finally, slightly after this episode, another instance of verse fragmentation occurs among the *utenḍi* stanzas recounting the event narrated over three *āyāt* in *sūra* 12:

> 12:30 Certain women that were in the city said, 'The Governor's wife has been soliciting her page; he smote her heart with love; we see her in manifest error.'
>
> 12:31 When she heard their sly whispers, she sent to them, and made ready for them a repast, then she gave to each one of them a knife. 'Come forth, attend to them,' she said. And when they saw him, they so admired him that they cut their hands, saying, 'God save us! This is no mortal; he is no other but a noble angel.'

> 12:32 'So now you see,' she said. 'This is he you blamed me for. Yes, I solicited him, but he abstained. Yet if he will not do what I command him, he shall be imprisoned, and be one of the humbled.'[99]

Āya 31 is not quoted in full in any of Kijuma's manuscripts; the first part quoted is 'then she gave to each one of them a knife,' while the second part which reads 'God save us! This is no mortal; he is none other than a noble angel' (see Plate LV, Figs 14–15).[100]

> 'When she heard their sly whispers, she sent to them, and made ready for them a repast**, then she gave to each one of them a knife**. "Come forth, attend to them," she said. And when they saw him, they so admired him that **they cut their hands**, saying, "God save us! **This is no mortal; he is no other but a noble angel**"'

It is particularly worth looking at the quotation of the first fragment that occurs in all four manuscripts, and that bears the same mistakes in each (DA1, DA2, and A1). In the following Table I will take DA1 and H as an example:

Stanza 287	*Zisu kwawanyiliza* *Zikali zaiḍi shaza* *Na huku kiwapumbaza* *Hukata wakiliya*
	'She gave them knives Sharper than a shell, And [she did] this to make them sing; 'They cut and eat'

[99] Arberry 1986, 229.

[100] The circled part contains the specific fragments quoted in the manuscripts that will be analysed below. In order to facilitate cross-referencing between the full, original Qur'ānic quotations and the excerpts (namely, fragments 1, 2 and 3) quoted in the Swahili manuscripts, the three circled parts of the Arabic verse 12:31 are boldfaced in the English translation by Arberry that follows.

DA1 quotation 12 : 31 [see Plate LV, Fig.16]

H quotation 12:31 [see Plate LV, Fig.17]

'Then she gave to each one of them a knife'

Compared to the 'original' verse printed in full above, the fragment quoted after stanza 287 in manuscript DA1 shows that the poet-quoter has: (i) mistaken the third-person singular of the verb آتَى *ātà* 'to give to; to grant' (root 'TY أ-ت-ي), instead using another defective verb whose final letter is a weak one, أَعْطَىَ *aʿṭà* (root 'ṬW ع-ط-و) and has the similar meaning of 'to give to; to offer,' but spelled and conjugated incorrectly (it should be فَاعطت *fā'ṭat* instead of the *فعطط fa'ṭaṭ found above); (ii) omitted the ة *tā' marbūṭa* in the feminine pronoun *wāḥid* واحد , writing وَاحِدِ *wāḥidi* rather than وَاحِدَةٍ *waḥidatin* in a case of haplography; (iii) skipped the partitive مِنْهُنَّ *min-hunna* ('among them'); (iv) omitted the repeater sign ّ *šaddah* on the *kāf kasra* كِ (or *kāf maksūrah*), thereby deleting the geminate consonant in the noun سِكِّن *sikkīn* 'knife'; and (v) printed the word *sikīna* سِكِيْنَا without the *tanwīn* ً *–an* (*sikkīnan* سِكِّيْنًا), the correct accusative form. On the other hand, in manuscript H, the unknown scribe-quoter has: (i) used the correct verb, آتَى *ātà* 'to give to; to grant,' despite omitting the initial glottal stop ء *hamza*; and (ii) included the ة *tā' marbūṭa* in the feminine pronoun and (iii) the following partitive مِنْهُنَّ *min-hunna* ('among them'); however, like Kijuma in DA1, he has also (iv) omitted the ّ *šaddah* diacritic marking the gemination of the consonant *kāf* ك in the noun سِكِّن *sikkīn* 'knife.'

