

# Somalia and the Indian Ocean: Cultural and Linguistic Contacts

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One of the main aims of traditional linguistics has always been the compilation of an etymological dictionary; to be sure, this aim might seem somewhat out-of-date, in view of the standards of modern sociolinguistics. But even such an apparently static work as a repertoire of etymology could do good service to our understanding of a complex linguistic situation. Cast and woven together, the items of an etymological dictionary help to reconstruct trends and directions of linguistic contacts in a fairly subtle and accurate way; no other comparable device could obtain the same results. The recent publication of a comprehensive dictionary of the Somali language, comprising more than 25.000 items, gives us, for the first time, the opportunity to widen our etymological speculations all over a large and reliable corpus of words, carefully checked for accuracy and real use. This checking out allows us to discard the typical uninvited guest in etymological discussions, the nonce or instant loanword; in wordlists collected by single-handed researchers it is sometimes difficult to screen out loanwords which never found their way to common usage.

At least since the first centuries of the Christian era and increasingly during the Middle Ages, the coast of Eastern Africa has been actively involved in the far-reaching process of cultural cross-hybridization which took place in the Indian Ocean; in spite of apparently wide distances, the particular system formed by seasonal monsoons and summer equatorial streams allowed an uninterrupted chain of communication from Sofala and Madagascar in the southwest to Sumatra and Java in the southeast. Here and there this contact resulted in a complete ethnic melting; this was the case in Madagascar, where a Malayo-Polynesian stock mingled with the native African population, imposing on them his own language, Malagasy. Tradition has it that Persian or Arabic-speaking settlers from Shiraz, the Persian Gulf, and Oman, founded many cities and harbours all along the East African coast; and kiSwahili language is still there to witness the depth of cultural contact between Islamic settlers and Bantu ethnic groups. Along the channels of trade and communication every kind of precious goods was sold or bartered: foodstuff, crops, spices and drugs, textiles and so on; but technologies and specialized skills, crafts (such as wood carving), and sailing techniques also found their way into Africa. I will not elaborate on such well-known topics, about which almost everything has already been said in the learned contributions of A.J. Arkell,

U. Monneret de Villard and V. L. Grottanelli; but I want to stress that the linguistic facet of these centuries-old connections is of paramount importance; carefully scrutinized, single lexical items can reveal the direction of a trade and can provide a chronological peg when chronology is doubtful.

Much still remains to be done in this field; the whole gamut of Asiatic languages (Persian, Urdu, Gujarati, Marāṭhī, Tamil, Malay, to mention just the most important among them) has been carefully worked over by well-known specialists in search of mutual relationships, and I would like to mention the superb papers of Alessandro Bausani on Persian influences on Tamil and Malay, and on nautical terms in the Indian Ocean; thanks to his unsurpassed command of Asiatic languages and civilizations, Prof. Bausani has provided complete coverage and sound evaluation of the entire array of the phenomena involved.

On the other hand, the record is rather poor for East African languages and for several reasons; specialists of African languages, dealing usually with unwritten or recently written sources, are less willing to engage in the bookish work of comparing and sifting etymologies; and lexicographical devices are of course of a lower standard when compared to the extensive dictionaries at hand for every major Asiatic language. Spadework on Arabic loanwords in Somali was done almost twenty years ago by Prof. Zaborski. A welcome addition to our scarce equipment is a recent paper by J. Knappert, of the SOAS, consisting mainly in an annotated checklist of Swahili terms of Persian and Turkish origin; this will provide a useful touchstone for evaluating loanwords in Somali too, even if it does not substantially increase information already available in Johnson (1939).

But there is a major theoretical problem intrinsic in every wordlist. By its nature a wordlist squeezes a multifaceted and flowing reality in a yes-or-no framework; a list has to state just one starting point, and this statement could be utterly inaccurate, because most of the time there is more than just one path. To look for Turkish words in Swahili amounts to overstating the case for etymology at the expense of the case for a sociolinguistic model of contact. As everywhere, even in linguistic research there are many kinds of truth. There is a purely etymological truth, when we trace the most remote starting point of a word — and in this vein we can say that there are Accadian words in Somali, because *aajur* 'brick' is traceable to a Mesopotamian word of the 2nd millennium, (namely, *agurru*). And there is also a sociolinguistic truth, telling us that to state the Accadian origin of *aajur* is utterly irrelevant, since speakers of the two languages never had the opportunity to interact.

