# A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF TIGRE GRAMMAR

by

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# ABSTRACT

The present work is intended as a linguistic description of the Mansaʿ dialect of the Tigre language.

The Introduction provides a survey of previously published material in the subject.

Phonetics and Phonology (§ 1). / ā / is counted among the vowel-phonemes (§ 1.3). *ə* is excluded from the phonemic inventory: its role is in conserving the syllabic structure typical of Tigre. In order to describe the accentual system and the assimilation process, a basic arbitrary unit of measurement has been established (the 'stress unit', § 1.5). Its boundaries are subject to the sandhi habits of the language. Vowel variations are to be stated in terms of stress (§ 1.4), and assimilation to other vowels (§ 1.7), but also to consonants (§ 1.7.3 (e), (f)).

The Morphology of the Noun (§ 2). Morphological and syntactic features necessary to the classification and analysis of the Tigre noun (§§2.1-2.1.4) and basic forms which underlie the various types of formation (§§ 2.2-2.2.3) are given. Semantic categories which are, morphologically, suffixed derivatives of basic forms, are dealt with in §§ 2.6-2.6.5. Verbal formations which are, morphologically, nouns are treated in §§ 2.7-2.7.4. Pronominal suffixes in conjunction with nouns (§ 2.10) and the definite article (§ 2.11) conclude the chapter. Throughout the chapter a distinction is made between countable and uncountable nouns; the former occur in the singular and are statable lexically.

Pronouns (§ 3). These form a heterogeneous group of words; some of them are lexical entities which are also used as pronouns. Tigre pronouns are not mutually exclusive as qualifiers (§ 3.8(iv)).

The Morphology of the Verb (§ 5). The description of verb formation necessitates the recognition of four types of inflexion according to stem. These types of inflexion are referred to in this work as A, B, C, D, where type A, *qatla*, is taken as representing the 'simple' stem, the other types being *qattala*, *qātala* and *qatātala*. Verbs of each of the four types may occur with a preformative - prefixed to the stem of the verb. Such a preformative is functional in the system where it is a derivative of another co-existing verb-form. Compounds which

function as verb-class members are treated in § 5.11. The Tigre language makes wide use of pronominal suffixes in conjunction with verbs. These take various phonemic shapes, but with each person a common element is encountered in all forms (§ 5.12).

Nominal Sentences are encountered in Tigre in the case of those utterances which do not contain a finite verb or verb equivalent (§ 9.3). However, the relation between subject and predicate usually has a formal expression (§ 4.1). Linguistic forms which serve in the expression of Existence and Possession are treated in §§ 4.2 et seq, where lexical and idiomatic meanings of auxiliaries in tense-compounds are also given.

The Tense System. There are three morphological categories of the Tigre verb: perfect, imperfect and jussive. The perfect and imperfect constitute the temporal category of indicative, while the jussive is a modal non-temporal category. The major distinction of category between the perfect and imperfect can be seen in terms of the temporal contrast past (perfect forms)/non-past (imperfect forms). A detailed discussion of the various uses of the modal categories is provided in §§ 6.2-6.8.2. More specific time relations can be expressed by means of a complex. Three major syntactical structures are to be noted:
(a) the imperfect form + <u>halla</u>, <u>ʿala</u>, <u>ṣanḥa</u> and <u>nabra</u> (§§ 6.9-6.12.2),
(b) the perfect form + <u>halla</u>, <u>ʿala</u> and <u>ṣanḥa</u> (§§ 6.14-6.15.3), and
(c) the participle form + <u>halla</u>, <u>ʿala</u> and <u>ṣanḥa</u> (§§ 6.16-6.16.5). In the case of (b), two different constructions are to be considered:
(1) <u>ʾendo</u> + perfect + auxiliary; (2) perfect + <u>ka</u> + auxiliary.

The Numerals, the ordinal numbers which are morphologically particples, and the cardinal numbers,are described in § 7.

Adverbs; Prepositions; Conjunctions (§ 8). Boundaries between these are often of equivocal nature. Distinction between adverbs and prepositions which are similar in form can be made according to whether the word lacks or possesses a complement ( almost all prepositions have pronominal suffixes). The linguistic stock from which subordinating conjunctions are constructed comprises mainly prepositions. Subordinating conjunctions which also occur as prepositions may function as 'sentence prepositions': they introduce a subordinate clause whereas the corresponding prepositions introduce a single word or phrase.

Interjections (§ 8.4) are syntactically independent parenthetic insertions of the utterance. Many of these are used as interjections only.

Some Syntactical Aspects of the Tigre Sentence are discussed in § 9. These cover phenomena briefly dealt with or only mentioned in other chapters of the thesis. A few broad principles concerning paratactic and hypotactic relations of clausal combinations have been enunciated. Some of these (e.g. § 9.2.3) are in the nature of survey rather than a study in depth.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Professor E. Ullendorff who inspired and guided this study and whose constant help and stimulating criticism throughout my work was invaluable. I am also extremely grateful to the Friends of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the School of Oriental and African Studies, the Central Research Fund of London University and the University of Tel Aviv, without whose financial support the work could not have been carried out.

# PREFACE

This work is in the nature of prolegomena to a descriptive grammar of the Mansaʽ dialect of the Tigre language. Published works on Tigre are few, and the majority of these draw on a very small corpus of original Tigre texts. The only previous attempt at a descriptive grammar of the language[1] is, for the most part, based on a body of texts not collected by the author. The raison d'être of the present work derives from the need to go beyond the existing corpus of texts in order to attempt a fresh treatment of Tigre grammar, while taking account of previous work in the field to the fullest extent possible.

Despite its all-embracing title, certain issues of Tigre grammar have been dealt with in this work in a concise manner only, while a more detailed treatment is given - as in the case of the pronominal suffixes in conjunction with the verb (§§ 5.12-5.12.7) - where this is necessary in order to advance our understanding of Tigre grammar beyond that contained in previous writing. Throughout the aim has been to provide as balanced a presentation as possible.

The first three months of 1970 were spent by me in Eritrea collecting material in the field. The political situation there curtailed my freedom of movement in the area. While the major part of my stay was in Asmara and Massawa, I managed a few visits to some Tigre speaking areas. On arrival at Asmara I discovered that the Ethiopian Radio was broadcasting from there in Tigre - half an hour per evening. The three native speakers of Tigre responsible for these broadcasts became my first 'informants'. One of them, Musse Bakit a native of Galab, became my assistant and main 'informant' during my stay in Ethiopia and proved of particular help in introducing me to

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[1] W. Leslau, Short grammar of Tigre (North Ethiopic). Dialect of Mensa, New Haven, 1945. See section B of my Introduction to the thesis.

members of his family and to further 'informants'. Another of them, Leǧam Ishaq, a native of Mehlab, had previous experience of being an 'informant' for Tigre and had worked in this capacity with F. R. Palmer during the early fifties.

Tigre broadcasts were taped by me and a transcript of them in Ethiopic characters obtained from the broadcasters. I then transcribed the tapes phonetically and worked through them with my 'informants'. The broadcasts consisted of about five minutes of news followed by talks on such specific topics as Ethiopian geography, the improvement of Ethiopian agriculture, disease prevention etc.

I collected further material by engaging in informal conversation, on everyday topics, with the broadcasters and other 'informants' which I also taped.

I collected additional material from people engaged in various jobs, such as cab-drivers, waiters, door-men, etc..

Finally, I spent six days on the Red Sea, on a fishing boat, whose crew consisted almost entirely of native speakers of Tigre. This trip enabled me to gain access to material which would otherwise be very difficult to obtain.

Throughout the thesis unattributed examples in Tigre are from the material I myself collected; all other examples are attributed to their respective sources.

At the end of the thesis examples of the texts collected are given.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| ʻAd Šek | M. Höfner, *Überlieferungen bei Tigrē-Stämmen (1)*. ʻAd Šek, AE 4, 1961, pp. 181-203. |
| Advanced Syntax | C.T.Onions, *An Advanced English syntax*, London,1904 (Reprint of (1932) 6th edition, London 1966). |
| ʼAgʼazot | K.G.Rodén, *Kətāb ʼagʼazot waqərʼān*, 3rd edition, revised by Musa Aron, Asmara, 1958. |
| C Ross Doc | C.Conti Rossini, *Documenti per lo studio della lingua tigré*, GSAI, 16, 1903, pp. 1-32. |
| C Ross Trad | C.Conti Rossini, *Tradizioni storiche dei Mensa*, GSAI 14, 1901, pp. 41-99. |
| Das Verbum | E.Littmann, *Das Verbum der Tigresprache*, ZA 13, 1898, pp. 133-178; ZA 14, 1899, pp. 1-102. |
| Essentials | O.Jespersen, *Essentials of English grammar*, 1933 (Reprint, London, 1966). |
| FM | K.G.Rodén, *Fetəḥ Maḥāri waʻādotāt* (Part two of *Le tribù dei Mensa*, pp. 95-187). |
| Grammatical Sketches | W.Leslau, *Grammatical sketches in Tigré*, JAOS, 65, 1945, pp. 164-203. |
| GT | *Grammatica della lingua tigrè*, Per cura della Missione Catolica dell' Eritrea, Asmara, 1919. |
| IPA | *The Principles of the International Phonetic Association*, London, 1949./The International Phonetic Alphabet. |

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| Isaiah | G.R.Sundström, transl., *Il libro di Isaia (kətāb 'əsayās)* in lingua tigré, Asmara, 1925. |
| LH | E.Littmann und M.Höfner, *Wörterbuch der Tigrē-Sprache*, Wiesbaden, 1962. |
| Lt Leg | E.Littmann, *The Legend of the Queen of Sheba in the tradition of Axum,* Leyden: E.J.Brill, 1904 (Bibliotheca Abess. no. 1). |
| Lt Su Sång | G.R.Sundström, *En sång på tigrè-språket*, Uppsala: Akademiska bokhandeln, SKVH, vol. 8, no. 6, 1904. |
| NT | *Ḥaddis Galad* - *'əb higa təgre, kəl'e ḫətām 'ərrum* - Il Nuovo Testamento in lingua tigré, Seconda edizione riveduta, Asmara, 1931 (1st edition: 1902). |
| OT | Old Testament. |
| PL | E.Littmann, *Publications of the Princeton expedition to Abyssinia*, Leyden, 1910-1915, 4 V. in 5. |
| Psalms | G.R.Sundström, transl., *I Salmi di Davide (dərsān dāwəd)* in lingua tigré, Asmara, 1925. |
| Racconti | Wilh. Norlén, e Fr. Lundgren, *Racconti Biblici*, Tradotti dallo svedese in Tigrè da A.Renlund e K.G.Rodén, Asmara, 1916. |
| Short Grammar | W.Leslau, *Short Grammar of Tigre* (North-Ethiopic), Dialect of Mensa, AOS, Offprint Series No. 18, 1945. |

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|---|---|
| Supplementary Observations | W.Leslau, Supplementary observations on Tigre grammar, JAOS 68, 1948, pp. 127-139. |
| SS | G.R.Sundström, Sjukdomar ock deras behandling av infödingar i Mänsa', MO 3, 1909, pp. 127-151. |
| Storia | Wilh. Norlén e Fr. Lundgren, Manuale di storia sacra (versione tigré), Seconda edizione, Riveduta da K.G.Rodén e Giuseppe Hemmed, Asmara, 1925. |
| TE | E.Littmann, Tigrē Erzählungen, ZDMG, 1911, pp. 697-708. |
| Tigre Games | W.Leslau, Tigre Games, RSE, 17, 1961, pp. 61-68. |
| Tigre Texts | G.R.Sundström, Some Tigre texts with transliteration and translation, MO 8, 1914, pp. 1-15. |
| Traité | M.Cohen, Traité de langue Amharique, Paris, 1936. |
| Tribù | K.G.Rodén, Le tribù dei Mensa, Storia, legge e costumi, A. Testo originale tigrè, Asmara, 1913 (Part one, pp. 1-91. For part two see: FM). |

# REMARKS on SIGNS and SYMBOLS

(1) Most phonetic symbols used in this work are those set out in

§ 1.1 (consonant) and in

§ 1.3 (vowels).

A symbol not mentioned in § 1.1 is [x] (Arabic خ), which occurs in one word only: 'axbār - "news".

(2) Phonetic symbols, other than those of (1) above, are in conformity with The Principles of the International Phonetic Association, University College, London, 1949 (Reprint 1960). These are commented on where they occur.

(3) An exception to (2) above is the tilde. It is used here to denote juncture and not nasalization.

(4) / / is used to denote phonemic transcription.

[ ] is used to denote (a) phonetic transcription; (b) in the English translation of Tigre utterances words which are not found in the original, but are needed in the translation.

( ) is used to denote in the English translation of Tigre utterances words that are found in the original but should better be omitted in the translation.

(5) All Tigre utterances are underlined. Tigre names which appear in the English translation begin with a capital letter and are not underlined.

(6) Morphological notation:

(a) The three consonants of the triradical verb are represented by qtl.

(b)
C stands for consonant
V stands for vowel
L stands for laryngal
SV stands for semivowel

(c)
$\overline{CC}$ stands for a geminated consonant whereas
CC signifies a cluster of two - identical or different - consonants

(d) Actual speech-sounds are underlined, e.g.:
’aCəCCat, ’akətbat - "books".

# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this introduction is to provide a survey of the published material that can be used as a basis for descriptive research on the Tigre language. The material discussed is not therefore the entire bibliographical corpus of works connected with Tigre.[1] Certain works whose content has been summarized by other writers are not mentioned in every case.

Owing to the scarcity of Tigre texts and to the fact that most scholars used the same texts for their researches, I have found it necessary to clarify the questions of 'who wrote what, when, and with whose help'. The importance of throwing light on this matter lies in the need to establish the origin of the Tigre text or of the grammatical problem presented. Such clarification enables one to see if a certain problem is inherent in the language or results from previous writers' attempts at explanation.

The material surveyed is classified and presented in the following manner: A. texts, B. grammatical material, C. lexical material. A subdivision within each section is made by grouping together all works attributed to one person. In these subdivisions the names of other writers on Tigre are sometimes mentioned where relevant.

## A. Texts

### Texts collected by E. Littmann

The most distinguished scholar in the field of Tigre studies

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[1] As regards bibliopgrahies, two valuable works are available: E. Ullendorff, The Semitic languages of Ethiopia, London, 1955, xiv, 273 pp., Bibliographical notes : pp. 233-239; W. Leslau, The Semitic languages of Ethiopia. An annotated bibliography of, The Hague, 1965, 336 pp., Tigre: pp. 145-164.

is Enno Littmann, whose *Publications of the Princeton expeditinn to Abyssinia*,[1] the peak of his achievement in this field, is still the best available collection of Tigre texts. Littmann undertook an expedition to Eritrea in the autumn and winter of 1905/6. The material for *Publications of the Princeton expedition to Abysinnia* was collected with the help of the Revd. G. R. Sundström who spent many years in Eritrea, notably at the Swedish Mission in Galab, and was himself an accomplished student of the Tigre language.

Sundström introduced Littmann, on the latter's arrival at Galab, to Naffaʿ wad ʿEtmān, whose invaluable services, then and later, prompted Littmann to dedicate the first volume of his *Publilications* to him. Naffaʿ travelled to Germany following the expedition and stayed there with Littmann for two years (1907-1909) while they worked together on the material collected in Eritrea.[2]

In transcribing his texts, Littmann used Ethiopic characters together with a special sign to indicate the gemination of appropriate consonants. Throughout *Publications* all words which terminate with the vowel *a* have this vowel in the fourth order, including verbs in the perfect, third person, masculine singular.[3]

In the preface to volume I Littmann gives an account of the manner in which the material was collected.

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[1] E. Littmann, *Publications of the Princeton expedition to Abyssinia, Leyden: late E. J. Brill, Ltd., 1910-15, 4V. in 5, 287, 344, 541,* 1097 pp.

[2] In 1909 Naffaʿ, being en route from Naples to Sicily on his way back home, disappeared, never to be heard of again.

[3] Littmann finally changed his mind about this, using the distinction between the first and the fourth orders to denote a morphological value, i.e.: the fourth order being used to denote a final radical which is a semivowel. Cf.: *Wörterbuch der Tigre-Sprache* in section C. of this Introduction.

A more detailed account of his stay in Eritrea is given in Preliminary Report[1] (pp. 151-154), augmented by an account of the Tigre speaking people and a proposed outline (pp. 155-165) of what was later to be printed as Publications.

The contents of volume I of Publications may be classified under four headings: (a) - prose - consisting of anthropomorphic tales about animals, stories from folklore, accounts of local historical events, stories about the stars, descriptions of the state of the Tigre speaking tribes, customs, riddles etc.; (b) - a list of names - interpreted as fully as possible - of men (pp. 136-156), of women (pp. 156-161), of səqrāt[2] (pp. 161-163), of swords and their kinds (pp. 172-187); (c) - poetry - consisting mainly of songs and dirges (pp. 203, 210-215, 229-250); (d) - idiomatic expressions such as salutations (pp. 200-202) and curses (pp. 270-277).

Volume II of Publications consists of an English translation of volume I. In the preface to volume II Littmann makes further remarks about the nature of the material collected in volume I, e.g. an evaluation of the literary aspects of the prose and poetry is given and a comparison made with similar material from within the boundaries of Ethiopia and from outside it. He also comments on the difficulties he encountered in the translation of Tigre names, suggesting as possible for some of them the idiolectic interpretation of his 'informant' Naffaʿ. The translation of the poetry is supplemented by a commentary.

Volume III (published 1913) consists of a numbered sequence of seven hundred and seventeen poems in the Tigre language, in Ethiopic

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[1] E. Littmann, Preliminary report of Princeton University Expedition to Abyssinia, ZA 20, 1907, pp. 151-182.

[2] səqrāt: "the second name by which the mother and the other women call the child" (LH, 181b). The use of these səqrāt names - in the majority of cases they are also battlecries - is found frequently in poetry.

script. Each poem is preceded by the poet's name. This poetry consists of (a) folk songs - amounting to about two-thirds of the collection and (b) dirges - traditionally sung by women.

Some prose is also included in Volume III. There is an introduction of about thirteen pages, in the Tigre language, concerning various aspects of the poetry of the Tigre people both in the past and at the time at which this material was collected. There is also a description of the origin of the Tigre speaking tribes, and an explanation of how certain rites expressing clientship came into being. Apart from the introduction, many of the poems are preceded by prose sections in which the background to the poem is related. At the end of the volume the poets' names are listed in Ethiopic script, in Ethiopic alphabetical order.

Volume IV consists of a German translation of, and commentary on, the poems of Volume III. It appears in two parts: A (published 1913) and B (published 1915). Part A consists of a translation of, and commentary on poems 1-391, part B of a translation of and commentary on the remainder. At the end of part B there is a list of the poets in Latin alphabetical order.

In addition to Publications, two other prose texts published by Littmann remain to be mentioned: (a) The legend of the Queen of Sheba[1] and (b) Tigrē - Erzählungen.[2]

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[1] E. Littmann, The Legend of the Queen of Sheba in the tradition of Axum, Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1904, Bibliotheca Abessinica, no. 1, xi, 40 pp.

[2] E. Littman,, Tigrē-Erzählungen, ZDMG (1911), pp. 697-708.

Towards the end of 1902 G. R. Sundström sent Littmann the text of The Legend of the Queen of Sheba. The man who wrote the text down was "one of our evangelists of the Mensa tribe".[1] Footnotes to the text preceded by the letter S are those of Sundström. The Tigre text appears on the left hand page with an English translation opposite. The text itself - about six pages - is in Ethiopic script, gemination not being marked and the final a of the verb in the perfect, third person, masculine singular, being represented by the first order.[2] These and other orthographic features found in this work are typical of the manner in which Tigre texts were transcribed by people of the Swedish Mission.

Notwithstanding the generally consistent transcription and fairly accurate translation, the major part of the credit here due to Littmann derives from his editing of the material: he did not work on the material with an 'informant' and thus had to rely entirely on Sundström in the case of passages that he did not understand or grammatical forms with which he was not acquainted.

Tigrē-Erzählungen is a collection of six Tigre tales rendered in Ethiopic script. The Ethiopic script is given on the right hand page followed by a free translation into German. On the left hand page the text is rendered in a narrow phonetic transcription with an interlinear translation into German. This collection of tales, both as to its nature and quality, resembles the prose material which appears in Publications of the Princeton expedition to Abyssinia, the symbol for gemination being omitted in the Ethiopic script owing to the presence of the coexisting transcription.

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[1] In a letter from Sundström to Littmann, The Legend of the Queen of Sheba, x:16.

[2] Cf. footnote 3 on p.23.

No scholar has rendered better service to the cause of Tigre studies than E. Littmann. The translated and annotated texts of Publications have been a cornerstone of the work of the student of Tigre. Yet Littmann, especially in the earlier stages of his collection of texts and research, was heavily indebted to the endeavours in the field by members of the Swedish Evangelical Mission in Eritrea.

## Texts published by Swedish Missionaries (and works connected with those texts).

Texts published by members of the Swedish Mission show two different levels of Tigre style: there are (a) folk talkes, biblical tales, customs and rites, law, history of the Mansaʿ people, medicines and diseases, poetry, etc., and (b) Bible translations whose style is literary in the sense that it does not reflect the colloquial language in the manner that most of the prose texts of (a) do.

### Texts collected by K. G. Rodén

The most prominent text published in book form by the Swedish Mission is Kəlʾe Mansaʿ - The Two Mansaʿ, or as it is better known among western scholars: Le tribù dei Mensa.[1] The text is in Ethiopic script. There is a preface in Italian (vii-x), for the benefit of the western reader, as well as a preface in Tigre (xi-xiii) which is directed at the indigenous Mansaʿ reader. K. G. Rodén, the head of the Missionary Station at Galab, devoted a considerable period - between his arrival in Galab in 1890[2] and the publication

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[1] K. G. Rodén, Le tribù dei Mensa. Storia, legge e costumi. A. Testo originale tigrè, Asmara, Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsens Förlags-expedition, 1913, xiii, 192 pp.

[2] In 1900 Rodén handed over some material to C. Conti Rossini. Cf. section on Conti Rossini below. See Tribù, p. xi:10-13.

of Kəlʾe Mansaʿ in 1913 - to collecting material for the book, which is printed in two parts. The first part (pp. 1-87), entitled Dəgəm Mansaʿ - "the story of Mansaʿ", contains a description of genealogies of the Mansaʿ, accounts of historical events and of tribal traditions. Tables of genealogies (pp. 88-91) conclude part one. Part two, entitled Fətəḥ Maḥāri waʿādotāt - "the law of Maḥāri and customs", consists of an account of the law and customs of the Mansaʿ tribes. Some of the tales and customs found in both parts of this book are also found in Littmann's Publications of the Princeton expedition to Abyssinia, volume I,[1] in slightly different versions. A free translation by Rodén into Italian of Kəlʾe Mansaʿ was published along with the Tigre version.[2]

A much more accurate translation - which exists only for the second part of Kəlʾe Mansaʿ - is the one into German, Das Feteḥ Maḥarī[3] made by M. Höfner. M. Höfner's translation incorporates a commentary with many references to Littmann's Publications of the Princeton Expedition. Critical observations on the translation of Fətəḥ Maḥārī, into Italian by Rodén and into German by Höfner, were later made by W. Leslau.[4]

The credit for the only valuable[5] Tigre reader in existence-

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[1] Cf. e.g.: Tribù, 3:18-4:6 with PL1, story no. 73; Tribù, 4:20-5:1 with PL1, story no. 74: FM, 102:23 et seq. with PL1, 112:5 et seq.

[2] Le tribú dei Mensa, Storia, legge e costumi. B. Traduzione italiana, Stockholm, 1913, xi, 352 pp.

[3] M. Höfner, Das Feteḥ Maḥarī. Sitten und Recht der Mänsaʿ. Nach dem Tigrē - Text K. G. Rodén's übersetzt. Verlag der: Akademie der Wissenschaften und Litteratür in Mainz, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Jahrgang 1951, Nr. 8, pp. 647-746, off print, 102 pp.

[4] W. Leslau, Linguistic observations on a Tigre codex , RSE 11, 1952, pp. 33-46, Roma, 1953. This writer seemed, however, to ignore the fact that Rodén's was a rather free rendering of the text into Italian.

[5] Two other readers exist: (a) Fidal wəlād higa təgre laletmaharobu, Mukullo, 1889, 35 pp; (b) - Fidal nāy higa təgre, Asmara: Missione Cattolica, 1908, 32 pp., the first being a syllabary only, the second - containing sentences, but not texts - being of doubtful value.

*Kətāb Fidal* - goes to K. G. Rodén. This reader - using Ethiopic script only - has gone through three editions, Rodén himself being the editor of the first two.[1] The third edition of the reader[2] is one revised by Musa Aron and published under the sponsorship of A.Berglund of the Swedish Mission. This third edition has been adapted to the needs of the young learner by means of a complete revision of the first part - entitled *’Ag’azot* - "spelling" - dealing with reading exercises, and by leaving out sections of the second part - entitled *Qər’ān* - "reading" - in the case of material thought by the reviser to be unsuitable for the young learner. The second part of the book (pp. 54-112) includes short phrases (pp. 54-55), salutations (p.56), tales - some adapted from foreign languages - riddles and a few poems.

As well as participating in the translation of the New Testament into Tigre,[3] Rodén translated into Tigre- in Ethiopic script - two theological works, based on Martin Luther's catechism.[4]

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[1] K. G. Rodén, *Sillabario della lingua tigrè*. Per cura della Società evangelica nazionale svedese. Asmara: Tipografia della Missione Evangelica Svedese, 1904, 127 pp. K. G. Rodén, *Sillabario e comprimento per le scuole elementari inferiori in lingua tigrè*. Seconda edizione. Asmara: Società Evangelica nazionale svedese, 1916, 173 pp.

[2] K. G. Rodén, *Kətāb ’ag’azot waqər’ān*, 3rd edition, revised by Musa Aron, Printing and Stationery Directorate, Asmara, 1958, 112 p.

[3] See the paragraph on Bible translations at the end of this section.

[4] K. G. Rodén, transl., *Dottrina Cristiana, secondo il Piccolo Catechismo di Martino Lutero*, per opera del comitato Catechistico (in Isvezia). Liberamente tradotta dallo svedese in tigré da K. G. Rodén. Asmara: Tipografia della Missione Evangelica Svedese, 1920, 128 pp. (pp. 117 et seq - the contents of the book). K. G. Rodén, transl., *Martino Lutero Piccolo Catechismo*. Tradotto in Tigrè da K. G. Rodén. Asmara: Missione Evangelica, 1926, 23 pp.

Scriptural quotations in these works are taken from the Tigre translation of the New Testament[1] with some changes and omissions which simplify the literary style of that particular translation.

Other texts in the publication of which K. G. Rodén participated are *Racconti biblici*- *'Adgāmāt qəddus kətāb*[2] and *Manuale di storia sacra* - *Dəgəm qəddus kətāb*.[3] Both publications, which are in Ethiopic script, consist of a selection of simplified versions of stories from the Bible translated from Swedish. *Racconti biblici* was originally translated by the Revd. A. Renlund with the help of an indigenous scholar,[4] but was not then published. Years later Rodén undertook the work of revising the text which was finally published in 1916. The book contains stories from the Old (pp. 5-35) and New (37-58) Testaments.