Considering that Kijuma's other manuscripts, DA2 and A1, bear the same mistakes as in DA1, it is most likely that the unknown scribe of ms. H did not rely on one of Kijuma's above-mentioned mss. as his basis for ms. H, which, in fact, features quotations that are closer to the 'original'

compared to Kijuma's hypercorrected or misspelled quotations. However, it is not improbable that the scribe, familiar with the Qur'ānic passages, might have recognized some inaccuracies in Kijuma's handwritten quotations and edited them by recalling them from his own memory in making his copy.

The most striking phenomenon is that, after a span of four stanzas, the same portion of *āya* 31 is repeated once more (namely, '*fragment* 1, *repaetit*'). Nevertheless, the *āya* is still not copied in its correct form, either in comparison with the original or with the 'inexact' one quoted just a few stanzas above. However, this new but still inexact way of rendering the same verb shows precisely that the poet was relying on his memory and trying to match the verb as closely as possible with its 'original' stem in citing it. The variations in this case differ from one manuscript to the next, and compared with how the same verse was quoted previously, this time the poet seems to have made an effort to edit the verb. In A1 and DA1, the previously quoted verb, أَعْطَى *a'ṭà* (root 'ṬW -ع-طـو), is replaced with the one occurring in the original Qur'ānic verse: آتَى *ātà* 'to give to; to grant' (root 'TY أ-تـ-ي). The pronoun *wahid* still lacks the ة *tā' marbūṭa* marking the feminine in A1 and DA1, although the latter includes the partitive مِنْهُنَّ *min-hunna*, which instead is lacking in A1:

291

Kwa Yusufu kumu^{h}*unḍa*
Kwa zisu wakaitinda
Na maṭo yao huzinda
Yusufu humwangaliya

'When they looked at him, they cut their hands with a knife.
And they turned their eyes to dazzle Yusuf'

A1 quotation 12:31 (fragment 1, *repaetit*) [see Plate LV, Fig. 18]

*Wa *atat kulla *wāḥidi sikkīna*[101]

[101] The scribe's mistakes are marked with a star.

DA1 quotation 12:31 (fragment 1, *repaetit*) [see Plate LV, Fig. 19]	*Wa *atat kulla *wāḥidi minhunna sikkīna*[102]

A further peculiar feature is the fragment quoted in DA2 and H (namely, '*fragment* 2') after the same stanza, in which the first part, *faqaṭṭa'at aydiyhim*, echoes a different fragment of *āya* 31 (see the second circled part of Qur'ānic verse 12:31, printed in full above), the original of which reads as follows: *wa-qaṭṭa'na aydiyahunna*, 'and they cut their hands saying …'[103] In fact, compared with the full 'original' verse, the continuation of the quote with *sikkīnan* ('knife') belongs to the previously mentioned fragment of the verse, reading *wa ātat kulla wāḥīdatin minhunna sikkīnan*, 'Then she gave to each one of them a knife.' The kind of mistakes found in the copies (e.g. DA2 and H) penned respectively by the poet-quoter Muhamadi Kijuma (DA2) and the unknown scribe (H) are clearly those of the *saut du même au même* variety.[104] In fact, as explained by Stussi in the context of Italian philology, if we imagine that the act of copying is split into several stages, in between visually perceiving the written words—or, in the case of the Qur'ān, I would say 'memorized readings,' as the text is learned by heart—and reproducing them by hand, there is an intermediate space in which the recollection and self-dictation occurs: this leads to an interior pronunciation in which the copyist introduces his own phonetic habits, which are causes of error.[105] In the Swahili examples presented above, it could have happened that while copying, the scribes mistook *aydiyahunna* ('their hands') in conjunction with the feminine plural partitive *min-hunna* ('of them'). Thus the scribes attached to *aydiyahunna* ('their hands') the ob-

[102] Ibid.

[103] As noted by the anonymous reviewer, it is interesting that DA2 provides the plural form in the oblique case instead of the accusative, as would be expected, and that he uses *-him* instead of *-hinna*.

[104] Stussi 1994, 96.

