

PHONOLOGY

1. CONSONANTS

		Labials	Dentals	Palatals	Velars	Laryngeals
Stops	Voiceless		<i>t</i>	<i>č</i>	<i>k</i>	ʾ
	Voiced	<i>b</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>ǰ</i>	<i>g</i>	
	Glottalized	<i>p</i>	<i>t̚</i>	<i>č̚</i>	<i>q</i>	
	Rounded	<i>bʷ</i>			<i>kʷ gʷ qʷ</i>	
Spirants	Voiceless	<i>f</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>š</i>		<i>h* hh**</i>
	Voiced		<i>z</i>	<i>ž</i>		
	Glottalized		<i>ʂ</i>			
Nasals	Voiced	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>ɲ</i>		
Liquids	Voiced		<i>l, r</i>			
Semivowels		<i>w</i>		<i>y</i>		

* Dialect [A] has *x*, not *h*. **For *hh*, see 67.1.

1.1. Single examples of rounded consonants occur in *äh^wa* ‘water’, and *žäht^wän* ‘nine’, *yəzzor* and *yəzz^wär* (*tä*-stem of *zora* ‘wish’).

A rounded *s^w* occurs in Arabic loanwords: *s^wäbiyy* ‘baby’ (Ar. *šabiyy*), *s^wädäqa* ‘death commemoration’ (Ar. *šadaqa*).

2. Observations on the various consonants.

2.1. The glottal stop ʾ occurs in Arabic loanwords: *zil qaʾda*, name of a month (Ar. *qū-l-qīda*); *šaʾban*, name of a month (Ar. *šāban*); *dwa* ‘prayer’ (Ar. *daʿwā*). The glottal stop in *saʾint* ‘seven’ is enigmatic if it is to be compared with the Semitic root *sb*, Amh. *säbat*.

2.2. Alternance between *l:n* occurs in *läham: näham* ‘big’.

2.3. *ž* is in free variant with *ǰ*; e.g., *žemmära* and *ǰemmära* ‘begin’.

2.4. An example of a minimal pair of a labiovelar *g^w* and *g* occurs in *gäddäla* ‘kill’: *g^wäddäla* ‘decrease’.

3. Labials

3.1. Final and intervocalic *b* may become *w*; e.g., *həwaw* 'serpent' (Amh. *əbab*, but Ed. also *əwāw*); *aw* 'father' (Amh. *abbat*, but Har. Ed. also *aw*); *nəw* 'bee' (Amh. *nəb*, but Ed. also *nəw*); *rəhaw* 'hunger' (from *rəhab*, Amh. *rab*); *qəwi* 'butter' (Amh. *qəbe*, but Ed. also *əw*); *təwwah* 'early morning' (also Amh. *təwat*, from the root *šbh*); *hawa* 'give' (from the root *whb* 'give' with loss of the initial *w*, G. *wāhabā*; for the loss of the initial *w*, cp. also Tna. *habā*).

In the [A or B] dialect: *ǧəw* 'hyena' (Amh. *ǧəb*); *təw* 'breast' (from *təbba* 'suck'); *zənaw* 'rain' (for *zənab*); [A] *tabaw* 'narrow' (Amh. *təbbab*); *gāws* 'sorghum' (Amh. *gābs*); *rəhāw-a* 'find' (Amh. *rəkkābā*); *sādāw-a* 'insult' (Amh. *sāddābā*).

3.2. Loss of *b* occurs in [A] *gulot*, (SArg.) *guled* 'knee' (Amh. *gulbāt*); *asuma* [A] and *absuma* 'grandchild'.

3.3. Alternance between *b* and *m* in one dialect and loss of *m* in another dialect occurs in *dims*, *dus* 'honey' in relation to Ar. *dibs*.

Alternance between *b* and *f* occurs in Argobba *bāgara*, *fāgara* 'buttocks', Amh. *fāgara*.

