



# STARS, SEASONS AND WEATHER

*in Somali Pastoral Traditions*

Muusa H.I. Galaal



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#### Cover Image:

The Pleiades (*Urur* or *Laxo*, in Somali), an open cluster consisting of approximately 3,000 stars at a distance of 400 light-years (120 parsecs) from Earth in the constellation of Taurus. It is also known as “The Seven Sisters”, or the astronomical designations NGC 1432/35 and M45. By NASA, ESA, AURA/Caltech, Palomar Observatory The science team consists of: D. Soderblom and E. Nelan (STScI), F. Benedict and B. Arthur (U. Texas), and B. Jones (Lick Obs.) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons.

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## FOREWARD

**I**t is a pleasant task for me to introduce the present work of Muusa Galal. To be sure, I have no expert knowledge in the vast field of Somali culture, traditions and folklore. I do, however, possess two modest qualifications for this happy assignment.

First, as Secretary of State for Education in the Somali Democratic Republic, it is part of my official duty to encourage and promote the collection, preservation and study of Somali culture and history. Secondly, I have intimate familiarity with the efforts of Mr Musa Galal in researching and documenting the Somali cultural heritage. In recent months, I had the happy experience of collaborating with him in developing the Somali language for technical, administrative and educational uses.

Mr. Musa Galal is an energetic researcher tirelessly digging into the varied aspects of Somali culture – poetry, folklore, traditional medicine and the vigour and richness of the Somali language. The present work is a product of his long research and experience. I do hope that this book will only be a beginning for the publication of Musa's valuable collections on Somali cultural traditions.

This book will give the foreign reader the opportunity to explore and acquaint himself with the strange and fascinating ideas and beliefs of an African culture so radically different from his own. No less important, the Somali reader will gain a deeper understanding of his own culture and society.

Hassan Ali Mirreh  
Secretary of State for Education  
Somali Democratic Republic  
Mogadishu,  
9th July 1970.



## FOREWARD TO ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT EDITION

**M**usa Galal has distinguished himself as a writer of the Somali traditions and culture and has produced many pamphlets, periodicals and books. His present book is yet another addition to the rare treasure of written records on Somali traditions. In this book, the author has shown that it is possible to write down the most valuable cultural aspects and traditions of our country which have so far been preserved only in the memory of our people. Preservations of traditions and culture in the memory of the scholars cannot be permanent and in fact we have reached the stage when our valuable traditions are fast disappearing from the life of the people. The handicap of writing the rich tradition has all along been the lack of a script for the Somali language. Mr Musa Galal has overcome this difficulty by writing his book in English.

Traditions are one of the basic pillars of any society. The Somali traditions are one major force in the unity of all Somalis, from Obokh (in French Somaliland) to Lammu (in Kenya). Every Somali can identify with the traditions of his fellow kinsmen. These traditions must be preserved for future generations and they must be recorded before technical development causes many of them to be forgotten. This is precisely what Musa has been trying to do in his publications. I hope the Somali graduates who are abroad gaining higher education will on their return respond to the challenge and follow Musa's lead in writing books on Somali traditions and culture (including the rich collection of poetry, folklore, proverbs, material objects, art and other pastoral science) for the benefit of future generations.

The present work, which I hope is the beginning of a series of publications (others by the same are in draft stage), is based on the Somali folk literature on the subjects of Astronomy, Astrology, Meteorology, Geography, Veterinary

Science, Botany, Native Medicine, and political, economic and social life, as well as other useful topics. The study actually represents many years of research, for Musa lived the first twenty years of his life as a pastoralist and a nomad in the interior, and has a great passion for preserving and enriching his traditions and culture. He has shown how unique our traditional ways of life have been. The more one reads the book, the more one appreciates the philosophy and wisdom of our ancestors.

As Director-General of the Ministry of Education at the time of the first release of this book, I would very much like most of the contents to be written in a language suitable for instruction in our schools, so that the young Somali children could have first hand information on the national way of life, to which they could add the modern scientific knowledge which they may acquire later on. I hope that such a synthesis will lead to an enlightened society.

This book is extremely useful not only to the Somali youth as a source of valuable knowledge which will help him to preserve his age-old traditions and culture hand in hand with modern technological development, but also to foreigners who would to study and carry out research into our way of life. I strongly recommend this book to one and all in Somalia for a proper appraisal of the Somali traditions and culture.

Mohamed Aden Shef  
Director-General  
Ministry of Education  
April 1968.

## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

**T**he uniqueness of the Somali language, and the depth and coherence of the Somali folk literature have been recognised ever since the first tentative accounts of them were written down. All the travellers and explorers in the Horn of Africa, both in ancient times and more recently, have testified to the underlying unity of the various Somali clans and of their culture, and realized the affinity between the Somalis and the neighbouring Gallas.

Statements of this kind have always seemed self-evident, and have been made in the past without much in the way of substantiating evidence behind them. Little use has been made of the vast mass of folk-tradition and oral literature, which would have demonstrated the truth of these bold assertions; and the traditions and customs which bind all Somalis together in a single culture have largely gone unrecorded, even to the present day. It is in fact unusually difficult to gain access to this mass of oral traditions, and one of the main problems has been the lack even now, of a national system of orthography. Although many detailed proposals have been made for a Somali orthography by both Somali and foreign linguists, none has yet been adopted by the Government<sup>1</sup>. The problem remains with us, and hinders not only the scholar wishing to produce studies of our cultural heritage, but also the Government itself- since it is difficult to assure the success of development programmes in general, and literacy programmes in particular in the absence of a national script for our language.

Because of this lack of script, and because the idea of writing about the people of Africa is often associated by Africans themselves with colonialists, it has not been at all easy for me to compile this and other books on our society.

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<sup>1</sup> The Revolutionary Government born October 1969, adopted the modified form of Roman Script used in the Somali texts in this book.

But there are always ways round the difficulties, and research into fascinating store of oral tradition must go on in spite of them. I have chosen to write this present book in the Roman Alphabet, which I have modified to suit the phonemic characteristics of the Somali language.

This alphabet, it seems to me, is not only the most practical one in the world today, but also the most widely used and the most international in character. I strongly urge its permanent adoption in Somalia and for the Somali language: through it, Somalia will be with the world and not out of the world.

The present book is a development from an earlier manuscript cyclostyled locally in April 1968, under the title "Terminology and Practice of Somali Weather Lore, Astronomy and Astrology". A copy of this version came to the notice of UNESCO. This present revision is a result of UNESCO's interest in the publication of works on African traditions and cultures.

I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the assistance of many people in the compilation of this work, both during the collection of the traditional material contained in it and during the editing of the material. The names are too many to enumerate, but special mention should be made of the following:

The Director-General of UNESCO, M. Rene Mahan, and the Heads of the Department of Culture, especially Mr. Seydow and Mr Bammate.

Mr. James Herbert of the British Council, who recast the original manuscript into its present form.

The Secretary of State for Education in the Somali Democratic Republic at the time of the revision of the Book: Dr. Hassan Ali Mirreh; and Mr. Mohamed Adan Sheff, Director-General of the same Ministry at the of the publication of the original version: for contributing their excellent forewords, and also for the continuous encouragement they gave me during the research and compilation of the materials.

Dr. B.W Andresjewski and Professor I.M. Lewis, both of London University, and to Mr. John Drysdale of London, for advice and encouragement.

The Secretary-General of O.A.U., Mr Diallo Telli, for his encouragement.

Mr. John W. Johnson and Mr. Michael G. Walsh of the U.S.A. for their assistance in the translation of the Somali poetry in this and in the arrangement of the original draft.

Mr. Felix K. Knauth, Mr. John Fanselow, Miss Bertha Beachy, Mr. Jay Mauer and Mr James C. Shirley, all from the U.S.A., for valuable help in the

production of the original draft.

Finally I should like to express my sincere thanks to the countless number of Somali poets and specialists who were kind enough to allow me to record from them the treasure of Somali oral tradition and literature which form the basis of the analysis given in this work.

They include:

Caamir Ducaale Cilmi of Burco, H. Maxamed Axmed Liibaan of Ceelbuur, Maxamed X. Xuseen, Sheeko-Xariir of Dhagaxbuur; X. Cabdullaahi Jaloose of N.F.D.; Xaashi Saalax-Mas yar of Balli-dhiig, Maxamed Cali Jimcaale of Warshiikh, Sh Cisman Garorre also of the same, Maxamed Sh. Cabdalla of Xuddur, X. Maxamed Cawl Ileeye of Marqaanweyne, X. Xasan Deyl Cali also of Marqaanweyne, Inspector Yusuuf Galool of Hargeysa, Guure-Danaakil of Hargeysa, Sh. Yusuf Cabdi of ? X Maxamed Aadan, of ? Cabdi-semed Faarax-Affey of Qabriddaharre, Sh. Muxumed-Yare of Gebiiley, Maxamed Cali Raan of Oodweyne, Suldaan Maqtal Daahir of Dhagaxbuur, Cabdi Ciise Faarax of Balli-Dhiig, Maqtal Raffle of Wardheer, Cali Maxamed-Duddumo-Gale of Muqdishu, Yuusuf Daahir of Wajeer, Suldaan Cali Xirsi of Wajeer, Heebaa Nuur of Jigjiga, Neygaag Samatar Furre of Hargeysa. Sh. Jaamac Ciise of Buuhoodle, Yaasin Cismaan Keenadiid of Hobya, Cumar Xuseen, Cumar Xuseen Gorse-Australia, of Hargeysa. Maxamed Cabdi Xaashi of Laascaanood, X. Cabdi X. Yuusuf of Meeladeen, Jaamac Cali Aw Maxamed of Burco, Saalax Maxamuud Cali of Balli-dhiig, Shaafi-dheere of sagag, X. Cilmi Cabdille of Gaalkacayo, and many others.





## INTRODUCTION

**S**omalis, particularly those who still follow the traditional nomadic life, have a profound interest in, and knowledge of the weather, the stars and planets, and their penetrating effects upon the lives of this people. This is reflected in the language itself, which contains a large number of sayings, riddles and songs which link astronomical phenomena to events in nomadic life with which they are associated. I was myself a camel-herder when I was a boy, and I recall many of these sayings and songs. They have always interested me, and during my life I have collected very many more.

There are for example phrases in the language that closely associate the weather and the well-being of my people: such as the *Dabayl-Caafimaad*, the breeze of health and tranquillity. *Nabad iyo naq-roobaad*, peace and the greenness that follows rain. Some are deeply allusive: *Abaar iyo oodo-lullul*, drought and then the shaking of the thorn-fences. The image here is of drought-stricken nomads who have lost all their livestock, trying to force, their way into the corrals of those more fortunate ones who still have cattle left. A final example illustrates how deeply the life of the people is bound up with weather: *Nin waliba wuxuu qabo Qardho la imandoonee*, all grievances shall eventually be brought to Qardho. This proverb, alliterated in Q, refers to the annual movement of the former Sultanate of Majeerteenia from the coast to the cooler climate of Qardho, both to escape the spring heat and to dispense justice in the courts at Qardho.

There are moreover, countless songs in Somali traditionally sung to girls, to camels or to cattle which link astronomical phenomena, as observed omens,

to years of prosperity or drought, to the deaths of important persons, to wars or storms. This song I remember clearly from my youth:

Xaydho-dayihii  
Kuu xiddiginjirey,  
Xareed baridiyo,  
Xays inoo sheeg

(MY BEAUTIFUL CAMELS)

*The reader of the Xaydho<sup>1</sup>,  
Who is also the expert on stars,  
Announces a long-lasting supply of rainwater,  
An unexpected season of heavy rain.*

The herder shares the problems of his cattle: both will suffer with drought, and prosper with rain,

Haddaan ururkiyo,  
Afaggaal riday  
Mugga eeddaa,  
Ilaah bayska leh,  
Anna orodkay,  
Waa intii hore.

*My lovely cow, now you can see that URUR  
And AFAGGAAL have set,  
And still there is no sign of the GU rains,  
I have laboured hard to keep you well,  
So that you may live through the harsh JILAAL,*

---

<sup>1</sup> The fat that covers the stomach of the goats. This fat was used in the past by the Somalis for telling the future. It was removed from the goat and held to the light. Inductions were then made—from looking at the inside of the fat—about the weather, wars, rain, etc.

*Be witness, then, it is the will of Allah,  
And not my neglect of you.*

(HEES LO'AAD or cattle-song)<sup>2</sup>

The setting of the Pleiades at twilight should have coincided with the onset of the spring rains; the setting of the AFAGGAAL group of stars (see page 83) should have coincided with the end of the rains.

Particularly severe droughts seem to occur in Somalia every eight years. The singer sings of this, with parched lips, to his lovely girl:

Beydaney Berdaale gudh  
Bullaalena gaabi orodkii  
Anna biifihii dhigay,  
Xaggaan biyo kaagaa doonaa

*Oh, my lovely Beydan,  
The well Berdale is dry,  
And my horse Bullaale is old and weary  
How can I then fetch water for your thirst?*

(A traditional HEES CAYAAREED)

Knowledge of the stars and of the weather is part of every child's upbringing.

<sup>2</sup> The crucial distinction between the different forms of Somali poetry is in the number of syllables in each line. The following rough guide may be found useful:

HALAANHAL:	normally 12 syllables (oldest metre)	}	classical metres
GABAY:	normally 14 to 16 syllables)		
GEERAAR:	normally 7 syllables)		
JIIFTO:	normally 7 syllables)		
HEELLO:	normally 10 syllables		
HEES-XOOLAAD:	normally 4 to 5 syllables		
HEES-CAYAAREED:	normally from 6 to 11 syllables (dance-song)		
HEES-CAANOOD:	normally from 6 to 9 syllables (milk-shaking song)		
HEES-MOOYE:	normally 6 syllable (grinding-song)		
HEES-CARRUUREED:	normally 8 syllables (Song to children).		

In this dance song, alliterated by D, a group of girls challenge the boys to show their knowledge:

Waar xiddigaha maxaa dira?  
Maxaa deris iyo walaalo ah?  
Maxaa dan-u-heshiisyo ah?  
Maxaanse daabano kala gelin?

*Which constellations are most ancient?  
And which are both neighbours and cousins?  
Which live in peace with each other?  
And which are strangers?*

The boys answer:

Naa xiddigaha waxaa dira  
Dib-qalloocyadaa dira,  
Waxaa deris iyo walaalo ah,  
Afaggaalla dushaas mara,  
Waxaa dan u heshiisyo ah,  
Laxahaa dan u heshiisyo ah,  
Waxaanse daabaano kala gelin  
Lixda dameerajooheen iyo,  
Inta uu dayuxu maro.

*The oldest constellation is Scorpio.  
The stars that are both neighbours and cousins  
Are those of AFAGGAAL.  
The Pleiades live in peace together,  
And the stars that are strangers to each other  
Are the six stars of DAMEERAJOOGHEEN<sup>3</sup>  
And those that lie on the moon's path.*

(a traditional HEES-CAYAAREED)

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3 For Dameerajooheen, see page 95.

Weather is all-important for the nomadic people of this country: if rain fails at the expected season, there is drought and suffering, heavy losses amongst the herds, and consequent poverty, leading often to war. It is therefore hardly surprising that they should have become so closely acquainted with the paths of the moon and the stars, and should have come to rely so heavily on the interpretations and predictions traditionally drawn from “Stations of the moon”. There is indeed a deep commitment of the Somali nomad to signs and portents, based upon long tradition, and not subject to orthodox Islamic beliefs. There is a proverb of the Raxanweyn people of the South that foolish people who spend all their time reading the stars would do better to ponder on the divine will:

Malluug moogow  
Maruubsatadaada firsooy.

And I recall a poem recited by an Arab Sheikh, scorning the Somalis for their over-dependence on astronomy and the astrological deductions made from it:

Hadday laxo dhacaan,  
Laxona dhalaan,  
Seermaweydona saaceedba la waayo  
Hor Soomaali-qalinley siday yeelidoontaa?

*If sheep start lambing  
At the setting of the Pleiades,  
But the life-giving SEERMAWEYDO rain failed,  
What would the foolish Somalis do then?*

The Somali however would defend his attitude by the following argument: There are three kinds of teaching, and each are valid. There is firstly the CILMI-WADAAD, the teaching of the religious leader, the Sheikh; secondly, THE CILMI-HABREED, the teaching of the “Bush-Nurse”; and thirdly, the CILMI-CURRAAF, the teaching of the “Bush-life Expert” or weather-lore-expert. If we refuse to

obey the Sheikh, our souls will be damned. And if we refuse to obey the Bush-Nurse, our children will die. And if we refuse to listen to the teachings of the Bush-Life expert, poverty and war will follow.

The persistence of the purely Somali tradition is illustrated in the story of the four rich brothers, and the quarrel between them as to which was properly the leader. One was a famous Sheikh, learned in history and in religious matters. One was a warrior, who claimed the leadership since he was the protector of the family. The third was a man of great charm and generosity, who pacified the family's enemies and rewarded its friends. The fourth, expert in reading the stars and the weather, in predicting the proper seasons for all activities and in healing sickness with herbal recipes, argued that his work was the most vital for the well-being of the family. They could not agree. In trying to find someone to arbitrate between their rival claims, they journeyed far, until they came to a village which had a terrifying problem. The inhabitants were menaced by four fierce lions, and in order to pacify them, tied up each night one man from the village as a sacrifice. When the four brothers presented their arguments to the assembled villagers, they found the latter far too deeply concerned with the nightly lion problem to care much who was the most worthy of the four. Instead they suggested that the brothers, since they had not suffered from the lion before, should provide the victim for the night and leave the villagers in peace. It was clearly the will of Allah that had sent them to the village for this purpose. So, when night fell, the four brothers were thrust helpless towards the lions, and left to fend for themselves. The fourth brother, told the lions that they would get their food, but that it would take a little time to choose the victim. He then invited the warrior, so proud of his martial skills and his courage, to defend the four of them, and earn his right to leadership. But the warrior was helpless. He then invited the learned Sheikh to muzzle them with the Qur'an, or to turn them into stone; but the Sheikh replied: *Alamtraa libaaxu leeyahayoo, Soo dhaaf*, the only thing in the Qur'an against lions is Alamtra.....and that is not enough to frighten off the lions. So the fourth brother finally asked the generous one if he would be generous enough to feed the lions; but there was nothing he could do either. Well then, if one of you can help us in this predicament, I must do so, said the fourth brother. Then turning to the lions, he explained that they had decided which of them to offer to the lions, and added that this person had a piece of flesh containing *Johorad*,

sufficient for only one lion, but that the lion who ate it would have eternal life. The lions and the lioness and the two cubs each claimed the right to have the critical bite, and fought wildly amongst themselves for the privilege; and while they were fighting the bush expert told his brothers to spear them. And they all died, mainly from the bites of their own kind. The villagers, drawn to the scene of battle, asked who was responsible for the miraculous event, and were told by the warrior, the Sheikh and the generous giver that their preservation, and the death of the lions were both to the wisdom of the bush expert. Then, said the villagers, he is not only your leader, but ours and the whole world's as well.

In fact, Somali traditional beliefs and practices are a unique compound and do not consistently follow any one dogma or religion. In particular, it has always seemed evident to me that there is a conflict between the pure Islamic culture, which has had a profound influence on the Somali way of life, and a pre-Islamic cultural background, much of which is still expressed in pseudo-religious practises running contrary to those prescribed by Islam. There is, for example, the practice of infibulation, and that other custom by which the bodies of men born on nights when the moon and a star or group of stars were in conjunction were never buried in ground, but in an elevated position above the ground. The raiding of other Muslim communities, and the habit of forcing girls to marry someone by abduction from her own family, are also against the spirit of Islam, but nevertheless traditional amongst Somalis. Traces of pre-Islamic worship are to be found in beliefs associated with NABSI (see page 6) and MALUUG (see page 50); and in the concept of AYAAN, the cycles of prosperity or of evil:

Waqtigay haya ee Jadamiyow,  
Kuma wareersheene .....

*Jadami, my cousin, I am under the evil spell of the cycle,  
Or I would not have pestered you for help*

(Gabay in 'W' by Dhoolla-Yare, Hargeisa)

Waqti in this Gabay means a period or cycle. One can also perhaps see the

same pre-Islamic survival in the personification of CARRAB, the tongue, and of IL, the eye—the two effective organs of human communication:

Carrabkayga seefta ah markaan,  
Cidhib ku naafeeyo  
Hadhow baa dar calafkoodu go'ay  
Loo calaacaliye

*When my sharp tongue cuts your tendon, razor-like  
Then will people lament for you.*

Waa la ileeyey

*He is destroyed by the evil eye*

Ili waa seef

*The eye is as sharp as the sword*

In trying to set down what I have learned of Somali weather lore, I have become aware of many difficulties, and the complexity and uniqueness of the subject is one of them. But more than this, the fact that the beliefs and practices are unwritten, are handed down from generation to generation of scattered groups of nomads, and differ somewhat with each group in the oral exposition of them, makes it extremely difficult to offer a comprehensive and consistent statement of what is generally held. It is moreover no easy task to explain this unwritten “Bush Science” in a manner acceptable both to the culture one writes about and to the modern reader with quite different cultural ideas, and a quite different scientific outlook. And finally I realise that it is one thing to have a grasp of an elusive subject such as this in one’s mind and in one’s tradition, and another thing to be able to explain it lucidly in argument and in writing.

From all this, it will be apparent that I can make no claims to have been comprehensive, not even to have accurately represented the traditions as I have experienced them or been told about them. But this work will, I hope,



stimulate interest in the subject, and be of use to future Somali administrators as well as foreign scholars, as a basis for understanding this very important aspect of Somali life. I shall welcome all comments and helpful criticism.

My sources of information have, for the most part not been the modern books on geography, astronomy, or meteorology, but rather the knowledge and memory of a great number of the chief Somali weather lore experts, who keep the art alive in their memories as a traditional science handed down from generation to generation. I have provided the reader with an extensive list of these experts (see Appendix 10) in the hope that their knowledge may further be tapped to fill in and illuminate this vast and still relatively unexplored subject.

# 1

## THE ROLES OF THE SOMALI WEATHER LORE EXPERT

**E**ach nomadic group has its weather lore expert. He is not necessarily a religious leader, but he is recognised as having a special expertise and his advice is listened to and respected. He is a person who has studied under a traditional teacher, and has inherited the knowledge of that teacher: knowledge of astronomy and folk-lore, of philosophy and astrological predictions. Throughout his life, though he is a normal member of the clan, he will have kept records in his mind of past years, of the movements of cattle and of the seasons. He will be an elder of his group, and at least 40 years old. His expertise is of several kinds, and it will be as well to distinguish between them at the outset.

One preliminary point to be noted is my terminology. I call him “weather lore expert”, because it is the broadest term in English that I can find. But even that is not broad enough, for in one of his functions, he is not concerned with the weather at all, but with augury in the classical sense of the word. He is also a seer. He watches the behaviour of cattle; and he is said to be able to detect the unseen qualities of the land which make for good or bad grazing. These aspects of his work will be mentioned at the end of this section.

In the first place, the weather lore expert is an astronomer, in the sense that he studies the skies, and knows from the experience of years the paths of the more important celestial bodies - including the visible planets, the sun, the moon and a large number of constellations at this latitude. He knows well enough the positions and relative positions of these bodies at given times of the year.