[105] Stussi 1994, 97.

ject complement following *min-hunna*, namely *sikkīnan* ('a knife'), rather than the verb that should follow, *wa-qulna* ('and saying'). As a result, the quotation reads 'and they cut their hands knife' in DA2 and H, whereas the original part of the verse reads 'they cut their hands, saying …'

291	*Kwa Yusufu kumt^{h}unḍa* *Kwa zisu wakaitinda* *Na maṯo yao huzinda* *Yusufu humwangaliya* 'When they looked at him, they cut their hands with a knife. And they turned their eyes to admire Yusuf.'
DA2 quotation 12:31 (fragment 2) [see Plate LV, Fig.20]	*Fa *qaṭṭ'at ayadīhum *sikīna*[106]
H quotation 12:31 (fragment 2) [see Plate LV, Fig.21]	*Wa qaṭ'ana 'ayadīhunna *sakīna*[107]
(translation)	**'And they cut their hands *knife'**

In between the two stanzas that each quote the portion of the verse about the knife, another segment from verse 31 (see the third circled part in the full version of *āya* 12:31 above) is quoted (namely, *fragment* 3). It corresponds to the very last part of the *āya* and occurs in all four manuscripts at the same point in the narrative. While the case of the repeated quotations shown above has demonstrated how the same *āya*, quoted in the same Swahili *ubeti*, can display different types of errors in

[106] I have deliberately opted to mark the scribe's mistakes with stars.
[107] Ibid.

its copying, in this case, the poet-quoter has correctly reproduced the *āya* that features in all the manuscripts.

Stanza 290	*Kapita Yusufu bwana* *Kwa wot^{h}e wakadangana* *Si kiumbe wakanena* *Malaika metokeya* 'Yusuf, the master, passed by; all of them were bewildered. They said, "He is not a human being; An angel has appeared"'
DA1 quotation 12:31 (fragment 3) [see Plate LV, Fig. 22]	*Mā hadha basharun illa malakun karīmu*
(translation)	**'This is no mortal; he is none other than a noble angel'**

5. *Conclusion*

Muhamadi Kijuma's style of quoting and misquoting, assembling fragments of the Arabic Qur'ānic into a 'collage' of verses is the result of a concrete—but unconscious—effort to 'mak[e] words stick and outlast the here-and-now.'[108]

In relying on his memory, Kijuma has recalled and inserted Qur'ānic *āyāt* in different forms in the various manuscript copies. By observing this process, we can start mapping out the special entanglement that orality shares with manuscript culture, differently from printed texts. It is in the act of copying and recopying manuscripts, particularly the misspellings, hypercorrections, or jumbling of Arabic passages, as in the case presented in this work, that the fluidity exclusively ascribed to oral performance is also seen to affect the manuscript traditions of literary texts such as *tenḏi*.

[108] Barber 2007, 67.

The act of quoting reveals an intertextual practice: in the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf*, making a reference can be considered primarily to have the symbolical value of evoking the authoritative text par excellence, the Qur'ān, which is a fixed and holy text, and the knowledge, transmission, and perpetuation of which is secured through rote memorization and/or physical reproduction on paper.

While in Kijuma's *Utenḍi wa Yusuf* manuscripts, the quotations stem from the 'authoritative utterances' of *sūra* 12 of the holy book, the manuscripts also embed further quotations that might be mistaken as coming from the Holy Qur'ān, but in fact have been taken from other Arabic sources (the 'unremarked intertextuality' in Barber's terms, or the 'secret' hypotext in Genette's),[109] like the Arabic *Qiṣaṣ al-ʾAnbiyā'* ('Stories of the Prophets').

Still, as mentioned above, in the *Utenḍi wa Siraji*, although most of the quotations come from the authoritative Qur'ān, between the poem's lines we also find a quotation from a song (Swahili *wimbo*, pl. *nyimbo*) that the scribe/author Kijuma has quoted from memory; we can assume here that the scribe and poet did not have a master copy of this work at his disposal while copying the *Utenḍi wa Yusuf*. Likewise, it is certain that he no more relied on a physical copy of the Qur'ān than he did a piece of paper with the song's lyrics in citing either work. Quoting from the Qur'ān, from narrative prose such as the *Qiṣaṣ* or from Swahili songs (*nyimbo*) always implies that the quoted excerpt, be it a Qur'anic *āya*, a song, or a line of prose, has been adapted from its source genre into the Swahili *utenḍi* form. Each of these other genres—the Qur'ān, the *Qiṣaṣ*, *nyimbo*—'retain recognisable features,'[110] which, in fact, become particularly evident in manuscript form. Once these distinctive elements of other genres are incorporated into *utenḍi* manuscript compositions, 'their characteristic features are thrown into relief and their pre-existence as text is affirmed.'[111] What I wished to show in the first section of