3.4. Insertion of *b* occurs in *gumbəç* 'chin, cheek', for *gunbəç* (for *nb* becoming *mb*, see 7.2.1), Amh. *gunç*. In [A] *əḅgər* 'foot', Amh. *əgər*. For *əngər* (with inserted *n*), see 11.2.

3.5. Initial *wā-* becomes *o* in [A] *ombär* 'seat' (Amh. *wāmbär*).

3.6. An initial *o*, *ō* may bring about a preceding *w*; e.g., *ōnqa* 'know': *wōnqa*; *ollām* 'those': *wollām*.

4. Dental *d*

4.1. Final *d* may occasionally become *r*; e.g., *hur* (for *hud*) *tāhur* (for *tāhud*) *ləyyu ne* 'this is different from this'; *hur* (for *hud*) *su* 'this man'; *tāwor* (for *tāwod*) 'from there'¹.

4.2. Final *t* may become *d* either in suffixes or in lexemes in which final *t* is a radical of the root. In suffixes, as in the perfect 3d singular: *nād* 'she is', *sābbārād* 'she broke'; in a feminine suffix, as in *əhəd* 'sister'; in various nouns with a final "feminine" suffix *t*, as in *amād* 'year' (Amh. *amät*), *angād* 'neck' (Amh. *angät*), *əsad* 'fire' (Amh. *əsət*), *fid* 'face' (Amh. *fit*).

Examples for nouns with an original final *t* becoming *d*: *bed* 'house' (Amh. *bet*), *mod* 'death' (Amh. *mot*), and in the verb *moda* 'die' (Amh. *motä*)².

1 For Amharic *d:r*, see *Amharic*, p. 7.

2 For final *t* becoming *d* in Ennemor and Endegeñ, see *Gurage* xliv.

Examples for a non-final *d*, as in *arada* (SArg.) 'tongue' (Har. *arrāt*), *bārādo* 'cattle pen' (Amh. *bārāt*); *yedəññaw* 'which?' (Amh. *yätəññaw*).

4.3. On the other hand, final *t* is preserved in *ənqəfat* 'obstacle', *ənqərt* 'goiter', *dagāt* 'ascent', and others. It is quite possible that the nouns with final *-t* are borrowed from Amharic.

4.4. The *t* of the gerund that occurs in Amharic only in the verbal class *sämma* and *qärrä*, as *sämtö*, *qärto* is generalized in Argobba in all the verbal classes and appears as *d* (54.1.1.); e.g., *säbrädo* (from *säbbära* 'break'), *čəndo* (from *čana* 'load'), *gäbdo* (from *gäbba* 'enter').

5. Laryngeal *h*

5.1. *h* corresponds historically to a variety of consonants. Thus, *h* goes back to *h* in *halla* 'there is'; to *ḥ* in *halläba* 'to milk', *habbäta* 'swell'; to *ḥ* in *haddära* 'spend the night'; to *ḥ* in *hammäna* 'believe', *hannäsa* (also *annäsa*) 'be less'; to *ç* in *harräfa* 'take a rest', *hamäd* 'year'. For many more examples, see the verbal classes with initial, medial, and final *h*.

5.2. The presence of *h* whether initial, medial or final causes changes in the expected vocalization. An original **hä* becomes *ha*: e.g., *habbäta* 'swell', *haddäga* 'grow' as against *säbbära* 'break'; *sähaqa* 'laugh' as against *säbbära* 'break'; *ayhalbu* 'he doesn't milk' as against *aysäbru* 'he doesn't break'.

5.3. **əhä* becomes *äha*; e.g., *yəhalbäl* 'he milks' as against *yəsäbräl* 'he breaks'; *sähaq* 'laugh!' as against *səbär* 'break!'.

5.4. **əhV* (=vowel) may become *əha*; e.g., *qäddäha* and *qäddəha* 'he drew water' as against *säbbära* 'he broke'; *qäddähäd* and *qäddəhäd* 'she drew water' as against *säbbäräd* 'she broke'; *qədähi* and *qədəhi* 'draw (f.) water!' as against *səbäri*.