The linguistic layer which for the sake of brevity I will term Asiatic is the second major layer in the Somali language, after the Arabic one. But there is a main difference between the Arabic component and the Asiatic one. Arabic elements reached Somali through two different channels of contact, the cultivated knowledge of the literary language, the property of every cultivated Somali, and contact with Arabic-speaking people — not necessarily ethnically Arabs — from the coasts of South Arabia. It is merely trivial to state that through the former channel a host of words have been adopted, referring to religion, law, social and political institutions, and the whole world of spiritual experience. The second channel has a different range; it relies on face-to-face interaction, and it encompasses many aspects of everyday experience, from military service to seafaring and trading — this mainly in the Red Sea area. Since this is a spoken, current language and

not a pure, literary form, this variety includes some amount of non-Arabic material, chiefly of Persian, or even of Western origin.

The second component, the Asiatic one, does not involve a single specific contact with a specific community. Of course, minorities of Persians or Gujaratis have settled in Somali cities, but their linguistic contribution to Somali is not very relevant. We have to account instead for a rather peculiar and specific phenomenon of linguistic contact: since the Middle Ages, across the whole immense area of the Indian Ocean many varieties of « *linguae francae* » have been in use among seamen, traders, soldiers. They were and are based on Arabic or Persian or Hindī-Urdu, or even Tamil or Malay, but they share their main lexical bulk. Asiatic words in Somali, indeed, come from these forms of language, which it would be inaccurate to style Persian or Urdu or Hindi.

Statistically, a very frequent word is likely to be accepted in many different languages, and in fact more or less the same lexical core occurs in different languages, ranging from Swahili to Malay. That is why I kept at hand the whole range of lexical lists in compiling my own checklist. An obvious loanword at one point of the area can help to identify a dubious loanword in another point.

Many « *Wanderwörter* » are so commonly and widely spread through all the languages of the Indian Ocean that it would be rather naive even to try to trace a definite starting point; but even so, there are interesting differences in the attitudes of Somali speakers. The word for 'tea' is *shaah*, *shaahi* in Somali, hence a typical Arabic word; it is *chai* in Swahili, pointing to an unmistakable Persian origin. Many words of Persian origin spread widely not from Persia but from India, possibly in the so-called Anglo-Indian usage; to a lesser extent the same holds true for coastal Arabic, particularly in nautical terminology (cfr. *daqal*, *qalammi*, *qolfaad*).

Something has to be said about the assimilation of non-Somali material into the lexicon. At first sight, the core of the Somali lexicon seems to react strongly against non-native addition. As compared, for instance, with Swahili, a language standing in a very similar position, Somali looks much more self-centered. Where one would expect a foreign label for a foreign referent, Somali uses a native sign. The common Arabic word *fūṭā*, which is the current word in the « *lingua franca* », as every Western traveler could testify, was not adopted in Somali but replaced by *furun*. The A-P term *janbiya* for a typical Yemeni hooked dagger is not in Somali (but it is in Swahili, as *jambia*), and many more examples could be quoted.

Phonologically, the same rules seem to be at work for the purely Arabic and for the Asiatic loanwords; the opposition long/vs/short vowel is heavily used either to duplicate a similar opposition holding in the source language, or, more commonly, to depict a vowel color opposition; this is the case with Persian phonology, in which in modern times vowels contrast only for quality. As for Arabic, the fairly accurate rendering of long and short vowels could also be owed to the fact that cultivated people are perfectly aware of the source forms and of their spelling too; but comparable knowledge could not be assumed for Persian or Urdu.

The opposition voiced/voiceless at the end of the word, which in one case is assumed by Knappert as diagnostic between Persian and Turkish (*bārūd*/*barut*, whence Sw *baruti*), is irrelevant in Somali and cannot be used as a diagnostic.

Vowel harmony is responsible for the vowel pattern of *baraf*, *daftar*, *galaas*, *saab* or, with a different rendering of vowel height, *bender*. Dissimilation is at work in *binuur* (<-ll-), *deeban* (<-m-).

It is hardly possible to define with any accuracy the phonology of the source languages. Persian is a direct source in many cases; and judging from the vowel quality, it would seem that loanwords come from a rather archaic stage of the language (as in *sambuusi* with long /u/ instead of /o/); but as I said, in many cases a more recent Indian or even Anglo-Indian intermediate has to be assumed.

Morphologically, an unsteady rendering is adopted for the final morpheme of a word; as we know, an Arabic word with *tā marbūṭā -ah* is usually rendered as *-ad*. The same applies for Persian words: *-ad* is added analogically in *beesad* (dual form *beesteen*), *damaashad*, *rubbad*; but *baamiye*, *rande* show a -∅ ending, and *bafto* is analogically formed according to a regular morphological pattern of Somali.