[109] Genette 1982, 39.
[110] Ibid. 2007, 78.
[111] Ibid. 2007, 79.

the present study is precisely the forms and distribution of Qur'ānic quotations across citation practices, and to what extent they differ, but at the same time are not isolated or independent from the *utenḏi*'s stanzas. The 'mosaic-esque' co-presence of Qur'ānic quotations in Swahili *utenḏi* manuscripts sheds light on their intrinsic double power. If 'the power of the concept of quotation is that it captures simultaneously the process of detachment and the process of recontextualization,'[112] its second strength resides in the above-mentioned talismanic power of the Qur'ān, which functions as a 'mantra.' Even if their meanings are not clear, the value of Arabic quotations lies in their sound and symbolic value rather than in their lexical meaning When we talk about Arabic quotations from the Qur'ān, the most striking aspect is indeed that their authority resides not just in their quotation per se, but above all, in that they are considered God's words. This is the reason why in the Malay texts, as Ricci points out, 'even an error, an approximated Qur'ānic citation for example, was accepted as potent speech.'[113]

In this sense, an evaluation of the author's interventions—commonly known as 'the author's philology'[114]—his literary fidelity to the holy words, and his efforts to hypercorrect misquotations reveals a useful starting point from which, rather than attributing to the scribe a lack of accuracy, knowledge, or respect towards the Holy Qur'ān, we should understand the act of copying and the existence of manuscript variants as features still very much related to memory and orality.

[112] Barber 2005, 274.
[113] Ibid. 2011, 147.
[114] Isella 2009.

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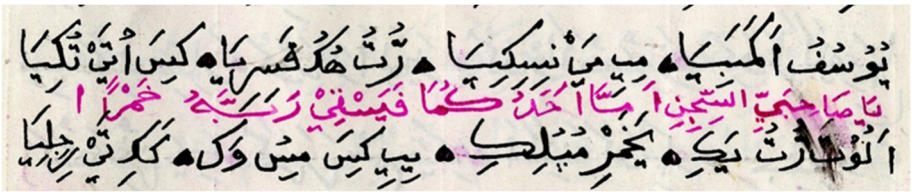

Fig. 1: Example of a segment of a Qur'ānic āya (Sura 12, verse 41) interpolated between Swahili lines of the Utendi wa Yusuf manuscript—Seminar 1465 H 73, p.31. The quotation looks inserted and squeezed between the lines.

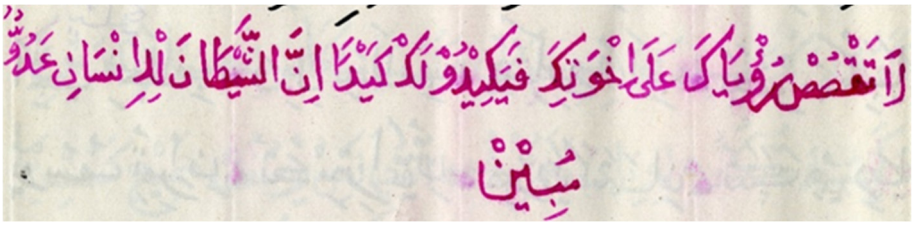

Fig. 2: Hamburg, Seminar 1465 H73. Handwriting: Kijuma. Year: 1332 EG (1913 AD).

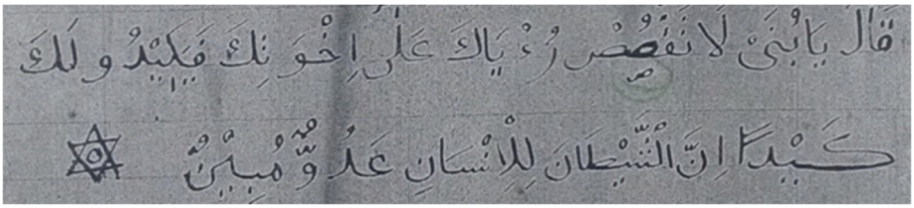

Fig. 3: SOAS, Ms. 228624–Vol.1. Unknown scribe. Year: 1356 EG (1937AD).