For *VhV* becoming *i*, see 13.2.

6. LOSS OF INTERMEDIATE *h*

6.1. When preceded by a consonant (but sometimes by a vowel) and followed mostly by a vowel (but sometimes by a consonant) *h* may be lost. Examples: *ashašša*, *ashešša* and *asešša*, *as*-stem of *hašša* 'rub'; *yəhəš* or *yəš*, jussive of *hašša* 'rub'; *ashenğa* and *asenğa* 'show', *as*-stem of *hanğa* 'see'; *asheda*, *aseda*, *as*-stem of *heda* 'go'; *yələb* for *yəhläb*, jussive of *haläba* 'to milk'; *maläb* for *mahläb*, verbal noun of *haläba* 'to milk'; *sähaq* and *saq* 'laugh!'.

6.2. *V(=vowel)-hV*, or *C (=consonant)-hV*: may become *Ci* with loss of *h*: *sähaqdo* and *siqdo*, gerund of *sähaqa* 'laugh'; *yələhsäl* and *yəlisäl* 'he licks', from *lähasa*; *yəwähzäl* and *yəwizäl* 'he seizes', from *wähaza*; *asmähəṭ* and *asmit*, impera-

tive of the *as*-stem of *māhaṭa* 'hit'; *yarhaq* and *yariq*, imperfect of the *a*-stem of *rāhaqa* 'be far'.

For the vowel *i*, see 13.2.

6.3. An original medial *h* of a triradical verb is most often omitted with *-āha* becoming *a*; e.g., *laka* for *lāhaka* 'send'; *gara* and *gāhara* 'make'; *laqa* 'grow' for *lāhaqa*; *čala* 'be able' for *čāhala*; *čana* 'load' for *čāhana*. Note, however, that the original *h* may also be kept; e.g., *lāhaka*, *čāhala*; see verbs with 2d radical *h* and verbs of the class *laka* (68, 72).

7. Assimilation

7.1. TOTAL REGRESSIVE ASSIMILATION

7.1.1. The morpheme *t* of the *tā*-stem is assimilated to any consonant that follows; e.g., **yətnākkās* > *yənnākkās* 'he will be bitten', *yətkāffāt* > *yəkkāffāt* 'it is opened'

7.1.2. The dentals *t*, *d* are also assimilated in other circumstances:

tk > *kk*; e.g., *kāffātku* > *kāffākku* 'I opened'; *gemmātku* > *gemmākku* 'I estimated';

ts > *ss*; e.g., *əmmətsədəb* > *əmməssədəb* 'she who insults';

tč > *čč*; e.g., *kāffātč* > *kāffāčč* 'you (f.) opened'; *gemmātč* > *gemmāčč* 'you (f.) estimated';

dč > *čč*; e.g., *modč* > *močč* 'you (f.) died'; *hedč* > *hečč* 'you (f.) went';

dk > *kk*; e.g., *fārrādč* > *fārrākk* 'you (m.) judged'.

7.1.3. The liquid cluster *lr* > *rr*; e.g., *alrəggātaw* > *arrəggātaw* 'he didn't kick'; *alrəddaw* > *arrəddaw* 'he didn't help'.

7.1.4. The sibilant *s*, *z* is assimilated to a following *š*, *ž*; e.g. *əššerrāha* > *əššerrāha* 'it was bought'; *asšema* 'he deposited' > *aššema*; **tazāzi* > *tazāž* > *tažāž* 'be (f.) ordered!'.

7.1.5. Isolated occurrences of regressive assimilation:

bs > *ss* in *ləbs* > *ləs(s)* 'dress';

zd > *dd* in *wizdo* > *widdo* 'he taking';

rs > *ss* in *kārs* > *kās(s)* 'abdomen', and probably also *kəssu* 'he', *kəssa* 'she' < *kərsu*, *kərsa* < *kərsu*, *kərsa*;

ns > *ss* in *mans* > *mass* 'small'.