But he is also an interpreter of this knowledge, in matters which affect the life and well-being of his people. The interpretations are in part based upon the experience of past years and of older teachers: that is, based upon records of events which, are normally associated with the astronomical phenomena. In a sense, such interpretations are pragmatic and have a basis in observed fact. At the other extreme they would be rather astrological in nature. For example the eclipse of the moon is said to foretell the death of a renowned leader; while the eclipse of the sun is a sign of a prosperous year. If a child is born on certain nights when the moon is in conjunction with certain stars, he is thought to be evil; but if he is born on certain other nights, he is considered virtuous. The two extremes might roughly correspond to the following: "Red sky at night the shepherd's delight" on the one hand, and on the other the belief that a robin on one's window, portends a death in the house. The one might be called experiential, the other superstitions, but probably no two people would agree on the position between the two extremes of any given example.

The interpretations given to observed astronomical phenomena, and the predictions based upon them, are entirely dependent upon an accurate record of the months and periods of the year. One of the functions of the weather lore expert is consequently as a keeper of calendrical data of various sorts. He is in fact a human calendar; collating the observations which he makes of sky and weather with the oral record of past years to define the start and end of specific seasons, and to calculate the exact days on which certain events, holy days and so on should occur. This is more complicated than it sounds, since one year does not exist as an independent stretch of time, but as part of a cycle of years. And in making his calculations and predictions, he must refer not only to previous years, but to previous cycles. Much of this lore, of which he is the keeper and transmitter, is memorised in the form of riddles and proverbs, and can thus be readily called to mind.

Afartamaad iyo af-dhallaantoona dhareer lagama waayo

*The sky on the 40th day after DAB-SHID is like the month of an infant: it is often wet.*

This riddle comes from the Banadir District. From Yuusuf Daahir comes the following:

Marka labada xiddigoodo Hal-Toddobaddo u horreeyaa godka  
galaan, xooluuna labada jeeni e horay biyaa kula jiraan.

*By the time the first two stars of the Great Bear sink below the horizon, the animals should also be sinking their front legs into rain water.*

The astronomical calculation refers to the normal timing of the primary GU rains; if there is no rain by that time, the GU season will be late, and the expert will advise the nomads to take the necessary actions to ensure survival.

Among the many outstanding skills of the great Sayid Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan must be counted that of weather lore. The Sayid foresaw his death on the Sibi Plateau four years before his final retreat from the British, in his headquarters in the Nugaal Valley. He expressed this in a beautiful GABAY, full of the difficult terminology of astronomy, astrology and weather lore, which I quote here as a good example of the complex data on which the yearly cycles are based.

Sidii saxal nujuumeed markaan, saxaha eegaayey,  
Ma saxaabka duuliyo cirkaan, saro u weydaartay,  
Ma samuuladkaan sida ayaxa, samada uugaanshay.  
Ma sagaashankiiyo go'aan, sagal ku geylaamay,  
Dirirkoo sideed maray miyaan, badh u siyaadeeyey  
Sammadiyo kulaylkii miyaa, Saxansax loo dhaafshey,  
Sakal roob daruuraa salliban, saymo curanaaya,  
Sarka-dhabanka fidkii markay, samadu ceegaagtay,  
Goortay suxuurtii ahayd, sarab miyaa fuulay,

Kolkii uu sawaaxiga gudgude, dunida saameelay,  
Onkodka iyo sawdkii markay, samadu xiimaysey,  
Hillaacii saraaraa ka baxay, Sibi miyuu muujey.

*When I gaze into the sky for the SAXAL star and ponder on its  
interpretations,  
Have I not myself been lifted above the clouds?  
And have I not, during the SAMUULAD, overcrowded the heavens  
with my thoughts, like a swarm of locusts?  
On the ninetieth day after DAB-SHID, has the sky not shown the sign  
of SAGAL?  
And when DIRIR reached its eighth stage, was there not an addition  
of one-half?  
And has the SAXANSAXO not blown?  
This is the time when the rain prepares to fall, when the sky is crowded  
with clouds, when falling rain resembles the tails of a horse –  
When, in early evening, the sound of falling rain stirs life in all  
creatures, and the sky is very active.  
Have I not seen this celestial activity realized by Divine will?  
But When the sounds of the GUDGUDE rains filled the countryside  
And when the noises of the heavy thunderstorms filled the sky —  
At that time, did the lightning not give me visions of the distant Sibi  
Plateau?*

Many weather lorists recognize at least five different kinds of cycles that they must keep account of to make weather prediction possible.

The three year cycle is the one upon which the Somali lunar calendar is adjusted to mark the leap year. (See the later section of this study on the calculation of the lunar months). The second is an eight year cycle (SIDDEED-GUURO), supposed never to fail. If a drought occurs at a certain time, it will occur eight years later. It is the same for prosperous events as well as bad ones - droughts, prosperous rainfalls, floods, wars, deaths of important personalities, shifts of political power, and the occurrence of serious epidemics? The third is a thirty-year cycle. If drought is on this cycle, for example, the one at the end of the cycle will be less severe than the one at the beginning. In the case

of prosperity, there will likewise be a lessening of its intensity. This particular cycle is not as likely to occur as the others. The fourth is one of fifty years. This is thought never to fail. The last cycle is of eighty years and this too is considered to repeat itself precisely with each cycle, whether in terms of drought or prosperity, disease or political upheavals. Quite clearly, the keeping of records for such long cycles as those impose a considerable strain on the weather lore expert who must be familiar with them.

His study of the weather also implies that he is able to, and is expected to, give practical advice to his nomadic group in much the same way as a modern meteorologist does to a different kind of audience. He understands the winds, and their changes, and how they bring rain and where the rain will fall. Other practical advice also is expected of him. He knows the land, and what happens to it in each season. He knows which areas are best for grazing at any given time of the year; and he knows which types of grass are best for the animals, and the kinds of soil on which they will best grow.

Golis iyo Gol-dhaxameed  
Iyo Garbadiir geelu kuma dhalo

*Golis and Gol-dhaxameed are poor places to graze milking camels: they lack both grazing and NURO<sup>1</sup>*

He knows which wells give the boat water for the herds. It is his job to watch for wells that contain XANFALEY, or poison.<sup>2</sup> His records tell him that certain wells at certain times of the year or in certain years, will contain XANFALEY, and he knows which flocks or herds were lost because of it. He tastes the water of suspect wells, or takes one goat to drink there. Unless he is certain that the water is good, he will advise his kinsmen not to use the well.

These multiple responsibilities of the weather lore expert still do not exhaust the list of skills which are expected of him. He is at home also with the invisible spirits and powers which operate on the lives of his people and their cattle, either for good or for ill. He watches for every sign or symbol

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<sup>1</sup> See Page 9.

<sup>2</sup> Somali pastoral veterinary doctors think the poison is caused by roots of certain plants making their way down into the water table. The most dangerous plant is called CADAY. This, interestingly enough, is the tree whose roots and branches are used throughout Somalia as the best toothbrushes. CADAY is found in salty or gypsaceous country.

which might affect his kinsmen or their animals, whether it is rain on a certain night of the year portending war, or dust-storms driven by djins which might carry the children away. His powers as a seer or soothsayer are considerable. Three important aspects of this may be discussed here.

In the first place, he is an expert in the behaviour of animals, and makes deductions from the behaviour he observes, particularly when they return to the wells after a period of dry grazing. He knows that, among his NUGUL (weak animals), the ADHI (sheep and goats) can do without water for up to seven days and the GAMMAAN (donkeys, horses and mules), and cattle must be watered every two days, or every four days at the maximum. This is the meaning of the following HEES LO'AAD, or cattle song:

Afar inu qaday,  
oo afku engegey  
Kii, hor joogiyo  
Habaaskuba weri

*That (this cow) was away from water four (days)  
Is confirmed by the herder,  
By the greedy look (on the cow's face)  
And by the dust on its hide.*

So that when the cattle do return to the wells after a long period, they will be thirsty. But the seer closely observes their manner of drinking, and makes prognostications from it. If they rush noisily to the water and drink greedily, the year is reckoned to be a bad one. If, on the other hand, they are relaxed, and drink at leisure, the year is reckoned to be a good one. Also, if they break out of the throne-fence corral during the night to graze, it is a sign of a bad year; but if they stay inside the corral until late in the morning, this portends a good year. The seer observes his kinsmen, as well as their animals. In good years, one may have few guests, even if there is a drought. In bad years, there will be many guests to feed, though there may be plenty of food and water in the district.

Oddly enough, there are songs in Somali which ascribe to animals themselves the powers of the seer and the weather lore expert. This GABAY by

Cali-Dhuux, recorded from Jamac Daahir of Buuhoodle, ascribes these skills to the CAWL (a species of Gazelle):

Markuu Cawlku Cawlaa orgayn, waa u cibaaroone,  
Cisaday ku uuraysatiyo, caadadu garane,  
Cashaday calool gelahayaan, canugga beertiisa,  
Carcurradiyo lawyada intuu, ku cuskadu saaro,  
Cirridiyo cagaar miday ku dhalan, caadka kor u eegye,  
Hadba cirirka loo nuuriyuu, ku cimro-qaataaye.

*When the male CAWL wishes to mate with his females, he first makes  
astronomical calculations  
He also knows their menstrual periods and the techniques of mating  
The day he wishes to cause propagation and offsprings, He, placing first his  
front knees on to the female's back Judges whether the young will be born in  
sun<sup>3</sup> or in green from signs in the heavens.*

His decision whether to continue mating or to descend is in accordance with his celestial inductions.

A second aspect of the “dividing” power of the weather lore expert concerns the invisible quality or influence known as NABSI. This is a probably pre-Islamic concept of “destiny” or fate, which superimposes a sort of regularity and order upon the capricious events under which people live. The natural order of life, in the Somali belief, is somewhat akin to the medieval European idea of the wheel of fortune: ups will inevitably be followed by downs. If this year is good, the next will be bad; a year of drought will be followed by one of abundance. But this natural order may be counteracted, or even reversed by other influence stemming from astrological or meteorological phenomena. Unexpected rains or draught will be unnatural, in that they upset the natural sequence. When this happens, the power NABSI will restore the natural order, or at least lessen the disorder: it may render the unnatural rains ineffective, or cause the grazing to lose its usual nourishment, or cause disease to break out among the cattle. It may temper the success of the mighty:

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3 A metaphor for drought.



Nabsaa.-idinka soo ridey xaqaad,  
nugux ka siiseene,

*Nabsi made you give up the power over others which you had seized*

(Sayid Moxamed against the Isaaq)

Nabsi ha qaadin

*Take care that NABSI does not cause your downfall*

if may even be invoked as a curse:

Nabsi baan kugu xawiley

*May NABSI work your ruin*

NABSI is then a levelling power which keeps life in its natural course:

Arligiyo ayaantiyo waqtigu,  
aamminaad ma lehe.

*The benevolence of the land, the day and natural life cannot be taken for granted for ever.*

There is also a similar power in nature known as NAQSI, from a Cushitic root meaning to return or to withdraw. It is the corrector of abuse, a “divine” act of retribution or punishment. Unlike NABSI, however, the effects of NAQSI can be warded off by good behaviour, hospitality and worship of God. It gives rise to the sort of sentiment of which the following GABAY is an example:

Sado waa la luudaamiyaa,  
Laganse haynwaaye  
Ninkii laase yidhi baa hambada,  
Lagala laabtaaye;

*Power is a treasure that should be  
Gaurded wisely and prudently.  
Anyone who uses it against people  
unjustly will soon lose it*

(Qaaje-Guroy of Burao)

The weather lore expert, as a seer, detects the influence of NABSI or NAQSI in the events of life; and tries to estimate the effects of their influence in relation to other astrological and meteorological influences, and to that equally potent force of the seven days of the week. (See page 13.)

The third belief the weather expert considers in his role of seer is one similar to NABSI, NURO, which simply means “grazing nourishment”, is believed by some to reside in certain areas only at certain times. NURO is thought to be a life-giving, intangible substance which animals can sense, but which people cannot. The Weather expert knows of its existence only through observation of his animals. If, for instance, the land is very green, if there is plenty of water, if every other sign is favourable, but the animals are still unhealthy and undernourished or give little milk, the expert knows there is no NURO in the area. Conversely, if drought occurs and pasturage is sparse, but the animals are healthy, then it is present. Acting in his role as record keeper, the weather expert observes and mentally notes the place and time of its occurrence. Moreover, lost animals are believed always to travel in the direction of NURO; for they, unlike human beings, know where it can be found. By extrapolation, the expert can then predict where it will be on certain days and years.

Some places are known by other people to possess NURO permanently. These are given appropriate names to distinguish them from places which either never have NURO or have it only in certain years. The following are known traditionally as such permanent sources of NURO:

GURYO-SAMO, “the good home”  
ABAAR-CAANO-LEH, “the drought with milk”  
GEEL CAYILIYE, “the fatter camels”  
TAWLANEYAAL, “the good places”

DARAR-WEYNE, “the place of udders big with milk”  
 XOOR-BOODHLE, “the dusty place of milk”  
 TUUR-CAANOOD, “the hill of milk”  
 CAANO-WEYNE, “the place of abundant milk”  
 CANDHO-QOYS, “the place of moist udders”  
 WANAAGSAN, “the good place”  
 MARQAAN-WEYNE, “the place where the nipples of animals are  
 shut” (to save the calves from overfeeding)  
 DIBBIRO-WEYNE, “the place of satisfying grazing”  
 WANG-LA-WEYN, “the place of plenty”  
 JAAR-CAD, “the place where jars are white with milk”  
 NEGAADI WEYNE “the permanent place”  
 DHIIN SOOR, “the feed of cattle”

The following places are known to possess no NURO, as their names suggest:

LAMA DEGO, “the cursed place”  
 GARBO-DIIR, “the place that affects the camel’s humps”  
 QANDHADHLEY, “the dryer”  
 ADHI-GABA, “the betrayer of flocks”  
 GEEL-WEYTA “the weakener of camels”  
 AWR BOOGAYS, “the camel diseaser”  
 FAARSO, “the well with dirty water”  
 LAASO DAWACO, “the wells of foxes”  
 DHUUSO-MA-REEB, “the well of flatulence”  
 CEEL-XUME, “the bad well”

A very important fact to be aware of is that Somalis believe NURO to reside in the Haud-grazing lands within the political boundaries of Ethiopia—on certain years. (These are Saturday and Sunday years. I will discuss these later on in this study). Though the Haud is largely waterless and barren during the JILAAL, the principal dry season, the nourishing NURO is believed to be there on these years. NURO is in Northern Somalia on Monday and Tuesday years. If the year is to be either a Saturday or Sunday year, the Northern Somalis go to the Haud to seek NURO, which will counterbalance the badness for that year.

Somalia's claim to the Haud is, then, a mystic one as well as a political one.

Along with NABSI, NAQSI and NURO, one may find yet another belief that falls within the province of the weather expert. This is called BARAAKIIN. Like NURO, it is an abstract substance, a sort of medicine - a cure-all and a health preserver - that is said to exist in certain grazing plants abundant more in some areas than in others. The meat and milk of camels and goats act as the best transmitters of BARAAKIIN to people. Nomads living in towns go to the bush to recuperate after illness, believing that the fresh meat and milk produced there contains BARAAKIIN. Unlike NURO, which may or may not be in a certain place at any given time, BARAAKIIN is a permanent: where it is found, it will stay. Over the years, experts have isolated the plants in which it is believed to reside, and significantly enough, these plants are particularly abundant in the red sandy soil of the Haud. One such is the tree called CAWTAL-GASIIR, and of this it is said that the ram owes its sexual powers to the nourishment it gets from the CAWTAL-GASIIR. It is also said that the meat and milk of animals that feed on the tree are medicinal, since the secrets of Allah are hidden in it. Animals recognise the tree, but men cannot. The richness of the Haud in BARAAKIIN-bearing plants helps to explain the very deep attachment that Somalis have for this area of what is now Ethiopia.

The reader of this study will have noticed that the interpretations given here to the astronomical and terrestrial phenomena by the weather lore expert are related mainly to the pastoral nomadic life, since traditionally - and even today - it is the most important aspect of Somali life. However, a section at the end of the study considers the interpretations given to these phenomena by the agricultural communities, mainly in the south of the country, whose interest in them is of a different kind.



## 2

# THE BASIC DATA OF THE SOMALI ASTROLOGIST

**A**ccording to Somali tradition, there are six main calendrical datum points, six periods of the year, which are particularly critical for astronomical and meteorological observations, and for the vital predictions which are based upon them. This section will describe each of these in turn, since they lie at the very centre of the astrologist's craft.

### A. THE TAAWIL

TAAWIL is an Arabic (Islamic) concept which attributes to each day of the week an innate quality of goodness or evil. In very general terms, there is a regular alternation of good and evil days, in keeping with the idea of natural order described on page 12. The character of these days is not in fact invariable, since astronomical or meteorological phenomena are said to have an influence on them; but any undue alteration in the character of the days will be expected to be evened out by the operation of NABSI, and the basic rhythm re-established.

The seven days of the week fall into pairs, with Friday standing alone as the exception. The pairs are alternately 'good' or 'evil'; and within each pair,

one day is potentially wholly good or evil, while the second day is potentially wholly good or evil. In other words, the second day of each pair, while sharing the basic character of the first, leans towards neutrality. Sunday and Thursday are the days of potential evil, while Saturday and Wednesday, their ‘twins’ in the pair, are days of lesser evil, of ‘lighter’ evil. Normally the ‘lighter’ days have a much smaller potentiality for evil than the Sunday and Thursday, but events attribute to the heavens on the weather might cause the greater evil to be transferred to them - in which case their ‘evil’ twins would be expected to lose something of their potentiality for evil. It will thus be seen that the inherent character of the days (TAAWIL), the observed phenomena of the heavens, and NABSI the equaliser, all interact with each other; and it is part of the astrologist’s craft to assess this complicated interaction. What has been said of the ‘evil’ days applies equally to the ‘good’ days: potential full goodness lies with Monday: its ‘lighter’ pair is Tuesday, which may on occasions receive the full postponed goodness of Monday.

The characteristics of the different days of the week are often described in traditional riddles or proverbs. The following is about Wednesday and Thursday (ARBACA and KHAMIIS):

Arbaca doobirley adhiga duufkiisa mooyiye,  
 Khamiistii darrayd sow dab weyn laga kulaalee,  
 Waxay dalan-kacdoba sow Jimcaha daba-ka naaxdeen

*The evils of the Wednesday NAWRIISH are revealed  
 in the spread of foot and mouth disease among the animals. But remember  
 you must prepare to struggle against the Thursday NAWRIISH also if you are  
 to survive. And remember too that a Thursday year may extend even into parts  
 of a Friday year.*

The last sentence of this riddle implies that a drought is not over as soon as it rains: the effects of the drought are much longer, and it may take animals as much as two more months to regain their health and weight. A further example describes graphically the conditions associated with a Sunday NAWRIISH (AXAD):

Axadi waa habar, habarina ceel darki kama tagto

*The Sunday year is like a wretched old woman: such woman does not venture far from the watering places.*

The advice intended to a family and their livestock is to leave the rocky lands of the North, and journey to the red sand of the Haud in the South, where NURO is to be found to nourish the herds.

Friday is unlike the other days of the week in that it has no twin. It is the day known to the Somalis as “the redeemer”. It redeems the land and the people from the hardships caused by Thursday:

Khamiis dhiro qallalav sow jimcuhu soo qoyaanshee,  
Wiilashii goofallanjirey sow hablaa quud-darreeyeen

*The plants shrivelled by the drought of the Thursday year may be revived by the rains of the Friday year, and the youths who thirsted will regain their strength and go wooing.*

This saying calls for some explanation. It is not only that each day of the week has a specific character (e.g. a Thursday-day is an evil day); but also that a New Year which starts on a Thursday is a Thursday-year, and will potentially bear the evil quality of its name-day. Since Friday is the “redeemer”, a Friday-year will be expected to have the ‘goodness’ of its name-day. It will be remembered that, during the discussion of NURO, in Saturday or Sunday years the nomads tended to take their flocks into the Haud to seek NURO, in the belief that this elixir would mitigate the severity of the evil year. Naturally, the day of the New Year is not the sole factor determining the character of the year, but it is an important one to which the astrologer pays great attention. It will be discussed in greater detail under the title DAB-SHID on page 19.

I have talked of ‘good’ and ‘evil’ as characteristics of days and years, and it will be as well at this point to comment on the meaning of these words in the context of astrology and weather lore. There is undoubtedly a moral connotation to these words, similar to that used in a more general context. But the specific connotation is in terms of good or ill fortune for the people



and their cattle. By evil one means primarily drought, for drought is said to be the source of all evil. Good fortune is equated with prosperity, and rain is the source with the two basic interpretations of drought and rain. Drought, ABAAR, is said to be accompanied by war, COL; and rain is said to be accompanied by peace, NABAD.

Col iyo Abaar. Nabad iyo Caano

*War and Drought, Peace and Milk,*

Milk of course being synonymous with rain - representing a further extension of the connotation into the physical products of these abstract qualities. The explanations are clear enough to anyone who has known the country in which these people live. Inter-clan warfare may well result from two different families, REERS, arriving at a well at the same time during a drought. The connotations of drought are further extended to include CUDUR, disease; and of rain to include CAAFIMAAD, health and RAXO, happiness. And also, since it is only in times of plenty that people have leisure and spirit and strength for such things, associations with marriage, education, and religious worship. Thus the general concepts of 'good' and 'evil' are primarily interpreted in terms of the facts of the nomadic life, where everything depends on the arrival of rain at the appointed times.

Certain traditions have also begun as a result of TAAWIL. No journeys are ever begun on the third of any month, or on any Sunday, or last Wednesday of any month. Animals are never watered on Saturdays by some traditionalists. The Somali AQAL (nomadic dwelling) is always pitched on Sundays for newlyweds.

It is easy to see the many direct and indirect references to NABSI in the Somali oral literature. Compare the following excerpts:

An excerpt from a GABAY by Maxamed-Cawar, alliterated by the sound B:

Belaayada adduun weli ma iman, bohoradeediye,  
Buuray ku joogta intay, reero baabbi'ine  
Hadba qolada focor haysataa, loo beyimiyaaye,  
Badhaadho iyo caydh baysu jira, laba bidhaamoode,

Banka xoolo lagu foofiyaan, biid ka soo hoyane,  
Waxa lagu bilkeydahaa raggii, bohosha Faaf yiile,  
Waa baadi geerida Isaaq, noo bundubayayaaye  
Wedkii Nebiyadeennii bulaa, noo badheedh-yimiye.

*The evils of the world have not yet all been experienced by man - the  
worst may yet come:  
These evils are on top of some adjacent mountains, from which they  
descend to make destruction. They often direct their destructive powers to  
people of affluence.  
Often we see a rich man and a poor man living together  
As everyone knows, herds and flocks released for grazing in the morning  
sometimes do not return in the evening  
The same thing happened to those men who came against one another  
at the ditches of Faaf.  
It is unjust that the Isaaq look down on us (for our folly in fighting at  
Faaf)  
The same death, which took away the good prophets of Allah Simply  
visited our clan.*

The following is an excerpt from a HEELLO<sup>1</sup> by Cabdullaahi Qarshi  
alliterated by the sound D

Nabsiga aan daahinow  
Be aan dakaaminow  
Dawga loo tilmaaminow,  
Ee aan cidi diraynninow  
Degdegga aan aqoonninow,  
Marmarna aan daahinow  
Diinka ka dheerayninow  
Dayuuraduhu aanay gaadhinow,  
Taniyo waagii dura,  
Dalkayaga naga maqnaa  
Duqiyyow waa sidee,

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<sup>1</sup> The full text of this HEELLO is given in Appendix I. The application of NABSI to political events is interesting.