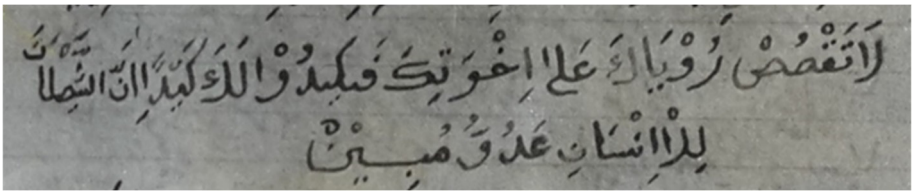

Fig. 4: Dar es Salaam, Ms. 352. Handwriting: Sharifu She Hamadi. Year: 1329 EG (1911 AD).

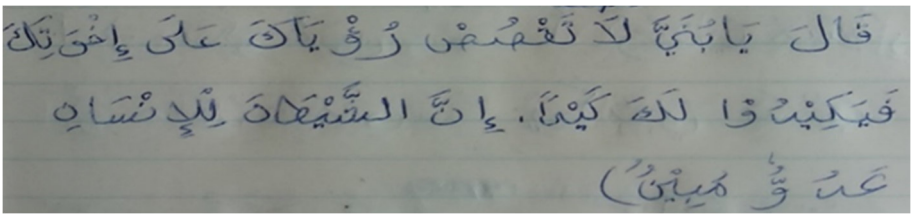

Fig. 5: Dar es Salaam, Ms. 182. Handwriting: Yahya Ali Omar. Year: 1963 AD.

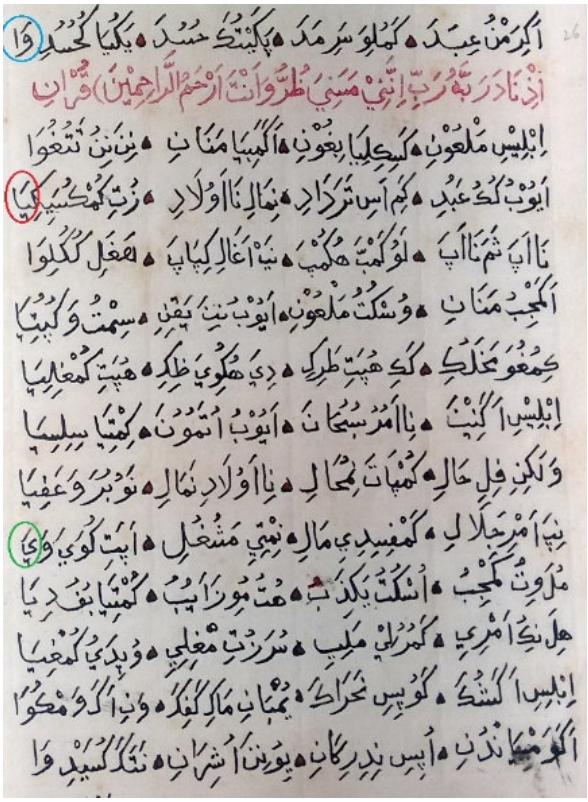

Fig. 6: Manuscript 103. Utendi wa Ayubu, University Library of Dar es Salam, Allen's catalogue (1970,8). Scribe: Muhamadi Kijuma, Date of copying: 1938 AD/ 1357 EG. The Arabic quotations embedded between the Utendi stanzas are marked in red ink and taken from sura 21, āya 83. Within every stanza some space and an inverted heart—accurately filled with red ink in—are devoted to separate the verses (kipande) and mark caesura (kituo). Both elements contribute to make the manuscript layout of a four equal columns. The end-rhyme (bahari) is fluctuating: the most recurrent -iya (يا) alternates with -wa (وا) (circled in blu in the illustration above) or -ya (ي) (circled in green).