7.1.6. Assimilation may occur across word boundaries; e.g., *hand nəgār* > *hann nəgār* 'something'; *mən ləğ* > *məl ləğ* 'which child?'.

7.2. PARTIAL REGRESSIVE ASSIMILATION

7.2.1. *nb* may become *mb*, that is, the nasal dental *n* becomes a labial *m* in contact with the labial *b*. Examples: *əmbäräkkäka* 'kneel' from *ənbäräkkäka*; *əmba* 'tear' (n.) from *ənba*; *əmbärt* 'navel' from *ənbart*; *əmbära* 'he/it was' from *ənbara*; *sämbäd* 'Saturday, Sunday' from *sänbäd*;

7.2.2. *sč* > *šč* in *näkkäsč* > *näkkäšč* 'you (f.) bit'.

7.3. PROGRESSIVE ASSIMILATION

7.3.1. Contiguous: *qk* > *qq*; e.g., *särräqk* 'you (sg. m.) stole' > *särräqq*; *dämmäqko* 'you (sg.m.) decorated it' > *dämmäqqo*;

th > *tt* in *athalbu* 'you (sg. m.) don't milk' > *attalbu*. This procedure applies to all the verbs with initial *h*.

7.3.2. Noncontiguous: *lənsäkrən* 'in order that we become drunk' > *ləlsäkrən*.

7.4. SPECIAL CASES OF PROGRESSIVE AND REGRESSIVE ASSIMILATION

7.4.1. Of special interest are a few occurrences that are not to be found in the other Ethiopian languages. In these occurrences there is an intermediary stage of assimilation that may explain the final outcome.

Thus, *tk* > *qq* in **šetke* 'you (m.) sold it' becoming *šeqqe* is to be explained by **šetke* > **šetqe* (progressive assimilation of *tk* > *tq*) > *šeqqe* (regressive assimilation). The same phenomenon occurs in **alfällätku* 'I did not split' > *alfälläqqu*.

č > *čč*, in **šetč* 'you (f.) sold' > *šečč*, going through an intermediary stage of **šetč* > **šetč* (progressive assimilation) > *šečč* (regressive assimilation); cp. also **alfällätču* 'you (f.) didn't split' > *alfälläčču*.

dk > *gg*, in **modk* 'you (m.) died' > **modg* (assimilation of voicing) > *mogg* (regressive assimilation); cp. also *a-wedk* 'you told' > *a-wegg*, and *färrädku* 'I judged' > *färräggu*.

The same assimilation occurs in SArg. *harag(g)e* 'you slaughtered it' for *haradke*, and *al-harag(g)u-m* 'I did not slaughter' for *al-haradku-m*.

dč > *ğğ*, in **alfärrädču* 'you (f.) didn't judge' > **alfärädğü* (assimilation of voicing) > *alfärrädğğü* (regressive assimilation); cp. also *modč* 'you (f.) died' > *mogğ*, and *hedč* 'you (f.) went' > *heğğ*.

7.4.2. More difficult to explain is **hedku* 'I went' becoming *he⁸ku* and *modku* 'I died' becoming *mo⁸ku*. If my recording is correct, the voiced *d* became a voiced *g* which is the voiced counterpart of the voiceless *k*; thus *dk* became *gk*.

7.5. ASSIMILATION OR OMISSION OF A CONSONANT IN FREQUENTLY USED VERBS

7.5.1. The frequently used verbs are: *əmbära* 'he/it was', *ala* 'he said', *wala* 'he spent the day', *hawa* 'he gave', and *gəddäla* 'he killed'¹.

7.5.2. In the conjugation of *əmbära* 'he/it was' the final *r* is assimilated to the following suffix *-k*, *-č* as clearly evidenced by *al-əmbäkku* 'you (m.) were not' (for *al-əmbärku*), *al-əmbäčču* 'you (f.) were not' (for *al-əmbärču*).