Xaqayagu ma duudsaa

*Oh Nabsi, who never tires,  
And who is never bored,  
Whom no one directs,  
And whom no one instructs,  
Who never hurried,  
And who yet is sometimes punctual,  
Who can be as slow as a tortoise,  
Yet whom airplanes can never catch,  
As long as the days of Dura<sup>2</sup>  
Our lands have not been our own -  
Oh Elder, why do you not exert your powers?  
Must our rights be denied us?*

And finally a GABAY by an anonymous poet, alliterated by the sound B:

Adduun waa hadh labadiisa gelin, waana la hubaaye,  
Hal galgalatay waxa looga dhigay, yaan ninnaw hadhine,  
Maruunbaa sabool la harqiyaa, hodonna deegaaye.

*Chances for success in life are like the shade of a tree (which changes position under the tree secretly and unobtrusively).  
The reason why there should be illusions (in life) is that no one can inherit happiness; for this reason the vision of happiness is like the udder<sup>3</sup> of a milk-camel, viewed from below.  
Often we see a poor man becoming rich, and rich man becoming impoverished.*

## B. DAB-SHID

DAB-SHID, or the “night of fire” is the night of the Somali traditional New Year. It is also called NAWRIISH; and KALA GUUR, and it always occurs on one

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<sup>2</sup> The days of Dura: from time immemorial.

<sup>3</sup> The milk camel's udder is wide and impressive when viewed from underneath. In spite of appearance, however, some of these camels cannot give even a pint of milk.

of the first four nights of August, usually the fourth. Many historians, both Somali and Foreign, believe that it probably dates from the Persian occupation of Zeila on August 4th, over a thousand years ago. It ranks second only in importance to the TAAWIL as a datum for meteorological observations, and astrological deductions are made from them. It not only marks the Somali New Year, but also provides a basis for calculations for the whole year. (The records of the calendar, the timing of the rains, the changes in the positions of the sun, moon and winds, as well as the timing of the birth of calves, are all calculated from the occurrence of DAB-SHID.)

The night of DAB-SHID is one of the three chief “weather regularizers” in the lore of the Somali weather experts. Since their occurrence can be exactly determined by the expert, they serve as reference points for most of his calculations. The three are:

- (a) The DAB-SHID, always occurring on the end of the season called SAMALOH (SAMALAH) (BURCO and JIGJIGA terminology), which is that of the heavy XAGAA rain in the Benadir and Waamo coasts (near Kismaanyo), the season of the heavy KARAN rains in the Jigjiga area, and is the dry cloudy (CADAR) period during the XAGAA in the BURCO, QARDHO, QABRIDDAHARRE, BAYDHABO, and WAJEER regions.
- (b) The DAMBASAMO, which always occurs on the 15<sup>th</sup> night of the month marking the middle of the DAYR (secondary rainy season). Sometimes it occurs on the 14<sup>th</sup>, but then it would portend a bad year—GOD-WAA, “the moon out of position”. (See page 43).
- (c) TODDOB, which occurs on the 200th night from DAB-SHID. It coincides with the meeting of the Moon with URUR (Pleiades) constellation on this night. The night of the TODDOB usually occurs in the calendar month known as KALIL.

Moreover, the astrological omens for the whole year are derived from the behaviour of the weather on the night of DAB-SHID, and on the two nights

that precede and follow it. Three things are watched for on that night:

- (a) whether there is rain or not
- (b) if there is no rain, whether it is cloudy or not
- (c) if it is not cloudy, whether there is a wind or not, and if there is, how strong it is.

The best omen is the absence of the rain on that night and those adjacent to it. Rain that night is the portent of war, the severity of which would be determined by the heaviness of the rain. It is said that the heavier the rain, the worse and bloodier the war will be. This is indicated by the following maxims:

Kala-Guur habeynkii wansiixaa gob way tidhi leh

*Rain on the night of Kala-Guur foretells the moaning of a noble clan.*

Nawriish onkodey waa lixdanjir ooyey. Lixdan jirna  
wax jidhkiisa ku dhacay kama ooyo e col iyo abaar  
baa ka ooohiya.

*The sound of thundering drops of rain on the night of NAWRIISH is like the sound of tears from a sixty year old man. Such a man never weeps because of the hurts of his own body, but because of the killing of his men and the effects of drought.*

Oddly enough, however, a completely different interpretation of rain on the night of NAWRIISH is given by people living in the Southern region of the country, around the town of Afgoi. It is taken to portend a prosperous year, and is associated with the ritual celebration of ISTUNG, in which men beat each other with sticks.

In the absence of rain on that night, attention is focused on whether or not the sky is overcast. Opinion in the North is generally that it should be cloudy, for that signifies permanent clouds overhead all year, and Sinha clouds are the-source of rain, this is a sign of a good year. *caad ama waa xab ama waa mandheer*. “Clouds are either pre-birth liquids or the after-birth itself.” (i.e. Clouds are a sign of rain, whether it has already poured or will pour later).

In the absence of both rain and clouds, what is the next desirable thing? Should there be winds or not? The answer is that there should be winds, the stronger the better. As hot and uncomfortable as these August, South-west monsoon winds are, they are thought better than the cold, dry, flu-carrying winds of winter.

It should be noted here that weather lorists in the MUDUG region of Somalia recognise two different kinds of drought. One type is said to go with DAB-SHID: that is, it is derived from a calendrical datum. The other kind of drought is a result of astronomical phenomena, and is therefore ALLA-KEEN, “brought by Allah”. The phenomena in question are either abnormalities in the path of the Moon in relation to certain stars at a particular time, or a more general condition known as GOD-WAA, the “homeless moon”, during years in which the Moon is observed to be out of its customary or expected path.

NAWRIISH is celebrated in slightly different ways in various regions of Somalia. The most common practice amongst all Somalis, and perhaps also amongst the Gallas who are related to them, is the making of bonfire. This is made sometimes inside the settlement, and sometimes just outside it in the yard. In my own region, water is also sprinkled about in the settlement, by hand, by the head of the family. This person, who could be either a man or a woman, reads a Somali prayer “*Shuushow bax*”, meaning Oh Evil, depart; And long tendrils of a creepers are hung downwards from the roof outside the huts. Then the children are allowed to play, in imitation of the adults, jumping over the fire and singing the same prayer, “*Shuushow Bax*”.

Some Somalis, however, tend to turn the NAWRIISH celebration into a sacred ritual, and call in a religious leader to sprinkle CASHAR on the people, the animals and throughout the settlement, reading verses of the Holy Quraan as they do so. CASHAR is water containing the black ink of verses of the Quraan, washed out of a metal basin in which they were inscribed. In addition to being sprinkled in the way described, this inky water is also sometimes given to patients as a remedy against sickness; and as such, the treatment forms part of traditional Somali theological medicine.

## C. THE MONTH OF SABBUUX

The third important datum in the weather lore calculations is the occurrence

of the Somali month of SABBUX (in Arabic, RAJAB). It is always hoped that the second day of SABBUX will fall on a Friday. If so, then all men can count on a prosperous year, and may slaughter animals for food at any time.

If, however, the third day of SABBUX is a Friday, instead of the second, then it is believed that the GU rains will be delayed for ten or twenty days.

Sabbux Jimce laba ka weydaa wankaa qalad leh

*If the second of SABBUX does not fall on Friday  
One's fattened ram must be slaughtered.*

Ram meat will last about ten days—three days for the meat, and seven days for the fat, the ghee, and the dry provisions bought from the village for the price of the ram's skin.

If the fourth day of this month falls on a Friday, the rain may be delayed for an entire month. In this case, the nomad is obliged to slaughter his male burden camel: (AWRKAA-QALAD or HAYIN-QALAD)—the meat of this will last throughout the expected month of drought. If, finally, Friday does not occur until the fifth, sixth or seventh day of SABBUX, even worse calamities are in store. The nomads await DIIN IYO DAMEER QALAD, meaning the time when the forbidden meat of the tortoise and the donkey will have to be eaten to ensure survival in the long period of drought expected. It is therefore always hoped that the month of SABBUX should begin on a Thursday, so that the crucial second day should be on a Friday<sup>4</sup>

Since the calculation of Somali Lunar Months is not quite the same as those of the Arabic, it may be helpful to give a comparative table of names.

#### SOMALI LUNAR MONTHS

#### ARABIC LUNAR MONTHS

Dago	Muxaram	(30 days)
Bil-dhurro-hore	Safar	(29 days)
Bil-dhurro-dambe	Rabiic al Awal	(30 days)
Rajal-hore	Rabiic al Thaani	(29 days)
Rajal-dhexe	Jamaad al Awal	(30 days)

<sup>4</sup> For beliefs about SABBUX in the Somali agricultural regions, see page 74.

Rajal-Dambe	Jamaad al Thaani	(29 days)
Sabbuux	Rajab	(30 days)
Waabberiis	Shaebaan	(29 days)
Soon	Ramadaan	(30 days)
Soon-fur	Shawaal	(29 days)
Sidataal	Dulqaeda	(30 days)
Arrafo	Dul-xija	(29 days)

The number of days ascribed to the Arabic lunar months is not invariable. A month generally assumed to be a *Kabiisha* month (i.e. 30 days) can have only 29 days. The Somali lunar month is either a *Qundhalad* month (i.e. 30 days) or a *Toomman* month (29 days). In Somali weather predicting, the incidence of Toomman on two of the months is taken as a sign of a bad year. These are the seventh and eighth months, SABBUX and WAABBERIIS. In years when SABBUX is a Toomman month, there will not only be drought but also widespread disease amongst camels. This month is in fact called “the month of camels”, when young female goats are slaughtered as a sacrifice to the herds on the 9th day of the month. WAABBERIIS likewise portends an evil year if it has only 29 days; but when it has 30 days, the omens of prosperity are more powerful than any other astronomical or calendrical phenomena, and will outweigh all other portents for evil, even in combination.

#### D. THE MONTH OF WAABBERIIS

The Somali lunar month of WAABBERIIS sometimes has 30 days, and sometimes only 29. Important predictions about the seasons to follow are based upon whether the month has an even number of days (i.e. 30) or an odd number (29). Good fortune comes with the even number (QUN-DHALAD).

Xiddig habarti waa Waabberiis, waxay ku bilaabataaba;  
ama weysa gala bay ku odhen waytabaaq dhigaya ama  
Weelka culo nay ku odhan iyo wac iyo aabi.

*The mother of astronomy is the lunar month of Waabberiis; it either signifies death to the calf in order to save the cow and the child for whom it is*



*milked, or else it is the signal for the cleaning of the milk-vessels to prepare for a coming abundance of milk.*

If the month ends at the 29th day, milk will be scarce; if on the 30th day, there will be plenty. And milk, as always, is a symbol of prosperity. WAABBERIIS is also a basis for agricultural predictions in the predominantly agricultural regions of the country.

## **E. THE NIGHT OF DAMBASAMO**

A fifth calendrical datum in the Somali weather lore system is the behaviour of the weather on the night of DAMBASAMO—the night in the middle of autumn when the rams are let loose with the ewes for mating. It is traditionally believed that rain should fall on this night if the year is to be a prosperous one.

Dambasamo wacaaalkiis la waayaa cir Waakaday leh

*No rain on the night of Dambasamo means no rain for a whole year.*

Rain, the reader will recall, is the primary symbol of prosperity and good: the mating must be timed so that the lambs are born in a season of abundance. Lambs conceived on the night of DAMBASAMO will be born about 150 days later, which should be in the middle of the spring rains. Since DAMBASAMO is calculated to be 150 days from the night of DAB-SHID, it therefore lies exactly midway between DAB-SHID and the middle of the spring rains.

## **F. THE HABEYNTIRIS**

This sixth item in our list is not itself a calendrical datum, but the whole business of keeping records of the months and seasons of the Somali calendar. An accurate keeping of the HABEYNTIRIS should be understood as one of the major functions of the pastoral-expert. In this chapter, some of the main data involved in this recording of months and seasons have been noted. There remains however the large and complex subject of the GOD, the Somali system of astrology; and it is necessary that his system should be explained before discussing the HABEYNTIRIS in greater detail.

# 3

## THE CELESTIAL BODIES

A major branch of study in the Somali weather lore system is the XIDDIGIS, the study of the skies and, the celestial bodies visible in them at different times. There are four important elements in the field of study, all in practice capable of inter-relation and interaction. Firstly the GOD, the study of the 28 positions of the moon in relation to certain stars and planets, secondly, the XIDDIGO, the study of the stars and constellations themselves; and thirdly, the relationship of these first two to the planets. There is also a fourth element involved in the study and interpretation of general weather signs in the sky, not deduced from any specific element in the first three, and unconnected with any particular star or planet.

There is in this study of the XIDDIGIS ample evidence of the double interest of star-gazers at different epochs all over the world: that of astronomy pure and simple—the knowledge of where certain bodies are or should be at certain times, the knowledge of their paths and conjunctions; and the predictions based upon this observable data, which are essentially astrological in character. To know the stars and planets is one thing; to relate the stars and planets to human life is another, but they have in traditional lore all over

the world proved thoroughly inter-dependent. And in traditional Somali lore, there has proved to be no incompatibility between astronomy and astrology.

## A. SIGNS IN THE SKY

As in so many other pastoral traditions, the Somali tradition associates certain types of weather with the varying effects of the setting or rising sun. One such effect is known as SAGAL, a certain red dawn, characterised by black lines radiating from the place of the sun-rise. These lines are said to be the paths of the rising sun on previous days. It is also said to occur as a red-layer of thin cloud in the east at dawn. SAGAL is seen always just before and during the spring and autumn rains, and therefore is held to be harbinger of rain

Naa cirku sagal hadduu ku xamrado  
Xugunka Eebahay mooyiye,  
Balliyada Xareed geli.....

(MY LOVELY GIRL)

*If the sky shows Sagal,  
The ponds will surely be full of rain water,  
Unless the will of Allah prevents it.*

(excerpt from Hees-Cayaareed: Trad.)

A more general statement, paralleling the benefits expected from the SAGAL with those of other special occasion is the following:

Sannad waliba kiisii horuu, sanacsanaayaaye,  
Saadaasha roob waxay waddaa, sagal kaliileede,  
Dhirtuna waxay ka suno, qaadataa sananka Nawriishe,  
Guna Samuulad kama baaqsadiyo Sermaweydada e.

*Each new year is guided by the previous one;  
certain heavenly signs help to predict the time of SAGAL,*

*showing that rain will follow;  
All plants receive their influence from the weather on  
the night of DAB-SHID  
And the GU rains never lag behind SAMUULAD and  
SEERMAWEYDO.*

(Excerpt from GABAY by Salaan-Carrabay)

An opposite phenomena is that known as MOOD—a series of dark lines radiating from the place where the sun will set, and seen only during seasons of extremely dry weather. It is the “footprint of the setting sun”.

Mayayga cir iyo  
Moodda galabeed  
Meel uga ekeey

[MY LOVELY CAMEL]

*Your colour is like that of the sky in the morning rain,  
And that of the MOOD of the afternoon.*

Rather different from the deductions based upon the appearance of the rising and setting sun, are those which derive from the set of the wind. These are, however, clearly experiential in the sense that they are based upon what often happens - just as SAGAL and MOOD are. For example, the experience of the nomadic people has taught that if a strong wind blows from the west for a long time, rain would fall. And this is reflected in the traditional saying from the Burao district:

Haddii toddoba cashoo is xigta dabayshu galbeed ka  
Dhicilahayd, dunidoo dhammi jannay wada noqon lahayd.

*If the wind should blow from the west for seven days consecutively, the  
land would become a Paradise.*

And likewise this:

Hoohad galabsaday, caano galabsaday,

*A south-easterly breeze blowing till late in the afternoon means Milk of the livestock lasting from morning till late afternoon.*

The implication of this is that the wind blowing for so long from this quarter brings rain, and therefore plenty (i.e. milk). The Somalis, so heavily dependent on their knowledge of the weather for survival have brought their interpretation of it to a fine art. And yet even they are prepared to be deceived by the signs:

Barqin keenkeene,  
Bariiso wanaaje,  
Casar baab'iye

[ON BEGUILING AND BAFFLING SKY!]

*[You try to trick me] gathering clouds in the early morning  
And offering tempting signs of rain in the late morning  
But in the afternoon, the clouds withdrew!  
[You cannot mislead me]*

(trad. MAAHMAAH from Shaafi-Dheere of Sagag)

To return from the winds to the sky, it is interesting to notice the traditions associated with AWRKA-CIRKA, the “sky-camel”. This is a black image in the sky at night in the region of WADAAMO-XOORO or WAADAAMO-LUGUD (the Southern Cross) caused by the fact that there are no important stars in that area; and in the blackness is said to appear the shape of a huge male camel on dark nights in the months of April and May. Somali folk-lore has a legend about this sky-camel.<sup>1</sup> It says that the camel was once, long ago, positioned in the north, above the mountains of CIR-SHIIDA, in the Warsangeli district of Erigavo. One

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<sup>1</sup> There are several other legends about the “Milk Way” in the Somali oral literature.

year there was a severe drought, and the people of the district attacked the great sky-camel and tried to kill it for meat. First they built a huge platform on top of the highest mountain of the CIR-SHIDA, tall enough for the people standing on it to reach up to the tail of the sky-camel and cut it off. The camel felt the pain and raced off to the south - where it is still to be seen. The Milky Way is said to be the path taken by the sky-camel on its hurried journey southwards.

In the month before the start of the GU rains, the sky-camel is seen with its head down towards the east. Then it is said to be drinking water — *Wuu afku-rubadlaynayaa*. In April and May, its image is upright again, and can be seen clearly between eight and twelve o'clock at night, apparently satisfied, and chewing the cud heartily. In June and July, its head appears to be turned upwards towards the zenith, its back falling towards the west, apparently cropping the tops of the trees. In fact, the three different periods of the grazing year in this region of Africa are closely pictured by the onset of the GU rains, all the livestock are busy drinking the spring waters. Towards the middle of the rains, when there is plenty of green grass and water, the animals have fed so well that they spend long periods contentedly sitting and chewing. And when the rains are finished, and the green grass parches, the camels begin cropping from the trees.

It is an interesting thought that the region of Somalia in which the sky-camel is said to have originated has a great wealth of as yet uninvestigated archeological interest. The Maakhir coast, including Erigavo and the Warsangeli country, is the centre of an area in which numerous ruined cities, whose history is still unknown, have been discovered; and there are also said to be cave-paintings and rock-carvings still to be examined. The Somali legend of the sky-camel, and men's first ventures into the sky, may be indicative of a great ancient civilisation, which built observatories on the mountain ranges, and studied the heavens.

Awrka-cir nin daya mooyiye  
 Nin dayoo ka taga mooyiye  
 Nin dabrada dad laga waa...

*Man could only gaze at the sky-camel,*

*Gaze and turn away.  
None could conquer it or make it tame.*

There is certainly need for a thorough archeological investigation of the Maakhir region.

And finally we may note here the XIDDIGTA DABADA LEH, the star with a tail. This comet is thought to appear over Somalia in a fairly well-defined, though not clearly understood, cycle of years. It appeared in March 1970, during the preparation of this book, at about 4.30 in the morning, with its tail towards the west. It has previously-been seen by the author in 1940, during the East African campaign and coincided with the expulsion of the Italians from Somalia; and in 1956 during the “Suez war”, when the British, French and Israelis invaded Egypt. This gives a cycle of approximately fifteen years, and the timing of the recent appearance of the comet - during persistent clashes between Arabs and Israelis in the Middle East - confirms that of previous appearances: that it is usually seen during a period of strife. This at least is the traditional interpretation given to it in Somali astrology; it is considered to be an omen of war and bloodshed, and Somalis are frightened of it.

It is also believed that any child born while the comet is visible in the sky will have special virtue, and will inspire the same awe in the others as the child born in the \_\_\_\_ BAYAXOW (Station No. 16)<sup>2</sup>. From the weather point of view, the XIDDIG-DABO-LEY is a portent of a plentiful year to come. The saying goes *Xurbo Caano ku jirta*—the stick for churning milk in a milk-vessel—and where there is plenty of milk, there is plenty of everything. However, in the Mudug region, the opposite belief is held, since the worst drought ever experienced in that region occurred in the year of a comet’s appearance. Oddly enough, the phrase XIDDIG-DABO-LEY is used adjectivally to describe a person or event seldom witnessed, although frequently discussed.

## **B. THE STARS AND CONSTELLATIONS**

The XIDDIGO are important for the Somali nomads in a number of ways. They help them to orientate themselves in the bush at night; they are used as a basis for record-keeping, so that the nomads can calculate the seasons and dates of the year which are important for them; and above all, they play a part

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<sup>2</sup> See Page 45

in certain Muslim religious rites. But in addition to these, some of the XIDDIGO are also significant in terms of weather prediction, and inferences are drawn from their position in the heavens.

The following is a short list of the more important stars and constellations, considered here independently of their position relative to the Moon:

(a) XIDDIGA QIBLADDA (or JAAH). This is the North Star, or the Prayer Star of the Muslim faith: Somalis can always look in the direction of this star in order to orientate themselves towards Mecca for their five daily prayers. Unfortunately for the Somalis of the South, the Prayer Star cannot be seen from the Benaadir region, or the part of the country lying between the two rivers.

(b) HAL TODDOBAADDO, the seven-in-one. This is the Great Bear, or Big Dipper. The constellation is very important in predicting rain or the absence of rain. If there is no rain by the time HAL TODDOBAADDO begins to sink below the horizon, the Somali knows that the GU will be delayed that year<sup>3</sup>. He must then take the necessary action to ensure the survival of himself and his stock.

(c) WADAAMO-XOORO or WADAAMO-LUGUD, literally the throwing down of the water skins. This is the Southern Cross, and again it forms the basis of weather predictions:

Waar lo'da, wadaama lugudkeedii dhacay ama jir laa ama Jilaal  
laaye ceelka ka soo bax.

*[Dear friend], since the WADAAMO-XOORO constellation is sinking, our herds  
must soon all be killed, either by flood or by prolonged drought: so save your  
own life as best you can.*

This was the advice of a star-watcher, who at the sinking of the southern Cross foresaw calamity either way: floods from a sudden onset of the GU rains, or drought from its complete failure.

(d) DIRIR DHAWR (or XIMIR). This is the star Arcturus, the “Watcher of DIRIR (Spica)”. XIMIR is said to be responsible for the astronomical misfortune of GOD-WAA—the Moon out of its proper path in relation to other stars in the

<sup>3</sup> c.f. the ODHAAH from Yuusuf Daahir quoted on page 3.



heavens. Some experts believe that the star XIMIR sometimes leaves its proper position, and as a result the Moon also goes astray. XIMIR is usually identified with DIRIR-DHAR, but the identification is not certain.

(e) AWRKA-CIRKA, the sky-camel. This “black patch” in the sky in the region of the Southern Cross has already been discussed on page 28.

(f) JIITIN-CIRIR (or JID CIRIR). Literally the place where the devil dragged his mother—the Somali term for the Milky Way. The legend which explains this odd title is narrated on page 48. A further belief based upon the appearance of the Milky Way during the month of SABBUX will be found on page 73.