Plate LII

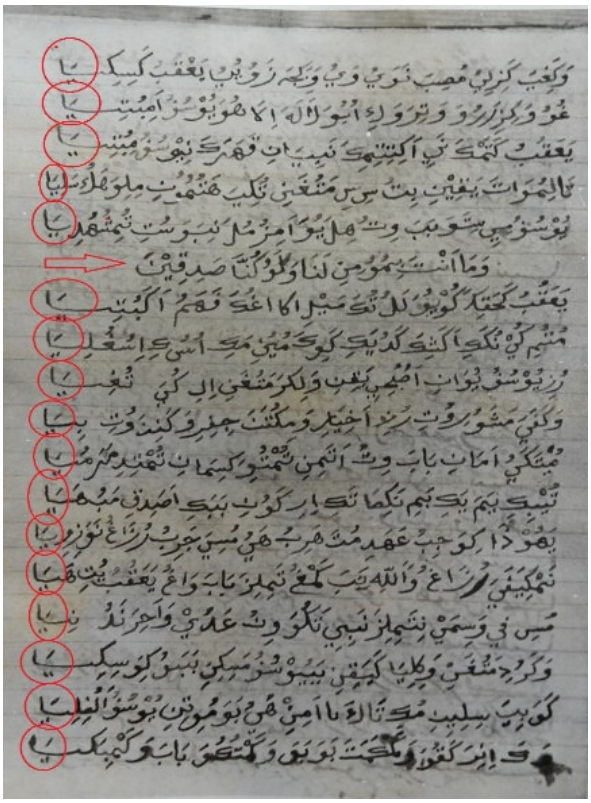

Fig. 7: Ms. 352. Utendi wa Yaaqubu, University Library of Dar es Salam, Allen's collection (1970,21). Poet and Scribe: Abdalla bin Muhamad Anhadi and Sharifu She Hamadi from Pate. Date of composition: 1911 AD/ 1329 EG. The Arabic quotation as well as the utendi stanzas unfold in one line. No space nor particular symbols are used to mark the caesura between the verses within the same stanza. The arrow indicates the presence of a quotation adapted from sura 12, āya 11. The end-rhyme –iya (circled in red in the illustration above), closes regularly every stanza of the Utendi. To note that the middle consonant yā' is lengthened or shortened in order to make every line (mstari) being of the same length and coming to their conclusion graphically at the same point.

وَٱقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُم مِّنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ ۚ وَٱلْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ ٱلْقَتْلِ ۚ وَلَا تُقَٰتِلُوهُمْ عِندَ
ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ حَتَّىٰ يُقَٰتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ ۖ فَإِن قَٰتَلُوكُمْ فَٱقْتُلُوهُمْ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ جَزَآءُ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ

Fig. 8: Qur'ān, Sura 191.

Plate LIII

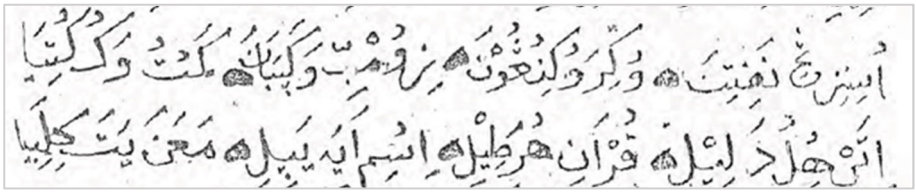

Fig. 9: Utendi wa Siraji, Stanzas 36 and 37.

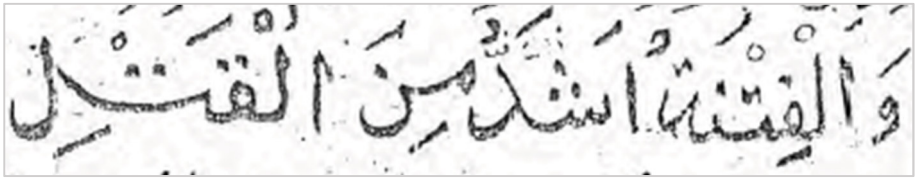

Fig. 10: Qur'ānic quotation (2:191) inserted in the Utendi wa Siraji.

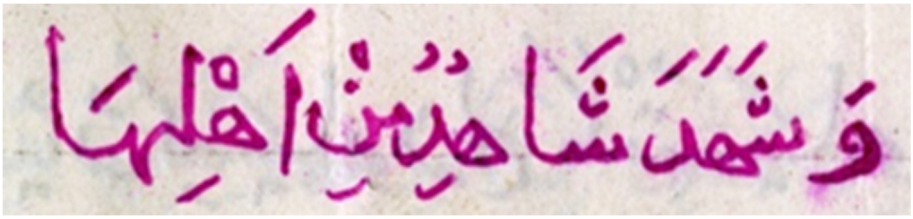

Fig. 11: DA2, page 25. Small excerpt from the first part of verse 26 from Qur'ān 12 inserted in the Utendi wa Yusuf.