It should be pointed out that one would have to examine other verbs ending in *r*, such as *čeggära* 'be difficult', *däffära* 'dare' to ascertain whether in these verbs *-rk*, *-rč* would also result in *-kk*, *-čč* (that is, *aldäffäkku*, *alčeggäkku*). Even though I didn't investigate these forms I doubt whether in any verb ending in *-r* the sequence *-rk*, *-rč* would result in an assimilated form *-kk*, *-čč*. Consequently, I arrive at the conclusion that it is only in the frequently used *əmbära* that *-rk*, *-rč* results in *-kk*, *-čč* by assimilation.

7.5.3. In the conjugation of the verb *ala* 'say', when *l* is followed by the verbal endings *-k* (2d m.), *-č* (2d f.), *-kum* (2d pl.), the *l* is omitted rather than assimilated to the following consonant. Indeed, the assimilation of *l* to the following *k* for 'you (pl.) said' would have resulted in *akkum*, while the actual form is *akum*, with a missing *l*.

7.5.4. In the conjugation of the verb *hawa* 'give' I recorded *hak* 'you (sg. m.) gave', *hač* 'you (sg. f.) gave', *haku* (but also *hawku*, *ha^wk* 'I gave'), forms that would indicate that *w* is missing.

7.5.5. The assimilation of *dl* > *ll* occurs in the frequently used verb *gəddäla* 'kill'. The form that I recorded is *ligälle* < *ligädle* 'in order that he kills him'.

The only other verbs that end in *dl* are *g^wäddäla* 'lack', *beddäla* 'ill-treat', and *näddäla* 'make a hole'. One would have to investigate these verbs to ascertain whether the sequence *dl* also results in *ll*. Note that on the basis of Amharic where *g^wäddälä* 'lack' likewise shows the assimilation of *dl* into *ll* (as in *yəg^wällall* for *yəg^wädlall*) it is safe to assume that this feature also occurs in Argobba. It is not sure that this assimilation applies to the verbs *beddäla* 'ill-treat', and *näddäla* 'make a hole'.

8. Dissimilation

The labial *m* of a noun expressing an instrument becomes *w* if there is a labial *f* in the noun.² Examples *wofčo* 'mill' (from *fäčča* 'grind'), *wonaf* 'bellows' (from *näffaha* 'blow'), *wärfa* 'awl' (from *rf*: G. *rafä* 'sew').³

- 1 For the changes that occur in frequently used words, see W. Leslau, 1969, pp. 189-198.
- 2 This is also the case in Amharic. The dissimilation would probably also occur with a labial *b*, *m* in the noun, but there are no occurrences attested.
- 3 For Amharic, see Amharic, p. 26.

9. Gemination

9.1. All the consonants may be geminated except *h*; e.g., *säbbära* 'break', but *fähaqa* 'tan'; *ənnekkäsa* 'he was bitten', but *əmmehaṭa* 'he was hit'; *as-melläsa* 'return', but *amehaṭa* 'hit'. However, in the *tä*-stem that has the form *ənnekkäsa* (that is, a geminated 1st radical), the verbs with 1st radical *h* have the form *əḥhelläba* (from *halläba*); *əḥhešša* 'it was rubbed' (from *hašša*); *əḥhenḡa* 'it was seen' (from *hanḡa* 'see'); see 67.1. Note that for the Argobba spoken in Č'anno I recorded *əḥhelläba*, with geminated *h*.

9.1.1. Incidentally, the Argobba root *hanḡa* (with *h*) and the Harari root *ḥḡa* (with *ḥ*) would confirm the opinion expressed by F. Praetorius 1879, p. 510, and *Gurage*, p. 103 that the origin of the Argobba and Harari root, as well as of Amh. *ayyä* and of Gafat *aḡä*, goes back to the Semitic root *ḥzy* (cp. Hebrew *ḥzā*).