*Manuale di storia sacra* which was published ten years later, in 1925, is an enlarged and revised version of *Racconti biblici*. At the end of the enlarged version there are four appendices consisting of: (a) the names of the books of the Bible (pp. 178-180); (b) a table of the most important events "from the time of the creation of

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[1] See the paragraph on Bible translations at the end of this section.

[2] Norlén Wilh., and Fr. Lundgren, *Racconti biblici*. Illustrati, per le scuole elementari inferiori, di Wilh. Norlén e Fr. Lundgren, Rettori di scuole magistrati. Tradotti dallo svedese in tigrè da A. Renlund e K. G. Rodén. Asmara: Evangeliska-Fosterlands Förlagsexpedition, 1916, 57 pp.

[3] Norlén Wilh., and Fr. Lundgren, *Manuale di storia sacra* (versione tigré). Seconda edizione. Riveduta da K. G. Rodén e Giuseppe Hemmed. Asmara: Tipografia Evangelica, 1925, 200 pp.

[4] Yosef Ḥəmmad who helped Rodén and other members of the Swedish Mission with their translations into Tigre.

the world until Christ and from Christ until our time"[1] (pp. 181-185); (c) a list of names appearing in the Bible with interpretations (pp. 186-193); (d) a list of abbreviations and symbols used in the book (p.194).

The above two publications supply the student of Tigre with excellent material as regards the syntactic structure of the language; all stories appearing in the shorter version of the work appear also in the enlarged edition, and comparisons of syntactic phenomena may thus be drawn. Furthermore, a comparison of three versions of certain texts is possible in the case of stories from the New Testament, owing to the existence of the Tigre translation of the latter.

To complete the list of publications by K. G. Rodén, it remains to mention a collection of songs: Darus Ṣəyon - Cantici di Sion[2] translated and edited by Rodén in collaboration with R. Sundström. This work, like all of Rodén's other texts, is in Ethiopic script and consists of three hundred and ten religious songs. An index to the songs, in Ethiopic alphabetical order and according to the first word of the opening verse, is found on pp. 423-435.

### Texts collected by G. R. Sundström

The Revd. G. R. Sundström, a contemporary of K. G. Rodén, became known as a Tigre scholar not only through the texts that he published but also by reason of the help that he offered to E. Littmann, in terms of both scholarly knowledge and the collection of

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[1] Manuale di storia sacra, 181:3. The first date given is that of the creation of the world, 4165 B.C., and the latest date - that of the translation of the Bible into Amharic, 1841 A.D.

[2] K. G. Rodén and G. R. Sundström, transl., Cantici di Sion. In Tigrè. Tradotti ed ordinati da K. G. Rodén e R. Sundström. Seconda edizione. Asmara: Missione Evangelica Svedese, 1931, 437 pp.

material.[1] From a general point of view it can be said that Sundström presented his material in a more scholarly manner than his colleagues at the Swedish Mission, perhaps owing to his fruitful relation with E. Littmann. A few, relatively short, texts were published by Sundström.

One[2] was published in 1904 as an article in collaboration with E. Littmann, at a time when Sundström's experience of the Tigre language was limited to a couple of years. The text consists of two pages in Ethiopic script (pp. 11-12) out of the 34 pages of the whole article, one page of text being a Tigre tale, the other a song connected with it. The rest of the article is a translation (pp. 3-4) and commentary (pp. 4-10) in Swedish, with a translation of the Swedish into German (pp. 13-23) by E. Littmann. At the end of the article a phonetic transcription of the song is given (pp. 23-24), followed by a small glossary in phonetic transcription and a Swedish and German translation of this (pp. 25-34).

Another Sundström text published five years later, deals with (a) illnesses, injuries and their cure, (b) medicines, their preparation and use. The text is in Ethiopic script and a translation into Swedish is provided. Part A)[3] (pp. 127-151), entitled *’Amər ‘ādār* - "the knowledge of illnesses", consists of a list of illnesses and injuries with, in each case, a description of symptoms and an outline of treatment. Part B)[4] (pp. 152-173), entitled *’Amər*

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[1] See above, section on Littmann's collected texts.

[2] G. R. Sundström, *En sång på tigrè-språket*, upptecknad, öfversatt och förklarad af R. Sundström. Utgifven och öfversatt till tyska af E. Littmann. Uppsala: Akademiska bokhandeln, SKVH, vol. 8, no. 6, 1904, 34 pp.

[3] G. R. Sundström, *Sjukdomar ock deras behandling av infödingar i Mänsa‘*, MO 3, 1909, pp.127-151.

[4] G. R. Sundström, *Kännedom om läkemedel ock deras andvändning bland infödingarne i mänsa‘*, MO 3, 1909, pp. 152-173. Parts A) and B) appear as consecutive but separate articles.

ʼasəryat - "the knowledge of remedies", consists of a list of medicinal trees and plants together with an account of the manner in which medicines are prepared, preserved and administered (i.e. dosages and frequencies).

The Sundström text[1] most enlightening from a linguistic point of view was published in 1914. Sundström wrote it, after a stay of twelve years among the Tigre-speaking peoples, with the stated aim of giving an idea of Tigre pronunciation and accent. In the preamble to the text an account is given of certain phonetic phenomena, the most interesting of which are the allophonic forms of the vowel a. Apart from his unclear statement that "the vowel of the first order is always short",[2] Sundström gives a striking description of the allophones of a though without relating them to their positional values. It is quite clear from this description that a may be open or close, front or centralized, and that the distinction between first and fourth order vowels cannot, thus, be a question of vowel-quality. Neither Sundström nor any other student of Tigre, for a long time afterwards, took pains to continue the analysis beyond this point; only in recent years has any advance been made as regards this aspect of Tigre phonology.[3] This third Sundström text contains four Tigre tales in Ethiopic script, each tale

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[1] G. R. Sundström, Some Tigré texts with transliteration and translation , MO 8, 1914, pp. 1-15.

[2] Ibid., page 1, A.

[3] See F. R. Palmer , Openness in Tigre, BSOAS 18, fasc. 3, 1954, pp. 561-577. See also The morphology of the Tigre noun by the same author, §§ 1.2, 1.6 and 1.7. This work is dealt with at the beginning of section B of this Introduction.

being followed by a narrow phonetic transcription with an interlinear translation; this in turn being followed by a free translation into English. The style of each tale is highly narrative, as if proceeding directly from the narrator's mouth.

A document of Sundström's concerning the ʿAd Šek,[1] a Tigre-speaking Muslim tribe,[2] may be mentioned here. It was turned over by Sundström to Littmann and later published by M. Höfner. The text - in Ethiopic script - consists of a genealogy of the tribe and an account of its law, customs and songs together with a translation into German and a commentary.

## Texts collected by C. Conti Rossini

A contribution to the corpus of Tigre texts was made by C. Conti Rossini, whose Dəgəm Mansaʿ - Tradizioni storiche dei Mensa[3] was, in fact, the first valuable text to be published in Tigre. The text, in Ethiopic script (pp. 45-68), gives an account of the history of the two branches of Mansaʿ and there follows a translation into Italian and a commentary (pp. 69-99). The Tigre text also contains (pp. 68-69) a short folktale, Dəgəm walat ḥasạy - "the legend of the king's daughter". In a preamble Conti Rossini explains how and when his material was collected (pp. 41-44) and provides an ethnographical introduction to the Tigre-speaking peoples. In his work Conti Rossini was helped by K. G. Rodén[4] and by Rodén's native assistant Tawalda

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[1] M. Höfner, Überlieferungen bei Tigrē-Stämmen (1). ʿAd Šek , AE 4, 1961, pp. 181-203.

[2] Cf.: PL1, 285:5.

[3] C. Conti Rossini, Tradizioni storiche dei Mensa , GSAI 14, 1901, pp. 41-99.

[4] Cf. Ibid., p.41:9-15

Madḫən. Indeed, a comparison of Rodén's 1913 text - bearing the same Tigre name *Dəgəm Mansaʿ* - *Le Tribù dei Mensa* - with that of Conti Rossini's shows that the same Tigre source underlies both.[1]

Another text edited by C. Conti Rossini worth mentioning is *Documenti per lo studio della lingua tigré*.[2] This publication contains Tigre texts in phonetic transcription with an Italian translation. The transcription shows some peculiarities with regard to the phonetics and to the morphology of the Tigre language, e.g.: *y*, which is not geminated in the Tigre of Mansaʿ, is here geminated;[3] palatalization is marked as if it occurs regularly, when in fact it is non-existent[4] in Tigre; gemination appears in the consonants of certain words where gemination is in fact also non-existent.[5] The collection contains:[6] (a) fifty proverbs, (b) thirty-seven riddles, (c) two stories, a translation being given immediately after each proverb, tale and story.

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[1] Cf., e.g., *C. Ross. Trad.*, pp. 60-61 with *Tribù*, 46:27 et seq; *C. Ross. Trad.*, 63:13 et seq. with *Tribù*, 40:10 et seq; *C. Ross. Trad.*, 59:7 with *Tribù*, 8:8.

[2] C. Conti Rossini, *Documenti per lo studio della lingua tigré*, GSAI 16, 1903, pp. 1-32.

[3] As, e.g.: p.6, no. 36; p. 7, no. 43; 18:21.

[4] As, e.g.: *tezabbiěko* - "I was sold (the slave cries [saying])", p.8, no. 49 (phonetic transcription as in the original).

[5] As, e.g.: *ḫaqqohǎ* - "after that", 14:8; *ellú* - "for him", 18:21 (phonetic transcription as in the original).

[6] *C. Ross.Doc.* also contains a translation into Italian with a commentary (pp. 21-32), the text in Tigre appearing in *Ricordo di un soggiorno in Eritrea*, 1903, pp. 67-78.

## Texts collected by W. Leslau

The contribution of W. Leslau to the existing corpus of Tigre texts is an article entitled Tigre games [1](published 1961). The text consists of seven children's games in phonetic transcription, the Tigre text of each game being followed by an English translation. This material was recorded by Leslau during his stay in Keren in 1947, a stay which also yielded his Supplementary observations on Tigré grammar[2](published 1948). The grammatical footnotes that appear in Tigre games are, in fact, part of the data of the Supplementary observations. There is reason to believe, then, that no further analysis was made of the material included in Tigre games since it was originally collected (1947) and commented on (1948).

The phonetic transcription of the text suffers from the same defect as the examples supporting the grammatical data of the Supplementary observations: i.e. a doubtful 'informant' - if one assumes that Leslau's transcription is a true reflection of the 'informant's' articulation. Among the peculiarities - common to both of the above works - which incline one to this view are: the gemination of semi-vowels,[3] and the recurrence of the form 'əndä - "while" instead of 'əndo,[4] other peculiarities occurring in either one of the works.[5]

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[1] W. Leslau, Tigre games, RSE 17, 1961, pp. 61-68.

[2] See section B) of the Introduction, below.

[3] As,e.g.: Tigre games, p.63, footnote 2; p. 64, footnote 7; Supplementary observations, p.128 § 4; p. 131 § 27a).

[4] As, e.g. Tigre games, p.62, footnote 2; Supplementary observations, p.137, § 156a).

[5] As, e.g.: Tigre games, p.64, footnote 3, where the form 'əllu, instead of 'əlu - "[which is] for him", is questioned by Leslau himself; Supplementary observations, p.127, § 1, where examples of fricative [q] are given. [q] is non-existent in any dialect of Tigre.

## Bible translations

Only two parts of the Old Testament were translated into Tigre: The Book of Psalms - Dərsān dāwəd[1] and The Book of Isaiah - Kətāb 'Esayās.[2] G. R. Sundström is to be credited with the work, though its publication is posthumous. The names of the native speakers who helped him are not on record. As regards the New Testament, the first part to appear in print was the Gospel of St. Mark,[3] from the Swedish Mission press at Monkullo - where there was at that time one of the two missionary stations among the Tigre speaking people (the other being at Galab). This translation into Tigre, in an Ethiopic script whose orthography is not consistent, was done by indigenous scholars under the supervision of Dr. C. Winqvist, a missionary physician, whose own scholarship was more in the domain of Tigrinya. The entire New Testament in Tigre was first published in 1902 by the Swedish Mission Press at Asmara. K. G. Rodén, the principal of the Mission station at Galab, supervised the work of translation which was carried out with the help of the native teachers at the Swedish Mission.[4] Books of the New Testament used now among Tigre speaking Christians are reprints of a second edition of the 1902 publication, produced in a revised and improved form at Asmara in 1931.[5] All Tigre Bible translations appear in Ethiopic script.

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[1] G. R. Sundström, transl., I Salmi di Davide in lingua tigré. Prima edizione. Pubblicato dalla Società Biblica britannica e forestiera, Asmara: Tipografia Evangelica, 1925.

[2] G. R. Sundström, transl., Il Libro di Isaia in lingua tigré. Prima edizione. Pubblicato dalla Società Biblica britannica e forestiera, Asmara: Tipografia Evangelica, 1925.

[3] Evangelium enligt Markus på Tigre-Språket, tryckt på Missionspressen i ~~Monkullo~~, 1889, 52 pp.

[4] As for the sources from which the translation was made, see: E. Ullendorff, Ethiopia and the Bible, Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1968, p.71.

[5] Ḥaddis Galad- 'əb higa təgre, kālə' ḥətām 'ərrum - Il Nuovo

## B. Grammatical material

The scarcity of Tigre texts is paralleled by a scarcity of grammatical works. Practically all the grammatical works of the earlier period of Tigre studies are of no descriptive value to the student of Tigre, some of them now being linguistic curiosities of primarily historical value, while others were written by people who lacked the required skill or qualification for the task. Most of the credit for grammatical work on Tigre goes to E. Littmann, W. Leslau, and F. R. Palmer, the latter having made the strongest impact in his endeavours to bring Tigre studies into the domain of modern linguistic research.

### Grammatical writings of E. Littmann, and connected works

E. Littmann published several monographs and articles concerning various aspects of Tigre grammar. The most comprehensive, Das Verbum der Tigresprache ,[1] is based on the published texts and grammatical works that were available at that time. A survey of such material is given at the beginning of the article (pp. 133-140), followed by an attempt at outlining distinctive dialectal features (pp. 140-152). General observations of a comparative and diachronic nature are made in part one (pp. 152-159).

Some of the gaps in Das Verbum were filled by M. Höfner in her article Probleme der Verbalstammbildung im Tigrē .[2] In this

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Testamento in lingua tigré. Seconda edizione riveduta. Pubblicato a cura della Società Biblica britannica e forestiera, Asmara: Tipografia Evangelica, 1931.

[1] E. Littmann, Das Verbum der Tigresprache , ZA 13, 1898, pp. 133-178; ZA 14, 1899, pp. 1-102.

[2] M. Höfner, Probleme der Verbalstammbildung im Tigrē , ZDMG 101, 1951, pp. 89-106.

article M. Höfner attempts an analysis of the relationship of form and meaning between verb-moulds such as *qal*[1] (i.e.: the invariable element of verb compounds whose second element is *bela*), *qalla* (i.e.: triradicals with similar second and third radicals) and *qalqala* on the one hand; *qatla*, *qatlala* and *qataltala* on the other - with the preformatives *'an-* and *'as-* being examined in appropriate instances. Verbs of the form *qetala* and *qotala* are incorporated in the tables of examples. The data for this article appear in *Wörterbuch der Tigrē-Sprache*.[2]

An article concerning the pronoun in Tigre, *Die Pronomina im Tigrē*,[3] was published by Littmann prior to the publication of *Das Verbum*, utilizing the same corpus of material. This article - in two fascicles - includes a description of the personal pronoun, the pronominal suffixes with the noun and the verb, indirect suffixes (i.e.: "Mittelbare suffixe", which are in fact the prepositions *'əl* - "to, for", *'ət* - "in, on by, with"), the pronominal copula *tu*, the possessive *nāy*, the reflexive (as expressed by *nos* - "self", *ra'as* - "head, self"), the reciprocal (*nosnos*), the demonstrative, the definite article and the relative *la-*, the interrogative pronouns and, finally, the indefinite pronoun (as expressed by the enclitic particle *-ma* with *gale*, *sema* - "some, any").

A short article by Littmann, *Die Diminutivbildung im Tigrē*,[4]

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[1] The graphemes q, t, l, stand for the radicals of the verbal root.

[2] See section C) of this Introduction.

[3] E. Littmann, *Die Pronomina im Tigrē. Ein Beitrag zur aethiopischen Dialektkunde*, ZA 12, 1897, pp. 188-230, 291-316.

[4] E. Littmann, *Die Diminutivbildung im Tigrē*, Estratto dagli Annali del R. Istituto Superiore Orientale di Napoli. Nuova Serie, volume II, Roma: Tipografia del Senato, 1942-XX, pp. 89-103.

deals with the formation of the diminutive in Tigre, mainly in proper names. The corpus of texts used is that of Littmann's Publications of the Princeton expedition to Abyssinia, where the lists of proper names and appellatives contain the equivalent diminutive forms.[1]

## Grammatical writings of F. R. Palmer

F. R. Palmer has added a new dimension to research work in Tigre by his attempts to put it on a purely descriptive plane. He has been able to do this because of the material he collected on field work during his stay in Eritrea in the early fifties. Palmer has written three grammatical essays on the Tigre language, the most comprehensive being The morphology of the Tigre noun.[2] In the first part of this book Palmer provides a brief discussion of the phonology of Tigre (pp. 1-10), emphasizing the principle of assimilation which is the most influential factor in phonetic variation in Tigre. In chapters two and three (pp. 10-15) the writer establishes an outline of those criteria, such as types of formation, noun and adjective, number and gender, etc., which form the basis of the classification in the following chapters. Chapters four (pp. 16-34) and five (pp. 35-39) deal with broken plurals and suffixed plurals respectively. Chapter six (pp. 40-65) deals with 'derivatives', i.e.: diminutives, pejoratives and augmentatives, according to form and meaning; an analysis of problematic forms (i.e.: forms which raise problems of classifcation) being made at the end of the chapter (pp. 62-65). In

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[1] Cf. PL1, p.137 et seq.

[2] F. R. Palmer, The morphology of the Tigre noun. London: Oxford University Press, 1962, 96 pp. (London Oriental Series, vol. 13); The other two are: F.R.Palmer, Openness in Tigre , BSOAS 18, fasc.3, 1954, pp. 561-577; F. R. Palmer, Relative clauses in Tigre, Word 17, 1961, pp. 24-33.

chapters seven (pp. 66-69) and eight (pp. 70-73) respectively pronominal suffixes and adjectives are discussed. The grammatical part of the book is augmented by a list of nouns - arranged according to the different structural patterns of the singular form - and consists of material collected by the writer and selected by him for the purpose of this work. A glossary of the linguistic terms used in the book rounds off the work.

### Grammars

Two attempts have been made to produce comprehensive works on Tigre grammar,[1] the first in 1919, *Grammatica della lingua tigrè*,[2] and the second, *Short grammar of Tigre*,[3] in 1945.

*Grammatica della lingua Tigrè* contains a description of grammatical data (pp. 10-71), texts with Italian translatinn (pp. 79-90) and vocabulary: Tigre-Italian (pp. 93-186) and
Italian-Tigre (pp. 189-292).

The Tigre material is in Ethiopic script. The grammatical data are not very helpful to the student of Tigre, since (a) the grammatical framework used is that of another language (probably Italian), and (b) many features of the data given are foreign to the Tigre language.

Leslau's *Short grammar of Tigre* is the only valuable grammar of the language available. The book is a reprint of two articles which

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[1] The work on the Beni ʽAmər dialect: A. C. Beaton and A. Paul, *A grammar and vocabulary of the Tigre language* (as spoken by the Beni Amer). Khartum: Publications Bureau, 1954, 88 pp., mimeographed, is not covered by the above statement. In any case, the worth of this book to the student of Tigre is not very great, mainly owing to the non-linguistic presentation of the data.

[2] *Grammatica della lingua tigrè*, con annesso: Vocabolario tigrè-italiano e italiano-tigrè. Per cura della Missione Catolica dell' Eritrea, Asmara: Tip. Francescana, 1919, 299 pp.

[3] W. Leslau, *Short grammar of Tigré* (North Ethiopic), Dialect of Mensa, New Haven, 1945. Publications of the American Oriental Society. Offprint series, no. 18.

appeared in the same year,[1] the dialect described being that of Mansaʿ. Leslau's treatise is mainly based on Littmann's Publication of the Princeton expedition to Abyssinia, volume I, and on certain of Littmann's articles. The Tigre material is given as a transliteration of the Ethiopic script of the sources used.

The main problem which Leslau faced was his inability to check the material in the field. Consequently he tended towards a speculative approach in those cases in which he considered the evidence from existing material to be insufficient. Leslau did not, unfortunately, take the fullest advantage of Littmann's texts: some of the problems to which he found no answer could have been solved if Littmann's texts had been more fully investigated. Leslau, who was well aware of the shortcomings of his treatise, made an attempt to supplement his work with fresh material. This he collected while on a short visit to Keren in Eritrea and published as Supplementary observations on Tigré grammar.[2] The new material enabled him to throw some further light on basic problems. However as he himself remarked, his time in the field had been too limited to carry out a systematic investigation. Supplementary observations on Tigré grammar has, therefore, a casual air; in some instances the small number of examples collected lead to an incorrect interpretation of the data. A detailed critical account of Leslau's Short grammar and Supplementary observations is beyond the scope of this Introduction, and one example will have to suffice in illustrating

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[1] W. Leslau, The verb in Tigré (North Ethiopic), Dialect of Mensa, JAOS 65, 1945, pp. 1-26; W. Leslau, Grammatical Sketches in Tigré (North Ethiopic). Dialect of Mensa, JAOS 65, 1945, pp. 164-203.

[2] W. Leslau, Supplementary observations on Tigré grammar, JAOS 68, 1948, pp. 127-139.

their limitations: Leslau's treatment of the phonological identity of the vowel *a* can be seen to be inadequate and confusing. In *The verb in Tigré*[1] Leslau assumes that "the final *a* of *nägra* is not ... the same as the final *a* of *säta*, contracted from sätäya ..." and thus he transcribes the verb in the perfect, singular masculine as *qätlä*, such speculation being based here on etymological grounds.[2] It is not possible otherwise to understand what he means by saying: "not ... the same".

The quality of the vowel represented by the first order is described in *Grammatical sketches* as being "between *a* and *e*",[3] the quality of the delimiting vowels not being defined. In another place, Leslau suggests that the final *a* of the singular and plural of the personal pronoun forms "does not indicate the long *a* ... but the qualitative value of *a* versus *ä*".[4] A summary of the last two statements gives the impression that (a) - there is a distinction in quality between the two vowels, and that (b) - such a distinction is reflected in the use of the first and fourth orders - as represented in the texts in Ethiopic script. The first part of such an assumption does not fit the phonetic data regarding the vowel *a* which are presented by Sundström[5] - even though Leslau himself refers

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[1] *The verb in Tigré*, § 1 b), pp. 3-4.

[2] In fact, there is no difference in quality or quantity between the two vowels in this case. Cf. chapter one of this thesis, section 3 et seq.

[3] *Grammatical sketches*, p. 165, § 1.

[4] Ibid., p.185, § 43 a).

[5] G. R. Sundström, *Some Tigrē texts* , MO 8, 1914, p.1, A.

to Sundström's data in connection with the pronunciation of the first-order vowel.[1]

Having had the benefit of some actual field work, Leslau came closer to the fact in stating that "Contrary to the assumption made in Verb § 16, the final vowel of the verb in the perfect is a and not ä. The form is thus fägra.",[2] and that "the first vowel may optinnally also be a, and the form ... is thus fagra or fägra".[3] Another fresh observation[4] was that "There are both a short and a long a. The length contrast often has a semantic or grammatical value", e.g.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ʿafa | - | "to look at" |
| ʿāfa | - | "to heal". |

All these casual statements do not proceed beyond the preliminary phase of observations; they constitute general statements not based on systematic analysis.

## C. Lexical material

The only valuable dictionary of Tigre in existence - E. Littmann's Wörterbuch der Tigrē-Sprache[5] - incorporates most vocabularies and glossaries published previously. Littmann's Publications of the Princeton expedition to Abyssinia was the main text used, but almost all other published texts are represented as well. It also

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[1] Grammatical sketches, p.165, footnote 1.

[2] Supplementary observations, p.132, § 28.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Supplementary observations, p.127, § 2 b).

[5] E. Littmann und M. Höfner, Wörterbuch der Tigrē-Sprache. Tigrē-Deutsch-Englisch, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1962, 744 pp.

includes material produced by Sundström, Naffaʿ wad ʿEtmān, and others, and thus saw the light of publication for the first time in this Dictionary. M. Höfner participated in the work of editing. The Tigre entries are in Ethiopic script and in Ethiopic alphabetical order, with translations into German and English. The heading of a verb entry is usually given in the perfect, third person, singular masculine, the final consonant being put in the fourth order when it is a final semivowel. The heading of a verb entry is the verb form of the basic stem, other types of formation and their prefixed derivatives - with attested participles and infinitives - being given in each case. Each entry is usually attributed to several sources, and lexical, grammatical and dialectal notes are occasionally given. Idiomatic expressions and compound words are included as well, full utterances being sometimes given as examples. At the end of many entries etymologies are adduced from Gəʿəz, Tigrinya, and Amharic, and the Arabic origin is given where the source of the Tigre word is Arabic. Proper names, names of tribes, names of animals, names of stars and geographical names appear in a list at the end of the book (pp, 678-738). An addendum which deals mainly with additional etymologies to previous entries rounds off the book (pp. 739-744).

Wörterbuch der Tigrē-Sprache is an impressive work. Its range of entries covers almost all published texts of the language and the various sources attributed to each item of an entry make a fine collectinn of examples. The dictionary has, however, a weak point: too many entries are based on Littmann's poetry collection,[1]

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[1] Publications of the Princeton expedition to Abyssinia, volume III.

where the meaning is frequently that of the contextual sense - specific to a certain verse - and not that of the general lexical content. Thus balsa,[1] for example, has three meanings: 1. "to turn (over)"; 2. "to cause to be"; 3. "to answer". Meaning no. 2 is practically non-existent in prose and would be unintelligible to the native speaker of Tigre outside the specific poetic context in which it occurs. From a general point of view it can be said that the dictionary is a compilation of linguistic forms and their meanings as found in certain texts, rather than a reflection of the spoken language. The disadvantage of this is that the spoken Tigre of today is represented to a limited extent only.

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[1] LH, 269b.

# Chapter One

# PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY

## § 1.1 Consonants - General description.

| | |
|---|---|
| /h/ | voiceless glottal fricative |
| /l/ | voiced alveolar lateral |
| /ḥ/ | voiceless pharyngal fricative |
| /m/ | voiced bilabial nasal |
| /r/ | voiced alveolar trill |
| /s/ | voiceless alveolar fricative |
| /š/ | voiceless palato-alveolar fricative |
| /q/ | ejective velar plosive |
| /b/ | voiced bilabial plosive |
| /t/ | voiceless dental plosive |
| /n/ | voiced dental nasal |
| /ʼ/ | glottal plosive |
| /k/ | voiceless velar plosive |
| /w/ | semivowel ('voiced bilabial') |
| /ʻ/ | voiced pharyngal fricative |
| /z/ | voiced alveolar fricative |
| /y/ | semivowel ('voiced palatal') |
| /d/ | voiced dental plosive |
| /ǧ/ | voiced palato-alveolar affricate |
| /g/ | voiced velar plosive |
| /ṭ/ | ejective dental plosive |
| /č̣/ | ejective palato-alveolar affricate |
| /ṣ/ | ejective alveolar affricate |
| /f/ | voiceless labiodental fricative |

| | |
|---|---|
| /č/ | voiceless palato-alveolar affricate |
| [ž] | voiced palato-alveolar fricative |

The above list is the complete phonemic inventory of Tigre consonants, excluding [ž] and with reservations in the case of /č/ : in terms of distribution, [ž] occurs only as the palatalized form of /z/, while [č] occurs almost exclusively as the palatalized form of /t/. This palatalization occurs with dentals and alveolars, in final position, in forms to which the first pers. sing. pron. suff. is attached. [ž] is seldom met with while [č] is by no means uncommon.