An interesting feature is the suffix *-i*, which is very frequently added to foreign words. As we know, there are different sources for *-i*: there is a native Somali *-i*, as in *rati*; there is an Arabic formant *ī* as in *Maḥmūdī*, *miṣrī* ('relative to, coming from' etc.); there is a Persian *-ī*, with the same meaning, but different etymology (ancient Persian *-aya*, middle Persian *-īg*); and there is an Indo-Aryan *-ī* as in the feminine ending of *rānī* 'queen', or in *bālī baaldī*; and Swahili too adds a formant *-i* to loanwords: *tini* 'fig'. So *-i* would scarcely qualify as a diagnostic; it might sometimes act as an integrative formant, just to give the expected Somali shape to a foreign word (*banji*, *ranji*); sometimes it is already in the source word (*rani*, *kori*); and sometimes it is unexpected, as in *sambuusi*.

I will present here only the general results of my sifting; the corpus of words of Asiatic origin is rather meager; taking the *DSI* as a starting point, there are only one hundred and twenty words of traceable origin; a few more are of possible Asiatic origin, in view of their meaning and phonological form.

Loanwords are distributed over several thematic areas, with a rather balanced ratio: commodities and goods, food, plants, textiles, but also social life and institutions. As predictable, a small but tight group of words refer to seafaring and fishing, the techniques handed over to Somalis by the seamen of the Indian Ocean.

#### Checklist

*aayad* 'wet nurse' < U *āya* < P *āya* < Pt *aia*?; *aayad* 'verse of the Qur'an' is from A *āyat*

Abraham, *SED*, p. 18 (<< Hindustani-English >> ≠ S *aayo* 'stepmother, uncle's mother, auntie')

*almas* 'diamond' < A *almās* < P, cf. Mal *almas*

*baaldi* 'bucket' < U *bālī* < Pt *balde*

cf. *HJ*, p. 53b, <*s.v.* « balty », Bausani 1969, n° 4

*baamiye* 'okra, *Abelmoschus esculenta*' < P *bāmiya*

cf. Knappert 1983, p. 120

*baaniyaal* 'Indian trader; follower of Hinduism' < Bengali *bāniyā*, Guj *vāniyo* etc. Abraham, *SED*, p. 30 (< U); cf. *HJ*, pp. 63a-64b; *s.v.* « banyan » and Sw *banyani*

*baaruud* 'gunpowder' < P *bārūd*, Tk *barut*  
cf. Knappert 1983, p. 121, Sw *baruti*

*baati* 'batik' < Mal *batik*  
cf. *HJ*, pp. 201b-202b, s.v. « chintz »; the dropping of [-k] would suggest a proper Mal pronunciation ([bati.]) and hence a direct loan

*babbaay*, *mafafay* 'pawpaw' < U < Mal *papaya*  
Abraham, *SED*, p. 22 (< H); cf. *HJ*, pp. 670b-671b, s.v. « papaya, papaw ». This fruit is of course of Mesoamerican origin; but its diffusion in Asia started out from the Philippines and Indonesia, and from there it spread to India.

*bakhaar* 'store' < A, P, U *baqqāl* 'shopkeeper'  
cf. *HJ*, p. 117a, s.v. « buckaul »

*barandis*<sup>1</sup> 'ropes of the stern pulleys in a boat' < A *brinda*, P *buranda* 'swifters (shrouds)' < Pt *brandal*  
cf. Bausani 1969, n° 10

*barandis*<sup>2</sup> 'a wooden barrack' < Anglo-Indian *veranda*, U *varandā*,  
cf. *HJ*, pp. 964b-966a, s.v. « veranda »

*bariwale* 'postman' < U *vālā*  
Abraham, *SED*, p. 24 (« baddiwale », < U)

*bafto* 'a cotton fabric, white and valuable' < P *bāfta*  
cf. *HJ*, p. 47, s.v. « bafta », Knappert 1983, p. 120, Sw *bafta*; Bausani 1964, n° 23, Mal *bafta*

*bajiye* 'fried bean pancakes' < U *bahjiyā*  
Xuseen 1984, p. 198 < Sw *bajia*

*banji* 'hemp; a local drug' < U *bhaṅg*  
cf. Knappert 1983, p. 121, Sw *bangi*

*baqaal* 'a large freight dhow' < P *baghala*, M *bagla*  
cf. *HJ*, p. 123, s.v. « buggalow »; Knappert 1983, p. 120, Prins 1965, p. 280, Sw *baghala*

