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Reflections on the Nature and Social Function of Somali Proverbs

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In some societies, especially in Western Europe, proverbs now play a very insignificant role. Only a limited number are in actual living use, and even then do not occur very frequently. It seems that the decline of proverbs is correlated with the lack of interest in rhetoric, in an allusive and allegorical style of speech, and in the art of witty and sparkling conversation of the type that is still preserved for us in the dialogue of Elizabethan plays. In the era of modern technology, mass communication and preoccupation with the economic utilization of time there seems to be very little room for this leisurely refinement of the spoken language. However, there are many societies where proverbs are still a living force, especially in those where oral communication is the main source and the main channel of artistic expression. The African continent is particularly well endowed in its proverbial lore,[1] though much of it still awaits documentation. In Somali society, proverbs are a part of everyday life, and as one observant Somali once remarked, 'they put spice into speech': *Hádalka wày ḥqwaashaysaa maahmáahdu.*[2] In this essay, I have attempted to give a brief introduction to this aspect of Somali culture.

It is a commonly observed fact that proverbs of different nations often coincide in their themes.[3] One can find numerous parallels all over the world for proverbs like

Kaadsáde má kufó.

He who takes his time does not fall.[4]

or

Beeni márka horé waa málab, márka dambé na wàa malmăl.

Lies are honey at first, later they are myrrh.[5]

The similarities in the assertions made by many proverbs may sometimes be due to borrowing, but it seems more likely that in most cases they result from the universality of human experience. One can easily imagine situations which could have led to the spontaneous invention of such proverbs as:

Afhumádu ᶜoláadda wăħ bá ka má tartó, nabádda na wày fǫgaysaa.

Offensive speech does not help at all in warfare, but it makes peace remote.

Nín bukaa boqŏl ú tqlí.

Someone who is ill can order a hundred [people] about.

Doqoni hádigga Lagú hídayó húsulkày kú sidataa.

Fools carry in the crook of their arm the rope with which someone will tie them up.

Waħmahubsadé beenáalàa daamá.

A liar is better than he who does not make sure [that what he says is true].

Bdáayòoy, maħàad tartaa? Nín méel la'áa ayàan méel ú banneeyaa.

O Misfortune, what are you useful for? I clear a space for him who had no space.

Haddàad wáħaad je'éshaháy wdydó, wáħaad ká fursán wdydaa bàa La yeelaa.

When you cannot get what you like, you have to do what you cannot avoid.

Haddày lúgtu jdenniga daaftó way jabtaa.

If the hind leg passes the front leg it breaks.

Méeshaad nín ká qaadánaysó ba nín bàad kagá tdgaysaa.

Wherever you win someone for yourself, you [also] lose someone.[6]

Proverbs naturally draw their imagery from the environment in which they have arisen; domestic animals feature prominently in Somali life and have often produced allegorical material for proverbs.

Adi béen waa ú didaa, béen se u má dutiyó.

Sheep and goats stampede for a false reason, but they do not limp for a false reason.

Àwrka dambe àwrka horé só'odkjisùu lèeyahay.

The camel which is behind keeps the pace of the one in front.

Baarqáb labá gdel je'él dehdodàa bahal kú 'unaa.

It is between the two herds that a beast of prey will eat the stallion-camel which loves two herds at once.

Baqál fardó lá mìrataa bádkòodày is mqoddaa.

A she-mule which grazes with horses at night imagines that she is their equal.

No less often images are taken from the abundant wild life of the Somali countryside.

Abéeso dul'u'ekáan ayèy Kúgú dishaa.

The *abéeso*[7] snake kills you by its resemblance to the ground.

Libàah aammusá iyo libàah ᶜiÿá, libàah ᶜiÿàa wanaagsán.

[Of] the lion that keeps quiet and the lion which roars, the one which roars is better.

Nin aan[8] *qooq dílin maroodi má dilo.*

An elephant does not kill a man whom [his own] bravado does not kill.

Waraabé úl Lalá gaadi wáa, éray hún na wăh Lagagá díbi wáa.