Exx.:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| [masānit] | - "friends"; | [masāniččе][1] | - "my friends" |
| [gəzāz] | - "glass" | : | [gəzāžže][1] | - "my glass" |

The corresponding inventory of Ethiopic graphemes by which most Tigre texts have been rendered includes also [p̣] or [p] for loan words, as in: [fəlp̣os] - "Philip"; [polis] - "police".

## § 1.1.1 Gemination

All consonants except /ʼ/, /ʻ/, /ḥ/, /h/ (laryngals)[2] and /w/, /y/ (semivowels) are subject to gemination. The significance of gemination is primarily morphological.

## § 1.2 Consonant variation

Though the articulation of most of the consonants is not

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[1] The gemination is optional.

[2] This term denotes /ʼ/, /ʻ/, /ḥ/, /h/ throughout the work except where it is necessary to distinguish laryngals /ʼ/ and /h/ from pharyngals /ʻ/ and /ḥ/, the distinction then being explicitly made.

subject to major variation, some variants do occur in a manner determined by consonant position in the word, by adjacent speech-sounds and by certain suprasegmental features - mainly stress. Some of these variants must be treated as simple allophones; some others are evidence of the articulatory overlapping of different phonemes. The principal examples are as follows:

### § 1.2.1 Ejectives - /q/, /ṭ/, /ṣ/, /ç̣̌/.

These consonants share the homorganic co-articulation of a glottal stop, the release phase being simultaneous in each case. In final position in a syllable - preceding a consonant - the ejectives show a tendency to weaken and to lose their homorganic feature, full release not being achieved in the absence of a following vowel.

Exx.

[qanașko] - "I got up"; (/qanaṣko/)
[mašațko] - "I combed (my hair)": (/mašaṭko/)
[ʼç̦̌bāl] - "ashes": (/ʼaç̣̌bāl /)

/q/ loses its homorganic feature only when followed by close juncture, as in: [ʼafluk] - "forked branches"; (/ʼafluq/).

In final position - preceding a consonant - /q/ tends to lose completely its phonemic identity. The articulatory position of the variants of /q/ is post-velar. The acoustic impression is usually that of [ʼ]. Sometimes, however, being extremely tense in the release phase, it sounds like [ʻ].

Exx.

[loʼloʼ] or [loʻloʻ] - "smeared": (/ləqluq/)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| [ma’rəḥa] | - | "her condition"; | (/maqrəḥa/) | |
| [ta’bəl] | - | "she will return"; | (/taqbəl/) | (jussive) |
| [’a‘bər] | - | "tombs"; | (/’aqbar/) | |
| [’amma’rab] | - | "evening-prayer" (of Muslims); | (/’ammaqrab/) | |
| [la‘a’ba ’əb ‘a’rudu] | - | "the ‘Aqba tree [together] with its roots" (PL1,83:14); | (/la‘aqba ’əb ’aqrudu/) | |
| [’əgəl lə’tolo] | - | "in order to kill him"; | (/ləqtolo/) | |
| [bet ma’das] | - | "the temple"; | (/maqdas/) | |

Post-velar variation of /q/ is not limited to final position in a syllable: it may occur in a stress unit (see §1.5) in medial position as a result of regressive assimilation.

Ex.:

[tsaḥa’a’$^{ə}$ttóm] - "He laughed at them"; (/təsaḥaqa ’əttom/).

§ 1.2.2 Voiced plosives - /b/, /d/, /g/

These consonants, being in final position in the syllable, may become voiceless. The voiceless b̥ , d̥ , g̥ are tense and differ as such from /p/, /t/, /k/ which are lax and have a greater degree of aspiration.

Exx.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| [’əb̥˜fərug̥] | - | "exactly" |
| [‘adäd̥] | - | "number" |
| [gäläb̥] | - | "Galab (name of a village)" |

### § 1.2.3 Laryngals[1] - /’/, /‘/, /ḥ/, /h/.

The unstressed glottal stop may have weak articulation in all positions. In word-final position it may disappear altogether.

Exx.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| [gabbi] | - | "maybe"; | (/gabbə’/) |
| [mulu] | - | "full"; | (/mulu’/) |

Followed anywhere in the word by a laryngal or by an ejective, [ ’ ] and [ ‘ ] may be in free variation with one another.

Exx.:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| [’addəḥa] | or | [‘addəḥa] | - | "noon"; | (/’addəḥa/) |
| [’ad˜ḥəd] | or | [‘ad˜ḥəd] | - | "one another"; | (/‘ad˜ḥəd/) |
| [’arqay] | or | [‘arqay] | - | "bed"; | (/‘arqay/) |
| [’aqrud] | or | [‘aqrud] | - | "roots"; | (/’aqrud/)[2] |
| [’aṭāl] | or | [‘aṭāl] | - | "goats"; | (/‘aṭāl/) |
| [’aṣfār] | or | [‘aṣfār] | - | "nails"; | (/’aṣfār/) |
| [’alləṣ] | or | [‘alləṣ] | - | "hawk" | |

### § 1.2.4 Nasals - /m/, /n/.

There is a possible neutralization of the m/n phonemic contrast when one of them occurs in a homorganic consonantal sequence, either of the phonemes then being actualized as either [m] or [n].

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[1] See: § 1.1.1 footnote 2.

[2] Cf. § 1.2.1.

Exx.:

[ʿəmboba] or [ʿənboba] - "flower"
[ç̌əmbuy] or [ç̌ənbuy] - - "solitary"
[’ambata] or [’anbata] - "He began"
[təmbāk] or [tənbāk] - "tobacco"
[ṣəmfə’āt] or [ṣənfə’āt] - ʿname of a plant’

The question of which phoneme is represented in each actualization can be answered only where the morphological evidence is sufficient, as in:

[’əgəl təmbar] or [’əgəl tənbar]
- "in order that you live" (root: nbr).

[’əmbə] or [’ənbe] - "We said" (root: bhl, preceded by 1st pers. pl. verb pref. in the imperf.: ’ən-).

§1.2.5. Liquids - /l/, /r/.

/l/ which exists in two monosyllabic particles of very wide distribution - ’əl - "to, for" and la - the definite article (and relative pronoun) - is liable to disappear by assimilation in the following circumstances: the particle ’əl either loses the [l] without acoustic compensation (since /y/ is not geminated), or becomes zero when it occurs with the 1st pers. sing. pron. suff.

Exx.:

[bəḥəl bal˜’əye] - "Excuse me".
[zābe ’əye] - "Buy for me".
[hallaye] - "I have (lit.: "there is to me", for: halla ’əlye).

With 2nd pers. suffs., sing. & pl., the suffix is geminated when [’əl] becomes zero.

[illegible] ?

Exx.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| [hallakka] | - | "you (masc. sing.) have"; | (*halla ’əlka*) |
| [hallakkum] | - | "you (masc. pl.) have"; | (*halla ’əlkum*) |

The definite article *la* is usually assimilated to the preceding particle, forming one unit with it and thus creating a sharp transition between itself and the initial sound of the following word.[1]

[illegible]

Exx.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| [’əbbā šəqəl] | - | "about the work"; | (*’əb lašəqəl*). |
| [’əbbā teprekorder] | - | "with the tape recorder". | |
| [’əttā gabay] | - | "in the street"; | (*’ət lagabay*). |
| [mənnā bet] | - | "from the house"; | (*mən labet*). |

The /r/ phoneme has a free variant which has the relative length of articulation typical of a geminated consonant. It lacks, however, the tension which characterizes a geminated consonant in the release phase. This /r/ variant occurs in a way that could be interpreted as a voice-quality modulation.

Exx.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| [’ädbərr] | - | "mountains"; | (/’adbər/). |
| [rrabbi] | - | "God": | (/rabbi/). |
| [fagarrna] | - | "We went out"; | (/fagarna/). |

### § 1.2.6 Semivowels - /w/, /y/.

Semivowels may have a weak articulation. The weak variant of /w/ is distinctive as regards lip position, which is 'spread'[2],

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[1] Cf. § 2.11.2 a)

[2] Denoted in the IPA alphabet by an upside down m.

as in:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| [təmäyäu] | - | "They spent the night"; | (/təmayaw/). |
| [ʿäud] | - | "threshing-floor"; | (/ʿawd/). |

The weak variant of /y/ has a lower, more lax position of the tongue as in:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | [karā$^{y}$i] | - | "band (of raiders)"; | (/karāyi/). |
| cf. | [karāy] | - | "hyaena"; | (/karāy/). |
| | [qa$^{y}$əḫ] | - | "red"; | (/qayəḫ/). |

In both cases the acoustic impression is that of a diphthong. In words of frequent occurrence the /y/ in intervocalic position is liable to disappear by assimilation.

Ex.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| [hē] | - | "however"; | (/haye/). |

The semivowels are liable to metathesis.

Exx.:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| [č̣awač̣it] | or [č̣ač̣awit] | - | "chicken" | |
| [mawarri] | or [marawi] | - | "sticks"; | (sing.: *mora*) |
| [ʾabyāt] | or [ʾaybāt] | - | "houses"; | (sing.: *bet*) |
| [rādyām] | or [rāydām] | - | "cruel (people)"; | (root: *rdy*)[1] |

## § 1.3 Vowels - General description.

There are six vowel phonemes in Tigre, as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| /i/ | high-front |
| /e/ | mid-front |

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[1] See also verbs with final SV, § 5.5.3 footnote, and participles, § 2.7.1 a) last example but one.

| | |
|---|---|
| /a/ | low-front (to low-central) |
| /ā/ | long low-front |
| /u/ | high-back |
| /o/ | mid-back |

In addition to the above six phonemes the vowel [ə] (mid-central) needs to be mentioned here. From a phonemic point of view nothing is gained by including it in the inventory of the vowel phonemes: its role is in conserving the syllabic structure typical of Tigre. Otherwise it is a positional allophone of a 'zero phoneme' (cf.§ 1.7.7.).

From the articulatory point of view each vowel is distinctive in regard to tongue-height and tongue-advancement, excluding the a/ ā contrast which is in terms of vowel quantity. That such phonemic contrast exists is shown by the following sets of minimal pairs:

/ḫar/ - "afterwards; than".
/ḫār/ - "the other; the last one".

/gadəm/ - "now then; so; thus".
/gādəm/ - "plain; country".
/ḥal/ - "maternal aunt".
/ḥāl/ - "maternal uncle".

/baʿal/ - "master; owner".
/baʿāl/ - "a festal day; holiday".

Exceptional is the case of words with a final CV-type syllable, when V is a low-front vowel. In such a case no phonemic contrast of quality may occur and vowel duration is subject to stress and syllabic structure[1], e.g.:

---

[1] Cf.: § 1.7.4, (c).

| | |
|---|---|
| [sábka] or [sabkā́] - "your people" | (/sabka/). |
| [sabkā́~tom] - "they are your people" | (/sabka tom/) |
| [bálsa] - "he answered" | (/balsa/) |
| [balsā́~'əttu] - "he answered him" | (/balsa 'əttu/) |
| [ḥṓṣa] or [ḥoṣā́] - "sand" | (/ḥoṣa/) |

The above statement provides a basic description of cardinal values of Tigre vowels. A wide range of variation is encountered in some of these (see § 1.7 et seq.) when actualized in the chain of speech.

## § 1.4 Vowel quantity and the syllabic structure[1]

Usually vowels may be long or short according to the incidence of stress and syllabic structure, though one typical variant of /a/ (namely [ä] - see § 1.7.4) and also [ə] are predominantly short. Thus vowel quantity is phonemically relevant only in the (above-mentioned - § 1.3) case of a/ ā.

The typical Tigre sequence is composed of CV and CVC syllables, or any combination of these two syllables. Long vowels are likely to be found in syllables that carry prominent stress. There are, however, two further observations to be noted: (a) - phonetically-long vowels are typical of CV syllables and rare in unstressed CVC syllables - where phonetically-short vowels are frequent; (b) - a CV-type syllable does not favour a short vowel in word-final

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[1] Cf.: § 1.7.6.

position. Though the occurrence of / ā / is not subject to the implications of the incidence of stress and syllabic structure, [ ā ] usually occurs in locations similar to those mentioned in (a) and (b). Observation (b) is of especial importance in regard to / ā /, as no contrast between /a/ and / ā / is likely to materialize in a CV-type syllable in word-final position.[1]

Exx.:

(1) in CV-type syllables with prominent stress:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| [ʿābḗ] | - | "yes"; | (/ʿābe/) |
| [šāhī́] | - | "tea"; | (/šāhi/) |
| [ʾīfālū́] | - | "no"; | (/ʾifālu/) |
| [ḥōṣāhā́] | - | "its sand" (lit.: her sand); | (/ḥoṣaha/) |

(2) in CVC-type syllables with prominent stress:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| [bā́b] | - | "door"; | (/bāb/) |
| [bḗt] | - | "house"; | (/bet/) |
| [yṓm] | - | "day"; | (/yom/) |
| [ʿarā́t] | - | "bed"; | (/ʿarāt/) |
| [bādṓb] | - | "desert"; | (/bādob/) |
| [dḗrhō̂] | - | "chicken"; | (/derho/) |
| [gādmō̂tā́t] | - | "plains"; | (/gādmotāt/) |

(3) in unstressed CVC-type syllables:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| [kädbḗt] | - | "floor"; | (/kadbet/) |
| [mäskṓt] | - | "window"; | (/maskot/) |
| [bārbaṛḗ] | - | "pepper"; | "/barbare/) |

---

[1] Cf.: ,§ 1.3; see also § 1.7.4, (c).

(4) in a CV-type syllable in word-final position:

[nábra] - "He lived"; (/nabra/)

[nabrā́] - "meal"; (/nabra/)

## § 1.5 The accentual system - the stress unit.

The accentual system of Tigre cannot be described in terms of word boundaries. This is, firstly, because stress is non-distinctive and shifts easily from one syllable to the other. Secondly, a certain speech rhythm is maintained by means of which the number of prominent stresses in a given utterance determines the length of time it takes to produce the utterance. This means that the time elapsing between two primary stresses is roughly the same, regardless of the number of syllables in between. Such a phenomenon may have an overwhelming effect on all vowels.

In order to represent the spoken chain, a basic unit of measurement will be established. This unit will be called a 'stress unit'. Its boundaries are two sharp transitions (non-phonemic) between which there occurs at least one prominent stress. Such an arbitrary unit, established without regard to morphological or semantic considerations, 'cuts' words and affixes in such a way that some bound morphemes fall on the 'wrong' side of the juncture. In spite of this, the importance of recognizing such a unit is the fact that vowel variation by assimilation occurs inside it. The analysis of the utterance into stress units is accomplished as in the following instance:

The utterances

[ʼā́thäyäbäyóm] - "He caused (it) to be given to them"

and [lág'a~ləgbáʼ] - "whatever; something"; (<u>lagaʼa ləgbaʼ</u>)

each consist of a stress unit, with, in this instance, the same stress pattern.

Other examples: the utterances

‘adad kəl’e mə’ət waḥəmsa - "a number of two hundred and fifty"

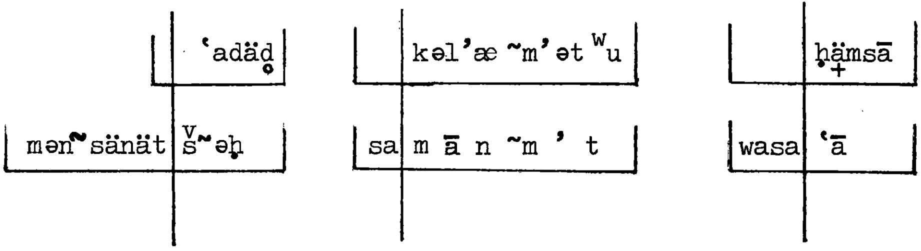
and mən sanat šəḥ samān mə’ət wasa‘a - "since the year of 1890"

are to be rendered as:

[‘ádäd̥ kə́l’e~m’ətʷu ḥä̟́msā]

[mən~ṣänät~šəḥ samā̂n~m’t wasa‘ā́].

A comparison of the last two examples reveals the stress-timed rhythm as follows:



Notes:

1. the vertical long line marks each successive primary stress
2. the horizontal lines delimited by two vertical strokes mark the stress units
3. the tilde stands for an open ('muddy') transition, while the empty spaces between the stress units mark close (sharp) transition .

## § 1.6 Intonation and pitch

Usually stress and pitch coalesce. In interrogative (or emphatic) utterances the tonal pattern can have its own distinctive contour.

Exx.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | [ 'əlli betká~tu↑ ] | - | "Is this your house?" |
| | [ 'ət 'asmará~tə↑ná↓bbər↑ ] | - | "Do you live in 'Asmara?" |
| cf. | [ mɨ̀↑~wadéka↓ ] | - | "What did you do (having got up)?" |
| and | [ mɨ̀↑~'əwádde↓ ] | - | "What shall I do?" (exclamative). |

## § 1.7 Vowel variation.

All vowels except / ā / are liable to variation.

### § 1.7.1 /i/.

(a)i Between two prominent stresses and without being itself stressed, this vowel may have a centralized variant.

Exx.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| [ 'əbbə́llɨ~säbäb 'əllí ] | - | "because of this" |
| [ sánnɨ~l$^{\text{ə}}$bbás ] | - | "beautiful clothes" |

ii Furthermore, a full centralization of /i/ can be occasionally detected.

Exx.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| [ 'entá sánnə~wadéka ] | - | "You have done well" |
| [ mendə́llə~hé ] | - | "after that, however";<br>(məndəlli haye) |

iii With the greatest degree of weakening, the acoustic impression is that of zero articulation, as in:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| [ sànnhalléko ] | - | "I am well"; (sanni halleko)[1] |

(b) In interrogative patterns, where the tonal contour prevails and stress and pitch do not coalesce (see § 1.6),

---

[1] In fact the vowel is not entirely eliminated, as the release phase of the geminated /n/ implies a vocalic timber during the shift of the organs of speech to /h/ position.

the centralized variant of /i/ may be stressed.

Ex.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | [mɨ̀↑~ga'akā́] | - "What happened to you?" |
| | (Cf.: [mí↑~ta 'əllā́] | - "What is this?") |

Here, the particle mi, being at the centre of intonation in the stress unit, takes a prominent stress. The primary stress, however, falls on the last syllable of the stress unit.

## § 1.7.2 /e/.

The most frequent variant of /e/ is a low-front sound, which is closer to [a] than to [e]. It will be represented, therefore, by the symbol [æ]. The sounds [e] and [æ] exist in a stressed-unstressed relationship to each other, analogous to that of [i] and [ɨ].

Exx.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | [ḥáttæ~kəbbáyät nay~bū́n] | - "a cup of coffee". |
| | [waḥatḥáttæ~'əwā́n~hē] | - "and sometimes, however". |
| cf. | [ḥatté~tu] | - "It is the same". |
| | [gálæ~gā́r] | - "something". |
| | ['amērikā́ 'ətkə́l'æ~tətkä́ffäl] | - "America is divided into two [parts]". |
| | [mən 'ázæ~'ázæ~fäggər] | - "Now, even now, he will come out". (PL1, 34:4) |
| cf. | [wä'ä́sək 'azémā] | - "and even until now". |

Occasionally one can hear a stressed [æ], which is a case of dilated regressive assimilation[1] - in these examples owing to the influence of /a/[1]:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| [la’azǽ~tnaddaqa ’ofī́s] | - | "the office which is built now". |
| [hətú ’ənzǽ~ʿalā́] | - | "He was here." |
| [hətú gǽgā~thā́gā] | - | "He made a mistake [in speech]". |

### § 1.7.3 /u/ and /o/.

These two high-back and mid-back vowels have unstressed variants which are more lax and centralized, and lower, than is the case with cardinal [u] and [o]. Stressed variants of /u/ may occur in the case of assimilation by laryngals.

Exx.: /o/ :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| [wɜró ’ənā́s] | - | "a [certain] man". |
| [’ə́ndɔ~ḥadágna] | - | "we, leaving [having left]". |

/u/:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| [bétkUm] | - | "your (masc. pl.) house". |
| [’afsÚḥ~’əlye] | - | "Allow (masc. pl.) me". |
| [bəzÚḥ] | - | "much; many". |
| [sabÚʿ] | - | "seven". |

### § 1.7.4 /a/.

Allophones of this phoneme are actualized in the area[2] which extends between the points of actualization of [a] and [ɐ][3].

---

[1] Cf. § 1.7.4 (b) & (c). Assimilation of [e] byconsonants is infrequent but possible, e.g.: [kəl’áe~šäḥ] - "two thousand"; (kəl’e šəḥ). cf. § 1.7.4 (e).

[2] Of the IPA trapezium.

[3] The symbol [ɐ] (an upside down a ) stands for a central vowel which is lower than [ə] (see IPA, p.7, § 18). For typographical reasons [ɐ] is denoted in this work by the symbol [ä].

In fact /a/ has a considerable number of variants whose gross accoustic features overlap the allophones of several phonemes. In terms of the spoken chain no allophone dominates. Two variants can, however, be chosen as a standard of measurement by reference to which other variants can be described and without which the process of variation would be incomprehensible. These allophones are [a] and [ä][1] - suggesting only the acoustic range of the phoneme and not referring to the characteristic distribution of its variants.

Assimilation is the main factor which determines the quality of the allophone.[2] The processes of assimiation by which the actualization of an /a/ allophone is determined are as follows:

(a) When followed by a front vowel other than /ā/.

When immediately followed by /i/ or /e/, /a/ is represented by a more advanced variant than otherwise. Such variants can be almost as advanced as [a].

Exx.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| [rā́təʿ~gä̟bbiʾ] | - "It will be all right"; | (/rātəʿ gabbəʾ/) |
| [gä̟bil] | - "tribe; people"; | (/gabil/) |
| [gä̟lehom] | - "some of them"; | (/galehom/) |
| [rä̟ʾä̟ssé] | - "my head"; | (/raʾas/ - "head") |
| [ʾana dUlúy ha̟lléko] | - "I am ready"; | (/halleko/) |

---

[1] See previous page, footnote 3

[2] As well as in its narrow sense assimilation is taken here also in the broad meaning of a process by which a simplification of the articulatory motion brings about economy of movement.

(b) When followed by / ā /.

When immediately followed by / ā / /a/ has the quality of [a].

Exx.:

[masānī́tu] - "his friends"; (/masānit/)

[ʼamānú˜tu] - "He is right"; (/ʼamānu tu/)

(c) When followed by a low-front vowel in CV stress-unit final position.

No contrast between /a/ and / ā / is likely to materialize in a CV-type syllable in stress-unit final position. In such a position /a/ may be represented by [a] or [ā], and regressive assimilation occurs. This regressive assimilation is applied to all /a/ allophones which precede [a] or [ ā ] within the stress unit, on condition that no other vowel - relevant to the process of assimilation - occurs in between.

Exx.:

[ʼəb˜tartarā́] - "sometimes; sporadically"; (/tartara/)

[qadámlā zəlām ṣaḥā́y˜ʻalā][1] - "There was sun before the rain"; (/qadam ləzəlām ṣaḥāy ʻala/)

[sábbara] - "(He, it) was broken"

[lasalsálatla brōsī́][1] - "the anchor's chain"

---

[1] For the tendency of the particle la to be assimilated with the preceding sequence, cf. § 1.2.5 and § 2.11.2 a)

### (d) When followed by a back vowel

When followed by either of the two back vowels, retracted variants of /a/ are liable to occur. The variant with a following /o/ is more retracted than that with a following /u/.

Exx.:

| | |
|---|---|
| [mpmbpró] | - "[way of] life" |
| [mpskót] | - "window" |
| [sa̲lsa̲la̲tú] | - "its chain" |
| [ba̲nnú] | - "by himself" |

### (e) Influence of consonants on /a/ - ejectives and pharyngals.

When immediately preceded by, or when followed anywhere within the stress unit by an ejective or a pharyngal, /a/ is represented by [a].[1]

Exx.: Ejectives

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | [gaṣ] | - "face" |
| Cf. | [sär] | - "half" |
| | [ṭarmúz] | - "bottle" |
| | [ṣalót] | - "prayer" |
| | [qalíl] | - "light: easy" |
| | [mándaq] | - "wall" |

Pharyngals

| | |
|---|---|
| [ḥamašganây] | - "dark-grey" |
| [waḥár] | - "and after" |

---

[1] Providing that the vowel is not crushed by the stress rhythm, as for instance: [’ə́tta˜māy˜lamḥâz] - "in the water of the river"; (’ət lamāy lamaḥāz).

| | |
|---|---|
| [nə́baḥ] | "a bark" |
| [sáʿat] | "hour; watch" |
| [ʿásər] | "ten" |
| [saʿarsaʿaró] | "green" |

(f) Laryngals.

/ ’ / and /h/ do not affect the quality of /a/ in the same way that the pharyngals do. When immediately preceded or followed by / ’ / or /h/, /a/ may have variants which are more advanced or more retracted than [ä], owing to partial assimilation with other vowels and consonants, as described previously. In the absence of such an influence, there is a tendency, however inconsistent, to pronounce adjacent /a/ allophone slightly higher and/or more retracted than the [ä] position. In a $V_1CV_2$ sequence where C is laryngal, $V_1$ tends to become similar to $V_2$.

Exx:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | [lə’ənās] | "the man"; | (/la’ənās/) |
| | [bähälät] | "that is"; | (/bahalat/) |
| | [dähäb] | "gold"; | (dahab/) |
| | [bəzÚḥ gähäw] | "They were very sorry"; | (/gahaw/) |
| | [dähäy] | "noise"; | (/dahay/) |
| | [’äf] | "mouth"; | (/’af/) |
| | [lä’äkät] | "she sent"; | (/la’akat/) |
| | [da̲’á̲m̲] | "but"; | (/da’am/) |
| | [wa̲’a̲t̲] | "cow"; | (/wa’at/) |
| cf. | [’a̟rwé] | "snake"; | (/’arwe/) |

In one case the behaviour of the laryngals is similar to that of the pharyngals. In a word, or a stress-unit final syllable, closed by either of these two categories of consonant, /a/ is represented by [a] or - when stressed - by [ā][1], as in:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | [lág'a˜ləgbā́ʼ] | - | "something; anything"; | (/lag'a legba'/) |
| | [ʼəgəl ʼinəṣmā́ʼ] | - | "that we shall not be thirsty"; | (/ʼinəṣma'/) |
| | [farrā́h] | - | "fear"; | (/farrah/) |
| cf. | [leblā́ʿ] | - | "that he will eat"; | (/ləblaʿ/) |
| and | [ləftā́ḥ] | - | "that he will open"; | (/ləftaḥ/). |

(g) When an /a/ allophone appears in sequences whose phonetic contexts make the phoneme immune to the assimilation procress - namely processes other than one of those described in (a) - (f) - its actualization fluctuates between [a] and [ä] and is usually closer to [ä]. This is so since an utterance which includes the vowel /a/ and excludes the set of phonetic phenomena described in (a) - (f) can only consist of a CVC-type syllable (where V is /a/) or an utterance having a CVC-type syllable in final position. Such a CVC syllabic structure in final position is favourable to the actualization of phonetically-short vowels (cf. § 1.4) and a phonetically-short /a/ allophone is here liable to become centralized. Thus, the utterance /faras/ - "horse", for example, can be rendered as [färäs] or [faras] and the first form is favoured. The utterance /šaf/ - "battle" can be rendered as [šäf] or [šaf] with a preference for [šäf], etc.

