

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF ADDIS ABABA · ETHIOPIA

The Scientific Investigation of the Ethiopic Languages

*An inaugural lecture delivered at
the University College of Addis Ababa
on 12 February 1954*

by

WOLF LESLAU

*Professor, University of California, Los Angeles
Visiting Professor, University College of
Addis Ababa*

.L · LEIDEN

1956

THE SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION
OF THE ETHIOPIIC LANGUAGES

YOUR EXCELLENCY, Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, students of the College! It is a great honour for me and a real pleasure to share with you, speakers of Ethiopic, my experiences in the field of Ethiopic linguistics. I sincerely hope that in a few years from now one of you, students of the College, will be able to inaugurate a chair of Ethiopia, her culture, literature, history, and languages.

I will limit my lecture today to the problem of the Ethiopic languages, and among the Ethiopic languages, to the Semitic group alone. The reason for this limitation is in certain respects obvious. Amharic, the national language of the country, and Geez, the most ancient language of Ethiopia, belong to the Semitic group. There are indeed three language families spoken in Ethiopia: there is the Semitic group, the Cushitic group, and the Nilotic group. Since we shall later discuss the Semitic group in some detail, let me just mention briefly some languages of the other families. Thus, some of the

Cushitic languages are Sidamo, Galla, Somali, Saho, Agau, with the various dialects and sub-groups. The Nilotic languages include Barea, Kunama in the north, and others.

You certainly know that many languages are related to one another and go back to a common origin. To cite only a few languages familiar to you and their relationship with one another: French is related to Italian, and together with Spanish and Rumanian goes back to Latin; all these languages belong to the Romance group. Or English, together with German, Dutch, and Swedish, belongs to the Germanic group of languages. The question then arises: to what other languages are Amharic and Geez related and to which language family do they belong? In the present state of our knowledge the answer is clear. Amharic, Geez, and some other Ethiopic languages that will be mentioned later belong to the Semitic language family.

Before we discuss in greater detail the Semitic Ethiopic languages, I would like first to say a few words about the Semitic languages in general.

We do not know the parent language of the various Semitic languages, which we call Proto-Semitic. Nor do we know what we might call the

cradle of the primitive seat of Proto-Semitic. Possibly Arabia was the cradle of Proto-Semitic, possibly Mesopotamia, that is, present-day Iraq. As a consequence of the migration of the various Semitic tribes, various Semitic languages developed. These various Semitic languages are conveniently divided into North Semitic and South Semitic. North Semitic in its turn is divided into North-east Semitic and North-west Semitic. North-east Semitic includes Assyro-Babylonian, or Akkadian, a language group that we know from inscriptions on clay going back as far as the third millennium B. C. This language group was spoken in Mesopotamia and is now extinct.

North-west Semitic includes Aramaic and Canaanite, languages formerly spoken in Syria and Palestine. Aramaic had a great variety of dialects, the most important one for the purpose of Ethiopic studies being Syriac. Indeed, Syriac was the linguistic means of expression of the Eastern church of which the Ethiopian church is a part; besides, it was also from Syriac, directly or indirectly, that many Geez writings were translated. There are very few remnants of Aramaic at present; some Aramaic is still spoken in three villages in the Antilbanon, and around Lake Urmia. Canaanite (coming from

Canaan, the ancient name of Palestine) includes, among others, Phoenician, Moabite, and Hebrew. Of all these languages Hebrew alone is still spoken, in Israel. Another language belonging to the same group is Ugaritic or Ras-Shamra, a language recently discovered in the northern part of Syria. Its precise position within Canaanite is not yet established.

South Semitic is also divided into a South-east and a South-west. South-east Semitic includes Ethiopic and South Arabic. About Ethiopic we shall speak later. As for South Arabic, there is an epigraphic or an ancient South Arabic, and a modern South Arabic. Epigraphic South Arabic includes various dialects, such as Sabaean, Minaean, Hadramautic, and others: they are known from inscriptions on stones going back as far as the first millennium B. C. Modern South Arabic includes Semitic dialects spoken in certain parts of southern Arabia which are known as Mehri, Šhauri, Sogotri, Botahari, and others. We shall see later how important the study of both epigraphic South Arabic and modern South Arabic is for a better understanding of Semitic Ethiopic.

South-west Semitic includes Arabic, that is,

classical Arabic and the various Arabic dialects spoken in Asia and Africa.

Let us now turn to Ethiopic, by which we mean Semitic Ethiopic. The indigenous language of the country was not a Semitic one. Cushitic was the language group of the geographical domain that at present more or less coincides with the Empire of Ethiopia. It was only sometime in the first millennium B. C. that Semites from South Arabia came over to Ethiopia. We do not know precisely from what region they originated. All we can say is that they were speakers of one or more of the South Arabic dialects. They imported from South Arabia a Semitic language and a Semitic script, and it is this language that developed into Semitic Ethiopic. The linguistic connection between South Arabic and Ethiopic is evident in many points of the morphology and of the vocabulary. It should therefore be stressed here that the scholar in Ethiopic will have to pay special attention to the study of South Arabic.

We shall now deal briefly with the geographic distribution of the various Semitic Ethiopic languages. The most archaic features of the Proto-Ethiopic language are undoubtedly preserved in

Geez. Geez was most probably spoken until the twelfth century A.D. For political reasons, with the shift of the political power to the south, the language of the south, namely Amharic, took its place. Geez remained the language of literature and of prayer. The oldest inscriptions in Geez date from the third or fourth centuries. We know Geez, thanks to the scientific efforts of the Ethiopian and Western scholars, but we are still in the dark concerning important phonetic problems in the pronunciation of certain consonants. True, there is an oral tradition of the pronunciation of Geez, but it is doubtful whether the tradition represents the original pronunciation.

The Semitic Ethiopic languages closely related with Geez are Tigré and Tigrinya. Tigré is spoken in the northern part of Eritrea, in Massawa and the Dahlag islands in the east, and in the Keren and Agordat divisions in the west. It is also spoken in the border regions of the Sudan. The only writings existing in this language are some religious texts translated through the efforts of the Protestant mission.

Tigrinya is spoken in the northern part of Ethiopia, in the Tigrai province. It is also used in Eritrea in the Hamastien and Seræ divisions, in Akkele

Guzay, and partly in the Keren, Agordat, and Massawa divisions. Tigrinya has the beginning of a literature, textbooks, and newspapers.

The national language of the country is Amharic. The oldest written documents of Amharic date from the fourteenth century. These documents are the so-called 'Songs of the Kings'. From these documents as well as from those of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries we presume that Amharic of that period was slightly different from the present-day Amharic. The phonetic and morphological variants of the different Amharic-speaking regions are relatively slight. As for the recent literature of Amharic, you are the witnesses of its development.

The language that is the most closely connected with Amharic is Argobba. If we disregard certain phonetic and morphological features, we gain the impression that Argobba is an Amharic dialect. There are two kinds of Argobba: one that we call the northern Argobba, spoken in the region of Ankober, and another one, the southern Argobba, spoken in a region south of Harar. Argobba is disappearing. North Argobba is being supplanted by Amharic, and South Argobba, so it seems, is being entirely submerged by Galla.

Another Semitic language is Adare, or, as we also call it, Harari. Harari is spoken in the walled city of Harar. There is an Adare literature of Moslem character, since the inhabitants of Harar are Moslems. The writings are in the Arabic alphabet.

To the south of Addis Ababa, in the region of Gurage, a relatively small province, there is an extraordinary variety of dialects that can be divided at least into three groups: (1) East Gurage, including Selti, Ulbarag (Urbarag), Innegor, Wolane, and the dialects of the islands of the lake Zway; (2) West Gurage, including such dialects as Chaha, Eža, Ennemor, Gyeto, Muher, Masqan, Gogot; (3) Northern Gurage with Aymellel as the only representative. When speaking above of 'Gurage' I mentioned the term 'dialects', but if we apply for the definition of 'dialect' the criterion of intelligibility, I wonder whether we are not entitled to speak of Gurage languages, since a Selti speaker, for instance, will not understand an Ennemor or a Chaha speaker, and an Aymellel speaker will have difficulty in understanding a Wolane speaker.

Finally there is Gafat spoken in the Womberma region of southern Godjam. Allow me to be more personal as far as Gafat is concerned, since Gafat is one of my linguistic adventures in Ethiopia. We

knew that Gafat was still used at the end of the eighteenth century. Indeed, the famous traveller James Bruce had had translated the Song of Songs into various Ethiopic languages, among others into Gafat. The manuscript of the Gafat translation has been preserved in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. I had occasion to publish this manuscript in 1945, working out the structure of the language on the basis of this single manuscript. The language was considered as completely extinct. During my trip in Ethiopia in 1946 I made an effort to find out whether there were still some speakers of Gafat. After an investigation of about three weeks and thanks to the generous help of the Ethiopian authorities of Godjam, I was able to find four speakers in the region of the Blue Nile, in Womberma. There is, of course, a strong possibility that there are more than four speakers of the language, but it remains true that Gafat is disappearing completely.

After this brief survey of the various Semitic Ethiopic languages the question arises: is there any marked difference in the phonology, morphology, and vocabulary of the various languages? If so, what conclusion should we draw, on the basis of these differences, concerning the Proto-Ethiopic

type of language? A close examination of the various Ethiopic languages leads us to the conclusion that from the descriptive point of view—and this classification happens to coincide with the geographic distribution—the Semitic Ethiopic languages can be divided into two groups: a North Ethiopic group and a South Ethiopic group. The North Ethiopic group would include Geez, Tigré, and Tigrinya; the South Ethiopic group includes Amharic, Argobba, Adare, Gurage, and Gafat. I shall not enter here into too many technical details, but let me just mention a few points that mark off the northern group from the southern group.

Here are a few features in the phonology. There is a group of consonants that we call laryngeals. These consonants are: *ħ*?, *ʔ*, *ʰ*, and *h*; the velar *ɣ* also shares this particular feature. The laryngeals and the velar *h* belong to the Semitic stock and are also found in Geez; in Tigrinya and in Tigré these sounds are still preserved except for the velar *ɣ* *h* which coalesced with the laryngeal *h*. A few examples will illustrate the point. In initial position: Geez, Tigrinya *ħħħ* 'āsā'ā 'tie, bind', Tigré *ħħħ* 'asra; Geez, Tigré *ʔʔʔ* 'ayn 'eye', Tigrinya *ʔʔʔ* 'ayni; Geez, Tigré, Tigrinya *ʰʰʰ* haḡār 'region, pro-

vince'; Geez, Tigrinya *ħħħ* hazānā 'be sad', Tigré *ħħħ* hazna; Geez *ɣɣɣ* hadārā 'dwell' (with *h*), but Tigrinya *ħħħ* hadārā, Tigré *ħ.ħ.ħ* hadra. In final position: Geez, Tigré *ħħħ* sām 'a 'hear', Tigrinya *ħħħ* sām 'e; Geez, Tigré *ħħħ* bārha 'be clear', Tigrinya *ħħħ* bārhe; Geez, Tigré *ħħħ* fālha 'boil', Tigrinya *ħħħ* fālhe; Geez *ħħħ* bāzha 'be numerous' (with *h*), but Tigrinya *ħħħ* bāzhe, Tigré *ħħħ* bāzha.

The status of the Proto-Ethiopic laryngeals is not the same in most of the South Ethiopic languages. Indeed, in the initial position all the laryngeals (except occasionally *h*) and the velar *h* no longer have any consonant value; they have become *zero* and are merely carriers of the vowels. In medial and final positions they disappeared completely, causing original trilateral roots to become biliteral. Amharic will be taken as an illustration of this phenomenon, but the facts also apply to most of the South Ethiopic languages. Thus the above-mentioned examples are represented in Amharic as follows. In the initial position: 'tie, bind' *ħħħ* assā'ā; 'eye' *ʔʔʔ* (also written *ħħħ*) ayn; 'country' *ħħħ* agār; 'be sad' *ħħħ* azzānā; 'spend the night' *ħħħ* addārā. In the final position: 'help' *ħħħ* rādā (Geez *ħħħ* rādā); 'be bright' *ħħħ* bārha (Geez *ħħħ* bārha); 'boil' *ħħħ* fālha

(Geez **ፈልላ** *fālha*); 'be numerous' **በዘ** *bāzza* (Geez **በዘኃ** *bāzha*).

Another phonetic feature may be mentioned. There is a phonetic phenomenon that we call palatalization or prepalatalization. In this process the dentals and sibilants **ደ** *d*, **ተ** *t*, **ጠ** *ṭ*, **ሰ** *s*, **ዘ** *z*, **ነ** *n*, and **ለ** *l* become prepalatalized into **ጰ** *ṣ*, **ቸ** *č*, **ጬ** *ḷ*, **ሰ** *š*, **ዘ** *ž*, **ፕ** *ṣ̣*, and **የ** *ɣ* when they are followed by a front vowel *-i* or *-ya*. The prepalatalization is a regular process in all the South Ethiopic languages in the verbal forms. The prepalatalization does not occur in the North Ethiopic languages in the same conditions. Thus the form of the active participle of a Tigrinya verb such as **ክፋተ** *kəfati* 'he who opens' (with final *t*) or of Geez **ክፍለ** *kəhali* 'he who is able' (with final *l*) remains without change of the last consonant in the North Ethiopic languages, but in South Ethiopic the last radical is subject to palatalization. Taking again Amharic as an illustration we shall find: **ወለፕ** *wäləṣ* 'he who engenders' (from *wald*), **ክፋቸ** *kəfáč* 'he who opens' (from *kft*), **ገለጭ** *gäláč* 'he who discovers' (from *glt*), **ወረሽ** *wäráč* 'he who inherits' (from *wrs*), **ገረዥ** *gäráč* 'he who cuts' (from *grz*), **አፋኝ** *addan* 'hunter' (from *addanä*), **ክፋይ** *kəfay* 'he who pays' (from *kftl*). The same

palatalization occurs in the imperative feminine forms in South Ethiopic (thus **ክፈቸ** *kəfáč* 'open', from ***kəfati**; **ክፈይ** *kəfay* 'pay', from ***kəfali**, and so on), or in the so-called instrumental (thus **መክፈቻ** *məkfäčä* 'key', from ***məkfätiya** 'instrument to open', as witnessed by a form such as **መልቀጧይ** *mälqänīya*).

A feature in the morphology, namely the formation of the plural, may be mentioned at this point. The North Ethiopic languages have two kinds of plural, an external plural and an internal plural. The external plural consists in the addition of an external element to the basis of the singular; the internal plural consists in the internal vocalic change of the singular basis. A few examples will be helpful as illustration. External plural: Geez **ዳደቃ** *sadaq* 'just': pl. **ዳደቃፍ** *sadaqan*; Tigrinya **ከመም** *hamum* 'sick': pl. **ከመማት** *hamumat*; Tigré **ቁደብ** *qassub* 'angry': pl. **ቁደብም** *qassubam*. Internal plural: Geez **እግር** 'ager' 'foot': pl. **እግር** 'ager'; Tigrinya **ክፀር** *kəṣār* 'lip': pl. **ከፍር** *kəṣār*; Tigré **እግር** 'ager' 'foot': pl. **እግር** 'ager'. The South Ethiopic languages do not have the internal plural; only the external plural is used in these languages. So, for instance, Amharic **ቤት** *bet* 'house': pl. **ቤቶች** *betoč*; Argobba *bed* 'house': pl. *bedáč*; Gafat *gəggäčä* 'house': pl. *gəggäčä*.

Finally the formation of the gender clearly marks off the North Ethiopic languages from the majority of the South Ethiopic group. Indeed, the North Ethiopic languages (and also Harari) form the feminine of the adjective with the Semitic ending *-t*; thus, Geez **ወናይ** *šānāy* 'beautiful': fem. **ወናይት** *šānāyt*; Tigrinya **ከፋት** *kāfat* 'he who opens': fem. **ከፋትት** *kāfātt*; Tigré **ብጽል** *bašāl* 'cooked': fem. **ብጽልት** *bašāla-t*. South Ethiopic, however, no longer uses the ending *-t* as mark of the feminine. Thus, for instance, Amharic **ተልላ** *tallāq* 'big' is both masculine and feminine, as is also Chaha **ናቂ** *naq* 'big'.

In view of these differences and of many others, we can now ask the question: was there *one* South Arabic dialect that was transported into Ethiopia and then became differentiated into the two different groups of North Ethiopic and South Ethiopic, or were there different South Arabic dialects that came over to Ethiopia? This is a problem of prime importance for our understanding of the development of the Ethiopic languages. My provisional answer would be that there was one single South Arabic dialect that developed into Proto-Ethiopic. This Proto-Ethiopic type became differentiated into various groups for various reasons. The main dif-

ferentiation lies in the preservation or in the loss of archaic features (such as the laryngeals, the internal plural, the feminine mark *-t*), or in the development of new features (such as the prepalatalization). The North Ethiopic languages are more conservative in this respect. As for the reasons why North Ethiopic preserved the Semitic character more tenaciously than South Ethiopic, one can only guess. Most probably the Semitic colonization of northern Ethiopia was more dense and intensified and was thus less subjected to extra-Semitic influences, such as Cushitic. We will speak later about the influence of Cushitic.

One is entitled to ask the question: why study and investigate all these languages and dialects, especially as we saw that some of them are spoken by four individuals, as is probably the case of Gaḥat, or by a few hundred individuals, as may be the case of Argobba? I would stress here the point that we are not interested in the practical aspect of the question, that is, in speaking, writing, or even reviving these languages. Our main concern with these languages and dialects lies in the scientific domain. There is not the slightest doubt that a country as vast as Ethiopia should strive for a single national

language and that this language should be Amharic. But since we are interested in Amharic, its structure, history, and development, it becomes evident that this aim can be achieved only if we investigate all the other Ethiopic languages as well as the Cushitic languages of Ethiopia and also the Semitic languages other than Ethiopic. Without entering into too many technical details, let me just mention a few points to justify this statement.

The few examples will be taken from the phonology, morphology, vocabulary, and syntax.

A case of phonology will be considered here. We know about the alternance of *z* and *ǰ* in Amharic, as in *ṚṣṣṢ ḡāmmäwä* and *ṘṣṣṢ zämmäwä* 'begin', or in *ṘṘ ḡoro* and *ṘṘ zoro* 'ear'. Nothing in the phonetic system of Amharic can explain to us this alternance. If we consider, however, that in Sidamo, which can be considered the 'substratum' language of Amharic, this alternance occurs, we may safely assume that this particular feature is due to Sidamo influence.

Other examples in the phonology connected with lexicography come to my mind. There is an Amharic root *ṢṢ ṭäbba* meaning both 'to suck' and 'to dawn'. Everyone will agree that the relationship

between these two meanings is quite peculiar. No etymological *tour de force* can explain this relationship, but Geez will help us in the elucidation of this problem. Indeed, we shall notice that the Amharic root *ṢṢ ṭäbba* represents a coalescence or coming together of two different roots of Geez, namely of *ṢṢ ṭäbäwä* 'to suck', that by a phonetic and morphological process of Amharic became *ṢṢ ṭäbba* in Amharic, and of *ṘṘ ṣäbba* 'to dawn', that by another phonetic process of Amharic also became *ṢṢ ṭäbba*. It is the coalescence of these two roots which can explain the different meanings of the Amharic verb *ṢṢ ṭäbba*.

Likewise the different meanings of Amharic *ṘṘ ṭä-märä* 'be forgiven' and 'study' can be explained only if we go back to the origin of this verb in Geez and the other North Ethiopic languages. From these languages we learn again that the Amharic root *ṘṘ ṭä-märä* represents a coalescence of two different roots, namely of Geez *ṘṘ ṭä-mährä* 'to study' (root *mhr*) and of *ṘṘ ṭä-mährä* 'be forgiven' (root *mhr*).

A few examples in the domain of the morphology will also prove the point. There are in Amharic

verbs of the type **ገገ** *näggärä* 'to say' and **ጠየየ** *täyyäqä* 'to ask', both having the same syllabic structure, that is, three radicals each of them having the vowel *ä* and the second radical being geminated or long. But for the expression of the present or of the future we have for **ገገ** *näggärä* the form **ይገገረል** *yenägral*, with the second radical (*g*) simple, whereas for **ጠየየ** *täyyäqä* we have **ይጠየቃል** *yatäyyaqal*, with the gemination of the second radical (*yy*). Yet nothing in the nature of the consonants or in the form of the verb in the perfect can explain the difference in the treatment of the imperfect. Here again we have to go back to Geez where we notice that these verbs are of a different type altogether. Indeed, the Amharic verb **ገገ** *näggärä* is represented in Geez by **ገገ** *näggärä*, with a simple *g* (as against a geminated *gg* in Amharic), and the Amharic verb **ጠየየ** *täyyäqä* is represented in Geez by **ጠየየ** *täyyäqä*, with a geminated *yy*, as is the case in Amharic. Consequently, the original type of these verbs is not at all the same even though they seem to be of the same nature in the Amharic perfect. It is precisely this different nature of these verbs that explains the difference in the Amharic imperfect **ይገገረል** *yenägral* (with the second radical simple) as against **ይጠየቃል** *yatäyyaqal* (with the second radical

geminated). Thus Geez helps us in the understanding of this particular phenomenon.

Likewise in the morphology we should be unable to understand the isolated forms of Amharic **ጠገገል** *basal* 'cooked', **ጠራር** *sawwar* 'hidden', and others if we did not know that these are remnants of a North Ethiopic passive participle *qatal*.

In the vocabulary the Semitist will be interested in the fortune of a root that occurs in most of the Semitic languages. So, for instance, he will look in Ethiopic for the root *s' l* 'to ask': Arabic **سأل** *sā'ala*, Hebrew **שאל** *šā'al*, and so on. He will find it in North Ethiopic, in Geez **ተሰለ** *tä-s'älä*, Tigré **ጠለ** *sā'ala*, but he will not find it in Amharic, where the root expressing 'to ask' is **ጠየየ** *täyyäqä*. However, some Gurage dialects will fill the gap. Indeed, Selti, Wolane have *tä-sälä*, Ayrnellel *tä-salo*, and so on. Another example is the Semitic root *bey* 'to weep': Arabic **بكى** *bakä*, Hebrew **בכה** *baka(h)*, and so on. We shall find it in Geez **ጠየ** *bäkäyä*, Tigrinya **ጠየ** *bäkäyä*, and Tigré **ጠየ** *bäka*, but not in Amharic, where the meaning of 'to weep' is expressed by **ጸለጸለ** *aläqqäsä*. However, the Semitic root is still found in Gurage, Gafät, and Harari under the

various forms of *bāk'ā*, *bāka*, *bāṣṣā*, and so on. A last example will conclude the domain of the vocabulary. The Semitic root *sty* 'to drink' (Hebrew *שָׁתָה* *šata*) is represented in Geez *ሰጥ ሰጥ ሰጥ*, Tigrinya *ሰጥ ሰጥ ሰጥ*, and Tigre *ሰጥ ሰጥ ሰጥ*, but not in Amharic, where we find *ጠጥ ስጥ*. However, Gurage, Harari, and Argobba preserve the original root; thus, Harari *sāta*, Argobba *sāṭā*; in Gurage: Selti *sāte*, Chaha *sāṭā-m*, Aymmel *sāṭā-m*.

Many features of the Amharic syntax, too, can be understood with the help of the various Semitic Ethiopic and Cushitic languages. There is a certain sentence order in Amharic that is inconceivable from the point of view of Semitic. This is the case with structures such as *ጥጥ ሰጥ*: *ሰጥ*: *ጥጥ* *tallaq sāw* 'a great man', that is, the adjective before the noun; or a structure such as *ጥጥ ሰጥ*: *ሰጥ*: *ጥጥ* *yāmāṭiasāw* 'the man who came', literally 'who-came man', that is, the relative clause before the noun that is qualified by the clause; or a structure such as *ጥጥ ሰጥ*: *ሰጥ*: *ጥጥ* *yā-nāgāde bet* 'the house of the merchant', literally 'of-merchant house', that is, the qualifying element of the possessor before the possessed. Let me add that in Ethiopic this is the normal sentence order in South Ethiopic and only partially so in North Ethiopic. Likewise

the place of the verb at the end of the sentence, as in *ሰጥ*: *ሰጥ*: *ሰጥ* *sāw māṭā* 'the man came', is contrary to the Semitic style, as is the order of the subordinate clause preceding the main clause in a sentence such as *ሰጥ ሰጥ ሰጥ*: *ሰጥ*: *ሰጥ* *andimānu azzāzā* 'he ordered them to come', literally 'in-order-that-they-come he ordered'. What is then the solution for this kind of syntax which is contrary to the Semitic type? We have to look elsewhere for a similar type of syntax that might have influenced the syntax of Semitic Ethiopic. It is precisely the structure of Cushitic which is of the same type that most probably influenced the Amharic syntax.

In summing up we may safely state that the examples of the phonology, morphology, vocabulary, and syntax show us clearly the importance, from the linguistic point of view, of the investigation of all the dialects and languages spoken in Ethiopia—Semitic and non-Semitic—if we wish to understand the character of Semitic Ethiopic in general and of Amharic in particular.

Beside the linguistic reasons for the investigation of all the languages of Ethiopia there is the cultural and historical point of view. Indeed, we know relatively little about the movement of populations

in Ethiopia in ancient times. The royal chronicles and other documents of an historical nature are often silent on this subject. But if we apply linguistic principles and see, for instance, that the language of Harar has some common features with the Eastern Gurage group of Selti, Wolane, and Zway, or that a dialect of Gurage has certain features in common with the North Ethiopic group, and yet that these two language groups are now separated by various other languages, are we not entitled to assume that the speakers of these languages were at some period of Ethiopian history in contact with one another and must have had a common origin? Linguistic considerations of this nature will help us in the elucidation of the historical and cultural problems of the country.

Finally, we are impelled to undertake the investigation of the various languages and dialects of Ethiopia simply by human curiosity. It is fortunate for mankind that the human mind is also interested in subjects other than technical achievements and technical problems. Language, its history and its development, is one of these subjects.

All the problems mentioned above are only a

small portion of what confronts the linguist concerned with Ethiopic. There are many more that await solution, among them—to mention only here—the relationship between the various Ethiopic languages and the position of Ethiopic in Semitic. There are many others. Unfortunately, the workers in the field are few. I see, however, prospective workers who may be able to contribute their share toward the solution of these problems. You, Ethiopian students of the College and students from abroad, are these prospective workers. I hope that the opportunity will be given to some of you to devote your future work, I would even say, your lifetime, to the study of Ethiopia, her history, literature, culture, and languages.

Historical Phonetics

8

Amharic

1991.

Boris Ch. Podolskiy

Table of Contents

- 0. Introduction.
 - 0.1. Previous works on Amharic historical phonetics.
 - 0.2. Various layers of the lexicon.
 - 0.3. The role of different factors in the language development.
 - 0.4. The relationship of Amharic to Gə'az.
- 1. The phonemic system of Gə'az.
- 2. The phonemic system of Amharic - a comparison of descriptions.
- 3. The history of the Amharic consonants.
 - 3.1. Proto-Ethiopic consonants preserved in Amharic.
 - 3.2. Bilabial voiceless stops *p, p'*.
 - 3.3. Merger of *š* with *s*.
 - 3.4. *š* → *s* → *f*.
 - 3.5. The fate of *h*.
 - 3.6. *'* → *∅*.
 - 3.7. The morphophoneme H.
 - 3.8. The status of *h* ~ *∅*.
 - 3.9. The phoneme /*x*/.
 - 3.10. Palatal consonants.
 - 3.10.0. Palatalization as a prominent feature of Amharic. ✓
 - 3.10.1. Palatalization of dentals in verbs.
 - 3.10.2. Phonemicization of palatals.
 - 3.10.3. Palatalization of dentals in other parts of speech.
 - 3.10.4. Lack of palatalization and the role of # boundary.
 - 3.10.5. The morphophoneme X.
 - 3.10.6. Palatalization triggered by a guttural.
 - 3.10.7. Word-final palatalization.
 - 3.10.8. The connection between labialization and palatalization.
 - 3.10.9. Palatalizing effect of velar consonants.
 - 3.11. Alternation of palatal : dental consonants.
 - 3.12. *Cy* → *y*.
 - 3.13. The role of borrowings in nativization of palatals.
 - 3.14. Palatalization of velars.
 - 3.15. *m* → *w*.
 - 3.16. Alternation between a nasal and an oral consonant.
 - 3.17. *b* → *w*.
 - 3.18. Simplification of *Cb* (*Cj*) clusters.
 - 3.19. *d* → *r*/*C*
 - 3.20. *rn* → *nd*
 - 3.21. Loss of a syllable-final nasal.
 - 3.22. The intrusive *n*.
 - 3.23. The fate of *w* as verb-final radical.
 - 3.24. Gemination of consonants.

4. The vowel system.

- 4.1. The commonly accepted 7-vowel chart.
- 4.2. The question of vowel length.
- 4.3. The status of schwa
- 4.3.1. in Gəʿəz
- 4.3.2. in Amharic.
- 4.4. The phonemic chart variant 2 – consonants.
- 4.5. The status of *i, u*.
- 4.6. The sources and the status of *e*.
- 4.7. The origin and the status of *o*.
- 4.8. The new vowel system.
- 4.8.1. The phonemic chart (vowels), var. 1 and 2.
- 4.8.2. Similar vocalic systems in other languages.
- 4.8.3. Polotsky's analysis of vowel phonemes in Chaha.
- 4.9. Synopsis of vowel development.
- 4.10. Variation in vowels.
- 4.11. Word-final vowels.