[If] one fails to reach a hyena with a stick, one also fails to harm it with abusive words.

Hàadka, haad bá hàad kiᶜi.

For every bird of prey there is another which will drive it off.

Anything that belongs to the traditional scenes of Somali life may be found as the raw material of proverbs: huts, fences, wells, pastures, utensils and weapons, to quote but a few. For instance, the following proverb teaches that problems are best solved one by one as they come:

Oodó daᶜaméed síday ú kala sarreeyàan ayàa Lóo guraa.

One picks up the branches of the outer gate barrier in the order in which they lie on top of one another.

The branches are those which close the gap in the enclosure within which people and animals shelter at night; they are so thorny as to be impenetrable and must be carefully removed in the reverse order to that in which they were laid.

Wells built by hand, before the advent of mechanical boring, are often deep and dangerous[9] and are provided with steps and galleries. To use them one has to have a good knowledge of their structure and characteristics. Hence it is said:

ᶜÈel nín galáy ayàa Lagá waraystaa.

One enquires about a well from a man who has entered it [before].

There is a proverb, warning against imprudence, in which the concrete image is taken from the life of those clans which in former times used poisoned arrows:

Gantáal Kugú sóo noqón doontá La má ganó.

You should not shoot an arrow which comes back to you.

An accident of this kind can happen when arrows are shot in volleys at a very steep angle and a strong wind changes their course.

The Somali traditional social system is well reflected in proverbs and is to some extent reinforced by them.[10] For instance, the following proverb lays down some of the main functions of the clan in regard to its own members:

Nín qaldán qabashádí iyo nin qummán quwáyntí iyo nín qolmán wahsíintí bàa tol kú ḍaqmaa.

It is in restraining those who are at fault, supporting those who are upright and helping those who are in need that clanship[11] is profitably exercized.

In Somali society a man may have more than one wife, and each of them lives with her children in a separate household.[12] While the ties of solidarity among the offspring of the same father are very strong, they are even stronger when the mother is also shared. In the public life of daytime the sons of the same father normally associate with and support each other without distinction, but if they also have the same mother they tend to meet as well in the more intimate social life of the evening, discuss matters more freely, help each other or even scheme together. These two bonds of solidarity are described as follows:

Maalíntíi na odáy odáy bàa Lóo shiraa, ḥabèynkíi na habár habár.

In the daytime people assemble in council according to [their descent from the same] fathers, at night according to [their descent from the same] mothers.

It is possible for a Somali to be adopted into another clan, and the extent of this practice differs from region to region. Once accepted, such a 'naturalized' clansman has, at least in theory, the same rights as anyone else. But in matters of special importance a person who is not a born member of the clan may not be fully trusted and may be excluded from certain meetings, particularly if a leakage of secret information might occur and prove harmful to the clan. It is said that this exclusion happened to someone who joined a clan called Báh Ḥawaadlé.[13] He asked one of the elders:

Báh Ḥawaadlé sidée bàa Lóo noqdaa?

How does one become [a real member of] Báh Ḥawaadlé?

His reply was:

Waa Lagá ḍashaa.

One gets born into it.

This exchange has now become a proverb which is sometimes applied even to the wider contexts of international politics.

There is a link in Somali between proverbs and poetry. Many proverbs, like poems, are alliterative, as can be seen from some of the examples already given, and in the following proverb, where the alliterative words are capitalized:

Dáb MUNAAFIQ shidáy MÚSLIN bàa kú gubtá.

A [sincere] Muslim gets burnt in a fire which a hypocrite has lit.

Short quotations from poems are often used in much the same way as proverbs, e.g.

Nín yaráan kú loofaray wúhuu lumiyáy rqaᶜdée ye.

He who in his youth was a loafer ever pursues what he missed.[14]

Or similarly:

Baadída nín bàa Kulá dęydéÿi, dǫal na Káa badán e
Aan dǫonihâyn inaad heshó na, dǫayin ábidkǫis e.