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[1] Duration is optional even when stressed.

### § 1.7.5 [ə] variations.

By nature of its articulatory status, which implies an economy of movement, this mid-central vowel is particularly exposed to the effects of assimilation. The positions and environments in which [ə] variations occur are on a par with those of the other vowels, with special resemblance to those of /a/. However, two important observations may be made when the determining factors of /a/ variations are compared with those of [ə]:

1. - almost all variants of [ə] are central, even when the influence is that of pharyngals or ejectives.
2. - the occurrence of [ə] variants is frequent but inconsistent.

Exx.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | [mən˷gabbíʼ][1] | - "perhaps"; | (mən gabbəʼ) |
| | [wUlā́d] | - "sons"; | (wəlād) |
| | [wUrā́q] | - "papers"; | (werāq) |
| | [qUrŪ́b] | - "relative"; | (qərub) |
| | [wUddā́y] | - "a deed"; | (weddāy) |
| | [qäblä́t] | - "north"; | (qəblat) |
| cf. | [gəblä́t] | - "south"; | (gəblat) |
| | [šä́qäl] | - "work"; | (šəqəl) |
| | [šaqä̟́lnā] | - "our work"; | (šəqəlna) |
| | [ṣälmä́t] | - "darkness"; | (ṣəlmat) |
| | [ʼarbaʻā́] | - "forty"; | (ʼarbəʻa) |
| | [ḥä̟msā] | - "fifty"; | (ḥəmsa) |

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[1] Only in stress-unit final position - the syllable being closed by a laryngal.

### § 1.7.6 The role of [ə] in the syllabic structure.

The full treatment of [ə] calls for a description of its role in the syllabic structure.[1] In any sequence of common occurrence composed of CV and CVC syllables, a cluster of two consonants only is favourable, and this only in medial position. Thus, the word kətāb - "book", has a plural form ʼakətbat, where by means of the introduction of [ə] the non-attested sequence CVC C CVC is avoided, and a legitimate CV CVC CVC sequence occurs. Similarly, in cases where a morphological $C_1C_2C_2$ is about to materialize in medial position, an [ə] is inserted to avoid such a sequence.

Exx.:

ʼagəṣṣat - "faces"

ʼagədda - "but; especially"

məwəqqāl - "high places"

Bearing in mind that the term 'medial position' is not limited to the 'word', a sequence like [ħabánnɨ~laktā́b][2] is no exception. A similar process governs the re-distribution of syllables in the following examples:

[ʼə́llɨ~ktā́b ʼəllí] - "this book"

[ḥəfún mā~brúd] - "hot or cold"

[ʼəgəllá~gzā́z ʼəbmāy malʼayā]

- "He filled the glass with water" (ʼəgəl lagəzāz ʼəb māy malʼaya).

In initial and final position - though infrequently encountered - clusters are not impossible. The typical syllabic

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[1] Cf. § 1.4.

[2] "Give(masc.sing.) me the book"

structure yields forms like:

<u>Initials</u>:

[zəlā́m] - "rain"; [gərrū́m] - "beautiful"

<u>Finals</u>:

[’ǟ́nəs] - "women"; [rā́yəm] - "long"

[ḥə́ləm] - "dream"; [ḥábəl] - "rope"

Yet, owing to the stress-timed rhythm and to the articulatory nature of potentially-continuant consonants (i.e., consonants other than stops), it is possible to encounter a cluster of two consonants, and even more than two, in all positions, in many sequences that disallow them otherwise.

Exx.:

[ grrúm~tu] - "It is beautiful"

[ bzÚḥ~tu] - "It is abundant, more than enough"

[ kars][1] - "inside" (noun)

[ ḥars][1] - "ploughing; agriculture"

[’ət~gálab~’ənábbrr]

- "I live in Galab"; (’<u>ənabbər</u>)

A cluster of three consonants is found in the following utterance:

[‘afšná~karénā] - "We put (past tense) down our luggage"

cf. [ la‘af$^{ə}$š] - "the luggage; the parcel"

An interesting example is the following, where /r/ functions as a syllabic:

[kŕn~ḥyā́et] - "a voice of an animal"; (<u>kərən ḥəyāyət</u>)

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[1] The articulation of this [r] consists of one flap.

## § 1.7.7 The phonological identity of [ə].

The examples above have shown the range of variation in the occurrence of [ə] sounds in Tigre and their characteristic distribution. The question arises as to whether these [ə] sounds can be regarded as allophones of a phoneme /ə/ in the phonological system of the language. To answer the question, sets of minimal pairs like:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| [kəm] | - | "like" (prep.) |
| [käm] | - | "how much" (adv.) |
| [kən] | - | "bribe" |
| [ken] | - | "there" |
| [dərho] | - | "donation" |
| [derho] | - | "chicken", etc., must be examined. |

Taking into account the syllabic role of [ə] (see § 1.7.6), the utterances [kəm] [kən] and [dərho] can be described as /km/, /kn/ and /drho/ and thus do not constitute a series of minimal pairs with /kam/, /ken/ and /derho/. Analysing its syllabic role one realizes that [ə], in the examples above and in the previous paragraph, represents an 'allophone of a zero phoneme'. This special role of [ə] as a 'consonantal glue', is sometimes reflected in pronunciation, when it is almost impossible to be absolutely certain of the actualization of the sound, as with [ḥar(ə)s]- "agriculture", [kär(ə)s]- "inside" (noun) and the like. In fact, many instances among the examples with non-medial clusters can be seen in this light.

## Chapter Two

# THE MORPHOLOGY OF THE TIGRE NOUN

The grammatical data treated in this chapter consist of (i)-morphological and syntactic features relevant to the classification and analysis of the Tigre noun (§§ 2.1-2.1.4); (ii) - noun formation consisting of a treatment of the morphologically basic forms (§§ 2.2-2.2.3); (iii) - the formation of plurals, suffixed (§§ 2.4.-2.4.6) and 'broken' (§§ 2.5.-2.5.5); (iv) - the semantic categories which are, morphologically, suffixed derivatives of basic forms (§§ 2.6.-2.6.5); (v) - verbal formations: participles, infinitives and nouns denoting the instrument, place or product (§§ 2.7.-2.7.4); (vi) - compound nouns (with the syntactic features of concord between the elements of the compound dealt with (§ 2.8); (vii) - adjectives - where the main morphological classes used in this capacity are mentioned (§ 2.9); (viii) - pronominal suffixes in conjunction with nouns and particles (§ 2.10);[1] (ix)-the definite article (§ 2.11).

Throughout the chapter a distinction is made between countable nouns and uncountable nouns; the former can be qualified by numerals whereas the latter's occurrence with numerals is not typical of the Tigre syntax.[2] Such a distinction is essential to the classification of the subcategories of number.

## § 2.1 Grammatical categories

The Tigre noun occurs a) belonging to the number category which comprises, as subcategories, the singular and plural and an

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[1] The pronominal suffixes in conjunction with verbs are treated in § 5.12 et seq.

[2] Cf. § 2.1.4.

intermediate category - the collective, and b) having either masculine or feminine gender. The intermediate position of the collective noun involves morphological and syntactic features of overlapping between itself and the other subcategories which are treated in the appropriate sections below.[1]

## § 2.1.1 Gender

a) The gender of the singular noun is statable lexically, the plural-form gender being subject to the state of animateness of the noun.[2]

Examples of nouns of masculine gender:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| kətāb | - | "book" | gəndāy | - | "log of wood" |
| maʿaṣad | - | "scythe" | madoša | - | "hammer" |
| ḥangal | - | "brain,<br>skull" | goṣ | - | "side-chamber" |
| | | | qənfəz | - | "porcupine" |
| ʾaf | - | "mouth" | fəluy | - | "bull-calf" |
| təkla | - | "wolf | ʾənās | - | "man" |
| wad | - | "son" | | | |

Examples of nouns of feminine gender:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| wānč̣a | - | "bracelet" | gabay | - | "road" |
| bəqot | - | "accident" | ʿad | - | "villâge, country" |
| ʾəwān | - | "time" | ʾəngəra | - | "(loaf of) bread" |
| šokan | - | "gazelle" | qorəʿ | - | "frog" |
| ʿanṣāy | - | "mouse" | fəlit | - | "female-calf" |
| walat | - | "daughter" | ʾəssit | - | "woman" |

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[1] Cf. §§ 2.2.1, 2.2.3.

[2] Cf. § 2.1.3.

As may be seen from the above examples gender correlates with sex only in those nouns where sex is expressed semantically - animateness itself, though necessary, is not sufficient in establishing such a correlation.

b) Inanimate nouns may sometimes occur having concord of either gender. In such a case (i) the noun may be described as having both genders, or (ii) the gender of the noun may be stated in accordance with the gender of its diminutive form - when such a form exists - which is itself always that of the noun from which the diminutive is derived.[1] The noun bet - "house", for example, was recorded having both masculine and feminine concord.

Cf. ’əlli bet ’əlli wakəmsalhu lahay -

"This (masc.sing.) house and also that (masc.sing.) [one]",

and lahan ’abyāt lahan -

"those (fem.pl.) houses"

The diminutive form of bet is betatit - i.e. a derivation with a suffix of feminine gender - and is thus definable morphologically as a feminine form.

c) An animate noun may have both masculine and feminine concord and also a diminutive form with alternate genders expressed morphologically. In such a case gender and sex usually correlate although masculine concord may also refer to species, e.g., habay - "(male/female) monkey".

Diminutive: "h̄abbeyāy (masc.)" "h̄abbeyat (fem.)"

d) The lexically statable gender of Tigre nouns is the key to the analysis of the suffixed derivatives: the gender of the

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[1] Cf. § 2.6.

diminutive form corresponds to that of the basic singular form - all other types of suffixed derivatives having a different gender.[1]

### § 2.1.2 Features of concord

A statement regarding features of concord in the Tigre noun must account for a) the state of animateness of the noun[2] and b) the occurrence or non occurrence of numerals as its qualifiers.[3]

### § 2.1.3 Animateness in relation to concord

a) One may generally observe a distinction between (i) animate nouns whose plural forms usually have plural concord and the same gender as the singular form, and (ii) inanimate nouns whose plural forms usually have masculine singular concord.

Examples:[4]

lohan ʼanəs - "those (fem.pl.) women" (ʼəssit - "woman" (fem.sing.)

ʼəllan dawarrəh ʼəllan gazāyəf tan -
"These (fem. pl.) chickens are fat." (derho - "chicken", (masc./fem.sing.)

ʼət galab ʼaḥa ʿaṭāl ʼabāgəʿ waʼagmul ʼəbbəzḥe lətrakkabo -
"There are (masc.pl.) in Galab cows, goats, sheep and camels in abundance."

(waʼat - "cow", fem.sing; ṭalit - "she-goat", fem.sing.; bəgguʿ - "sheep", masc.sing.; gamal - "male camel", masc.sing.)

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[1] Cf. § 2.6.1.

[2] Cf. § 2.1.3.

[3] Cf. § 2.1.4.

[4] With relevant features of concord inserted in brackets following the appropriate words in the English translation, and the lexically statable gender of the noun given at the end of the translation.

takallit rayim ’afač bom -

"Wolves have (masc.pl.) long (masc.sing.) mouths (i.e. 'jaws')."

(təkla - "wolf", masc.sing; ’af - "mouth", masc.sing.)

’əlli ’akətbat ’əlli -

"these (masc. sing.) books." (kətāb - "book", masc.sing.)

həta bəzuḥ gərrum wanač̣č̣it ba -

"She has most beautiful (masc.sing.) bracelets."

(wānč̣a - "bracelet", fem.sing.)

b) Though the features of concord observed above in a) are the most obvious to inspection, other relations of concord between the noun and the form or choice of words which refer to it, are possible, as follows: (i) animate nouns may have singular concord in the plural, the concord feature retaining the gender of the noun; (ii) the lexically statable gender of inanimate nouns may still be kept as a feature of concord.

Examples of (i):

’əlla ’aḥa - "these (fem.sing.) cows". (wa’at - "cow", fem.sing.)
’əlla ’ənsa - "these (fem.sing.) she-camels". (na’at - "she-camel", fem.sing.)

Examples of (ii)

lalataʻǧǧəb ’akānāt - "fascinating (fem.sing.) places."
(’akān - "place", fem.sing.)
’əllan ’agbuy - "these (fem.pl.) roads."
(gabay - "road", fem.sing.)

## § 2.1.4 Nouns qualified by numerals

a) A noun qualified by a numeral occurs in the singular form, e.g.:

kəl’e wa’at - "two cows"; (pl.: ’aha - "cows")
salas hāl - "three maternal uncles";(pl.: hālotāt - "maternal uncles")

| | |
|---|---|
| kəlʾe šəḥ rəyāl | - "two thousand Ethiopian dollars" |
| | (pl.: ʾašḥāt - "thousands"; |
| | ʾarəlyat - "Ethiopian dollars") |

b) The plural form may also, though infrequently, occur with numerals, as in:

| | |
|---|---|
| sabuʿ ḥemātāt | - "seven first wives" (sing.: ḥema - "first wife") |
| | (PL1, 102:20) |
| ʾasər ʾaç̌ābəʿ | - "ten fingers" (sing.: ç̌abʿit - "finger") |

c) The collective noun never occurs with numerals.

The singular form which occurs regularly with numerals will be referred to in this work as the 'countable noun' or the 'countable singular', as distinct from both the uncountable collective noun and the plural form - the occurrence of the former with numerals being non existent, and that of the latter being atypical of Tigre syntax.

## § 2.2 Noun formation: the basic forms

The morphological analysis of the Tigre noun calls for a recognition of the basic forms which underlie the various types of formation. Such basic forms may be the collective nouns, or the countable singular nouns. The basic form is morphologically the unmarked member of a given form class.

The countable singular nouns vary greatly in their phonological shape and may be identifiable morphologically only as verbal forms[1] or where a collective form coexists.[2]

The collective nouns pose an even greater problem of morphological

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[1] Cf. § 2.7 et seq.

[2] As singulative, cf. § 2.2.2.

classification owing to their special status in respect of syntactic features and meaning. A negative morphological statement would be that the collective form does not have suffixes or the additional morphological elements typical of broken plural forms.[1]

## § 2.2.1 The collective noun

The collective nouns never occur with numerals and are not subject to the semantic distinction 'one/more than one'. They refer to the grouping of individual objects or persons, species of animals, plants, material etc.

### a) Morphological features

The presence of a collective noun does not imply the absence of either the countable singular or the plural: where a collective noun exists, a countable singular, for which a plural form is possible, is derived from the collective by means of a suffix (i.e. the singulative, cf. § 2.2.2). A plural form may exist beside the collective form, and in the absence of a countable singular derived from the same root.

Examples:

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| collective : | gabil | - | "people, tribes, nation" | qaṭaf | - | "leaves" |
| countable sing.: | gabilat | - | "(one) tribe" | qaṭfat | - | "leaf" |
| plural : | gabāyəl | - | "tribes, people" | ʼaqaṭṭəf | - | "leaves" |

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[1] Cf. § 2.2.3 a)(i)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| collective : | wagre | - "olive" | səga | - "meat" |
| countable sing. : | wagretat | - "olive tree/fruit" | səgat | - "a piece of meat" |
| plural : | wagāri | - "olive trees" | ’asgāy | - "meats" |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| collective : | ḥaṣin | - "iron" |
| countable sing. : | ḥaṣināy | - "a piece of iorn"; ḥaṣinat - "iron implement" |
| plural : | ḥaṣāyən | - "pieces of iron, iron implements" |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| collective : | gim | - "low clouds" | ’addām | - "people, men" |
| countable sing. : | gimat | - "low cloud" | (’ənās | - "man") |
| plural : | —— | | ’addāmātāt | - "crowds" |

b) Syntactic features

It is relevant here to draw a distinction between animate and inanimate nouns, though on a level of analysis different from that of the other subcategories of number. The concord typical of the collective is masculine singular, with one exception: animate nouns may have either singular or plural concord (where concord, in the case of words referring to the noun, can be singular in one word and plural in another word of the same utterance). This plural concord is limited to nouns of masculine gender denoting human beings.

Examples:

’ət galab lanabro gabil (...) - "the people (collective) who live (masc.pl.) in Galab (...)"

’əlli gabil ’əlli bəzuḥ ’əkkuy ’amal bom - "These (masc. sing.) people (collective) have (masc.pl.) a very bad custom."

rabbi ʼəgəl ʼaddām bellom - "God said to the human race."
(lit.: 'God to the human-race (collective) said to them (masc.pl.)'.).
(PL1, 82:19)

mən laʼaddām laʼaze lahalla (...) - "from the human race (collective) which exists (masc.sing.) now (...)."
(PL1, 83:16)

ʼəlli gərrum tofāḥ - "these (masc.sing.) beautiful (masc. sing.) apples/apple-trees."

lasəga balʼayu - "He ate [of] the meat" (lit. 'The meat he ate it (masc.sing.)').

Pretty rare, though not impossible, is feminine singular concord with nouns denoting human beings, e.g.

dallālib təqābalatto -"(A caravan of) merchants met him."
(PL1, 16:1)

Since the concord of collective nouns is - excluding the above exceptions regarding animateness - almost always masculine singular, the gender of most collective forms is lexically unstatable. Only rarely does a collective form have feminine singular concord, in which case its gender will be lexically statable as feminine, e.g.:

gim - "low clouds" (fem.sing.)

## § 2.2.2 The singulative

### a) Form and meaning

The singulative is one of the morphologically identifiable classes of the countable singular noun.[1] The singulative form is

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[1] The others being nouns of verbal formations, cf. § 2.7 et seq.

derived on the basis of the collective noun to which either a) the suffix -at - the gender of which is feminine - or, less frequently, b) the suffix -āy - the gender of which is masculine - is added. Countable singular nouns having either one of these endings but no corresponding collective forms are excluded from the above statement, e.g.:

| | |
|---|---|
| kəbbāyat | - "cup, glass" |
| bəʻrāy | - "bull" |

On the other hand, a collective form may have - though rarely - the ending -at, to which the singulative suffix is added, e.g.:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| collective: | ṣaḥat | - "kind of tree"; | qəṭqəṭat | - "kind of thornbush" |
| singulat.: | ṣaḥatāy | - "a tree (of that species)"; | qəṭqəṭetat | - "a thornbush (of that species)" |

The meaning of the singulative can be "one(of)", "a piece(of)" etc., depending on the lexical content of the collective and the contextual sense of the utterance, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ʼənǧəḥ | - "quartz" | ʼənǧəḥat | - "a piece of quartz" |
| ṣāy | - "kind of tree" | ṣāyat | - "a tree (of that kind)" |
| warəq | - "silver" | warqat | - "a silver implement, a piece of silver" |

### b) Formation

#### (i) The suffix -at

In deriving the singulative form from the collective form, the following constructional features may be noted:

1) The suffix -at is usually added to the collective form without causing any changes in its phonological shape - whereas in the case of a CVCVC syllabic structure of the collective a final V is not a or ə.[1]

Examples (collective on the left, singulative on the right):

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| rəšāš | - "lead | rəšāšat | - "a bullet, piece of lead" |
| šom | - "beads" | šomat | - "a string of beads, bead" |
| dərbob | - "ant-hills" | dərbobat | - "an ant-hill" |
| romān | - "pomegranates" | romānat | - "a pomegranate tree/fruit" |
| bun | - "coffee" | bunat | - "a coffee bush/grain" |
| lomin | - "lemons" | lominat | - "a lemon tree/fruit" |
| fənč̣ič̣ | - "kind of herb" | fənč̣ič̣at | - "a bush, a leaf (of that species)" |
| ḥabuš | - "species of locust" | ḥabušat | - "a locust" |
| nib | - "teeth" | nibat | - "a tooth" |
| sarur | - "lamentation for the dead sung by women" | sarurat | - "a song of lamentation for the dead" |
| cf.[1] šəbəḥ | - "fat" | šəbḥat | - "a piece of fat" |
| marəg | - "clay" | margat | - "a clay vessel" |
| bəlaq | - "rocks" | balqat | - "a rock" |

---

[1] A final vowel a may also submit to change. See (3) below.

2) A juncture feature -t- is introduced, preceding the suffix -at, in the case of collectives ending in a vowel other than a; with collectives ending in a, the suffix -at replaces this a, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| wagre | - "olive trees/ fruits" | wagretat | - "an olive tree, a piece of olive wood" |
| ṭəmbəlʿe | - "butterflies" | ṭəmbəlʿətat | - "a butterfly" |
| č̣əwa | - "salt" | č̣ewat | - "a pinch of salt" |

3) Vowel changes are effected in the case of singulative forms of which the corresponding collective form structure is CVCVC,[1] where either vowel of the collective is ə, a or ā. In such instances, the second vowel of the basic form is omitted in the derived form, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| nədəʼ | - "sheaves" | nədʼat | - "a sheaf" |
| qaraṣ | - "kind of tree" | qarṣat | - "a tree (of that species)" |
| qaṭaf | - "leaves " | qaṭfat | - "leaf" |
| tamar | - "date" | tamrat | - "a date tree/fruit" |
| ǧəlāb | - "boats" | ǧalbat | - "a boat" |

4) In certain instances of the structure mentioned in 3 above a gemination of one of the consonants of the singulative form occurs, whereas the vowel change set out in (3) does not occur, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| qəmal | - "lice" | qəmmalat | - "a louse" |
| č̣əgar | - "hair" | č̣əggarat | - "a hair" |

---

[1] Cf. (1) above. The syllabic structure may also be CVC͡CVC, e.g.: šəkkər - "sugar"; šəkkarat - "a piece of sugar".

### (ii) The suffix -āy

Some few singulative forms have the suffix -āy as the marker of the singulative; these fall into two groups semantically identifiable as follows:

1) Nouns denoting insects, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| qadar | - "gnats" | qadrāy | - "a gnat" |
| tabʿən | - "worms" | tabʿənāy | - "a worm" |
| təkān | - "bugs" | təkenāy | - "a bug" |

2) Nouns denoting material, where the suffix -āy is a marker of the notion 'a piece of'; in such a case both -at and -āy may occur with the same item of lexis in the expression of the notions 'a whole' and 'a piece of', respectively,

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ḥaṣin | - "iron" | ḥaṣināy | - "a piece of iron" |
| | | ḥaṣinat | - "an iron implement" |
| ʾəbən | - "stones" | ʾabbanāy | - "a piece of stone" |
| | | ʾəbbanat | - "a stone" |
| ʿəč̣ay | - "trees, wood (substance)" | ʿəč̣yāy | - "a piece of wood" |
| | | ʿəč̣yat | - "a tree" |

### (iii) The suffixes -āy (masc.) and -āyt (fem.)

There are certain collective nouns denoting human beings whose corresponding singulative forms are derived by means of the suffixes -āy and -āyt for persons of the male and female sexes respectively. Such nouns refer to the tribal and racial origin, or the social and occupational status of the persons concerned.

Examples:

| Collective: | Singulative (masc.): | Singulative (fem.): |
|---|---|---|
| *ʼəslām* - "Muslims" | *ʼəslemāy* - "a Muslim" | *ʼeslemāyt* |
| *kəstān* - "Christians" | | |
| | *kəstenāy* - "a Christian" | *kəstenāyt* |
| *šānqəlla* - "negroes" | *šānqəllāy* - "a negro" | *šānqəllāyt* - "negress" |
| *mansaʻ* - "the Mansaʻ (tribe/ people)" | *mansaʻāy* - "a member of the Mansaʻ tribe" | *mansaʻayt* |

Derivational relations between the collective and the singulative forms similar to those of the above examples - no feminine singulative form being attested - are shown by the following nouns, the last of which has the suffix *-tāy*:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *dallālib* | - "merchants" | *dallālibāy* | - "a merchant" |
| *šəmāgalle* | - "noblemen" | *šəmāgallāy* | - "a nobleman" |
| *ʻagar* | - "(ivory)hunters" | *ʻaggartāy* | - "a(n ivory) hunter" |

## § 2.2.3 Formal and semantic relations of the two subcategories of uncountable nouns

### a) Overlapping in form and meaning of the collective and the plural

The relationships between semantic categories of the noun and its formal criteria are not in all cases sufficiently explicit to enable a line to be drawn between collective and plural forms. It transpires that a partial overlapping between these two subcategories of number exists, which, in many an instance, renders classification arbitrary. The features of form and meaning that need to be stressed in connexion with this problem of overlapping are as follows:

### (i) Morphological features

Collective forms rarely have suffixes and neither have they the additional morphological elements which typify broken-plural forms[1] - but such features are common with uncountable nouns of the syllabic structure CVCVC which, in many instances do not have any other uncountable form,[2] e.g.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *’əgər* | - "foot"; | pl. *’əgar* - "feet" |
| *kaymat* | - "tent"; | pl. *kəyam* - "tents" |

### (ii) Syntactic features

Collective forms which denote human beings can have either singular or plural concord, the latter being similar to the concord of the plural forms of animate nouns. Such collective forms are:

*gabil* - "people, tribes", *’addām* - "people", *kəstān* - Christians" etc. Inanimate nouns, both collectives and plurals, have, almost exclusively, masculine singular concord, e.g.:

*’əlli ’agərbat*-"these belongings(pl.)"(singular: *gərāb* - "thing")

*gərrum tamar* -"beautiful dates" (singulat.: *tamrat* - "date"
plural: *’atmār*)

### (iii) Semantic features

Many lexical entries in the Tigre dictionary contain both a collective and a plural form which can be interchangeable in a given

---

[1] Cf. § 2.5.1.

[2] Cf. § 2.5.3 f)

utterance without, apparently, altering its meaning, e.g.:

darābuš darbuš la'əlu rakba 'əgəl labde qānəṣ ʿala -
"The Dervishes - the Dervish people - rose in order
to destroy everything they might find."
(PL1, 163:3)

In the above utterance the word for "Dervishes" occurs twice, first in the plural form, followed immediately by the collective form of the same noun, occurring between hyphens. Other instances in which collective and plural forms overlap semantically are (collective form given on left):

nib, 'anyāb - "teeth"
nədə', 'anda'āt - "sheaves"

The semantic contents of the plural and the collective do not overlap where the contextual sense of the plural form suggests the notion of 'more than one' in relation to the notion of 'one' or 'ones' underlined by the countable singular, as in:

higa təgre lala'amro gabāyəl -
"the tribes who know the Tigre language".
(PL1, 278:2),

where a list of Tigre speaking tribes follows. The collective form, on the other hand, gabil (singulat.: gabilat - "a tribe") refers to the grouping of people, so that one may have:

gabil galab - "the people of Galab" (name of a village)
gabil mansaʿ - "the people of Mansaʿ" (i.e. the people of Mansaʿ in general, without a particular notation as regards the branch of tribe.)
ḥatte gabilat - "a (certain) tribe".