0. INTRODUCTION

0.1. The Amharic language, the dominant language of Ethiopia, has attracted the attention of quite a few linguists. Many of them have dealt, among other aspects, with its fascinating history. **Hiob Ludolf**, the father of Ethiopian studies in Europe some three hundred years ago, could not compare Amharic but with the Old Ethiopian (Gəʿəz). **Prætorius** (1879) brings forth a great number of etymologies, as well as remarks dealing with the historical development of the language, sound changes, and various other phonetic phenomena.

A wealth of linguistic material related to all aspects of Amharic can be found in numerous publications of **Marcel Cohen**. But his research, the importance of which can hardly be overestimated, belongs in fact to the pre-phonological era. In **Marcel Cohen's** books and papers we find carefully collected facts of the language, including a thorough description of minute phonetic details. He did not attempt, however, to distinguish between what is really relevant to the structure of the language and what is not, between phonetics and phonemes.

Edward Ullendorff's important book "The Semitic Languages of Ethiopia: a Comparative Phonology" (1955) is a great step forward. This book makes an attempt to give a comparative description of both the phonetics and the phonology of the most important Ethio-Semitic languages. In addition to a synchronic description, the author makes a great many diachronic remarks dealing with various phonetic and phonemic developments. Unfortunately, even though the name of the book contains the words "comparative phonology", we do not find here a sharp borderline between phonetics and phonology.

Wolf Leslau, one of the most important and prolific Ethiopianists of our time, has contributed much to our subject. He investigated, among other things, the influence of Cushitic languages upon various Semitic languages of Ethiopia. Leslau has collected and published an immense amount of material on the less known Ethio-Semitic languages, such as Harari, Argobba, and especially Gurage, which were only briefly mentioned in Ullendorff's book. Two etymological dictionaries published by Leslau, that of Harari (1963), and that of Gurage (1979), are of special importance to our subject. [Leslau's monumental "Comparative Dictionary of Gəʿəz" appeared after this work was completed.]

Robert Hettrron's "Ethiopian Semitic: Studies in Classification" (1972) contains a great many interesting suggestions as to the phonetic and morphological development of Ethio-Semitic languages. However, not all of these suggestions are sufficiently substantiated, as was shown in Goldenberg's expanded review (1977).

In the last two decades new material which is of great importance for the study of the history of Amharic has appeared in print: texts in Old Amharic published by **S. Strelcyn**, **Getatchew Haile** and **Roger Cowley**, descriptions (albeit incomplete)

of Amharic dialects, investigations of Cushitic languages of Ethiopia. All these can contribute to our understanding of the phonetic development of Amharic.

Our investigation of historical phonetics of Amharic is based upon several sources: descriptions of Modern Amharic phonetics; dialectal material, and Old Amharic as it appears in ancient texts, as well as in Ludolf's presentation. Amharic words which have been transcribed by various travellers of the past may also shed light on certain phonetic peculiarities. Of great interest are also descriptions of the neighbouring languages, both Semitic and Cushitic.

* * *

0.2. In Indian linguistic tradition the lexicon of Modern Indo-Aryan languages is divided (from the point of view of origin) into five layers:

1. "tatsama" (lit. "the same as it", i.e. Sanskrit) - words borrowed from Sanskrit;
2. "ardhatatsama" (lit. "half the same") - Sanskrit words which underwent some adjustment to the phonetic structure of the receptor language;
3. "tadbhava" ("those which developed from it") - original stock of words which underwent the phonetic developments characteristic of the modern language;
4. "deśja" ("local") - those whose origin is unknown; and
5. "videśi" ("foreign") - loanwords from foreign languages, such as Arabic, Persian, English, but not Sanskrit or other Indian languages (see e.g. Guru 1957:45-47).

This subdivision can be helpful not only in the field of Indo-Aryan languages but also in other parts of the world, especially where an ancient language serves as a source from which its descendant (or otherwise related) languages draw freely. It can be easily applied, for example, to Modern Arabic. The bulk of its lexicon belongs to the "tadbhava" layer: words taken over from Classical Arabic are "tatsama" or (in case of phonetic adaptation) "ardhatatsama". Foreign words are "videśi" and those whose origin cannot be stated with certainty, are "deśja".

This method is applicable to the analysis of the Amharic lexicon as well. Its basic components are Semitic elements which developed in accordance with the phonetic laws of Amharic: the "tadbhava". Words borrowed from Ga'ez, which did not undergo this development, belong to the "tatsama" and "ardhatatsama" layers. Modern loanwords are "videśi", and those which were borrowed from other languages of Ethiopia or created in Amharic are "deśja".

What is of primary interest to our subject is the "tadbhava" layer, since it is from this linguistic stratum that we can learn about the various phonetic processes which are (or were at some time in the past) characteristic of Amharic. Hence our attention here will be turned first of all to the words and morphemes of the original Semitic stock whose phonetic history can be traced with a fair degree of certainty. Borrowed elements were taken into account only if their original form was well documented and their development was in accordance with phonetic laws of Amharic.

0.3. The historical development of a language should not be seen as a straight line, both ends of which can be connected by means of phonetic laws. It is true, this was the attitude of the Junggrammatiker of the last century, for whom the notion of sound law was sacrosanct. Today we know that, in addition to rigid sound laws, we have to take into consideration other processes which can confuse the picture: mixture of dialects (especially if the dialectal base of the literary language changes); impact of the substratum and various adstrata; morphological changes, analogy, etc.

All this is true in the case of Amharic as well. Here we find a mixture of dialects (for a long time the dialect of Gondar held the central position; now the literary language is based on the Southern dialect of Addis Ababa); the heavy impact of Ga'ez, which has for many centuries been the literary and liturgical language of the Amhara; influence of various neighbouring languages, both Semitic (Arabic, Tigrinya) and Cushitic (Agaw, which must have been the substratum language not only of Amharic but also of Ga'ez; Oromo, with which Amharic has been living in a kind of symbiosis for the last 400 years; Sidamo and Hadiyya, which are the southern neighbours of Amharic, etc.). Besides this, due to various morphological processes, the actual Amharic form of a word is quite often very different from what could be expected if only strict phonetic laws were applied to its Ga'ez or Proto-Semitic etymon.

We also have to keep in mind that in the Ethiopian sprachbund the isoglosses usually cross the language borders, so that we may find similar phenomena in Amharic (sometimes in a single dialect of it) and in Tigrinya, whereas other features connect Amharic with Gurage or Harari. An example of such an isogloss is the sound change $s \rightarrow f$ characteristic of the southern Ethio-Semitic languages (Gurage, Harari) and of the southern dialect of Amharic. On the other hand, in the northern languages (Tigrinya, Tigre) and in the northern dialect of Amharic s has remained unchanged.

* * *

0.4. For a long time Semitists took it for granted that modern Ethio-Semitic languages were directly derived from Ga'ez. Now it is clear that this is not so. Even the northern languages, Tigrinya and Tigre, which are linguistically much closer to Ga'ez than Amharic, can hardly be called direct descendants of Ga'ez. As to the southern languages (Amharic, Argobba, Gafar, Harari, Gurage), they should be considered descendants of a distinct ancient South-Ethiopic language, a sister-tongue of Ga'ez. This is evident, for instance, from the fact that Amharic and other southern languages have preserved some common Semitic lexemes which were lost in Ga'ez. Amh. *māzā* < **matay* 'when', cf. Heb. *mālay*, Arab. *matā*; in

Gə'əz we find an innovation *mā'əze*.

Nevertheless, since Proto-Amharic (or Proto-South-Ethiopic) is unattested, and since Gə'əz must have been rather close to it, we have to rely upon Gə'əz data, while keeping in mind that the actual situation is very complex and that a Gə'əz form need not be identical with the form from which a given Amharic word derives.

Chapter 1.

The Phonemic System of Gə'əz

1.1. We shall begin with observing the phonemic system of Gə'əz, which is supposedly identical with, or at least very close to, that of Proto-Amharic

(p)	t	k	kʷ		i	a	u
(p)	t	k	kʷ		e	o	
b	d	g	gʷ		ā	ā	
ʃ	s	ʃh	hʷ	h	h		
ʒ	ʒ						
m	n						
w	l	r	y				

1.2. The bilabial stops *p, p* are put in brackets since they are marginal phonemes which appear in Gə'əz only in borrowings, mainly in Greek words (e.g. *πάππας* 'bishop'), and also sometimes in Coptic (ἄκουε > *pakən* 'the tenth month of the Coptic calendar') and Cushitic words (*kopon* 'shoe' - cf. Oromo *koppe* 'id').

1.3. There is no possible way to know the exact phonetic realization of the consonant *ʃ* (its more common transiteration is *ʃ* as it is related etymologically to the Arabic sound *ʃ*). It is nevertheless clear that in Gə'əz this consonant must have been close to *ʃ* with which it later merged, although this merger occurred very early. Even in the most ancient Gə'əz texts the two characters *h* and *ʃ* are used interchangeably. Helzron (1972:37, see also Helzron & Habte Mariam 1966:19 n.6) tried to show that in Northern and Western Gurage, the Proto-Semitic and Proto-Ethiopic consonant **ʃ* (= *ʃ*) did not merge with **ʃ* but - at least under certain conditions (in roots containing also *k* or *d*) - lost its glottalization and turned into *d*. Thus, in Chaha we find *dāmāddā* = Amh. *tāmāddā* 'to harness' from the Proto-Semitic root **ʃmd*. In Northern and Western Gurage the verb 'to laugh' is *dakā* - in Gafat it is *ʃakā*, from the root **ʃhq*, Heb. *šḥaq*, Arab. *šḥika*. But, as has been convincingly shown by Goldenberg (1977:464-66), what we find here is a different phenomenon: a sporadic sound change *t* → *d* (i.e. substitution of voicing for glottalization; this phenomenon is attested in some Amharic dialects as well). The consonant *t*, which participates in this sound change, can derive etymologically from either **ʃ* or **t*, or else represent the original **t*. See also note 24 on p. 465 of Goldenberg's paper which disproves Marcel Cohen's (1931:10 n.1) claim that in the Tigrinya dialect spoken by Cohen's informant Abba Gêrôme, the Proto-Ethiopic *ʃ* became *ʃ*. The material on the dialect collected by Wolf Leslau (1941) shows clearly the regular sound change **ʃ* (= **ʃ*) → *ʃ*.

1.4. As for the labiovelars k^w , g^w , h^w , they developed, as Dillmann showed as far back as 1857 (paragraphs 17 and 26), from plain velar consonants in the presence of rounded vowels o , u . This development usually occurred when the rounded vowel immediately followed or preceded the consonant: * $kull-$ > $k^wəll-$ 'all', * $kurbān$ > $k^wərbān$ 'sacrifice'. But according to Kurylowicz (1934): "...there is no need of immediate proximity. This [rounded] vowel is 'attracted' by a velar consonant and 'swallowed' by it".

There are still quite a few roots and words in Ga'az where the presence of a labiovelar cannot be explained in this way, e.g. $k^wə$ 'is', $k^wə$ 'ays' 'leg', $k^wə$ 'asə 'leaf', $k^wə$ 'ak' $k^wə$ 'a' 'to be hard', and even $k^wə$ 'arapita' 'pen, pencil' from Greek γράφειν, dative of γραφίς 'id.'. Regarding such cases Dillmann (1857 par. 26.4) remarked: "...blös aus einer allgemeinen Vorliebe der Sprache für solche Laute, ohne daß wir jetzt noch im Stande wären besondere Veranlassungen dazu nachzuweisen etc.". Such 'Vorliebe' could have developed in Ga'az under the influence of the neighbouring Cushitic languages, in some of which, viz. those of the Agaw group, labiovelar consonants are quite common.

The phenomenon of "naturalization" of a new or borrowed phoneme and its spread to native words, where its appearance is totally unjustified, is not that rare. Retroflex stops first came into Sanskrit through borrowings from Dravidian languages, but very soon they found their way into original Indo-European words. Pharyngeal consonants penetrated the phonetic system of such Iranian languages as Kurdish or Tat by means of Arabic loanwords; now they are found in native Iranian words like Kurdish $həʃi$ 'seven' or Tat 'əsb' 'horse' (cf. Persian $həʃt$, $əsb$).

1.5. The Proto-Semitic and Proto-Ethiopic voiceless velar fricative * $ħ$ behaves in Ga'az exactly like the pharyngeal $ħ$ or laryngeal $ħ$. Evidently, at a very early stage this sound merged totally with $ħ$, so that the fate of the two consonants in modern Ethiopic languages is the same.

1.6. The long vowels of Proto-Semitic (\bar{a} , \bar{i} , \bar{u}) are preserved in Ga'az without any change (in transcription we omit the macron and write the long vowels simply a , i , u , the original short (first order vowel) a is written \bar{a}).¹ The short vowels i ,

¹ One can hardly accept Voigt's (1983) claim that one of the characteristics of the vowel system of Ga'az is "the systematic reduction of vowel length:

Sem. short : long : diphthong
Eth. central : short : long"

This could have been true for the late Ga'az, as pronounced by speakers of Amharic (especially when Voigt speaks about the phonetic realization of $gə'z$ as $[gʒ]$ with vowel length substitution for the lost pharyngeal. We have no reason, however, to suppose that this was the case when Ga'az was a spoken language.

u turned into \bar{a} (at the same time the rounded vowel u caused labialization of the velar consonant if such was present in the word, see 1.4. above).

1.7. The long vowels o , e stem from contracted diphthongs: $\bar{a}y \rightarrow e$, $\bar{a}w \rightarrow o$, also $i+\bar{a} \rightarrow e$, $u+\bar{a} \rightarrow o$, e.g. $bə'si+\bar{a} > bə'se$ (accusative and construct form of $bə'si$ 'man'), $k^wə'silla+\bar{a} > k^wə'sillo$ (acc. of $k^wə'silla$ 'all'). It is not sufficiently clear under what circumstances the contraction of diphthongs took place. In the most ancient Ga'az texts - Aksum inscriptions - we still find uncontracted forms: $\bar{a}w\bar{a}t$, $\bar{a}w\bar{a}$, $\bar{a}w\bar{a}$. In classical Ga'az there are forms with a diphthong ($bə'yəd$ 'between' vs. $bət < *bəy'$ 'house'). In other forms diphthongs are in free variation with long vowels: $halləwət$ - $halləkə$ 'I am'. It is possible that contraction or preservation of a diphthong is connected with strong vs. weak word stress (e.g. $*bəy' > bət$, $*bəywa > bəyəd$). Contraction does not occur when the semivowel is geminated: $yəməwwət$ 'he dies', $yəšəyem$ 'he puts'.

1.8. $Cwə \rightarrow i$, $Cwə \rightarrow u$, e.g. in subjunctive forms * $yəšyam > yəšim$ 'he should put', * $yəmməw > yəmmid$ 'he should die'.

1.9. There are a few other phonetic rules in Ga'az related to the vowels:

a. $\bar{a}y \rightarrow i$, $\bar{a}w \rightarrow u$. This contraction occurs in word-final position in verbs (* $yəf'array > yəf'arri$ 'it brings fruit', * $yətəllaw > yətəllā$ 'he follows') as well as in the word-internal position before a consonant (* $ħaydār > ħidār$ 'plundering', * $ħaykū > ħikū$ 'separate'). In some words, both contracted and non-contracted forms are attested: $ħaywār$ - $ħiwār$ 'wife' (see Dillmann 1865:127), $ħəfəy'$ - $ħəšit$ 'betrouthed f.' (ibid. p. 140).

At the end of a nominal form this contraction does not occur. This is a clear evidence of the presence of a word-final vowel \bar{a} in nominals, which is a remnant of the Proto-Semitic nominative ending * $-u$ ($\rightarrow \bar{a}$): $ħəyāyəs$ 'nights', $māllawə$ 'following' (see Dillmann 1890, Goldenberg 1974:237-38).

b. On the other hand, the word-final high vowels i , u turn into diphthongs $\bar{a}y(i)$, $\bar{a}w(u)$ (usually with gemination of the glide) as soon as a vocalic suffix is added:

$gəbāru + o > gəbārəwə$ 'they made him',
 $gəbārkū + omu > gəbārəkəwomū$ 'I made them',
 $gəbārki + o > gəbārəkəyo$ 'you [f.sg.] made him'.

c. The high long vowels u , i are found primarily in open syllables or in word-final syllables ending in a single consonant (which can also be considered an

Moreover, Voigt is inconsistent in his analysis: first he claims that the contrast between \bar{a} and \bar{a} is that of quality, not quantity, but in Rule 1 (p. 356) he says: "The vowel \bar{a} is lengthened [stress is mine - B.P.] before a syllable-closing laryngeal." There are quite a few such inconsistencies in his paper.

open syllable, since in nominals the final consonant must have been pronounced (C₂). As soon as the final syllable is closed with two consonants (when, for example, the feminine suffix -t is added), the long vowel is shortened, and in accordance with 1.6 above becomes *a*:

kaddis + *t* > *kaddasi* 'holy', *lahik* + *t* > *lahaki* 'grown up'.

If, due to this shortening, a diphthong occurs, it undergoes contraction according to (a):

baluy + *t* > **balayt* > *balit* 'old'.

As for the long vowel *a* in this position, it can either shorten into *ä* or else remain unchanged:

sännay + *t* > *sännayt* ~ *sännäyt* 'good',
sämantiu ~ *sämantiu* 'eight'

(see Dillmann 1865:334; Lambdin 1978:11).

1.10. The guttural consonants ' *h* *ħ* *ʕ* influence the adjacent short vowels in the following way:

a. *ä* → *a* / *G*_. This rule is characteristic of the traditional pronunciation of Ga'eaz as spoken by speakers of modern Ethiopic languages: it is not always reflected in spelling and must be a very late occurrence.

b. *ä* → *a* / *G*\$., i.e. *ä* is lengthened into *a* before a tautosyllabic guttural:

šar 'grass', *sämaku* 'I heard'.

In certain word patterns (broken plural, the causative prefix 'a-) this rule is not observed in spelling: ለአዘን 'ahzab 'peoples', ለዐጥ 'a'büyü 'increase', although in traditional pronunciation the vowel here is that of the fourth order, in accordance with both rules (a) and (b).

c. *ä* → *a* / *G*u₂, i.e. *ä* turns into *a* before a guttural followed by a [-low] vowel:

**lahik* > *lahik* 'grown up';

**yasäh(h)af* > *yasähaf* 'he writes';

**yablä'u* > *yablä'u* 'they eat'.

A word boundary prevents this change: *bä-#'anä* 'as to, regarding', *lä-#'asra'el* 'to Israel'.

d. *a* → *ä* / *G*a, e.g.

**yahawwar* > *yähawwar* 'he goes';

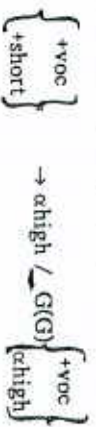
**lä'ak* > *lä'ak* 'send!'

This rule also does not work across a morpheme boundary: *'abaga*+*ä* > *'abaga'a* 'sheep (acc. pl.)'.

Rules (a) and (b) can be coalesced into one rule:

ä is lengthened into *a* whenever it precedes or follows a guttural within a syllable.

Rules (c) and (d) can also be united in one rule of assimilation:



Chapter 2.

The Phonological System of Amharic - a Comparison of Descriptions

There is no agreement among scholars about the number of phonemes in Amharic. Let us have a look at phonological charts as proposed by different scholars (we have unified the system of notation).

2.1. Marcel Cohen (1936):

(p)	t	č	k	(k ^w)	l	ʕ	u
(p)	i	č	k	(k ^w)	ə	ə	o
b	d	ğ	g	(g ^w)	(ä)	a	(ä)
f	s	š	(h ₁)	(h ₂)	ə		
(s)							
z	ž						
m	n	ñ					
w	l	r	y				

Altogether 7 (+2 in brackets) vowels, 22 (+8) consonants.

p - a marginal phoneme found only in borrowings from European languages.

p - a marginal phoneme found in words of Greek origin which came into Amharic through Ga'az.

s - preserved in the North, became *i* in the dialect of Shoa.

ğ - "En amharique moderne non dialectal, de plus en plus, la semi-occlusive *ğ* se substitue à la continue *z* dans les mots où la présence de celle-ci est justifiée étymologiquement" (p.34).

*h*₁ - a stable consonant, a phonetic variant of *k*.

*h*₂ - the distinction between the two phones *h*₁ "vélaire" and *h*₂ "laryngale" is not clear, especially since both are put in brackets.

Regarding the labiovelar consonants, Marcel Cohen remarks (p.36): "En effet cette série tend à s'éliminer en tant que série consonantique distincte, l'appendice labial agissant dans beaucoup de cas sur la voyelle suivante en se fondant avec elle, ou apparaissant comme un traitement de la semi-voyelle autonome *w*, ou encore se prononçant avant la consone."

2.2. Bender (1978) has his phonemic chart based upon Marcel Cohen's, introducing just a few small changes. He takes off the brackets from *h*₁ and adds two more symbols in brackets: ' and *h*^w, so that the total number of consonantal phonemes in Bender's chart is 23 (+9 in brackets). About the laryngeal consonants ' and *h* Bender says (pp.12-15): "The glottal stop (') is marginal in Amharic. It occurs as a dialectal variant of *k*' [= *k*'] (ejective) in Shewa Province (e.g. in *ba'ä* 'mule', for *bak'ä* [bak'ä]), but also as a distinctive sound in such words as *sa'at* [sä'at] 'hour,

The History of the Amharic Consonants

which is on the verge of disappearance; still, there are minimal pairs sufficient to justify its phonemic status: *maʒān* 'to be sad' - *maʒān* 'angle', *maḅāl* 'to tell a lie' - *maʿḅāl* 'wave'.

Concerning labialized consonants, Titov claims that they are no different from a cluster of any two consonants. In words like *bāgwa* 'her sheep', *baḅwa* 'her husband' there is a morpheme boundary before *w*, so the sequence *Cw* cannot be a single phoneme. Thus any sequence of a *C* and *w* should be viewed as a consonant cluster.

With regard to vowels, Titov remarks that the two central vowels *a*, *e* (= *ä*) have certain conditioned allophones: /*a*/ is pronounced [i] in the vicinity of a palatal consonant (*ʃah* > [ʃih/], [ū] when it comes after *w* (*wasi* > [wāsi/]) and is close to [i] before a dental (*sami* > [sini/]).

2.8. According to our analysis, the phonetic and the phonemic systems of Amharic differ considerably.

2.8.1. The Phonemic Chart:

p	t	č	k		i	a	u
β	ʈ	č	k		ε	o	?
b	d	ǰ	g		?	?	?
f	s	š	x	h	ä	a	
ḅ	v	z					
ʃ							
m	n	ñ					
w	l	r	y				

2.8.2. The Phonemic Chart Variant 1:

(p)	t	k		a
(β)	ʈ	k		ä
b	d	g		a
f	s	x	(h)	
(v)	z			
ʃ				
m	n			
w	l	r	y	

± palatalization and/or labialization of (almost) any consonant
Two morphophonemes X, H.

Now we are going over to the discussion of how the Amharic phonetics and phonology developed through the ages.

3.1. First of all, we observe that a great many Proto-Ethiopic consonants are preserved in Amharic without any serious change.

Consonant	Gəʒəz	Amharic	gloss
b	<i>ḅarāla</i>	<i>ḅarāla</i>	'ripen'
	<i>raḅārā</i>	<i>sāḅārā</i>	'break'
d	<i>dām</i>	<i>dām</i>	'blood'
	<i>nāggāda</i>	<i>nāggāda</i>	'trade'
t	<i>takkāla</i>	<i>takkāla</i>	'plant'
	<i>antā</i>	<i>antā</i>	'you m.sg.'
f	<i>fāḅawā</i>	<i>fāḅā</i>	'suckle'
	<i>mātarā</i>	<i>mātarā</i>	'measure'
g	<i>gāmāl</i>	<i>gāmāl</i>	'camel'
	<i>nāggārā</i>	<i>nāggārā</i>	'speak'
k	<i>kāfāla</i>	<i>kāfāla</i>	'divide'
	<i>takkāla</i>	<i>takkāla</i>	'plant'
k	<i>koma</i>	<i>koma</i>	'stand'
	<i>okā</i>	<i>awwākā</i>	'know'
f	<i>fārta</i>	<i>fārta</i>	'fear'
s	<i>nāfas</i>	<i>nāfas</i>	'wind'
	<i>sāḅārā</i>	<i>sāḅārā</i>	'break'
	<i>ḅasāḅā</i>	<i>asāḅā</i>	'think'
z	<i>zāmmā</i>	<i>zāmmā</i>	'rain'
	<i>azzāra</i>	<i>azzāra</i>	'command'
m	<i>māfa</i>	<i>mālla</i>	'fill'
	<i>sām'a</i>	<i>sāmma</i>	'hear'
n	<i>nāfas</i>	<i>nāfas</i>	'wind'
	<i>xanākā</i>	<i>annākā</i>	'strangle'
w	<i>wāḅādā</i>	<i>wāḅādā</i>	'give birth'
	<i>yā'awwak</i>	<i>yawk</i>	'he knows'
y	<i>yasāḅḅar</i>	<i>yasāḅr</i>	'he breaks'
r	<i>kāyyah</i>	<i>kāyy</i>	'red'
	<i>rād'a</i>	<i>rādāda</i>	'help'
l	<i>ka'</i>	<i>sar</i>	'grass'
	<i>lāḅsā</i>	<i>lāḅḅārā</i>	'wear'

bāf'a bālla 'east'

3.2. The consonants *p*, *p̄* are as foreign in Amharic as they were in Ga'az. They appear exclusively in loanwords: *p* mainly in Greek words borrowed via Ga'az (papas 'bishop, Pope', pantičkoste 'Pentecost'), *p* in words of modern European origin (posta 'post-office', polāitika 'politics', profesār 'professor'). In the speech of uneducated people these sounds are often replaced by *b*: "Tə *p*, occlusive sourde' emphatique, nest articulé correctement que par les gens cultivés; les autres le remplacent ordinairement par *b*, autre labiale, ou (dans un seul mot, cité ci-dessous) par *q* [*=k*], autre emphatique, m̄l Ale: tarap'ezā, tarab'ezā 'table'; ḥ ṭ ṗ (ṭ): pag'w am'el(n) et ḫ ṭ ṗ: q'w agm'el jours épagomènes (mois de cinq jours à la fin de l'année)". (Cohen 1936:32)

A very interesting example is the name of the country ityopayā, which is often (in the speech of uneducated people) pronounced as tobhaya with substitution of the native *b* for the foreign sound *p* and transfer of the glottalization to the preceding stop.

3.3. Some of the original consonants were lost due to their merger with some other consonant. Thus, the proto-Ethiopic fricative *ṣ* (*w*) merged very early with *s* (*n*). In words borrowed by Arabic from Ga'az in the pre-Islamic period, this fricative appears as *ṣ* (*s*): šāyvan > šayvān 'Satan, devil', nāgāfi > naḡāfi 'negus, Ethiopian king' (see Nöлке 1910:47). From the first centuries of the Hijra, however, we have evidence that the Ethiopian *w* was pronounced like the Arabic *و* (*s*): wṣ šānāy > sanāy) 'good' (Kobščanov 1966:119, citing al-Ṭabarī). On the other hand, "some time in the 3rd cent. A.H. an Ethiopian is said to have pronounced Arabic šārtu as sārṭu (Jāhiz, Bayān I, 32)" (Ullendorff 1955:112).

It is thus clear that by the 8th century C.E. the two characters *w* and *n* were pronounced identically, so that in Amharic the fate of the two proto-Ethiopic consonants is the same.

ṣ	šāṭ	sār	'grass'
	šāhākā	sakā	'laugh'
	ašārtu	asṣar	'ten'

The wide-spread spelling of the name 'isra'el' using the figure for 20: ṣ ḥ ḏ = 'šrā'el (20 = 'šra) is a good evidence of merger of *ṣ* with *s* (as well as of 'with').

3.4. As has been mentioned above (see 1.3), the two emphatic fricatives *ṭ* and *n* must also have merged very early. Strelcyn (1968b) dealt extensively with the problem of frequency of *ṣ* in various stages of the history of Amharic. From the material adduced in his paper it is obvious that the emphatic fricative is being replaced by the stop *t*. In the language of the "Royal songs" (15th cent.), Strelcyn found 41 words containing *ṣ* versus 13 words with *t*. Evidently, the sound change *ṣ*

→ *t* had not yet started.² In the Amharic dictionary of Ludolf (1698a) the ratio is already 85:80 in favour of *s*. In Guidi's "Vocabolario" (1901) Strelcyn counted 860 words written with a stop, as opposed to 110 with a fricative.

In all the investigations of modern Amharic it is mentioned that the sound change *s* → *t* is characteristic of the Southern dialect of the language. In the North as well as in the speech of educated Amhara the emphatic fricative is much more stable. Nevertheless, in numerous native (tadhava) words the stop is common even in the Northern dialect.

Ga'az	Old Amh.	Mod. Amh.	Gloss
šān'a	šāna	šāna	'be strong'
šāla	šāla	šāla	'hate'
šāra	šāra	šāra	'call'
šāra	šāra	šāra	'be pure'
šārs	šārs	šārs	'tooth'
šāmāda	šāmāda	šāmāda	'harness'

In words of Ga'az origin (šāsama), belonging mainly to the semantic field of religion and culture, the emphatic fricative is retained, especially in the speech of educated Ethiopians:

šāhafa	šāhafa	šāhafa	'write'
šālot	šālot	šālot	'prayer'
šāhay	šāhay	šāhay/ia	'sun'

It is very interesting to note that in the Western dialect of Oromo, which was in close contact with the Southern dialect of Amharic, the Amharic sound *f* (<*s*) is sometimes represented by *č*: čāfa (< šāfā) 'write', mačāfa (< māšaf) 'book', čimadi (< šimadi) 'pair of oxen'. In other words we find *t*: tarra (< tarra) 'pure, good', falata (< fallata) 'split', karaia (< karrāia) 'collect taxes' (Gragg 1980:123). It seems that the forms with *č* reflect the archaic pronunciation in the dialect of Amharic which is now characterized by a complete shift *s* → *t*. This conclusion is supported by the parallel development of Amharic *z* → *g* in Oromo (which lacks both *z* and *s*): ačāga < azzāzā 'command' (*s* → *č* // *z* → *g*).