### C. THE MOON

The new moon is considered by the Somali expert to have a significant influence upon the weather. There are four aspects of the new moon’s appearance which have to be considered.

Firstly, the day on which the new moon falls is important because of its potentiality for good or evil. It is commonly accepted that the last Wednesday of each lunar month is an evil day, and the new moon of each month is the basis of the calculations about it when this last Wednesday will occur. The appearance of the new moon, moreover, is the determining factor in the calculations of the beginning of the fast in the month of Ramadan. It will also be recalled that the day on which the month of SABBUX falls is very important in predicting the character of the year to follow, and this again depends on the occurrence of the new moon.

But it is not only the date on which the new moon occurs that has significance to the Somali: the manner of its appearance is also important, whether it is tilted to the North or to the South, or whether it is erect in the sky. A new moon tilted towards the North implies rainfall and therefore prosperity in the North of the country. If it is tilted towards the South, the southern areas of the country will benefit. But if it inclines neither way, but stands erect, then this is generally understood to mean that you should not travel northwards or southwards, but stay where you are.

The third factor to be considered in studying the appearance of the new moon is whether, in its 28 positions or stations, it precedes or follows or closely accompanies the stars or constellations proper to each station on each day of the month. As an illustration of this, we may examine the case of the Moon in

the station DIRIR (Spica). If the Moon in the Dirir station rises from the east at 7 o'clock in the evening, it is said that there will soon be war. If however, the moon and DIRIR meet at about 11 o'clock at night and do not part company until around 3 in the morning, then there should follow a period of prosperity, marked by heavy rains - although accompanied also by disease in the land. Best of all is when the Moon and DIRIR meet about two hours after midnight and set together when the sun rises: this foretells a year of health and prosperity. There is a common saying which lays down the optimum conjunctions of the Moon and DIRIR:

Guga ama sannadka wanaagsani waa ka dirirku dayaxa habeynka  
gelinka horoo dhan ka dambeeyo, habeynka gelinkiisa  
dambena dayaxa iyo dirirku sinmaan

*The year of the successful rains is that in which Dirir is slightly behind the  
Moon in the early part of the night, but in which the two become parallel  
in the sky throughout the second half of the night.*

#### D. THE GOD: THE STATIONS OF THE MOON

The GOD, a fundamental concept in Somali astrology and weather prediction, and studied by the nomadic experts with great care and thoroughness, consists of the twenty eight positions or "stations" along the path of the Moon, from the beginning to the end of the lunar month. A detailed preliminary study of these stations - particularly as they appear to, and are known to, GOD experts of the Southern Somali regions, is found in Enrico Cerulli's *le Slazione lunare nelle nozioni astronomica dei Somali e dei Danakil*.<sup>4</sup> Cerulli, in common with other foreign authors, believed the Somali GOD system to be of Arab origin, but I am convinced that it is of at least equal antiquity, and that evidence for this can be found in the Somali language and in traditional literature.

Somali, one of the Cushitic group of Hamito-Semitic or "Erythraic" languages, is unlikely to be younger than Arabic, and probably evolved its own distinctive character at about the same time as Arabic, if not indeed earlier<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Published in Somalia: Scritti vari editi ed inediti, Vol.I. Rome: Institute Poligrafico dello Stato, 1957, pp. 211-218.

<sup>5</sup> c.f. M.A. Bryan: The Distribution of the Semitic and Cushitic languages in Africa, O.U.P. 1947, for the International African Institute; and also A.N. Tucker: Erythraic Elements and Patternings in the African Language

Certainly an oral literature has existed in this region from the earliest times in which the language was spoken by the pastoral nomads. Their lives and well-being were then, as now, very closely bound up with the rains, and in the prediction of rain, and the necessary calculations of the seasons, riddles and songs were an essential feature. A knowledge of the GOD, and of all the other phenomena thought to influence the weather and tribal life, was probably already in existence, and already memorialised in oral literature, by the time of Queen Arraweelo (Arwel), who is said to have lived between 1500 and 200 years ago: that is, before the arrival of Islam in this area. One of the poems which she is credited with having composed, an alliterated GABAY, illustrates not only her own legendary cruelty—she is said to have castrated all the men to destroy their male pride and make them slavishly obedient to her will—but also the fact that even at that time, Somalis were pastoralists, with their camel-herds and their water problems:

Maantana far bay maydhla'  
e hay fadhiyo geelu....

*One of my fingers has yet to be bathed,  
Therefore the camels must not yet be watered*

This excerpt suggests that the Somali language was developed then as now, and that the literary forms which are recognised today were already established.

Somalia can be divided into seven distinct “weather districts”<sup>6</sup> It often happens that the names used to describe each of the 28 stations of the GOD differ from district to district<sup>7</sup>, and moreover the exact identification of the station in the sky, and even the inferences to be drawn from any specific station, are liable to variation in different regions, and in the views of different traditional experts.

In my own description of the stations, and their characteristics and influences, I shall use the terminology of the Burco district, except where otherwise stated; but there is no reason why a different terminology should

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Review, Un. of Sierra Leone, 1967.

6 See Appendix 6 for a map of the weather districts.

7 Appendix 7A gives a comparative chart showing the separate sets of names.

not have been used. For example, during my investigations of the Somali weather traditions, I came across an old book in Arabic, in the possession of an informant, Sheikh Isman Hassan-Garorre of Eel-Buur, in the Benaadir Region. This book, which he had inherited from his grandfather was said to be about 100 years old. It contained a chapter on the GOD system, with a list of names of the GODS in Arabic. I include this list in Appendix 7, set against the Somali names of Burco, Hargeisa and Qabriddaharre regions, and those provided for me by an Egyptian scholar, Dr. Abdul-Mun'm Abdul-Halim, of the Egyptian Cultural Centre in Mogadishu, taken from a booklet on the *Taariikh al falak 'anil' Arab*—History of Arab Astronomy, published in Cairo in 1963. The lists set against each other in this way show a number of significant variations, and in some cases confusions. It was therefore necessary, in the body of this text, to choose one set of variations, and I have chosen the Burco terminology and characteristics, since these are most familiar to me. For each of the 28 stations, I have attempted to give the meanings (sometimes multiple) of the Somali word, the location of the station in the heavens as observed by Somali experts in this region, and so far as possible, its correspondence to the stars and constellations recognized by Western, or in some cases, by an international astronomers<sup>8</sup>. I have also noted, where appropriate, the purported influence of the Moon in this.

#### STATION NO. 1: GODAN (OR FARAACI).

In relation to shape, GODAN suggests “curved” or “stooped”. In the relation to land formation, it means “low”, or “hollow” or “depressed”. The Moon is positioned in relation to three stars, of which the main one is SHARTAN (Ar.) in the constellation Aries.

Its influence upon weather is a favourable one. If the new moon of the lunar month of DAYDO (in the GU spring season) begins with this station, then the ensuing rains will be heavy and beneficial.

Godan buu ku bishee meel godan oo dhan ka durug

*The [GU] rain began with the Godan; so stay away from low-lying patches*

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<sup>8</sup> The Western names of the stars and constellations were mainly obtained through examination of the star charts in Maurice Brackbill's *Events with the Stars*, Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1945, p.42 with astra-guide charts.

*of land.*

That is, make your camp on a hill, or else it will be flooded. Normally the beginning of the GU falls in the season DAYDO DIRIR which should be the 15th of the lunar month corresponding to the end of March in the Gregorian Calendar. This lunar month begins either with the station GODAN, or with the following one, LISTAN.

In the astrology of marriage, GODAN is unfavourable, since any girl born on the night of this station will be unmarriageable.

Naag godan dhalatay ama gaajo la godnayd ama cudur

meaning that a woman born under this station will be stooped either with hunger or with continuing sickness. The station therefore acts as an omen of poverty and sickness.

## STATION NO.2: LISTAN

The verb LIS means to milk, or to cause some liquid to flow. LISTAN implies “being milked”, and the Moon in this station is held to be a cause of heavy rainfall, and a consequent abundance of milk from the stock. It is also said to cause intense sunshine, immediately following the rain, which dries up both it and the milk. However, the GU rain beginning with LISTAN is said to be good, because even the dryness caused by the ensuing hot weather is a healthy dryness, and good for the stock.

Men and women born on the night of LISTAN are said to have excessively strong sexual appetites - a trait which can only be moderated by encouraging the individual to become very religious. Somalis often take a child born under LISTAN to be brought up by a Sheikh or WADAAD (a religious man) in the attempt to counteract this tendency of his birth (CUNSUR-GUURIS). If this is not done, the individual, when he grows up will be an unwelcome guest in anyone’s house, for the host or hostess (as the case may be) will be worried and suspicious about the guest’s intentions towards one or other of them. The spouse of a LISTAN is always said to be jealous.

## STATION NO.3: URUR (OR LAXO OR LIXO)

The first term means a group meeting or rally. LAXO is sheep. LIXO means “the

six”, referring to the Seven Sisters or Pleiades, of which the Somalis recognise only six, in the constellation Taurus. This is the station in which the Moon is in conjunction with the Pleiades.

When the Pleiades set just before dawn in winter, a heavy wind known as DUF is said to blow. But URUR is also important as an indicator of the night of DAMBASAMO; when the Moon is in this station on the 15th of the lunar month marking the middle of the DAYR season, the night of DAMBASAMO occurs.

A child born on an URUR night is destined to have plenty of sheep, and his luck lies with these animals. The fortunes of the sheep themselves are closely linked with this station. Since the goat is bracketed with sheep in Somali (ADHI) and is valued at approximately half a sheep, the statistic influence also extends to goats.

#### STATION NO.4: CADAAD

CADAAD is the oppressor, the causer of hardship. This station has two other alternative names: LAX-MAR — the ram mating with the ewe, and GALGAAL — the delayer. It is believed that the father or the mother of a child born under this station, and sometimes both, will not produce any more children; the CADAAD Child will be their last.

#### STATION NO.5: AGAALLI-WARANLEY (OR AGAALLI-CAS)

The connotation of AGAALLI is “being near herds of camels”: that is, a man destined to own many camels, CAS means “red” or “reddish”, and probably refers to the colour of the star Bellatrix in the constellation Orion, which is in conjunction with the Moon in this station. But there are varied opinions about this, and some authorities take the whole cluster of stars in the constellation as the identifying conjunction. When the Moon is in this station after a period of excessive rains and flooding, it is desired that the downpours should come to an end. The Station pertains to weaning rather than birth.

Ma Agaalli buu agloolay? Ma Naafuu agguugey?  
Ma uur deeruu ku jiidjiidey?

*Has the sky been weaned in the GOD of Agaalli?*

*Did it show signs of rain in the Naafo?<sup>9</sup>  
And was it covered in thin cloud layers, like the layer of fat on the  
gazelle's stomach?*

In terms of astrological influences, this station, like GARBO (No. 15) is associated with warriors. A male child born under AGAALLI-CAS is destined to be great fighter, and may even be an assassin.

#### STATION NO.6: AGAALLI-CAANOOD

This station also is associated with the owning of camels, but additionally it carries the connotation of “bright hope for milk in abundance”. The other term under which this station is known is AGAALLI-CAD, the second item CAD meaning “white” is a synonym for camel’s milk. Clearly this is a station of good fortune and prosperity: anyone born on this night will become rich, and his wealth (XOOLU—livestock) will ensure him rich nourishment from the milk of his camels. The night of AGAALLI-CAANOOD occurs at the conjunction of the Moon with Sirius in the constellation Canis Major.

#### STATION NO.7: AFAGGAAL

AF means “mouth” and GAAL is an archaic form of the word GEEL, “camels”. Hence, the “mouth of camels”, or “fortunate for camels”. The stars associated with the Moon in this station are Castor and Pollux in the constellation Gemini, and Gombiza and Procyon in Canis Minor. It is believed that when these stars set just before dawn, a strong wind will blow in Somali lands.

AFAGGAAL is of all nights the most favoured for conception—whether of children, of calves or of ideas. It also signifies rain and the prosperity which comes from rain. Yet there are some Somali astrologers who believe that AFAGGAAL may be malign in its influence. The four stars associated with the Moon in this station are in the form of an irregular elongated trapezoid. The normal eclipse passes between the middle two stars. But it is said that once, about 150 to 200 years ago, the Moon passed through the two stars on the right side of the group, facing west, and that at this time there occurred the worst and latest epidemic (possibly typhoid) ever to have struck in this region, killing two-thirds of the population of Somalia. The fortunes of the camel-

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9 Naafo: See Stations 8 and 9.

herds are closely linked with this station.

### STATION NO.8 NAAF-CADDE

Literally this compound means “white cripple”. Possibly the epithet refers to the appearance of the star in conjunction with the Moon in this station: the small (therefore crippled) white star Praesepe—which is actually a small cluster in the constellation Cancer.

This station, together with No.9 offers hope of rain, provided that the condition given in the riddle on page 34 is fulfilled—that the rains, heavy before AGAALLI, ceased under that station.

NAAF-CADDE is considered to be favourable for wealth; and also those born under it will avoid sickness:

Tolkaa Tar u dhalo, naftaadana Naaf u dhalo

*For the sake of your clan, be born under Tar but for the sake of your  
own future, be born in the night of Naaf.*

But it is also said by the less optimistic that a person born under NAAF-CADDE will have to wait until his hair is grey before he acquires real wealth; in his youth he will have to put up with small property.

### STATION NO.9: NAAF-MADDOBE.

This is the “black cripple”, so called because of the Moon’s proximity to a black starless patch near the previous station. It is close to the star RASALAS (Ar.) in the constellation Leo Major. Once again, this station is favourable to the acquisition of wealth, except that a man born under it will be very rich only while his hair is black - while he is still young. Old age will see him drift back into a reduced wealth.

### STATION NO.10: TAR.

TAR suggests “propagation”, “increase”, “growth in number”. It is commonly associated with the Moon’s conjunction with four stars: one of which is certainly Regulus, and another possibly AL GEBHA (Ar.) in Leo Major.

It is believed in some regions of Somalia that a prolonged conjunction of



CIR-JIIDH (the planet Jupiter) with this and the following station (MAJIN) foretells a long period of rainfall, and consequent prosperity. This in fact was the result, to my own knowledge in 1968.

In terms of the size of one's clan, this is a most important station, for a man born under it will leave a multitude of prosperous descendants. In the days before Islam came to Somalia, a TAR man was never buried in the ground when he died, for it was believed that the clan would shrink in numbers with his death as rapidly as he had enlarged it during his life. Instead, his grave was made on the upper branches of a tall tree. But with the coming of Islam, this custom was modified, and now tree-burials are seldom encountered. In certain areas, however, a relic of the early practice is still found: the body of the TAR-born man is placed on a framework of thick sticks built up above the normal Muslim grave, and a normal Islamic burial ceremony is performed. An elder of my own region, Hassan Mursal Ismail Mohamed, is said to have been buried in this fashion: he had enlarged his clan by ten grown sons, more than twenty descendants, and a greatly increased sub-clan: all of them perhaps saved from premature death, and the consequent negation of all his efforts, by this strange burial practice.<sup>10</sup>

#### STATION NO.11: MAJIN

The Somali word means "the shin of a sheep or goat", because the child born under this station is destined to become as poor as an animal's shin. This predestination is bad enough for a male child, but still worse for a girl, and she will take care, throughout her life, to keep her station of birth a secret. The omens for a camel born under MAJIN are also evil.

The stars associated with this station are two marking the thighs of Leo Major, known in Arabic as ZASMA and CHORT.

#### STATION NO.12: KUXDIN AWR

KUXDIN means "wealth", and AWR is a male camel. The suggestion is that a person born under this station will possess a single camel only, and will thus be a poor man. The Moon in this station is in conjunction with the single star ZAVIJAVA (Ar.) in the constellation Virgo.

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<sup>10</sup> The reader will recall the saying quoted under Station 8, referring to TAR.

### STATION NO. 13: KUXDIN-NAASO-GAAL

This, like the previous station, is an omen of poverty. The man born under it will possess only one female camel, and thus be poor. The stars associated with the Moon in this station are four in number, in the constellation Corvus.

### STATION NO. 14: DIRIR

The word DIRIR means “good omen”, and it is the Somali name for the bright star Spica in Virgo. From the point of view of its influence over weather and the seasons, it is the most important of all the 28 stations, since it is believed to govern the stations of the three sub-seasons of the GU season. These three sub-seasons are known, in the BURCO terminology as SEERMAWEYDO, CAWL and DIRIR SAGAARO, and together they make up the most vital part of the Somali climatic year: the period in which fresh life is brought to the country, and in which most of the important social activities of the nomadic people are undertaken. It is the period in which almost all marriages are timed to take place, in which all great inter-clan problems and disagreements are discussed and settled, and in which leisure is found to carry out public duties such as the digging of ponds and wells. People who wish to travel around the country or abroad choose to do so in this season, and it is therefore the time when important news to the people is carried out of the country or into it. If diseases are to be cured, they are cured in this season, and people’s thoughts turn, if they turn at all, towards the holy men, the poor and the needy at this time. Generally, it is a period of relative ease, in which the nomads have a breathing space from the harsh struggles of the rest of the year, and time to devote to the more social and sociable pursuits. The success of the three GU sub-seasons is therefore crucial, and the role played by DIRIR in bringing this about makes it one of the most carefully studied stars in the sky.

SEERMAWEYDO, known as the “king” of the three sub-stations, always begins on either the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> of the lunar month corresponding to the end of the month of April each year. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, the Moon and DIRIR should be in close conjunction, provided that the new moon of this lunar month first appeared in the position of the LISTAN station (No.2). Then the following season, CAWL, will begin on the correct night, the eleventh night of the next lunar month—the one corresponding to the last week of the month of May; and the third sub-season, DIRIR SAGAARO (or DIRIR-SAGAAL AH as it is sometimes called) will open

on the ninth night of the next lunar month, corresponding to the month of June. In a year in which all this happens, it is believed that the GU rains, throughout their whole period, will be successful; moreover, that the whole year will be prosperous. This is because all the heavenly bodies that influence the climate are observed to be in the fertile rain zone—this zone being the totality of the GOD positions that portend rain to the Somali astrologers.

If on the other hand, the lunar month in which SEERMAWEYDO occurs begins with the GODAN station (No.1) instead of the LISTAN station, then the Moon and DIRIR will not be in conjunction until the 14<sup>th</sup> night of the lunar month, and this will make the start of the SEERMAWEYDO one day later than it should be. It will also postpone the start of the CAWL season until the 12<sup>th</sup> night of the following lunar month, and that of the DIRIR-SAGAARO until the 10<sup>th</sup> of the lunar month after that. This displacement of the three subseasons of the GU by one night is held to be of the gravest significance. The Moon of the whole rainy period is then GOD-WAA, out of its correct orbit. As a result, the success of the rains is jeopardised.

Because the Moon's conjunction with DIRIR ought to take place on the 13<sup>th</sup> night of the lunar month, it is normally considered that odd-numbered days are more favourable to people and cattle than even-numbered days.

When DIRIR is in conjunction with the Moon during the GU rains a number of differing meteorological interpretations are possible, and the differences are mainly regional. The weather experts of the Mudug and Majeerteeniya regions believe that when the Moon and DIRIR rise together in the east at the same time of the night, rain will fall on all Somali territories: *Waa roob, bad ka soo da'ay, oo webi galay*:- The Moon and DIRIR rising together from the seas (i.e. in the east) and passing together into the rivers (i.e. the Shabeelle and the Jubba in the west) foretells rain throughout the land. In another saying, the Moon is personified as the old man of a family trekking to better grazing lands. His advice is *Reerku Horseed uma baahna*—the family needs no scouts. Only in times of drought and hardship is it necessary to send out scouting parties to select the best available grazing land; in a good year, such as this one in which the Moon and DIRIR journey together through the night, there will be water and fine grazing everywhere.

The sheep-owning clans of the Burco and Jigjiga regions however prefer to see the Moon rising slightly after DIRIR. The Moon, in the role of an elder

of the clan, advises his son, in a typical proverb, to keep the herds where they are: *Abbe tanba waa dhergayaaye, soo celi*: there is enough grazing here as well, my son, so turn [the flock] back.

A second interpretation is possible, when the Moon is ahead of the DIRIR when they rise and they later meet at the zenith. *Oogaduu ku Dirirshey*—when “they meet at the zenith”, inauspicious conditions are portended. These are described in two ways. Either: *Qudhac Xaab saaran*: “grazing will be found on top of the QUDHAC acacia tree”—to find rain, the nomad will have to move far from the coast, towards the Haud where the Qudhac tree grows. Or: *Awer heeryadii ridey*: “the burden-camel casts off its load”, because it is so tired from its trek to the Haud that it doesn’t even wait to be unloaded. Both versions therefore imply that the year that follows will be hard, though not unendurable. Nomadic clans frequently have to move to the red-sanded Haud, now most administered by Ethiopia. I have also recorded an opinion at variance with the one given above. Apparently the Somalis near the coast prefer it when the Moon and DIRIR rise together at the same time, but the Somalis living in the Haud prefer to see DIRIR with the Moon at its zenith.

DIRIR normally passes to the south of the Moon. However, it sometimes passes the Moon on the north side, and on those occasions there is an evil period to be expected - a period of drought, pictured in the riddle; *Nin gob-ah oo hal dhashay gowracaya*—“a man of noble birth slaughters a milk-camel”. To slaughter a milk-camel is a sign that the times are very hard indeed. In the spring season of this year, 1970, the Moon actually passed to the south of the DIRIR of Daydo on the 16<sup>th</sup> March. This was bad in two ways: it occurred on the 16<sup>th</sup> instead of the 15<sup>th</sup>, and also the Moon passed south of DIRIR. In addition, the year is a Wednesday year. Therefore there must be a severe drought unless NABSI acts.

The astrological implications of the DIRIR station are favourable ones. A boy or girl born under DIRIR is considered to have a bright future and to possess a quality called *AYAAN* ama *NASHIB* which I interpret as the power of luck. A DIRIR person will have special luck in owning camels and horses.

The quality of luck is illustrated in the following proverb or saying common among Somalis:

Afar wiil afar geel bay dhicisaa -

Dirir dhalad,  
Garbo dhalad  
Bayaxow dhalad  
Gudban dhalad

Wiilka Dirir dhalad geeliisoo la qaaday ayaan buu ku dhacshaa;  
Wiilka Garbo-dhaladna geeliisoo la qaaday waran buu ku  
dhacshaa (geesinimo)  
Wiilka bayaxow dhaladna Buruud;  
Wiilka Gudban dhaladna carrab — Ducadiisa iyo habaarkiisubana  
waa kacaan

*Each of four sons manages to recover a herd of stolen camels single-handed*  
*The DIRIR-born boy*  
*The GARBO-born boy,*  
*The BAYAXOW-born boy,*  
*The GUDBAN-born boy.*

*The DIRIR boy will recover it by luck*  
*The GARBO boy will recover it by his spear, for he is fearless and skilled in war*  
*The BAYAXOW boy will chase the enemy off by inspiring the enemy with awe.*  
*The GUDBAN boy will overpower the enemy with his eloquence, so that they*  
*return the herd voluntarily-both his blessings and his curses are also*  
*fulfilled.*

#### STATION NO.15:GARBO.

There are variously five or six stars associated with this station of which the main one is AL QAPRA (Ar.) the foot of Virgo. If the DAYR secondary rains begin with this station, then they will be inadequate for the needs of both people and animals. The clans will then have to travel vast distances in search of better grazing, and the burden-camels will be continuously laden with the families' possessions. This is the allusion in the name GARBO—the shoulders or back, on which heavy loads are carried.