*bakhshiish* 'tip' < P *baxšīš*, cf. Mal *bachsijs* etc.  
cf. *HJ*, pp. 117b-118a, s.v. « buckhsheesh, buxees », Bausani 1964, n° 17

*baraf* 'snow, ice' < P *barf*  
cf. Knappert 1983, p. 121, Sw *baraf*

*barasaab* 'British governor' < U *barā ṣāhib* 'great Master'  
Abraham, *SED*, p. 23 (< H), cf. *HJ* 132, s.v. « burra sahib »

*baraykaan*, *maraykaan* 'a cotton cloth, imported from Zanzibar' < Sw *amerikani*  
'a kin of unbleached calico'

the « American » cotton cloth was a current piece of good by the end of the past century, as witnessed by Bottego 1900, p. 333, cf. also Mal *kain merikan* 'a coarse American cloth'

*bariid*, *bariis* 'rice' < P *birinj?*

cf. Knappert 1983, p. 122, Sw *birinzi*; the actual phonetic shape of S form is problematic

*barrad* 'hawser of a sailboat' < A *barraj* > Sw *barai*, *baraji* 'halyard', cf. Prins 1965, p. 280

*bayraq* 'flag, banner' < P *bayraq*, *bayrāq* < Tk *bayraq*

*beden* 'a fishing boat' < A *badan*  
cf. Prins 1965, p. 281, Sw *bedeni*

*beesad* 'a coin, 10 cents of a rupee' < U *pāisā*

Abraham, *SED*, p. 31 (< H *paisa*); cf. *HJ*, pp. 703b-704a, s.v. « pice »; *bees-tayn*, *beesteen* '20 cents' and *beeso* 'money' are also used. Since the original value of a *pāisā* is 1/64 of a rupee, only the general meaning of 'little coin', 'subunit' has been adopted

*bender* 'seaport, harbour' < P *bandar*

cf. *HJ*, p. 127, s.v. « bunder »; Bausani 1964, n. 28, Mal *bandar*; Prins 1965, p. 280, Knappert 1983, p. 120, Sw *bandari*

*bengali* 'a kind of sugar' < P *bangalī* 'Bengalese'

sugar was commonly styled out of the name of the place; cf. A. *miṣrī* 'Egyptian sugar', *HJ*, p. 568b, s.v. « misree ».

*binnuur* 'a glass for drinking' < P *billawr* 'crystal, glass'  
for the diffusion of this word cf. Cardona 1980-81

*borbo* 'a kind of mango' < Sw *boribo*  
Xuseen 1984, p. 198

*bundad* 'a roll, a bale of clothes' < U  
Abraham, *SED*, p. 36 (< H)

*buntuq*, *bunduq* 'a rifle' < P-A *bunduq*

cf. *HJ*, pp. 127b-128a, s.v. « bundook »; Knappert 1983, p. 122; a very common word in every Islamic country; the plural form *buntuqyo* is purely Somali, but the broken plural *banaatiq*, *banaadiq* presupposes an A origin

*bustaan* 'a small cultivated field, garden (rare)' < P *bustān*

cf. Knappert 1983, p. 122, Sw *busitani*, Bausani 1964, n° 39, Mal *bostan*, *bustan*

*caanad* 'a coin worth 1/10 of a rupee' < U *ānā*

cf. *HJ*, pp. 31b-32a, s.v. « anna »; a. a. is 1/16 of a rupee; cfr. Sw *anna*

Linguistics

*cambe, cambo* 'mango, *Mangifera indica*' < P 'anbe, A 'anbā < Sk *amrā*, cf *SI*, p. 552

Xuseen 1984, p. 198, Sw *embe*

*cananaas* 'pineapple' < U /'ayn un-nās

cf. *HJ*, pp. 25a-28a, s.v. « ananas »; the fruit is of Mesoamerican origin but has been grown in India; the name has been reinterpreted, f.i. U 'ayn un-nās 'the eye of the man'; the presence of /ʎ/ seems to point to an Asiatic, not to an European origin, even if renderings such as *cisbitaal* < *hospital* are also known.