[Sometimes] a man comes out with you to look for lost animals, and gets [even] more tired than you,
But without wanting you to find them at all.[15]

Proverbs enjoy great prestige among Somalis as is witnessed by the proverbs:

Soomaalídu béen wàa sheegtaa, béen se má maahmaahdó.

Somalis tell lies, but they do not tell lies in proverbs.

And

Rag ná waa rággíi horé, hadal ná waa íntuu yiqi.

[Real][16] men are the men of old, and [real] speech is what they said.

Yet it would be an exaggeration to assert that the statements proposed by proverbs are always accepted as true, or even taken seriously, in the traditional Somali environment. The hard life of the nomadic interior is too exacting a teacher not to inculcate some measure of scepticism into its pupils. One can hear people joking about proverbs or commenting on the contradictions which can be found in such proverbs as

Gęesi Alla má hiló.

God does not put to shame a brave man.

And

Ĩǫley habartį má gablantó.

The mother of a coward does not lose all her children.

Or

Fiqí báhdį ka má Jannó tagó.

A [Muslim] lawyer will not go to Paradise alone, leaving his nearest kin behind.

And

Jiq walăal má ahá, jidiin bàa walăal áh.

It is not [your] flesh [and blood] who is [your] brother—it is [your] gullet.

The use of proverbs in Somali is closely bound up with the art of public speaking, which is extensively practiced during the debates of clan councils, arbitration committees and formal social gatherings of all kinds; in the last three decades it has also been adapted to the needs of modern politics. To explain this a brief digression is necessary into one aspect of Somali rhetoric.

It is considered to be a sign of refinement and wisdom not to come directly to the point but to present to the audience one's statements or proposals by means of allegorical images, veiled expressions and cryptic allusions, which are subsumed under the term *gụudmár*[17] which literally means 'moving over (or above) the surface' and is contrasted with the term *gudagál* 'entering inside', i.e. dealing with the subject matter directly.

A proverb says:

Hádal wąayeel wàa gụudmár.

The speech of a [real] elder[18] consists of *gụudmár*.

Similarly

Nínka rág áh daaqsingèel ayàa hádalka Lóo mariyaa, doqónta na háan gadàankęed ayàa Lóo saaraa.

One presents one's words to a [real] man from a distance as great as the camels' daily walk to the pastures; one puts them in front of fools on the basket frame of a water vessel.[19]

Such a stylistic device is not merely an excuse for thoughtless verbosity. One of the functions of *gụudmár* is to create an atmosphere conducive to peace, order and mutual respect at public meetings.[20] 'It cools down speech' (*hádalka wùu qąboojiyaa*), as an elder once said.

Since his audience are usually 'real men', expert at guessing the hidden meaning, a sensitive speaker can watch their reactions to his veiled proem before he fully commits himself. In this way he has time to modify his approach in the course of his speech or even withdraw altogether without loss of face under the cover of a flowery style.

Moreover, the intellectual pleasure of deciphering *gụudmár* is often linked with aesthetic enjoyment of the artistic embellishments which are introduced into it. Poems and proverbs are quoted, a stately and elaborate style is used and the speaker takes care to pronounce his words in a clear and sonorous voice. All this tends to 'raise the moral tone' of the debate and imposes a degree of delicacy and restraint in speech and behaviour which is invaluable when tempers are frayed and the meeting is split by a conflict of views.

Finally, such elaborate rhetoric intimidates people who are inexperienced or not very intelligent, and virtually prevents them from active participation in debates. Even though every adult male has the right to speak at a clan council, in fact most of the debates are

conducted by a small but highly articulate élite of experienced men. To be a good orator, described in Somali by the terms *ᶜodkár* 'he who is able in [the use of his] voice' or *doodyaqàan* 'he who knows how to debate', is an important social asset which many ambitious young Somalis strive hard to acquire. In this essentially democratic society, the art of rhetoric is the main road to power.

The generalized statements contained in proverbs are eminently suitable for use in the allusive style of Somali oratory. Their wit, wisdom and familiar imagery of everyday life contribute substantially to the strength of *gųudmár*, and offer immediate clues to the speaker's trend of thought. At one meeting, for example, an elder talked about the feeding habits of camels and then quoted this proverb in which reference is made to the poisonous plant called *ᶜiin*:[21]

Gęelòw, dàaq, dàaq, dàaq ôo maalíntaad ᶜiin daaqdó ayàa LaGúu yaabaa!