GARBO is considered to be a station of war, and of fine warriors. A man born under it is said to have a blessed spear. Such a man is brought to the front of the charge in time of war to throw the first spear at the enemy; he is credited with the power of never missing his aim, and his first shot will be enough to make the enemy flee. More than being a perfect marksman, he is also endowed with the quality of expression in war which makes people afraid to face him. In all, he is a formidable defender of the clan.

### STATION NO.16: BAYAXOW

The Somali word means “brightly lit”, and refers to the power of awe and inspiration over men, which will mark any person born under it. It is certainly one of the most advantageous stations that a man could be born under, for he is destined to be so wealthy.

The star associated with this station are ZUBEN EL CHAMALI (Ar.) and ZUBEN EL GENUUBI (Ar.), in the constellation Libra.

### STATION NO.17: GUDBAN

This is the fourth of the four most important and favourable stations that a man can be under—the other three being DIRIR, GARBO, and BAYAXOW. They are known collectively in the northern regions of Somalia as the DIRIR stations, and their main influence is over men and their character and achievements—in contrast to the four MALALLO stations, which are concerned with women. (Nos.18-21). GUDBAN, as has already been implied, confers upon those born under it the gift of eloquence—the golden tongue appropriate to the lawyer, story-teller, philosopher, historian; and the power of uttering effective blessings on those he favours, and curses upon his enemies.

GUDBAN is associated with the four stars in the scorpion’s feelers in the constellation Scorpio, lying across the path of the Moon. The analogy is with the barring or controverting of evil.

### STATION NO.18: LIB CAS

This is one star probably identifiable as Antares (AL-QALB in Arabic) in the centre of the constellation Scorpio. It has an allegedly big influences on the weather. Some experts, particularly in the Qardho district, believe that if any season begins with rain during a night when the Moon is in conjunction with

any of the four stations of which LIB-CAS is the first, then that season will be a very successful one, and will provide abundance for all.

Hadduu roob dib-dhoco, oo dib-dhoco, oo Daalalli Haleelo,  
Dooxada hiyaa waa geshaa, Dayr ka qadan roone.

*If the rains of a season are delayed until they catch the Daalaallo Stations,  
then inevitably they will fill all natural pools, and they are the  
most nourishing*

GABAY (Anonymous)

The DAALALLO stations, numbered as 18 to 21 in the terminology of the Burco and Jigjiga districts, all relate to women. A woman born under any of them is both beautiful and seductive. And therefore dangerous, for she is the kind of woman for whom and over whom blood is likely to be shed. She is given the nickname TAFO-DHIIG—a woman with a bloody hem.

The particular meaning of LIB-CAS is “Dangerous victory”. One who wins the hand of a LIB-CAS woman has won a dangerous victory. In relation to war, there is an additional connotation: a victory won during a war in this station will not diminish in importance if the victory is not final and the war drags on; but a battle lost in this station may be redeemed if the war continues. In some regions, this belief is attributed not only to LIB-CAS itself, but to the other Daalallo stations as well.

#### STATION NO.19: XOORREY

The Somali word XOOR can mean “the froth of milk”, and XOORREY suggests an abundance of milk and therefore prosperity. About ten stars are usually identified as being in this station: the cluster at the tail of Scorpion, the main one being AL SHAWLA (Ar.). A woman born under this station is said to be especially favoured in CAANO, milk—the symbol of wealth and prosperity. CAANO MA WEYDO: she is never without milk.

The conditions under which LIB-CAS was associated with good weather apply equally to XOORREY, and to the other daalallo stations.

## STATION NO.20: MAREEGO-DHEER

This station is approximately identified by the constellation Sagittarius, although there is some difference of opinion in different localities as to which stars exactly mark the station; one significant star in this group, however, is NUNKI (Ar.)

The Somali term for the station refers to the long rows of knotted cords for tying up baby kids and lambs; their heads are placed in the many loops along the length of the cords, which are fixed to posts either in the camp enclosure, or in corners of the nomad's dwellings. For the newly-born, the latter place is more usual, since it affords better protection and enables the family to keep the animals under constant supervision.

A woman born under MAREEGO-DHEER is said to be doubly fortunate not only is the station one of the DAALALLO stations which are favourably to women in general; but it is also the station which, more than any other, bestows the highest womanly virtues: nobleness of character, thrift, charm, reserve, prudence and chastity; and wealth in addition. When a MAREEGO-DHEER girl is married and taken off by her husband, her family often secretly keeps back from her possessions, the stick the girl used for herding livestock when she was younger. It is believed that this practice will ensure that the girl leaves behind for her own family's advantage some of the blessings with which she was endowed by her birth-station. On occasions, other things besides the herding-stick are kept back from the husband to make this more effective. But whatever article is kept back, the husband must never get hear of it, since he may charge the parents with dishonesty in the marriage settlement, and a serious family quarrel may ensue.

The parents of a MAREEGO-DHEER girl must be especially careful of their child while she is still an infant; for there is a risk that other families, who have heard of her fortunate birth-station, may try to steal her, or exchange her for their own less gifted daughter born under a more indifferent station. There are many stories told of stolen children; some of them rather gruesome. One such account is of a MAREEGO-DHEER girl stolen by another woman, who took the child to her own house, choked her, and made her vomit and defecate—this being a means of appropriating for the thief's family—some of the virtues of the child herself. Somalia would thus seem to be the only country in which theft is liable to be committed for the food in some child's stomach.



## STATION NO.21: MADHAN

This is the last of the four stations that directly relate to women. Its potentiality is the exact opposite of that of MAREEGO-DHEER. It is the station of women cursed with poverty and barrenness: the most feared of all womanly evils. The word MADHAN itself means emptiness, or poverty, and it is identified with an empty space in the sky where the Moon is on that night. The area is close to the last stars of Sagittarius.<sup>11</sup>

A MADHAN woman is unlikely to find a husband, unless the station of her birth is kept a close secret by her parents, who fear for her and for the prestiges of the whole family. There is however an alternative way of diverting this evil fate from the girl: the system known as CUNSUR-GUURIS, which, by means of sacrifices of animals or donations of alms to the poor and to travellers may counteract the fate of her birth-station. CUNSUR-GUURIS may be an Islamic introduction, intended to alleviate the harshness of the pre-Islamic astrology, with its inescapable destinies.

## STATION NO.22: FARUUR-CIRIR

Literally this means “the cursed lip”, and it is usually used in reference to children who are cruel to their parents, or troublesome to people in general. In this station the moon is in conjunction with two stars, one of which is DABIH (Ar.), in the horns of Capricorn.

This is the first of a number of stations, variously reckoned to be six or seven, called collectively CIRIRRO or TODDOBADA or LIXDA GOD CIRIR. They are given these names because they lie within the area of the JID-CIRIR, the Milky Way. JID means “way” or “path”, and CIRIR is the “cursed child”. This explains one Somali legend about the Milk (and also the term FARUUR-CIRIR) which tells the story of a cruel son who beat his mother every day and dragged her along the rocky ground in the hot sun. One day he was more vicious than usual, and pulled her by the leg over sharp rocks until she was torn and bleeding all over. Half-dead, she raised her eyes to the sky looking for some deliverance from her oppressor. The Almighty rescued the unhappy old crone by paralysing her son. He quickly died, and his body was cast up into a special purgatory in the sky where he can still be seen as the constellation Orion: AGAALLIYO. A representation of the rough ground over which he had dragged his poor

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<sup>11</sup> Some experts, however, consider that there is one star in this station.

mother was made for all to remember in the heavens—the Milky Way; and from that time on, no son has been cruel in this to his parents, fearing that he also would meet with the same fate.

Camels born during the CIRIR stations are believed to have no hair on their mouths or hooves. Moreover, it is wrong to shed blood, or cause blood to flow during these stations, for the period is one of infections that spread or prove fatal. Children are never circumcised at this time, and any living thing that bleeds will die. Camels should not even be caught or pulled by the lips, nor made angry.

FARUUR-CIRIR in particular is sometimes used for the calculation of the seasonal New Year. The JILAAL sometimes begins on the night when the Moon is in this stations. If this happens, the drought will be harsh, and the burden animals would have to be used extensively in fetching water and dry goods from the wells and towns, in order that the nomads and their animals may survive. The camels, being themselves weak with hunger and thirst, will be slow to travel on these errands, and their lips will have to be tied to make them walk faster. This is the only one of the CIRIR stations which portend drought. The meteorological consideration of the six or seven CIRIR stations is a cheerful one, and they are called CIRIR CAANOOD: Milk-stations or stations of plenty and prosperity. However, if the JILAAL begins on the night of FARUUR-CIRIR, the whole CIRIRRO period will be GOD-WAA (displaced) and become one of drought.

### STATION NO.23: JED KABARRE.

JED is the same word, pronounced differently, as JID, “path” or “way” and “KABAR” is the “penis”. This, and the other three JED stations, are important during the GU season, as a time in which many marriages take place.

There is one star in this station, known in Arabic as SACDUL-BULCA; it is difficult to identify exactly, but is probably the small star in the stomach of Capricorn.

### STATION NO.24: JED DHIRIGLE

Literally this means “the path of animal dung”. Dung always implies prosperity, for when there is good grazing, the animal enclosures or corrals are filled with dung much more quickly than in times of drought. The heaviest

of the GU rains are always said to occur at the times when the Moon is in this station. The stars identified with it are SACDUL-SUUD in Aquarius, and DENEBA-ALGED at the tail of Capricorn.

#### STATION NO.25: JED GACANLE

This JED is “the path of generosity”: generosity itself being represented by the image of GACAN, the “hand” of the giver. This station is at its most influential in the CAWL sub-season of the GU, the most plentiful part of the rainy season. It is the time when all animals have calved and lambed and are nourishing their young, when the water pools and wells are all full, and the fresh green grass has grown to the best length for animal grazing. The stars in this station are SACDAL MELIH (Ar.) in the Aquarius constellation, and DAHAB EL JED (Ar.) in the Capricorn constellation.

#### STATION NO.26: JED-DUKBUQLE

JED in this station is the “path of great noise”, so called because it often coincides with the last period of the GU, the time of GUDGUDE - when there are gales, thunder and lightning. The north-east monsoons are just beginning, driving the rainfall over a wide area, so that, for the nomads’ purpose, they are not very effective. The word DURRUQ is onomatopoeic, intended to represent the rumbling of the gale winds and the distant thunder.

The station is identified with the star—SKAT (Ar.) in the constellation Aquarius.

#### STATION NO.27: DUUGANTI

There are variously reckoned to be eight or ten stars in this station, in the constellation Pisces (BADNUL-HUUT in Arabic). It is the worst possible station under which a child can be born. The word DUUGANTI itself means burial, or one destined to be buried; and in the days before Islam came to Somalia, a child born under this station was immediately disposed of, since it was considered to be a curse upon the parents and their property. There were two main methods of killing the DUUGANTI child. The first was to place it at the entrance to the thorn corral, and to drive the camels over its body. If the child lived, it would be considered to be purified from the stain of its birth, and released from the evil born with it. If it died, its death would be

considered proper and just. The second method was to take the child out into the bush country, and abandon it there. Its survival was unlikely, but if it did escape the wild animals and scavengers of the bush and was not killed by heat, exposure or thirst, then it would be reinstated into the family after a night and treated as blessed. The introduction of Islam into Somalia gradually put an end to such barbaric customs, and another method of purification was substituted—although even now this more humane treatment is felt to be somewhat degenerate in some regions and is applied in secret rather than openly. This is the ritual of CUNSUR-GUURIS, previously mentioned, which is now fairly widespread. The purification ceremony may take a number of forms. Some people make religious sacrifices which involve the offering up of slaughtered animals, and they give donations of food to travellers and to the poor. Others rely on purification by bleeding; this involves inflicting a minor wound on the child, so that blood flows but the child's life is not endangered. When the wound heals, the curse of the child's birth is considered to have been removed, and it is accepted as a normal member of the community. The third common form of this ritual is to put the child inside, a DHERI or cooking-pot made of clay. The lid is fitted on to the top, and the child is at once pulled out of the bottom of the pot through a hole specially made in it. This form of purification does no injury whatever to the child.

### STATION HO.28: FARANGAAG

FARANGAAG and FARAACI (Station No.1) form a pair known as FOOCAAR. Astrologically they are both interpreted in the same way: one should always guard one's tongue under these stations, for words spoken in anger will have serious consequences, and quarrels started will grow into violent feuds. In particular, it is said, husbands should be very careful not to quarrel with their wives, and a single cross word on the nights of FARANGAAG and FARAACI will make a shrew out of a good wife and a hell out of a good marriage. Evil lies in wait just outside the door, and will enter at the slightest pretext.

This, the last of the 28 stations, is identified with two small stars in Pisces.

### THE EMPTY STATIONS

In addition, however, to the 28 stations along the visible path of the moon during each lunar month, there are said by Somalis to be one or two nights

in every month during which the Moon is not visible. These are the “empty stations” when the Moon is not in conjunction with any star or group of stars visible to the Somali observer. The period is known in Somali as DIBBAD or DUBBAD. To be born on one of the DIBBAD nights is most fortunate, and shares the same favourable destiny as the BAYAXOW boy. He is traditionally never allowed to shave his head. His hair is thought to be a cream or crown of great virtue that should never be thrown away. Not only are the omens of DIBBAD good for the birth of children; they are also favourable in terms of weather.

### A DIFFERENT GOD SYSTEM

Although the 28-station system described in the preceding pages is the one normally recognised throughout Somalia, a different system of 30 stations has also been recorded. It was described to me by Abdillahi Jaloose of Wajeer, who learned it from his teacher, the famous Dubbad Hirad of Qabriddaharre. The thirty stations in this system are classified in two groups:

(a) Group one consists of the first day and the last two days (DUBBAD) of each lunar month. These are considered to be climatically and astrologically favourable.

(b) Group two consists of the remaining 27 stations, which are further sub-divided into three sets of nine each:

(1) The first set is called HALACLEY, which implies that the stations are associated with “intense heat”, and are therefore unfavourable from every point of view. The stations in this set are GODAN, LAX-MAR, AGAALI-WARANLEY, HAAF-MADDOBE, AF-QOYS, MAJIN, XOORREY, LIB-CAS and MADHAN,

(2) The next set is called HILIBLEY—the stations of “meat-eating”. The implication is that during these stations, people will neither prosper nor starve: They will have meat to eat, but in eating it they are forced to consume their stock. The stations in this set are FARUUR, JED-KABBARRE, JED-DURRUQLE, KUXDIN-AWR, NAAF-CADDE, JED-GACANLE, AGAALLI-CAANOD, LISTAN and GUDBAN.

(3) The final set is called HODONLEY, meaning “the sources of prosperity”, which are wholly advantageous. The stations are AFAGGAAL, DIRIR, GARBO, BAYAXOW, MAREEGO-DHEER, FARANGAAG (or MEECAAD), LAXO, JED-DHIRIQLE, and NAASO-GAALO.

There also exists a third system of GOD-classification, this time centered on the BANAADIR region. The division of the 28 stations is into four groups of

seven stations each. They are as follows:

- (a) RAQO; which are HOGGAAN, LISTAN, LAXO, GALGAAL, SACO, SAC-KA-DAMBAYE, DURDURO
- (b) NAAFO, which are CAMBAAR, NAAF-MADOUBE, OOD-WEYN, KALA-HAANLE, KUXDIN, NAASO-GAALLO, and DIRIR.
- (c) BAH, or GARBO; which are GARAB, DAMEER, BAH, DADBIN, KOBAS-RASAN, UUR-WEYN-HORE, and UUR-WEYN-DAMBE.
- (d) CIRIR; which are KUMAN-HORE, KUMAN-DAMBE, FARUUR, REDMO, JEDO, KABRO, and MEECAAD.

There are two virtuous stations in each group of four. It is “believed that all political, social, cultural, and religious activities should be undertaken on these GODS. The names of the virtuous positions are:

- (a) In the RAQO group: AGAALLI-CAD and AGAALLI-GUDUUD (i.e. SACO and SAC-KA-DAMBAYE)
- (b) In the NAAFO group: KUXDIN and KALA-HAANLE
- (c) In the BAH group: UUR-WEYN-HORE and UUR-WEYN-DAMBE
- (d) In the CIRIR group: KUMAN-HORE and KUMAN-DAMBE

## E. THE MALLUUG: THE PLANETS

The final element of the XIDDIGIS which we shall consider is the MALLUUG, the study of the motions and influences of the planets. Most nomads believe the planets to be huge stars with special courses of their own: they are commonly defined by Somali weather experts as “heavenly bodies that move round on their own orbits, and with the sun”. The number of such planets, according to various traditional beliefs, is as few as five or as many as nine. A few experts include the Moon among the planets, but most take it to be a satellite of the earth. Mercury is considered by some as a planet, and by others as a star. There is therefore no general agreement about what are planets and what are not; and moreover, although all these bodies are named in Somali tradition, it is very difficult apparently to match the Somali names to the planets identified in Western Astronomy. The Somali names themselves vary very greatly in different regions of the country. More research is needed into this whole question of the identification of the planets, and my chart (Appendix 9) giving the names of each planet in different regions by no means complete.

Although there is a considerable uncertainty about the identification of the planets recognised by Somalis, there is no doubt that they do constitute an important part of the sky studies of Somali weather-lore experts, and are thought to have astrological influences that are by no means negligible. I shall however limit my discussion of these influences in the following pages to the four great planets, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.

The commonest Somali names for Venus are MAQAL XIDH-XIDH or WAXARO XIDH-XIDH, but the astronomers' name for it is SAHRA (from the Arabic ZUHRA). All Somalis accept it as a planet. There is a riddle traditionally associated with Venus, and its periodic absences from the night skies. Sometimes it is reckoned to be absent for only six nights—to correspond with alternating roles of Morning Star (in the East), and Evening Star (in the West). When the absence is of six days, it is said on its return to greet people with the question "How did you spend the night?"—as if it had gone on a journey and was delighted to see its old friends once more. But sometimes the absence is reckoned to be for sixty days, and then the greeting is said to give takes the form of another question: "What have you lost while I have been away" and finally absences considered to last for six months, it is believed to ask: "What wealth have you still left?" The absences of six nights are traditionally held to foretell a year of plenty; those of sixty nights foretell a year which will be hard but not unendurable. But from an absence of six months the assumption is that there will be great drought and suffering in the land. The presence of this planet in the sky is thus considered to exert a mysterious protective influence over people. Because of the serious implications read into the period of its absence from the sky, the MAQAL-XIDH-XIDH is closely watched by the local astronomers and weather-experts.

Significant in a different way are the movements of the planet Mars, known in Somali as SAXAL-GUDUUD. It is believed to meet and 'live with' each of the twenty-eight stations of the Moon once in a cycle of thirty-three years. It thus plays host to each GOD for an indefinite period, sometimes for one or two years, sometimes for seven or even more years. The 'host' planet is thought to contaminate the GOD for as long as they stay together, and thus to bring evil fortune to any person born under this GOD, or to a clan associated with it. For the duration of the conjunction, therefore, it is considered wise to efface oneself as much as possible, to avoid quarrels or involvement in others'

quarrels, and most decisively to avoid tribal wars. The enfeebling influence of a SAXAL conjunction with one's personal GOD is beautifully suggested in the following anonymous GABAY:

Adduunyadu nin bay saaciddaa  
sare u qaadaaye  
Ninna waaba saranseerisaa,  
yare silleeddaaye,  
San baraar ka taag-daran ninkuu,  
Saxalku fuulaaye

*Life in this world allows one man to grow prosperous,  
While another sinks into obscurity and is made ridiculous  
A man passing through the evil influence of red Mars is feebler than a  
sheep hit on the nose.*

There is an interesting historical example of the disastrous influence of the red planet on human fortunes in the long conflict between the Isaaq and Ogaadeen clans of Northern Somalia towards the end of the nineteenth century. The Isaaq are said to have had their origin on the DIRIR station, and the Ogaadeen on the NAAF station. Whether this was really so is a matter of controversy, since many experts believe that all the clans of the Daarood tribe are under the NAAFO stations; but at least traditional accounts of the struggle place great emphasis on the effects of the contamination of their two stations by Mars. When Mars was the unwelcome host of DIRIR, the Isaaq became weak and disorganized, and the Ogadeen enjoyed victory after victory. In a long series of raids, the Ogadeen would sweep to the coast at Bulhar, Berbera, Heis and Mait, killing warriors and plundering the Isaaq caravans. This in spite of the fact that normally DIRIR was considered to be one of the most beneficent signs in the sky its virtue was eclipsed by its conjunction with SAXAL. The area of Northern Somalia covered by these devastating raids still shows evidence of them in a multitude of place-names which bear witness to the string of defeats suffered by the Isaaq: CABAAD-WEYNE ("the cry of camels being slaughtered"), GEERI ("the place of death"), LAFO-RUUG ("the place where the bones were chewed"), GUBATO-XIL (the plain of shame), GEBAGGEBE ("the



place where the stolen herds were corraled on the first night). And while the warriors were suffering defeat after defeat, their wise men and astronomers were busy watching the stars in the hope that Mars would depart and leave DIRIR free to reassert itself.

In time, this happened. And one night it was realised that not only was DIRIR no longer in conjunction with SAXAL, but, even more fortunately, that SAXAL was moving towards a conjunction with NAAF. At that time the most powerful leader of the Ogadeen was Ina Careef Jiige, a member of the REERH HARRUUN sub-clan. In his pride of victory, he had just sent a demand to the Isaaq that they should pay an impossibly large tribute of camels, horses, clothes and virgins who would become Ogadeen wives. In reply to this demand, an Isaaq astronomer whose name was not preserved is said to have sent to the Ogadeen a GABAY drawing their attention to the fact that SAXAL was now hovering near their own GOD.

Qabka Ina Careef Jiige, qabo, iyo qabiilkoodu,  
Qabnadiisa uun buu dooyee, qayb Ilaah ma oga,  
War sow Saxal Qadhoomaa rujaa, kuma qadaad joogo?

*The son of Careef Jiige and his clan judge the Isaaq weak  
By over-valuing their own strength and wealth,  
For they ignore the SAXAL now hanging over their heads.*

And soon after, the Isaaq took the offensive again, and began a long period of cruel, and unobstructed revenge for all the indignities they had suffered before, a period which lasted from the time of the British occupation of Northern Somalia until the end of the Dervish movement. It was just about this time when an Ogaadeen poet whose name has been preserved (it was Xarbi) recited the following GEERAAR during a great assembly of the Ogadeen. He is said to have composed it as a result of inferences he had drawn from the positions of the stars and planets the previous night:

Sagaalkii xiddigood  
E sayaariinta ahaa,  
Xalay baan saru eegoo,

Saxalkiiyo, Mariikhu  
 Sidoodii ma ahayn  
 Ogadeen sucdigii iyo,  
 Sedkuu waayo lahaa iyo  
 Sunadiiba u ameertayoo  
 Saacii buu fadhiyaa  
 Waa sokeeye Walaalah.

*The nine stars,  
 which are truly planets —  
 Last night I looked up at them  
 And realised that SAXAL and MARIKH<sup>12</sup>  
 Had changed their positions in the sky.  
 To the Ogadeen have returned good fortune  
 And the rights which they had lost,  
 And tribute which was really theirs.  
 They dwell now under stars of good omen.  
 and live the peace of brothers and kinsmen.*

Now that the hateful influencer of SAXAL had in turn left them; the Ogadeen were ready to strike back once more; and the struggle might have gone on except that the British were now present in strength and put an end to the fighting.