*daal* 'pulse' < U *dāl*

Abraham, *SED*, p. 44 (< H); cf. *HJ*, p. 312, s.v. « dhall, doll »

*daalan, daallan* 'after dinner sweets' < U *dālī* 'a offering of fruits, flowers, sweetmeats etc.'

cf. *HJ*, p. 322a, s.v. « dolly »

*daftar* 'register, record-book, copy-book' < P *daftar*

cf. *HJ*, p. 329, s.v. « dufter », Bausani 1964, n. 49, Mal *daftar*; Bausani 1971, n° 177, T *taptār*; Knappert 1983, p. 124, Sw *daftari*

*damaashaad* 'festival, public ceremony' < P *tamāšā* < A *tamāšā*; via India Abraham, *SED*, p. 45 (< H < A); cf. *HJ*, p. 941, s.v. « tumasha »; Bausani 1964, n° 175, Mal *tamasja*, Bausani 1971, n° 172, T. *tamācu, tamāš*, 'show, spectacle, fun'

*daqal* 'the ship's post' < A *daqal* 'sistem of a tree, mast of a ship'

cf. Bausani 1969, n° 16; forms from India have rather *ḍol* etc.

*deebaan* 'sailrope' < U *dāwanī*, G *dāmaṇ*, *dāmṇū*, M *dāvaṇ* etc. < Sk *dāman* 'rope', cf. Turner, *CDIAL*, n° 6283

Bausani, 1969, n° 17 traces the word to P *dāman*, which means 'skirt hem'; but the general meaning of the Indo-Aryan group makes an Indian origin of the Somali word more likely; cf. Prins 1965, p. 283, Sw *demani*; Bausani 1971, n° 173, T *tamān*

*derji* 'tailor' < P, U *darzī*

Abraham, *SED*, p. 57 (< H); *HJ*, p. 319a, s.v. « dirzee »; Bausani 1964, n. 52, Mal *dardji/darzi*

*dhambaal* 'postman, message' < U *dākvālā* 'postman'

Abraham, *SED*, p. 46a; for U and M *dāk* 'post' cf. *HJ*, p. 299b, s.v. « dawk »

*dhodho* 'a kind of mango' < Sw *dodo*

Xuseen 1984, p. 198

*digsi* 'iron cooking pot, casserole' < U *dēgci*

Abraham, *SED*, p. 61b (< H)

*doobbi* 'laundryman' < U *dhobī*

Abraham, *SED*, p. 64c (< H), cf. *HJ*, pp. 312b-313a, s.v. « dhoby »

*doon, doonni* 'dhow' < T *tōni* 'a vessel formerly made out of a single dug-out tree' cf. *HJ*, p. 323, s.v. « doney, dhony ». In the Indian Ocean a rather similar term is widespread, cf. *HJ*, pp. 314a-315b, s.v. « dhow, dow » and Prins 1965, p. 283 for Sw *dau*. The vowel of *doon* has advanced tongue root, which could originate as a Umlaut form from the other variant, *doonni*, which in turn might be the more archaic one

*faarmaan* 'beam of a sail' < P *farman* < U *parwān*  
cf. Bausani 1969, n° 24; cf. Prins 1965, p. 284, Baldi 1976 n° 399 for Sw *foromali* etc.

*gaari* 'cart' < U *gārī*  
Abraham, *SED*, p. 84 c (< H), *HJ*, p. 365b, s.v. « garry, gharry »

*galaas* 'glass' < P *gilās*  
cf. Knappert 1983, p. 126, Sw *gilasi*; glasses were formerly made out of tin and not glass; so it is possible that the loanword comes via P

*Gereza* < Sw *gereza* 'fort used as a prison' < Pt *igreja* 'church' (and then obviously 'masonry building')  
cf. Mal *geredja* 'church'

*haadbiri* 'handcuffs' < U *hāth* 'hand' + ?  
deest in *DSI*; Abraham, *SED*, p. 101c (< H *hand* + ? Somali *bir* 'iron')

*hadhiin* 'hearts at cards' < ?  
Rheinisch, *SDW*, p. 198 assumes Sk *hr̥daya-* 'heart' as a candidate, but none of the modern Indo-Aryan words (cf. Turner, *CDIAL*, n° 14152) seems suitable in form and meaning

*hafto* 'instalment' < P *hafta*, U *haftā* 'week'  
Abraham, *SED*, p. 103a (<H <P)

*heeyl* 'cardamom' < P *hel* (written <hyl>) < Skr *ēlā-*, cf. M. *ēlā*

*huruud* 'saffron' < A, P *hurd*, var. *harad*  
the meaning 'saffron' is given by Abraham, *SED*, p. 113b and *DSI*; in Somali *sac̣faraan* < A *zạʿfaran* is also known; but often what is currently referred to as 'saffron' in Somalia is actually turmeric, the ground powder of *Curcuma longa*, which is, by the way, very similar in color to real saffron, *Crocus sativus*; and even the Somali form seems to presuppose an Indo-Aryan derivate of Sans. *haridrā-* 'turmeric'.