O camels, graze, graze, graze but one fears for you on the day when you graze on *ᶜiin!*

It soon became obvious to his audience that he was giving a warning to someone who was engaged in corrupt practices, since they had already heard rumours about it. A few more allusions were enough to identify the person involved.

A good stock of proverbs is indispensable to a Somali orator, as much in opening speeches as in rejoinders and ripostes. A proverb brought in on the spur of the moment can bring humour into debates and relieve tension:

Wąayeel qábtįisa káftan kú ląasév.

An elder exhausts his wise argument with a jest.

Though in private conversations the full allusive style of public assemblies is less often used, there is a tendency at times to veil the subject matter, especially when tension or embarrassment are likely to arise. This method of communication is a boon to the shy, the sensitive and those easily roused to anger. Here again a good stock of proverbs is of enormous advantage.

As an adjunct to the art of rhetoric and a useful asset in private life, knowledge of proverbs is highly prized and keenly sought after in the traditional pastoral environment and is by no means neglected in towns. Proverbs are learnt by heart not merely because of their sapiential appeal,[22] but because they help in the task of acquiring the power to speak effectively, to win friends and influence people.

NOTES

1. It is doubtful whether the proverbs of the peoples of Africa have any characteristics common to them and to them alone. Any positive assertion to that effect might be simply due to not taking a world-wide view of the matter and to excluding from comparison the oral cultures in Eastern Europe, Asia, America and Australia.

2. The transcription used here is explained in Appendix II in my *The Declensions of Somali Nouns*. This transcription is employed, instead of a broad orthography, in order

to render with greater precision those characteristics of Somali proverbs which are of linguistic interest.

3. This can be easily ascertained by consulting such works as those of Champion, Strafforello or Taylor. For an extensive bibliography of collections of proverbs and theoretical works on this subject see Moll, *Sprichwörter-Bibliographie*, which contains over 8,000 bibliographical entries.

4. In the translation care has been taken to preserve the intention and the imagery of the original. When the sense requires some expansion the explanatory words which do not correspond to any particular words in the original, but are implied in the context, are placed in square brackets.

5. See Textual Annotations under *malmâl* (below).

6. See Textual Annotations under *qaadó*.

7. See Textual Annotations under *abéeso*.

8. See Textual Annotations under *nín*.

9. Somali oral tradition describes numerous accidents of this kind: for an example see von Tiling's *Somali Texte*, Ch. III. Aus dem Leben Muhammed Nurs: 1. Kindheit und Tod des Vaters.

10. I. M. Lewis pays considerable attention to proverbs in his *A Pastoral Democracy*.

11. See Textual Annotations under *tól*.

12. For an account of the Somali family see I. M. Lewis's *Marriage and the Family in Northern Somaliland*.

13. See Textual Annotations under this name.

14. From a poem by *Salaan ʿArrabey*: for the text and translation of this poem see B. W. Andrzejewski and I. M. Lewis, *Somali Poetry: An Introduction*, pp. 116–19.

15. From a poem by *Qamàan Bulhán*; for the text and translation of this poem see B. W. Andrzejewski and Musa H. I. Galaal, 'A Somali Poetic Combat—II', pp. 94–7.

16. For the concept of 'real men' and 'real speech' see Textual Annotations under *rág* and *hádal*.

17. For other uses of cryptic and allusive diction and the technique of deciphering it, see B. W. Andrzejewski and Musa H. I. Galaal, 'The Art of the Verbal Message in Somali Society'; Musa H. I. Galaal, 'From the Somali Story Teller's Anthology'; Jâmaᶜ ᶜUmar ᶜIsā, 'Falsafat al-Ṣūmāl al-ᶜaqliyya' in his *Taᵓrikh al-Ṣūmāl*; and Mohamed Farah Abdillahi, 'Kabcalaf iyo Huuryo Ugaas' in his *Sheekooyin*.