Since neither clan was suffering from SAXAL, and both were well armed, the war might have continued for a long time. As it was, the Ogadeen regained their former prosperity and power over the succeeding years.

Somali astronomers, particularly from the eastern region, give the name SAXAL to two different planets. One is Mars (SAXAL GUDUUD, the red SAXAL), and the other is Jupiter (SAXAL CADDE, the white SAXAL). Both these planets are believed to have unusual orbits, and the association of both with other stars or planets, and even with each other, are believed to have a powerful influence upon the weather and upon people's actions and behaviour.

We have already noted the malevolent influence of Mars in conjunction with the GOD under which a person was born, or under which a clan originated.

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12 MARIKH: Saturn.

When Mars stands in conjunction with the GOD LISTAN of the constellation Aries (Station No.2), it is believed that a change of government, or a shift in power, is imminent. The conjunction of SAXAL GUDUUD with LISTAN has in recent years been of usually long duration—and the longer the duration, the more severe the consequences are said to be. During the last World War, LISTAN was the guest of SAXAL for an extremely long period, and the wanning of Italian fortunes in Somalia has been attributed to this.

If SAXAL CADDE remains for a long time in conjunction with TAR and MAJIN (Stations No.10 and 11), a long period of prosperity is predicted; and the present author had experience of this during the years 1966-1968. If on the other hand, SAXAL CADDE remains for an unusually long period with the NAAF and AFAGGAAL Stations (Nos.7, and 9), a bad drought is feared.

Roob bar ah, dal bar ah, Xoolo bar ah, Dad bar ah

*Scanty rainfall, new lands you are driven to explore,  
Half of your wealth lost, half of your people dead.*

I have been informed by elders that this is what happened in the years 1921 and 1922, in the period following the Daraawiish (Dervish) war. A contrary view of the association of SAXAL CADDE and the NAAF and AFAGGAAL Stations is also put forward by some weather-lore experts: that the GU rains following will be long and effective: but that also it will be a time of epidemic and many people will die.

The influence of SAXAL GUDUUD, however, seems to be uniformly disastrous in conjunction with the Stations to which a person is attached. If one's name, for example, is DIRIR, and the SAXAL comes close to the star DIRIR at any time in one's life decontamination by means of CUNSUR-GUURIS<sup>13</sup> is held to be necessary, so that the evil influence may be neutralised. When SAXAL GUDUUD and MARIKH are close together, the astrologer predicts *Gob Gob Magan Gashay* 'the fall from power of a noble clan or nation, and its consequent search for protection with another clan'.

In general MAQAL XIDH-XIDH (Venus), DAYAX (the Moon), DUSA (Mercury)

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<sup>13</sup> For a note on CUNSUR GUURIS, see page 48.

and QORRAX (the Sun) are considered to be bodies of good omen, while the others including comets, are of evil omen. However there seems also to be a tradition in which five of the planets are linked together in a special relationship. Little is known about this, but it appears that if SAXAL CADDE or MARIKH are seen to be close to MAQAL XLDH-XIDH or to DUSAA, an international disaster is predicted—only to be avoided by the ceremonies associated with CUNSUR-GUURIS.



## 4

# THE HABEYNTIRIS: CALCULATION OF SOMALI MONTHS AND SEASONS

**O**ne of the most important functions of the weather-lore expert is, as we have already noted, the keeping of calendrical records. We have in preceding sections of this study described the data on which these records are based, both meteorological and astronomical and it is now possible to analyse the application of this data to the Somali calendar.

One complication arises at the start: the fact that a rather varied terminology is used in different parts of Somalia. These parts are in fact more accurately described as ‘weather districts’, since they each have a different experience of the annual weather cycles, and different words for the seasons and lunar months—just as they often have different words for the stations of the moon, for the stars and the planets.

There are usually considered to be seven weather districts, numbered from 1 to 7 on the map given in Appendix 6. Their approximate boundaries follows:

**1:** Centered on the town of Qardho (Gardo) in Majeerteeniya, the district is enclosed by a line from Xarshow on the Maakhir coast (the Gulf of Aden) to Hadaftimo, thence to Garoowe (Garoe), Gaalkacayo (Calcio), and ending at the coast just east of Hobyo (Obbia) on the Indian Ocean.

**2:** This district is centered on Burco (Burao), and bounded by a line running from Berbera, through Oodweyne (Odweina), Awaare and Wardheer (Wardere) to Gaalkacyo.

**3:** This is known as the Karan<sup>1</sup> district with Jigjiga at its centre. It lies within a line joining Bullaxaar (Bulhar), Cadaadley (Adadley), Oodweyne, Awaare, Dhagaxbuur (Dagabour), Fiiq and the watershed of the Shabeelle (Shebelli) river; and from there to the Rabassa and Ceel-Foofle ('el Fofle) area, embracing the whole of Djibouti coast.

**4:** This fourth area centres on Qabridaharre, and is enclosed by Wardheer, Beled-Weyn (Balad Wein)—along the grazing; land on the east bank of the Shabeelle.

**5:** This district has as its nucleus the political region of Banaadir (Benaadir), but takes in also the western part of Mudug (Mudugh) and the whole of the Hiiraan as well.

**6:** Centered on Baydhabo (Baidoa), this district covers the whole inter-riverine area between the Shabeelle and the Jubba

**7:** With its centre at Wajeer (Wajir) in the Northern Frontier District of Kenya, it includes the whole of the grazing area sometimes known as Jubaland, west of the Ganaane river.

In each of these regions, the terminology of weather prediction, astrology and of the celestial bodies themselves - as well as the local geography, medicine and other traditional studies - tends to be unique. But naturally some features are shared by more than one region, and there is an overlapping of regional boundaries. In the following pages, the terminology and systems obtaining in the Burco region are described, but some variations are also given.

## THE MONTHS OF THE YEAR

Somali lunar months are of two types. Those which have 30 days each are known as QUN-DHALAD months, and those with only 29 days are known as TOOMAN<sup>2</sup>. The twelve lunar months together add up to 354 days, to bring

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<sup>1</sup> KARAN is a seasonal rainfall, from early July to mid-August. It corresponds to the heavy XAGAAYO rains on the coasts of Banaadir and the Jubalands - the latter being commonly known as GANAANE. The two rains are mild, and those of the KARAN are heavy and accompanied by storms and high winds.

<sup>2</sup> QUN-DHALAD and TOOMAN: See also page 23. It is worth remarking that, whereas the months of the Arabic calendar regularly alternate between 29 and 30 days, the duration of the Somali months cannot be reckoned in advance, but depend entirely on the night on which the new moon appears. If, for example, this new moon is seen

the total up to the 365 days of the calendar year, eleven more days are then added at the end of the month of ARAFO—the last month of the lunar year. This procedure gives rise to a certain amount of controversy. It was difficult to justify from a religious point of view, since these eleven days are intrusions from a non-lunar system (i.e. the Solar system), and therefore do not properly speaking exist at all, since they were not allowed for by Allah. This view of the year as consisting only of 354 days was held only by religious men learned in the Sharia of Islam; so the weather experts' explanations were held up to ridicule both by those who were well-versed in Islamic matters and by those who claimed to be anti-traditionalists.

In each cycle of three years, DAB-SHID occurs in the same month—once at the beginning of the month, once in the middle and once at the end of it in each successive year. On the fourth year, it moves to the next month, where it remains for the next three-year cycle. On the first year of each cycle, when it moves to a new month, DAB-SHID is said to wed (ARROOS) the new month, since it will stay with it for the next three years. Eventually over a period of thirty-six years, DAB-SHID will marry each month in turn - and will thus have twelve wives.<sup>3</sup>

These calculations of the lunar months are one of the most important responsibilities of the local expert. No less important is the task of dividing up the year into the correct seasons.

## THE SEASONS OF THE YEAR.

There are actually four systems used in Somalia for calculating the seasons—depending on which New Year date is used as a starting point. These four are the Western New Year (January 1); the Arabic New Year (the first day of the Lunar month DAGO—Somali ZAKO); the DAB-SHID or NAWRIISH<sup>4</sup>; and finally,

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on the 31<sup>st</sup> night of the month, it automatically becomes the first night of the new month, and the previous month is then reckoned to have been of 30 days duration. If the new moon appears on the 30<sup>th</sup> night, the month was only 29 days long, and the 30<sup>th</sup> night becomes the first night of the next month.

3 For a complete list of Somali months in the different regional terminologies, see Appendix 5.

4 Of the DAB-SHID system, John A. Hunt writes "..... The Somali seasonal calendar ... is based on a combination of:

- (1) The old Persian new year (perhaps dating from the occupation of Zeila) on August 4, DAB-SHID.
  - (2) The Moslem Lunar Calendar.
  - (3) A system of shifting the lunar calendar every three years to bring it into better adjustment with the solar calendar, and therefore the actual rain seasons ..."
- (John A. Hunt: A General Survey of the Somaliland Protectorate 1944-50. London, Crown Agents, 1951,



the first night of the SEERMAWEYDO season. I shall describe only the last two of these four systems, since they alone are widely used in the traditional pastoral society of Somalia. It should however be remembered that the Gregorian calendar is used by the Somali Government for all official purposes, and also by educated towns-people; and that the Arabic system of calculating times and dates is used in the ZEKA — the Muslim taxation code — and in the calculation of Islamic religious holidays, fasts, feast-days and pilgrimages.

The DAB-SHID forms the datum point for all calculations based upon the traditional pre-Islamic new year, for the traditional division of the year into seasons, for weather predictions and for certain astrological forecasts based upon these.

DAB-SHID generally falls on one of the first four days of August, but occasionally it is earlier or later than this: in 1967 for example it was celebrated on 31st July. Starting from the night of DAB-SHID the weather expert is able to calculate the dates on which the following seasons will begin and end, since each season is of specific length. He is also able to apply traditional weather predictions to each of the seasons.

In the Burco and Jigjiga regions of the North, the forty days after DAB-SHID make up the season known as DAYR-HALALOOD, which comes at the end of the south-westerly monsoon wind. The twenty days following the DAYR-HALALOOD are known as the DAYR-HABBIS — “the time of little rain”. And these are followed by thirty days of the DAYR-DIRIR season, when the north-westerly monsoon winds start to blow in the North-East. These three seasons together make up the DAYR quarter-year-ninety days in all, including DAB-SHID itself. The names for the quarter and half years in the various weather regions is more or less the same, although the names of the seasons themselves differ greatly. There are, moreover, rather different weather attributes to the seasons in various regions: as can be seen from the following two riddles from the Banaadir region describing the DAYR seasons:

Afartamaad iyo af-dhallaantoona dhareer lagama waayo

*The sky on the 40th day from DAB-SHID is like the mouth of an*

*infant - it is always wet.*

Kontomaad waa cir qoodhihi

*The weather on the 50th day from DAB-SHID is like penis of a man  
(i.e. the sky is in an organism).*

Following the DAYR quarter come ninety-four days known as the JILAAL quarter. In the Northern Frontier District of Kenya, this season seems to vary slightly in length - as the following riddle suggests:

Jilaal waa sagaal iyo sagaashan habayn, war sagaashanka  
Habayn reerka waan ka saariye, yaa sagaalka iiga saara

*[The wise man says to himself]; “JILAAL is 99 days long I can save my family  
for ninety days, but who can help me to survive the other nine.”<sup>5</sup>*

The DAYR and JILAAL quarters together make up the JILAAL half-year which ends at about the end of March. The following 180 days, collectively known as the GU half-year, divided into the GU and XAGAA quarter, the former being the time of the main rains, and the latter being the secondary dry season. Again their characteristics tend to be expressed in riddles which are part of the nomadic inheritance:

Haddii gugu, da’o  
oo gu sami da’o  
Meel gaduud badan  
Loola guuryoo,  
Looga guri-ood

*If the GU rains fall,  
And are successful,  
My herd should be taken*

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5 The period between the 90th day and the 99 days is that in which the rain has fallen, but the grass has not yet grown. Thus it is the time between JILAAL and the next season of milk. The nine days do not actually belong to the JILAAL, but to the following GU half-year.

*To the red sand country<sup>6</sup>  
Which is best for grazing*

(trad. HEES LO'AAD recorded from Yuusuf Daahir)

Xagaa iyo hangaralleba, gadaal bay wax ku halleeyaan

*The XAGAA and the Scorpion both sling with their tails*

(Trad. ODHAAH recorded from Yuusuf Daahir).

The total number of days of the four quarters is 365. Every third year, the seasonal calendar is shifted slightly to bring it into line with the solar calendar.

The fourth system of dating used in Somalia is that which takes the New Year to be the first night of SEERMAWEYDO. This system is mainly used in weather prediction, but it is also used as the basis for some calculations of the seasons, and for making astrological predictions. It is closely related to the astronomy—astrology of the GOD system, and to the twelve lunar months. The first night of the SEERMAWEYDO season is said to occur when the DIRIR (Spica) and the Moon are in conjunction on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of the lunar month of GU—that is at the beginning of May in the Gregorian Calendar. If this conjunction occurs on the 13<sup>th</sup>, the GU is known as a LISTAN GU, and if it occurs on the 12<sup>th</sup>, it is a FARAACI or GODAN GU.<sup>7</sup>

The FARAACI GU is expected to be successful and prosperous: *Gugu waa Godane meel godan ka fogow*: Since it is a GODAN GU, avoid locating your family in the course of floods. The LISTAN GU, because its presence is due to GOD WAA—‘the Moon out of station’—is expected to be unsuccessful one though healthy. The days on which the succeeding seasons are calculated to begin will of course vary according to whether the GU is FARAACI or LISTAN. If the latter, beginning on the 13<sup>th</sup> of the lunar month, the following XAGAA quarter will start with the AFAGGAAL station (No.7) the DAYR quarter with DIRIR (No.14) and the JILAAL quarter with MADHAN (No.21). If the GU is FARAACI, beginning on

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6 The red sand country: i.e. the HAUD.

7 See pages 41-42 for a detailed analysis of this.

the 12<sup>th</sup> day of the lunar month, then XAGAA will start with NAAFCADDE (No.8} DAYR with GARBO (No.15) and JILAAL with FARUUR (No.22)

Just as the quality of the GU season can be predicted from the date of its beginning, so the characteristics of the other seasons, are said to depend on the station of their first day. A GARBO DAYR, for example, is expected to be season of endless moving from one grazing area to another. Movement of this kind is costly and physically exhausting for men and livestock<sup>8</sup>. And the following season in this sequence, the JILAAL opening with the FARUUR station, is expected to be extremely harsh.<sup>9</sup>

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8 GARBO DAYR: see page 44.

9 FARUUR JILAAL: see page 49.



## 5

### THE SOMALI WEATHER LORE SYSTEM AND AGRICULTURE

**E**mphasis in this study has been given to the weather lore of the pastoral nomads, since this has always been the concern of the largest proportion of the Somali nation. There are, properly speaking, no areas of Somalia that are strictly or entirely agricultural. The farmers all keep goats, sheep and cows, which they raise along with their crops. And the areas in which farming is carried out are small, in relation to those occupied by the pastoral nomads. In any case, there is no essential difference between the lore of the pastoralists and that of the agriculturalists. The two are in principle identical, except in terminology and in the specific application which each is given. It is the purpose of this section to give some indication of the application of this common lore to the agricultural life, mainly in the South of the country.

There are, as the reader will now be aware, two fairly regular seasons of rain in Somalia: the GU rains, falling in April, May and June, and the DAYR secondary rains falling in September, October and November. It sometimes happens that a TUS, a season or part of either the GU or the DAYR rains fails to run its normal course, and it is one of the main tasks of the weather expert,

as we have seen, to predict such failures and to assess the seriousness of the resulting drought. A very bad year in the South is described as *Boqoliyo labaatan shuban*, “a failure of the first 120 days” of the DAYR, counting from the night of DAB-SHID. This is comparable to the time known in the North as *Diin iyo Dameer-qalad*, “when the meat of the donkeys and tortoise has to be eaten”. The beginning of the rains, the volume of rainfall and the duration of the season all vary from year to year, and from season to season.

The GU rains are much more regular and effective than those of the DAYR. So the Somali farmer is not particularly worried about when to start sowing his seeds for the GU season. He usually prepares the ground in March, and counts on there being enough rain from April onwards for his millet to grow successfully. But in sowing for the DAYR rains he has to exercise the greatest care, and makes a very careful study of the weather omens. If all the omens point to a more or less complete failure of the DAYR rains, then he will not sow any seeds at all during this half-year.

In estimating the date of the onset of the rains, the farmer has up to a point to allow for his own geographical position, since the rains are traditionally said to arrive in different places at different periods. The calculations are, as usual, based upon the number of days that have passed since the night of DAB-SHID. I give some samples of these traditional calculations below:

1. **Lixdamaad lixda iyo labadaa iska leh**

The rainfall of the sixtieth [night after DAB-SHID] belongs to the six clans and the two clans.

(that is, to the six clans of the SHIIDLE tribe, and the two clans of the MOOBLILEEN ISMAN tribe, all living near the Shabeelle river)

2. **Toddobaatamaadna Tuuf iyo Quraanyow baa leh.**

The rainfall of the seventieth [night after DAB-SHID] belongs to the Tuuf and the Quraanyow clans.

(these are two the GARRE clans in the Upper Juba area and along the west bank of the Shabeelli.)

3. **Siddeetamaadna Suge iyo Maalinle ayaa iska leh**

The rainfall of the eightieth [night after DAB-SHID] goes to the Suge and Maalinle clans.

(these are respectively the GELEDI and WACDAAN clans of Afgoi).

4. **Sagaashanaadkana Sagaalka Abgaal baa iska leh.**

The rainfall of the ninetieth [night after DAB-SHID] belongs to the nine sections of the Abgaal clan.

5. **Boqlaadkana Biya-Maal iyo badda**

And the rainfall of the hundred night belongs to the Biyo-Maal clans and to the sea.

(these clans live along the coastal areas around Merca, Jannale and Brava.)

The two and six clans live north of Jowhar. The TUUF and QURAANYOW are south-west of Jowhar. South-east of these lie the SUGE and MAALINLE in the area of Afgoi, while still further south and south-east are the ABGAAL. Finally the BIYA-MAAL clans extend as far south as Brava. The rain-fronts therefore move down the country in a southerly or south-easterly direction, and their rate of progress estimated in terms of ten-day intervals starting from the night of DAB-SHID.

The first forty days after the night of DAB-SHID are known in the Banaadir region as DAYR-KALA-HAAN—corresponding to DAYR-HALALOOD in the Burco terminology. The first showers of the DAYR rains should fall within this period, or the season will be unsuccessful. If the showers come within the forty days allowed, then it is believed that the full DAYR rains will certainly follow. This is pleasantly illustrated by a traditional MAAHMAAH or proverb from the Northern Frontier District:

Kala-haan, Dayr ma sugo,  
Kasna baaluq ma sugo.

*The Kala-Khan rain does not wait for the main Dayr rains:  
Neither does a youth who has learned to make love wait until he comes  
of age.*

This is the rainfall during which the seeds are sown for the JILAL half-year. It is not proper to begin sowing, the Somali farmer says, until there is enough moisture in the ground to his entire palm when he thrusts his hand in up to the wrist. Only when he has satisfied of this will he start to sow.



The millet crop sown during the GU rains should be ready for harvesting about thirty days after the night of DAB-SHID—that is, just before the expected onset of the DAYR rains. A good millet crop inspires the following piece of country wit:

Saabuul soddomaad xagaa soo bexay iyo soddohdaa,  
oo dhimataba saddex jeeraa sare loo boodaa.

*When you hear of a successful crop of millet, and also  
When you hear of the death of your mother-in-law, you should jump  
three times for joy.*

If the DAYR rains do not start within the prescribed forty day period after DAB-SHID, the farmer waits with diminishing hope for a further thirty days. The chances of raising a crop in the DAYR rains get less as each day passes. As a common prayer says:

Toddobaatamaad iyo toobadda Eebbetoona allow ha na seejin

*Oh Allah, let us not be without the rains of the seventy days, or your  
forgiveness.*

Between the seventieth and hundredth day, if rain comes, the family may still be able to grow enough food for bare survival, but no more. After the hundredth day, there is no possibility of sowing for the remainder of the half-year. These first 100 days after DAB-SHID are called TOL-WEYNE DAYREED. The following twenty are known as BARWAAQO, which corresponds to the period of DAYR-DIRIR in the North. [They] represent the final phase of the DAYR rains.

The best time for sowing seeding in the DAYR rains is between fifty and seventy days after DAB-SHID. Millet seed which is sown then, provided it receives the right amount of rain, is said to possess three virtues; firstly, it repels millet pests; secondly, it grows to what is considered to be the ideal height; and thirdly; it does not produce the bushy top of an over-mature plant.

Clearly rain is as vital to the farmers to the South as to the pastoral nomads, and they pay just as much attention to weather-signs as the nomads do. Many

of their predictions are based on the lunar month of SABBUUX<sup>1</sup>. It is said for example that if the Milky Way is seen distinctly in the east from sunset to about 8 p.m. during the month of SABBUUX, the DAYR rains will either be seriously delayed or weak, or else will fail altogether. It is also said that if the first day of the month of SABBUUX falls on a Friday or a Saturday, the year following will be LABA-MOYYAALE<sup>2</sup>, and the crops will therefore be successful; but that [if it?] falls on a Thursday or Monday the year will be LABA-MAALISLEY<sup>3</sup>, implying a failure of the crops, but plentiful grazing – and therefore plentiful milk. The final possibility for the beginning of SABBUUX is the worst: if it falls on a Sunday or a Tuesday, the year will be LABA-MAYLINLEY<sup>4</sup>, and both crops and grazing will fail.

Some predictions made by the Southern weather expert are also based upon the lunar month of WAABBERIIS<sup>5</sup>. If WAABBERIIS starts on a Sunday, the northern districts of the region will have bad weather in the year following; if the 6<sup>th</sup> day of WAABBERIIS falls on a Sunday, the southern parts of the region will suffer a drought.

One may add as a final note here that in Somalia, as in many other countries, the nature of the ideal way of life is a subject of some controversy. The nomads of Somalia have tended on the whole to look down on the settled life of the farmer, and to consider their own life to be freer and purer. There was once a nomadic poet who tried to take up farming in the belief that it would offer him greater contentment and an easier life. In the end, he rejected it and went back to his pastoral wanderings. His views are expressed in the following GABAY:

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1 SABBUUX: see page 22.

2 Literally this means “two mortars”. In a LABA-MOYYAALE year, two mortars rather than one will be needed to grind and process all the millet. In a good year, the millet when ground will produce a full extra mortar-full of water as a by-product of the grinding. In a bad or moderate year, the ears will have less liquid in them, the milky liquid from the ground millet is used as a children’s drink (it has a nutritive value), or it is boiled and then takes on a very characteristic taste.

3 Literally this means “two milkings”. The implication is that the animal grazing is so good that each animal will have to be milked twice a day.

4 Literally, “two sharpened sticks”, or two spears, of different kinds. The first is used for carrying meat from the market or slaughtering-ground; and the second as a sort of spear in war. The implication here is that both crops and grazing will be so poor that the farmer will be forced to slaughter his livestock to keep his family alive, and that the year will as a result be full of strife, looting and thieving of cattle. So the one stick would be needed for fighting in defence of one’s own stock or in raids on the stock of others, while the second stick would be used for carrying meat to the pot and for lifting it out of the pot when it is cooked.