9.2. Final gemination is hardly audible; thus, I recorded the form *aškärač* 'servants', but in intervocalic position *aškäračču* 'his servants', with geminated *č*; compound imperfect *yəsädbäl* 'he offends', but in intervocalic position *yəsädbällu* 'they offend'. However, in occurrences of assimilation I was more aware of the expected gemination and I recorded forms such as *gemmäčč* 'you (f.) estimated', from *gemmätč*; *färräkk* 'you (m.) judged', from *färrädk*; *neggägḡ* 'you traded', from *neggädḡk*, and so on.

9.3. Note that *ḥ* is geminated in forms in which the gemination is not expected; e.g., *agäḥḥädo* 'he finding' instead of *agḥädo*; *waḥḥädo* 'he swimming' instead of *waḥdo*¹.

9.4. A minimal pair of a geminated and non-geminated consonant is *zär* 'family' as against *zärr* 'river'.

10. Palatalization

10.1. As noted above, the palatals are phonemic. The process of palatalization is also a phonetic feature. Indeed, the dentals *d*, *t*, *ṭ*, *l*, *n* and the sibilants *s*, *z* are palatalized when followed by the vowel *-i*. The resulting sounds are: *di* > *ḡ*, *ti* > *č*, *ṭi* > *č*, *li* > *y*, *ni* > *ḥ*, *si* > *š*, *zi* > *ž*. Examples: *gämadi* > *gämaḡ* 'who twists a rope'; *käfati* > *käfač* 'who opens'; *bälaṭi* > *bälač* 'who exceeds'; *käfali* > *käfay* 'who pays'; *lämmani* > *lämmaḥ* 'who begs'; *bäṭtasi* > *bäṭtaš* 'who pulls out'; *bärazi* > *bäraž* 'who dilutes honey in water'.

10.2. Occasional palatalization also occurs in several lexemes: *ənəšča* 'female, woman', Amh. *anəst*; *k^waša* 'ball', Amh. *k^was*; *čähed* 'sun', Amh. *ṭay* (but Č. M. also *čet*); *murač* 'spittle', Amh. *məraq* (but also So. *əṛəmmačä*).

1 For the non-expected geminated *ḥ* in Amharic, see *Amharic* 5.3.

10.3. A palatalization difficult to explain is *əwwažža* 'talk to one another' derived from *a-weda* 'say'. Note also that a variant of *əwwažža* is *əwwayya* unless *əwwayya* is to be compared with Amh. *awwäyayyā* 'discuss (problems), talk something over with someone'.

11. Insertion of *n*

11.1. There are several nouns with an inserted *n*. While some of them precede a velar, others precede a prepalatal. The nouns with an inserted *n* that also occur in Amharic are: *ənqəfat* 'obstacle' (Amh. *ənqəfat*, and nearly all the other Ethiopian languages; see *Gurage*, p. 70 under *ənqəft*); *əntəff ala* 'spit' (from the root *tf*); *hand* 'one' (Amh. *and*, also Z. *and*); *mähənžed* 'best man' (Amh. *mize*, *mənže*, G. *mähaza*; for the other languages, see *Gurage*, p. 413, under *mänzet*, p. 442 under *mize*).

11.2. The nouns with inserted *n* that also occur in Harari and in some Gurage dialects are: *əngər* 'foot' (also in S. W. Z.); *anqära* 'stomach' (H. *anqär*, but Č. Gt. M. *aqär*).

11.3. The nouns that also occur in the various Gurage dialects (but not in Harari) with inserted *n* are: *əng* 'hand' (S. W. Z. *əng*, Amh. *əğğ*); *ganğir* 'bread' (Gt. *g'ang'ära*, So. *ganğir*; for its connection with Amh. *gaggärä* 'bake' and *əngära* 'bread', see *Gurage*, p. 309, under *g'ang'ära*); *gonžo* 'hut' (So. W. *gonžo*, Amh. *goğğo*, possibly resulting from *ğğ* passing into *ğž*, *ğğ*); *golanda* 'knife' (Amh. *gälädo*); *hanğa* 'see' (S. W. *anže*, Č. *ažā-m*); *a-sonče* 'smell' (S. W. *sonče*, H. *sōča* going back to *št*; see *Gurage*, p. 550, under *sonče*); *gunž* 'back of the body' (E. M. So. *g'anžā*, but Č. En. *g'iša*; note also [A] *gəğo*); *hanättära* 'fence in' (Amh. *attära* 'fence in', but M. Go. So. *ənṭarəyā* 'fence', S. W. Z. *ənṭarat*).