18. See Textual Annotations under *wąayèel*.

19. See Textual Annotations under *hóan* and *gadáan*.

20. It must not be assumed, however, that the allusive style is always used in public speeches. In fact there is a great deal of plain speaking as well. Proverbs are used in both allusive and plain styles of speaking and often bring humour into discussions or conversations.

21. See Textual Annotations under that name.

22. It seems that in the paræmiological literature there is too much emphasis on 'proverbial philosophy' and not enough on the socio-linguistic aspects of proverbs. Among the writers who show a high degree of awareness of the social side of proverbs Bystroń, Firth and Westermarck deserve particular attention.

TEXTUAL ANNOTATIONS

DETAILED information on the texts of the proverbs quoted in this article is provided here in the form of glosses on individual Somali words. A reader who wishes to analyze these texts word by word will find that all the lexical items which they contain are accounted for, with the exception of those words which are recorded in R. C. Abraham's *Somali–English Dictionary* and C. R. V. Bell's *The Somali Language*, and which do not require special annotations.

Since the texts represent a typical selection, anyone who is interested in the detailed linguistic aspects of the style used in Somali proverbs may find the glosses useful. In this connection special attention should be given to the entries under *báhdį* and *kį'ci* and the subsequent cross references to them, since they refer to grammatical features rare in the colloquial or narrative style but frequent in proverbs.

When grammatical designations are given for verbal forms, the system of entry and code letters describing root extension classes are the same as in my article 'Inflectional Characteristics of the So-called Weak Verbs in Somali'. The abbreviation 'hb.vb.' means 'hybrid verbs', a term explained also in that article. In entries on nouns the following abbreviations are used: n. (noun), m. (masculine) and f. (feminine). When contractions and combinations of words are analyzed the entries are preceded by the sign =, as in the Notes on Musa H. I. Galaal's ***Hikmad Soomaali***

abéeso (n.f.) BITIS ARIETANS (Merrem), a large poisonous snake which has a sand-like colour pattern; it reaches 1.50 m. in length and 15 cm in diameter; for a description see Funaioli, *Fauna e caccia in Somalia*, p. 80 and Table XXIV–6

afkúmo (n.f.) offensive speech; cf. *áf* (n.m.) mouth, speech, language, and *hún* (hb.vb.) to be bad

aẏáa an indicator equivalent in its function to *báa*

aẏáan = *aẏáa* + *aan* (**1**)

aẏéẏ = *aẏáa* + *aẏ* (she)

baadí (n.f.) lost livestock or property

báq (n.m.) a half; a portion of; a part of

báqlį'odˀiẏ = *báqkį'oda báẏ*

báh (n.f.) brothers and sisters; descendants of the same female ancestor; for a detailed description of Somali marriage and family see Lewis, *Marriage and Family in Northern Somaliland*; in the proverb *Fiqi báhdį* . . . this word is used in the general sense of 'closest kin'

Báh Hęwaadlé name of a Somali clan in the Ogaden region

báhdį = *báh* + *t'į* which is a 'shortened' form of the possessive definitive *tjis*, for which see my *The Declensions of Somali Nouns*, p. 119; such shortened forms occur frequently in proverbs

baqál (n.f.) she-mule; cf. *báqal* (n.m.) he-mule

beenáalàa = *beenáale* + *bàa*

beenáale (n.m.) a liar; cf. *béen* (n.f.) a lie, lies

bęláayo (n.f.) misfortune, calamity, danger

bęláayòoy = *bęláayo* + the vocative suffix *-ooy*

daaqsingęl (n.m.) an average distance which camels can cover on their way out to a pasture and back again, within one day; this concept is used as a rough measure of distance; cf. *daaqsín* (n.f.) pasture and *gęl* (n.m.) camels

dáayin (n.m.) 'for ever and ever', eternity

dáyday (Z) to look at or look out for again and again; cf. *dáy* (Z) to look at, to examine; note that the root of the verb *dáyday* has the alternance *daydaẏ* ~ ~ *daydaÿ* ~ *dęydęẏ* ~ *dęydęÿ*