*jaalabbuud* 'a boat' < U *jālībōt* < Eng *jolly-boat*  
cf. *HJ*, p. 447b, s.v. « jaleebote », 361 a, s.v. « gallevat »

*jago* 'place' < U *jaga*  
Abraham, *SED*, p. 137b (< H)



*Linguistics*

*jaws, jows* 'nutmeg' < A *jawz*

the primitive Iranian form, \**gōz* etc., was Arabized and then readopted in Persian, as witnessed by the initial phoneme

*jengeli* 'bushman, rustic woman' < U *jangal* 'forest'

cf. Turner, *CDIAL*, n° 5177; the original meaning of Sk *jāngala-* is 'waterless place'; the best translation would be 'bush' as opposed to 'inhabited place'

*joohaar, masjoohaar* 'a mythical snake with a gem in his belly' < P *jawhar, gohar* 'pearl'

cf. Knappert 1983, p. 128, Sw *johari* 'jewel'; the archaic Iranic form is *gohar*; /j-/ points to an Arabic intermediate, but the Arabic form has been readopted in Persian

*jowhar, jowharad* 'jewel, precious stone'; see the preceding item

*kaafuur* 'camphor' < P *kāfūr*

the variant *kanfuur* is also attested, in Abraham, *SED*, p. 148b; cf. Knappert 1983, p. 128, Sw *kafuri*, Bausani 1964, n° 90, Mal *kapur*

*kaanad* 'rudder' < A *kāna* < U *kān* 'ear, helm of a rudder' < Sk *karna-* 'ear, handle', cf. Turner, *CDIAL*, n° 2830

cf. Bausani 1969, n° 35

*kaari* 'curry' < T *karī*

cf. *HJ*, pp. 281a-283ā, s.v. « curry »

*kabaab* 'roast meat' < A, P, U *kabāb*

cf. *HJ*, p. 138, s.v. « cabob »

*karaab* 'the floating of the net' < ?

*karaawil, karaawul* 'spade (in cards)' < A *karwiya* 'caraway'

cf. *HJ*, p. 166, s.v. « carraway »

*karraani* 'clerk' < U *karānī, kirānī* 'a clerk'

Abraham, *SED*, p. 149 a (< H); cf. *HJ*, pp. 273-274, s.v. « cranny », Knappert 1983, p. 129, Sw *karani*

*kidaar* 'thick, round millet-bread' < ?

Abraham, *SED*, p. 151b

*koodhi* 'income-tax' < U *kurhi* 'house-tax'

Xuseen 1984, p. 198 < Sw; Knappert 1983, p. 130, Sw *kodi*

*laas* 'silk' < P *lās*

Knappert 1983, p. 130, Sw *lasi*

*laxoox* 'thin, flat millet-bread' < ?

Abraham, *SED*, p. 162c

*liim* 'lime, lemon' < P *līmū* 'lemon'  
cf. Bausani 1964, n. 113; *liimougunji*, *liinugunji* 'pineapple' seems to point to *Unguja*, the Sw name of Zanzibar

*maxamuudi* 'white cotton fabric, a kind of *bafto*' < P *maḥmūdī*  
cf. *HJ*, p. 707b, s.v. « mammoodies »

*miidaan* 'an open space in town' < P *maydān*

*miinsaab* 'European lady' < Anglo-Indian *memṣāḥib*  
Abraham, *SED*, p. 180c (< H), cf. *HJ*, p. 567a, s.v. « mem-sahib »

*miis* 'table' < P *mīz* < Pt *mesa*

*mindil* 'handkerchief' < A, P *mindīl*, *mandīl* < Pt *mandil*  
Abraham, *SED*, p. 180b, cf. Mal (archaic) *mandil*

*moor* 'stamp, seal' < P *muhr*  
cf. Knappert 1983, p. 131, Sw *muhuri*; Bausani 1964, n° 117, Mal *mohor*, Bausani 1971, n° 102, T *mōkar*

*murjaan*, *marjaan* 'coral' < P *marjān*  
cf. Knappert 1983, p. 130, Sw *marijani*

*naakhuude* 'ship's captain' < P, U *nāxudā*  
cf. *HJ*, p. 612, s.v. « nacoda, nacoder », Bausani 1964, n° 120, Mal *nachoda*;  
Bausani 1969, n° 47, Bausani 1971, n° 104, T *nakuta*; Knappert 1983, p. 131,  
Sw *nakhoda*