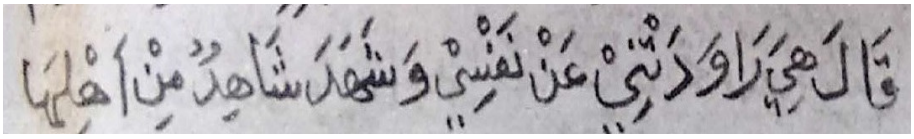

Fig. 12: A1, page 20. Full excerpt from the first part of verse 26 (fragment 1) from Qur'ān 12 inserted in the Utendi wa Yusuf.

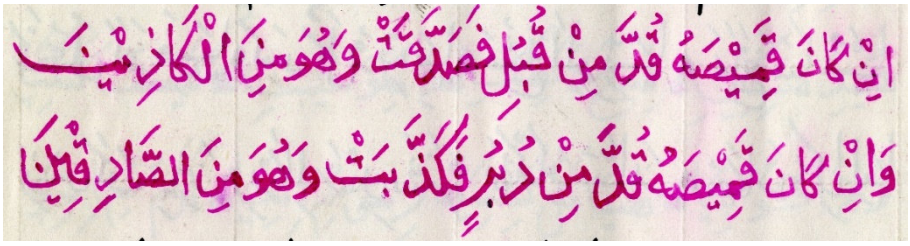

Fig. 13: DA2, page 26. Qur'ān, 12:26 (fragment 2) + Qur'ān, 12:27 inserted in the Utendi wa Yusuf.

Fig. 14/15: Full Qur'ānic verse, 12:31.

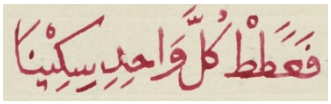

Fig. 16: DA1 quotation 12:31.

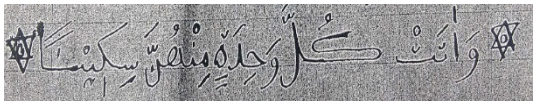

Fig. 17: H quotation 12:31.

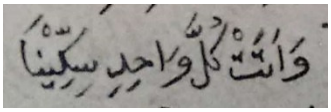

Fig. 18: A1 quotation 12:31 (fragment 1, repaetit).

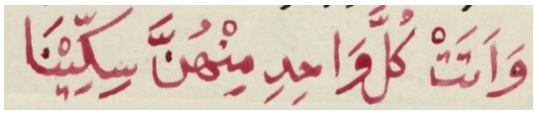

Fig. 19: DA1 quotation 12:31 (fragment 1, repaetit).

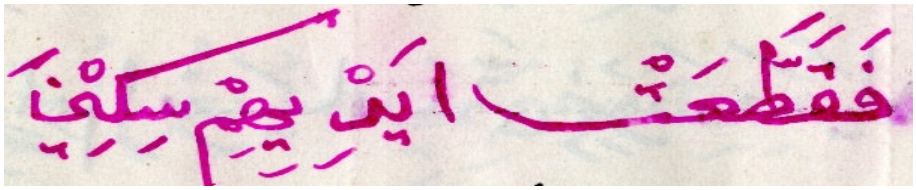

Fig. 20: DA2 quotation 12:31 (fragment 2).

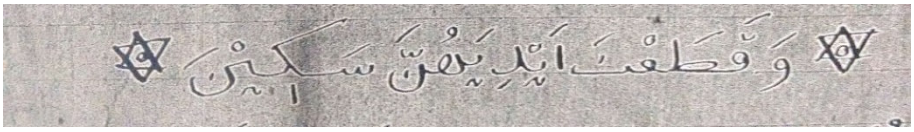

Fig. 21: H quotation 12:31 (fragment 2).

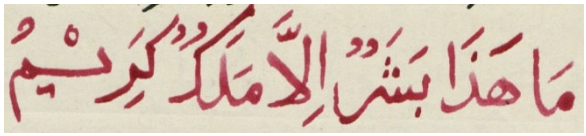

Fig. 22: DA1 quotation 12:31 (fragment 3).