Most probably this process (*s* → *t*) is due to the influence of the neighbouring Cushitic languages: Oromo, Sidamo, Hadiyya, whose phonemic systems contain *f* but not *ṣ*. On the other hand, in the North, the influence of Agaw is most conspicuous, so that we can even speak of an Agaw substratum in Northern Amharic, as well as in Tigriña and Tigre. In Agaw languages (at least in Awraṣi and probably also in Khamir), we do find an alveolar affricate *c* [*ts*] which, by the way, replaces the Amharic *t* in older borrowings.

² The Arab grammarian of the 14th century Abū Ḥayyān (see Glazer 1942) gives the form *ṣ* *mhi* in the meaning of *ṣ* *māḥāsā* for an unidentified Ethiopic language. It might have been Old Amharic or some other southern Ethio-Semitic language.

3.5. In the later stages of Gə'ez the velar fricative *ħ* was pronounced as the pharyngeal *ħ*, so that both sounds share the same development in Amharic. The only exception is the Gə'ez word *ħer* 'good' which became *čär* in Amharic. The reason is evidently that it was not an original Ethiopic word, but a borrowing from Arabic *ħayr* in Arabic words borrowed into Ethiopic languages *ħ* is usually replaced by *k* (see Leslau 1957a, 1958): in Gə'ez *kämär* < *ħamr* 'wine', *tarik* < *tarīħ* 'era, history', *rak'wam* < *ruħām* 'marble'. In Amharic we have, for example, *mākädäda* < *mihadda* 'pillow', *kok* < *ħawħ*, *höħ* 'peach'. Leslau (1957a:230) ascribes the change *ħ* → *k* to Cushitic influence.

3.6. The pharyngeal 'ayn must have merged with the laryngeal 'alef (glottal stop) in Old Amharic. In Gə'ez manuscripts, all of which were written by speakers of Old Amharic a few centuries after Gə'ez stopped being a spoken language, the two characters replace each other indiscriminately. Only in a few most common words, according to Ullendorff (1955), was the spelling with the one or the other stable: "...certain words are apparently never misspelt (*tl, lk, ml* - never *tl, lk, ml*)".

In Tigrinya and Tigre the distinction between 'alef and 'ayn is well preserved. Evidently, this was also the situation in spoken Gə'ez. The confusion of the characters found in Gə'ez manuscripts reflects, no doubt, the situation in the spoken language of the scribes, viz. Old Amharic.

In written Amharic - both old and modern - the two characters *ħ*, *ʕ* are used indiscriminately. Spellings like *ħwč* are found side by side with *ħwč*, *ħwč*; *ħwč* instead of *ħwč*, even *ħwč* instead of *ħwč*. From a phonetic point of view, both denote either glottal stop or zero. According to Jušmanov (1936/1959), every word beginning with a vowel has a glottal stop onset: 'af. Most other linguists who made transcriptions of Amharic words or texts, do not notate this. The only exception is Klingenberg, who consistently marks word-initial glottal stop. In a paper dealing specifically with the problem of laryngeals in Amharic (Klingenberg 1950), he remarks that the glottal stop is pronounced word-initially when the word is uttered separately: 'ante [*anta*] 'you (m.sg.)', 'ei [*ai*] 'sister', 'äger [*ägär*] 'land, country'. In context, it disappears. Our observations support this view.

In root-final position glottal stop disappeared long ago. Even in most ancient Gə'ez texts - Aksum inscriptions we find forms like *ħwč* instead of the expected *ħwč*, and *ħwč* instead of *ħwč* (from the root *ħwč*). In Old Amharic there are numerous examples where the glottal consonant (*ħ*, *ʕ*) is written, but its vowel either moves to the preceding consonant (like *ħwč* instead of *ħwč* 'listen (f.sg.)' or appears twice (*ħwč ħwč* 'those who were happy'). Such spellings reflect the actual pronunciation *semi, yäätä'äggyum* without the guttural consonant (see Cowley 1983:21).

In intervocalic position a glottal stop can be heard, but is optional: *sä'ad - saad* 'hour, watch', *ba'ar - baar* ~ *bär* 'pen'.

As to Titov's claim mentioned above that glottal stop is found in such words as *māzän* 'angle', *mābäl* 'wave', it is no more than spelling pronunciation. From Mittwoch's (1925) most accurate transcription of the traditional pronunciation of Gə'ez one can learn that the sequence *a' - a'* is pronounced as a diphthong *a i*: *ħwč äämer, ħwč sämāiä, ħwč äidä, ħwč äigäf*. In Salt (1814) we find an Amharic word spelled 'i-lef' with the gloss 'million'. This is actually the word *ħwč* 'thousands', and Salt's English-based spelling reflects the pronunciation *aylaf* rather than *älaf*. Another example of a diphthong *ay ~ a* substituting the original *a' ~ a'* is the personal name *ħwč*, now usually pronounced as *yaakob ~ yaiakob*.

Mittwoch compares this phenomenon with the Ashkenazic pronunciation of Hebrew *ää, ää*: *מאזן dälgas [daygas], מאיזה mäize [maysel]*.

According to our observations, the historical sequence *a', a'* is now pronounced [*a i*] or [*az i*]: *ħwč māzän, māzän*.

If we disregard the dialectal phenomenon *ħ* → ' found in the Showa dialect of Amharic (as well as in some dialects of Gurage), it becomes clear that all the scholars who ever dealt with Amharic either deny glottal stop a phonemic status or call it a marginal phoneme on the verge of disappearance. Voigt (1981), on the other hand, considers the "hamzah" a full-fledged phoneme of Amharic. Moreover, he finds it not only in the cases dealt with above, but also in words like *lakä /lääkä/* 'send', *sämma /sämmaä/* 'hear', *barräkä /bä'ärräkä/* 'bless'. The reason underlying this representation is morphophonemic rather than phonemic. In this way Voigt attempts to unify various verbal roots and build up a single conjugational paradigm for all the different types of Amharic verbs. Unfortunately, in order to achieve this goal, Voigt had to propose ad hoc rules, which sometimes clash with other well-established rules in the language. For the Type C verbs (*barräkä*), Voigt proposes a quite plausible rule:

(a) *ä' → a / C*

that yields the jussive form /y=*bä'rk*/ > /y=*bark*/.

For the *lakä* type verbs Voigt proposes another phonetic rule contradicting the former:

(b) *ä' → a / C*

(or in Voigt's system of notation: *ä / 'C → a*). He needs this rule in order to get the imperfect form /y=*lääk*/ > /y=*lak*/ (see my remarks concerning Voigt's system in Podolsky 1984).

It turns out that instead of admitting the existence in Amharic of various morphological types of verbs - a common feature of Semitic as well as of many other languages of the world - Voigt suggests different phonetic realizations of the same string of phonemes [see rules (a) and (b) above]. This is possible only if there is a conditioning factor, but there is none, neither on the phonemic nor on the morphophonemic level. To claim that rule (a) applies to *barräkä* type verbs, whereas rule (b) - to *lakä* type, would mean that Voigt's idea of reducing the number of morphological types of verbs to only one by introducing new phonemes

(glottal stop in some cases, zero - viewed as a phoneme - in others) has failed.

According to our analysis (Podolsky 1976, 1986), the *lakä* type verbs have a biconsonantal root, and their paradigm differs significantly from that of the triradical verb. For example:

imperfect	<i>yasäbr</i>	* <i>yalak</i>
gerund	<i>säbro</i>	* <i>lakö</i>
perf. frequ.	<i>säbbharä</i>	* <i>lakakä</i>

(reduplication of the second radical of the triradical verb in the frequentative stem vs. reduplication of the first radical in *lakä* type verbs).

Type C (*barräkä*) verbs do not have a quadriconsonantal root (as proposed by Voigt) but should be viewed as a conative (O₃) stem of a regular triconsonantal verb (even though this latter never appears in the basic O₁ stem). Its passive form *täbarräkä* is morphologically no different from *tänaggärä* which is obviously the T₃ stem of the triconsonantal root *ngr*.

3.7. Unlike *lakä*, verbs of the *addäsä* and *sämma* types (i.e. those whose first resp. last radical had been a guttural) do behave like triconsonantal verbs, although with some deviations. Bender (1978) notates the missing radical as *h*: *√smh*, *hds*. This choice is, in our view, highly infelicitous. The symbol *h* serves here in five different functions, all of which should be kept apart. It denotes:

- the unstable consonant *h* in free variation with zero (*aggär* ~ *haggär* 'country', *tamari* ~ *tamhari* 'studies');
- the stable consonant *x* ~ *h* which often (although not always) alternates with *k*: *waha* 'water', *näggärh* ~ *näggärk* 'you (m.sg.) spoke');
- the missing guttural consonant in what synchronically are either triradical or biradical verbs (*addäsä* / *hds* 'renew', *sämma* / *smh* 'hear', *lakä* / *lkh* 'send');
- the missing original semivowel *y*, *w* in verbs like *säjjä* / *sjh* 'give';
- it serves as a radical in verbs containing a vowel like *galläbä* / *ghib* 'gallop', *däbällakä* / *dbhik* 'mix'.

This overloaded symbol can hardly fulfill its duties properly, as has been shown in critical reviews of the book (Kapelink 1979, Podolsky 1984).

Voigt, in his above-mentioned paper (1981), considers the missing radical to be a glottal stop ("hamzah"): *addäsä* / *'ds*, *sämma* / *'sm*, just as he finds a glottal stop in *lakä* / *'lk* (see above). In verbs like *säjjä*, *kärrä* Voigt introduces what he calls "Null-Radikal Ø": *sijØ*, *qrØ*. Indeed, as has already been mentioned, these verbs (with the exception of *lakä* type) behave as triradicals even though on the surface only two radicals can be seen. Nevertheless, both Voigt's and Bender's solutions are unacceptable. Their symbols chosen to fill in the gaps left by the missing radical are not mere abstractions. They have a certain phonetic value. But what justification is there to make use of the symbol of a certain consonant if this consonant never appears as such in those words, e.g. in various forms of the verb *sämma*? Even if a glottal stop is heard word-initially or in intervocalic position, this does not credit it with the status of a phoneme; its appearance is dictated by

a simple rule:



Still, since the behaviour of *addäsä* and *sämma* types verbs is very similar to that of regular triradical verbs, their respective roots must contain an element which functions as a radical without having any phonetic value of its own. We have proposed a morphophoneme H, which, being a purely abstract notion, lacks the consonantal connotations of Bender's *h* and Voigt's '3.

Proto-Ethiopic guttural (pharyngeal and laryngeal) consonants have become phonetic zero in Amharic. On the morphophonemic level, we have to say that they turned into a morphophoneme H in root-initial and -final position; in root-medial position they became zero, and the new root is of a specific biconsonantal type:

Gé'ez	Amharic	Gloss
<i>'asärä</i>	<i>assärä</i>	/Häsärä/ 'bind'
<i>säma</i>	<i>sämma</i>	/sämäHä/ 'hear'
<i>xalä'ä</i>	<i>allä'ä</i>	/Hällä'ä/ 'pass'
<i>halläwä</i>	<i>allä</i>	/HälläXä/ 'there is'
<i>haräsä</i>	<i>arräsä</i>	/Häräsä/ 'plough'
<i>lä'akä</i>	<i>lakä</i>	/lakä/ 'send'

When exactly the gutturals were lost in Amharic is very difficult to say. In the oldest Amharic texts there is already a complete confusion in the use of guttural letters. It seems likely that at first ' and *h* both merged with ' , and later *h*. *h* turned into *h*. This situation must have existed for some time, at least word-initially. In old texts we find the characters *h*, ' , ' , U substituting indiscriminately the etymological *h*, *h*, and the characters *h*, ' , ' , U.

The distinction between *h* U/*h*/' and ' *h*/' *h* was preserved in word-initial position. In the middle of the word, both turned into zero. Ludolf (1698a) writes:

ተከሙ: contracte ታሙ: eger factus est
 ታላቱ: contr. ታታ: visus fuit

ታላቱ: ታላቱ: pro ታላቱ: Quid videt?

After a guttural consonant was lost, there turned out to be a sequence of two vowels, which is not permitted in Amharic, and so one of the two vowels is lost. If the two vowels are identical, one of them is simply omitted (with a possible lengthening of the remaining vowel): *asra arai* > *asrära* 'fourteen', *sa+ṣägr* > *ṣägr* 'when I say'. If the vowels are different, the "stronger" of the two remains,

³ David Appleyard (1979) arrived at a similar conclusion; he uses the symbol A for this morphophoneme.

according to the "order of strength" $a : ä : a$, e.g. *lä+ane* > *läne* 'to me', *bä+and* > *band* 'in one', *sä+al* > *säl* 'when I pass'.⁴

⁴ In verbs this rule is obligatory; in other parts of speech it is optional, at least in writing. In Amharic Grammar by Märsä'e Hazän Wäldä Kirqos (1948 AMM) we find the contracted form ያገርኝ ለክፍ on the title page and the non-contracted ያገርኝ ጠላፍኛ on page 3. Nevertheless, in the spoken language practically only contracted forms occur.

3.8. The laryngeal fricative *h* is still found in Amharic, mainly in words borrowed from Ge'ez (where it reflects the etymological *h*, *h*: *hamor* 'blie', *kaymanot* 'faith, religion', *kayl* 'force', *haṣan* 'child', *haḡ* 'law', *māṣḡaf* 'book'), from Arabic (*ḥisab* 'calculation, account', *ḥakim* 'physician', *ḥadid* 'rail') or from English (*hotel*, *helikopter*, *haydrogen*). In old borrowings *h* is in free variation with zero: *haḡar ~ aḡar* 'land'. This is already well attested in old texts. In Littmann's "Altamharisches Glossar" (1943) we find such pairs as, e.g., *hand* ~ *and* 'in order to', *hanžär ~ anžär* 'friend(ship)', *hanḡär ~ anḡär* 'neck'. In the majority of such cases Modern Amharic has preserved only the form without *h*.

The word for 'sister' (Ge'ez *ših*) is pronounced in Amharic *šhar*, but there exists also a (vulgar?) - thus Klingenberg 1966:133) form *ar*.

Sometimes *h* is found word-initially in a noun, whereas the related verb begins with *h* /*H*: *halm* 'dream' - *allämä* 'to dream', *hamäm* 'pain' - *ammämä* 'to be painful', *hassab* 'thought' - *assäbä* 'to think', *hakim* 'doctor' - *akkämä* 'to treat medically'. It is easy to see that the verb, due to its regularity, is resistant to borrowing foreign sounds and thus reflects much better the internal trends of the phonetic development.

It is interesting to note that *h* is retained - at least as an option - in the word (*h*)*and* 'one' when it comes in compound numerals: *asrahand* = *arand* = *asradand* 'eleven', *hayahand* = *hayand* 'twenty-one' etc. The informants who supplied us with these forms absolutely rejected any possibility of pronouncing *h* in numerals containing *arar* 'four' or *ammast* 'five': *asrarat*, *asrammast* = *asradammast* but never **asrahara*, **asrahammast*. Evidently, the *h* in *-hand* is not an intrusive glide but a remnant of the original consonant. The reason for its preservation may be the fact that the original form contained two gutturals word-initially (see also the word for 'sister' - *šhar* where we have the same phenomenon). A similar phenomenon is known in Samaritan Hebrew where we find ' in words which originally contained **h*, such as 'ä < 'ah 'brother', 'äd < 'chad 'one' (see Ben-Hayyim 1977:26).

On the other hand, in the old form of the word *yär* 'where' spelled *hṯ* in Ludolf 1698a (Gankin 1969 gives the form ሂṯ as dialectal) we find *h*, stemming from 'alef. Ludolf compared this Amharic word with Arabic أرض *ḥayṯu*, but there is no doubt that the real etymology of the word is Proto-Ethiopic **ay-* (Ge'ez 'ayle): **ay-* > **ai* - *hai* > *yär* (regarding the development of the vowel see below, 4.6).

Since, as we have already seen, there is quite often variation between a pure vowel and a *h*- in word-initial position (*aḡar/haḡar*, *šim/hšim*), *h* could develop in

het < *et as a kind of on-glide.⁵ In a few words *h* appears in syllable- or word-final position: *dāhna* 'good' (in Ludolf 1998a, as well as in Gə'az, the form is *daḥna*) from the original root *dhn* whose regular development has yielded the verb *danā* 'recover'; *goh* 'dawn' (Gə'az *goh*); *balah* 'clever' (Ludolf *balah*, Gə'az *balaf*). It is possible that these words are Gə'az borrowings in Amharic.

3.9. Besides the unstable consonant *h*, which is usually found word-initially, cannot have the mid-central vowel *ä* following it and is in free variation with *Ø*, there is another phoneme in Amharic – we'll notate it as *x* – whose phonetic characteristic is the same but whose behaviour is different. This phoneme can occur in any place in the word, it poses no restrictions on the adjacent vowels and can in many cases be substituted by *k*: *kudad* ~ *xudad* 'big field', *xonā* 'be' – cf. *akk^wax^wan* 'manner of being, condition', *xedä* 'go' – *takk^waxedä* 'be handied'. In some dialects the consonants *k*, *x* are in complementary distribution in the past tense endings of the 1st and 2nd person sg., the stop occurring after a consonant and the fricative after a vowel (*säbbärk^w*, *säbbärk* – *sämma^w*, *sämma^x*). Sometimes the alternation of *k* ~ *x*, *k^w* ~ *x^w* can be found in the language of the same author, in the same text, without any conditioning factor, e.g. *alku* ~ *alxu* 'I said'.

It is necessary to stress that the difference between *h/Ø* and *x/k* is not a phonetic but purely a phonemic one. True, Praetorius (1879:67) wrote: "Die aus *h* entstehende Spirans *h* ist nach Isenberg zunächst pronounced like the German and the Scotch *dt*, e.g. in *Loth*." Actually, Amharic speakers nowadays do not distinguish between the characters *h*, *u*, *h*, *ʔ*. All these characters can substitute one another even in the oldest texts, and, as Praetorius adds on the following page: "Durch diesen beständigen Uebergang der starken Spirans *h* in den schwachen Haut *u*, *h*, *ʔ* und in Folge der vielfach gewiss beliebigen Wahl zwischen beiden Aussprachen, wird das Sprachgefühl vielleicht zuweilen irreführt und setzt auch umgekehrt für einen in der Aussprache erhaltenen Gutturalest ein *h*. Auch Fremdwörter welche in ihrer Sprache einen schwächeren Guttural haben, können daher denselben im Amhar. durch *h* bezeichnen, so Isenberg lex. 145 *h^w* neben *u^w* *Indien*, *h^wh^w* für *u^wu^w* *Wiedehopf*."⁶ As to the origin of the phoneme

⁵ The instability of *h* in Amharic can be compared with a similar phenomenon in Oromo: *ʔ/h/* occurs only morpheme initially, and apparently can be dropped in some, but not all, morphemes (conditioning unclear): (h)irree 'arm', (h)angafa 'older child' (Gragg 1976:174)

⁶ According to Prof. Goldenberg (personal communication), in the Northern dialect of Amharic the character *h* is pronounced as a front-velar voiceless fricative [x], more front than [x] in German or Hebrew. Marcel Cohen (1936:36) called it "h palatal". Our impression is that it is very close to the Russian [x]. The common transcription of labialized consonants as *C^w* is imprecise: labialization does not come after the articulation of the consonant but is simultaneous with it.

/x/, there is no question: it is the result of spirantization of the non-geminated *k*. This phonetic phenomenon, viz. spirantization of stops, is well known in Semitic as well as in other languages of the world; suffice it to mention the *begadkefat* phenomenon in Hebrew and Aramaic. Spirantization of *b*, *k*, *ḳ* is a regular feature of Tigrinya, where it occurs not only within a word but also within a syntagm, just as in Biblical Hebrew. See, e.g., in the following passages from Genesis i: *barhan dama konä* 'And there was light', vs. non-spirantized *k*: *maḥān konä baḡhatawan konä* 'And there was evening, and there was morning...'

The situation in Gurage is somewhat more complex. In the verbal system the situation is similar to that of Tigrinya (except for the ejective velar *k* which does not spirantize in Gurage); see Hetzron 1972:12: "Ṭəgrəjña rāxəbä/yerəkkəb 'he found/finds' looks similar to ʔəz rəkkəbä/yerəhəb 'he found/finds'".

Ullendorff (1955:56), on the other hand, writes while citing Polotsky: "In general it may be said that in Gurage old ungeminated *k* can become *ḳ* in every position." It is natural to suppose that in Amharic and in Gurage spirantization of *k* originally occurred in postvocalic position, just as it does in Tigrinya. Since Semitic languages in general and Ethiopic in particular have a number of proclitic particles (prepositions and conjunctions) which constitute a single phonetic unit with the following word, the initial consonant of the word is then naturally spirantized:

"These forms *hullu*, *hulät*, *hedä*, &c. which developed from *k* via *ḳ*, originally mostly appeared, of course, in environments such as *bäkhullu*, *yəkəd*, &c. and later the 'fossilized' spirantized form was also used initially" (Ullendorff 1955:43).

It is necessary to stress that spirantization of *k* evidently occurred mainly in the most common words, with a high frequency of occurrence in everyday speech: verbal affixes, pronominal suffixes, frequently used verbs (*xedä*, *xonä*), postpositions (*kəwala* > *x^wala*), numerals (*xuläit*, *xəyā*). In a great number of words *k* remained unchanged, so that, unlike the situation in Tigrinya where *k* and *ḳ* are in complementary distribution and thus constitute one phoneme, in Amharic we speak of two different phonemes: /k/ and /x/, the latter having an allophone [k]. This is a result of phonemicization of what had once been an allophone [x] of the phoneme /k/.

Such development is widely spread in the languages of the world. A similar case – the beginning of phonemicization of allophonic contrast – is found in Biblical Hebrew in words like מלכות *malakūt* 'kingdom', קרבה *qirbā* 'closeness', where a spirantized consonant comes after a consonant. In the case of *malakūt* we can safely suppose that there had earlier been a vowel preceding *k*, which caused its spirantization and later was dropped, as is typical of a short vowel in an open pre-stress syllable in Aramaic:

**malakūt* → **maləḳūt* → *malakūt*
(see Arabic *malakūt* and Gə'az *maləkoi*, both words borrowed from Aramaic).

The natural tendency to preserve a sound (in our case a fricative allophone of a stop) even after the original conditioning factor has disappeared causes violation

of former relations between allophones. This is the situation, e.g., in Modern Hebrew where, on the one hand, (phonetic) gemination of consonants is lost, and on the other hand, the schwa vowel *ə* is also lost in most cases. As a result of all this we have a stop after a vowel (*zika* < *zikkā* 'he conferred') and a fricative after a consonant (*yelxi* < *yelāxi* 'they'll go'), i.e. the stop and its spirantized variant are no longer in complementary distribution. Consequently, in spoken Hebrew the rules of spirantization are violated more often than not. Many literary forms, like *yifor* 'he'll sew', *yidpok* 'he'll knock', are pronounced by practically every speaker of Hebrew (except a few purists) with a fricative instead of a stop [/(y)iffor, (y)idpof], to say nothing of the newly-coined verbs like *rixel* רִיחַל 'to gossip' (from the noun מְרִיחֵן *meriḥin* < *raḥiḥin* 'gossip') or רִיחֵן/רִיחֵן *rixen/yekaxen* 'to star' (from רִיחֵן *rixen* < *koḥab* 'star').

An excellent example in Amharic is the verb *arxeda* 'lead, let pass', which consists of the causative stem prefix *as-* and the verbal base *xeda*. This is a productive formation in Amharic, so that the historical rule of *k/x* distribution does not apply here. [Leslau in his "Consize Amharic Dictionary", 1976, gives the form *askedä*, but my informants, as well as Ganikin's "Amharic-Russian Dictionary", 1969, prefer the form with *x*]. On the other hand, the words *askiyag* 'manager' and *alaskedä* (in the expression *alaskedä alä* 'did not allow to pass') are not constructed by the speaker at the moment of speech but are learned forms; hence preservation of the historical form with *k*.

3.9.1. In Old Amharic the velar fricative *x* was much more common than in modern language. Quite a few words in Ludolf (1598a) are written with *h*, whereas now only *h* is used: *käräsir* (now *kärärit*) 'pound', *k/käräwä* (*käräwä*) 'put into', *känd* (*känd*) 'arm', *kädänä* (*kädänä*) 'cover', *xw'alatit* (*kalalit*) 'kidney', *mäkär* (*mäkär*) 'harvest', *marḳo* (*marḳo*) 'captivity', *baḳo* (*buko*) 'dough', *daḳam* (*dakam*) 'fatigue'.

This phenomenon of a phonetic "retreat" (*k* → *x* → *k*) is not sufficiently clear. Two explanations can be proposed:

a. Dialectal differences: It is quite possible that in the dialect represented in Ludolf and in Old Amharic texts, spirantization of *k* was much more wide-spread than in the dialect(s) upon which the modern literary Amharic is based [see *kä* instead of regular *kä* - 'from' in Aläka Lämmä's memoirs (Goldenberg 1981)].

b. A recent phonetic process of despirantization (*x* → *k*) which is parallel to the process *s* → *t* discussed above.

3.9.2. It seems that in some words the new phoneme *x* has developed not from *k*, as is usually the case, but from one of the guttural fricatives (*h*, *ḥ*, *ḥ*). One such example is the verb *ḥoxä* 'shout', from the common Semitic root *ḥwh* (Heb. *ḥay*, Arab. *ḥaw*; true, in Gə'ez we find the form *ḥwḥ* *säw'a* with an 'ayn, but confusion of gutturals is a well known phenomenon in Gə'ez; cf. Gə'ez *raḥabä* vs. Heb. *ra'eb*, Arab. *ragiba* 'be hungry', or Gə'ez *zär* vs. Heb. *zär*, Arab. *zar* 'seed'). Another example is Amh. *xomiatia* 'sour' from the Semitic root *ḥmš* (Heb. *ḥmš*,

Arab. *ḥmš*; in Gə'ez we find the root *mšš*, but it cannot account for the initial *xo-* of Amharic).⁷ To this group of words with irregular development of guttural → *x* (→ *k*) belong also *bokka* 'ferment (dough)', *buko* (Ludolf *baḳo*) 'dough' [cf. Gə'ez *bahu* 'fermentatus...de massa et pane']; *käbt* (Ludolf *käbt*) 'livestock, wealth', if we accept the common etymology from Gə'ez *habr* (✓ *whb*); the above-mentioned *därna* (✓ *dḥn*), *gor* (*goh*), *balax* (*balah*).

The word *tambaxo* 'tobacco' (Ludolf *tämbaḳo*) must have been borrowed from Portuguese in the 16th cent., when spirantization was still a living process.

⁷ The alternative form *komiatia* [as well as *komäḥḥä* 'devenire agre (biéro)'] found in Rodinson 1967:110, with expressive palatalization *i* → *ḥ* shows the process *x* → *k* → *k* with assimilatory glottalization: *k-i* → *k-i*.

3.10. Palatal Consonants.

3.10.0. As is well known, one of the prominent features of Amharic phonetics when compared with Ge'ez is palatalization. In Amharic (and in other modern Ethiopian languages as well) there is a whole series of palatal consonants: č, č̣, ž, ẓ̌, š, ṣ̌, ẓ̌, ɲ. In approaching the problem of palatal consonants, we have to distinguish clearly between (a) palatalization of dentals as a purely phonetic feature, and (b) existence of palatal phonemes.

3.10.1. Palatalization of dental consonants is extremely productive in the verbal system. According to the law of palatalization, any dental or alveolar consonant, except *r*, turns into its palatalized allophone when followed by *i*, *e*, *y*:

$$\text{Cdent} \rightarrow \text{Cpalat} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} i \\ e \\ y \end{array} \right.$$

whereby *i*, *y* are absorbed in the palatal consonant.

C-C	basic form	imp.f.	ger.1st sg.
<i>d</i> → <i>ḡ</i>	<i>xedä</i>	/xid+i/ <i>xigē</i>	/xid+e/ <i>xigē</i>
<i>t</i> → <i>č</i>	<i>tämätäkkäätä</i>	<i>tämätäkč</i>	<i>tämätäkččč</i>
<i>t</i> → <i>č̣</i>	<i>t^wärrätä</i>	<i>kuräč</i>	<i>t^wäräčč</i>
<i>s</i> → <i>š</i>	<i>annäšä</i>	<i>anäč</i>	<i>anačč</i>
<i>s</i> → <i>ṣ̌</i>	<i>labbäšä</i>	<i>lebäš</i>	<i>läbbšš</i>
<i>z</i> → <i>ž</i>	<i>bärräžä</i>	<i>bärräž</i>	<i>bärräžž</i>
<i>n</i> → <i>ɲ</i>	<i>lämmänä</i>	<i>lämmän</i>	<i>lämmänɲ</i>
<i>l</i> → <i>y</i>	<i>säkkälä</i>	<i>säkäy</i>	<i>säkkäyye</i>

a. The *s* consonant is found in just a few verbs, since it has usually changed into *t*: *annäšä* ~ *annäätä* 'carve'.

b. As a rule, *ž* is in free variation with *ḡ*: *ž/gämmärä* 'begin', *ž/ganhoj* 'Emperor'. Still, when *ž* is a result of palatalization of *z*, it is usually kept apart from *ḡ*.