*nayruus* 'new year's festival' < P *nawrūz*  
Abraham, *SED*, p. xviiib < P; the Somali equivalent for the beginning of the  
solar year is *dabshid*, and the festival is currently held to be of Persian origin,  
cf. Lewis 1955, p. 63, n. 25; cf. Knappert 1983, p. 131, Sw *nauruzi*

*nookar* 'civil servant' < U *naukar* 'servant'  
Abraham, *SED*, p. 189a (< H), cf. *HJ*, p. 628b, s.v. « nokar »

*qaabuuli* 'a kind of rice; a spiced rice-dish in the Indian style' < P *kābulī* 'from  
Kabul'  
commenting upon Mal (*nasi*) *kebuli* 'rice in the Kabuli style', Bausani 1964, n°  
93 notes that P *birinj-i kābulī* is not a rice preparation, but rather a medicine:  
« maybe this preparation was used in India ».

*qalammi* 'the main mast of a ship' < A *qalamī*  
cf. Bausani 1969, n° 48

*qarmuusi* 'a silk fabric' < P *hurmuṣī* 'from Hurmuz'  
cf. *HJ*, pp. 645b-646b, s.v. « Ormus, Ormuz »; the first sound is difficult to ex-  
plain; a form <agramuzo< in a XVI century Western source quoted by *HJ* shows  
an analogous rendering of initial /h-/

*qolfaad* 'to caulk' < A *qalfaṭ* etc.

cf. *HJ*, pp. 148b-149a, s.v. « calputtee »; Bausani 1969, n° 33, Prins 1965, p. 288, Sw *kalafati*

*qulaan* 'jack, knave' < P *ghulām* 'boy, page'

*raando* 'carpenter's plane' < P *randa*

Xuseen 1984, p. 198 < Sw, Knappert 1983, p. 133, Sw *randa*

*raani* 'the queen in the cards' < U *rānī* 'queen'

Reinisch *SDW*, p. 324 (< Sk *rajnī*), cf. *HJ*, p. 757a, s.v. « rane »

*ranji, rinji*, 'color, dye, paint' < P *rang*

Xuseen 1984, p. 198, Knappert 1983, p. 133, Sw *rangi*; there is no need to surmise a Sw intermediate, as pointed out by Xuseen. The same morpheme seems to occur in *booranji* 'a kind of fabric'

*rishwaan, rushwaan* 'silk fabric'

in spite of its obvious Persian form, it is impossible to trace the source of this word; maybe it is an all-too obvious metathesis from P *širwānī*, a brocade from the town of Širwān

*rooti* 'loaf of bread' < U *roṭī* (maybe < Dutch *broodje* > Mal *roti*)

Abraham, *SED*, p. 211 b (< H) s.v. « roodhi »

*rubbad, rubbiyyad* 'rupee' < U *rūpiya*, P *rūpiya* < Sk *rūpya*

cf. *HJ*, pp. 774b-776b s.v. « rupee »

*saab* 'officer, oh lord!' < U *ṣāḥib* < A *ṣāḥib*

Abraham, *SED*, p. 213b (< H < A, P), cf. *HJ*, pp. 781b-782a, s.v. « sahib »

*saari* 'woman's dress' < U *sāri*

Abraham, *SED*, p. < H)

*sabuul* 'maize-cob' < A, P *sunbul*, 'ear, spike (of grain)'

*sambuusi* 'spiced meat in triangular pastry' < P *samūsa, sanbūsa*

Xuseen 1984, p. 184 (< Sw), cf. Bausani 1964, n° 183, Mal *tembosa*, Knappert 1983, p. 134, Sw *semusa, sambusa*. The name of this favorite stuffed bread has spread in both variants, with /-b-/ and without (Malagasy *samosa*, Sw *semusa*)

*sareedaan* 'ship's galley, camboose' < A *sārīdān*, P. *sārīdān*, T *cuḍuvān*

cf. Bausani 1969, n° 57 (the ultimate origin seems to be T)

*sargaal, sarkaal* 'officer' < U *sarkār* 'government'

Abraham, *SED*, p. 218c (< H), cf. *HJ*, pp. 840b-841a, s.v. « sircar », Bausani 1971, n° 22, T *carkkār*

*sees* 'groom' < U *sā'is* < A *sā'is*

Abraham, *SED*, p. 220c (< H), cf. *HJ*, p. 885b, s.v. « syce »

*serenji* 'ship's commanding officer' < P *sarhang*

cf. *HJ*, pp. 812b-813a, s.v. « serang »; Bausani 1964, n° 162, Mal *serang*, Knappert 1983, p. 134, Sw *serehangi*, Bausani 1971, n° 18, T *caranku*

