

## 5. Phonemic System and Transcription.

As far as possible, Burji word forms are cited in a phonemic transcription based on the following phonemic system.

### CONSONANTS

labial    denti-alveolar    palatal    velar    glottal

plain stop/	voiceless	<b>p</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>c</b>	<b>k</b>	<b>ʔ</b>
affricate	voiced	<b>b</b>	<b>d</b>	<b>j</b>	<b>g</b>	
glott. stop/	voiceless	<b>p'</b>	<b>t'</b>	<b>c'</b>	<b>k'</b>	
affricate	voiced		<b>d'</b>			
fri- ca- tive	voiceless voiced	<b>f</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>ʃ</b>		<b>h</b>
nasal		<b>m</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>ɲ</b>		
liquid			<b>l</b>			
vibrant			<b>r</b>			
semivowel		<b>w</b>		<b>y</b>		

## VOWELS

short: **i e a o u**  
 long: **ii ee aa oo uu**

### ALLOPHONICS AND DISTRIBUTION

/b/ and /g/ may be slightly spirantized intervocalically (IPA [b] ~ [β] and [g] ~ [ɣ], resp.).

/t/ and /d/ are dental (IPA [t̪] and [d̪], resp.), rather than alveolar.

/n/ is slightly palatalized [ɲ] before palatals, and pronounced as a velar nasal [ŋ] before velars.

/c/ is IPA [t͡ʃ], /j/ is IPA [d͡ʒ], /s/ is IPA [ʃ].

Of the glottalized series, /p'/ and /d'/ are implosive (IPA [ɓ] and [ɗ], resp.), while /t'/, /k'/ and /c'/ are ejective (IPA [tʰ], [kʰ] and [t͡ʃʰ], resp.).

/ny/ is IPA [ɲ]. It is a loan phoneme occurring only in loans from Oromo and Swahili.

The pronunciation of /h/ varies between [h] (slight breath) and [x] (velar fricative).

All consonants except /z/, /h/ and /ʔ/ occur in geminate clusters word-medially.

/ny/ occurs only word-initially; /p/ and /p'/ occur only word-medially.

In word-final position only open (i.e. vowel-final) syllables are permitted. The only exception to this is a number of words that end in -y.

Vowel allophones (both long and short) fluctuate between higher and lower tongue positions, approximately /i/, /ii/ [i(:)] ~ [ɪ(:)], /u/, /uu/ [u(:)] ~ [ʊ(:)], etc.

The contrast of a and e is neutralized in closed syllables before y. I write a throughout, though Straube sometimes has e.

In word-final position, the contrast of length is neutral-

ized for non-low vowels to the effect that only /i/, /u/, /ee/ and /oo/ are permitted. In Straube's material final /ee/ and /oo/ sometimes appear as -e and -o, resp.; this is a phonetic rather than a phonological transcription but it is left unaltered in order to avoid normalization. As a rule, final long vowels are shortened and/or slightly glottalized, whereas final short vowels are voiceless.

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Genuine phonemic transcriptions were possible only for words attested in M, for those forms of Straube 1977 that were taken from the tape recordings, and for Hayward's and Wedekind's material. Straube himself uses a transcription system different from that employed here. I have taken the liberty of assimilating his system to mine, just as I have taken the liberty of unifying the transcription for all Cushitic citations no matter which source they are taken from (cf. p.9). This does not mean that Straube's forms can be interpreted as phonemic; the 1955 citations particularly are often problematic with regard to vowel and consonant length, and somewhat less so with regard to the proper distinction of plain and glottalized consonants (t vs. t', k vs. k', d vs. d', c vs. c'), and the placement of the accent.

The following alphabetical order is employed: a, ʔ, b, c, c', d, d', e, f, g, h, i, j, k, k', l, m, n, o, p, p', r, s, š, t, t', u, w, y, z.

Word accent (stress) is marked by an acute '. Accent placement is a problem in itself. For the dialect he describes, Wedekind 1980 gives the rule that a word-final syllable is stressed if it has a long vowel, otherwise stress falls on the penultimate, e.g. gogáa 'skin' vs. máala 'meat'. I found this rule corroborated by most (though not all) of my examples from Marsabit. On the other hand, Hayward (p.c. and forthcoming) claims that stress always falls on the penultimate (at least in nouns), regardless of the quantity of the final vowel. This is also what Straube heard from his informants in most cases. It may well be that differences in

stress placement are among the dialectologically relevant isoglosses within Burji.