In verbs, palatalization is automatic and obligatory. In the rare cases where it does not occur, like *anasi* ~ *anaci* (Ludolf *kanasi*) 'carpenter', one has to assume Ge'ez influence.

Such is the situation in word-final position. In medial position the situation is somewhat more complex. Besides forms with palatalization (like *šärä*, Ludolf *šeiä* 'sell' - Ge'ez *šeiä*), we find here a few verbs with *e* after a dental consonant: *azemä* 'chant', *tesä* ~ *čäsä* 'smoke (intr.)', *ressänä* 'indulge in lust'. All these are denominative verbs derived from corresponding nouns (*zema* 'chant', *tis* ~ *čäs* 'smoke', *ressänä* 'lust'). In such cases the language tends to preserve the sound of the original word, even if it contradicts its phonetic or morphophonemic rules, just as in Modern Hebrew there are denominative verbs *kixev* 'star', *rixel* 'gossip', *hixaver* 'make friends', with a fricative as a second radical, which is expected to

be geminated.

Most instructive is the verb 'to smoke (intr.)' that is found in Amharic in two phonetic variants, one with a dental stop and vowel *e*, the other with a palatal affricate and vowel *ä*. These are but two phonetic realizations of the same underlying form:

$$\begin{array}{l} (i^y \rightarrow \check{e}) \text{ čärä} \leftarrow \begin{array}{l} i^y \check{ä} \check{ä} \\ \text{tesä} (i^y \check{ä} \rightarrow e) \end{array} \end{array}$$

3.10.2. Leslau (1957b) has shown that one of the characteristic features of the O₂ stem (= Type B), besides gemination of the second radical, was the presence of *e* vowel after the first radical. In Ge'ez this vowel is present in the imperfect: *yä/šəšəm*. In Gurage and Harari the front vowel *e* is found in the perfect as well: Chaha *meiärä*-. Maskan *keiätä* (see Hetzron 1972, 111e). This vowel is supposed to cause palatalization of the first radical. In Amharic, both modern and old, only one type of vocalization is found in all the stems (in perfect): *-ä-ä-(ä)-*, which is obviously a result of levelling. As Leslau (*op.cit.*) has shown, in quite a few verbs of Type B we do find a palatal consonant as the first radical: *čämmärä* 'add' (Ge'ez *šämmärä*), *čälämä* 'get dark' (Ge'ez *sälämä*), *čäbbäjä* 'clench, squeeze' (Ge'ez *šäbäjä*), *čäkkäjä* 'dive a peg into', related to Type A (or O₁stem) verb *täkkäjä* (Ge'ez *täkkäjä*) 'plant'.

Although historically this type of palatalization is no different from the type discussed earlier, from the synchronic viewpoint it has caused an important change in the phonological system. Since the conditioning factor of palatalization has disappeared - either through the phonetic process *e* → *yä* (see below, 4.6) or through levelling - there occurred phonemicization of contrast Cdent : Cpalat.

If at the end of a verbal form a dental and a palatal are in complementary distribution and thus belong to one phoneme, in word-initial or medial position the two consonants are in the same phonetic surrounding (e.g. *t* : *č* in *täkkäjä* : *čäkkäjä*) and so should be viewed as different phonemes. This is one of the sources of palatal phonemes in Amharic.

We cannot date the beginning of the process of palatalization since it is already fully attested in Old Amharic: see in Littmann's vocabulary (1943) forms like *mäläläš* 'reconquering', *bay* (= /bali/) 'speaker', *mäkädäddäšä* (= *mäkädäddäšä*) 'itinerary'.

3.10.3. The situation in other parts of speech is much more complicated. On the one hand, we find here many examples of palatalization of the classical type: *ančč* (Ludolf *anč* with the vowel absorbed in the palatal consonant and with assimilation *n* → *ɲ* in front of *č*) 'you (1 sg.)' (Ge'ez *anči*), *šəbär* 'gray hair' (Ge'ez *šibär*); *čäw* 'salt' (Ge'ez *šew* < Proto-Agaw **šaw*-, see Appleyard 1977a); *čäs* ~ *tis* 'smoke'; *ayb* 'cheese' (Ge'ez *kalib* 'milk', with regular development *li* → *ya* → *y*); *näčč* (Ludolf *näčän*) 'white' (Ge'ez *näših*); *mäč* ~ *mäčä* 'when' (Proto-Semitic **māday* with *ay* → *e*); *aččär* 'short' (Ge'ez *šasir*); *täyyəm* 'dark brown' (Ge'ez *sälim*). The adjectival

pattern *kādi(i)l* is most conspicuous here: *nāčč*, *aččär*, *iäyyam*, *käččam* 'thin' (Gəz *kātin*), *räggəm* ~ *räzzəm* 'long' (from the root *rzm*). The adjective *käyy* 'red' (Gəz *käyih* ~ *käyih*) also belongs to this pattern; due to false analogy it was grasped as if derived from the (nonexisting) root **kjh* with palatalization *li* → *yy*. This gave birth to a new verbal root in Amharic: *kjh* (*käila* 'redden').

The word *addis* 'new' also belongs to this pattern. Lack of palatalization of *d* in this word can be explained by Gəz influence (maybe due to the frequently used name of *(h)addis kidan* 'The New Testament'). In Ludolf (1698a) the word is attested in the form *kñh* *həgäs* with the expected palatalization. The Tigrinya form *hadäs* is especially interesting since it presents progressive palatalization: *i s* → *asʸ* → *äš*.

Still, as has been convincingly shown by Goldenberg (1977:467), in southern Ethio-Semitic languages only regressive assimilation is found. Thus the two alternative forms of the word 'wife' in Amharic: *mist* ~ *mafi* should be regarded as two realizations of the same underlying form */msʸfi/*, where the palatal element is either attached to the preceding consonant (*sʸ* → *š*) or else is realized as a high front vowel (*ʸ* → *i*).

3.10.4. Along with such cases in which palatalization is attested, there are many words in Amharic without palatalization. Among these we find many loanwords (*sirima*, *sekond*, *telefon*, *diplom*, *sini* 'cup' from Arabic *سنة*, *timatim* 'tomato' from Arabic *طماطم*), as well as words whose origin is unknown to us (probably borrowings from neighbouring languages): *tini* 'cactus species', *sila* 'bird of prey', *sibago* 'string'. Nevertheless, there are in this group also some authentic Amharic words of the *tadhava* layer, such as *ser* 'woman', *näggade* 'merchant', *azzix* 'here', *yäthiu* 'which (f)'.
 Two instances of non-palatalization deserve special attention:

- (a) noun + 1st p. sg. pronominal suffix (*bete* 'my house', *abbate* 'my father', vs. gerund form *käfačče* 'after/while I opened' with palatalization *-t+e* → *-čče*);
 (b) conjunction *s(ə)* - 'when' followed by imperfect 3rd p. sg./pl (*sinägr* 'when he says').

Both cases can be understood if we insert an intervening *e* preventing palatalization:

- **betəyā* > *bete*
 **səyändgr* > *sinägr*.

The form *betəyā* - with a stressed *š*! - is actually attested in Gəz, where the schwa vowel continues the Proto-Semitic nominative or genitive morpheme; cf. *betəkä* 'thy house nom./gen.' vs. *betäkä* 'id. acc.'. In Amharic, as we shall see in the chapter dealing with vowels, the schwa vowel was lost in word-final position; word-medially it was retained when the syllabic structure demanded it:

betəkä > *betəx* 'thy house', *betəyā* > *bete* 'my house'.
 In Tigré, unlike Amharic, there is no trace of the original schwa in the end of

the nominal forms, and so nothing prevents palatalization of word-final dental when the 1st sg. pronominal suffix is added: *bet+ye* > *bečče* 'my house', *walad+ye* > *waləčče* 'my sons', *raʿar+ye* > *raʿəšše* 'my head' (see Palmer 1962:66-67).

In order to account for non-palatalization in the two cases dealt with above from the synchronic point of view, we'll have to apply the morpheme boundary of the # type: *bet#e*, *s#yändgr*. The symbol #, as well as the distinction between the two types of boundary (+, #), are taken from Chomsky and Halle 1968, chapter 8 paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2. The necessity to distinguish behaviour of the sequence of boundary in Amharic is evident in the different behaviour of the sequence *Cdent + e,i* in verb (*wasəg* /*wəsdət*/'take! fsg.', *səməčče* /*səmr+e*/'after/while I heard') and in noun (*bete* /*bet#e*/'my house').

An interesting parallel to the phonetic importance of the morpheme boundary can be seen in Modern Hebrew: the schwa vowel in forms like *בָּרוּךְ* *baroš* 'at the head' vs. *בִּירוּךְ* *byros* 'cypress'; *רִשְׁוֹן* *rəšudar* 'it (f.) will be broadcast' vs. *רִשְׁוֹן* *rəšura* 'answer'; or *הַנְּשָׂמָה* *hanəšama* 'the soul' vs. *הַנְּשָׂמָה* *hanšama* 'resuscitation' - this vowel (which, in our opinion, is not a phoneme in Modern Hebrew and whose appearance is automatic in accordance with syllabification rules) can be easily accounted for with the help of a morpheme boundary: /*b#ros*/, /*r#šudar*/, /*ha#nšama*/. That the decisive factor is indeed the boundary is obvious in those cases in which a fossilized expression behaves synchronically as a single word with no morpheme boundary, e.g. *בִּירוּךְ* *byros* 'angry' vs. *ברוגז* /*b#rogəz*/'in anger'.
 Two types of morpheme boundary correspond to two types of juncture:

- a. A close juncture - within derived words (*käfač* /*kəfa+ti*/'opener', *māk/äčä* /*māk/fä+ya*/'key') and in the verbal system between the stem and the personal affix. It should be stressed that the Amharic gerund, in spite of its nominal origin, belongs to the verbal system, hence *därəššä* /*där(ə)s+yä*/'when I arrive' (from **därisryä*). This type of juncture can be notated with + or can be left unmarked.
 b. An open juncture, as in noun plus pronominal suffix or verb with preceding conjunction. This type of juncture is written #.

3.10.5. Schwa alone, without the morpheme boundary #, could not prevent palatalization:

šayum > *šum* /*sʸum*/'chief',
 from which a denominative verb *šomä* 'appoint' is derived.

The palatalizing effect of *y* is felt even when a full vowel, and not just a schwa, intervenes between the dental and the glide: *sänny* > *sänño* 'Monday' (maybe through metathesis **sänny*.); historical verbs tertiae *y* like *hašäyā* > *aččä* 'be engaged', *fädäyā* > *fäggä* 'waste', *lasäyā* > *laččä* 'shave'. True, it is possible that in such verbs palatalization occurred at first in the imperfect (*yähašši* > *yačč*, *yafädädi* > *yafägg*), and the rest of the forms were built from the new root *HčX*, *fčX*, just as the verb *šomä* 'appoint' is derived from the new root *šʸm* < *šum* /*šʸm* (ə)m/, and not from the historical root *šym*.

Verbs of this type behave as triradical verbs, even though on the surface, similarly to the *sämma* type, there are only two radicals seen.

A well-known rule in Amharic is that in perfect the last but one radical is geminated (*nağğärä*, *tänäğğärä*, *asğäräzzäbä* etc.). Thus, in *fäğğä* the geminated consonant is structurally the penultimate radical, whereas the last radical is a morphophoneme X (see Podolsky 1976, 1980). This morphophoneme behaves somewhat differently from the morphophoneme II postulated as the last radical in *sämma* /*sämma*II/. Historically, the morphophoneme X stems from a root-final glide *y*, w: *fädy* > /*fäX*, *stw* > *stX*.

3.10.6. The original *e*, *i*, *y* are not the only sources of palatalization in Amharic. A similar effect could be triggered by a guttural:

sähul > *šul* 'sharp'.

[The old root *šhl* has given birth to three different roots in Amharic: *sähäla* > *salä* 'sharpen'; from this the adjective *sal* 'sharp' was derived, from which a new root *stH* (*sälla* 'be sharp') was extracted (by analogy with *mäbl* 'food' from *bälla* /*bill* 'eat'); *sähul* > *šul* 'sharp', and hence the new root *šWl* (*šölä* 'be sharp').]

səhub 'tractus' > (Ludolf *šəhbo*) *šəbo* 'wire'.

Here, too, besides the regular phonetic development *sähäbä* > *səbä* 'drag, pull' there is a denominative verb *a-šäbä* 'produce wire'.]

səur > *šur* 'dismissed', and hence the new verb *šärä* 'dismiss'.

fäšha > *fäččä* 'grind'.

zəb > (Ludolf *žäb*) *žəb* 'hyaena'.

**iñnä* > *añnä* 'we' [for the etymon cf. Spoken Arabic *iñna* as against Gä'ez *nəhna*, Literary Arabic *nəhnu*.] In this word, palatalization of *n* → *ñ* (in a South Ethiopic dialect) was attested as early as 14th cent. C.E. in the Arabic transcription *Li inyā*, in a book by the Arab grammarian Abū Ḥayyān (see Glazer 1942). Gemination of *ñ* in *añnä* is a normal result of coalescence of two consonants, with the tendency to retain the quantity if not the quality.

✓*hnt* > *aññäkä* 'chew' [the root is unattested in Gä'ez, but cf. Arabic *ħanāk*, Heb. *ħəḳ* < **ħink*- 'palate'].

In some verbs both palatalizing factors: a guttural consonant and the vowel *e* of the O₂ stem, are present:

**ʔe* 'anä' > *čanä* 'load' (in Gä'ez the verb *əun* is attested both as O₁ and O₂ stem).

**šəħharä* > *čarä* 'scrape' (cf. Harari *čəħharä*).

There are also a few nouns in which both palatalizing factors are found: *mädä* > *mäg* 'millstone', *mäfä* > *mänf* 'pitchfork'.

The palatalizing impact of a pharyngeal consonant is well-known in Akkadian (**hadāšum* > *edēšum* 'be new', **aprum* > *eprum* 'ashes'), as well as in some Cushitic languages of Ethiopia:

*In Baiso, Arbore, Dasenech, Elmolo and Yaaku *a* was raised to *e* (sometimes also

i) in the environment of pharyngeals prior to their merger with *h* and ... **arrab*- 'tongue' - Yaaku crt, Baiso *irreb-i*, Dasenech *ere*, Elm. crtcp.

**mañ*- 'head' - Baiso *mele*, Arb. *mele*, Das. *me*, Elm. *mač*, Ya. *mich* (Sasse 1979).

Another explanation of the phenomenon, maybe even a more plausible one, is that at a certain stage the guttural might have turned into *y* (see above the discussion of *a' ~ a''* → *ay* in the traditional pronunciation of Gä'ez). Hetzron (1972, 12d) gives the following explanation of the development of the personal pronoun 'we':

"In this position [*nəhna*], -*h*- could easily become -*i*-. Thus the Proto-South-Ethiopic form was something like **nina*. The vowel *i* [...] palatalized the surrounding *n*'s into *ñ*. In a palatal context, *i* is equivalent to the zero vowel *a*, thus **nina* = *ñəna*."

It is our view that the 1st p. pl. pronoun in various Ethio-Semitic languages (except Gä'ez) stems from ***iñnä* > **añna* (cf. Syriac and Spoken Arabic), which must have existed along with Proto-Semitic ***nihñä*. Nevertheless, we accept Hetzron's explanation regarding the possible development *h* → *i/y*.

The sound change *G* → *i/y* seems very plausible in such cases as:
mašad > **maɣsad* > **maš'ad* > *mačad* 'sickle',
and in other words of the same root:

ašada > *aččada* 'mow' (via metathesis **ašada* > **ayšadaš*),

ašad > **ɣsad* > *čad* 'straw'.

ħasn > **ɣsn* > *čən* 'thigh, lap'.

**wäšəḥat* > *wäčəḥat* 'bowl' (cf. Gä'ez *wäšəḥa* 'pour').

kälä > **käläya* > *xäya* ~ *xäya* 'twenty'.

fañ > *fačč(i)* 'divorce'.

**waš* > *wačč* 'outside' (from the root *wš'*).

It is possible that a similar development has occurred in the word *tanñaš* 'small'; **tan'as* > **tanmas* > **tanmaɣs* > *tanñaš* even though this reconstruction is only speculative.

The sound change *G* → *y* (for *aG* → *ay* → *i*) is also attested in some cases where there is no palatalization of the consonant:

**ba's* > *bis* 'lacking'.

**garly* > *tarr* 'call'.

šəhm > *im* 'beard'.

The old title of nobility *birwädädäd* is attested in old texts as *bañwädädäd* (see Getachew Haile 1970).

Polotsky (1951:19) remarks that in such Gurage verbal forms as *tib* 'she gives' (3rd p.f.sg. imperfect of the verb *abä* - < ✓*whb*) there is the sound change *h* → *y*: *tehab* > *teyab* > *tib*.

It is to be stressed that the sound change *G* → *y* is far from being a law in Amharic; there are dozens of words in which the guttural has disappeared without

a trace:

wāz' > wāz 'sweat';

Old Amh. (Ludolf, Getatchaw) wāsh' > wāi 'soup';

wārh' > wār 'month'.

The reasons for the application of the rule in some cases and its non-application in others are unclear to us.

3.10.7. In quite a few words a palatal consonant is found in word-final position: *laḡ* 'child', *aḡḡ* 'hand', *afḡān* 'handful', *massarāc* (Gəʿəz *basra*) 'good news'; the 3rd p.f.sg. perfect ending *-ācč* (Gəʿəz *-āi*, Proto-Semitic *-at*); the plural suffix *-očč* related somehow to Proto-Semitic *-āt*.⁸ The phenomenon is especially striking when we find in Amharic two related forms, one with a palatal in word-final position, the other with a dental non-finally:

zāān 'nine' - *zāānānā* 'ninth', *zāāna* 'ninety';

mutrān (Ludolf *mahsun*) - participle of the verb *tā-māiānā* 'seek refuge'; *zaggān* 'handful' - *zāggānā* 'take a handful'.

The word *šani* 'urine' (Gəʿəz *šani*) is attested in Ludolf (1698a) as *šānč*. Praetorius (1879:88) mentions the rare forms *ändāc* 'how' (usually *ändet*), *manabāc* 'maybe' (*manalbat*).

It is possible that in some of these cases there was a high front vowel which caused palatalization. The word for 'hand' in Gəʿəz, whenever used with a pronominal suffix, has the form *ʾade-*, from which the Amharic *aḡḡ* might have developed. Similarly, the Gəʿəz *dədə* 'door' could produce the Amharic *dāḡ* through dissimilation (*dədə* > **ḡāḡ* > *dāḡ*). In both cases, as well as in the Amh. words *afḡān*, *zaggān* 'handful', it is possible to reconstruct the Proto-Semitic dual suffix **-ay* (> Proto-Ethiopic **-e*).

Either the connecting vowel *e* or a guttural could have been the palatalizing factor in such Amharic words as *tač* < *taht-e-(yā)* 'under', *lay* < *laḡl-e-(yā)* 'upon'.

Ullendorff (1955) says:

"...there are certain indications that Amharic at one time made even use of a final *-i* after simple consonants, for otherwise forms like the Amh. plural suffix *-oḡ* (<

⁸ In this suffix not only the consonant, but also the vowel presents a problem. Leslau (1957c:162) explains the palatal stop as caused by the vowel *-i* (**-oti* > *oč*) which is found in Gəʿəz plural forms before a pronominal suffix (*māwāšl-i-homru* 'their days'). As to the vowel *-o-*, Yvcichl (1957:174) sees it as a proof of his hypothesis that the Proto-Semitic plural suffix was **-awr*.

"Il semble que *-āi* de l'arabe et du gue'ez contient bien un **-w* actuellement disparu (comme dans l'arabe *māra* 'il est mort', de **mawira*) et que *-ōi* de l'amharique a gardé un souvenir de la consonne *w* disparue dans toutes les autres langues sémitiques (*-ōi* de **awr* comme *mōta* de **maw-ta*). " One can hardly accept this proposal, since in Gəʿəz, unlike in Arabic, **mawita* > *mōtā*, but the plural suffix is *-at* and not **-ot*. Moreover, according to this supposition, the sound change **awr* → *āi* must have occurred independently in Akkadian, Arabic, Aramaic, and Gəʿəz, which is hardly possible. If the existence of intensive contacts between Amharic and Oromo could be dated much earlier than the 16th century, one could assume the influence of the Oromo plural suffix *-o(o)la*. Meanwhile, the problem remains without a good solution.

-oti), or the suffix of the 3rd fem. sing. perf. -ät (< -äti) would be inexplicable."

Still, there is no good explanation for such instances of word-final palatalization as *zätän* 'nine', or the Arabic noun *kayyät* 'tailor' attested in Ludolf (1698a) in the form *ḥṣṣṣ kāyāṣ*. Nothing but a general preference for final palatals can account for *sarafaṣ* 'mustard' (< Ge'ez *sarape* < Greek *σάραπον*).

The nominal suffix -oš found in words like *saklaš* 'hanging', *sarkoš* 'thief', *taltoš* 'dowry', *gatoš* 'pasture' and in a number of game names (*ḍababbaḥkoš*, *laḥmwoš*, *kammamraḥoš*, *zurriyoš*) must have developed from -oi (*sarkoi* = *sarkoš*) or from the plural suffix -ošš.

3.10.8. Apparently there is some connection between palatalization (at least of *s*) and labialization; see e.g. *ṣokāi* (Ge'ez *sawṭāi*) 'sword', *ṣotāššotā* = *ṣotā adārrāgā* 'to whip' (Ge'ez *sawī* 'whip'), *ṣankarri* 'onions' (Ge'ez *sag'arā* < Greek *σκόρδον*); *sakl'ar* 'sugar' is pronounced with initial *š* in the dialect of Gojjam as well as in Tigriña.

3.10.9. In the last two examples there is yet another factor which could have caused palatalization of an adjacent *s*, viz. the velar stop. Here are a few examples of the palatalizing impact of a velar consonant:

tāṭakkāmā 'carry' - Ge'ez *sakkāmā* 'carry on the shoulder';

šakona ~ *sakona* 'hoof' - Ge'ez *sak'wana*;

aškār 'servant' < Arab. 'askar';

fiška 'whistle (n.)' < Ital. *fischio*;

faško 'bottle' < Ital. *fiasca* ⁹ /fɪl/.

An alternative explanation can be proposed for the last two examples: metathesis of *y*.

[*fiskyoj*] > **fis'ko* > *fiška*,

[*fyskəl*] > **fas'ka* > *faško*.

This phenomenon is reminiscent of the so-called "internal labialization" in Gurage which can also "float" within a word until it comes across a labializable consonant; see Hetzron (1972:9):

**gätüruru* > *g'wätür*, **čäkküruru* > *čäk'ar*, *dänäguru* > *dänäg'w*.

In the Amharic examples the palatal element "floats" from the less palatalizable

⁹ Cf. a similar phenomenon in Mātese: *sk* → *šk* in words borrowed from Italian, e.g. *škafja* 'shelf' < Ital. *scalfale*) (Borg 1978:98). It is possible that what is reflected here is a dialectal - Sicilian or Calabrian - form of the word. See also Mātese *šorta* 'sort' < Ital. *sorte*, Southern Ital. *sciorta* [šortja], Malt. *šorti* 'fate' < Ital. *sorte*, South. Ital. *šorti*, Malt. *bašš* 'low' < Ital. *basso*, Sicilian *bašu* [bašku] (there, p. 97). In these examples we find *š* instead of *s* preceding a rounded vowel (palatalizing effect of lip-rounding?).

f and *k* to the more palatalizable *s*.

The sound change *s* → *š* / *k*, *k* is evidently the source of the new stem prefixes *aš-/iäš-*, Marcel Cohn (1939:30) wrote:

"...un préfixe *as-* peut passer à *aš-* devant les labiales, labiovélaïres et postpalatales..."

A comprehensive check of several Amharic dictionaries has shown that the preverbs *aš-/iäš-* occur with no more than 14 roots, of which 5 begin with *k/č* (*aš-kabbābā*, *aš-käfäkkäfä*, *aš/iäš-korämmämä*, *aš-karäkkärä*, *aš-koräkkorä*), and 7 more begin with *k/č* (*aš/iäš-kädädämä*, *aš-käčča*, *aš-korämmämä*, *aš-koläččolä*, *aš-koläččolä*, *aš/iäš-känäätärä*, *iäš-känäädärä*). Out of the remaining two, one (*aš-m'w atitā*) begins with a labialized consonant, and in only one case (*iäš-bäräččäččä*) is there no obvious phonetic reason for *š*. This is a denominative verb derived from the noun *šabräčča* 'brilliance', which is an irregular expansion of the root *brč* (cf. another irregular expansion of the same root: *an-šäbarräččä*). The distribution of the preverbs *aš/iäš* supports the hypothesis that a velar consonant, as well as a labialized consonant, can trigger palatalization of *s*.

3.11. Alternation of palatal: dental consonant.

In a number of cases a palatal and a dental are found in words of the same root, and sometimes in different forms of the same word. In such pairs as:

məknyat 'reason' - *tämäkäniä* 'be used as an excuse',

kane 'sacred hymn' - *täkänjā* 'compose a hymn',

the reason is clear: the nouns are borrowed from Ge'ez and have preserved the original dental, whereas palatalization has found its way into the derived verbs. Nevertheless, in the majority of cases, we have no explanation for the dental: palatal variation.

sakl'ar ~ *šakl'ar* 'sugar';

zagra ~ *ž/ğagra* 'guinea hen';

sanğa ~ *šanğa* 'bayonet';

särian ~ *šärian* 'crayfish';

täkarša ~ *čäkarša* 'soot';

iägur 'hair on the head' - *čögär* 'body hair';

iä-kolita ~ *kočča* 'be angry';

gəšalla - Ludolf *gəšalla* 'panther';

säti ~ *čəččä alä* 'keep silence';

gostämä ~ *goššämä* 'poke in the ribs';

an-kolläččä ~ *an-kolläččä* 'cause hatred'.

This phonetic phenomenon, viz. alternation between a dental and a palatal, is well attested in Tigriña: *səm* - *šəm* 'name', *šänäčča* ~ *čänäčča* 'suffer', *salla* - *šalla* 'in order to', *häri* - *häggi* 'now', *šančäyi* ~ *šančäyi* 'wood' (see Leonessa 1978:11-12,

3.14. Palatalization of Velars

The palatalization of velar stops is much more rare in Amharic and has evidently never been productive. Nevertheless, it is found in quite a number of cases. It is caused by the same factors that characterize palatalization of dentals. Here are a few examples:

- anǧāra* 'Ethiopian bread' - Tigrinya *anǧera*;
arǧǧā 'grow old' < *aroge* 'old' (Old Amh. *arǧg'e*, Gə'əz *arǧarwi*);
ǧaraj 'whip' - *ǧārǧǧǧā* 'to whip';
waǧǧā 'ransom' - *waga* 'price';
wārǧ 'front leg of animal' < Arab. *wārik*;
muǧǧa 'weed' - Gə'əz *mag^wahya*;
ǧār 'good, kind' < **kar* < Arab. *xayr* (> Gə'əz *xer*);
ǧalā 'he could' - Gə'əz *kəhlā* (possibly palatalization occurred at first in a form like **yakhal* > **yakyal* > *yāčal*);
manǧ 'fountain, source' < **mānkā* (Gə'əz *nākə*);
2nd p. f. sg. suffix and perfect ending -*š* < -*ki*, maybe through a spirantized form **-xi*.¹⁴

Marcel Cohen (1936:35) brings forth the personal name *kirkos* > *ǧarǧ^wo s* 'Cyrrique' and remarks in this connection:

"Ce phénomène a une action étendue, en amharique moderne, dans la prononciation dialectale du Gofjami; ainsi ḲḲḲ: ḲḲḲ pour ḲḲḲ: *kidān* 'pacte religieux' (nom donné à certaines prières)."

Ullendorff (1955:65) gives a few more examples:

- Gə'əz *'anket* 'bird of prey' - Amh. *anǧet*;
 Gə'əz *kes* 'priest' - Amh. *ǧās*.

The verb *ǧāmmārā* 'begin' must have developed from **gemmārā*, if we accept its derivation from the root *gmr* 'finish'.

There is no doubt that Amharic *ǧar* 'harcoitic shrub' is related to Arabic *qār*, but the reason for the palatalization, as well as the origin of the word, is unclear.

Palatalization of velars, just like other phonetic phenomena, is not restricted to

¹⁴ Leslau (1957c:153) remarks: "The direct passage from *ki* to *š* is attested in some Arabic dialects in which the suffixed pronoun -*ki* becomes -*š*, and also in Modern South Arabic, as in Soqotri *boš* 'weep', root *bky*, *šerəš* 'stomach', root *křš*, and so on". Still, one has to remember that simultaneous change of two distinctive features (place and manner of articulation) is possible only because the phonological system of those dialects lacks the affricate *č*, which would be a natural result of palatalization of a velar voiceless stop. Cf. Amharic *čalā*, *čār* with *k* → *č*. Besides, the proposed development -*ki* > **-xi* > *š* is supported by the parallel development of the masculine affix -*kā* > **-xā* > -*x*.

Amharic. It is found in Argobba (*marǧ* - Amh. and Gə'əz *marǧ* 'spit'), Gatat (*baǧǧā* - Amh. *bǧklo* 'mule') and Gurage, in which it is an ongoing process (see Selii *bāčə*, Sodo *bāššā-m* 'cry, weep' from the Semitic root *bky*).