dęydéÿi infinitive form of *dáyday* (Z)

doodyąqáan (n.m.) a person proficient in the art of debating; cf. *dóod* (n.f.) debate; dispute, and *yąqáan* a nominalized form of the strong verb *yąqaan* to know

dǫ́oniháyn an equivalent of *dǫ́onáyn*, negative present continuous invariable form of *dòon* (Z) to seek, to want

doqón (n.f.) fools; cf. *dóqon* (n.m.) a fool

ɖ̀aan (Z) to be better than; note that the root of this verb has the alternance *ɖaan* ~ *ɖaam*

ɖaᶜán (n.f.) the outer barrier used for blocking the entrance to an enclosure made of thorny branches; note that the root of this noun has the alternance *ɖaᶜan* ~ *ɖaᶜam*

ɖáb (n.f.) truth; wise and true statement

ɖáqan (AM) to 'become' used profitably; to acquire profit or advantage through using; to use; cf. *ɖáq* (Z) to save; to look after (wealth)

ɖéhdǫ́odàa = *ɖéhdǫ́oda bàa*

ɖulˀuᶜekáan (n.f.) similarity to the ground; cf. *ɖúl* (n.m.) ground; earth; *á* (prepositional particle) to, and *ęg* (hb.vb.) to be similar

fiqî (n.m.) a man well versed in the Islamic Law; a man of religion

fiǰley (n.m.) a coward

gáblan (Z) to lose all one's children through death; note that the root of this verb has the alternance *gablan* ~ *gablam*; this verb has the optional alternative form *góblan*

gadàan (n.m.) a basket frame in which a water vessel is carried: sometimes clothes and other things are placed on it in the household; in the proverb *Ninka rág áh* . . . this basket frame symbolizes immediate proximity

gȩ̀el (n.m.) camels; a herd of camels

gèelòw = *gèel* + the vocative suffix *-ow*

gȩadmár (n.m.) allusive speech; allegorical speech; cf. *gȩ̀ad* (n.m.) top, above, and *már* (Z) to pass; there is also an equivalent phrase: the noun *gȩ̀ad* (in a fixed preverbal position) followed immediately by the verb *már*; this phrase has the meaning 'to use allusive or allegorical speech'

hȩ̀ad (n.m.) a bird of prey; the form *hȩad* is in B Case (i.e. subject case); see my *The Declensions of Somali Nouns* for the accentual patterns of this case.

hàan a large water vessel made out of fibres of a species of euphorbia called *qábo* (n.f.)

habár (n.f.) an old woman; mother; any female ancestor

habartí = *habár* + *tí*; see under *báhá*

hádal (n.m.) speech; discourse; diction; in the proverb *Rag ná waa* . . . this word is used in the sense 'real speech', i.e. speech which has the good qualities which people value and appreciate

hawaashèe (AYN) to put spices in; cf. *hawàash* (n.m.) spices

híl (Z) to put to shame; cf. *híl* (n.m.) sense of decorum; shame; sense of responsibility

húsul (n.m.) elbow; in the proverb *Doqoní húǰigga* . . . this word is used in the sense of 'crook of the arm'

húsulkày = *húsulka bay*

ᶜí (Z) to shout; to cry; to roar; note that the root of this verb has the alternance *ᶜí* ~ *ᶜíǰ*

ᶜíin (n.m.) a poisonous plant deadly to camels; this is probably the plant the Somali name of which is transcribed in Glover's *Checklist* as *in* and identified as SARCOSTEMMA VIMINALE (R.Br.); as camels can eat many kinds of plants which are too rough for other livestock, the notion of being poisoned by *ᶜíin* symbolizes the dangers which are in store even for people who are very strong

ᶜíǰàa = *ᶜíǰá bàa*

ǰíd (n.m.) flesh; meat; also in metaphoric sense: 'flesh and blood', i.e. kinsmen

kaadsáde (n.m.) a person who takes his time or is cautious; cf. *kaadsá* (SAN) to take one's time; to be cautious

kíʳí 3 sg.m. past indep. form of *kíʳí* (IN) to raise; to lift; note that forms of this tense are often used in proverbs and poetry, and in many contexts describe habitual or everpresent occurrences without any specific time reference