Hence the alternative of singular/plural concord with the collective forms of animate nouns,[1] which exists with those collectives whose lexical content covers also the notion of plurality, i.e. depends on whether the underlying notion is that of the group or the members of the group - in the former case the concord is singular, in the latter - plural.

### b) Arbitrariness in the classification of the collective and the plural

Taking into account the import of formal and semantic features presented in a)(i)-(iii) above, it happens that the classification of a given form as a collective or a plural is arbitrary, e.g., the classification of inanimate nouns of the pattern CəCaC, such as:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ʼətmat | - "spring" | ʼətam | - "springs" |
| karšat | - "stomach" | kəraš | - "stomachs" |
| dabbat | - "sand hill" | dəbab | - "sand hills" |

It would be equally justifiable to classify the forms which appear on the right as either collectives, or as plurals. They might be classified as collectives, since (1) they have corresponding singulatives derived from them, (2) they do not have suffixes and neither have they the additional morphological features which are typical of broken plurals, and finally (3) their concord is that of the collective form (i.e. masc.sing.) and they are uncountable.

They might be classified as plurals, since (1) there is no other form for the expression of the notion of plurality for these particular nouns, (2) the meaning of the forms under discussion is

---

[1] § 2.2.1 b).

that of plural, and finally (3) the concord of these forms is typical of the plural concord of inanimate nouns (i.e. masc. sing.) and they are uncountable.

A somewhat more complicated problem regarding the distinction collective/plural is presented by certain pairs of animate nouns which complement each other semantically on distributional grounds but are completely different in terms of their phonological shape. Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ’ənās | -"man" | sab[1] | - "men, people" |
| | | ’addām | - "people" |
| wa’at | - "cow" | ’aḥa | - "cows" |
| na’at | - "she-camel" | ’ənsa | - "she-camels" |

In the first example a distinction collective/plural may be formally maintained, since sab is used more in the expression of plurality - having then plural concord - whereas ’addām is regularly used in the expression of the notion of collectivity - having singular or plural concord. However, in the absence of any phonological features common to the members of each pair, only features of concord and lexical meaning can be considered in respect of the plural forms, where concord can be either singular or plural (a feature of concord typical of collectives denoting human beings), and the underlying notion implied can be that of either collective or plural - depending on the contextual sense.

To sum up, where a form can be taken as either a collective or a plural form, preference can be given to semantic criteria - notably to the contextual meaning of the noun. There is no point in retaining either label - collective or plural - for those forms whose formal criteria are insufficient to classify them as such.

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[1] sab is also the plural form of baʿal - "owner, master" in compound expressions, e.g.:

baʿal nəssāl - "client"; pl. sab nəssāl

baʿal gaṣ _ "master, dignitary"; pl. sab ’agəṣṣat, etc.

Such forms may be described as belonging to both categories.

## § 2.3. Plural forms

Plural forms fall into two morphological classes: suffixed plurals (§ 2.4 ) and broken plurals (§ 2.5 ) with the plural forms derived, in either case, from the basic forms described in § 2.2. As was shown in § 2.2.3 a)(i) certain basic forms are similar in pattern to one type of broken-plural forms (cf.§ 2.5.3 f) ). Plural forms serve in the expression of the notion 'more than one'. Syntactic features of both the suffixed and the broken plurals are those described in § 2.1.2 et seq.

## § 2.4 Suffixed plurals

This section deals with nouns whose plural is expressed by means of a suffix attached to the basic form (as defined in § 2.2). Semantically, such a suffix has the sole meaning of plural.[1]

The characteristic morphological features (i.e. vocalic exponents and syllabic structure) of the basic form are retained in the suffixed plurals in so far as morphophonemic phenomena and features of juncture can in appropriate cases be accounted for.

The formatives met with, suffixed to the singular form in the expression of the notion of plural, are the following:

-āt, -otāt, -ot, -ač, -at, -ām.

### § 2.4.1 The suffix -āt

a) This suffix is the commonest among the suffixed

---

[1] Thus excluding from the discussion suffixes which are similar to those of the suffixed plurals in phonological shape and participate in the formation of derivatives, such as -āt and -ām (paucative and pejorative plurals), cf. §§ 2.6.2, 2.6.4.

plurals. It is especially common with singular forms that consist of one syllable, CāC, or whose final syllable is CāC.

Examples:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| dār | - "house, property, | pl. dārāt; | ʿāǧ | - "male elephant", | pl. ʿāǧāt |
| gār | - "matter, thing", | pl. gārāt; | tāl | - "trap, snare", | pl. tālāt |
| kās | - "cup", | pl. kāsāt; | māl | - "fortune,money", | pl. mālāt |
| ʾəsāt | - "fire", | pl. ʾəsātat; | ʾakān | - "place", | pl. ʾakānat |
| ləmād | - "custom", | pl. ləmādāt; | maḥāz | - "river", | pl. maḥāzāt |
| baʿāl | - "festival", | pl. baʿālāt; | ḥarām | - "sin", | pl. ḥarāmāt |

b) The suffix -āt is also common with singular forms ending in a vowel, a juncture feature -t- occurring between the noun and the suffix in this case, e.g.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| hibo | - "funeral dance and wailing", | pl. hibotāt |
| masanqo | - "(Ethiopian) harp", | pl. masanqotāt |
| makḥəllo | - "neck", | pl. makḥəllotāt |
| səʾli | - "picture, photograph", | pl. səʾlitāt |
| ḥase | - "abyss", | pl. ḥasetāt |
| dəme | - "herd of elephants", | pl. dəmetāt |
| mantalle | - "hare", | pl. mantalletāt |
| ḥarawya | - "boar", | pl. ḥarawyātāt |
| zama | - "brother-in-law", | pl. zamātāt |
| goyla | - "dance", | pl. goylātāt |

c) Nouns having the syllabic structure CVCet or CVCot in the singular form have, in the plural, the structure CaCyāt and CaCwāt respectively. The treatment of such plural nouns as suffixed plurals is possible in so far as vowel alternation in the suffixed forms can be recognized as a morphophonemic change in relation to the singular form. These morphophonemic features may be summarized as follows: (i) when the vowel of first syllable of the singular form is ə it is represented by a in the plural. When the vowel of first syllable of the singular form is a it remains thus in the plural;[1] (ii) the vowels e or o of the second syllable of the singular form are represented in the plural by the palatal semi-vowel -y- in the case of the front vowel and by the labiovelar semivowel -w- in the case of the back vowel.

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| rəqot | - "scum of milk", | pl. | raqwāt |
| rəkot | - "pot-ladle", | pl. | rakwāt |
| gəlot | - "thicket", | pl. | galwāt |
| ʿəgot | - "small vessel", | pl. | ʿagwāt |
| ḥənot | - "child, fetus", | pl. | ḥanwāt |
| nəgot | - "trunk (of elephant)" | pl. | nagwāt |
| bəsot | - "forehead", | pl. | baswāt |
| ḥarot | - "mud", | pl. | ḥarwāt |
| ʿəyot | - "lamb", | pl. | ʿawyāt/ʿaywāt |
| səlet | - "placenta", | pl. | salyāt |
| sətet | - "rib, side", | pl. | sayṭāt |
| šawet | - "corn", | pl. | šawyāt |

d) In the case of certain nouns having the ending -at in the singular form, this ending is replaced in the plural by -āt.[2]

---

[1] Only these two vowels were met with in the first syllable of the singular forms of the examples collected.

[2] The more common plural suffix with singular forms which have the ending -at is, however, -otāt. Cf. § 2.4.2.

Examples:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| sam‘at | - "witness", | pl. sam‘āt |
| ḥərrārat | - "charcoal", | pl. ḥərrārāt |
| šākat | -"water-pool" | pl. šākāt |
| ḥoṣat | - "sand", | pl. ḥoṣāt |
| raḥat | - "palm(of hand)<br>sole (of foot)" | pl. raḥāt |
| ba‘at | - "cave" | pl. ba‘āt |
| nalat | - "female<br>antelope", | pl. nalāt |

### § 2.4.2 The suffix -otāt

a) This suffix is common with nouns whose singular form has the ending -at. The suffix -otāt replaces the ending -at of the singular (see, however, § 2.4.1 d) above), e.g.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ǧabhat | - "forehead", | pl. ǧabhotāt |
| sə‘mat | - "kiss", | pl. sə‘motāt |
| sadaqat | - "sacrifice" | pl. sadaqotāt |
| kaynat | - "deception", | pl. kaynotāt |
| sadāyat | - "help", | pl. sadāyotāt |
| gahayat | - "sadness", | pl. gahayotāt |
| ‘āmat | - "year", | pl. ‘āmotāt |
| ’āyat | - "sorcery", | pl. ’āyotāt |
| wākat | - "piece of meat", | pl. wāqotāt |
| salsalat | - "chain", | pl. salsalotāt |

b) The suffix -otāt is also met with in the case of certain morphological structures of the noun of which the following are worth mentioning:

(i) - as the plural suffix of nouns of the syllabic structure CāCəC which is rendered in the plural as CāCCotāt, e.g.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ʼānəf | - "nose", | pl. ʼānfotāt |
| kātəm | - "ring", | pl. kātmotāt |
| sāmən | - "week", | pl. sāmnotāt |
| gādəm | - "plain", | pl. gādmotāt |

One particular instance of the above structure is the morphologically active particle of the pattern qātəl whose plural may be qātlotāt[1],e.g.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| dāfər | - "a man in his prime", | pl. dāfrotāt |
| šāyəb | - "white haired (i.e. 'old')" , | pl. šāybotāt |
| ḥāyəs | - "noble", | pl. ḥāysotāt |

(ii) - as the plural suffix of some verbal nouns of the structure qətəl whose plural form is qətlotāt, e.g.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| sərəq | - "theft", | pl. sərqotāt |
| kəbər | - "honour", | pl. kəbrotāt |
| wərəs or rəs | - "inheritance", | pl. rəsotāt |

(iii) - as the plural suffix of certain biconsonantal nouns that are morphologically CVCC while being phonologically of the structure CVC,[2] e.g.:

---

[1] The regular plural suffix of the active participle is -(y)ām(masc.); -(y)āt(fem.). See § 2.7.1. a)(i), examples. See also § 2.9.2. a)(ii).

[2] But: ʼəm - "mother", pl. ʼəmmāt.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *kəs* | - "accusation", | pl. *kəssotāt* |
| *ʿad* | - "village, tribe", | pl. *ʿaddotāt* |

(iv) - as the plural suffix of certain nouns whose singular forms terminate with a vocalic exponent liable to metathesis (i.e. involving semivowels as juncture features), e.g.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *zamāte* | - "robbing excursion", | pl. *zamāytotāt* |
| *malāṣe* | - "razor", | pl. *malayṣotāt* |
| *karāyi* | - "army, band" | pl. *karāyotāt* or *karāwyotāt* |

(v) - as the plural suffix of certain nouns expressing kinship where phonological shapes are different in each case:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *ḥāl* | - "maternal uncle", | pl. *ḥālotāt* |
| *ḥal*[1] | - "maternal aunt", | pl. *ḥaltotāt* |
| *naʿal* | - "sister-in-law", | pl. *naʿaltotāt* |
| *talākəm* | - "brother-in-law", | pl. *talākmotāt* |
| *ʾabʿəb* | - "grandfather", | pl. *ʾabʿəbotāt* - "ancestors" |
| *ʿammat* | - "father's sister", | pl. *ʿammotāt* |

Some other instances of the occurrence of the suffix *-otāt* are:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *naʿar* | - "revolt", | pl. *naʿarotāt* |
| *mallahay* | - "companion", | pl. *mallahayotāt* |
| *gaššāy* | - "guest", | pl. *gaššotāt* |
| *ṣar* | - "companion, friend", | pl. *ṣarotāt* |

---

[1] But: *ʿən* - eye", pl. *ʿəntāt*

### § 2.4.3 The suffix -ot

This plural suffix is attested for three nouns only, the ending -āy which is common to their singular form being replaced by -ot:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ḥarastāy[1] | - "peasant", | pl. ḥarastot |
| wāṭay | - "singer", | pl. wāṭot |
| tastāy | - "young bull", | pl. tastot |

### § 2.4.4 The suffix -ač

Nine nouns[2] having this suffix in the plural form were recorded:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | ḥam | - "father-in-law", | pl. ḥamač |
| 2. | ʾab | - "father", | pl. ʾabač and ʾabayt |
| 3. | ʾaf | - "mouth", | pl. ʾafač and ʾafayt |
| 4. | talāy | - "shepherd", | pl. talač and talayt |
| 5. | harmāy | - "robber", | pl. harmač and harammit |
| 6. | karāy | - "hyaena", | pl. karač and ʾakarrit |
| 7. | fatāy | - "friend", | pl. fatač |
| 8. | ʿaqqaytāy | - "soldier", | pl. ʿaqqač |
| 9. | ʿallaytāy | - "bondsman", | pl. ʿallač |

Taking into account the additional variants of the plural form in instances 2-4[3] and forms with pronominal suffixes such as ʾabaytu - "his paternal uncles", ʿaqqaytu - "his soldiers",

---

[1] Beside ḥārsāy - "plougher".

[2] One adjective form whose plural form is used also as a noun has this suffix: ʿabi - "big", pl. ʿabayi and ʿabač (as noun its plural meaning is "elders").

[3] According to W. Leslau, Short grammar, p.178, g), ḥamayt is also attested.

fataytu - "his friends", etc., the č of this plural suffix may be interpreted morphologically as yt. Such an interpretation requires the recognition of a morphologically plural suffix -ayt for the above examples. This suffix may, then, be described as being fully additional to the singular form in instances 1-3 but incorporating the ending āy of the singular in instances 4-7. In respect of instances 8-9 the singular form includes the plural form.

## § 2.4.5 The suffix -at

This suffix is regularly used in the expression of plural with the morphologically active particle of the mould qātlāy, maqatlāy etc. - the pattern of the singular form being peculiar to the type of the verb and/or its prefixed derivative.[1] Such verbal nouns, denoting the 'agent', have distinctive forms for masculine and feminine but one form to express the plural e.g.:

kādmāy - "servant" (masc.), kadmāyt (fem.), pl. kādmat.

As can be seen from the above example the plural suffix is added to the stem.

Other examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| sāfyāy | - "weaver", | pl. | sāfyat |
| ḫāylāy | - "singer", | pl. | ḫāylat |
| wāldāy | - "father", | pl. | wāldat - "parents" |
| mabašrāy | - "messenger (for good news)" | pl. | mabašrat |
| magāyrāy | - "shoemaker", | pl. | magāyrat |
| mattalhəyāy | - "player", | pl. | mattalhəyat |

---

[1] Cf. § 2.7.1. a)(i), c)(i) & d)(i).

| | |
|---|---|
| *matbəʻəsāy* -"adversary", | pl. *matbəʼəsat* |
| *matanṭənāy* -"tender of sick persons", | pl. *matantənat* |

### § 2.4.6 The suffix *-ām*

This suffix is used in the expression of masculine gender in participles and in adjectives which are morphologically particles. Such forms are treated in §2.7.1. a)(i), c)(i) & e) and in §2.9.2. a)(i) - (v) & c).

## § 2.5 Broken plurals

### § 2.5.1 Form and meaning

Noun forms used in the expression of the notion of plurality (i) which share the same radicals as their singular form but not the same vowels(i.e. with at least one new vocalic element in the stem which cannot be interpreted in terms other than those of the broken plural - such as that of juncture features), (ii) whose syllabic and vocalic patterns are different from those of the singular, and (iii) which may have additional morphological elements of affixation, gemination or vowel duration, are referred to here as 'broken plurals'.

Broken plural forms show no peculiarities as regards the features of plural concord set out in §§ 2.1.2-2.1.3. There is, however, a classificatory problem involving the above definition of the class, since many of the collective nouns may fall within it, having regularly the morphological features described in (i) and (ii) above but not those described in (iii).

The inclusion of the collectives of the syllabic structure CVCVC in the form class of broken plurals should not, however, impair the validity of the above definition in any way, since: (a) we have seen that the determination of a noun as a collective form on morphological grounds must be arbitrary (§ 2.2.3 b)) - the contextual sense of the noun as a collective being indispensable. A given form may occur having the meaning of either collective or plural and, by virtue of its occurrence with the latter meaning, the form may be considered as a broken plural, e.g.: *wərāq*, plural of the countable singular *waraqat* - "a letter" may in one context have the meaning "paper", whereas another context might suggest the meaning "letters"; b) there are instances in which the only form serving in the expression of plurality is that typical of a collective (points (i) and (ii) of the above definition), e.g.: *'əgər* - "foot", pl. *'əgar* - "feet", and the exclusion of such forms (which comply with points (i) and (ii) only, in the above definition) from the class of the broken-plural would complicate rather than simplify the description.

## § 2.5.2 The morphological relationship between singular and broken-plural forms

The broken plurals and the countable singulars are not predictable from each other's forms, though certain singular patterns correspond more often than not to certain plural patterns, e.g., the singular form of the pattern CəCāC has, many times, the plural pattern 'aCəCCat:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *kətāb* | - "book", | pl. *'akətbat* | |
| *gərāb* | - "thing", | pl. *'agərbat* | - "things, property" |

səgād - "neck", pl. ʼasəgdat

but cf. zəlām - "rain", pl. zalāyəm

ʼəgāl - "calf", pl. ʼəgəl or ʼāgāl (type ʼa̱CCā̱C, see § 2.5.3 d))

ḥəṣān - "boy", pl. ḥəṣānāt

Any attempt at producing a scheme of relationship between the singular and plural forms would, even on this ground of practical consideration, be of a specious nature. This is so since a given plural pattern may have singular forms of various patterns, e.g., the plural pattern Ca̱Ca̱C̅C̅ə̱C,[1] the range of whose patterns in the singular includes Ca̱CCā̱C, Cə̱CCā̱C, Ca̱CCa̱C, Cə̱CCə̱C, CəC̅C̅ā̱C, Cə̱Cə̱C and Ca̱Ca̱C as exemplified below:

1. ḥarmāz - "elephant", pl. ḥarammǝz
2. bəsṭān - "garden", pl. basaṭṭən
3. danbar - "wing", pl. danabbər
4. ʼənkər - "side", pl. ʼanakkər
5. ʻənkəllat - "hill", pl. ʻanakkəl
6. nəssāl - "tongue", pl. nasassəl
7. bəššārat - "bit of good news" pl. bašaššər
8. səbər - "fragment", pl. sababbər
9. qaraf - "peel", pl. qararrəf

Three types of syllabic structure in the singular are met with in the above examples: (i) -CVCCVC (exx. 1-5; the ending ʼat in exx. 5 and 7 is to be regarded as that of the singulative even in absence of the unsuffixed singular), (ii) - CVC̅C̅VC (exx.

---

[1] The notation C̅C̅ stands for a geminated consonant whereas CC signifies a cluster of two - identical or different - consonants.

6-7) and (iii) - CVCVC (exx. 8-9), and these structures are in turn capable of being manifested in a wide range of broken-plural patterns.

### § 2.5.3 Analysis and classification of the main broken-plural types

A classification of broken-plural forms may be made by taking into account their syllabic structure, and by, in each case, considering one or more of the following three morphological conditions (the third being a negative one):

(i) the presence of the prefix ’a- or its absence.

(ii) the gemination of the penultimate radical, or the lengthening of the vowel of the penultimate syllable - two features that may be in complementary distribution in patterns of certain types.

(iii) the non occurrence of either feature mentioned in (i) and (ii), under which heading patterns common to nouns expressing collectivity are included.

The basic types of the broken-plural forms are as follows:

a) ’aCaC̅C̅əC (’aCaC̅C̅it)/’aCāCəC

b) CaCaC̅C̅əC/CaCāCVC

c) CaCaC̅C̅i(t)/CaCāCi(t), ’aCaC̅C̅it

d) ’aCCVC

e) ’aCəCCat

f) CVCVC

Types a)-c) share the features mentioned in (ii) above, and differ among themselves in that type a) has the prefix *ʼa-* while b) and c) (excluding *ʼaCaC̄C̄it* - see immediately below) do not have this prefix; forms of type c) differ from those of both a) and b) in their endings. The type *ʼaCaC̄C̄it* may belong to either a) or c); it is allocated here to the latter on the grounds that all patterns of c) are variants of a) and b) - their presentation as a basic pattern being made in order to simplify the description.

Types d)-e) differ among themselves and are distinctive from a)-c) both in syllabic structure and in lacking the features mentioned in (ii) above. Pattern f) is different from a)-e) being the only broken-plural form fulfilling condition (iii) above.

The overall number of broken-plural forms, occurring in the main types a)-f), may be set out and exemplified as follows:

### a) *ʼaCaC̄C̄əC/ʼaCāCəC*

Patterns of this type consist of forms with the prefix *ʼa-*, and with gemination of the penultimate radical or lengthening of the vowel of the penultimate syllable. Nouns of the pattern *ʼaCāCəC* whose stem consists of three consonant radicals are rare: only three examples were recorded, one of which (*ʼawāləd*; see below) is idiosyncratic.

Examples:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *barad* | - "hail", | pl. *ʼabarrəd* |
| *qaṭfat* | - "leaf", | pl. *ʼaqaṭṭəf* (collective: *qaṭaf*) |
| *balasat* | - "fig", | pl. *ʼaballəs* (collective: *balas*) |
| *naggal* | - "kid", | pl. *ʼanaggəl* |
| *warqat* | - "piece of silver", | pl. *ʼawarrəq* (collective: *warəq*) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| sayəf | - "sword", | pl. ʾasayəf[1] |
| walat | - "daughter", | pl. ʾawāləd |
| č̣əbʿit | - "finger", | pl. ʾač̣ābəʿ |
| bəgguʿ | - "sheep", | pl. ʾabāgəʿ |

b) CaCa$\overline{CC}$əC/CaCāCVC, where V is ə, i or u

The stem of the singular form has the syllabic structure CVCVC (CV$\overline{CC}$VC) or CVCCVC.

(i) In the case of singular nouns of stem structure CVCVC (CV$\overline{CC}$VC) an additional consonant is provided in the plural forms by means of the repetition of the medial radical or the production of a semivowel,[2] e.g.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| zanab | - "tail", | pl. zanannəb |
| kəffal | - "portion", | pl. kafaffəl |
| nəggārat | - "drum", | pl. nagāgir |
| qaṣir | - "(point of) lance", | pl. qaṣāyər |

(ii) In the case of singular nouns of stem structure CVCCVC, certain limitations on the choice between the geminated and non geminated plural patterns of type b) - in respect of the phonological shape of the singular - may be noted as follows:

(1) Verbal nouns having the prefix -ma/me[3] require the non geminated plural patterns, e.g.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| məsqāl | - "instrument for suspending", | pl. masāqəl |
| mangas | - "kingdom", | pl. manāgəs |

---

[1] y is not geminated.

[2] Cf. § 2.5.5

[3] Cf. § 2.7.3 a)(i) & b).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *manṣaf* | - "cover, carpet", | pl. *manāṣəf* |
| *məwəqqāl*[1] | - "high place", | pl. *mawāqəl* |
| *maḥadar/məḥədār* | - "dwelling place", | pl. *maḥādər* |
| *margaṣi(t)* | - "wine-press" | pl. *marāgəṣ* |

This limitation of distribution also operates in the case of verbal nouns with the suffix -*ma*/-*me* whose stem is quadriradical, the structure of the singular derivation being then CVCVCCVC, e.g.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *maʿandaq/maʿandaqi(t)* | - "belt", | pl. *maʿanādəq* |
| *məḥəngāg* | - "a curved ornament on sword blades", | pl. *maḥanāgəg* |

(2) Singular forms of the structure CVCCVC may, where the final vowel is *ə*, *a* or *ā*, have either the geminated or non geminated type of plural, the non geminated pattern being limited to C*a*C*ā*C*ə*C. Other vowels in the final syllable of the singular may produce the other patterns of the non geminated plural, i.e. C*a*C*ā*C*i*C and C*a*C*ā*C*u*c.

---

[1] *waqqala* - "to be high".

Examples:

Plurals whose singular forms have *ə*, *a* or *ā* in the final syllable the plurals being C*a*C*a*C̄C̄*ə*C/C*a*C*ā*C*ə*C:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *kərbāǧ* | - "whip", | pl. | *karabbəǧ* |
| *farṭā‘* | - "sort of dove", | pl. | *farāṭə‘* |
| *karban* | - "old skin (of no use)", | pl. | *karabbən* |
| *kanfar* | - "lip", | pl. | *kanāfər* |
| *qəlč̣əm* | - "wrist", | pl. | *qalač̣č̣əm* |
| *dəngəl* | - "virgin", | pl. | *danāgəl* |

Plurals, the stem of whose singular form has any vowel other than *ə*, *a* or *ā* in its final syllable, the plural patterns being C*a*C*a*C̄C̄*ə*C/C*a*C*ā*CVC, where V is *u* or *i*:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *šəngul* | - "adult", | pl. | *šanaggəl* |
| *darbuš* | - "Dervish(es)", | pl. | *durābuš/darābiš* |
| *məsṭir* | - "secret, mystery", | pl. | *masaṭṭər* |
| *ǧanbil* | - "basket (made of palm) | pl. | *ǧanābil* |
| *qandil/qandel* | - "candle", | pl. | *qanaddəl* |
| *dərbobat* | - "termites' mound", | pl. | *darabbəb* |
| *maskot* | - "window", | pl. | *masākut* |

(3) The plural pattern C*a*C*a*C̄C̄*ə*C is required by a certain number of nouns whose singular forms consist of the structure CVCCVC plus *a* or *ot* - endings which otherwise require plural forms terminating in *-i(t)*[1], e.g.:

---

[1] Cf. § 2.5.3 c) below.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ʼəngəra | - "bread", | pl. ʼanaggər |
| ʼanbaṭa | - "locust(s)", | pl. ʼanabbəṭ |
| ʿankabot | - "spider", | pl. ʿanakkəb |

c) CaCa$\overline{\text{CC}}$i(t)/CaCāCi(t) , ʼaCa$\overline{\text{CC}}$it

Patterns of these types are associated with those described above in b) and a) respectively and are distinguished from them by having Ci(t) as the last syllable and not CVC (where V is ə, i or u). The ending -i(t) of the plural is effected in those cases where the corresponding singular form terminates in a vowel, or in -Vt, in all patterns but the one described above in b)(ii)(3). Whether a final t is actualized in the plural form is a matter which belongs to the domain of lexis.

Examples:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| rora | - "highlands", | pl. rawarri(t) |
| dəqala | - "bastard", | pl. daqallit |
| šəfta | - "rebel, bandit", | pl. šafattit |
| ǧalbat | - "boat", | pl. ǧalabbit (also ǧəlāb) |
| kadbet | - "floor", | pl. kadabbi(t) |
| manfat | - "sieve", | pl. manāfit |
| masni | - "friend", | pl. masānit |
| ʼarwe | - "snake"; | pl. ʼarāwit |
| ǧəna | - "child", | pl. ʼaǧannit |

Certain nouns terminating in -ay/-āy in the singular form have, in the plural form, the ending -i(t) which replaces this -ay/-āy, e.g.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| č̣ənč̣āy | - "fly", | pl. č̣anač̣č̣it[1] |

---

[1] For further examples see § 2.5.5 (iv)(2).

d) *'aCCVC*, where V is ə, u or ā.