3.15. The sound change *m* → *w*.

This sound change occurs mainly in the prefix of the nominal pattern *mǧkǧǧǧ* denoting tools, the condition being the presence of a labial in the root:

- **māsfe* > *wāsfe* 'awl';
mānbār > *wānbār* 'chair';
māšmād > *wāšmād* 'trap';
 **māǧčə* > *wāǧčə* 'grinder' (cf. *māǧčə* 'mill' which is a later derivation of the same root);
 **mānfi* > *wānfi* 'sieve';
 **mānǧaf* > *wānǧaf* 'bellows';
 √*wāšf*, *mašǧf* > **mānǧaf* > *wānǧaf* 'sling', and hence the new verb *wānǧǧǧǧǧǧ*.

This sound change is no longer productive, unlike Gurage where it is generalized in the verbal infinitive.

In a few cases the sound change *m* → *w* can be accounted for as dissimilation whenever there is another nasal in the word:

- awinā* (Ludolf *unā*) < **awinā* 'truth';
awof(n) (Ludolf *awā*) < **awof(n)* 'yes'.

Possibly also *wānne* 'zeal, enthusiasm' < √*mny*, Gə'əz *tāmānāyā*, Amh. *tāmānā* 'desire'.

3.16. Alternation between a nasal and an oral consonant.

This phenomenon, of assimilatory character in some cases and dissimilatory in others, is attested already in Gə'əz (*nǧbr* 'leopard' - cf. Heb. *nǧmēr*). In Amharic we find:

zanab 'rain', *zānpǧbā* 'it rained' - Gə'əz *zanam*, *zānpǧā*.

Along with the form *zānpǧnāy* 'parvenu' there is also *zābǧnāy*, although it is possible that the word is of Tigrinya origin. The suffix -*ǧy* is more characteristic of that language (in Amh. it usually changed into -*e*), and the word for 'time, era' (Amh. *zāmān*) is attested in Tigrinya as *zābān*.

The Arabic word *madāmīr* 'hippodrome' has been borrowed in Amh. as *māāmār* ~ *māābar* in the meaning of 'horse bridle ornamentation'.

Another Arabic word *maḥārīm* (plural of *maḥrāma* 'kerchief') is also attested in Amharic in two forms: *māharǧm* - *māharǧāb*.

Turkish *tabanca* (*tabanǧal*) > Arab. *tabanǧa* > Amh. *tābānǧa* - *tāmānǧa* 'rifle'. Maybe also Amh. *māndār* 'village' from Arab. (ultimately Persian) *bandār*.

In some of the words there seems to be no phonetic reason for the change:

- bəsrat* > *massarəc* 'good news';
bə'sit > *mist* ~ *maš* 'wife';
 Arab. *kabšira* or Eng., French *capsule* > *kəmsur*;
 Arab. *miḡā* > *biškai* 'longs'.

Variations of a nasal and an oral consonant are attested not only in labial but also in dental area:

alla ~ *anna* 'plural prefix in pronouns';
talant ~ *tanant* 'yesterday' (Gə'ez *talantem*). The proposed chain of development

is as follows:

- **talantm*-t > **talantam* > **talant* > *tanant*.
 Greek *μόναχος* > *mānākuse* ~ *mālakuse* 'monk';
 Arab. (from Pers.) *nišan* > *nišan* ~ *išan* 'medal';
 Arab. (from Pers.) *šarāwīl* > *sānaʃil* 'wide trousers';
 wāld 'son' > wānd 'man, male';
 *wāld(ā) 'əm 'mother's son' > wāndam 'brother'.

3.17. *b* → *w*

As is well-known, the non-geminated *b* after a vowel or a sonorant is pronounced as a fricative [β]. This fricative can easily change into a bilabial glide [w] or even disappear while inducing rounding of an adjacent vowel.

sāb > *sāw* 'man' (the form *sāb* found in certain compounds should be viewed as adaptation of the Gə'ez word).

**sābah*-t (Gə'ez *sābah*) > *sewa* (Littmann, Ludolf) > *twa* ~ *t^wat* 'morning' (cf. the verb *šābba* < *sābha* 'dawn' with preservation of *b* due to gemination);
nābārā > **nāwārā* > *norā* 'live, dwell'. The actual source of the Amh. form could be the imperfect *yanābr* > **yanāw* > *yanor*, while the perfect produced the auxiliary verb *nābbārā*.

kābd 'liver, belly' > **kāwd* > *xod* 'belly'.

Arab. *mibrad* > **māwrad* > *morād* 'file, rasp';

**tab*-t (Gə'ez *tab*) > **taw* > *tai* 'breast';

**dabr* (cf. Gə'ez *dābr* 'mountain') > **dawr* > *dur* 'woods' (this semantic development is attested in various languages; see, e.g., Common Slavic *gora* 'mountain' meaning 'woods' in Bulgarian).

The phenomenon of consonant lenition *b* → *w* → *w* is known in other Ethiopian Semitic languages as well; see, e.g., Tigrinya *šō'atā* ~ *šōb'atā* 'seven' < *sāb'at* ~ Gə'ez (according to Dillmann 1907, paragraph 28) *šābsā* ~ *šāw(w)āsā* 'weaken'.

3.18. *b, f* → ∅

In a number of words the bilabial consonant *b* (in one case *f*) has disappeared altogether without a trace.

- **sāb'ay* (cf. Tigrinya *sābbayit*) > **sāy* > *sei* 'woman' (derived from *sāb* 'man');
 **agri'abher* > *agzer* (in the spoken language) 'God';
baḥlā > *alā* 'say'. The consonant *b* was evidently lost in the imperfect **yabhal* > *yal*, and the new perfect was built by analogy:

yasaf : *saʃā* = *yaḫl* : *alā* / *Halā* /

(this explanation has been proposed by Praetorius 1879:57).

**h/arbāt* > *harat* (Ludolf) > *arat* 'supper' (cf. Gurage *ārḫāt*, *ārḫād*, *ārḫat*, Argoba *harbat*, Oromo *irḫaata*).

**arbāt* > *arat* 'four', Guidi (1901) reconstructs the development of the word: **arbāt* > **arbā* > **arwal* > *arat*.

A similar reconstruction is proposed by Guidi for the word *fat* (Ludolf *šat* ~ *sā'at*, Littmann *šā'at*) 'finger':

**sāb'at* > *sāb'at* > **sawat* > *sat*
 One can hardly accept these two reconstructions, because *w* does not usually disappear in Amharic; it either remains untouched or at least labializes a neighbouring sound:

- **arwe* > *arwe* 'beast';
šābāt > *t^wat* 'morning';
kāwala > *x^walā* 'after';

and see other examples above.

Evidently, lenition (*b* → *h* → *w*) is not responsible for the disappearance of *b* in these words. It is rather a case of cluster simplification. [Certain clusters, e.g. with a preceding nasal or lateral, have remained unaffected: *amba* 'flat-topped mountain', *gubāt* 'knee'.] A similar process is still active in some dialects of Gurage. Here is what Leslau (1979, vol. 3, p. xxxi) says:

"In the verb morphology there is quite a number of examples with loss of *b* in Ennemor. Examples for the jussive: *āār*, jussive of *bāārā* 'precede'; *āā*, jussive of *bāā* 'take'; *āā*, jussive of *ābāā* 'seize'; *ākār*, jussive of *bākārā* 'lack'; *āx*, jussive of *bāk'ā* 'weep, cry'."

It is not by chance that Leslau has chosen examples from the jussive: its basic form is *yanḡer/yabās*, in which the 1st and 2nd radicals come together. In all the instances of loss of *b* it appears either as 1st or as 2nd radical, but never as 3rd. The phonetic development of the jussive forms in Ennemor can thus be presented as follows:

- **yabār* > **aiār* > *āār*,
 **yabai* > **aiai* > *āai*.

There is also one case in which *f* has been lost:

**asfariu* > *sam* 'how much'. Here, too, we have a consonant cluster with *f* as

its second component. [At first Praetorius (1879:144) derived the Amharic word from the root *wsrn*, but in his paper published 10 years later (1889a:371), he showed the connection between the Amharic and the Gə'əz words, although his explanation of the latter as metathesis of **ə/o+sant* does not seem plausible. We prefer Dillmann's etymology: **ə+səfənt* -> **əfəntu* (Dillmann 1865, col. 406).]

3.19. *d* → *r* / *C*

Armbruster (1908:34) writes: "d before other consonants often becomes r: *qārm^w o* for *qādm^w o + rəp* 'formerly', *ihārānā* for *ihād nān ā.ā.ā.* 'I am going', *hārku* for *hādku ā.ā.ā.* 'I went', *wāssārku* for *wāssādku ā.ā.ā.* 'I removed', *həCTəp* *ādrigā* becomes *ārgā* 'do it!'"

In Marcel Cohen (1936:56) we find a similar remark: "La consonne *d* est sujette à devenir *r* en fin du syllabe devant diverses consonnes, notamment à la fin d'un mot devant *n* de la copule subséquente: ce changement, assez fréquent même dans une prononciation correcte, n'est pas normalement noté dans l'orthographe: *ṛ. ā. ṛ. ṛ. ā.* *g^w ūdgwād* et *gwargwād* 'puits, fosse', *tṛ. v.* *tadla* et *tarla* 'plaisir', *ṛ. ā. : ṛ. ə* *tād-naw* et *tār-naw* 'cest un génévrier!'"

No doubt, the loss of *d* in various forms of the verb *adārrägā* 'do' (*yadræg* > *yarg*, *adrəgo* > *argo*) in spoken Amharic is also due to this phenomenon.

Such a sound change is not unknown in other languages as well. See, e.g., the Biblical name Tidal טִידַל ִיָּדוּ לַיְתִן (Genesis 14:1), which appears in LXX as Θαιραλ. In Tat, an Iranian language of Dagestan and Northern Azerbaijan, every postvocalic *d* has changed into *r*: *amaræn* (Pers. *amadæn*) 'to come', *dyræ* (Pers. *duḍ*) 'smoke'. In Amharic, nevertheless, this phenomenon should be attributed to Oromo influence, where "...**d* before an unlike stop... became *r*."

**H/i/u/dk-* > ... Gal. *úrj-i*

**todba* > ... Gal. *tórba*

**mīdg+V* > ... Gal. *mīrg-a* (Black 1974).

The opposite direction of influence is highly improbable, since in Oromo it is a universal process without exception. In Amharic, nevertheless, this is a rare phenomenon attested only in the spoken language: there is no attestation of it in old texts.

3.20. *rn* → *nd*

In contrast to the previous phenomenon, which is rather recent, the sound change *rn* → *nd* must be very old, even though it is attested in a small number of words.

kārn > *kānd* 'horn' (attested both in Ludolf and in Littmann);
šarnay > *səndə* 'wheat' (also Ludolf; in Littmann *sarnay*);

kārnab > *kāndəb* 'eyelashes' (also Ludolf; in Littmann we find *kāranūn* which is a distortion of Gə'əz broken plural *kāranāb*);
k^wərna > *kānd* (Ludolf) > *kānd* 'arm'. The form *kārn* attested in dictionaries and texts is a Gə'əz "half-borrowing" (ardhatatama). The denominative verb *kāndāda* 'measure by cubits' still retains in its root (*kāndII*) a reminiscence of the final guttural.

**arānbār* > *andābār* 'tongue' (see Appleyard 1977a:11) from Proto-Cushitic **Ar/Ab-* (thus Dolgopolsky 1973:147-48); Black (1974:219) also reconstructs a similar form:

*PLEC [Proto-Lowland East Cushitic] *ḡarrab-* > PSL [Proto-South Lowland] *ḡarrab-* 'tongue*"

3.21. Loss of a syllable-final (or word-final) nasal

In a number of words the nasal *n* (very rarely *m*) is lost in a word- or syllable-final position:

awon ~ *awo* 'yes';
ank^wan ~ *ank^wa* 'even';

**māndāda* > *mādəgga* 'stove' (Gə'əz *māndā*, the root *ndd*);

furgo 'car of train' from French *fourgon*.

M. Cohen (1939:61) brings forth quite a few examples of sporadic loss of a nasal which he found in modern texts: *andā(n)d*, *ə(n)dət*, *ərna(n)h*, *māha(n)dis*, *gā(n)zāb*, *bərha(n)*, *santə(n)*, *ḡarə(n)*.

This is by no means a rare phenomenon. It is, e.g., attested both in Classical Latin (*sermo* - gen. *sermōnis*, *virgo* - gen. *virginis*) and in later Vulgar Latin (*kālm* > *kālu*, *mēnsa* > *mēsa*, see Duarte i Monserrat 1984:166). Cf. also the two forms of the Biblical name יְהוֹשֻׁעַ/יְהוֹשֻׁעַ *šalmā/šalmōn*.

3.22. The intrusive *n*

Along with loss of *n* in some words there are not infrequent cases of a non-etymological intrusive *n*:

Arab. *dukkān* > *dənk^wan* 'tent';

Greek οκρόβον > *səg^ward* > *šənkuri* 'onion';

sazr > *sanzar* 'span', and hence a new verb *sänzäzzärä* 'measure by spans';
 *mäwšäf > mošäf > *mänsəf > wänčəf 'sing';
 'ahadu > and 'one';
 *əf+äy (Gə'əz 'əf, but cf. Tigriṇya 'ə(n)čəy) > *ənset > ənčär 'wood';
 'əkəfi > ənkefət ('Tnya 'ənkefi) 'obstacle'.

Regarding the last three examples, Hetzron (1969) tried to connect the intrusive nasal with the nasal shade which, in his view (and here he leans upon Professor Delattre's opinion), is present in the pharyngeal consonants ' h. According to Hetzron

#L₁VC → #L₂VnC
 where L₁ = ' h and L₂ = ' h. Hetzron supports his view with numerous examples from Eastern Gurage.

This solution looks rather attractive, especially since in other Semitic languages, too, one can find some connection between a pharyngeal consonant and nasality. See, e.g., pronunciation of 'ayn as [ŋ] in the traditional reading of Hebrew by Italian Jews; forms like yä'äqəb > [yənqav] 'Jacob' and mä'äšc > [məysə/mansə] 'story' in Yiddish; pronunciation of Arabic 'ä'ä 'he gave' as an'ä in certain Arabic dialects (e.g. in the Bukharan dialect in Uzbekistan, see Vinnikov 1969:278; af fiš il-Rawšän an'ä 'he gave Rawshan 1000 gold coins'). Cf. also Arabic 'aqf 'brains' > hankali in Hausa.

Nevertheless, Leslau (1970) and Goldenberg (1977) have convincingly shown that appearance of a non-etymological nasal, in Ethio-Semitic languages in general and Amharic in particular, has nothing to do with a pharyngeal, since in a great many cases such a nasal appears in words without this conditioning factor: Argobba *ənḡ*, Eastern Gurage *ənḡi/ənḡe* 'hand'; Argobba *ingir*, East Gur. *ənḡar* 'foot'; Chaha *ənzar* 'ear'; Chaha *äf/anf* 'mouth'. See also the Amharic words given in the beginning of this paragraph. There is no choice but to see this as a sporadic phenomenon without any phonetic conditioning.

In connection with the word *ənčär* 'wood' it is worth mentioning that there is a large group of nouns beginning with *ən-* denoting largely trees and shrubs. In some of them *ən-* is obviously a prefix: *ändod*, *ənsošalla*, *ənkoḡko*, *ənkoḡ*, *ənkerdad* (cf. Gə'əz *kerdad*), *ənḡəčča*, *ənḡaday*, *ənḡorri*, *ənkuḡataš*. Neither a Semitic nor a Cushitic origin can be proposed for the morpheme, which looks more like a prefix of Bantu or maybe a Nilotic prefixed article, like the one found in Masai.

From the fact that the intrusive *n* appears only before a consonant one can learn something about relative chronology of a morphophonemic process that has occurred in the Amharic verb: 1ä23ä4ä > 1ä2ä33ä4ä (*ärḡ* w äm ä > *äräḡ* w äm ä 'translate'). The forms *ənäätä* 'sneeze' (Gə'əz 'ätä), *sänäḡḡä* 'castrate' (Gə'əz säḡ w ä), *sänäitä* 'split' (Gə'əz šäitä) allow us to come to the conclusion that *n* insertion preceded the restructuring of the Amharic verb: 'ätä > *'änäsä > *ənäitäsä*, and cf. Tigriṇya (*šäitä* >) *sänäitä*, *wäzzäfä* ~ *wänäfä*, Tigre *kattäfa* ~ *kantäfa* (Goldenberg 1977:470 and fn. 51).

3.23. The fate of *w* as the last radical in the verb

Regular phonetic development of *w* should have resulted in the *o* vowel in various verbal forms, as is the case in Gə'əz. In Amharic, on the other hand, there developed a single vocalic pattern ä-ä(-ä) that has spread into all the verbs (in the perfect). As a result of this, forms like Gə'əz **halläwku* > *halloku* were replaced by the regular *alläwku*, the root being *Alw* > *llw*, so that the verb-final *w* has disappeared altogether from the Amharic verb, having been replaced by the morphophoneme X.

3.24. Gemination

It is well known that gemination of consonants is one of the conspicuous features of Amharic phonetics. Still, its phonemic status is not that clear, to say nothing of its origin. It is clear, nevertheless, that at least in the verbal system, gemination has a morphological function.

- a. In the perfect of all the stems the penultimate radical is always geminated: *säbbärä*, *awwädä*, *käšäkkä*, *šämna* (/sm/), *täwädäḡḡä* (the paradigmatic root *wḡḡ* extracted from the noun *wädäḡ* /wädadi/ < /wäd/). This rule does not apply to bisradical verbs like *lakä*, *šä*, because the first radical cannot be geminated.
- b. The second radical is geminated in all the forms of stem O₂ (imperfect and jussive *yäfallag*, imperative *fallag*, gerund *fallago*, participle *fallagi*, infinitive *mäfallag*), A₂ (*yäččabal*, *äččabal*, *äččabalo*, *äččabay*, *mäččabäl*), AS₂ (*yaškämmat*, *äčkämmat*, *äčkämmato*, *aškämmat*, *maškämmat*). In T₂ stem the second radical is geminated, except in jussive (*yämälät*), imperative (*tämälät*), and infinitive (*mämälät*).¹⁵ c. In T₁ and in all stems of type C (= 3) and D (= 4), like O₃, T₃, A₃, AS₃, AT₃, O₄, T₄, A₄, AS₄, AT₄, etc., the penultimate radical is geminated (in addition to the perfect) only in the imperfect: T₁ *yännäḡḡar*, O₃ *yäḡallab*, T₃ *yäḡallab*, A₃ *yamassän*, AS₃ *yäḡallab*, O₄ *yänäḡḡar*, T₄ *yännäḡḡar*, A₄ *yäläččakäm*. The same is true about types 5 and 6 and quadriradical verbs: T₅

¹⁵ There is some inconsistency in various descriptions regarding gemination/non-gemination of second radical in imperative of T₂. In Cohen 1936 it appears non-geminated, but geminated in Cohen 1939. Dawkins (1960:42, fn.2) remarks: "The penultimate radicals of all Passive Imperatives should [...] be single. In the case of Passive verbs whose Basic form is Type B [= T₂], however, the penultimate radical is, in practice, often pronounced double: e.g. for 'sit down (m)' *täḡämmat* is frequently heard instead of *täḡämät*." See also in Goldenberg (1977:485) forms *täfalläg*, *täḡädäm* vs. *tämälät* and footnote 115 there.

yablačallač, A₅ yablačallač, T₆ yarǵä/aggäf, O⁴ yamänäzzär, T⁴ yammänäzzär, A⁴ yamänäzzär, T⁴ yammänäggäggän, A⁴ yamänäggäggän.

Since in almost all the stems (with the exception of O₁, A₁, T₂, and the bitradical verb) gemination of the penultimate radical serves to express the opposition imperfect : jussive, it is clear that gemination is here not purely a phonetic, but a morphological feature. Helzron (1972: 111d) proposed an interesting solution to the question why gemination is present in the imperfect of O₂ but not in O₁. This is how Helzron reconstructs the development of these forms:

Type A (= O₁) Type B (= O₂)

Stage a	perf. *säbärä	impf. *yasäbbar	perf. *fäsšämä	impf. *yafššam
Stage b	*säbbärä	*yasäbbar	*fäsšämä	yafššam

In Stage b the characteristic feature of the impf. (gemination in O₁, *e* vowel in O₂) spread to the perfect.

Stage c säbbärä yasäbbar fe/äitiämä yaf/e/äitiäm

In impf. of O₁ gemination is lost. According to Nyberg (1932), this must have happened at first in forms with a vocalic suffix (like Tigrinya *yasäbbar* - *yaräbbru*), and then due to levelling the form *yasäbbr*, without gemination, came into being. The O₂ stem had two characteristic features: gemination of the second radical and the *e* vowel (first in the impf., in Stage b also in the perfect). Due to this originally long vowel, gemination of the following consonant was preserved as compensation for the vowel length that was lost. In most of the Southern languages (Argobba, Gurage) the high vowel (*i-e*) has been preserved; in Amharic it changed into *ä*, both through analogy to other stems and by the phonetic rule *Ce* → *Cʹä*, while causing palatalization of the preceding dental consonant.

In the other stems, except A₁, gemination of the second radical in impf. may have spread through analogy to O₂, because in all Semitic languages there is a morphological similarity between the expanded stems (as well as quadriradical verb) and the geminated stem (Pi¹el, O₂):

Hebrew *bilbel*, *yəbalbel* // *dibber*, *yaḏabber*
 Arabic *bāraka*, *yūbāraku*; *tarǧama*, *yutarǧimu* // *faʿala*, *yufʿalu*

The opposition impf. : jussive is now expressed in Amharic by gemination : non-gemination of the second radical.

This nice theory can account for gemination in verbal forms. As to the other words, we can mention a number of factors:

Palatalization through *y* usually resulted in a geminated palatal (*sänny* > *sänño* 'Monday', *šna* > *šña* 'we').

In suffixes and enclitics we usually find gemination: *färädääläiri* 'acquitted him', *alläbbəññ* 'I owe'. In word-final position gemination is not always heard, but as soon as a suffix or particle is added, gemination becomes more prominent:

aläññ) 'he told me', but *alaläññam(m)* 'he did not tell me'.¹⁶ A geminated consonant can be a result of assimilation. In T stems *t* is assimilated to the first radical in forms with a prefix, like imperfect, jussive, or infinitive (*yammäläs*, *yammäläs*, *mämmäläs*). The *l* of the negative particle assimilates to the consonant of the prefix in imperfect and jussive (*aläzədam* 'you m.sg. won't go', *annəzədam* 'we won't go'). Other instances of assimilation are *arsu* ~ *assu* 'he', *dämmo* ~ *dämmo* 'again', *yarəgmall* ~ *yarəmmall* 'he curses' (see Polotsky 1937, repr. 1971:456).

Generally speaking, one has to admit that Amharic has a certain predisposition for geminated consonants, as is evidenced by Tubiana (1974):

"...très souvent dans un mot étranger l'amharique introduit une gemination pour l'étoffer en quelque sorte: le nom de Galla *karayyu* est devenu *karayyu*. Le nom du coca-cola est *koko-kolla*."

It has to be stressed that such predisposition for geminated consonants is evidently an areal feature widely spread in various languages of Ethiopia, both Semitic and Cushitic. Suffice it to mention here such forms as Oromo *obbolewankeēñña*, or Afar *gudduxysaggiidakkalañ*. A control check has shown in 5 lines of an Oromo text 46 single vs. 21 geminated consonants. In a similar text in Amharic the ratio was found to be even higher: 35 single vs. 22 geminated consonants.

16 There is no full agreement between scholars regarding gemination. Sometimes even the same scholar is not certain of this matter. Thus, in M. Cohen (1936: table IX) we find *bʸetačč/čam*, *bʸetačč/čaw*. Marcel Cohen writes the plural marker *-wəčč*, whereas Polotsky and Goldenberg consistently transcribe it *-očč*. As a rule, it is not easy to perceive gemination at the end of the word. The most conspicuous case is the non-spirantized *b*: *labb* 'heart', vs. spirantized *b*: *məgəb* 'food'.

Chapter 4. The Vowel System

4.1. In most descriptions of Amharic we find the following chart of vowels:

	i	ɛ
ɨ	ɨ	ɨ
ɛ	ɛ	ɛ
ɔ	ɔ	ɔ

This chart is identical with that of Ga'az and reflects the seven orders of the Ethiopian script. Marcel Cohen, Mitwoch, Jušmanov, Gänkin and Leslau add another vowel: ä (Jušmanov and Gänkin use the symbol ə). This is actually not an independent vowel, but an allophone of ä in the vicinity of w. It is true, Mitwoch (1907) distinguished between the first vowel in the word ወደ [wədə] 'towards' and the vowel in the word ወን [wən] 'river', but this distinction is not supported by any other source (see, e.g., in Gänkin's dictionary word, wən). Our impression is that lip-rounding in these cases is rather weak and evidently optional, so that the same speaker may produce either wədə or wä ä ä indiscriminately.

As for the ä vowel in Cohen (1936), which is different from his a [= ä in our transcription], it is also an allophone of the latter phoneme: "...une voyelle du 1^{er} ordre après une prépalatale est très souvent (mais non obligatoirement) un ä au lieu d'un a; ainsi ፕራፕፕ ራፕፕፕፕ (et ራፕፕፕፕፕ) 'mensuétude'" (Cohen 1936:46).

4.2. As far as vowel length is concerned, the common opinion is that it has no phonemic value in Amharic, even though phonetically speaking, there are short and long vowels. Says Marcel Cohen (1936:42): "Chaque de ces sept voyelles peut avoir des quantités (c'est-à-dire des durées) différentes...". Elsewhere he remarks: "ፕራፕፕፕ: yafä (avec deux a de longueur inégale) 'il passe(a)'. Still, the length of the vowel seems to be related to the place of stress and the structure of the syllable. According to transcriptions found in M. Cohen's book (1936), the historically long vowels a e i o u seem to appear in Amharic as long in final closed syllable (b'yät, masgün, nəfäs, m'öt, qalil) or in the penultimate open syllable (q'ōma, ɨyyäq'ä, mācäd, lakä, r'y'äsa). In some words a long a (ä) can also be found, mainly in final closed syllable (p.49: fidäl). [Regarding the length of a in certain cases see below.]

It should be mentioned that M. Cohen is not always consistent in this respect: s'wäst 'three' on p. 44 but s'wost on p. 81; the nominal plural marker is given as -w'oc on p. 70, but in various places we find forms like lağoc (p. 286), lamarioč (p. 287), satən w'oc (p. 287) without length. Sometimes M. Cohen gives both forms - with and without length - next to each other: ስራተ arät, arä, ስጡ sabät, sabät

(p. 283): ራዳ fidäl, fidäl (p. 47); ፍጥፍጥ fayyäl, fayyäl (p. 95).
What can be learned from all this is that vowel length is not stable in Amharic, is not phonemic, and the Proto-Semitic quantitative opposition in vowels has become qualitative.

4.3. The Status of Schwa in Ga'az and in Amharic

4.3.1. As is well known, the Proto-Semitic high short vowels i, u turned in Proto-Ethiopic into a high central vowel [ɨ] usually denoted as ə. This vowel is unstable and may disappear under certain conditions. In the Ethiopian writing it is expressed with the "sixth order" which also denotes lack of vowel. This fact may cast doubt upon its very existence as a separate phoneme. Indeed, if the Proto-Semitic triple opposition qat : kat : gal is reduced in Ethiopic to the binary opposition kat : kät, and if in addition there is a phonetic rule that does not allow a consonantal cluster in word-initial position, then kat may be represented phonemically as /kät/, with a rule Ø → ə/#C,C inserting a schwa vowel between the first and second consonants of the initial cluster.

Nevertheless, the vowel ə cannot be dismissed from the phonemic system of Ga'az, because there are forms in this language where it cannot be viewed as a phonemic zero. In word-final position, for example, schwa is not pronounced. Still, as has been shown in 1.9, the different behaviour of final diphthongs aw/ay in nouns and in verbs (yabälli vs. läyale, yätälla vs. määlaw) proves that in nouns there is - morphophonemically - a vowel ə which prevents contraction of the diphthong, so that the morphophonemic representation of the given forms will be /yabällay/, /yätällaw/ vs. /läyalay/, /määlaw/.

Another evidence of the existence of final ə in nominal forms (also dealt with in 1.9) is the reduction of the long vowels u, i → ə in forms like kadäsu > kadäst. Here we have a long vowel in an open syllable (kad-ä-sə) which becomes shortened and centralized when addition of the feminine morpheme closes the syllable (*kad-ä-s-ə > kadästə).

Ancient Greek transcriptions of Ethiopian words supply us with actual pronunciation of the word-final "sixth order" character: see forms like ἠῶμῆ - Μῶμῆ, ἠῶῆ - Σῶμῆ (Littmann 1913), or ἠῶμῆ - ἠῶμῆ - ἠῶμῆ in Cosmas Indicopleustes (1909; see Kobiščanov 1966:115).

There is also indirect evidence that in certain cases ə was in opposition to zero in the middle of the word. In the O₁ stem of roots whose second radical is w/y (medise infirmæ) we usually find contraction of the diphthong: /mäwä/ > mōwä 'die', /häwä/ > hōwä 'go'. But in the T₁ stem there is no contraction: tārwädä, tāfäwä. Evidently, the pattern of the passive stem is tākätälä with a schwa after second radical. (Although Lambdin 1978 stresses that in this stem there is no vowel after R₂, he gives no explanation as to the different behaviour of the diphthong in O₁ and T₁.)