11.4. With *n* becoming *m* before a labial: *komfa* 'lung' to be compared with Har. *kūf*; *gumbəç* 'cheek, chin' (<*gunbəç*)¹, Amh. *gunč*.

11.5. The lexemes with an inserted *n* that occur only in Argobba are: *ənqa*, *wənqa* 'know' (from the root *wq*; G. *oqa*, Amh. *awwäqä*); *lihinto* 'peel' (from *lähaṭa* 'to peel'); *manžarat* 'nape of the neck' (Amh. *māžrat*); *makara* and *mankara* (SArg.) 'pot'; *səint* 'seven' (if it is to be compared with the Semitic root *sb*, represented in Amharic as *säbat*).

6 For inserted *b*, see 3.4.

12. VOWELS

12.1. The following table illustrates the position of the vowels:

	front	center	back
high	<i>i</i>	<i>ə</i>	<i>u</i>
mid	<i>e</i>	<i>ä</i>	<i>o</i>
low		<i>a</i>	

For the pronunciation of the vowels, see *Amharic*, pp. 31-33.

The original vowel *ä* following *w* is occasionally rounded; e.g., *wäddäqa*, *wälläda*.

12.2. Initial Amharic *ə* is often represented as *ä* in Argobba; e.g., *äyyä* 'each' (Amh. *əyyä*), *ädme* 'age' (Amh. *ədme*), *ägğəg* 'much' (Amh. *əğğəg*), *ärs bärsənno* 'they one another' (Amh. *ərs*), *äkäle* 'so-and-so' (Amh. *əkäle*), *äff ala* 'blow' (Amh. *əff alä*).

Within Argobba initial *ä* also alternates with *ə*, as in *ämmibäqäññ* and *əmmi-bäqäññ* 'that is sufficient for me'; *əggäñña* and *ägğäñña* 'it was found'.

12.3. Vocalic assimilation occurs in *tälo* and *tolo* 'soon'.

13. Vocalic length

I recorded a few long vowels, but vocalic length is not phonemic.

13.1. Long vowels were recorded in some Arabic loanwords; e.g., *risāla* 'letter', *kitāb* 'book', *dīn* 'faith', *mānām* 'dream', *ğimād ahər*, name of month, but not in *rabi awwal*, nor in *rabi sani* as against Ar. *rabi*. It is quite possible that in recording these long vowels I was influenced by the Arabic pronunciation.

13.2. I also recorded vocalic length in the contracted form of some verbs with 2d radical *h*, as in *siqdo* (and *sāhaqdo*) 'he laughing'; *yariqäl* (and *yarähqäl*) 'he removes to a distance'; *yəwizäl* 'he takes' (from *wähaza* 'take'); *wizdo* 'he taking', for *wəhəzdo*, gerund of *wähaza* 'take'; *yəgiräl* (and *yəgähəräl*) 'he makes'.

Furthermore a long vowel also occurs in *ənqa*, *wənqa* 'he knew', *sir* 'grass', *sifa* 'medicament', in which *h* is not involved.

Future researchers will have to reexamine the question of vocalic length in Argobba.

14. Meeting of vowels

14.1. Same vowels:

ä-ä > *ä*: *yähəyä* 'of my brother', from *yä-äh-əyä*.

ə-ə > *ə*: *lələčələn* 'that we may be able', from *lə-ələčələn*.