(i) Patterns of this type of plural include the suffix *'a-* but lack the contrast gemination/non-gemination which typifies the patterns of broken plurals of the types a)-c). The syllabic structure typical of corresponding singular stems is CVCVC, e.g.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *dabər* | - "mountain", | pl. *'adbər* |
| *daqal* | - "mast", | pl. *'adqul* |
| *kaləb* | - "dog", | pl. *'aklāb* |
| *tamrat* | - "date (fruit)", | pl. *'atmār* (collective: *tamar*) |

(ii) In the case of the pattern 'aCCāC an optional form with the suffix *-āt* is possible, though the suffixed form may be the only plural form for some of the nouns:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *mələç̌* | - "herd of goats and sheep", | pl. *'amlāç̌* or *'amlāç̌āt* |
| *mədər* | - "land", | pl. *'amdār* or *'amdārāt* |
| *dəgəm* | - "tale", | pl. *'adgām* or *'adgāmāt* |
| *tarəf* | - "descendant(s)", | pl. *'atrāf* or *'atrāfāt* |
| *goṣ* | - "side-chamber", | pl. *'agwāṣ* or *'agwāṣāt*[1] |

(iii) In the case of certain forms of the pattern 'aCCəC the occurrence of an additional suffix, such as the third person pronominal suffix, requires the juncture feature -*t*-, e.g.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *ma'as* | - "hide, skin", | pl. *'am'əs*, *'am'əstu* - "his hides" |
| *qabər* | - "tomb", | pl. *'aqbər(t)* |

---

[1] For the additional element -*w*- see: § 2.5.5 (i).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ṣafər | - "nail", | pl. ’aṣfər(t) |
| bə’əs | - "husband", | pl. ’ab’əs(t) |

e) ’aCəCCat

Forms of this type of broken plural - which are typified by the prefix ’a- and the suffix -at - have, mostly, the singular form CəCāC,[1] e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | nəwāy | - "property, cattle", | pl. ’anəwyat |
| | rəyāl | - "Ethiopian dollar", | pl. ’arəlyat/’arəylat |
| | kərār | - "curtain", | pl. ’akərrat |
| cf. | kətəm | - "seal, stamp", | pl. ’akətmat |

f) CVCVC

(i) Uncountable nouns of this syllabic structure whose first vowel is ə or a and whose second vowel is a or ā are used in the expression of plurality or collectivity. The relationship between the plural in general and the collective is described in § 2.2.3, and that between the broken-plural in particular and the collective - in § 2.5.1. In the case of the following examples no other plural forms exist except the ones given - the morphological relationship between the members of each pair of forms being that of singulative with collective.[2]:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| karšat | - "belly", | pl. keraš; | ḥəfrat | - "hole,pit", | pl. ḥəfar |
| qaṭrat | - "drop", | pl. qəṭar; | šalgat | - "handful", | pl. šəlag |
| dabbat | - "sand hill", | pl. dəbab; | ḥəbbazat | - "round bread", | pl. ḥəbaz |
| ’ətmat | - "spring", | pl. ’ətam | dəmnat | - "deserted place", | pl. dəman |

---

[1] Cf. § 2.5.2.

[2] Cf. § 2.2.2.

qəlwat - "mat", pl. qəlaw;
ǧəbbat - "jacket", pl. ǧabab;
kaymat - "tent", pl. kəyam
qarbat - "skin (for holding liquid), pl. qərāb

(ii) A certain number of names have CV$\overline{\text{CC}}$VC as their syllabic structure and not CVCVC as in (i) above, e.g.:

fallastāy/fallasit - "monk", pl. fallas
nəgus - "king", pl. naggas
zābəṭ - "officer", pl. zəbbāṭ

(iii) There are a few nouns in which the syllabic structure of both singular and plural forms is CVCVC, the distinction being made between the two by means of vowel arrangement, e.g.:

ʼəgāl - "calf", pl. ʼəgəl (also ʼāgāl, cf.§ 2.5.4.(i))
ʼəgər - "foot", pl. ʼəgar

### § 2.5.4 The influence of laryngals on broken-plural formation

The presence of a largynal as one of the radicals in the stem may bring about changes in form, depending on the type of plural formation and the sequential position of the laryngal in the syllabic structure. Phenomena involving laryngals which are typical of Tigre morphology in general are met with here. These are the non gemination of laryngals,[1] the non occurrence of the prefix ʼa- preceding a laryngal[2] and the distribution of laryngals in the syllabic structure.[3] A phenomenon unique to the broken plural is the occurrence

---

[1] Cf. §§ 1.1.2, 5.4.2.

[2] Cf. §§ 5.4.1 (1)(b); 5.4.2.

[3] Cf. §§ 5.4.1. (2)(c); 5.4.3 (1).

of the suffix -Vṯ following a laryngal, for some of the patterns. The instances in which the presence of laryngals brings about changes in broken-plural patterns are set out and exemplified below:

(i) Plurals of the type ’aCCVC[1] the initial radical of whose stem is a laryngal occur having the syllabic structure CVCVC, the vowel of the first syllable being usually ā but also a, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ḥələm | - "dream", | pl. ḥālām | (* ’aḥlām) |
| ḥəbər | - "totality", | pl. ḥābā | |
| ‘ələb | - "number", | pl. ‘ālāb | |
| ‘ədəm | - "appointment", | pl. ’ādām | |
| ’əkəl | - "corn", | pl. ’ākāl | |
| ḥabəl | - "rope", | pl. ḥābāl | |
| ‘agab | - "injustice", | pl. ‘āgub | |
| ’asar | - "trace", | pl. ’āsur | |
| ‘aṣəm | - "bone", | pl. ‘āṣəm | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| habay | - "monkey", | pl. habuy | (also: hābuy) |
| ’adəg | - "donkey", | pl. ’adug | |

(ii) Plurals of the pattern ’aCCāC which occur having the optional suffix -āt - with a final radical laryngal they (1) may submit to no changes when occurring with the suffix -at or (2) provide the vocalic option a/ə in place of the vowel ā in the final syllable of the stem. Most instances recorded did not have the unsuffixed plural form, e.g.:

---

[1] Cf. § 2.5.3 d).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *zuʿ* | - "utterance", | pl. *ʾazwaʿāt* or *ʾazwəʿāt* |
| *bərəʿ* | - "pen", | pl. *ʾabrəʿāt* or *ʾabraʿāt* |
| *luḥ* | - "beard", | pl. *ʾalwəḥāt* or *ʾalwaḥāt* (also *ʾalwāḥ*) |

(iii) Plurals of the pattern *ʾaCaCCəC*[1] whose final radical is a largynal occur having the suffix *-ət*/*-at*, e.g.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *kaləʿ* | - "clay pot", | pl. *ʾakalləʾət* or *ʾakalləʾat* |
| *šarəʿ* | - "right, law", | pl. *ʾašarrəʿət* or *ʾašarrəʿat* |
| *zarəʾ* | - "seed", | pl. *ʾazarrəʾət* or *ʾazarrəʾat* |
| *kalaḥ* | - "bell", | pl. *ʾakalləḥət* or *ʾakalləḥat* |
| *gərəʿ* | - "neck", | pl. *ʾagarrəʿət* or *ʾagarrəʿat* |
| *rəməḥ* | - "point of spear", | pl. *ʾaramməḥət* or *ʾaramməḥat* |

(iv) As was mentioned in § 2.5.3 a) forms of the pattern *ʾaCāCVC* of which the stem consists of three consonant radicals are rare and only three instances of them were recorded. This pattern may be attributed to one more noun if one takes into account the presence in it of a final laryngal and the suffix *-ət*, a derivation which resembles the one described in (iii) above - even if the pattern *ʾaCāCVC* with a final laryngal does not produce such a suffix, e.g.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *baṣəḥ* - "youth, adult", | pl. *ʾabāṣḥət* |
| cf. | *č̣əbʿit* - "finger", | pl. *ʾač̣ābəʿ* |

The exclusion of *baṣəḥ* from being classified as *ʾaCāCVC* would require its introduction as a separate type, i.e. *ʾaCāCCət*, consisting of one noun.

---

[1] Cf. § 2.5.3 b)

(v) Plurals of the type *ʾaCəCCat*[1] whose medial radical is a laryngal occur having the syllabic structure *ʾaCCəCat*, the laryngal and the vowel *ə* being transposed, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *bəʿray* | - "ox", | pl. *ʾabʿərat* | (* *ʾabəʿrat* ;<br>cf. *ʾakətbat* - "books") |
| *wəhər* | - "bull", | pl. *ʾawhərat* | |

## § 2.5.5 The rôle of semivowels in broken-plural formation

Nouns with semivowels which occur in broken-plural forms but do not occur in the corresponding singular forms are numerous. In such instances the function of the semivowel is purely structural, i.e. it provides the 'missing' consonant necessary to the formation of the broken-plurals when the stem structure of the singular form is one consonant 'short'.[2]

The choice between the occurrence of either one of the semivowels in the plural form may be partly accounted for on the articulatory level of relationship with the singular form in the following manner: front vowels in the last syllable of the singular stem are associated with *y* in the plural, and back vowels with *w*. This statement is true for only some of the broken-plural types; the only statement valid for all types involves the relationship between *o* - in any syllable of the singular stem - and *w* in the plural.

The distribution of *w/y* in the various types of broken-plurals is set out and exemplified below:

---

[1] Cf. § 2.5.3 e).

[2] Repetition of the medial radical of the singular is another means of providing an additional consonant for some types of broken-plurals. Cf. § 2.5.3 b)(i)

### (i) Type ʼaCCVC[1]

The occurrence of semivowels in this type of broken-plural is limited to the pattern ʼaCCāC whose singular form has the syllabic structure CVC, where i and e in the singular are associated with y in the plural and u and o with w.

Examples:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| qor | - "depth", | pl. ʼaqwār |
| gof | - "interior", | pl. ʼagwāf |
| sok | - "market", | pl. ʼaswāk or ʼaswākāt |
| ṭuṭ | - "sinew", | pl. ʼaṭwāṭ |
| kis | - "bag", | pl. ʼakyās |
| mes | - "mead", | pl. ʼamyās |
| bet | - "house", | pl. ʼabyāt |
| šek | - "sheik", | pl. ʼašyāk |

### (ii) Type CVCVC[2]

The occurrence of semivowels in this type of broken-plural is limited to the pattern CəCaC whose singular stem has the syllabic structure CVC; the relationship between the semivowels in the plural form and the relevant vowels in the singular is similar to that mentioned in (i) above, e.g.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ḥilat | - "strength, power", | pl. ḥəyal | (verb: ḥela - "to be strong") |
| kidat | - "sole of shoe", | pl. kəyad | (verb: keda - "to tread") |
| kukat | - "viper", | pl. kəwak | (collective: kuk - "species of venomous snake") |

---

[1] Cf. § 2.5.3 d).

[2] Cf. § 2.5.3 f).

### (iii) Type CaCaCCəC/CaCāCVC[1]

None of the relationships between the singular and plural forms set out in (i) and (ii) above may be induced here. There is, however, a limitation on the distribution of the patterns of this type: only forms of the patterns CaCaCCəC/CaCāCəC are attested with semivowels. When the semivowel is y the pattern CaCāCəC prevails, CaCaCCəC being usually the pattern for forms which include w. Unlike the sequential position of y - which is that next to the last consonant of the plural form - w regularly assumes the antepenultimate position.

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ḥaṣur | - "enclosure", | pl. | haṣāyər |
| fanus | - "lamp", | pl. | fawannəs |
| ləmād | - "custom", | pl. | lamāyəd |
| zəlām | - "rain", | pl. | zalāyəm |
| kokab | - "star", | pl. | kawākəb |
| molād | - "generation", | pl. | mawalləd |
| dərho | - "chicken", | pl. | dawarrəh |
| qamiš | - "shirt", | pl. | qamāyəš |
| gabilat | - "tribe", | pl. | gabāyəl |
| wašifat | - "maid-servant", | pl. | wašāyəf |

### (iv) Type CaCaCCi(t)/CaCāci(t)[2]

(1) Only -w- is met with in patterns of this type, the syllabic structure of the singular being CVCV(t), e.g.:

---

[1] Cf. § 2.5.3 b).

[2] Cf. § 2.5.3 c)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ḥoṣa(t) | - "sand", | pl. | ḥawāṣi |
| ʿela | - "well", | pl. | ʿawalli |
| qišo(t) | - "village", | pl. | qawašši |
| konāt | - "lance", | pl. | kawanni |

(2) A relation of 'order inversion' of the features described in (i) - (III) above may exist between the singular and plural forms, whereby y as the ultimate consonant of the singular form is associated with the vowel i of the plural ending -i(t), e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ʿarqay | - "bed", | pl. | ʿaraqqit |
| ʿanṣāy | - "mouse", | pl. | ʿanaṣṣit |
| harmāy | - "robber", | pl. | harammit[1] |
| təgrāy | - "vassal", | pl. | tagarri(t) |
| mətwāy | - "sudden rain", | pl. | matāwit |

## § 2.6 Suffixed derivatives

### General characteristics

In addition to the formation of suffixed nouns, dealt with hitherto, there are in Tigre other noun plus suffix formations which form semantic classes of their own, namely: diminutives (i.e. - "a small ..."), perjoratives (i.e. - "a poor, bad ..."), augmentatives (i.e. - "a big, large..."), paucatives (i.e. - "a few...") and paucative perjoratives (i.e. - "some poor...").

---

[1] Also: harmač, cf. § 2.4.4

Noun forms belonging to any one of these classes are referred to in this work as suffixed derivatives. As their semantic connotation - given in brackets above - show, nouns of the first three classes occur in the singular and are countable whereas the other two classes consist of plural forms.

The relations of such semantic classes to morphological criteria suggest that the countable singular forms dealt with in § 2.2 - either suffixed or unsuffixed - , and the suffixed plural forms dealt with in § 2.4 are the unmarked terms of both the form and meaning of suffixed derivatives.

### Morphological features

The basic inventory of suffixes used in the formation of suffixed derivatives consist of the suffixes -āy and -at in the case of nouns with singular concord and -ām and -āt in the case of nouns with plural concord. The periphrastic nature of other suffixes taking part in the formation of the suffixed derivatives depends, for the most part, on the phonological shape and morphological structure of the noun, and is discussed in the appropriate sections below.

### Syntactic and semantic features

The diminutives are the only suffixed derivatives whose gender corresponds to that of the basic singular form (i.e. to the form of the countable unsuffixed singular or to that of the singulative. Cf. § 2.2), all other types of suffixed derivatives having a different gender from that of the countable singular.

As regards the plural forms of the suffixed derivatives, there are (a) those of the diminutive - the semantic connotation of which is that of paucative - and (b) the pejorative plurals which express the notion paucative-pejorative.

Suffixed derivatives in the singular are countable, while those in the plural are uncountable. However, they are not, because of their semantic import, frequently encountered along with numerals.

The classification which follows takes into account in the first place the lexical connotation of the semantic classes, the morphological features providing a formal dimension of classification only. Thus, § 2.6.2 for example, is entitled 'Paucatives' and not 'Diminutive plurals'.

## § 2.6.1 Diminutives

### General characteristics

The diminutive derivation is a productive one and can operate with almost any noun in Tigre. As a semantic class the diminutive denotes smallness and/or affection. Thus, *ḥəṣān* - "boy" has the diminutive form *ḥəṣenāy* which means "little boy", or "nice little boy".

The diminutive derivation is also common with proper names whose value is hypocoristic1). The gender of the diminutive corresponds to that of the countable singular, and is stated in

---

1)Morphological analysis of the diminutive forms of proper names is not necessary here since their formation is similar to that of the Tigre noun in general. For a list of such proper names see PL1, page 138 et seq., and E. Littmann, *Die Diminutivbildung im Tigrē*, AIUO 2, 1943, pp.89-103.

each case by means of the diminutive suffixes *-āy* (masc.) and *-at* (fem.) for countable nouns which have no suffixes, and by means of an additional suffix *-it* for singulatives with the suffix *-at*. Countable nouns of masculine gender whose suffix is *āy* have the diminutive suffix *-etāy* attached to the stem of the noun. The further use of the suffix *-etāy* and the use of a corresponding suffix, *-atit*, of feminine gender, may be attributed to certain morphological conditions which are set out in the appropriate sections below (cf. b) below).

a) The suffixes *-āy*, *at*, *-it*.

(i) Where the countable singular form has no suffix, the diminutive form has the vowel *e* replacing the vowel *ə*, *a* or *ā* in a final close syllable of the noun stem, together with the suffix *-āy* for masculine nouns or *-at* for feminine nouns.[1] Monosyllabic nouns of the structure CVC where V is *ə* or *a* are not covered by this statement.[2]

Examples:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *həyāb* | - | "gift", | *həyebāy* | - | "little present" |
| *bāb* | - | "gate, door, | *bebāy* | - | "small door, wicket' |
| *'əgāl* | - | "calf"[3], | *'əgelāy* | - | "little calf"(masc. |
| | | | *'əgelat* | - | "little calf"(fem.) |
| *kərbāǧ* | - | "whip" | *kərbeǧat* | - | "little whip" |
| *mambar* | - | "chair", | *mamberāy* | - | "little chair" |
| *gabay* | - | "road", | *gabeyat* | - | "little road" |
| *gənṣəl* | - | "fowling piece", | *gənṣelay* | - | "small fowling piece" |
| *marwad* | - | "ring", | *marwedat* | - | "little ring" |

---

[1] See, however, sections b)(iii) (nouns of the structure CāCəC) and b)(iv) (nouns with a final laryngal) below.

[2] See section b)(ii) below.

[3] Masculine & feminine. Cf. § 2.1.1 c).

Where the vowel of the last syllable of the noun stem is other than ə, a or ā, the stem remains intact, as in:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ḥašil | "jackal", | ḥašilāy | "little jackal" |
| mafrud | "six year old camel", | mafrudāy | "little camel" |
| ʿamur | "pail", | ʿamurat | "little pail" |
| maskot | "window", | maskotat | "little window" |
| kis | "sack, bag", | kisāy | "little sack" |

(ii) In the noun patterns CəCəC, CaCaC or CaCəC, where no laryngals are involved, a gemination of the medial radical is likely to be effected to accompany the occurrence of the features described in (i).

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| fələq | "forked branch", | fəlleqāy | "little forked branch" |
| qəšən | "branch", | qəššenāy | "thin branch, twig" |
| kərən | "voice, sound", | kərrenat | "little sound" |
| ḥəfən | "(the quantity of a) double handful", | ḥəffenat | "small, poor double handful" |
| zanab | "tail", | zannebāy | "little tail" |
| ʾasar | "track", | ʾasserāy | "little track" |
| habay | "monkey",[1] | habbeyāy | "little monkey"(masc.) |
| | | habbeyat | "little monkey"(fem.) |
| galab | "shield", | gallebat | "small shield" |
| dabər | "mountain", | dabberāy | "little mountain" |
| qabər | "tomb", | qabberāy | "little tomb" |
| kabəd | "belly", | kabbedat | "little belly" |
| wakəd | "time", | wakkedat | "short time" |

---

[1] Masculine and feminine. Cf. § 2.1.1 c).

(iii) Nouns ending in a vowel regularly have the juncture feature -t- between the noun stem and the suffix of the derivative. In the case of masculine nouns ending in a, this a is replaced by e, the ending of the diminutive being -etāy (e + t + āy). Feminine nouns ending in a retain this a and their suffix is, then, -it, the ending of the diminutive being -atit (a + t + it).

In the case of nouns ending in vowels other than a the diminutive suffixes are -āy in the case of nouns of masculine gender and -at in the case of nouns of feminine gender, the noun stem usually remaining intact.

Where a final a is replaced by e, the quality of preceding a vowels in the noun is also affected.

Examples:

Masculine nouns ending in a:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| laga | - "bullock", | ləgetāy | - "little bullock" |
| məgda | - "bonfire", | məgdetāy | - "little bonfire" |
| ḥarawya | - "(wild) boar", | ḥarawyetāy | - "little boar" |
| rāwya | - "stork", | rāwyetāy | - "little stork" |
| qəšāša | - "hut"[1], | qəšešetāy | - "little hut" |

Feminine nouns ending in a:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| kātra | - "dove", | kātratit | - "little dove" |
| ʻəla | - "well", | ʻəlatit | - "little well" |
| ʼəngera | - "(piece of) bread", | ʼəngeratit | - "little(piece of) bread" |

---

[1] Cf. PL1, 278:23; PL2, 336:4

Masculine nouns ending in vowels other than a:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| dəgge | - | "town", | dəggetāy | - | "small town" |
| 'arwe | - | "serpent", | 'arwetāy | - | "little serpent" |
| 'ənqoqḥo | - | "egg", | 'ənqoqḥotāy | - | "little egg" |
| dəmmu | - | "cat"[1], | dəmmutāy | - | "little cat, kitten"(masc.) |
| | | | dəmmatit | - | "little cat, kitten"(fem.) |

Feminine nouns ending in vowels other than a:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ləḥe | - | "jaw", | ləḥetat | - | "little jaw" |
| mantalle | - | "hare", | mantalletat | - | "little hare" |
| sə'əli | - | "picture, photograph", | sə'əlitat | - | "little picture" |

(iv) Countable nouns with the feminine suffix -at (or -(ə)t[2]) have an additional suffix -it in the formation of the diminutive.

Examples:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ǧalbat | - | "ship", | ǧalbatit | - | "little ship" |
| ḥəlāyat | - | "song", | ḥəlāyatit | - | "little song" |
| walat | - | "daughter", | walatit | - | "little daughter" |
| fəṭrat | - | "creature", | fəṭratit | - | "little creature" |

---

[1] This noun is of both masculine and feminine gender (cf. § 2.1.1 c) ). Its feminine diminutive form as if added to a singular countable *dəmmat, is dəmmatit, which is an exception to the above description.

[2] This statement also covers the case of countable animate nouns which are masculine and have a feminine suffix added to form their feminine gender, e.g.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 'adəg | - | "donkey", |
| 'adgət | - | "she-donkey", |
| 'adgətit | - | "little she-donkey". |

## b) The suffixes -*etāy*, -*atit*

(i) Countable nouns in the singular whose ending is -*āy*, where this -*āy* is regarded as a suffix, have the diminutive suffix -*etāy* attached to the stem.

Examples:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *kətkəttāy* | - | "chicken, fledgling", | *kətkətetāy* | - | "little chicken" |
| *bəllāy* | - | "piece of cloth, garment", | *bəlletāy* | - | "small piece of cloth, a small garment" |
| *mardāy* | - | "pointed lance", | *mardetāy* | - | "small pointed lance" |
| *hərомāy* | - | "bell", | *hərometāy* | - | "little bell" |
| *bəʿərāy* | - | "ox", | *bəʿəretāy* | - | "little ox" |

In other instances the ending -*āy* is taken as a part of of the noun stem, and the formation is the one described in a)(i) above, e.g.:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *talāy* | - | "shepherd", | *taleyāy* | - | "little shepherd" |
| *tastāy* | - | "young bull", | *tasteyāy* | - | "young little bull" |
| *č̣ənč̣āy* | - | "fly", | *č̣ənč̣eyāy* | - | "little fly" |
| *ʿansāy* | - | "mouse", | *ʿanṣeyat* | - | "little mouse" |

The ambiguity of the morphological pattern in the above examples is reflected by the diminutive of the noun *wāṭāy* - "singer", which can be either *wāṭetāy* or *wāṭeyāy*. None of the above nouns with the ending -*āy* have any other basic form (such as collective) in comparison with which the nature of the ending -*āy* could be determined.

(ii) Countable nouns which are (a) morphologically CVCC but phonologically CVC where V is ə or a, and (b) feminine nouns of the structure CVC where V is any vowel except ə or a, have the diminutive suffix -etāy in the case of nouns of masculine gender and -atit in the case of nouns of feminine gender[1].

Examples of (a):

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| dəs | - | "pot, dish", | dəssetāy | - | "little pot" |
| qaš | - | "priest", | qaššetāy | - | "little priest" |
| ʿad | - | "village", | ʿaddetāy | - | "small village" |
| ʾəm | - | "mother", | ʾəmmatit | - | "little mother" |
| ḥal | - | "maternal aunt", | ḥaltatit | - | "little maternal aunt" |
| ʿən | - | "eye", | ʿəntatit | - | "little eye" |

Examples of (b):

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| qāl | - | "speech", | qālatit | - | "short speech" |
| kās | - | "cup" | kāsatit | - | "little cup" |
| dol | - | "time", | dolatit | - | "short time" |
| bet | - | "house", | betatit | - | "little hut" |

---

[1] The production of diminutives of nouns of the structure CVC where V is ə or a, necessitates the occurrence of a consonant additional to those of the stem, be it a third radical or the juncture feature -t-.

The diminutive formation of nouns of the structure CVC may vary considerably and show idiosyncratic features in its morphology. Thus, nouns such as:

ṭəb - "breast"; ʾab - "father"; ḥāl - "maternal uncle"; qar(n) - "horn", have the diminutive forms:

ṭəbetāy; ʾabutāy; ḥāletāy; qarretāy, respectively, a special statement of their formation being required in each case.

(iii) The pattern CāCəC of countable nouns produces diminutives with the suffixes -*etāy* and -*atit*, the noun stem becoming CāCC.

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *gādəm* | - "plain", | *gādmetāy* | - "little plain" |
| *sāmən* | - "week", | *sāmnatit* | - "short week" |
| *kātəm* | - "ring (of silver)", | *kātmatit* | - "little ring" |

(iv) Unsuffixed countable nouns of more than one syllable whose final radical is a laryngal - in the case of nouns of the structure CVCVC whose medial or final radical is a laryngal - have the suffix -*etāy* (for nouns of masc. gender) or -*atit* (for nouns of fem. gender) attached to the noun stem. The quality of the vowels of the stem may be affected.

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *faraʿ* | - "branch (of a tribe)", | *farʿetāy* | - "small branch" |
| *baḥar* | - "sea(shore)", | *baḥratit* | - "little sea(shore)" |
| *ra'as* | - "head", | *ra'asetāy* | - "little head" |
| *safə'*[1] | - "winnowing tray", | *saf'etāy* | - "little winnowing tray" |
| *maḥāz* | - "river", | *maḥāzetāy* | - "little river" |
| *mədmaʿ* | - "blow, hit", | *madməʿatit* | - "small blow, hit" |

(v) Countable feminine nouns of the structure CəCCəC have the diminutive suffix -*atit*, the noun stem remaining intact, eg.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *ʿəndər* | - "flute", | *ʿəndəratit* | - "little flute" |
| *šənrəb* | - "bruise", | *šənrəbatit* | - "slight bruise" |
| *qəlč̣əm* | - "wrist", | *qəlč̣əmatit* | - "little wrist" |

---

[1] [safi']. Cf. § 1.7.5, first example and footnote.

c) There are instances in which the formation of the diminutive deviates from the general observations set out above in sections a) and b), the following being a few examples:

(i) Some countable nouns of the pattern CoCaC and CoCāC have their diminutive form with the vowel ə replacing the vowel a or ā of the stem, where one might have expected the occurrence of the vowel e. The final radical of the stem is geminated.