The basic stem (I₁ in Dillmann's or O₁ in our designation) also presents a problem. In mediae infirmae verbes there is diphthong contraction indicating lack of a vowel after R₂. On the other hand, in verbs with R₂ = guttural we don't find the expected vowel lengthening according to the rule $\bar{a} \rightarrow \bar{a} / \text{G} \text{G}$ (i.e. before a tautosyllabic guttural), as in **yasmā* > *yasmā*. Instead, we find a schwa (*šahkā, kahā*). This vowel substituting the original \bar{a} can be explained by assimilation to the schwa that follows the guttural:

***lahiqa* > **lahkā* > *lahkā*
 (cf. **yāhthak* > *yāhthak*).

A similar development is found in the III₁ (or T₁) stem of this group of verbs:

**tāhākā* > *tāhākā* (cf. above, *tākāṭā, tāḥwādā*).
 It is thus clear that the schwa vowel is a phoneme in G₃o₂z which is in opposition not only to other vowels but also to zero. Still, when we compare the forms /*māwā*/ *mā* with /*šahkā*/, both of which belong to the same original pattern **kāṭā*, and with /*tāḥwādā*/, we see that schwa has become a zero except in verbs with R₂ = guttural and certain verbal patterns.

4.3.2. As far as Amharic is concerned, most scholars include schwa among its vocalic phonemes (see above, Ch. 2). Nevertheless, practically everybody agrees that in certain cases *a* is just an epenthetic vowel. Word-initially there is a frequent prosthetic *a* coming before the consonants *r, s, š*: (*a*)*rab* 'hungry', (*a*)*set* 'woman', (*a*)*šox* 'thorn' (see Cohen 1936:62). Here it is clearly not a phoneme. Sumner (1957:71) distinguishes between two types of *a*: "...dont le premier /a/ est un phonème, et dont le second /ə/ a un rôle purement phonique. Ex. /a/ / [barrɪ] 'fer'; par opposition à une autre voyelle, par exemple à [c] dans [barrɪ] 'étalle'; /ə/ [anda] 'un'; placé par euphonie entre /d/ et l'occlusive qui commence le mot suivant; il est omis devant voyelle, devant une fricative."

Hetzron (1964) has expressed the idea that schwa has no phonemic status in Amharic. He has convincingly shown that in most cases this vowel, even though in opposition to other vowels, is not opposed to zero. Indeed, the great majority of cases where *a* is found can be explained as automatic insertion of an epenthetic vowel by means of a few phonetic rules: word-initially no consonant clusters are allowed; elsewhere clusters of no more than two consonants are tolerated; wherever consonant clusters violate these basic rules, a schwa is inserted.

There are, nevertheless, a few instances where the appearance of *a* cannot be explained by these simple rules: in word-initial position, in the enclitic general question particle *-ra*; in imperfect of *lakā* type verbs (*yālakal*) and in the accusative marker *-ra* following a single consonant. In order to account for these cases Hetzron introduced a special symbol: /*·*/, which functions as a consonant. So the word *asat* 'fire' is written by Hetzron as /-sat/, *ṭadan* 'juniper (acc.)' as /t-d-n/ and *yasatā* 'he errs' as /ys-tal/.

This solution looks rather artificial. That is why Olga Kapeliuk argued against it

in her PhD thesis (1968:2, fn.1): "It seems to me that one can't accept R. Hetzron's view expressed in his paper 'La voyelle du sixième ordre', according to which the sixth order vowel *a* should not be considered a phoneme, because there are such minimal pairs as: *biāw* 'while they say' - *baṭāw* 'if I tell him' (and on the other hand *biāw* 'if he tells him'), *yasmāccāw* 'he should hear them' - *yasmāccāw* *nābbār* 'he used to kiss them' (and on the other hand *yasmāccāw* 'he should kiss them'), *ada* 'debt' - *da alā* 'he was slow'; *tomh* 'you (m.sg.) fasted' - *tomah* 'your fasting'; *motun* 'his death (acc.)' - *motuna* 'did they die?'"

In order to account for Kapeliuk's counter-examples we'll have to make use of the morphophoneme H and the word boundary #, both of which have been introduced earlier. We shall start with a basic assumption: any word-initial vowel has a morphophoneme H before it. This assumption is needed first of all in the verbal system: since a regular verb consists of a consonantal root and a vocalic pattern, verbs like *awwākā, assārā* should be considered as /*Hawwākā*/, /*Hassārā*/ with H functioning as first radical. Hence the form of imperative *awāk* will be represented as /*Hwāk*/, analogous to *ngār* /*ngār*/. This approach allows us to represent words like *ada* as /*Hda*/. A simple phonetic rule will account for the schwa insertion:

$\emptyset \rightarrow a / \#CC / \#Hda / > *Hda$

whereupon another rule gets rid of the morphophoneme:

$H \rightarrow \emptyset \quad *Hda > ada$

This latter rule must be the last in the set of rules related to H.

It turns thus out that morphophonemically speaking, the difference between *da* and *ada* is to be explained by a single consonant vs. a cluster in word-initial position: /*da*/ : /*Hda*/.

The difference between *tomh* and *tomah* (in our transcription *tomx*, *tomax*) will be understood better if we introduce symbols for morpheme and word boundary: /*omtx*/ 'you fasted' vs. /*om#x*/ 'your fasting'. The former is a verbal form, whereas the latter is a noun with a pronominal suffix. What is important here is the difference between two types of boundary: the morpheme boundary denoted by + that is present, e.g. in verbal conjugation (this symbol can easily be omitted since it doesn't influence the actual pronunciation of the word), and the word boundary, which is denoted by # and the omission of which from the morphophonemic representation of the word would yield wrong results.

Regarding the necessity to distinguish between two different types of boundary, see above, 3.10.4.

The opposition *motun* : *motuna* can be explained in a similar way. In the former word (his death' acc.) we have /*mot#u+n*/ with a word boundary before the pronominal suffix (as has already been mentioned, the morpheme boundary + can be disregarded). In the latter word, on the other hand, the word boundary is between the verbal form and the enclitic: /*mot#u#n*/. The enclitic thus consists of a single consonant, and the schwa is added to render it pronounceable.

As far as the opposition *biāw* 'while they say' : *baṭāw* 'if I tell him' is concerned,

here, too, the picture will become clearer if we give their respective morphophonemic forms: *blāw* /*bl+āw*/ vs. *baīāw* /*b#H+H+āw*/. Regarding the former word (gerund 3rd p. pl.) we have to remark that pronunciation of this (*baīāw*) is also attested, e.g. in Cohen (1936:366. Other forms of gerund of this very verb are attested both in Cohen (1936) and Armbruster (1908) with a schwa: *baī'w*, *baīān* /*baīāx*/. Generally speaking, Amharic does not tolerate initial consonant clusters, the only exception being some *Cr-* and *Cl-* clusters, e.g. *blāna*, *krāsiyax*.

The latter form /*b#H+H+āw*/ consists of a conjunction *b#* 'f' followed by a word boundary, prefix *H+* of 1st p. sg. of imperfect, *H* the stem of imperfect, and a pronominal suffix *+āw* of 3rd p. m.sg.

Besides the purely structural, morphophonemic explanation of why the schwa is found in this form, a plausible historical phonetic explanation can also be given. In impl. 1st p. sg. the vowel of the prefix *a-* (morphophonemically /*H/*?) coalesces with the vowel *ə* of the stem *al* (morphophonemically /*H/*?) to produce a long schwa *ā*. Unlike the short schwa, which became a phonemic zero in Amharic, the long schwa is retained as *ā*. Regarding the long schwa, see M. Cohen's remark (1936:247): "L'él. qui a aussi une forme courte: *ḥā* *ḥā* (avec *ā* plus ou moins long)."

We have thus seen that in all the cases dealt with above, the schwa is not a phoneme but an epenthetic vowel whose occurrence in speech is easily predictable, on the condition that the morphophonemic form of the word is given. Still, there remains one case where schwa cannot be accounted for with the help of these devices: the imperfect of verbs of *samā* pattern: *yasamal* 'he kisses', or, to use Kapeliuk's examples, *yasamaāččāw* vs. *yasamaččāw*. In this form the schwa of the stem is stable: *yasamal*, *yasamaw*, etc. This is why *ā* is included as a phoneme in our Phonemic Chart Variant 1.

Historically the case of the schwa here is similar to the *baīāw* case dealt with above. Originally there were two schwa vowels divided by a guttural: *yaśā* "am. With the loss of gutturals in Amharic the two vowels coalesced, producing a long *ā*. The length of the vowel is thus responsible for its retention.

This is a historical explanation. The question is whether on a synchronic level the vowel *ā* should be granted the status of a phoneme, or if there is some other way to account for its occurrence in this form.

The form that needs to be explained is imperfect of *samā* type verbs, i.e. verbs whose original second radical was a guttural. Voigt (1981) and Bender and Fulass (1978) proposed to view such verbs as triradicals with ' (Voigt) or *h* (Bender & Fulass) as *R*₂. This solution is unacceptable for reasons explained in the previous chapter.

The *ramā* type verbs have a specific behaviour that is very different from that of triradical verbs. Let us see what has happened to another group of verbs whose second radical is lost: historical mediae infirmae roots. Here the second radical is

not exactly lost, but absorbed in the preceding consonant:

/kāyāda/ *kedā* > *xedā* /x^yyāda/
/kāwma/ *komā* > *komā* /k^wwamā/

Compare the frequentative stem *tak^yah^yādā*, *tāk^wak^wamā* with labialized resp. palatalized consonants and reduplication of the first radical characteristic of biradical verbs (*tāladakā* from *lakā*).

By analogy with mediae infirmae verbs we can claim that in verbs whose second radical was a guttural, it was not just lost, but was absorbed in the preceding consonant:

/sāamā/ *sāamā* > /s^{amā}amā/ *samā*

where the raised *B* denotes "gutturalization" of the preceding consonant.

Palatalization and labialization are expressed not only in the consonant but also - and sometimes mainly - in the following vowel, as in /*n^wārā*/ *norā* 'he lived', imperative /*n^wr*/ *nur*, or /*h^yādā*/ *hedā* 'he went', imp. /*h^yd*/ *hid*. Gutturalization (by which, for want of a better term, we denote absorption of an original guttural in the preceding consonant) is realized phonetically not in the consonant itself, but in the following vowel: /s^{amā}amā/ *samā*, /s^{am}amā/ *ysam*,¹⁷

This solution demands certain modification of the phonological chart.

4.4. The Phonemic Chart Variant 2 - Consonants

(p)	t	k
(p)	t	k
b	d	g
f	s	x (h)
(v)	z	
(š)		
m	n	
w	r	y

two morphophonemes X, H

± palatalization and/or labialization of most consonants

± "gutturalization" of most consonants.

¹⁷ In some dialects of Gurage (see Leslau 1959 for *Īnnāmōr* and *Hietzron* 1969 for *Īnnākōr*) there occurred a similar process: wherever the second or third radical of the verb was *alef* or *ayn*, it was absorbed in the preceding consonant if it was one of the sonorants *r*, *l*, *m*, *n*. The result of it is what Leslau called 'stop-attack consonants' *n*, *t*, and what in fact are glottalized (or preglottalized?) sonorants. From the behaviour of such verbs it is clear that glottalized sonorants function not as clusters, but as single consonants.

'Southern wind' = Arabic 'aziyd',¹⁸ and also the form of the accusative = construct state of nouns with final -t: *ba'si'a* > *ba'sa* (in Ezana's inscriptions we still find the uncontracted form *ḥa'syā*).

Word-initially the vowel *e* is extremely rare in Amharic: besides recent borrowings like *elektrik*, *ekwator* we have been able to find in dictionaries only two such words: an interjection *ediya* 'woe!' and a noun *eli* 'turtle', attested in Old Amharic as *elāy* (Ludolf), *hele* ~ *helay* (Gelatchew). Marcel Cohen gives an alternative pronunciation of the word: *yāli*, i.e. *e* = *yä*.

The negative verb *yällän* 'there isn't' occurs in Old Amharic (Gelatchew 1970) as *ellän* < **i/ay* + *allä* + *m*.

In a number of words we find alternation between *äy* - *yä* and *e* (sometimes *i*): *assäy* ~ *äxi* 'all right';

wäyra 'olive tree' - Ludolf *wera*;

wäzäro 'lady' - Ludolf *wəzəro*, Bulatović (1900) [in Russian transcription]

viziro;

wäyfan 'young bullock' - Ludolf *wəfan* [the Ga'az form *ṭäyfan* with initial *t* - evidently reflects an Agaw feminine form, cf. in this language *ädära* 'miser, lord' - *ädära* 'Mrs.' (Hetzron 1976:15)];

yäl 'where' - Ludolf *het*, *het* < **ay-e*;

mäce ~ *mäcä* 'when' - Ludolf *mäcä* < **mācäy* (Heb. מָצָא, Arab. مَجَّ).

Following a palatal consonant the vowel *e* is pronounced as a fronted *ä* (see Cohen 1936:46 and discussion above in this chapter). There is no phonemic opposition between the two vowels in this position, and spellings with *Ca* instead of the more regular *Če* are abundant in Amharic texts (ጥፍፍ = ለጥፍፍ 'white I heard', ለጥፍ = ለጥፍ 'my hand', see above ጥፍ = ጥፍ 'when'). This means that phonologically speaking, *e* can be represented as /*yä/* or /*yä/*, where the raised *y* denotes palatalization of the preceding consonant. Historically the development was as follows:

äy, *yä* → *e* → *yä* - *yä*,

i.e. at first, monophthongization of ancient diphthongs, then the front mid vowel *e* splits into a palatalizing element *y*, *y* and a central vowel *ä*.

The palatalizing element is usually absorbed in the preceding consonant which, if it was a dental, becomes a palatal: *y* → *č*, *d'y* → *ğ* etc. (see above, 3.10).

It should be remarked that in the dialects of Mänz and Wollo every *i* is pronounced as *ya*, and every *e*, as *yä* ~ *yc* (Ibabe Mariam 1973), i.e. what is presented here as phonological representation exists in these dialects on the phonetic level: [əngədyəh] 'angédix' 'therefore', [byri] 'bet' 'house', [ləğə] 'läge' 'my

¹⁸ This word is also known in modern South-Arabian languages: Məhri *hazizə* (Jahn 1902:262), Sogotri *izyib* 'wind blowing in winter from the sea' (Naumkin 1981:56).

son'.

On the problem of morphophonemic identity of *e* with *yä/yä*, see also Podolsky 1976, 1980.

4.7. The Origin and the Status of the Vowel *o*

The vowel *o* in Amharic stems as well from a number of sources. It can be a continuation of Proto-Ethiopic *o* (< **aw*):

proto-form	Ga'az	Amh.	gloss
* <i>maw(i)la</i>	<i>motä</i>	<i>motä</i>	'die';
* <i>qaw(i)ma</i>	<i>komä</i>	<i>komä</i>	'stand';
* <i>kaw(i)na</i>	<i>konä</i>	<i>xonä</i>	'be'

Sometimes contraction of the diphthong is a later one:

Ga'az *säwät* > *šotä* 'sword';

Arabic *lawz* > *loz* ~ *läwz* 'nut'.

Spirantization of *b* → *ḥ* → *w* sometimes produced a new diphthong *äw*, which later contracted to *o*:

käbd > **käbd* > *xod* 'belly';

yənäbr > *yənör* 'he lives', and hence the new perfect *norä*;

Arabic *mibrad* > **mäbräd* > *moräd* 'rasp'.

The sequence *Cwä* is sometimes replaced by *Co*:

dämwäz ~ *dämoz* 'salary';

as + *wälladä* > *aswälladä* ~ *asolladä* 'assist in childbirth';

On the other hand, we find *wä-* instead of *'o, 'o* in anlaut:

'of > *wäf* ~ *wof* 'bird';

possibly also *wäy* 'of' from **o* < **aw* (Common Semitic and Ga'az).

We also have to remember that *ä* is pronounced with lip-rounding (*o, o*) in the vicinity of *w, w*: *bäxwäliä* [boħalä] 'after'.

From all this one can easily deduct that there is no opposition between *o* and *wä* and that the mid back rounded vowel *o* is actually an allophone of the mid central unrounded vowel *ä* in the vicinity of the bilabial semivowel *w* or a labialized consonant. The fact that in written Amharic the characters ግ and ገ, ጉ and ገ, as well as their voiceless and glottalized counterparts, can easily

replace each other, gives an additional support to our analysis.¹⁹ An even stronger support will be found in the behaviour of verbs containing the *o* vowel after the 1st or the 2nd radical: whenever the pattern demands an *a* vowel in that place, *o* is replaced by labialization of the preceding consonant plus *a*.

komä 'stand' - *k^wami* (participle) - *ak^wak^wamä* 'set up' (AT 4 stem);
čäkkolä 'hurry' - *čäkk^way* (participle)

(for a detailed analysis of the relationship between *o* and *wä*, *wä*, *ä*, see Podolsky 1976, 1980).

From the morphophonemic point of view the roots of these verbs are not *k^wm*, *čk^wl*, as they appear in Bender 1978 or Beyene Taddese 1973, but *k^wm*, *čk^wl*. The verb *komä* contains two radicals only, as can be seen from the frequentative stem AT 4 *ak^wak^wamä* with reduplication of the 1st radical. It might be interesting to compare a verb containing a labialized consonant with one containing a palatalized consonant:

<i>/k^wämä/</i>	<i>komä</i>	<i>/x^yädä/</i>	<i>xedä</i>
<i>/y^käm/</i>	<i>yakom</i>	<i>/y^xyäd/</i>	<i>yaxed</i>
<i>/k^wamy/</i>	<i>k^wami</i>	<i>/x^yady/</i>	<i>x(ä)yag</i>
<i>/k^wm/</i>	<i>kum</i>	<i>/x^yd/</i>	<i>xid</i>

It should be added that in those dialects where the front vowels *i*, *e* are pronounced as diphthongs *yä*, *yä*, the back rounded vowels *u*, *o* are similarly rendered as *wä*, *wä* respectively (see Habte Mariam 1973): *mot* /*m^wäl/*, *kum* /*k^wäm/*.

Here too, what we observe is the process of diphthongization, just like in the case of *e* → *yä* dealt with above: a rounded vowel splits into a rounding element plus a central vowel. This is essentially the same process that is attested in Gə'az *k^warban* < *qurḥān*, *k^wšilä* < **kullä* (see Ch. 1). In Amharic the process has reached its culmination.

As has been said above, labialization of a consonant, as well as the consonant *w* by itself, cause rounding of a following or a preceding central vowel *ä*, *a*. This explains, by the way, numerous cases of alternative spelling where a rounded vowel can be expressed as labialization of a neighbouring consonant:

sukka^r ~ *səkk^war* 'sugar';
mukka^r ~ *mak^wat* (Ludolf) 'castrated';
bukayya ~ *bək^waya* (Ludolf) 'sprout';
mogzi^t ~ *mäg^wzi^t* (Ludolf) 'nursemaid';
turk ~ *tar^kw* (Old Amh.) 'Turk';
mokše ~ *mäk^wše* 'namesake';

¹⁹ As one of our informants, an educated man from Addis Ababa, explained: "The character ʔ is old-fashioned, now we are using ʔ-."

duket ~ *dik^wet* (Ludolf) 'flour';
barrukan ~ *bar^tak^wan* 'orange';
bowwäzä ~ *bəwwäzä* 'shuffle (cards)';

In some instances lip-rounding seems to float within a word:

soläg ~ *sällog* /*säl^wäg/* 'hound' from Arab. *salāq*.

Sometimes it produces the effect of vowel harmony, whereby a central vowel becomes rounded under the influence of another rounded vowel in the word:

tolo, Lud. *tälö* 'soon';

buko, Lud. *bəko* 'dough'.

The word for 'milk' (modern /*wätär/* [wätär]) is attested in old texts in spellings like *ṁṁṁ*, *ṁṁṁṁ* reflecting the pronunciation [wotär].

The name of the Oromo language is attested in the same book, even on the same line, in two spellings: *oromāñña* ~ *orāmāñña* (Bakkala Mulataa 1971:7), the latter form reflecting the subconscious feeling of the writer that the second *o* is actually an *ä* rounded due to the previous *o*.

An example of seemingly opposite nature, i.e. writing *o* instead of the expected *ä*, which nevertheless reflects the same phonetic phenomenon, was found in an Amharic translation from Russian of Maxim Gorky's "Childhood". A boy learning to read and making spontaneous metathesis of consonants utters *fiḥodöč* instead of *fiḥäöč* 'characters', where the rounded vowel of the plural morpheme must have influenced the central vowel of the stem: *fiḥäl* + *öč* > [fiḥäḥöč]; hence the metathesized form with *o* in the middle syllable.

A very interesting example is the ending *-x^w* (< *-ku*, **kum* ~ *-kəmu*) found in the verb (perfect 1st p.sg. and 2nd p.pl.) and in the 2nd p.pl. pronominal suffix. When it occurs before the pause it is realized as [ux ~ ux] or [x^w] (with simultaneous lip-rounding making the impression of a whistle):

/fällägx+x^w/ > *fällägəx^w* > *fällägux* 'I wanted';

/fällägx+äčx^w/ > *fällägäčəx^w* > *fällägäčux* 'you wanted'.

But when another affix is added after the ending, it is pronounced *h^w* before *a* and *hu* before a consonant:

/fällägx+x^w#a/ > *fälläg^hax^w* 'I wanted her';

/fällägx+x^w#t/ > *fälläg^hat^w* 'I wanted him'.

A situation very similar to that found in Amharic exists in the Agaw language of Kemant:
 "...in contact with a 'labial' consonant - *k^w*, *g^w*, *x^w*, *y^w*, *g^w*, *w* - it [the central vowel *a*] has a raised, back allophone [ɔ]. ... The half-open vowel *ä* has rounded allophones [ɔ], [ɔ] in contact with 'labial' consonants" (Appleyard 1975:315). Cf. also phonemic representation with phonetic transcription of Kemant words in Sasse (1973:121):

/g^wäz^wə/ [g^(w)zəv] 'belly';

/ti^yw/ [tiy] 'he came';

/färäy^wina/ [fär'cywina] 'egg'.

In Amharic, as well as in Kemant, the carrier of labialization is a consonant. In the ancient passive participle form of the O₁ stem (*katu*) the vowel *u* split into labialization of the preceding consonant plus a schwa, and this gave birth to new roots with a labialized consonant:

šayum > *šum* /š^w m/ > *šomä* /š^w ämä/

[by the double symbol >> we denote here morphological derivation, in contrast to phonetic development shown by the plain >]

sehul > *šul* /š^w l/ >> *šolä* /š^w älä/

mahu > [mahu] /m^w hu/ >> *molla* /m^w ällalla/

(along with this new verb there exists also a verb *mälla* which is a direct phonetic continuation of the original form, cf. Go'az *mäl'a*).

Another source of labialization (found in a few words only) is the lateral consonant:

kaj'et - > /x^w tati/ *hul'at* 'two';

šäl'at - > /s^w äst/ *sost* 'three';

Saho hangal > *angol* 'brain'.

It seems that syllable-final *l* would turn into *w* or cause labialization of a neighbouring consonant; cf. similar processes in English (call' /ɔ:l/, chalk' /tʃɔ:k/) and French ('cheval' + s' > 'chevaux' /šəvo/), Latin ('altus' > Fr. 'haut' /o/).

In the Amharic word for 'three' the ä of the second syllable must have turned into a schwa (alternations ä - ə in the vicinity of sonorants and s are well attested in Amharic; see below, 4.10), so that the development of the word can be presented as follows:

šäl'at - > **šäl'at* /šälst/ > **säw'at* > *sost*.

* * *

The processes that occurred with regard to the rounded vowels *o*, *u*, as well as the front vowels *e*, *i*, have brought about drastic changes in the phonemic system of Amharic. Whereas in Go'az there are no palatalized and only four labialized consonants, in Amharic almost any consonant can be palatalized, or labialized, or both:

x^w /x^w änä/ *honä* 'be, become'

k^w /k^w ämä/ *komä* 'stand'

l^w /l^w ät' ät' ät' ät' / *loftwättä* 'chatterer' (the pattern *kätkättä*, cf. *bäššäšša*

'finicky')

m^w /m^w älläHä/ *molla* 'be full'

r^w /r^w ätä/ *rotä* 'turn' (cf. the frequentative stem *tär^w ar^w ätä* 'turn about')

s^w /s^w äks^w akka/ *sokswakka* 'tramp'

š^w=s^{yw} /s^{yw} ämä/ *šomä* 'appoint'

b^w /b^w äkkäHä/ *bokka* 'ferment (of dough)'

l^w /l^w ärräbbä/ *torräbbä* 'stitch'

n^w /n^w ärä/ *norä* 'live, dwell'

k^w /k^w ään-k^w ällä/ *tänkwällä* 'roll'

z^w /z^w ärä/ *zorä* 'turn'

ɰ^w /ɰ^w ään-d^w ällä/ *tändällä* 'flow'

ɰ^w /ɰ^w ämä/ *tomä* 'fast'

č^w=ɰ^w /ɰ^w ärä/ *čohä* 'shout'

g^w /g^w äddä/ *goddä* 'diminish'

f^w /f^w ännä/ *fonnä* 'cut off the nose (as punishment)' (from Oromo

fanna 'nose', cf. also Amh. *fanno* 'snub-nosed').

š^w=ɰ^w /ɰ^w ää-ɰ^w ää/ *šäšša* 'flee'

č^w=ɰ^w /ɰ^w äkk^w ää/ *čäkkälä* 'hurry'

g^w=d^y /d^y ämmä/ *gämmä* 'begin'

č^w=ɰ^w /ɰ^w äsä/ *čäsä* 'smoke'

x^y /x^y ädä/ *hedä* 'go'.

4.10. Variation in Vowels

In quite a number of cases we find an irregular sound change ä (in anlaut *a*) → *a*, or vice versa, *a* → ä. As a rule it happens in the vicinity of a sonorant or *s*.

- ä/a → *a*
- gamäl* 'camel' - Ludolf, Gä'ez, Tigrinya *gämal*
 - tambaxo* 'tobacco' - Ludolf *tämbäko*
 - tanag* 'palate' - Ludolf *tänag*
 - aläki* 'leech' - Gä'ez *äläki*
 - anast* 'female' - Ludolf, Gä'ez *anast*
 - amba* 'leaf' - Gä'ez *'amba*
 - ane* 'I' - Gä'ez *'anä*
 - zaxon/zoxon* 'elephant' - Ludolf *zäxon*
 - arriya* 'wild boar' - Gä'ez *haräwya*
 - malas* 'tongue' - Ludolf *mäläs*, Gä'ez *mälhas*
 - sammant* 'eight' - Gä'ez *sämänt-/sämant-*
 - säfel* 'sewing' - Ludolf *säfel*

a → ä

- sälf* 'row, parade' - Ludolf, Gä'ez *sälf*
 - mänita* 'twins' - Ludolf *manita*
 - moräd* 'asp' - Ludolf *morad*
 - sähho* 'Monday' - Ludolf *sähho*
 - katäl*, Ludolf *kašäl* 'leaf' - Gä'ez *k'äsäl*
 - gä'ba* 'back' - Ludolf *gä'ba*
 - gäban* 'cheese' - Ludolf *gäban*
 - mäto* 'hundred' - Ludolf *mäto*, Gä'ez *mä'ti*
 - bäre* 'ox' - Ludolf *bäre*, Gä'ez *bä'ray*
- Cf. also Gä'ez *zä'b*, Mod. Amharic *gä'b*, but Old Amh. (Ludolf) *zäb* 'hyena'; Mod. Amh. *zä'än*, Old Amh. (Ludolf) *zäh'ä'n*, but Harari *zäh'ä'n* 'nine' (although its etymology is obscure, the first syllable must have contained *äh*, since *äh* would have produced *a* in Amharic).
- Some examples of variability *a* ~ *a*:

amba - Tnya *'amba* 'flat-topped mountain'

anä, Gä'ez *'anä* - Old Amh. (Littmann) *änä*, Tigre *'änä*

We have not been able to find an explanation to these alternations.

There are also variations within Amharic in rounded/unrounded vowels or, phonemically speaking, in labialized/nonlabialized consonants:

aydölläm ~ *aydälläm* 'is not'

šurrube ~ *šurrube* 'jug'

šomolay ~ *šomäläy* 'stork'

räštokälloka ~ *räššökälloka* 'creep'

tänbotäbbola ~ *tänbätäbbäla* 'burn'

šoräššokä ~ *šoräššokä* 'whip'

žäbbodä ~ *žäbbäjä* 'catch'

Goldenberg (1977:466) brings forth this last example while citing Dässta Täkiä-Wäld (1970 A.M.): "*žäbbodä yä-palagär*, *žäbbäla yä-kä'ämä*" - "*žäbbodä* of the rural people, *žäbbäjä* in the speech of the urban". Here we also see the *d* ~ *l* alternation, another well-known feature of Amharic dialects dealt with thoroughly by Goldenberg.

In some of the cases mentioned above labialization can be ascribed to the influence of the lateral. In others *š* might produce a similar effect (see above on the connection between palatalization and labialization). Usually we find this influence working in the opposite direction: labialization brings about palatalization, see Goldenberg 1977:469: *šänk ar* 'sugar-cane', Amharic of Goggam and Tigrinya *šak'ar* 'sugar', where the etymon begins with *r*; Amh. and Tnya *šä'ar* 'chick' from Gä'ez *šarai* (*šarai* > *šar'ar > *šar'ar > šar'ar > šar'ar ~ šar'ar with assimilation of the initial consonant).