14.2. Different vowels:

ä-a > a: e.g., *yawyä*, from *yä-aw-yä* 'of my father'; *yank* 'your', from *yä-ank*; *yalämbära* 'he who was not', from *yä-al-ämbära*.

ə-a > a: e.g., *yämmaygädäl* 'he who does not kill', from *yämmə-aygädäl*.

ä-ə > ə, i: e.g., *yänna* 'our', from *yä-änna*; *yännakum* 'your' (pl.), from *yä-ännakum*; *läyyo* 'for me', from *lä-əyyo*, lit. 'for I'; *wädəyyo* 'toward me', from *wädä-əyyo*, lit. 'toward I'.

For the forms *läyyo*, *wädəyyo*, see 26.2.

14.3. Inasmuch as *i* is a variant of *ə* (cp. *ämbära* and *imbära* 'he was', *yəgälləya* 'he kills her' as against *yəwäddiya* 'he loves her', *yəčäl* and *yəčil* 'he can', *yähiyə* and *yähəyə*, from *yä-äh-əyə* 'of my brother'), one obtains forms such as *binna* 'in us' for *bä-änna*, *tinna* 'from us' for *tä-änna*, *əstimbära dəräs* 'until he was' for *əstä-ämbära/imbära*. Note, however, that I recorded *sälämbära* 'because he was' for *sälä-ämbära* and not *säləmbära*.

14.3.1. Note also *-əya* > *iya*, as in *ləyaṭbu* 'in order that they wash' > *liyaṭbu*; *ləyabäg* 'in order that he fixes' > *liyabäg*; *bəyans* 'at least' > *biyans* (lit. 'if it is little').

15. Insertion of a semivowel w, y

The two contiguous vowels may also remain and a semivowel *y* or *w* is then intercalated between them. If the 1st vowel is *a*, *i*, *e*, most normally a semivowel *y* (but also *w*) is intercalated between the two vowels; if the 1st vowel is *o*, a semivowel *w* (and occasionally *y*) is intercalated between them. Examples: *gamela^yih* 'your (f.) camel', *bägi^yah* 'your (m.) 'sheep', *al-mähə^yu* 'he did not hit him'¹; *alčəle^yu* 'I cannot do it' (but also *ge^wu-n* 'the country-n'), *bäqlo^wah* 'your (m.) mule', *bäqlo^wih* 'your (f.) mule' (but also *mättədo^ye* 'it ailing him').

16. Contraction of syllables

ə-yə > i: *yämmisädəb* 'he who insults' for *yämməyäsädəb*.

ä-ye > e: *bed* 'where?', from *bä-yed*.

ay > e: *den* loan', from Ar. *dayn*.

ä-wo > o: *əndod* 'thus' for *əndä wod* 'like that'; *bod* 'there' for *bä-wod* 'in that'.

ä-wä > o: *ṭolläga* 'wither', from *ṭäwälläga*.

äw becomes *o*, *u*: *čo* 'salt', but remains also as *čäw*; *su* 'man' from *säw* (Amh.).

1 See also the analysis of *ahune^yu* 'he is not' (38.4.1).

17. Elision of ə

The original ə may be elided when preceded by a word ending in a vowel. Examples: *bä-gäzza nğu* (for *ənğu*) *moda* 'he killed himself' (lit. 'with-his-own-hand he-died'); *kəssu ttoro* (for *əttoro*) *mätta* 'he came carrying a load'; *argəzdo mbär* (for *əmbär*) 'he was riding'; *awu nk^wa* (for *ənk^wa*) 'even his father'.

Note also the elision of ə in forms such as *albälu* (for *aləbälu*) 'I don't eat'; *alhedu* (for *aləhedu*) 'I don't go'.

18. Clustering in phrases

If words constitute a phrase and the first word ends in two consonants or in a geminated consonant, a vowel ə is intercalated between the first and the second word; e.g., *handhandə ləss hallänna* 'each of us has a dress'; *handə ne* 'it is the same'; *əstə zərrə dəräs* 'until the river'; *äyyə nəññ* 'it is I'.

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