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| šokan | - "gazelle", | šokənnat | - "little gazelle" |
| soṭal | - "curved dagger", | soṭəllāy | - "little curved dagger" |
| kokan | - "cavity (in rock)", | kokənnat | - "small cavity" |
| rošān | - "loft", | rošənnatit[1] | - "little loft" |

The diminutive exponent e is also missing in the following instances:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| markab | - "ship", | markabat[2] | - "little ship" |
| kanfar | - "lip", | kanfarat | - "little lip" |
| ʿənkər | - "cub, whelp", | ʿənkərrāy | - "little cub" |

---

[1] Cf. (ii) below.

[2] Cf. a)(i) above.

(ii) In some instances the diminutive suffixes -āy and -at occur where one might have expected -etāy and -atit, and also vice versa, e.g.:

qəməʻ -"butter strainer", qəmmeʻāy[3] - "little butter strainer"

šəbbāk -"window", šəbbākatit[4]- "small window"

(iii) A few instances were recorded in which the diminutive form was derived from the uncountable singular. In one such example the vowel e alone is the marker of the diminutive:

tabʻənāy - "worm", tabʻenāy - "little worm"

The singulative and the diminutive are both derived from the collective tabʻən - "worms".

In another example no singulative form exists and the diminutive is derived from the collective:

ʼaddām - "people, crowd", ʼaddemāy - "little man" (also: "worthless man, weakling").

## § 2.6.2 Paucatives

Meaning:

The paucative derivation, which is a plural form, indicates smallness of quantity, e.g.:

waʼat - "cow", waʼāt - "a few cows"

sab - "men, people", sabʼətām- "some few people"

---

[3] Cf. b)(iv) above.

[4] Cf. a)(i) above.

### Morphological features:

The suffixes used in the formation of the paucative are the plural-type suffixes -ām and -āt, the former where the corresponding countable singular is of masculine gender, the latter where it is of feminine gender. The derivation of the paucative form is effected by means of (a) the countable singular form, notably the diminutive, and (b) the broken plural form.

### Syntactic features:

As plural-type derivations the paucative forms which are animate nouns have plural concord and the same gender as the corresponding countable singular, whereas those forms which are inanimate nouns have masculine singular concord.

### a) The countable singular form as a basis for the derivation of the paucative.

Where the paucative form is derived on the basis of the countable singular form, the morphological similarities between the two may, to a large extent, be interpreted - formally but not semantically - in the light of singular-plural type relationships. Such a formal correlation is clearly illustrated in the following examples, where animate nouns have separate derivatives as regards gender:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Countable singular: | habay - "monkey"; | ’əgāl - "calf" |
| Diminutive: | habbeyāy(masc.) | ’əgelāy (masc.) |
| | habbeyat(fem.) | ’əgelat (fem.) |
| Paucative: | habbeyām(masc.) | ’əgelām (masc.) |
| | habbeyāt(fem.) | ’əgelāt (fem.) |

(i) This type of formal correlation is pretty consistent between the paucative and diminutive forms with nouns of masculine gender, where the suffixes -*ām* and -*etām* in the former type of semantic category replace the suffixes -*āy* and -*etāy*, respectively, in the latter, e.g. (the order from left to right is: countable singular, diminutive, paucative):

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *tastāy* | - "bull", | *tasteyāy*, | *tasteyām* | - "a few bulls" |
| *ç̌ənç̌āy* | - "fly", | *ç̌ənç̌eyāy*, | *ç̌ənç̌eyām* | - "a few flies" |
| *safə’* | - "winnowing tray", | *saf’etāy*, | *saf’etām* | - "a few winnowing trays" |
| *dosa* | - "a sort of hut", | *dosetāy*, | *dosetām* | - "a few huts" |
| *laga* | - "bullock", | *lagetāy*, | *lagetām* | - "a few bullocks" |

In some instances, where the final syllable of the stem has the structure CVC, V is *e* in the paucative but not in the diminutive. This may be so where the absence of *e* is untypical[1] of the formation of the diminutive, as in (order from left to right is: countable singular, diminutive, paucative):

*ʿənkər* - "cub, whelp", *ʿənkərrāy*, *ʿənkerām* - "a few cubs",

but also occurs regularly where the diminutive form does not call for the presence of *e*:

*nawid* - "kid", *nawidāy*, *nawedām* - "a few kids".

Cf. *fəluy* - "calf", *fəluyāy*, *fəluyām* - "a few calves"

---

[1] Cf. § 2.6.1 a)(i) with c)(i).

(ii) As regards nouns of feminine gender, two types of formation prevail: one in which the singulative or diminutive suffix -at is replaced by -āt and another where the diminutive ending -atit is replaced by -etāt.

Examples (paucative form on the right):

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| qaṭfat(singulat.) | - "leaf", | qaṭfāt | - "a few leaves" |
| ’əbbanat(singulat.) | - "stone", | ’əbanāt | "a few stones" |
| šakanebat(diminutive) | - "(a nice) little vessel (made of pumpkin)", | šakanebāt | - "a few vessels" etc. |
| walatit(diminutive) | - "little girl", | waletāt | - "a few girls" |
| kātratit(diminutive) | - "little dove", | katretāt | - "a few doves" |
| mərəbbəʿatit(diminutive) | - "little house (square in shape)", | mərəbbəʿetāt | - "a few houses" etc. |
| kātmatit(diminutive) | - "little ring", | kātmetāt | - "a few rings" |

b) The broken-plural form as a basis for the derivation of the paucative.

The vowel a or ā in the final syllable of the noun in the broken-plural form is replaced by e in the paucative form, broken-plural forms not having either one of these vowels remaining intact.

Examples (paucative form on the right):

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| kərən | - "voice", | plural: ʼakrān, | ʼakrenāt | - "some few voices" |
| nəḥəs | - "house"[1], | plural: ʼanḥās, | ʼanḥesām | - "a few houses" etc. |
| ṭalit | - "goat", | plural: ʿaṭāl, | ʿaṭelāt | - "a few goats" |
| karāy | - "hyaena", | plural: ʼakarrit, | ʼakarritām | - "a few hyaenas" |
| wareza | - "youth, bachelor", | plural: warāzit, | warāzitām | - "a few youngsters" |

c) The paucative form was also found to be occasionally derived on the basis of the uncountable singular form (i.e. the collective) - in which case no other noun derivatives were recorded, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ramač̣(collective) | - "embers", | ramč̣āt | - "a few embers" |
| č̣abal(collective) | - "ashes", | č̣ablāt | - "a few ashes" |

Here the paucative form seems to be derived on the basis of a non existing singulative of the pattern CaCCat.

## § 2.6.3 Pejoratives

a) Meaning:

The pejorative derivation adds a dimension of disparagement to the lexical notion which underlies the noun (see examples in b)).

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[1] Made of stone and clay/clay roof.

b) Morphological and syntatic features:

The perjorative is a singular-type derivative (cf. § 2.6.4 for a plural-type derivation in which a pejorative aspect is included), whose formal relationship to the countable singular is similar to the relationship of the diminutive to the countable singular. There is, however, one morphological and syntactic feature which is exclusive to the pejorative: the latter has gender different from that of the countable singular form (and, thus, different from that of the diminutive) expressed by a suffix additional to the form of the countable singular.

Difference in gender is, for the most part, expressed in the pejorative by means of this additional suffix - the masculine suffix when the countable singular is of feminine gender, and - to a lesser extent - vice versa.

Examples (pejorative form on the right):

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| bet(fem.) | - "house", | betāy | - "ruined house, house in poor condition" |
| garhat(fem.) | - "field", | garhetāy | - "poor field" |
| walat(fem.) | - "daughter,girl", | waletāy | - "bad girl" |
| mabrəhat(fem.) | - "lamp", | mabrəhetāy | - "useless lamp" |
| 'ənās(masc.) | - "man", | 'ənesat | - "wortheless man" |

Along with the last example, a form whose semantic value is that of a 'double pejorative' was recorded:

'ənesatit - "utterly hopeless man".

c) As set out and exemplified above (in b)) the only obvious and consistent formal expression of the pejorative open to inspection is the possession of a gender opposite to that of the countable singular form and expressed by a suffix additional to it. There are, however, instances in which (i) the formation of the pejorative is similar to that of the diminutive and (ii) the formal difference which exists between the pejorative and the diminutive is idiosyncratic - the distinction in meaning in both cases being statable only in lexical terms.

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (i) | ’addām(collective) | - "men, people", | ’addemāy(dimin.pejorat.) - "little man, weakling, worthless man" |
| | ləbbās | - "dress", | ləbbesāy(dimin.pejorat.) -"(nice) little dress, poor dress" |
| | suq | - "market, | suqetāy(dimin. pejorat.) - "little market, poor market" |
| (ii) | ‘ənkər | - "cub, whelp", | ‘ənkərrāy(dimin.) - "a little cub",<br>‘ənkerāy(pejorat.) - "a poor cub". |

d) The pejorative may be semantically in contrast with the diminutive, in which case both suffixed derivatives describe the quality of the noun, e.g.:

’as’ən - "pair of shoes"
’as’enatit - "nice pair of shoes" (not:'little pair of shoes'),
’as’ənetāy - "poor pair of shoes"

## § 2.6.4 Paucative-pejoratives

Nouns belonging to this semantic class, which has a plural-type derivation, denote smallness in number. Such suffixed derivatives form the plural of the singular-type derivation dealt with in the previous paragraph (§ 2.6.3); hence the name 'paucative-pejoratives'.

The derivation of the paucative-pejorative form is effected on the basis of the paucative form (cf. § 2.6.2), but with plural suffixes with different gender, i.e.: *ām* and -*āt* where the paucative has -*āt* and -*ām* respectively.

Examples(the order from left to right is: singulat., paucat., paucat.-pejorat.):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *nibat* - "tooth", | *'anyebāt* - "a few teeth", | *'anyebām* - "some poor teeth" |
| *'əssit* - "woman", | *'ənsetāt* - "a few women", | *'ənsetām* - "some poor women" |
| *sab*(collective) - "men, people", | *sab'etām* - "a few people", | *sab'etāt* - "some poor people" |

## § 2.6.5 Augmentatives

Suffixed derivatives belonging to this semantic class, denote increased size or intensity. The augmentative, which has a singular-type derivation, can only be derived from the countable singular whose ending is -*at* (be it the ending of the stem or the suffix -*at* of the feminine singulative). This -*at* becomes -*āy* in the augmentative, other features of the countable singular being retained.

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *baʿat* | - "cave", | *baʿāy* | - "large cave" |
| *garhat* | - "field", | *garhāy* | - "large field" |
| *ʿəbbanat* | - "stone", | *ʿəbbanāy* | - "big stone/rock". |

## § 2.7 Verbal formations

This section deals with noun forms which are morphologically verbal formations.

## § 2.7.1 Participles

### Meaning and function:

The participle form which may be produced from any verb type and derivative has both (1) substantival and (2) verbal functions:

(1) In its active form the participle is regularly met with in the expression of the 'actor'; mostly in its passive form the participle is encountered as one of the derivations used to produce the Tigre adjective (cf. § 2.9.2 a)(i)-(iii)).

(2) The participle form participates in the formation of compound tenses (cf. § 6.16 et seq.). Type A verbs make use of both active and passive participles in the construction of tense compounds, other types and derivatives occurring in such compounds only in the passive form (even when meaning is not passive, cf. ibid).

### Morphological features

Features common with participles which are derived from the various types and derivatives of the Tigre verb are: (1) - the distinction of gender and number by means of suffixes[1] for all types and derivatives; (2) - the presence of both the prefix *ma-* and the suffix *āy* for all active participles excluding triradicals of type A; (3) the presence of the ultimate

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[1] Broken plurals are also met with. See examples in the appropriate sections below.

vowel -u- (masc.sing.form) and -ə- (fem.sing.form) for all passive participles; (4) - stem structure which is peculiar to each type and derivative, excluding similarities of stem in the following cases: in the case of B and ’a-B, C and ’a-C, t-C and ’at-C of the triradicals and A and ’a-A in the case of stems of more than three radicals.

### a) Active participles of the triradical verb

(i) The main derivations are set out in a scheme and exemplified as follows:

| Types and derivatives | Singular | | Plural | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Masculine | Feminine | Masculine | Feminine |
| A | qātəl | qātlat | qātlām | qātlāt |

| Types and derivatives | Singular | | Plural |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Masculine | Feminine | Masculine & Feminine |
| B | maqatlāy | maqatlāyt | maqatlat |
| C | maqātlāy | maqātlāyt | maqātlat |
| t-A/B | matqattəlāy | matqattəlāyt | matqattəlat |
| t-C | matqātlāy | matqātlāyt | matqātlat |
| ’a-A | maqtəlāy | maqtəlāyt | maqtəlat |
| ’a-B | similar to B | | |
| ’a-C | similar to C | | |
| ’at-C | similar to t-C | | |
| ’at-D | matqatātlāy | matqatātlāyt | matqatātlat |

Examples:

Type A[1]: lābəb - "clever", lābbat(fem.), lābbām(masc.pl.), lābbāt(fem.pl.)
qābəl - "former", qāblat(fem.), qāblām(masc.pl.), qāblāt(fem.pl.)

šākər - "drunken"; ḥātər - "brave"; nāfəʿ - "useful";
ḥāləf - "passing"; ṭāyəʿ - "obedient"; šafəg - "one who hurries"

Other types of plural are also noted, e.g.:

kābər - "honoured", kābrat(fem.), kabbar[2] (masc. & fem.pl.)
ḥāyəs - "noble", ḥāysat(fem.), ḥāysotāt[3](masc. & fem.pl.)

Where the medial radical is a laryngal the structure of the stem is CəCəC for the masculine singular form and CəC(ə)C for the feminine singular and plural forms, e.g.:

sə’ən - "tired", sə’(ə)nat(fem.); ləhəb - "sweating"
wəhəz - "flowing"; šə’əg - "near"; səhəl - "merciful;

A final radical semivowel is represented in the masculine singular form by i and in the feminine and plural forms by y, e.g.:

wāqi - "useful, wāqyat(fem.); rāwi - "quenched", rāwyat(fem.)

Where a final semivowel is represented by y a transposition of the second and third radicals may occur, e.g.:

qāli - "proud", qālyat(fem.), qāylām(masc.pl.), qāylāt(fem.pl.)

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[1] Cf. section d) below.

[2] Cf. § 2.5.3 f)(ii).

[3] Also: ḥāysām. For the suffixed plural -otāt cf. § 2.4.2

In roots of which the second radical is a laryngal and the third radical is a semivowel the stem structure is *CəCi* for the masculine singular form and *CəC(ə)y* for the feminine singular and plural forms, e.g.:

*gəhi* - "sad", *gəh(ə)yat*(fem.)

Type B: *ma'amrāy* - "scientist" *ma'amrāyt*(fem.), *ma'amrat*(pl.)
*masalfāy* - "preacher"; *mafargāy* - "commentator";
*maḥamdāy* - "thankful"; *maḥamsāy* - "swimmer";
*maʻalbāy* - "one who computes"; *mašaybāy* - "visitor";
*mamawnāy* - "administrator"; *maʻaynāy* - "spy";
*marafgāy* - "publican" (NT, Luke, 5:27).

Type C: *mawālmāy* - "slanderer"; *maʻāllāy* - "challenger";
*masāṭrāy* - "one who cuts into pieces";
*malāṣyāy* - "barber"(root:*lṣy*); *masāryāy* - "physician"(root:*sry*).

t-A/B: *matkabbətāy* - "host"; *mathayfāy*[1] - "reckless"(root:*hyf*).
*matgassəyāy* - "one who sits at a meal" (root:*gsy*);
*matnabbəyāy* - "one who utters in prophecy" (root: *nby*).

t-C: *matgāmrāy* - "clever, crafty" *maṣṣāggāy* - "plaintiff"(root:*ṣgg*);
*matbāṭrāy* - "adversary"

*'a*-A: *maqsənāy* - "avenger"; *marqəqāy* - "terrifying";
*matməmāy* - "he who has accomplished"; *magʻəzāy* - "wanderer";
*mašhədāy* - "one who has uttered the Šahāda"
*mamṣə'āy* - "he who brings"; *mawlədāyt* - "midwife";
*maqwəyāy* - "seducer"(root:*qwy*)"; *mastəyāy* - "water-bearer(root:*sty*)
*mangəfāy*[2] - "redeemer" (NT, Romans, 11:26)

---

[1] Semivowels are not geminated.

[2] The form *mangafāy*, LH 343b, is to be corrected accordingly.

Another form, maqatlāy, was attested for some verbs, e.g.:

masarfāy - "money-changer"; maʿabyāy - "educator".

This form is similar to B (cf. above) and 'a-B (cf.below) formations.

'a-B: Similar to B, e.g."

masalfāy - "creditor".

'a-C Similar to C, e.g.:

mazābyāy - "seller" (root:zby); manādyāy - "announcer"(root:ndy).

'at-B: massə'əlāy - "messenger" (root:s'l).

'at-C: Similar to t-C, e.g.:

matnāgbāy - "spy"; matgāwḥāy - "early-rising"

'at-D: maddafāf'āy - "Comforter" (the Holy Spirit).
(NT, John, 14:25).

(ii) The masculine singular form - type A forms excluded - may occur without the suffix -āy, the feminine and plural forms being as in (i) above. Type B forms have,then, the medial radical geminated and the vowel ə occurs in the ultimate position according to syllabic structure. For some verbs this active participle form is the only existing one, for other verbs it is an alternative to the suffixed form.

Some examples:

Type B: maʿaggəb/maʿagbāy - "one who does wrong", maʿagbāyt(fem.),
maʿagbat(pl.)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Type C: | mazābəṭ - "fighter" | |
| ’a-A: | maṭməq - "baptizer"; | mabšəl - "cook" maḥazən - "afflicting" |
| | marʿəd - "frightener"; | mawʿi - "lamenter"(root:wʿy) |
| ’a-B: | mafarrəh - "gladdening" | |
| t-A/B: | massalləf - "debtor"(root:slf); | matbə’əs - "adversary" |
| t-C: | matnāfəs - "parasite" (LH,346b). | |

b) Passive participles of the triradical verb

Passive participle forms of all verb types and derivatives regulary have the suffixes -ət(fem.sing.), -ām[1](masc.pl.) and -āt(fem.pl.). The feminine singular passive participle has an alternative form without the suffix -ət, where an ultimate vowel, ə, occurs between the second and third radicals. Such alternatives do not include type C forms.

(i) The three main types are set out in a scheme and exemplified as follows:

| Types | Singular | | Plural | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Masculine | Feminine | Masculine | Feminine |
| A | qətul | qətəl/qətlət | qətulām | qətulāt |
| B | qəttul | qəttəl/qəttəlet | qəttulām | qəttulāt |
| C | quttul | qutlət | qutulām | qutulāt |

---

[1] Some broken plurals may exist as alternative forms. See examples below.

Examples:

Type A:

qərub - "near, relative", qərbət/qərəb(fem.); qərubām(masc.pl.) qərubāt(fem.pl.)

kəbud - "heavy", kəbdət/kəbəd(fem.); kəbudam[1](masc.pl.) kəbudāt (fem.pl.);

ləmud - "usual"; səbur - "broken"; ʼəsur - "bound";

bəšul -"boiled"; rəgum - "cursed"; səbuk - "accused";

səgub -"satisfied"; həfun - "hot"; məhur - "learned"

Where the final radical is a laryngal the vowel u is omitted in the plural forms, e.g.:

gəruh - "kind, simple", gərhām(masc.pl.); gərhāt(fem.pl.)

bəzuḥ - "many", bəzḥām(masc.pl.); bəzḥāt(fem.pl.)

A final radical semivowel is represented by y, except the feminine singular form where it is represented by i - no other vowel occurs in the ultimate syllable of the feminine form, e.g.:

ḥəruy - "chosen", ḥərit(fem.), ḥəruyām(masc.pl.)

qəduy - "fragrant", qədit(fem.), təwuy- "delayed", tᵊwit(fem.)

Some forms with alternative broken plurals are:

gəmuṣ - "poor", gamāyəṣ(pl.); ləgum - "mute", lagāyəm(pl.);

ṣəbut - "caught", ṣabayəṭ(pl.)

Type B:

gərrum - "beautiful", gərrəm/gərrəmət(fem.), gərrumām[2](masc.pl.) gərrumāt(fem.pl.)'

qəddus - "holy"; qəfful - "locked"; dərrub - "folded";

məqqur - "spicy"; ṭəlluq - "free"; zəbbun-"precious, expensive";

ḥəbbus - "imprisoned"; ʼəmmur - "known"; wəqqul - "high"

ləwuq[3] - "joyful"; ʻəwur - "blind"; ḥəwuz - "fat"

gəssuy - "seated", gəssit(fem.sing.; root:gsy).

---

[1] Also: kabāyəd

[2] Also: gararrəm

[3] Semivowels are not geminated.

Type C: lubus - "dressed", lubsət(fem.) lubusam(masc.pl.)
lubusāt(fem.pl.);
sudud - "distressed", suddət(fem.); ḥusus - "anointed";
mutuh - "sharpened"; ḥurud -"slaughtered"; subur - "broken"'
suṭur - "cut into pieces"; mulu' - "full"; ḥubur - "mixed";
luṣuy - "shaved", luṣit(fem.); duluy - "ready", dulit(fem.)

(ii) Derivatives of the various verb types show no irregular morphological features. In theory each derivative may have a participle form as follows:

$t\text{-}\left\{\begin{matrix}A\\B\\C\end{matrix}\right.$ : similar to A, B, C (cf.(i) above).

'a-A : 'əqtul, 'əqtəl/'əqtələt(fem.);

'at-A : 'ətqətul, 'ətqətəl/'ətqətələt(fem.);

'atta-A : 'əttəqtul, 'əttəqtəl/'əttəqtələt(fem.);

'at-C : 'ətqutul, 'ətqutlət(fem.);

'at-D : 'ətqətutul, 'ətqətutlət(fem.).

Some examples:

'a-A : 'əgruf - "beaten in pieces", 'əgrəf/'əgrəfət(fem.);
'əqbul - "former" 'əfrus - "ruined"; 'əqlub - "pleasant";
'ənfuḥ - "inflated"

'at-A : 'ət'əmur - "announced"; 'ətḥəṣuy - "engaged", 'ətḥəṣit(fem.;
root:ḥṣy);

'atta-A : 'əttədluy - "being certain", 'əttədlit(fem.; root:dly);

'at-C : 'ətḥuzun - "distressful".

## c) Participles of verbs of more than three radicals.

(i) Taking into account (1) the distirbution of verb types and derivatives of more than three radicals[1] and (2) the syllabic structure of participles derived from such verbs, the phenomena described in the case of participles of three radicals are also to be noted here. There is, however, one morphological distinction which is peculiar to verbs of more than three radicals: type A verbs produce active participle forms with the prefix *ma-* and with one plural suffix, *-at* (masc. & fem.)[2]

Some examples of active participles:

Type A : *mašankəlāy* - "honey-gatherer", *mašankəlāyt*(fem.), *mašankəlat*(masc. & fem.pl.);
*masanqəyāy* - "harp-player", *masanqəyat*(pl.root:*snqy*);
*ma'ambətāy* - "beginner";

Type C : *manqasāqəs*[3] - "one who stirs";

t-A : *matqalṭən*[3] - "changing one's colours" (PL2,169,No.391);

'a-A : *madangəṣ*[3] - "frightening"

Some examples of passive participles:

Type A : *kəlkul* - "encircling", *kəlkəl*/*kəlkələt*(fem.), *kəlkulām*(masc.pl.), *kəlkulāt*(fem.pl.);
*qənč̣ub* - "lean"; *məzgun* - "heavy"; *ləqluq* - "smeared";
*mərduy* - "certain", *mərdit*(fem,root:*mrdy*);
*səfruy* - "hungry", *səfrit*(fem.; root:*sfry*).

---

[1] Cf. § 5.9

[2] Cf. a)(i) & b)(i) above; d)(i) below.

[3] Cf. a)(ii) above.

Some forms with broken plurals are noted, e.g.:

məqrəb/məqrəbət(fem.) - "pregnant", maqārəb(pl.)

Type C : ḥənugug - "ornamented(sword), ḥənuggət(fem.);

fənudug - "split"; šənukuy - "crooked"(root:šnky);

'a-A : 'əwəlwul - "airy"; 'ərʿəduy -"shaky" (root:rʿdy);

'an-A : 'əngərgur- "wallowed"; 'əmbəh(ə)rur - "shy".

(ii) Active participle forms derived from verbs of which one of the radicals is represented by o or e[1] retain these o or e in the active participle form, e.g.:

Type A : mašešāy - "destroyer", (verb: šeša - "to destroy", root: šyšy);

'an-A : mankoləl - "fugitive", (verb:'ankolala - "to be a fugitive", root: kwll)

In the passive participle o is rendered by u and e by i, e.g.:

Type A : 'ufuy - "hungry", 'ufit(fem.; verb: ta'ofa - "to starve";root: 'wfy);

muquḥ - "fettered" (verb: moqḥa - "to fetter";root:mwqḥ);

giguy - "mistaken" (verg: gega - "to be mistaken"; root:gygy);

bizuy - "redeemed" (verb: beza - "to redeem"; root:byzy).

'an-A : 'ənqutur- "looking downward" (verb: 'anqotara - "to look downward"; root: qwtr).

(iii) Examples of quinqueradicals, active forms:

Type A : maḥašakšakāy - "slanderer";

Type C : magramārmāy - "one who grumbles"

---

[1] o represents w and e represents y . Cf. § 5.9.2,(3)-(6).

## d) The form *qātlāy*

(i) Alongwith the active participle form *qātəl*[1] the pattern *qātlāy* may be met with in the expression of the 'agent'. Syntactically *qātlāy* is different from *qātəl* in that it does not regularly occur in tense compounds.[2] Morphologically *qātlāy* completes the set of forms of the paradigm given in a)(i) above for participles of type A verbs: it retains the vowel *ā* of the form *qātəl* but has the suffixes *-āy*(masc.), *-āyt* (fem.), *-at* (pl.) which are typical of all participle forms except those of type A. Semantically *qātlāy* belongs to the set of forms which have the same suffixes (i.e. active participles of all types and derivatives excluding *qātəl*), all of which share the general meaning mentioned above (i.e. the 'agent' or 'actor'). The form *qātlāy* is frequently met with in the expression of a profession, or that occupation in which one is engaged.

Examples:

*kādmāy* - "worker", *kādmāyt*(fem.), *kādmat*(masc. & fem.pl.);
*nāgdāy* - "trader"; *mārqāy* - "tanner";*ḥatmāy* - "printer";
*tāwrāy* - "spy"; *wārsāy* - "hair"; *nādqāy* - "builder";
*mārḥāy* - "leader"; *qār'āy* - "reader"; *ʿāddāy*- "visitor".

Where the medial radical is a laryngal:

*səḥətāy* - "violent", *səḫətat*(pl.); *məḫəkāy* - "indulgent";
*rəḥəmāy* - "compassionate"

---

[1] Cf. a)(i) above, type A.

[2] Cf. § 2.7.1, beginning section; cf. also § 6.16 et seq.

Where the final radical is a semivowel:

*tālyāy/tāylāy* - "follower", *tāylat*(pl.);
*wāydāy* - "doer", *wāydat*(pl.; root:wdy);
*māynāy* - "creator" (root:mmy); *gāmyāy* - "councellor", *gāmyat*(pl.)

Where the medial radical is a laryngal and the final radical a semivowel:

*rə'əyay* - "shepherd".