Besides the above cases of unstable labialization there are quite a few cases of loss of labialization:

- Gä'ez *räk'arä* - Amh. *räkkärä* 'be impure'
- Gä'ez *k'ama* - Amh. *kamal* 'house'
- Gä'ez *bäk'arä* - Amh. *bäkkä* 'be sufficient'
- Gä'ez *bäk'ar* - Amh. *bäkkär*, Ludolf *bäkkär* 'first-born'
- Gä'ez *k'arä* - Amh. *känd* 'forcarm'
- Gä'ez *g'and* - Amh. *gänd* 'trunk of a tree'
- Gä'ez *bäk'ala* - Amh. *bäkkäla* 'grow' (but labialization is preserved in the derived nouns *bäkkol* ~ *bokkol* 'sprout', *bäkkollo* 'corn, maize', *bukayya*, Ludolf *bäk'aya* 'bud, shoot')
- Old Amh. (Ludolf) *g'eta*, Tnya *g'äyia* - Mod. Amh. *geia* 'master, lord' (evidently an old borrowing from Oromo *gofia* > *goyia > g'äyia > g'eta > geia).

It seems logical to suppose that loss of labialization in some words and its preservation in others is due to mixture of dialects. There are dialects in Amharic with a preference for labialization (diphthongizing dialects; see Habte Mariam 1973 about the dialects of Manž and Wollo and our remarks above), whereas in other dialects there is no such tendency (and cf. also Tigre and Harari which have no labialized consonants at all).

There is in Amharic another type of vowel variation whose reason is not clear. We are speaking of the historical *a* ~ ä alternation. In some of the cases tertiary infirmæ (sometimes also medise geminatae) verbs that as a rule have a CäCCä pattern in Amharic, are treated as if they had a guttural as their last radical, whose pattern in Modern Amharic is CäCCä with R3 = H:

4.11. Word-final Vowels

Generally speaking, Modern Amharic has lost ancient word-final vowels, unless they represent a separate morpheme by themselves. See, e.g., verbal conjugation:

nābārka > *nābārɣ* 'you m.sg. were'
nābārna > *nābārɳ* 'we were'

The high vowels *i, u* are absorbed in the preceding consonant:

nābārku > *nābārɣ* 'I was'

nābārki > **nābārɣ*' > *nābārɣ* 'you f.sg. were'

On the other hand, we have

nābāru > *nābārɳ* 'they were'

nābārā > *nābārā* 'he was',

because the final vowels here are the only exponent of the person (*nābār+u, nābār+ā*).

The final *ä, u* of the 3rd p. tend to be dropped in auxiliary verbs, since the person is already expressed in the main verb:

yanāgr gāmmār, yanāgru nābār.

Final vowels are lost in pronominal suffixes:

betakā > *betax* 'your house'

betanā > *betan* 'our house'

sām'a-ni > *sāmmañ* 'he heard me',

as well as in the basic numerals:

**ahadi* > *and* 'one'

kaf'etu > *kulār* 'two'

šāstāru > *sor* 'three' etc.

See also forms like

**ayle* > (*h)el* > *yār* 'where'

mānu > *man* 'who',

and even *antā* 'you (m.sg.)' which is attested in Old Amharic (Ludolf, Getatchew) as *ant*.²⁰ The 3rd p.m.sg. pronominal suffix (= definite article) *-w / -w, -u / -u* is always retained due to the preceding word boundary: /*tarik#w / tarik* 'the story'.

Loss of final vowels caused a significant change in the nominal system, eliminating both the construct state and the old accusative case (the morpheme for both had been *-ä*). The new accusative marker *-n* has developed, evidently, from the old emphatic particle *-ni*.

The ancient interrogative particle *-nu* has lost its vowel, but unlike the previous marker it adjoins the word after a word boundary and is thus pronounced

Gə'əz	Old Amh.	Mod. Amh.	gloss
<i>rābbāā</i>		<i>rābba</i>	'breed'
<i>senä</i>	<i>šennä</i>	<i>šanna</i>	'urinate'
<i>sāfäyā</i>	<i>sāffä</i>	<i>sāffa</i>	'sew'
<i>kälawä</i>	<i>k'w'ällä</i>	<i>kolla</i>	'roast'
<i>säräyā</i>	<i>šärrä</i>	<i>šarra</i>	'be pure'
<i>iäbäwä</i>		<i>iäbba</i>	'sneakle'
<i>färäyā</i>		<i>a-färra</i>	'bear fruit'
<i>näfäyā</i>	<i>näffä</i>	<i>näffa</i>	'sift'
<i>hamäyā</i>		<i>amma</i>	'slander'

In other cases we find in Modern Amh. *a* as expected, but an unexplained *ä* in Old Amh.:

<i>färha</i>	<i>färrä</i>	<i>färra</i>	'fear'
<i>säha</i>	<i>a-säitä</i>	<i>a-säita</i>	'spread out'

Cf. also Mod. Amh. *iäitä* 'drink', attested in Old Amh. as (*a-)**iäitä*' (Getatchew), but *iäitä* in Ludolf.

In nouns both *ä* → *a* and *a* → *ä* can be found, as well as free alternation *ä* ~ *a* within Amharic:

<i>hamam</i>	<i>hamam</i>	<i>hamäm</i>	'illness'
	<i>sehlat</i>	<i>šalät</i>	'stripe'
	<i>hasäma</i>	<i>asama</i>	'pig'
<i>'ajän</i>	<i>'atän</i>	<i>ätan</i>	'incense'
	<i>čäwäta</i>	<i>čäwata</i>	'game'
<i>wälta</i>	<i>iäfäya</i>	<i>iäffiya</i>	'spleen'
	<i>walla</i>	<i>walla</i>	'part of roof'
<i>mānu</i>		<i>man</i>	'who'

Cf. also Amh. *maräda* 'necklace' - Tigre *märda*.

Examples of variations within Mod. Amharic:

mänka ~ *marka*, *markiya* 'spoon'

maränta ~ *maranä* 'whip'

mäsänko ~ *masinko* 'one-stringed violin'

sänduk ~ *sanduk* 'box, chest' from Arabic *šandūq*

In borrowed words there is an obvious preference for an *a* vowel before a nasal stop. Besides *sänduk* we can mention here also

sanğa 'bayonet' from Arabic *sanğa*

bomba ~ *b'amb'w'a* 'water pipe' from Italian *pompa*

k'w'ank'w'a 'language' from Oromo *koonko* 'throat, voice'

k'w'aria 'dry meat' from Oromo *kooniata*

samba 'lungs' from Agaw (Proto-Agaw **sänb-*, Appleyard 1977a:8) or from Oromo *somba*, but hardly from Gə'əz *sänbu*, which itself is of Agaw origin.

²⁰ The short form *ant* can be sometimes found in Modern Amharic as well, e.g. in the translation of Gorky's "Childhood" (p. 179): *ant aroge säyvan* 'you old devil'. Here, it is true, this may be due to sandhi: *antä a* → *lantä-l*.

with an auxiliary vowel: /#n/ [-nə]. Otherwise *a* is not found in word-final position, except in dictating, when every sixth order consonant is pronounced with a schwa (kǎ-nǎ for kǎn 'day'), or when three consonants happen to come together (/and kǎn/ [anda kǎn] 'one day').

Besides the 3rd p. m. sg. of the perfect, the vowel *ä* is found in auslaut in a few words only: *antiä* (*ani* in Old Amh.) 'you', *nägä* (attested as *näg* in Ludolf) 'tomorrow', *näččä* ~ *näče* 'baboon', *läččä* 'high-grown grass', and *mäččä* ~ *mäče* 'when'. In the last three words -*ä* is preceded by a palatal that must have arisen from *-C_{äy} > -Ce ~ -C'ä (this is certain in the case of **malay* > *mäččä*). The word for 'baboon' might be derived from the adjective *näččä* + *ay* > *näče*, meaning literally 'the white one', just as the word for 'giraffe' *käččane*, literally 'the thin one', stems from another designation of this animal *gəraiä* *käččən*, lit. 'thin tail'.

The two former words (*antiä*, *nägä*), which are attested in Old Amharic without the final vowel, may serve as an additional evidence of a phonetic "retreat", or of a more archaic character of the dialect underlying Modern Amharic, as compared to the dialect reflected in old texts (see above discussion of instances of de-spirantization *k* → *č* → *k* and irregular alternation of *a* ~ *ä*, where Old Amharic presents a newer form).

Even though the tendency to drop final vowels cannot be denied, a large number of nouns in Amharic end in a vowel. Sometimes the origin of the vowel is clear: a lost final guttural or a contracted diphthong. Still, in many cases historical phonetics cannot explain the occurrence of such a vowel:

mäso 'hundred' - Ge'ez *ma'i*

bäki'o 'mule' - Ge'ez *bäki*

konjo 'beautiful' from Arabic *gunj*.

Appearance of a non-etymological vowel in word-final position should be ascribed to the influence of the neighbouring Cushitic languages, such as Oromo and Sidamo. "With the exception of Hadiyya, and a few words in Kambata, HEC [= Highland East Cushitic] words end in vowels" (Hudson 1976:249). "The vast majority of nouns in Oromo end either in a short /a/ or in one of the long vowels /ii, ee, aa, oo, uu/" (Graeg 1980:115).

The heavy impact of Cushitic languages upon Amharic, as well as other Semitic languages of Ethiopia, has been recognized long ago. This subject was investigated by Praetorius (1889, 1893), Brockelmann (1950), Leslau (1945, 1952, 1963, 1979), Appleyard (1977a, 1977b, 1979). Among words of Oromo (or perhaps Sidamo, because sometimes it is not easy to state with certainty the source of borrowing) origin in Amharic we find quite a number of nouns and adjectives, almost all of them ending in a vowel:

goro 'ear' < Or. *gurrā*

goggo 'hut' < Or. *godoo*

k'W ant'W a 'language' < Or. *koon'koo* 'voice, throat'

k'W anta 'dried meat' < Or. *koon'aa*

čaakka 'forest' < Or. *čaakkaa*

čalle 'necklace' < Or. *čallee*

korma 'bull' < Or. *korma*

čolle 'smart' < Or. *čollee*

gubb alä 'be high' < Or. *gubba* 'above',

nouns with the Oromo suffix -čča:

koräčča 'saddle' < Or. *kooraa*

daräčča 'edge, shore' < Or. *darrī*

guračča 'earring' < Or. *guričča*,

and see also above, fn. 13, about *kaläčča*.

Moreover, in Old Amharic there are some examples of syntactic elements, e.g. the copula -*ti* appearing after pronouns (see Goldenberg 1976, Cowley 1977), apparently borrowed from Sidamo:

"In Sidamo, as in Kambata, the copula with pronouns, proper names, and other human nouns is -*ti*" (Hudson 1976:275).

An emphatic particle of Old Amharic -*le* had its origin in Oromo -(i)llēe (Cowley 1977).

Borrowing of such elements, in addition to a great number of other words, is indicative of close contact between the languages, and this can also explain the addition of a non-etymological vowel in auslaut of many Amharic nouns.

የግዕዝ ቅጂ መግቢያ

፩ኛ መጽሐፍ

ተዘጋጀ ።

ከዚህ ማርቆስ ጸገዳሎው

አዲስ አበባ ኮሌጅ ግምት ምክረት ፤

ባለግንኛ ሰዓት ማተሚያ ቤት ታተመ ።

ያደረሰኝ ከናቷ» ወይም «መንገድ ያደርሳል ከመንገድ» በሚባለው ምሳሌ የተወጠነ ነው።

የግዕዝን ቋንቋ በምናነብበት ወይም በምንናገርበት ጊዜ የሚከተሉትን ማስታወስ ይጠቅማል።

ሀ/ በመጥበቅና በመላላት የሚነገሩትን ለይቶ ማወቅ።

ለ/ ተነሽና ወዳቂውን ቃል ማስታወስ።

ሐ/ ተናቦ በሚነገረውና ላይናባብ በሚነገረው እርግጠኛ መሆን።

አንዳንድ የግዕዝና የቅኔ መምህራን የግዕዝ ቋንቋ ጀግኖች እንዳይቸገሩ ጠብቆ ከሚነገረው ፊደል ላይ «ዋ»ን ለልቶ ከሚነገረው ፊደል ላይ «ላ»ን ይጽፋሉ። ለማስታወሻ ያህል የሚቀጥሉትን የግዕዝ ቃላት እያጠበቅንና እያላለን ከናነብ ዐረፍተ ነገሮችንም ጨምረን እናንብብ።

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ሀረፍተ ነገር።
ላ	ሰባ	ሰብሐ ላህም ዘይባልፅ ይወኑላሂ።
ላ ላ	አመሰገነ	ፍጡር ሰብሐ ፈጣሪሁ።
ላ ላ	ወለደ	መንታ ወለደት እምዖ።
ላ ላ	ወለደ	ገገሥ ወለደ አሐደ እምአእ ላፍ።
ላ ላ	አስተማረ	ነቢያት ሰብሐ ልደቶ ለክር ስቶሰ።
ላ ላ	ጣዖት ሠራ	ሰብስ ሰብስ አረማዋ በአም ሳለ ላህም።
ላ ላ	ለቀመ	ቀሠመት ገህብ ጽጌ።
ላ ላ	አጣፈጠ	አግብርት ቀሰሙ ድረሮሙ በዪው።
ላ ላ	ጨረሰ	ግብረ ዘመሀብካሂ ፈጸምኩ አኝ።
ላ ላ	ዘጋ	ተራሲ ፈፀመ አፈ ብዕራይ ሰባ ያከደድ እክሎ።

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ስግር
ጥ	ጣዖት ሠራ	መስሎ ምስል አስዛብ ከመ ይሰግዱ ሎቲ።
፩	መስላ	መስላ
፪	መስላ	መስላ አቡዩ ዘዩዝብጠኒ በበ ቸር።
፫	ጉመዩ	ጉመዩ ገብረ ዕቡዩ።
፬	አሰረ	ጠዋይ ብእሲ ሐመዩ ቢጾ።
፭	ሐመዩ	አቡዩ ገለዩ ርጉቀ ፍኖተ ከም ይሐር።
፮	ገለዩ	ሐለዩት ማሕሌተ አገተዩ።
፯	ሐለዩ	ሐለዩት ተመከሩ ከመ ወርቅ በእሱት።
፰	መከረ	ሠፍዩ መከረኒ አቡዩ።
፱	መከረ	ሀላው አቡኮ ውስተ ቤት።
፲	ሀላው	ሀላው ሀገረ ሐረ ግጉሥ።
፳	ቀረ፤ ጠባቀ	

— I —

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ስግር
ጥ	ቦታ	አሐር እነ ገበ መካንዖ።
፩	መካን	የመገት ወልድ መካን ተበዙረት ዮሐንስሃ።
፪	መካን	የመገት ወልድ መካን ተበዙረት ዮሐንስሃ።
፫	አብሐ	አብሐ ሌሊት።
፬	አብሐ	አብሐ ሕዝብ አባላት ለገገሥ።

በገባብ የሚለያዩ ፤ በቸርገም የሚገኙ ተብለው የተጠቀሱት የግዕዝ ግምቶች ብዙዎች ናቸው። ይሁን እንጂ በዐረብ ስግር አላካቸው የተለዩ ስልት አላቸው። ሁሉንም በሚከተለው ዝግጅት እንመልከት።

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ስግር
ጥ	ሠራ	ጠባብ ለሐኬ ልሕዥተ እምድር፤
፩	ለሐኬ	ጠባብ ለሐኬ ልሕዥተ እምድር፤
፪	ሐነጾ	ጠባብ ሐነጾ ቤተ።

— 18 —

ግዕዝ	አግርኛ	ዐረብ ሃገር ።
፫ ሃሐስ ላ	ሠራ	ሃሐስ ናሕስ ሐናዪ ።
፬ ነደቀ ላ	"	ጠቡብት ነደቀ ንድቀ ።
፭ ሣረረ ላ	"	አግብርት ሣረሩ ሠራራሬ ።
፮ አነመ ላ	"	አነመ ልብስ አናመጧ ።
፯ ሠርዐ ላ	"	ሊቃውንት ሠርዐ ሕገ ጾም ።
፩ አፍቀረ ላ	ወደደ	አፍቀረ ስብአ እግዚአብሔር ።
፪ ሠምረ ላ	"	ሠምረ እግዚአብሔር ከመ ያደኅኖ ለአዳም ።
፫ ፈተወ ላ	"	ወራዛ ፈተወ ሠናይተ ብእሲተ።
፬ ፈቀደ ላ	"	ፈቀደ እግዚአ ያግዕዝ ለአዳም ።
፭ ዘመረ ላ	እመሰገነ	ሊቃውንት ዘመሩ በመጠን ።
፮ ስብሐ ላ	"	ፍጡር ስብሐ ፈጣሪው ።

ግዕዝ	አግርኛ	ዐረብ ሃገር ።
፫ አእኩተ ላ	እመሰገነ	ዳድቅ ብእሲ አእኩተ ለአብ ።
፬ ቅደስ ላ	"	ካህን ቅደስ ቅዳሴ ።
፭ ለጠነ ላ	"	ለጠኑ መላእክት ፈጣሪሆሙ ።
፮ ቡጉብጉጦ ላ	ሽተተ	«ደዐ ወቡጉብጉጦ ሥጋዩ ይቢ» ኢዮብ ።
፯ ዴነወ ላ	"	ዴነወኒ ዴኖ ሠናይ ።
፩ ርከዮ ላ	"	አፈው ርከዮ እምነ ርከቅ ፍኖት፤
፫ ፈርሀ ላ	ፈራ ፣	አፃገ ፈርሀ በትረ ።
፭ ርዕደ ላ	ደኅገጠ	ርዕደ ሠራቂ እመ ቀርቦ ቅድመ ገጉሥ ።
፮ ደገገፀ ላ	»	ኖላዌ አባግዕ ደገገፀ እመ ርከዮ አገባላ ።
፩ ጸርሐ ላ	ጮኻ	ጸርሐ ኖላዌ እመ ጠፍአት ላከሙ ።
፫ ነቀወ ላ	"	ነቀወ ዶርሆ ጊዜ ስመንጉቱ ሰዓት።
፮ ጥክረ ላ	"	ጥክረ አገባላ ውስተ ሐቅል ።

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዕረፍተ ነገር ።
ከልሐ ላ	ጮኸ	ከልሐ ዕውር ከመ ይድገገ ።
ነብሐ ላ	"	ከልብ ነብሐ አመ ርእዮ ሠራቄ ።
አገጸረ ጥ	አመላከተ	ጢሰ አገጸረ ገብ ተቀብረ መስ ቆሎ ለክርስቶስ ።
አመረ ላ	"	ብእሲ አመረ ፍኖተ ለእገግዳ ።
ለእከ ጥ	ላከ	ባዕል ለእከ አግብርተው ገብ ግብር
ረነወ ላ	"	ረነወ አብ ወልዶ ገብ ግላም ።
ጌሠ ላ	ሂዶ	በጽባሕ ጌሠ ሐዋርያ ።
ሐረ ላ	"	ሐረ ፈለሲ ጎዲጎ ብሐድሮ ።
መረደ ጥ	"	ወራዛ ብእሲ መረደ ፍኖተ ።
ሮጶ ላ	"	ሮጶ ኖላዊ ከመ ይግጥ አባግዐ ።
ነገደ ላ	"	ፈለሲ ነገደ ገብ ካልፅ ብ ር ።

— 10 —

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዕረፍተ ነገር ።
ርእዮ ጥ	አዩ	ርእዮ ነቢይ በመገፈስ ምሥጢረ ልደቱ ለክርስቶስ ።
ነጸረ ጥ	"	ወራዛ ነጸረ ሠኛድቱ ብእሲተ ወራተወ ኪያግ ።
አከዩ ላ	ከፋ	አከዩ ገብር አከዩ በግብር ።
ሐሰመ ላ	"	አከዩ ብእሲ ሐሰመ ለሰ ፅላቱ ።
ነሐ ላ	ነጋ	ነሐ ነሐ ወኮነ ጸባሐ ።
ጸብሐ ላ	"	ጸብሐ ሌሊት ።
ነግሀ ላ	"	ነግሀ ነግሀ ።
ጸረ ላ	ተሻከመ	ገብር ጸረ ፅፅ ጸብ ርእሱ ።
ሰከመ ላ	"	ነጋዴ ሰከመ መሥነቅተ ወረከባ በቀዳቱ ።

— 12 —

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ሃገር ።
፩ ላ	ገዛ	ተቀነዩ ሕዝብ ለእግዚአብሔር ።
፪ ላ	"	ከሁነ ሀገረ ወልደ መስፍን ።
፫ ላ	"	መስፍን ስረኒ በገረ ።
፬ ላ	"	አጥረዩ ላህመ ሐራሲ ።
፭ ላ	ጀመረ	ቀደመ መላክ ተረጎፎ እምስብእ፤
፮ ላ	"	ወጠነ መምህር ጸሐፊ ወገገል፤
፯ ላ	"	ተሰመ ትልመ ሐራሲ ።
፰ ላ	አገድ ሆነ	ተብረ ብእሲ ምስላ ብእሲቱ ።
፱ ላ	"	ተወሐደ ቃል ምስላ ሥጋ ።
፲ ላ	ባጀ	ሕመም ጎገዩ ውስተ ቤቱ ።

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ሃገር ።
፩ ላ	ባጀ	ነጋዲ ከርመ ውስተ ቤቱ እስከነ ዮገልፍ ክረምት ።
፪ ላ	መዘነ	ጠፋልሐ ወርቀ በመደሎት ነሐቤ ወርቅ ።
፫ ላ	"	ነጋዲ ደለወ ወርቀ በመደሎት ።
፬ ላ	ጫነ	ሐንባላ ሕንባላ ዲባባ ሐዋሬ ፍኖት ።
፭ ላ	"	ረሐነ አደግ ነጋዲ ከመይ ሐር ብባ ምስገዳ ።
፮ ላ	"	ነጋዲ ዳዕነ መዘነቅተ በአደግ ።
፯ ላ	ባረታ	ብእሲ አዘላ ላዕላ ዳላእሁ ።
፰ ላ	"	ጎዩላ ብእሲ ላዕላ ባዲ ።

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ሃገር
፩ ላ ተመጋደበ	ተቸገረ	ኤልያስ ተመጋደበ በዘአምጽኦ ነገር ።
፪ ላ ነደዮ	"	ዘነደዮ ብኣሲ ይሰኝል ፍተታተ ።
፫ ላ ስበከ	አስተማረ	ዮሐንስ ስበከ ወገጊል ።
፬ ላ መሀረ	»	መሀረ ሕገ መምህረ ሕግ ።
፭ ላ ረፈቀ	ተቀመጠ	ረፈቀ አረጋዊ ጊዜ ድረር ።
፮ ላ ነበረ	"	ገገሥ ነበረ ዲበ መግባር ።
፯ ላ ሐረመ	ተወ	ሐረመ አክላ ባሕታዊ ።
፰ ላ ገደገ	"	መኖሩ ገደገ ብኣሲቶ ወኮረ ገበ ገዳም ።
፱ ላ ባልሐ	አዳነ	እግዚአብሔር ባልሐ ሱባኦ እመ ገሡቱ ።

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ሃገር
፩ ላ ፈወሰ	አዳነ	ፈወሰ ድወዳነ አዳሱስ ።
፪ ላ አድኅነ	"	አዳሱስ አድኅነ ነፍሳተ በመስ ቀሉ ።
፫ ላ ቤዘወ	"	አዳሱስ ቤዘወ ዓለመ በደው ።
፬ ላ ወረደ	ወረደ	ብኣሲ ወረደ እምደብር ።
፭ ላ ተቋልቋላ	"	ተቋልቋላ ፀሐይ ገበ ምዕራብ ።
፮ ላ አግመረ	ቻላ	አግመረ አደግ ክቡደ ጸረ ።
፯ ላ ክህላ	"	ሐሙም አክህላ ተናግሮ ።
፩ ላ ተዐገሠ	"	አዳሱ ተዐገሠ ሕግግግተ ።
፪ ላ ወኅደ	ጎደላ	ወኅደ ነዋይ እምጊሊልቁ ።
፫ ላ ሐጸ	"	ሐጸ ማይ እምልዐቱ ።

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዕረፍተ ነገር ።
ላ	ጎደል	ነትገ ማየ አይኅ ።
ፈ	ጨመረ	መያሲ ወስከ ማየ ምስል ወይን ።
፪	ደመረ	ባዕል ደመረ ገዋዩ ምስል ገዋይ ።
፫	ቶስካ	ቶስካ አረጋዊ ማየ ምስል ሐላብ ።
፬	ቀመረ	ካህን ቀመረ ዘመነ ።
፭	ትላቁ	ነጋዴ ትላቁ ብሩረ ።
፮	ነገረ	ነገረኒ ኾሎ ነገረ ፍቁርዮ ።
፯	አብሠረ	ብእሲ አብሠረ ለቤዱ እስመ ወፅኦ ሎቱ ዕፃ እንተ ምእት ብሩር ።
፰	ዜነወ	ዘተረነወ ብእሲ ዜነወኒ ዜና ሠናዮ ።
፱	ጎሥዐ	ጎሥዐ ልብዩ ቃል ሠናዮ ።

— ፳፪ —

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዕረፍተ ነገር ።
፫	ተነበዩ	ተነበዩ ነቢይ ትንቢተ ከመ ይትወልድ ክርስቶስ እማርያም ዩንግል ።
፬	ኖቢረ	መምህር ኖቢረ ሐዲስ መጽሐፈ ልትገሀ መርጽኦ ።
፪	ሠርገወ	ለመራት አቡነ ሠርገወ ልብስ ለመራዊ ።
፩	ምዐ	ካህን ምዐ መሥዋዕተ ።
፭	ጠብሐ	ባዕል ጠብሐ ባግዐ ለእንግዳ ።
፮	በልዐ	ርጉብ በልዐ ገብስተ ።
፯	ተመገበ	አረጋዊ ተመገበ ምግብ ።
፫	ተሌስዮ	ተሌስዮስ አነ ገብስተ እስከ እጹግብ ።
		(ላሕም ተሌስዮ ግዕረ)

— ፳፫ —

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ግጥም
፬ ጥ	በላ	መያሲ መሀበ ወይኃ ለአናግድ እምድገረ ተደሩ ገብስተ ።
፭ ለ	ይቅር አለ	እግዚአብሔር መሐረ ፈይታዮ ።
፮ ተሠሀላ ላ	"	ተሠሀላነ አብ በሞተ ወልዱ ።
፯ ሠረጸ ላ	በቀለ	ሠረጸ ሣዕር አመ ዘንመ ዝናም ።
፪ በቁለ ላ	"	በቁለ እክል በወርገ ዝናም ።
፩ ዐዩ ላ	ተላ	ዐዩ ሥጋ ዘተሰቅል ደበ ዐረፍት።
፪ ጸአ ላ	"	ጸአ ወበጉብጎ ዐጽምዮ ።
፩ ሎሀ ላ	ጸፈ	መምህርነ ሎሀ ፈደለ በለውሀ ።
፪ ከተባ ላ	"	ከተባ ክታብ መምህርዮ ።
፫ ጠመረ	"	አነ ጸሐፍኩ ጠማረ ወፈነውኩ ገብ ዘመድዮ ።

— ፳፬ —

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ግጥም
፬ ጸሐፈ ላ	ጸፈ	አቡዮ ጸሐፈ መልእክተ ከመይ ፈነ ርጉቀ ብሔረ ።
፩ ሞጥሐ ላ	ለበስ	ሞጥሐ ላእክ ምጣክተ ።
፪ ለብስ ላ	"	ከፃን ለብስ ልብስ ።
፫ ተዐጽፈ ላ	»	ባክታዊ ተዐጽፈ አጽፈ ።
፬ ተአርዘ ላ	"	ብእሲ ተአርዘ አረዘ ።
፩ ሞቅሐ ላ	አስረ	መስፍን ሞቅሐ ስረቄ ።
፪ አስረ ላ	"	አስረ ገብር ሣዕረ ።
፩ ቀረመ ላ	ለቀመ	ቀረመ እክስ ሐራብ ።
፪ ቀሠመ ላ	"	ቀሠመ ንሀብ ጽጌ ገዳም ።
፩ በአ ላ	ገባ	በአ ቤቶ ሐራሲ ጊዜ መስዮ ።

— ፳፭ —

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ሃገር
፩ ላ ገብአ	ገባ	መዋቲ ገብአ መራተ ።
፪ ላ አተወ	"	አፃፃ ሮጸ ወአተወ ቤቶ ።
፫ ላ ፀርቦ	"	ፀርቦ ፀሐይ ውስተ ምዕራብ ።
፬ ላ ጠላ	ለመለመ	ጠላ ዕዕ አመ ያደ ደመና በሰማይ ።
፭ ላ ለምለመ	"	ለምለመ ተከል አመ ዘገመ ዝናም ።
፮ ላ አወረደ	ሰጠ	እግዚእነ አወረደ መራተተ ለጳጥሮስ ።
፯ ላ ደገወ	"	ደገወኒ ጸጋ እግዚአዳ ።
፲ ላ መጠወ	"	መጠወ አብ ወልደ ዋክደ ለሞት
፲፩ ላ ወህብ	"	ባዕል ወሀብ ገዋዩ ለነዳይ ።