*seeriwale, siiriwale* 'arbiter' < U

see *siiri* and *-wale*

*shaabuug* 'leather whip' < P *šābuk* 'quick' whip, via India

cf. *HJ*, pp. 185b-186b, s.v. « chawbuck »; Bausani 1964, n° 187, Mal *tjabuk*; Knappert 1983, p. 122, Sw *chabuki*

*shaadir* 'woman's veil' < P *šādar*

cf. Bausani 1964, n° 186, Knappert 1983, p. 122, Sw *chadari*

*shaal* 'shawl' < P *šāl*

cf. Knappert 1983, p. 134, Sw *shali*, Bausani 1971, n° 164, T *sāl*

*shanle, shanlo* 'comb' < P *sana*

cf. Knappert 1983, p. 123, Sw *ki-shanuo*

*shati* 'pass, letter, license' < U *šittī*

Abraham, *SED*, p. 231a (< H), cf. *HJ*, p. 203a, s.v. « chit, chitty », Knappert 1983, p. 123, Sw *cheti* 'note, ticket, passport, certificate'

*shax* 'a game' < P *šāh*

cf. Bausani 1971, n° 162, T *šāhā* 'check to the king'

*shooki* 'police station' < U *cauki*

Abraham, *SED*, p. 233a (< H)

*siiri* 'whistle' < U *sīrī*

Abraham, *SED*, p. 223c (< H); der. *siiriwale, seeriwale* 'arbiter'

*sirwaal* 'trousers' < A *sirwāl*, P *šālwār*, U *sarwel*

deest in *DSI*. Cf. *HJ*, pp. 832b-833b, s.v. « shulwaurs »; Bausani 1964, n° 160, Mal *seluar* < P

*suubeehi, suubbeehi* 'private soldier, police constable' < P *sipāhī*

cf. *HJ*, pp. 809a-811b, s.v. « sepoy, seapoy »

*suubidaar* 'sergeant-major' < U *subadār*

Abraham, *SED*, p. 227c (< H), cf. *HJ*, p. 856b-857a, s.v. « soubadar, subadar »

*taaj* 'crown' < P *tāj*

cf. Knappert 1983, p. 136, Sw *taji*

*taambuug* 'tent' < U

Abraham, *SED*, p. 235b (< H)

Linguistics

*takhtar* 'doctor' < U *ḍāktar* < Eng  
var. *dhaktar* (Abraham, *SED*, p. 43c) seems to be even closer to U

*tartan* 'sprinting-race' < U

*tastuur*<sup>1</sup> 'bowsprit' < P *dastūr*  
cf. Knappert 1983, p. 124, Sw *dasturi*

*tastuur*<sup>2</sup> 'constitution law, habits, good manners' < P *dastūr*  
Abraham, *SED*, p. 236b (< H), cf. Sw *desturi*, Bausani 1971, n° 190, T *tastūr*

*toonbakh* 'tobacco' < P, U *tanbākū*  
cf. *HJ*, pp. 924b-926b, s.v. « tobacco »; Bausani 1964, n° 182

*tumbul* 'betlenut, *Piper betle*' < P *tunbūl*, A *tanbūl* < Sk *tāmbūla*  
Abraham, *SED*, p. 240c, cf. Knappert 1983, p. 136, Sw *tambuu*

-*wale* 'the man of' < U *vālā* < P *wār*  
Abraham, *SED*, p. 249a (< H); it is the equivalent of S -*le*; cf. *dambaalwale*  
'postman', *fidnawale* 'agitator', *siiriwale*

*xamaam* 'pigeon' < A *ḥamām*  
Abraham, *SED*, p. 116b; the meaning 'bathroom' is from A *hammam*

*xawaldaar* 'sergeant' < P *hawaldār*  
Abraham, *SED*, p. 118c (< H), cf. *HJ*, pp. 412b-413a, s.v. « havildar »

*yeeke* 'ace' < P *yek* 'one'

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The spelling of Somali words is the one adopted in *DSI*; variants are given after a comma; the transcription of Persian is a rather conservative one, since it aims to reproduce a rather archaic phonology; note the following abbreviations:

- A Arabic
- H Hindustani (that is, U in Abraham, *SED*)
- M Marāthī
- Mal Malay
- P Persian
- Pt Portuguese
- Sk Sanskrit
- Sw Swahili
- T Tamil
- Tk Turkish
- U Urdu (actually Hindi-Urdu)

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