5 WAABBERIIS: see page 23.

Ciirka meel dushaada ah illayn, dooxid lama gaadhid.  
Illayn looma doog-dhabo hadhuudh, roob an kugu daadan  
Illayn meelan dani ka wadayn, kama dal xiisootid.

*[Oh All,] it is said that one cannot puncture the sky to get rain for one's garden.*

*Nor can one drive the farm, as one can drive animals, to the place where the rain is falling, [to let it drink its fill and bring it back again]  
And worst of all, one cannot abandon one's farm, even though barren and desolate, because all one's efforts are invested in it.*

The farmer, naturally, has an argument to counter this argument with, and we shall leave the last word with him:

Nin aan dhulka meel ku lahayni, cirkana meel kuma leh.

*A man who has no stake in this world cannot claim one in heaven.*

# 6

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- a) To chart the path of the Moon as seen in Somalia, for the purpose of
  - 1. checking exactly how many stars are in each of the 28 lunar stations in a month , and
  - 2. checking the Somali calculations of rainfall made from the position of the moon in a month.
- b) To ascertain the positions of the planets—as seen in Somalia and the exact number that can be seen.
- c) To study more thoroughly the facts behind the Somali belief in cycles of drought and prosperity; and of epidemics, locust plagues, wars, floods, etc.
- d) To investigate the systems of adjustment of cycles: for example, that of the leap year. A famous Somali astronomer, Aamir Duale Elmi, says that the DAB-SHID is sometimes calculated to fall back 18 or 20 days from one year to the next, instead of its usual 11 days. This very complex of process bringing the Somali calendar into exact alignment with the Gregorian calendar is not fully understood.
- e) To make a further study of the facts behind the belief that certain

- species of animals know the secrets of the weather and stars.
- f) To study the value of the meat and milk of the livestock grazing in different soils in the country.
  - g) To study the Somali marine weather tradition, and correlate it with the present study, which is chiefly confined to pastoral traditions.
  - h) To investigate and properly define the Somali nomadic beliefs in the existing of the following:
    - 1. the grazing nourishment called NURO;
    - 2. the medical properties inherent in the grazing called BARAAKIIN;
    - 3. the poison in the water called XANFALEY.
  - i) To devise a way of collecting together at intervals the few living Somali weather experts; and to
    - 1. record and systematize the weather traditions they have preserved;
    - 2. learn of their yearly inductions and deductions from the current positions of the stars.

## APPENDICES

# APPENDIX 1

## COMPLETE TEXT OF POEM BY CABDULLAAHI QARSHI ON NABSI

(see page 17)

GIDAARKA BAARLIIN

(HEELLO “D” ah)

Dawladdii gumaysiga  
E dul ahaanba Afrika  
Waagii ay damaaciyeen,  
Shirkii ay u dalbeen  
Magaaladay u soo dirteen  
Kobtii ay ku doodayeen  
Baarliin daya,  
Bal daya  
Derbaa dhex yaal,  
Bal daawada  
Durbaday na soo galeen  
Ay raggeenii dabradeen  
Sidii dameero ay rarteen  
Ay karbaash ugu dareen  
Ay darkiina buuxiyeen  
Dhiigoodii daadiyeen  
Markay madowgi damqadeen  
Durbaanaday garaacayeen  
Dawankii ay yeedhiyeen  
Gabayaday ku diirayeen,  
Ay heesaa isu direen  
Waa tay duhur dharaarnimo  
Badi wada dareeriyeen  
Nabsiga aan daahinow  
Ee aan dakaaminow  
Dawga loo tilmaaminow

Ee aan cidi diraynninow  
 Degdegga aan oqoonninow  
 Marnaba aan daahinow  
 Diinka ka deeryninow  
 Dayuuraduhu gaadhinow  
 Taniyo waagii dura,  
 Dalkayagii naga maqnaa  
 Duqiiyow waa sidee?  
 Xaqayagu ma duudsibaa?  
 Waxaan ku soo duubayaa.  
 Waxaan uga dan leeyahaan.  
 Idin dareensiinayaa.  
 Shimbirahaa duulayaa.  
 Ee dushaa meerayaa.  
 Marleyba way daalayaan.  
 Daafta way imanayaan.

THE WALL OF BERLIN  
 (A song alliterated in D)

*The colonialists powers,  
 spreading all through Africa,  
 decided to carve it up among them,  
 look at the meeting they arranged<sup>1</sup>  
 The place where they plotted,  
 The exact quarter they quartered us in-  
 Look at Berlin,  
 All of you look, look  
 A wall divides it  
 An astonishing spectacle.<sup>2</sup>  
 When they invaded our land,*

---

1 In Berlin, The Berlin Conference of 1884-5 was a turning point in the European nations squabble over Africa. The great powers - Britain, France, Portugal, Germany and Belgium (in the person of King Leopold who was working to obtain a personal empire) - realised at this conference that there was nothing for it but a rapid partition of Africa between them. The scramble for territories had begun.

2 Ironically, the very city in which Africa was divided up is now itself divided. The reference is to the Berlin Wall built in 1961 to separate the Eastern and the western sectors of the city.



*They chained men's legs,  
 Made of them beasts of burden,  
 And whipped them like donkeys,  
 Poured them into camps like water into a trough  
 Until the camps overflowed.  
 Then the blacks in their agony revolted,  
 The drums that they beat,  
 The bells that they rang,  
 The poems that stirred them,  
 The songs that held coded warnings -  
 All these we remember in the mid-day sunshine,  
 And they expelled the intruders from Africa,  
 Oh Nabsi, who never tires,  
 And who is never bored,  
 Whom no one instructs,  
 Who never hurries,  
 And who yet is punctual,  
 Who can be as slow as a tortoise,  
 Yet whom airplanes can never catch,  
 As long as the days of Dura,  
 Our lands have not been our own <sup>3</sup>  
 Oh Elder,<sup>4</sup> why do you not exert your powers?  
 Must our rights be denied us?<sup>5</sup>  
 The point I am making with my song,  
 The end to which my singing leads,  
 And the purpose,  
 Is simply this:  
 The bird which is flying,  
 And swooping overhead,  
 Will sometimes tire and needing rest,  
 Will come to earth,<sup>6</sup>*

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3 The 'lands' referred to are the Northern Frontier District of Kenya, the Ogadeen of Ethiopia and Djibouti, the alienated lands of the Somali people.

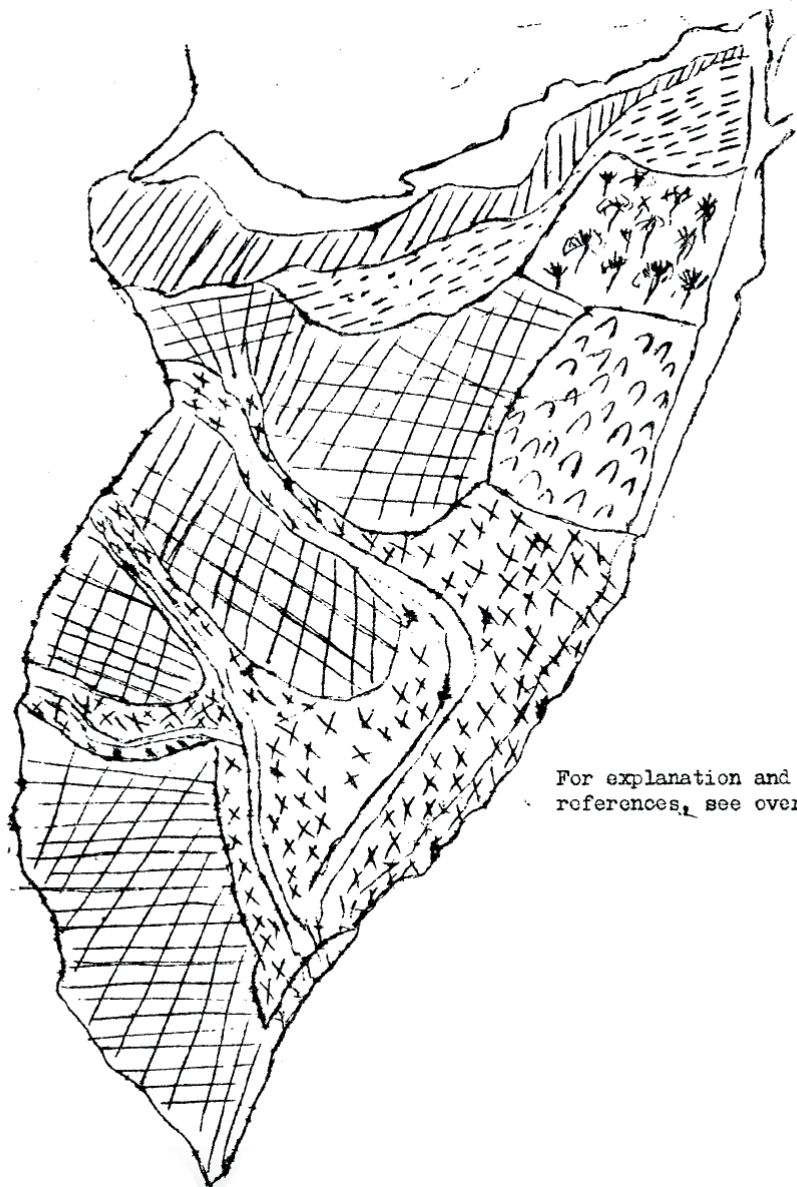
4 Elder: that is, NABSI.

5 Somalia's rights to the areas mentioned in Note 1, rights which have never been given up.

6 NABSI will come to Somalia to restore justice, to expel the colonialists and to recover the alienated territories.



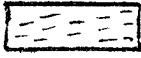


## APPENDIX 2

### THE PASTORAL GEOGRAPHY MAP OF SOMALIA



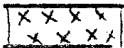
For explanation and  
references, see overleaf.

## KEY TO PASTORAL MAP

1.  The XEEB or DEEX      The long strip of coastline following the Maakhir coast as far as Alula, and then southwards facing the Indian Ocean. *Xeeb* means the 'sea-shores'. Adjacent to it in the North is the 'burnt region' known as *Guban*, very hot but well-watered for parts of the year, and a favourite grazing area for camels and flocks in the winter (jilaal) season. The *Xeeb* itself is about 3500 miles in length, has a great potentiality for fishing industries. There are also likely to be considerable mineral deposits in this area.
  
2.  The GOLIS      The mountainous area which runs inland of the *Xeeb* and parallel to the coast as far as Alula has three names, *Golis* in the West, *Gasharaareed* in the centre and *Calo* in the east. These mountain areas are excellent for grazing goats; and those eastern parts shaded on the map produce the fabled frankinsense.
  
3.  The GAAROODI      Is the region of white sanded semi-desert, the eastern wing of which is known as Sool. It is dry, but affords good grazing. The Galool (Acacia) grows widely here, and also the two nourishing grasses oalled *Dixi* and *Dareemo*, on which flocks thrive. It is the best area for rearing camels, sheep and goats for export: the meat is said to be of very fine flavour. There are minor areas of the same sort of land elsewhere in Somalia, notably at Bookh, near Gallaaddi. The Gaaroodi is the area most famed for Baraakiin after the *Hawd* (see pages 9-10).
  
4.  The NUGAAL      This is the gypsous salty area in the east characterised by the abundant growth of *Daran* and other salty plants. There is plenty of salty-flavoured water, excellent for livestock, especially horses and cattle. In the past, the best Somali horses came from this area. There are patches of similar land elsewhere, notably in the western part of Mudug (Gaalkacayo) and in the Northern *Guban*, and in Doy, near Qabriddaharre.
  
5.  The HAWD      The red-sanded and very dry *Hawd* covers by far the largest area of the Somali grazing lands. It is

thickly covered with bushes which make nourishing food for camels and goats. About half the camel-wealth of the country is grazed here, and it is particularly well-liked as being the best place for *Baraakiin*. Edible nuts and gum Arabic also grow in this place.

6.  The CADDUUN      This is a large area centered on the Mudug entirely covered by sand dunes.

7.  The Inter-riverine      Area, well watered and fertile, with dark agricultural soil, where most of the country's farming is done. But it also produces large numbers of cattle and camels, which grow larger in size than they do in the drier areas. It is believed that mineral deposits of various kinds exist in this region.

# APPENDIX 3

THE TIMES OF DAY \*  
A. SOMALI SYSTEM

Caano-Maal			
Maalin	<i>Gelin-hore</i>	Arooryo	About half an hour from sunrise
		Barqo-yar	From arooryo till 08.30 hours
		Xiksin	08.30 hours till 09.30 hours
		Barqo-kulul	09.30 till 10.30 hours
<i>Gelin-dambe</i>	<i>Gelin-hore</i>	Hadh-soo-kor	About 10.30 hours till 11.30 hours
		Hadh	11.30 hours till 12.30 hours
		Duhur	12.30 hours till 14.00 hours
		Duhur dabadi	14.00 hours till 15.00 hours
<i>Gelin-dambe</i>	<i>Gelin-hore</i>	Casar dheer	15.00 hours till 15.30 hours
		Casar	15.30 hours till 16.30 hours
		Casar gaaban	16.30 hours till 18.00 hours
		Maqrib	18.00 hours till 18.30 hours
Habeyn	<i>Gelin-hore</i>	Fid	18.30 hours till 19.30 hours till the sky is dark
		Caweys	19.30 hours till 21.30 hours
		Saq dhexe	23.00 hours till 02.00 hours
		Jiidh	Dawn
<i>Gelin-dambe</i>	<i>Gelin-hore</i>	Arooryo hore	First dawn to sunrise
		Waaberi	Clear light before sunrise
		Arooryo	06.00 hours till about 06.30 hours

+ Reference: Hunt, John A., A General Survey of the Somaliland Protectorate 1944-1950. London. The Crown Agents. 1951. pp. 8-13 (Chapter III).

**B. ARABIC TIME (ALSO USED, ESPECIALLY IN THE SOUTH OF SOMALIA)**

<b>WESTERN TIME</b>	<b>ARABIC TIME</b>
1.00 a.m.	7.00
2.00	8.00
3.00	9.00
4.00	10.00
5.00	11.00
6.00	12.00
7.00	1.00
8.00	2.00
9.00	3.00
10.00	4.00
11.00	5.00
12.00 noon	6.00
13.00 p.m.	7.00
14.00	8.00
15.00	9.00
16.00	10.00
17.00	11.00
18.00	12.00
19.00	1.00
20.00	2.00
21.00	3.00
22.00	4.00
23.00	5.00
24.00 midnight	6.00

# APPENDIX 4

## THE SOMALI DAYS OF THE WEEK AND THEIR POTENTIALITIES

(see pp.13-14)

Friday:	JIMCE:	‘the redeemer’. The good day that counterbalances the evil of Thursday (or its twin, Wednesday).	
Saturday:	SABTI:	the day of lesser evil, twin to Sunday	
Sunday:	AXAD:	potentially the day of evil	} Bad days
Monday:	ISNIIN:	potentially the day of good fortune	
Tuesday:	SALAASA:	(or TALAADA). the day of lesser good, twin to Monday	} Good days
Wednesday:	ARBACA:	the day of lesser evil, twin to Thursday	
Thursday:	KHAMIIS:	potentially the day of evil	} Bad days

# APPENDIX 5

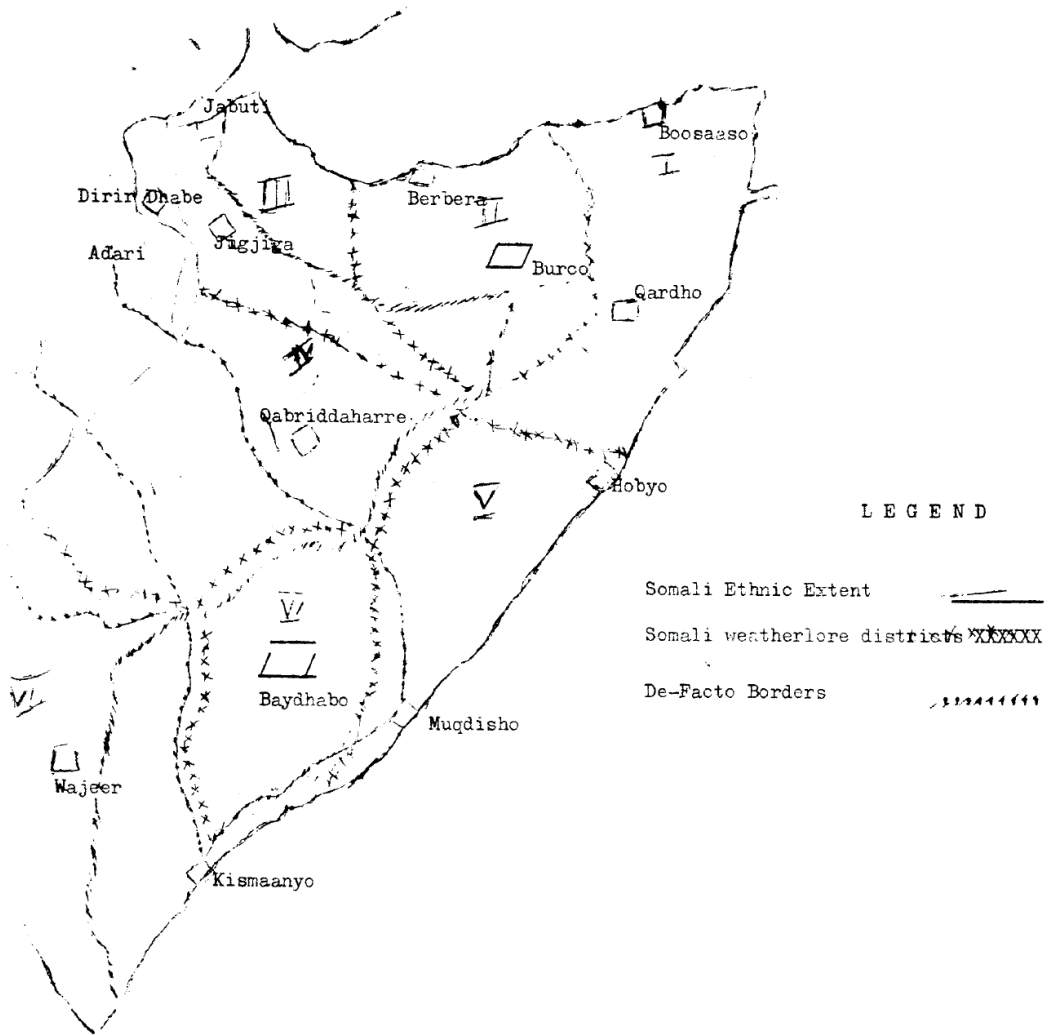
## THE SOMALI LUNAR MONTHS IN THE SEVEN WEATHER DISTRICTS

<b>DISTRICT 1 QADHO</b>	<b>DISTRICT 2 BURCO</b>	<b>DISTRICT 3 JIGJIGA</b>	<b>DISTRICT 4 QABRTA HARRE</b>	<b>DISTRICT 5 BANAADIR</b>	<b>DISTRICT 6 BAYDHABO</b>	<b>DISTRICT 7 WAJEEH</b>
Dago or Sako	Dago or Sako	Dago or Sako	Dago or Sako	Dago or Sako	Zake	Dago or Sako
Safar	Bil-Dhurro-Hore	Bil-Dhurro	Bil-Dhurro	Safar	Rajang-Horo	Safar
Mowliid or -Uud	Bil-Dhurro-Dambe	Mowliid or Uud	Mawliid or Uud	Mawluud	Rajang-Dambe	Rabiic-Al Awal
Maylood	Rajal-Hore	Rajal-Hore	Maal-Ma-Doone	Maal-Ma-Doone	Milli-Horo	Rabiical-Al Aakhir
Rajal-Hore	Rajal-Dhexe	Rajal-Dhexe	Rajal-Hore	Ban-Horo	Milli Dhexe	Jumaad-Al Awal
Rajal-Dambe	Rajal-Dambe	Rajal-Dambe	Rajal-Dambe	Ban-Dambe	Milli Dambe	Jumaad-Al Aakhir
Sabbuux	Sabbuux	Sabbuux	Sabbuux	Aw Cismaan	Shacbang-Horo or Aw Cismaan	Rajab
Waabberiis	Wabberiis	Waabberiis	Waabberiis	Abbow-San or Soon-Dheer	Shacbang-Dambo	Shacbaan
Soon	Soon	Soon	Soon	Soon-Qaad	Soong	Soon
Soon-Fur	Soon-Fur	Soon-Fur	Soon-Fur	Soon-Fur	Soon-Fur	Soon-Fur
Sidataal	Sidataal	Sidataal	Sidataal	Sidataal	Seytaal or Sidataal	Sidataal
Arrafo or Caraf	Arrafo or Caraf	Arrafo or Caraf	Arrafo or Caraf	Arrafo or Caraf	Arrafo or Caraf or Angrafe	Arrafo or Caraf

















# APPENDIX 6













## THE SEVEN WEATHER DISTRICTS OF SOMALIA



# APPENDIX 6

## THE SEVEN WEATHER DISTRICTS OF SOMALIA

NO.	SOMALI NAME	ENGLISH	ARABIC IN ROMAN SCRIPT	SHAPE OF THE STATION	ARABIC	
1	Godan	Shartan	Al Shardaan		الشرطان	١
2	Liſtan	Arie ?	Al Badiin		البطين	٢
3	Laxo	Pleiades	Al Thuraya		الثريا	٣
4	Cadaad	Aldebaran	Al Dabaraan		الدبران	٤
5	Aggaalli-cas	Orien (esp. Bellatrix	Al haqca		الحقعة	٥
6	Agaalli-Cad	Sirius	Al Hanca		الهنعة	٦
7	Afaggal	Caſtor Pllux Procyon Gombiza?	Al Diraac		الذراع	٧
8	Naaf-Cadde	Praesepe	Al Nathra	(White Patch)	النثرة	٨
9	Naaf-Madoobe	Rasalas (near)	Al Darfa		الطرفة	٩
10	Tar	Regulus (and others)	Algebha		الجبهة	١٠
11	Majin	Zaama Chort	Al Zabra		الزبرة	١١
12	Kuxdin	Zavi jaba	Al Sarfa		الصرفة	١٢
13	Naaso-Gaal	1. Algorab 2. Gienah 3. ? 4. ?	Al-Cawaa		العواء	١٣
14	Dirir	Spica	Al Samaak		السماك	١٤
15	Garbo	,?	Al Qafra		الغفر	١٥

NO.	SOMALI NAME	ENGLISH	ARABIC IN ROMAN SCRIPT	SHAPE OF THE STATION	ARABIC	
16	Bayaxow	1. Zuben El-Chamali 2. Zuben el-Genubi	Al-Zabaani		الزباني	١٦
17	Gudban	?	Al Ikliil		الإكليل	١٧
18	Lib-Cas	Antares	Al Qalb		القلب	١٨
19	Xoor (rey)	?	Al Shawla		الشولة	١٩
20	Mareego-Dheer	?	Al Nucaa'im		النعائم	٢٠
21	Madhan	?	Bulda	Emptiness	البلدة	٢١
22	Faruur	Dahib	Sacdu Daabix		سعد الذابح	٢٢
23	Jed-Hore	?	Sacdul Bulca		سعد بلغ	٢٣
24	Jed-Dambe	Sadal Suud	Sacdul Sucuud		سعد السعود	٢٤
25	Rab-Hore	Danab Elged	Sacdul Ukhbia		سعد الأخبية	٢٥
26	Rab-Dambe	Skat	Al-Farcul Muqaddam		الفرغ المقدم	٢٦
27	Duuganti	?	Badnul Xuut		الفرغ المؤخر	٢٧
28	Farangaag or Meecad	?	Farcul Mu'akhar		بطن الحوت	٢٨