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ሃገር
፩ ላ ዐሠዩ	ሰጠ	ምጉት እዕድዮ ለእግዚአብሔር በእጉት ሹሉ ዘገብረ ሊተ ።
፪ ላ ጎደረ	አደረ	ጎደረ እንግዳ ውስተ ማጎደር ።
፫ ላ ቤተ	"	አረጋዊ ቤተ ውስተ ቤቶ ።
፬ ላ ሞተ	ሞተ	አቡዩ ሞተ በሐማም ።
፭ ላ ጎሰረ	"	ጎሰረ አቤል ቅድመ አዳም ።
፮ ላ ለሀወ	አለቀስ	ለሀወት ማርያም በእጉት ወልዳ።
፯ ላ በኮዩ	"	ሕፃን በኮዩ እስመ ርገብ ።
፲ ላ አጉብዐ	"	ግራዕ አጉብዐ በተገናዖቱ ።
፲፩ ላ አስቄተወ	"	ያዕቆብ አስቄቀወ በእጉት ዮሴፍ ወልደ ።

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ስገር
ተሰደ ላ	ተሰደደ	ተሰደ ሃዳድ እምሀገሩ ።
ፈለሰ ላ	"	ፈለሰት ማርያም ገባ ምድረ ግብፅ ።
ሰከበ ላ	ተኛ	ወልድ ሰከበ ውስተ ኅል እመ ተወልደ ።
ኖመ ላ	"	ኖመ አረጋቂ ዲባ አረቱ ።
ደቀሰ ላ	"	ሰከር ደቀሰ እንባሰ መካኑ ።
ዐመፀ ላ	ባደላ	ዐማፂ ዐመፀ ግለመ ።
ገፍዐ ላ	"	ባዕል ገፍዐ ሃዳድ ።
አበሰ ላ	"	ኅጥእ አበሰ ፈጣሪሁ ።
ጌገዮ ላ	"	ጌገዮ ርእሶ ከሐዲ ።

— ፳፰ —

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ስገር
ከሠተ ላ	ገለጠ	መምህር ከሠተ ምሥጢር ለአርዳኢሁ ።
ገሀደ ላ	"	ከርቡዩስ ገሀደ ተገግኤሁ ።
ጎድጎድ ላ	መታ	አ አገው ጎድጎድ ጥገተ ወይ ኅረገወከሙ ።
አንዘረ ላ	"	አንዘረ አንዘረ ማሕልታዊ ።
ጠቅዐ ላ	"	መጥቅዐ ጠቅዐ ዲዩቆገ ።
ዘበጠ ላ	"	ከሀገ ዘበጠ ከበሮ ጊዜ ማሕልታ።
ጸፍዐ ላ	"	ጸፍዐ አግግዚ መልታሕተ ዕቡድ ገብር ።
ኮርዐ ላ	"	አይሁድ ኮርዐ ርእሶ ለክርስ ቶስ ።
ሰንቀወ ላ	"	ሰንቀወ ሰንቃዊ መሰንቆ ።

— ፳፱ —

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ግጥም
ሰቀመ	ማረክ	ሠራዊት ስቀመ ንዋዩት ወተካ ፈሉ።
ጻወወ	"	ጻወወ ገብረ ያርባሐዋ።
ጻህረክ	"	ጎዶል ጻህረክ ጸላኢው ጊዜ ቀትል።
አድነነ	አዘንበል	አድነነ ወልድ ርእሶ ዲቦ መስ ቀል።
አድነነ	"	ሕፃን አድነነ ርእሶ።
ለበወ	ተረዳ	መርድእ ለበወ ምሥጢረ።
ጠየቀ	"	ቀርቦ መብ ገብ ነበልባል ወነድ ወጠየቀ ከዋኒሁ።
ዖቀ	ዐወቀ	አላተውሩ ዐቀ ኢያስከተክሙ ባዕዳግ።

—፴—

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ግጥም
አእመረ	ዐወቀ	ትገሃግ አእመሩ መዳከፍት።
ወገረ	ጣል	ኖላዊ ወገረ ዕብነ ውስተ ባሕር።
ገደፈ	"	ሕሙም ገደፈ ልብሶ።
ቀጸበ	ጠቀሰ	ወረዛ ቀጸበ ሠናይተ ብእሲት በአዕይጉቲሁ።
ጠቀሰ	"	ጠቀሰ ብእሲ ቢጸ በእእዳዋሁ።
ተቀየመ	ቁም ያዘ	ተቀየመ አረጋዊ በእሱም።
ተበቀለ	"	ፈያታይ ተበቀለ ጸላኢሁ።
ሰረረ	ወጣ	ሰረረ ገሰር ገብ ሰማይ።
ወፅኦ	"	ወፅኦ ብእሲ አማግብር።

—፴፩—

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ሃገር
፫ ሰርገ	ወጣ	ዐርገ ኢየሱስ ብሎ ስማይ በዩባቤ
፩ ላ ጸመፀ	ደክመ	ጸመው ባፅሉ በፍቅር ግሉም ።
፪ ላ ስእነ	"	እውም ስእነ ተናግሮ ።
፫ ላ ደክመ	"	ደክመ አረጋግ በፍፍት ።
፩ ላ ነሠተ	አረረሰ	ነሠተ ገሰር በተነ ።
፪ መገበረ	"	መገበረ አላዊ መቅደስ ።
፩ ላ ገለዩ	አሰበ	ዐግዖ ገለዩ ዐመፍ በውስተ ምስክር ።
፪ ላ ተከከረ	"	እግዚአብሔር ተከከረ ጭቆራኒው ጊዜ መክራ ።
፩ ላ ተክሠ	አገለገለ	ክሠገ ተክሠ መቅደስ ።

—፳፪—

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ሃገር
፪ አሥመረ	አገለገለ	ተገሠ ብእሰ አሥመረ ፈጣሪሁ ።
፩ ላ ቀነተ	ታጠቀ	ቀነተ ያርብሐዊ ለገጸ ውስተ ሐቆሁ ።
፪ ላ ዐጠቀ	"	ሐረሰ ዐጠቀ ሐቆሁ ።
፩ ላ ፈለጠ	ለዩ	ፈለጠ ምላዊ አባግፀ እምአጣሊ ።
፪ ላ ሌለዩ	"	እግዚአብሔር ሌለዩ ኃጻኝ እምን ጸደቃን ።
፩ ላ ፈረዩ	አፈራ	ፍሬ ፈረዩ ወዩን ዘተክላ ።
፪ ላ ሐገገበ	"	ሐገገበ ወዩን በጊዜሁ ።

—፳፫—

ግዕዝ	አግርኛ	ዕረፍተ ነገር
ሐንከበ	ሰፈረ	ሐንከበ ንዑብ ላዕል ዕፅ ።
ሰፈረ	"	ሰፈሩ ሠራዊት ውስተ መርገብ ።
ሞቀ	ሞቀ	አሳተ ሞቀ አረጋዋ ።
ሰነነ	"	ሰነነ ጴጥሮስ መንገስ ብርሀ ።
ረከበ	አገኘ	ነጋዲ ረከበ ንዋዩ ።
አድምዐ	"	አድምዐ አብርሃም ጽድቀ ።
አተባ	ባረከ	አተባ ባሕታዊ ገጸ በአጽባዕቱ ።
ባረከ	"	ባረከ ሕዝብ መስቀሉ ከሀነ ወንጌል ።
ዐቀባ	ጠባቀ	ዐቀቡ ኖሎት አባግዐ ።
ኖለወ	"	መግሥረን ኖለወ ሕዝብ እምክሕደት ።

— ፴፬ —

ግዕዝ	አግርኛ	ዕረፍተ ነገር
ነላወ	ጠባቀ	ነላወ ሐራሲ ማዕረረ እምአራዊት በሌሊት ።
ሰወረ	ሸሸገ	ሰወረ ወርቀ ውስተ ልብሱ ስረቱ ወርቅ ።
ነብአ	"	ነብአ ብሕሊ ልብሱ እምነ ስረቱ።
አሳተጋብአ	ሰበሰበ	አሳተጋብአ ንስር ዕገላው በገበዋቱ ።
ዘገበ	"	ባዕል ዘገበ ወርቀ ።
ፈልሰፈ	ሰገገገ	ፈልሰፈ ገቡዐ ምጋጋጠረ ።
ጠባቀ	"	ትገብህ ሕፃን ጠባ እምአገዋው ።
ተከኔነወ	"	ተከኔነወ ዕፅ ጠባብ ።
ጸለባ	ሰቀላ	ጸለባ እድሁዳዊ ጴጥሮስሃ ።
ሰቀላ	"	አያሱብሃ ሰቀሉ እድሁድ ዲበ ዕፅ መስቀል ።

— ፴፭ —

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ስገር
ሄመ ^ላ	ሾመ ::	ሄመ ገገሥ መጻገገት ::
ከበበ ^ላ	"	አዩሱስ ከበበ ሐዋርያተው ::
ወልተው ^ላ	መከተ	ወልተው ያርብስ ወልታው ከመ ደድገገ እም ፀሩ ::
ሐብረተ ^ላ	»	ገያል ሐብረተ ንዋዩ ንቅሱ ::
አስተኣ ^ላ	ገብረ	ንጋዲ አስተኣ አስተኣው ለንገሥ ::
ዳብሐ ^ሞ	"	ዳብሐ ሕዝብ ዳባሕተ ለንገሥ ::
አስተተ ^ላ	ናቶ አቃላ	ገያል ብአሊ አስተተ ዳባአው ::

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ስገር
መነነ ^ሞ	ናቶ አቃላሊ	ደድቃገ መነነ ግለመ ::
ደጋገ ^ላ	ተከተለ	ደጋገ ድድቀ ብዑስ ብዕስ ::
ተላወ ^ላ	"	አርድኣት ተላወ አሠረ መም ሀሮመ ::
ተአገወ ^ላ	ወንድማ ማቸ ሆነ	ተአገወ ሕዝብ ወአሕዛብ በሞተ ክርስቶስ ::
ተባዩጸ ^ላ	»	ተባዩጸ አርድኣት ምስላ አርድኣት ::
አብቀወ ^ላ	ከረተ	አብቀወ አፋው አርጌ ከመ ደብላዕ ከልእ አርጌ ::
አርገወ ^ላ	"	ከሀናት አርገወ ሞገተ መቅደስ ጊዜ ቅዳሴ ::

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ሃገር ።
ግዕዝ ላ ስርዐት	አማርኛ ሆነ ስርዐት	ፀሐይ ጊዜ ጽዳቅ ።
ግዕዝ ላ ግዕዝ	ግዕዝ ላ ግዕዝ	ግዕዝ ላ ግዕዝ ጊዜ ጽዳቅ ።
ግዕዝ ላ አደመ	አማርኛ አደመ ፍትሐ ግጥም	በዙሉ ።
ግዕዝ ላ ወይ	ግዕዝ ላ ወይ	ወይ ማዕዘር በጊዜ ።
ግዕዝ ላ ተፀዕኖ	ፅንፈተኛ አደሁድ ተፀዕኖ	በልብ አርጎ ስቶ ።
ግዕዝ ላ ተፈሰሰ	ግዕዝ ላ ተፈሰሰ	ወሉድ ተፈሰሱ ምድር በዕፃ ።
ግዕዝ ላ ስበከ	ግዕዝ ላ ስበከ	አረማ ስበከ ስብከ ላከም ።
ግዕዝ ላ መሰለ	ግዕዝ ላ መሰለ	አላዘብ መሰሉ ምስል ።
ግዕዝ ላ ሐዘነ	አዘነ	ሐዘንኩ እነ በሞተ ወልድዎ ።
ግዕዝ ላ ተኮዘ	ግዕዝ ላ ተኮዘ	ርኑብ ተኮዘ ወአጽኘን ርእሰ ።
ግዕዝ ላ ወርዘው	ግዕዝ ላ ወርዘው	ዳዊት ወርዘው ላዕል ሳኦል ።

— ፴፰ —

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ሃገር ።
ግዕዝ ላ መሐዘ	ግዕዝ ላ መሐዘ	መሐዘ ወልድ ላዕል አቡሁ ።
ግዕዝ ላ ደገጸው	ግዕዝ ላ ደገጸው	ባዕል ደገጸው ነዳዳ ።
ግዕዝ ላ ቱቀዩ	ግዕዝ ላ ቱቀዩ	ይቀይ ለርእሱ ባዕል ወይዘግብ ለባዕድ ።
ግዕዝ ላ ፈገገ	አጩ	ፈገገ በእሱተ ወረዛ ።
ግዕዝ ላ ሐጸዩ	ግዕዝ ላ ሐጸዩ	ሐጸይኩ እነ ወናይተ ደግግላ ።
ግዕዝ ላ ዩባሰ	ደረቀ	ዩባሰ ተክል እስመ ገጥኦ ማዎ ።
ግዕዝ ላ ነቅጸ	ግዕዝ ላ ነቅጸ	ነቅጸ ማዕር በወርኅ ታግግሎ ።
ግዕዝ ላ ፈትሐ	ፈረደ	ፈትሐ ግጥም ርቱዕ ፍትሐ ።
ግዕዝ ላ በዩነ	ግዕዝ ላ በዩነ	ነበረ ግጥም ዲበ መገባሩ ወበ ዩነ ብሮኔ ።
ግዕዝ ላ መሐል	ግዕዝ ላ መሐል	መሐል እግዚአብሔር ለዳዊት ።

— ፴፱ —

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ሃገር ።
፪ ተካዩደ ላ	ተግማላ	እግዚአብሔር ተካዩደ ምስል አብርሃም ።
፫ አብደ ላ	ሰንፈ ታኩተ	አርጭ ምድር አብደ በሆሣዕና ።
፬ አከዩ ላ	»	አከዩ ገብር እስመ ኢገብረ ምግ ተኒ ።
፭ ነገሀ ላ	ረጌ	ነገሀ ማዩ ካህን ዲበ ሕዝብ ።
፮ ረቀዩ ላ	»	ሕፃን ረቀዩ ማዩ ላዕል ቢጺ ።
፯ በልዩ ላ	አረጀ	በልዩ ልብስ ሕፃን እንበል ጊዘሁ።
፰ አረገ ላ	»	አረገ አቡዩ በ፹ወጅ ግመተ ልዩቱ ።
፱ ተዐበዩ ላ	ክራ	ይወድቁ ድግረ እል ተዐበዩ በሀብቶሙ ።
፲ ተገሀረ ላ	»	ዕቡይ ተገሀረ ላዕል አብዩጊሁ ።

—ግ—

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ሃገር ።
፩ ንሀዩ ላ	አረፈ	ንሀዩ ሐዋርያ ፍዩቱ ታሕተ ዕፅ።
፪ አዕረፈ ላ	»	አዕረፈ እግዚአብሔር ለግብር።
፫ አግዑደ ላ	ገለጠ	ንግግሎሁ አግዑደ እግዚአብሔር ዕልቶ ።
፬ ከሠተ ላ	»	ከሠተኩ ምሥጢር የለፍቆርዩ ።
፭ ጠዕዩ ላ	አጠፉ	«ጠሰዩ እመጸሐፍት እምትጥስ ዮሙ ለእሉ ሕዝብክ እግዚአብሔር ይቤ ሙሴ ።
፮ ደምሰሰ ላ	»	እግዚአብሔር ደምሰሰ ስብአ ትካት በማዩ እይኅ ።
፯ አጥፋኦ ላ	»	ተዘብጠ በቡር መርዶእ እንተ አጥፍኦ ቀለመ ።
፰ ስኦል ላ	ለመነ	መርዶእ ስኦል ፍተታተ በቤተ።

—ግ፩—

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ሃገር
ጸላዮ ሞ	ለመኝ	ጸላዮ ኤልያስ ከመ ያውርድ ዝናማት ።
ጸላዮ ሞ	ቀማ	ፈያታይ ፈዮተ ልብስ ሐዋርያ ።
ጸላዮ ሞ	»	ጉያል ተክገላ ልብስ ሐዋርያ ።
ጸላዮ ሞ	ዘረ	ግል ነዳይ እምሀገር ሀገረ ።
ጸላዮ ሞ	»	ያደ ያመና በስማይ ።
ጸላዮ ሞ	በዛ	በዝኅ እምሸርተ ርእሱ ገጋይዮ።
ጸላዮ ሞ	»	እር ፈደረይ ያዌሀ ለአረጋዊ ።
ጸላዮ ሞ	ለለበ	ጥቡዕ ጉጾው አባላ ቢጸ ።
ጸላዮ ሞ	»	ይሁዳ አለገ አባሁ ወአዋ ።

— ፵፪ —

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ሃገር
ጉዮ ሞ	ዠጠ	ጉዮ ዮሴፍ ብሔረ ግብጽ ።
ጉዮ ሞ	»	እር ያነተአሙ አሐዱ ለዐሠርቱ ምእት ።
ጉዮ ሞ	ጋገረ	ጉዮት ጉብስተ ብእሲቱ ለመ ዕተገብር *
ጉዮ ሞ	»	ነጋዲ ነአተ ርእት በፍኖት ።
ጉዮ ሞ	ፈጸመ ሞ	ፈጸመ ግብር ሐረሲ ።
ጉዮ ሞ	»	ቃውም ወድአ ሃገር ።
ጉዮ ሞ	ጸ ሞ አላ	ዝኅነ ባሕር ።
ጉዮ ሞ	»	ነፋሱ ሀድአ ጊዜ ነግሕ ።

— ፵፫ —

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ሃገር
፩ ተዛውዐ	ተጫወተ	ተዛውዐ ኖሎት ምስላ ኖሎት ።
፪ ተዋሃዖ	»	ተዋሃዖ ቢጽ ምስላ ቢጽ ።
፫ ቀኘወ	ቸኘከረ	«ቀኘወኒ እደውዮ ወእገርዮ» ደቢ ኢየሱስ ።
፬ ለክአ	»	ጠቢብ ለክአ ዕፀ ምስላ ዕፀ ።
፭ ተረግአ	ተደሰተ	ተረግአ ሕዝግ ሲባ ስትዮ ወይሃ።
፮ ተፈሥሐ	»	ተፈሥሐ ኖላዊ ሲባ ረከባ ለዘጠ ፍኦ በግዑ ።
፯ ተቃወመ	ተከራከረ	ተቃወመ ሊቃውንት ምስላ ሊቃውንት ።
፰ ተቆሐወ	»	ተቆሐወ አሐዶ ምስላ ካልዑ ።

— ፵፬ —

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ዐረብ ሃገር
፩ ፈጠረ	ፈጠረ	እግዚአብሔር ፈጠረ ዓለግተ በቃሉ ።
፪ ፈለክ	»	እግዚአብሔር ፈለክ ፍልክ ።
፫ ቄኦ	ተፋ	ከልብ ቄኦ ዘበልዕ ወገብኡ ገቢዑ ።
፬ ተፍኦ	»	ሐመም ተፍኦ ምረቀ ።
፭ ተመልክክ	አለቃ ሆነ	ሚካኤል ተመልክክ ዲባ መላ አካት ።
፮ ሊቀ	»	ሊቀ መኮንን ዲባ ሠራዊት ።
፯ አውብኦ	መለሰ	ገዢው አውሎኦ ቃላ ።
፰ ሚጠ	»	እግዚአብሔር ሚጠ አዕድገተሁ ገቢ ፍጠረገ ።

— ፵፭ —

ግዕዝ		ላቲን		ዕርፍተ ነገር
፫	፳፱፱	መለሰ	ዐቡጥዎ ኢይሁድ ለስምዖን ከመ ዩጲር መስቀሉ።	
፩	ሐመዩ	አማ አሽሚ ጠጠ	ባዕል ሐመዩ አግዋሪሁ አመ ጠፍ አንዋዩ።	
፪	ዘንጎጎ	»	አሐቲ ዘንጎጎታ ለካልዕታ።	
፩	ሰረቀ	ሰረቀ	ተአሰረ ገብር ዘሰረቀ ወርቀ አግዚኡ።	
፪	ቀሠጠ	»	ተሰዕኑ አምሳይ መቶሙ ካህናት ዘቀሠጡ ንዋዩ መቅደስ።	
፩	ቀሠፈ	ገረፈ	ቀሠፍዎ ህ ለዘሰረቀ ሐራሁ ለንጉሥ።	
፪	ጠብጠበ	»	ጠብጠበ ብዕረዩ ሐረሲ።	
፩	አመርር	አጣፈጠ	አመርር መስግል ቁጽለ።	

ግዕዝ		ላቲን		ዕርፍተ ነገር
፪	ቀሰመ	አጣፈጠ	ቀሰሙ ምግብሙ በዳሙ ነጋድዖን	
፩	ጸረፈ	ሰደበ	አኪት ብእሲት ጸረፈት ብእሲሃ።	
፪	ዘለፈ	»	ዘለፍሙ ረቢ ለአይሁድ።	
፩	ጤዐ	ዘጋ	አይሁድ ጤዐ አዘኒሆሙ ከመ ኢዩስምዕ መደንግዳ ቃለ።	
፪	ደረነ	»	ደረነ ግብ በዕብን ገብር ተአዛዚ።	
፩	መቶረ	ቁረጠ	መቶረት ሔዋን ቁጽለ በሰሰ።	

ግዕዝ		አማርኛ	ዕረፍተ ነገር
፪	ገዘመ	ቁረጠ	አግብርት ገዘመ ዕፀወ በማሕጺ ።
፫	መድሐ	ፈጨ	መድሐ እክላ ማሕረጸ ብርት ።
፬	ሐረጸ	»	አፅማት ሐረጸ እክላ በማሕረጸ ።
፭	ሰከወ	ቀደደ	ሰከወ በአለቤት ማሳከወ ይርአይ ብርሃነ ።
፮	ሰቂረ	»	ጠቢብ ሰቂረ ዕፀ ወገብረ ማዕዕዖ ።
፯	አመገ-ጸ	አዋረይ	አንተ ብእሲ አታመገጥፅ ሰብአ ።
፱	አትሐተ	»	ነገተ ርጉም አትሐተ አረጋዌ ።
፲	መጠቀ	ረዘመ	ሰማይ መጠቀ እምድር ።

ግዕዝ		አ.ርኛ	ዕረፍተ ነገር
፪	ኖጎ	ረዘመ	እፎኑመ ኖጎ ቁመቱ ለአጉዮ ።
፫	ዶመ	ጠመ	ዶመ ሙቤ ፵ ሌሊተ ወ፵ መግ ልተ ።
፬	ሐረመ	»	ዘኒ ሐረመ ለእግዚአብሔር ሐረመ ።
፭	ኅዶገ	»	አቡዮ ኅዶገኒ ወሐረ ጎብ ገዳም ።
፮	አስተናጸፈ	መሠረት ጣላ	ጠቢብ አስተናጸፈ ቤተ ።
፯	መሥረተ	»	ሐናዲ መሥረተ መሠረተ ።
፱	ተሠገወ	ሰው ሆነ	ተሠገወ ቃል እምድገግል ።
፲	ተሰብአ	»	ተሰብአ ቃል አብ ።

ማሳሰቢያ ፤

ከነጠላ ጎሳፊ አንቀጽ ፯ ለእየተጨመሩ የግንገሩ ፊደሎች ለአንደኛና ለሁለተኛ መደብ የግሡግ መጨረሻ ፊደል ወደ ሳድስ በመለወጥ ፤

፩ ለአንድኛ ምድብ የሚጨምረው ፤ ሁ
 ለብዙዎች ሰዎች ፤ ነ
 ፪ ለሁለተኛ ምድብ ለንድ ወንድ ፤ ከ
 ለብዙዎች ወንድ ፤ ከሙ
 ለአንዲት ሴት ፤ ኪ
 ለብዙዎች ሴቶች ፤ ክንን
 ፫ ለዎስተኛ ምድብ ለአንድ ወንድ ግሙ
 ቋንቋ ፤ ለውጥ አይፈልግም ፤
 ለብዙ ወንዶች የግሙን መጨረሻ
 ፈይሎ ካፀብ ማድረግ ነው ፤
 ለአንዲት ሴት በግሙ መጨረሻ ትን
 ብቻ መጨመር ነው ፤
 ለብዙዎች ሴቶች የግሙን መድረሻ
 ወደ ራብፅ መለወጥ ነው ፤
 ለማስረጃ ያህል የሚከተሉትን እንመልከት ፤
 ግሥ | ሐረ | ሂደ

ሀ ፩ኛ ምድብ ሐርዙ ፤
 ለብዙዎች ሐርነ ፤
 ምድብ ለአንድ ወንድ ሐርከ ፤
 ለብዙዎች ወንድ ሐርከሙ ፤
 ምድብ ለአንድ ወንድ ሐረ
 ለብዙዎች ወንድ ሐሩ ፤

ለአንዲት ሴት ሐረት ፤
 ለብዙዎች ሴቶች ሐራ ፤
 እንደ ገና በሚቀጥሉት የንግግር ምስሰዎች ሙሉ
 ዐረፍተ ነገሮች እየሠራን እናንብብ ፤
የንግግር ምስሰዎች (መቆቋሚያዎች)
 እነዚህ የንግግር ምስሰዎች ወይም መቆቋሚያዎች
 በዝርዝር ዐሥር ሲሆኑ ባከፈሉ (በመዳደብ) ፫ ናቸው ፤

፩ ፩ኛ ምድብ
 ሀ አነ መርድእ አእመርኩ መጽሐፈ ፤ (አነ)
 ለ ንሐነ አርድእት አእመርነ መጽሐፈ ፤ (ንሐነ)
 ፪ ፪ኛ ምድብ ፤
 ሀ አንተ መርድእ አእመርከ መጽሐፈ (የቅር
 ለ አንትሙ አርድእት አእመርከሙ መጽሐፈ በች)
 ሐ አንተ በአሰት አእመርኪ መጽሐፈ ፤
 መ አንትን አንሰት አእመርከን መጽሐፈ ፤

፫ ፫ኛ ምድብ
 ሀ ውእቲ መርድእ አእመረ መጽሐፈ ፤
 ለ ውእቶሙ አርድእት አእመሩ መጽሐፈ ፤
 ሐ ዶእቲ ብእሲት አእመረት መጽሐፈ ፤
 መ ውእቶን አንሰት አእመሩ መጽሐፈ ፤

ትርጉማቸውን ታውቀዋለህ እንዴ ?

ግዕዝ	አማርኛ	ግዕዝ	አማርኛ
፩ አነ	አኔ	፯ አንቶን	እናንተ (ለሌቶች)
፪ ንሕነ	እኛ	፰ ውእቱ	እሱ፤ ም
፫ አንተ	አንተ	፱ ውእቶሙ	እነሱ፤ እነዚያ
፬ አንቶሙ	እናንተ	፲ ይእቲ	እሷ
፭ አንቲ	አንቺ	፲ ውእቶን	እነሱ፤ እነዚያ (ሌቶች)

ጥ ም ቁ =

፩ ከዚህ በታች የግዕዝ ግሥቶች ሁለት ሁለት እየሆኑ በፈጸል ተራ ተጠምደዋል ። እያንዳንዳችን ጥምድ በአንድ ዳንድ አማርኛ ለመተርጎም ትችላለህ ።

ሀ	ሐነጸ ፤	አነመ ፤
ለ	አፍቀረ ፤	ፈተወ ፤
ሐ	ዳርሐ ፤	ነቀወ ፤
መ	ርእየ ፤	ነጸረ ፤
ሠ	ኮነነ ፤	አጥረየ ፤
ረ	በጽሐ ፤	አልጸቀ ፤
ሰ	ድኅነ ፤	ሐይወ ፤
ሸ	ረምሐ ፤	ረገዝ ፤
ቀ	ተዐነሰ ፤	ተመንደበ ፤
ባ	ቀደሰ ፤	ሰብሐ ፤

፪ የሚቀጥሉት ግሥቶች ብዙዎቹ ላልተው የሚነበቡ ሲሆኑ ሌሎቹ ደግሞ ጠብቀው ይነበባሉ ፤ ስለዚህ በየወገናቸው ለይተህ ዳፋቸው ።

ሐጸ ፤ ቀነወ ፤ ባረከ ፤ ኅለየ ፤ ሐለየ ፤ ፈነወ ፤ ለአከ ፤ ሰአለ ፤ ሌለየ ፤ ክህለ ፤ ወረደ ፤ ሠምረ ፤ ቀመረ ፤ በዝገ ፤ ወደሰ ፤ ፈለጠ ፤ ጠባብጠጠ ፤ ዴግነ ፤ ፈጠረ ፤ ኅሠ ፤ ኅሠሠ ፤ በሚቀጥሉት ግሥቶች ከመጽሐፉ ላይሆን ከራሱህ አንቅተህ በያንዳንዳቸው ዐረፍተ ነገር ጐንጐን ።

ጸለየ ፤ ተፈግዐ ፤ ሦዐ ፤ ሠረጸ ፤ ጸሐፈ ፤ ወሀበ ፤ ኅጐለቄ ፤

በከየ ፤ ኖመ ፤ ዘበጠ ፤

፬ በነዚህ የንግግር መቋቋሚያዎች የሚቀጥለውን ግሥ በመውሰድ ዐረፍተን ነገር አቋቁም ።

ቀጸበ

ሀ አነ ፤ ንሕነ ፤
 ለ አንተ ፤ አንቶሙ ፤ አንቲ ፤ አንቶን ፤
 ሐ ውእቱ ፤ ውእቶሙ ፤ ይእቲ ፤ ውእቶን ፤
 ፭ እነዚህን የአማርኛ ግሥቶች ወደ ግዕዝ ቋንቋ ተርጉም ።

አየ ፤ ማረከ ፤ አፈረሰ ፤ አሰበ ፤ አማ ፤ ጣዖት ሠራ መለሰ ፤ ደስ ተሰኘ ፤ ሰበሰበ ፤ ጋገረ ፤ ተሜወተ ፤ ወንድማ ማች ሆነ ፤ አዘዘ ፤ ጠነቄላ ፤ ፈረደ ፤ አረጀ ፤ ጐረመሰ ፤ ገለጠ ፤ ዘረ ፤