* *qaséy* 3 sg.m. past indep. form of *laasá* (AN) to finish completely; to exhaust; for a note on this tense see under *kíʳí*

maahmàah (Z) to make a proverb; to make a general statement endowed with proverbial wisdom

maahmáah (n.f.) a proverb; a general statement endowed with proverbial wisdom; allusive or allegorical style of speaking

malmȧ́l (n.m.) myrrh; note that myrrh has a very bitter taste and thus is viewed as the antithesis of honey

miró (AN) to graze at night; cf. *mír* (Z) to cause to graze at night

nabád (n.f.) peace; safety

nin aan note that if no pause intervenes this sequence is pronounced *nîm aan*

odȧ́y (n.m.) an old man; an elder; any male ancestor

óod (n.f.) a fence made of thorny branches; any fence; a thorny branch used in building a fence

ᶜodkár (n.m.) a person who is proficient in the art of public oratory; a spokesman; cf. *ᶜód* (n.m.) voice and *kár* (Z) to be able

qaadó (AN) to take for oneself; in the proverb *Méeshaad nín ká qaadánaysó . . .* this verb refers to winning an ally or supporter

qabashadí = *qabásho*+*tí*; see under *bádhí*

qabásho (n.f.) seizing; catching; restraining by force

qabóoji (IN) to cool; to calm; cf. *qábow* (Z) to become cool; to become calm

qalaán (hb.vb.) to be at fault; to be mistaken; cf. *qálad* (Z) to make a mistake; to commit a fault

qolmán (hb.vb.) to be in need; this word, which is now archaic, is sometimes pronounced *qulmán*

qummán (hb.vb.) to be straightforward; to be upright

quuʿáyn (n.f.) strengthening; support; cf. *quuʿèe* (AYN) to strengthen

quuʿáyntí = *quuʿáyn*+*tí*; see under *bádhí*

raaʿdée (AYN) to look for lost livestock or property; cf. *ráaʿdo* (n.f.) a group of people looking for lost livestock or property

rgaʿdée 3 sg.m. past indep.; see under *kíʿí*

rág (n.m.) men; this word is often used in the sense of 'real men', i.e. men who have the good qualities which are expected of men in Somali society, such as courage, intelligence, endurance, self-assurance, prudence, etc.; such an ideal of strength is contrasted with the qualities of weakness tolerated in women and children

sóʿodkíisiu *sóʿodkíisa bíu*

tól (n.m.) agnatic kinship; clanship; for a discussion of this concept see Lewis, *A Pastoral Democracy* . . .

wáa (Z) to fail to find; to fail (to do something); note that the root of this verb has the alternance *waa* ~ *waay* ~ *wáy*

wáa 3 sg.m. past indep.; see under *kíʿí*

waayéel (n.m.) an elder; elders; this is a polite word which is sometimes used in the sense of 'a real elder' or 'real elders', i.e. an elder or elders endowed with all the good characteristics expected of them on account of their mature age and position

wahmahubsáde (n.m.) a person who does not make sure whether something is true or not; cf. *wáh* (n.m.) a thing; things; *ma* (negative indicator) and *hubsó* (SAN) to make sure whether something is true or not; in the proverb *Waʿahmahubsádé beenáalàa* . . . this noun is in A Case (i.e. non-subject case); see note on accentual patterns under *hàad*

wahsíin (n.f.) giving things; help through gifts; cf. *wáh* (n.m.) a thing; things and *sii* (IN) to give

wahsíintí = *wahsíin*+*tí*; see under *bádhí*

waraysó (AYN/SAN) to ask for news or information; cf. *wár* (n.m.) news; information

wgʿdó see under *wàa*

yàab (Z) to be astonished; to be startled; with the prepositional particle *ú*: to fear for

ye a junction form of the conjunction *e*

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