NOTE:

After the body of this paper was completed, I was referred to a very old, hand-written book in Arabic said to be written by the grandfather of Isman Sh. Xasan Garoorre, who together with H. Mokamed Axmed Liibaan brought the book to me. The number of stars listed for each GOD in that book differed considerably from what most other experts believe. The fact is, that opinions on this and other matters of oral folklore differ greatly, as I mentioned in the Introduction to this paper, because of the absence of a written system for Somalia and because of the

existence of cultural dialects. A full investigation of these differences will have to remain for future research. Following is a list of the number of stars for each GOD in this paper, compared to Isman's list from his grandfather's book:

<b>VIEW OF THE EXPERTS</b>		<b>VIEW OBTAINED FROM THE BOOK BY ISMAN'S GRANDFATHER</b>
<b>Station</b>	<b>No of Stars</b>	<b>No of Stars</b>
1	3	3
2	1 or 3	3
3	6	6
4	1 or 6	8
5	13	6
6	1	3
7	4	4
8	1 (a tiny star on a white patch)	16
9	0 or 4	5
10	4	4
11	2	2
12	1	1
13	4	5
14	1	1
15	5	4
16	4 or 3	2
17	4	4
18	1 or 3	3
19	10 or 11	9
20	10 +	9
21	0	9
22	2	3
23	1	1
24	2	1
25	2	6
26	1	22

	VIEW OF THE EXPERTS	VIEW OBTAINED FROM THE BOOK BY ISMAN'S GRANDFATHER
27	3	2
28	4	24

# APPENDIX 7A

CHART OF THE GOD SYSTEM IN SOMALIA							
GOD NO.	DISTRICT 1 QARDHO	DISTRICT 2 BURCO	DISTRICT 3 HARGEISA/ JIGJIGA	DISTRICT 4 QABRIDDAHARRE	DISTRICT 5 BANAADIR	DISTRICT 6 BAYDHABO	DISTRICT 7 WAJEER
1	Faraaci or Godan	Faraaci or Godan	Gudban or Godan	Godan or Faraaci	Hoggaan or Godan	Godin	Godin
2	Listan	Listan	Listan	Listan	Listan	Listan	Listan
3	Laxo or Urur	Laxo or Urur	Laxo or Urur	Laxo or Urur	Lixo or Urur	Urur or Laxa	Urur
4	Cadaad	Lax-kor, cadaad or Galgaal	Lax-mar or Cadaad	Cadaad	Galgaal or Cadaad	Edaad	Cadaad
5	Agaalli- Guduud	Agaalli Wareney	Agaalli- Wareney or Saco.	Agaalli-cadaad	Saco or Agaalli- Cad	Egaalli-ad	Agaalli-Cad
6	Agaalli- Cad	Agaalli- Caanood	Agaalli- Caanood	Agaalli-Cadaad	Agaalli- Gaduud or Saca-Ka- Dambeeye	Egaalli Gaduud	Agaalli- Gaduud
7	Afaggaal	Afaggaal	Afaggaal	Afaggaal	Durdur or Afaggaal	Afaggaal	Afaggaal
8	Naaf- Cadde or Canbaar	Naaf-Cadde	Naaf-Cadde or Canbaar	Canbaar or Naaf- Cadde	Canbaar or Naaf-Cadde	Ambaar	Canbaar
9	Naaf- Madoobe	Naaf- Madoobe	Naaf- Madoobe, Candha Qoys or Naaf	Naaf-Madoobe	Naaf- Madoobe	Naaf or Naaf- Madoobe	Naaf or Naaf Madoobe

CHART OF THE GOD SYSTEM IN SOMALIA							
GOD NO.	DISTRICT 1 QARDHO	DISTRICT 2 BURCO	DISTRICT 3 HARGEISA/ JIGJIGA	DISTRICT 4 QABRIDDAHARRE	DISTRICT 5 BANAADIR	DISTRICT 6 BAYDHABO	DISTRICT 7 WAJEER
10	Naaf- Sagaaro Af-Qoys or Tar	Tar or Af- Qoys	Tar or Af- Qoys	Af-Qoys or Tar	Ood-Weyn or Af-Qoys	Af-Goys	Af-Qoys
11	Majin	Majin	Majin	Majin	Dhayle or Majin	Majin	Majin
12	Kuxdin	Kuxdin-Awr	Kuxdin- Hanley	Kuxdin	Kuxdin Caanood or kala hanle	Koxdin	Kuxdin
13	Naaso Gallo or Dirir-Jhawr	Euxdin- Naaso- Gaallood	Kuxdin- Naasa-Gaalle	Naaso- Gaallo	Kuxdin- Naaso- Gallo	Naasa-Geelle	Naaso-Gallo
14	Dirir	Dirir	Dirir	Dirir	Dirir	Dirir	Dirir
15	Garbo	Garbo	Garbo	Garbo	Garbo	Garbo	Garbo
16	Bayaxow	Bayaxow	Bayaxow	Bayaxow	Bayaxow or Kabrasan	Bayaxow	Garbo (dambe)
17	Gudban	Gudban	Gudban	Gudban	Dameer or Gudban	Gudbang	Gudbin
18	Lib-Cas	Lib-Cas	Lib-Cas or Daalallo-Cas	Lib-Cas or Daalallo-Cas	Dadbin or Lib-Gas	Lib-Aas	Lib-Gas

CHART OF THE GOD SYSTEM IN SOMALIA							
GOD NO.	DISTRICT 1 QARDHO	DISTRICT 2 BURCO	DISTRICT 3 HARGEISA/ JIGJIGA	DISTRICT 4 QABRIDDAHARRE	DISTRICT 5 BANAADIR	DISTRICT 6 BAYDHABO	DISTRICT 7 WAJEER
19	Xoor or Dam-meerojoo- geen	Xoorrey	Daalallo- Xoorrey	Xoor	Uur-Weyn- Hore	Xoor	Xoor
20	Mareego- Dheer	Mareego- dheer	Mareego- dheer	Mareego-dheer	Uur-weyn- dambe or mareego- dheer	Mareego-dheer	Mareego-dheer
21	Madhan or Bah	Madhan	Madhan	Madhan or Dameero- Joogeen	Bah or Damaero-la- Joog	Dameer-la-Roog	Dameer-la-joog
22	Faruur	Faruur-Cirir	Faruur-Cirir	Faruur	Faruur	Faruur	Faruur
23	Jed- Gabarre	Jed-Kabarre	Jed- Kabarre	Jed-Gabarre	Jed or Jedo	Jid-Hora	Jid-hore
24	Jed- Dhirigle	Jed-Dhirigle	Jed-Dhirigle	Jed-Dhirigle	Ridmo or Jed-Dambe	Jid-Dambo	Jid-dambe
25	Jed- Gacangle	Jed-Gacangle	Jed-Gacangle	Ban-Horo or Kuman-hore	Rab-Horo or Kuman Horo	Rab-Hora	Rab-Hore
26	Rab-Hore	Jed-Durruqle	Jed- Dhurruqle	Rab-Dambe or Ban-Dambe	Kuman- Dambe or Rab dambe	Rab-Dambo	Rab-Dambe



CHART OF THE GOD SYSTEM IN SOMALIA							
GOD NO.	DISTRICT 1 QARDHO	DISTRICT 2 BURCO	DISTRICT 3 HARGEISA/ JIGJIGA	DISTRICT 4 QABRIDDAHARRE	DISTRICT 5 BANAADIR	DISTRICT 6 BAYDHABO	DISTRICT 7 WAJEER
27	Rab-Dambe or Joog-Madoobe	Duganti	Cirir-Duugato	Meecaad-Hore	Kabro or Meecaad	Mee'aad-Dhergana Mee'aad Horo	Meecaad-Dhergane
28	Meecaad	Farangaag	Meecaad-Dabaddalool	Meecaad-dambe	Meeoaaad, Meecaad-dambe or Meecaad Gibille	Mee'aad yibille or Mee'aad dambo or Mee'aad	Meecaad Gibille

Footnote for Pp.

Notes:

1. Many experts reverse the order of Stations No.5 and No.6.
2. In Regions No.1,4,5,6, and 7, the 28 Stations are divided into 4 groups of 7 Stations each, named as follows:  
Dist. 1: Raqo, Naafo-Diirir, cirir. Dist. 4: Godan, Naafo, Garbo, Cirir. Dist. 5: Raqo, Naafo, Garbo, Cirir. Dist. 6: Godin, Naafo, Garbo, Dirir. Dist. 7: Godin, Naaf, Garbo, Cirir.
3. In District 2 and 3, the divisions are as follows:  
1 & 28: Faraaoi; 2: Liŝtan; 3 & 4 Lax-mar; 5 & 6 Agaalliyo; 7 Afaggaal 8 & 9 Naafo; 10 & 11: Tar; 12 & 13: Kuxdimo; 14 to 17: Dirir; 18 to 21: Daalallo; 22 to 27: Cirir.

# APPENDIX 8

## THE SOMALI SEASONS IN THE SEVEN WEATHER DISTRICT

DISTRICT 1: QARDHO		
Habar-Ari	Dayr	Dambasame
Diraac-Good		
Lix-Kor	Jilaal	
Daleelatire		
Axal		
Baranbeer		
Lifato (Gap)		
Toddob	Gu	Bilo-Dirir
Amminla		
Fushade		
Gu-soore		
Samuulad	Xagaa	
Dirir-Sagaaro		
Yaare (Gap)		

DISTRICT II: BURCO		
Dayr-Halalood	Dayr	Jilaal half-year
Dayr-Habbis		
Dayr-Dirir		
Dayr-Dambasame	Jilaal	
Wajiine		
Xays		
Mehra-Jaan (Gap)		
Toddob	Gu	Gu half-year
Daydo		
Seermaweydo		
Cawl		
Dirir-Sagaaro	Xagaa	
Samaloho		
Mehra-Jaan (Gap)		

DISTRICT III: JIGJIGA		
Dayr-Halalood	Dayr	Jilaal half-year
Dayr-Habbis		
Dambasame	Jilaal	
Wajiine		
Samaloho (Gap)		
Xays	Kaliil	
Toddob		
Seermaweydo	Gu	Gu half-year
Cawl		
Dirir-Sagaaro	Xagaa	
Karan		
Samaloho (Gap)		

DISTRICT IV: QABRIDDAHARRE		
Dayr-Dirir	Dayr	Jilaal half-year
Diraac-Good		
Lix-Kor	Jilaal	
Toddobo		
Habar-Adhi		
Kaliil (Gap)		
Ceelka-Geeye	Gu	Gu half-year
Candho-qoys		
Cambaar		
Xagaa-Cad	Xagaa	
Xays		

DISTRICT V: BANAADIR		
Kala-haan	Dayr	Jilaal half-year
Kal-Abuur		
Qaydo-Dayreed		
Barwaaqo		
Yaare (Jilaal Gap)		
Jar	Gu	Gu half-year
Habar-Eri		
Ceelka-Geeye		
Samuulad		
Xays	Xagaa	
Laxo-Dhaqo		
Dumaal		

DISTRICT VI: THE BAYDHABO INTER-RIVER AREAS		
Beer-Fal	Dayr	Jilaal half-year
Dayr		
Ragaal		
Bar-Bax (Gap)		
Beer-Goymo	Jilaal	
Bal-daaq		
Jar		
Roob-Garas or Hogo (Gap)		
Beer-Fal	Gu	Gu half-year
Gu		
Naq-Dambeed		
Beer-Goymo	Xagaa	
Bal-Daaq		
Barwaaqo		

DISTRICT VII: WAJEER (THE NFD)	
Kala-Haan	Dayr (about one month long)
Dayr	
Urur-Dhac	
Xanfarow or Dayro-Dhaaf (Gap)	
Afaggaal	Jilaal
Lix-Kor	
Toddob	
Habar-Eri	
Ceel-Geeye	Gu
Canbaar	
Candho-Cays (Dambeed)	
Xagaa (about five months long)	

Notes:

1. JILAAL, begins on the rising of the AFAGGAAL constellation 30 days after the rising of URUR; the first 30 days of it is therefore called “AFAGGAAL”.
2. Lix-kor occurs on the 60<sup>th</sup> night of JILAAL, when the Moon is with the URUR constellation.
3. TODDOB occurs 100 days after LIX-KOR.
4. The JILAAL is 90 days long.
5. The N.F.D. has a long XAGAA of 5 months, and a short DAYR rainfall.



## APPENDIX 9

### SOMALI NAMES FOR THE PLANETS - MALLUUG OR SIYAARIIN

INTERNATIONAL NAME	QARDHO NAME	BURCO NAME	QABRIDDAHARRE NAME	BANAADIR NAME
Sun	Qorrax	Qorrax	Qorrax	Qorrax
Mercury	Dusaa	Hurjub ?	Cudaarid	Dhayl-Gaduud
Venus	Waxaro-xir or Sahra or Xiddig Waaberi	Maqal xidh-xidh or Sahra	Maqal xidh-xidh or Sahra	Waxarra-xir or Sahra or Xiddig Waaberi
Earth	Dhul	Dhul	Dhul	Dhul
Mars	Saxal-Guduud or Saxal	Saxal-Guduud or Saxal	Saxal-Guduud or Saxal	Saxal
Saturn	Farraarre or Mariikh	Mariikh - Dhiigle	Mariikh	Mariikh
Jupiter	Saxal-Cadde Mushtar or Cirjeex	Cir-Jiidh or Mushtar or Saxal-Cadde or Gob-Dhawr	Cir-Jiidh or Mushtar	Cir-Jiidh or Dhool-Mare or Mushtar
Uranus	?	?	?	?
Neptune	?	Docey	?	?
Pluto	?	?	?	?

# APPENDIX 10

## A PARTIAL LIST OF EXPORTS ON SOMALI PASTORAL LORE

1. X. Maxamed Axmed Liibaan of Ceel-Buur: a poet, historian, sheekh, mediator and expert on Somali social life and customs, philosopher.
2. X. Cabdi X. Yuusuf Samater of Bosaaso: an historian, expert on social life and traditions, expert on customary law.
3. Sheekh Maxamed Nuuraddiin of Qabridaharro: a great Sheekh, historian, mediator and expert on Somali social life and in customary law. (now a resident of Mogadishu).
4. Sh. Nuur X. Yuusuf of Obiya, a sheekh, historian, expert on Somali life. (Now a resident of Mogadishu).
5. Maxamed X. Huseen (SHEEKO-XARIIR): an outstanding man on history, Somali social life, mediation, religion, and in folklore. Also in customary law, a philosopher and a traditional doctor of high quality. (Now working in the Ministry of Information in Hargeysa).
6. Cumar Xuseen Gorse (Austerieliye): a great poet, historian, expert on Somali social life and in mediation. (Now working in the Ministry of Information).
7. Aw Jaamac Cumar Ciisa: a great historian and a writer. Also a researcher in history and in folklore. (Working in the Ministry of Education).
8. Sheekhdoon Ibraahim of Buhoodle: historian, an expert on Somali social life and folklore, and a doctor of traditional medicine.
9. Sheekh. Cismaan Sh. Xasan (Garoorre) of Ceel-Buur: an expert on the social farming system and in folklore. (Resident of Wardhiigley).
10. Caamir Ducaale Cilmi of Burco: an outstanding man in astronomy, astrology and weather lore. Also a great doctor of traditional medicine.
11. Cismaan Yuusuf Keonadiid of Hobiya: an historian, poet, expert on somali social life and customs. (Now resident in Mogadishu).
12. Sheekh Caqib Cabdullaahi of Jigjiga: a researcher in folklore and traditions. (Now resident in Mogadishu).
13. Xuseen Sheekh Axmed (KADDARE) of Wardhiigley: a researcher in

- folklore and traditions. (Now working in the Ministry of Information).
14. Muṣṭafa Sheekh Xasan of Baydhabo: a researcher in social life and literature Also good in sculpture. (Now resident in Mogadishu).
  15. Yuusuf Meygaag Samatar of Hargeysa: a researcher in literature and Somali Social life and an historian.
  16. Xuseen Aw Moxamed Ashkir of Gallaaddi: an expert on customary law, social life, and literature.
  17. Xuseen Xayle, of Qabriddaharre: an historian, expert on customary law, social life and in literature.
  18. Xuseen Caabbi Cilmi, of Wardheer: expert in customary law, on social life, on folklore, and on history.
  19. Cabdillaahi Muusa, of Burco: a great poet, historian, expert on social life and in customary law.
  20. Sh. Cali Maxamed (DUDDUMO-GALE), of Mogadishu: an historian, astrologer, a sheikh and expert on social life and literature.
  21. X. Daahir Seed, of Galkaio: an historian, expert on social life and in customary law, and a researcher of folklore.
  22. Cabdalla Nuux, of Ceerigasbo: an historian, an expert on social life and customary law, and a mediator.
  23. Cabdi Saalax (Cabdi-Dheeriyo), of Laas-qoray: an historian, expert on social life and in customary law.
  24. Maxamuud Xoosh, of Buhoodle: a great doctor and veterinarian, expert on social life and customary law.
  25. Yaasin Ali Sharma-arkeh, of Obia: an historian, story-teller, and an expert on social life (Now resident in Mogadishu).
  26. Moxamuud Jaamac-Waal, of Caynabo: an historian, poet, and expert on social life and customary law.
  27. Cabdi Nuur Xiddig, of Ceerigaabo: an historian and expert on social settings and on customary law.
  28. Jirde Cabdullaahi Guuleed, of Oodweyne: expert on social life and in folk literature.
  29. Soofa Ali-Buraale, of Laas-Caanood: an historian and expert in social life and on customary law. (Now resident in Mogadishu).
  30. Cali Yaasiin, of Balli-dhiig: a great traditional doctor, a veterinarian, an historian and a great expert on weather lore, and in soothsaying.

31. X. Ibraahim-Yare Maxamuud, of mezengawen: a renowned traditional doctor.
32. Cali Cigal Axmed, of Gelinsoor: a great traditional doctor.
33. Aw Yuusuf Xuseen, of Hargeysa: an outstanding traditional doctor and veterinarian.
34. Aw Xersi Ibraahim Jaamac, of Dabagorayaale: a traditional doctor and a veterinarian.
35. Aw Aadan Cazalle, of Hargeysa: a renowned traditional doctor and a veterinarian.
36. Maxamed Ibranhim Jaamac, of Dabagorayaale: a traditional doctor.
37. Xuseen Muumin, of Boled-Weyn, a renowned traditional doctor.
38. Seed Cali Cadde, of Gaalkacayo: a famous traditional doctor.
39. X. Cumar Maxamoud, of Widhwidh: a famous traditional doctor.
40. Xirsi Bahal, of Borama: a traditional doctor.
41. Askar Ugas Nuur, of Borama: a weather lore expert.
42. Sheekh Cali Cabdi-Dheere, of Hargeysa: a famous traditional doctor, though he is blind.
43. Cabdi Gadweyne Aw Muuse Axmed: a traditional surgeon, especially in orthopedics
44. Warfaa Nagan Khalaf, of Qabriddaharre: a famous traditional doctor.
45. Cabdi Afey, of Xananley: a traditional doctor.
46. Dhooddi Cabdulkadir Aw Xasan, of Qabridaharre/Mogadishu: a traditional doctor.
47. Maxamuud Qurar Babdi Belel, of Xananley: a traditional doctor.
48. Jaahuur Dhegagool, of Reydab-khaatumo: an expert on folklore and traditions, as well as on customs and social life.
49. Afrax Mooggeh Gudey, of Mosengaweyn: a traditional doctor.
50. The chief doctor of the Reer Afrax Sifaad family of Aadan-Yabaal. The whole family are traditional doctors.
51. Maxamed Aadan, of Duruqse: a traditional doctor.
52. The chief doctor of the Reer Gaalaay family of Afgooye. Again, these are all traditional doctors
53. Ibrahim X. Nuur of Burco: an historian, expert on social life, folklore and customs.
54. Sheekh Maxamed Cumerey of Dhoobey: a traditional doctor.

55. Sheekh Ebba, of Mogadishu: a traditional doctor.
56. Sheekh Faarax Maxamuud-Gabaar, of Balli-dhiig: a traditional doctor.
57. Sheekh Yarow Sheekh Cabdilladiif, of Bur-Hakaba: a traditional doctor.
58. Aw Xasan Filadheere, of Banaadir: a great weather lorist.
59. Maxamed Sheekh Cabdalle, of Dhinsoor: a great expert on weather and in social studies, a great story-teller and a poet.
60. Sugaal Xasan Nuur Aw Cabdi, of Burco: a traditional doctor and a surgeon.
61. Diiriyo Xiirey, of Buhoodle: both a human and animal doctor.
62. Maxamed Rocble-Dheere, of Habari-Heshay: both a human and animal doctor.
63. Warsama Ali-Hooreeye, of Burco; a great weather lorist.
64. Wadan-Danane, of Belli-dhiig; a traditional doctor and surgeon.
65. Cabdi Aadan Daa'uud, of iif-Madow; a doctor and veterinarian.
66. Mawliid Cabdi Axmed, of Af-Madow; a great traditional orthopedic doctor.
67. Jaamac Cali Muumin, of Xaadhadhan; a soothsayer.
68. Maxamed Xuseyn Bulbul, of Duruqsi; a great weather lore expert.
69. Xasan Cismaan Bidde, of Caynabe: a great weather lore expert.



## GARANUUG

Garanuug Limited waa shirkad waxbarasho iyo faafin. Hiigsi waxaa u ah: “soo saariista ummad garaad suubban iyo aqoon sare leh” Si ay uga midhadhaliso hiraalkeeda oo loo helo Soomaali la jaanqaadi kara, wax na ku biirin kara nolasha casriga ah waxa ay ka shaqaynaysaa in ay diyaariso buugaag iyo qoraallo ku saabsan mawduucyo badan, qaar asalkooda af-Soomaali lagu diyaariyey, qaarna afaf kale laga soo turjumay. Garanuug waxa ay la shaqaynaysaa aqoonyahanno Soomaaliyeed oo ku gudajira in ay soo saaraan buugaag cusub, sida buug dhawaan soo bixi doona oo loogu talagalay dugsiyada sare.

### Qorshe

Waxqabadka dhow waxaa ay diiradda saaraysa in ay daboosho baahida goobaha waxbarasho ka haysata buugaagta waxbarasho ee ku qoran afkeenna hooyo. Garanuug waxa ay soo saaraysaa buugaag tayadoodu sarraysa, oo maado ahaan iyo qoraal ahaan ba aa looga soo shaqeeyay. Garanuug waxqabadkeeda iyo in ay akhristeyaasheeda u soo gudbiso xog iyo aqoon heer sarraysa dhowaan filo. Garanuug waxay u taagan tahay kobacaaga iyo horumarkaaga, waxaana halkudheg u ah: Quudi Maankaaga, Kobci Garaadkaaga.

***Yoolkayagu waa ummad garaad suubban iyo aqoon sare leh.***



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