(ii) In some instances the alternative forms *kātlāy/kətlāy* were noted,[1] e.g.:

*zāmtāy/zemtāy* - "robber", *zāmtat/zemtat*(pl.);
*rāgmāy/regmāy* - "imprecator"; *rāmqāy/remqāy* - "beggar";
*ṭārqāy/terqāy* - "beggar"; *sārqāy/serqāy* - "thief";
*kātrāy/ketrāy* - "bandit"; *hegtāy* - "terrorist"

### e) The forms *qatāl* and *qatāli*

These forms may occur with a meaning similar to that of *qātlāy*. A distinctive morphological feature which is common to both *qatāl* and *qatāli* is the use of the suffixes -*it* (fem.sing.), *yām*(masc.pl.) and -*yāt*(fem.pl.). *qatāl* is also one of the patterns used in the expression of the Tigre adjective (cf. § 2.9.2 a)(iii)). As is the case with other patterns of the participle derivation, broken-plural forms also occur in this case.

---

[1] The contextual sense of some such instances suggests a shade of disparagement as regards meaning of the *e* alternatives. The vowel *e* is a distinctive feature in the formation of the diminutive and pejorative. However, an additional suffix is required in the case of the diminutive (cf. § 2.6.1), and in the case of the pejorative a gender different from that of the countable singular (cf. § 2.6.3).

Examples (the form *qātlāy* being added where it coexists):

*saḥāt* - "sinner", *saḥātit*(fem.), *saḥātyām*(masc.pl.), *saḥātyāt*(fem.pl.)
*walādi* - "begetter", *walādit*(fem.); *mākrāy/makāri* - "adviser";
*qātlāy/qatāli/qatāl* - "killer, murderer";
*ḥārsāy/ḥarāsi* - "plougher"; *zāmtāy/zamāt* - "robber"

## § 2.7.2 Infinitives

The infinitive derivation has a wide range of phonological shapes, the main patterns of which are described in the sections below. Any one of the derivations called here 'infinitive' may yield grammatical forms pertaining to the noun class, whose meaning is general (i.e., the name of action or state) or specific (i.e., lexically stated).

The import of the term 'infinitive' in Tigre is to be considered according to the syntactic role of the form in question, e.g., when such a form occurs as a verb complement, replacing the more usual construction of *'əgəl* + jussive[1].

### a) Infinitive forms of type A verbs

### (i) qatil, qətlat, qətlo, məqtāl[2], qətle, qatəl.

Examples (third pers.masc.sing.past tense of the verb is given in brackets on the right):

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *balis* | - "answer" | (*balsa* | - "to answer") |
| *fəṭrat* | - "creation" | (*faṭra* | - "to create") |
| *ḥədgo* | - "divorce" | (*ḥadga* | - "to leave, to divorce") |
| *məfgār*[3] | - "going out" | (*fagra* | - "to go out") |
| *qərbe* | - "being near" | (*qarba* | - "to be near) |
| *ḥarəs* | - "ploughing" | (*ḥarsa* | - "to plough") |

---

[1] See: § 6.4b) & § 9.5.
[2] This pattern is equally used in the expression of the name of a place. Cf. § 2.7.3 b)(i).
[3] Ibid. The meaning, then is "place of exit; exit".

(ii) The pattern qatil of (1) verbs whose final radical is a semivowel and of (2) verbs whose medial radical is a laryngal, assumes the shapes (1) qati and (2) qətil, e.g.:

*hadi* - "marriage" (*hada* - "to marry")
*tali* - "going after" (*tala* - "to follow")
*ṣəʿin* - "loading" (*ṣaʿana* - "to load")
*šə’ig* - "being near" (*ša’aga* - "to be near")

Where a verb has both a medial radical laryngal and a final radical semivowel qatil is rendered by qəti[1], e.g.:

*rə’i* - "seeing" (*ra’a* - "to see")

(iii) In infinitive forms derived from verbs with a final radical semivowel a metathesis of the *y* and the medial radical may occur, in which case the resulting diphthong **ey* assumes the shape of *i*, e.g.:

qətlat: *sətyat*/*sitat* - "drinking" (for **səytat*; *sata* - "to drink");
qətlo: *sito* - "drinking" (for **səyto*)

The same change (**ey* to *i*) is regularly met with in infinitive forms derived from verbs whose medial radical is a semivowel, e.g.:

qətlat: *ḥilat* - "strength" (for **ḥəylat*; *ḥela* - "to be strong")
qətle: *ḥile* - "strength" (for **ḥəyle*)

(iv) A given verb may have more than one infinitive form, e.g.:

*nadiq*, *nədqat*, *nədqo*, *məndāq* - "building" (*nadqa* - "to build")
*ḥasib*, *ḥəsbat*, *ḥəsbe* - "thinking" (*ḥasba* - "to think")
*ləmʿe*, *laməʿ* - "blossom" (*lamʿa* - "to blossom")

---

[1] The structure qəti is also met with where the medial radical is not a laryngal, e.g.: *səfi* - "sewing" (*safa* - "to sew")

(v) Certain verbs produce the infinitive form qəṭlān, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| qər'ān | - "reading" | (qar'a | - "to read") |
| ṭəlmān | - "betrayal" | (ṭalma | - "to betray") |
| ṭərʿān | - "complaint" | (ṭarʿa | - "to complain") |
| ḥilān | - "strength" | (ḥela | - "to be strong"; root:ḥyl) |
| ḥilān | - "singing" | (ḥala | - "to sing"; root:ḥly) |

## b) Infinitive forms of types and derivatives of the verb excluding type A, and of verbs with more than three radicals

The morphological data of the infinitive forms under discussion suggest two main patterns. One consists of the forms under discussion and excludes infinitives derived from verbs with the prefix t. The other consists of infinitives derived from verbs with the suffix t (sections (i) and (ii) below, respectively). Two other patterns are treated: one is common with quadriradicals[1] of type A (section (iii) below), another occurs with types C and D of the triradicals (section (iv) below).

(i) The commonest pattern of the infinitive forms under discussion is constructed from the stem of the verb form in the perfect plus the suffix -ot. This pattern is not used with verb derivatives which have the prefix t.

Examples of triradicals:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Type B : | ʿallabot | - "counting, computing" | (ʿallaba | - "to count") |
| | ḥaddasot[2] | - "renewal" | (ḥaddasa | - "to renew") |
| Type C : | sāqalot | - "hanging" | (sāqala | - "to hang"(v.t.)) |
| | ḥābarot | - "joining, putting together" | (ḥābara | - "to join, put together") |

---

[1] But also with some triradicals of types other than A. Cf.(iii) below.

[2] Cf. (iii) below, final example.

Type D : *balālasot* - "answering repeatedly" (*balālasa* - "to answer repeatedly")

’a-A : *’albasot* - "dressing" (*’albasa* - "to dress"(v.t.))

*’arqaqot* - "frightening" (*’arqaqa* - "to frighten"(v.t.))

*’alṣəḥot* - "purification" (*’alṣəḥa* - "to purify")

’a-B : *’abaššarot*- "good news" (*’abaššara*-"to announce good news")

*’agarramot* -"beautifying" (*’agarrama*-"to beautify")

’at-A : *’assa’alot* -"telling, announcing" (*’assa’ala*-"to tell, to announce")

Examples of quadriradicals:

Type A : *šangalot*[1] -"maturity" (*šangala* - "to become of age")

Type C : *tamātamot* -"making touch" (*tamātama*- "to make touch")

’a-A : *’amaslamot* -"becoming a Muslim" (*’amaslama*-"to become a Muslim")

Verbs whose final radical is a semivowel retain the final radical in the infinitive form, e.g.:

Type B : *hallayot* -"being, existence" (*halla*- "to be, to exist";root:*hly*)

Type A : *ṣenayot* -"smell" (*ṣena* - "to smell";root:*ṣyny*[2])

’a-A : *’amardayot* -"certainty" (*’amarda*" - to ascertain; root: *mrdy*)

---

[1] Cf. (iii) below, initial example.

[2] Cf. § 5.9.2, No.(5).

(ii) The infinitive pattern for verbs derived with the prefix *t* is constructed from the stem of the verb in the perfect with (1) an additional *ā* in the ultimate syllable of the stem and (2) the prefix *ma* -, e.g.:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| t-A/B : | *matqallā‘* | - "appearing" | (*təqallə‘a* | - "to appear") |
| | *matwallād* | - "birth" | (*təwallada* | - "to be born") |
| t-C : | *maṣṣāgām*[1] | - "fight, exerting oneself") | (*təṣāgama* | - "to fight, to exert oneself") |
| t-D : | *massalālām*[1] | - "greeting each other" | (*təsalālama* | - "to greet each other") |

Quadriradicals:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| t-A : | *matfar‘āy* | - "uttering a war-cry not in battle: | (*təfar‘a* | - "to utter a war-cry"; root: *fr‘y*) (PL.1,166:23) |

(iii) An infinitive pattern frequent with the quadriradicals of type A is CəCCāCe, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *šəngāle* | - "maturity" | (*šangala* | - "to become of age") |
| *təntāne* | - "tending sick people" | (*tantana* | - "to take care of sick people") |
| *ḥənqāqe* | - "luxury" | (*ḥanqaqa* | - "to live well") |

Triradical verbs may produce infinitive forms whose syllabic structure is similar to the one treated above, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *ḥəddāse* | - "renewal" | (*ḥaddasa* | - "to renew") |

---

[1] Cf. § 5.3.5.1, end of paragraph

(iv) Verbs of types C and D may yield infinitive forms of which the pattern is constructed from the stem of the verb in the perfect, with an additional *ā* in the ultimate syllable of the stem (but cf. § 8.4(b)(i), third example), e.g.:

Type C: *sāṭār* - "cutting into pieces" (*sāṭara* - "to cut into pieces")

Type D: *saḥāḥāt* - "doing wrong repeatedly" (*saḥāḥata* - "to do wrong repeatedly")

## § 2.7.3 Nouns denoting the instrument, place or product

### a) Name of the instrument

(i) Form and meaning: The pattern under discussion is used in the expression of the name of the instrument or means by which the action may be performed. Such a form is morphologically distinctive by means of the prefix *ma-*[1] and the suffix *-i* attached to the stem. The structure of the stem of nouns derived from the triradical verb[2] is -qt*a*l -, the pattern being *maqtali*, e.g.:

*maktabi* - "writing implement" (*katba* - "to write"; type A).

The pattern of nouns derived from verbs of more than three radicals is similar to the above taking into account the necessary changes due to the nature of syllabic structure of more than three radicals, e.g.:

*maqasqasi* - "fire-hook" (root:*qsqs*).

---

[1] For plural formation of the name of the instrument cf.§ 2.5.3(ii)(1).

[2] Excluding verbs of which one of the radicals is a laryngal or a semi-vowel, for which see (ii) & (iii) below.

Morphologically *maqtali* is a derivation of type A verbs. Semantically it is the marker of the name of the instrument for any given verb which contains type A forms. Where the 'head' of the lexical entry of a verb in the dictionary is a verb type other than A, the stem of the noun under discussion derived from it retains the distinctive morphological feature of that type, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *masaddaqi* | - "altar" | (*saddaqa* | - "to sacrifice"; type B) |
| *malā̄ṣe*[1] | - "razor" | (*laṣa* | - "to shave"; type C) |
| *maṣaggə‘i* | - ""support" | (*təṣaggə‘a* | - "to lean upon"; *t*-A/B) |

Further examples of the name of the instrument:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Triradicals: | *mamkaki* | - "saucepan"; | *margaṣi* | - "wine-press" |
| | *masqali* | - "hanger"; | *mašfaṭi* | - "sewing implement" |
| | *mabṭari* | - "stand" | *mal‘ali* | - "instrument for lifting" |
| Quadriradicals: | *maǧarbabi* | - "gutter"; | *manṭalṭali* | - "hanger" |

(ii) Where the initial radical of the stem is a laryngal its structure is *maqatali*, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *maḥaṣabi*[2] | - "washing implement"; | *ma’asari* | - "fetters" |
| *ma‘aragi* | - "staircase"; | *maḥafari* | - "spade" |

Where the final radical is a laryngal the structure of the stem is *maqtəli*, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *mabrəhi* | - "lighting utensil"; | *malṭə’i* | - "glue" |
| *manfəḥi* | - "bellows"; | *makrə‘i* | - "barrier" |
| *maṣfə‘i* | - "clapper"; | *mafrəhi* | - "means of frightening" |

---

[1] Root: *lṣy* . Cf.(iii) below.

[2] *bet maḥaṣabi* - "bathroom".

(iii) Where one of the radicals is a semivowel, w may be represented by o and y by e, e.g.:

Medial semivowels:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| maṣwari/maṣori | - "implement by which something is moved or carried; | (ṣora | - "to carry") |
| makyadi | "threshing floor"; | (keda | - "to tread") |
| masawari | -"brush"; | (sawara | - "to paint"; type B[1]) |
| maqayasi | -"measuring implement"; | (qayasa | - "to measure"[1]) |

Final semivowels:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| masfayi/masfe | - "big needle"; | (safa | - "to sew") |
| ma'atayi | - "a means to enter, access, preface" | (’ata | - "to enter") |
| magassayi | - "a piece of furniture to sit on" | (təgassa | -"to sit down"; t-A/B). |

### b) Name of the place

The pattern məqtāl is used in the expression of the name of the place for nouns derived from triradical verbs,[2] e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| məzfān | - "dancing-ground"; | məšbāb | - "place of visiting" |
| məskāb[3] | - "abode"; | məsqāl | - "place of suspending" |
| məwrād | - "place of descent" | (root: wrd) | |
| məkwāl | - "hiding place" | (root: kwl) | |
| məbyāt | - "dwelling place" | (root: byt) | |
| mətkāy | - "fireplace" | (root: tky) | |
| məgsāy | - "sitting place" | (root: gsy) | |

---

[1] Semivowels are not geminated.

[2] məqtāl is also one of the infinitive forms of the triradical verb. Cf. § 2.7.2 a)(i).

[3] Also: maskab, for both of which the plural form is masākəb. For plural formation of noun derivations with the suffixes mə or ma see: § 2.5.3(ii)(1).

Quadriradicals have a patterm similar to the one above, taking into account the necessary changes due to the nature of the syllabic structure of more than three radicals, e.g.:

mәngәrgār - "wallowing-place" (ʾangargara - "to wallow")
(PL1, 73:5)

Noun stems whose initial radical is a laryngal may have this laryngal vocalized[1], e.g.:

mәḥ(ә)bāʿ - "hiding place"; (mәḥ(ә)dād - "boundary, limit"

### c) Name of the product

The name of the product, or result of the action or state denoted by the verb is expressed by means of the pattern qәttāl, e.g.:

ḥәrrād - "that which is slaughtered"
ḥәddāg - "that which is left"
sәṭṭār - "a piece split off, a splinter"
šәrrāf - "a piece torn off bread; crumb"

## § 2.7.4 The suffixes -nna and -nnat in the expression of abstract nouns

### (i) Form and meaning

Nouns, having one of these suffixes are constructed from the stem CәCәC (triradicals) or CәCCәC (quadriradicals), to which the suffix is added by means of the juncture feature ә.

Nouns derived from type B verbs usually retain the medial radical geminated (see examples below).

---

[1] Cf. § 5.4.1(2)(c).

As regards meaning, the two suffixes are interchangeable, e.g.:

| | |
|---|---|
| bəṣəḥənna/bəṣəḥənnat | - "maturity" |
| məsləmənna/məsləmənnat | - "Islam", |

the occurrence of either one of the two suffixes being a matter determined by lexis.

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| qədəsənna | - "sanctity"<br>(type B); | ʿərəqənna | - "nakedness" |
| qəyəhənna | - "redness"; | yəttəmənna | - "orphanhood"<br>(type B) |
| šəngələnna | - "maturity"; | dəngələnna | - "virginhood" |
| məšməšənna | - "stench"; | wələdənnat | - "parentage" |
| gəbərənnat | - "slavery"; | səməʿənnat | - "witness" |
| kəntəbənnat | - "chieftainship" | | |

(ii) Where the final radical of the stem is n, this n is assimilated to the suffix, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ḥəwənna | - "weakness"; | kəstənna | - "Christianity" |
| məskənna | - "misery" | | |

(iii) Some of the nouns with the suffix -nna are noted without gemination of the consonant element in the suffix, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| fəǧǧəʿəna | - "cowardice"<br>(type B): | məmbəlna | - "widowhood" |
| wəḥərna | - "avarice"; | ʿəməsna | - "pregnancy" |

(iv) In a few cases the entire stem is taken from the noun which has the concrete meaning, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| yəhudənna | - "Judaism" | (yəhudi | - "Jew") |
| mandalənna | - "youth" | (mandalāy | - "a young man") |
| 'aramənnat | - "heathendom" | ('arami | - "heathen") |
| sab(ə)'ənnat | - "mankind" | (sab | - "men"; ' occurs preceding suffixes only). |

## § 2.8 Compound nouns

This section refers to compounds consisting of two nouns - one of which is the qualified, the other the qualifier - which are distinguished from other pairs of words with a similar syntactic relation by means of their idiomatic lexical content.

A distinction can be made on syntactic grounds between (a) compounds whose qualified element is a noun while the qualifier is an adjective and (b) compounds of whose elements are both nouns. In the case of (a) the noun and adjective agree in number and gender, e.g.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| kokab dāwarāy | - "planet"(masc.), | kawākəb dāwrat(pl.) |
| rayām 'əmmanat | - "obelisk"(fem.) | rarāyəm 'əman(pl.) |

In the case of (b) the plural form is regularly effected by means of putting the qualified noun in the plural, e.g.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| wad ḥal | - "cousin" (son of the mother's sister), | wəlād ḥal (pl.) |
| wad darasa | - "pupil, disciple", | wəlād darasa(pl.) |
| dəqāla ḥayat | - "lynx" (lit.: 'a bastard lion'), | dəqālātat ḥayat(pl.) |
| bet məhro | - "school", | 'abyāt məhro(pl.) |
| bet maktab[1] | - "office", | 'abyāt maktab(pl.) |
| bet munat | - "restaurant, hotel", | 'abyāt munat(pl.) |
| ṣabṭāy ʿāsa | - "fisherman", | ṣābṭat ʿāsa(pl.) |

---

[1] Also: maktab - "office", makātəb(pl.)

In the case of certain compounds consisting of two nouns, either one of the nouns can be put in the plural, e.g.:

ʿəwura lāli[1] - "bat", ʿəwura lālitāt/ʿawāyər lāli(pl.)

Where the singular form of two nouns of a compound submit to the process of contamination resulting from phonetic conditions, the plural form is derived from the morphologically one-unit singular, e.g.:

kadbet[2] - "floor", (from:kabəd - "interior" and bet-"house"), kadabbi(pl.)
qəmbet-"backyard", (from:qən - "lower part" and bet-"house"). qanabbi(pl.)
'affet-"entrance", (from:'af- "mouth" and bet-"house"). 'afyāt(pl.)

Here contamination occurs by means of assimilation of labials and dentals.

## § 2.9 The adjective

### § 2.9.1 Place of the adjective

(i) An adjective form may precede or follow the qualified noun. For the most part the adjective precedes the noun which it qualifies, e.g.:

bəzuḥ 'akətbat - "many books"; 'aḥa bəzḥət - "many cows"
dəkkub walwal - "strong wind"; 'əgər ḥarit - "last time"

(ii) The definite article is usually attached to the first word in the group, whether it is the qualified noun or the adjective[3], e.g.:

labāb ʿabi - "the big gate"; laṣəgub 'ənās - "the rich man"

---

[1] According to Palmer, The morphology of the Tigre noun, p.92b, this expression is to be taken as one word: ʿurālāli, pl.: ʿurālitāt.

[2] Also: kabəd bət. Cf § 8.2.1(39).

[3] Cf. § 2.11.2 a).

This also applies to the case of the 'indefinite article' expressed by worot[1] - "one"(masc.) and ḥatte(fem.), e.g.

worot gabər ṣallim - "a (certain) black slave"
('Ag'azot, 87:2)
ḥatte nə'iš walat - "a (certain) small girl"

(iii) As an epithet[2] the adjective regularly follows the noun which it qualifies, e.g.:

ʿargab ʿabi - 'name of a star' } (PL1,55:5/6)
ʿargab nə'uš - 'name of a star' }
kokab ʿabi - "the Big Star" (name of a star; ibid.,56:9)
č̣əgar 'əkkuy - "bad hair" (hair which brings bad luck; cf. PL1,257:16)
marya qayāḥ wamarya ṣallām - "Red Marya and Black Marya"
sawdat ṣaʿada - "Leucoderma" (Lit.: "white leprosy')(SS,39:1)
hobāy ṣallim - "vulture"

## § 2.9.2 Form of the Adjective

A classification of the adjective forms may be made by taking into account their syllabic structure and by, in each case, considering (a) the type of the plural formation: whether it is suffixed or broken and (b) the formation of the feminine singular: whether it is effected by means of a suffix or internal change, or whether it is similar in form to the masculine singular. The main patterns used in the expression of the adjective are set out and exemplified below.

---

[1] Cf. § 7.1.3

[2] Cf. § 7.2.1, example at the end of paragraph.

## a) Adjectives with suffixed plurals

The type of suffixed plurals regularly met with is -(y)ām(masc.) and -(y)āt(fem.). For other types of suffixed plurals see (vii) below.

### (i) CəCuC

The commonest type of adjectives with a suffixed plural is that whose masculine singular has the form CəCuC, feminine singular CəCəC/CəCCət, masculine plural CəCuCām and feminine plural CəCuCāt, e.g.:

səbur - "broken", səbər/səbrət(fem.sing.), səburām(masc.pl.), səburāt(fem.pl.)

This is the passive participle form, the morphology of which is treated in full in § 2.7.1 b) & c). The stem structure of the adjective may therefore be CəCCuC (triradical, type A), CəC̅C̅uC (triradical, type B), CəCCuC (quadriradical, type A), 'əCCuC (triradical, 'a-A), etc., depending on the verb type or derivative from which the passive participle form is produced. For examples see § 2.7.1 b) (i) & (ii); c)(i) & (ii).

### (ii) CāCəC

With this type of adjectives plural suffixes are -ām(masc.) and -āt(fem.) as in (i) above but feminine singular forms have the suffix -at, e.g.: nāfəʿ - "useful", nāfʿat (fem.sing.), nāfʿām(masc.pl.), nāfʿāt (fem.pl.)

One adjective was noted whose morphology is similar to that of the active participle CāCəC without itself being a verbal form[1], e.g.: bəʿəd - "other", bəʿədat(fem.), bəʿədām(masc.pl.), bəʿədāt(fem.pl.)

---

[1] Cf. § 2.7.1 a)(i), examples of medial laryngals.

### (iii) CaCāC, CaCCāC[1]

Adjectives with a masculine singular form of the structure CaCāC, CaCCāC may have suffixed plurals or broken plurals[2]. The feminine singular form is always effected by means of the suffix -it, the plural suffixes being -yām(masc.) and -yāt(fem.), e.g.:

qadām - "former", qadāmit(fem.sing.); qadāmyām (masc.pl.),
qadāmyāt (fem.pl.).

laʿāl - "upper", laʿālit(fem.sing.), laʿālyām (masc.pl.),
laʿālyāt (fem.pl.).

laǧaǧ - "obstinate", laǧaǧit(fem.sing.); ʾazām-"silent, ʾazāmit (fem.sing.)
karrāš- "fat", karrāšit(fem.sing.);naggār-"talkative"

### (iv) CaCəC

A few examples of this masculine singular pattern are noted. They may have suffixed or broken-plural and their feminine singular form is not subject to a definite pattern, e.g.:

ḥaməq[3] - "weak", ḥamqat(fem.), ḥamqām(masc.pl.)
ḥamqāt(fem.pl.)

qayəḥ - "red", qayāḥ(fem.), qayḥām(masc.& fem.pl;
also: qayḥit).

### (v) CVC

Where V is u the suffixes are similar to those treated in (i) above, e.g.:

ḥud - "little", ḥədət(fem.), ḥudām(masc.pl.), ḥudāt(fem.pl.)

Where V is ā the suffixes are similar to those in (iii) above, e.g.:

ḥār - "last", ḥārit(fem.), ḥāryām/ḥāyrām (masc.pl.)
ḥāryāt/ḥāyrāt (fem.pl.)

---

[1] Cf. § 2.7.1(e).

[2] Cf. b)(v) below.

[3] Not to be confused with ḥāməq - "weak", which is the active participle form.

(vi) One adjective of frequent occurrence whose pattern is idiosyncratic is

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| sanni | - "good", | sannet(fem.), | sanyām(masc.pl.),<br>sanyāt(fem.pl.) |

(vii) Some adjectives whose patterns differ from those treated in (i)-(v) above are noted. Many of them express hues of colours, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ḥambalāy | - "gray", | ḥambalāyt(fem.), | ḥambalitat(masc.& fem.pl.) |
| ḥamašganāy | - "dark gray"[1], | ḥamašganāyt(fem.), | ḥamašganitāt(masc. & fem.pl.) |
| ḥamalmil | - "brown", | ḥamalmāl(fem.), | ḥamalmilām(masc.pl.),<br>ḥamalmilāt(fem.pl.) |

There are adjectives that do not have distinct masculine and feminine forms, in the singular as well as in the plural, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| makān | - | "barren"(masc.& fem.), | makānāt (masc. & fem.pl.) |
| ḥamās | - | "brown" (masc.& fem.), | ḥamāsāt (masc. & fem.pl.) |
| qori | - | "deep" (masc. & fem.), | qoritāt (masc. & fem.pl.) |

The structure of the singular form in the first two instances has similar features to the one dealt with in (iii) above. Here, however, the plural suffix has no initial -y- and is in fact -āt[2]. The suffix āt in the third instance is preceded by the juncture feature -t-[3].

---

[1] Also: "brown"

[2] Cf. § 2.4.1 a).

[3] Cf. § 2.4.1 b)

### b) Adjectives with broken plurals

The type of broken plurals regularly met with here is CaCaC̅C̅əC/CaCāCVC[1]. A broken plural form makes no distinction of gender.

### (i) CaCiC, CaC̅C̅iC

The commonest type of adjective with a broken-plural formation has a masculine singular form of the structure CaCiC, or CaC̅C̅iC in the case of type B derivations. The feminine singular form is CaC̅C̅āC for both CaCiC and CaC̅C̅iC and the plural form is CaCāyəC or CaC̅C̅āyəC in the case of the singular CaC̅C̅iC.

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *ḥač̣ir* | - "short", | *ḥač̣č̣ār*(fem.), | *ḥač̣āyər*(pl.) |
| *rayim* | - "long", | *rayām*[2](fem.), | *rayāyəm*/*rarāyəm*(pl.) |
| *rəḥib*[3] | - "wide", | *raḥāb*[4](fem.), | *raḥāyəb*(pl.) |
| *marir* | - "bitter", | *marrār*(fem.), | *marāyər*(pl.) |
| *raqiq* | - "thin", | *raqqāq*(fem.), | *raqāyəq*(pl.) |
| *ṣabib* | - "narrow", | *ṣabbāb*(fem.), | *ṣabāyəb*(pl.) |
| *ḥaddis* | - "new", | *ḥaddās*(fem.), | *ḥaddāyəs*(pl.) |
| *ṣallim* | - "black", | *ṣallām*(fem.), | *ṣallāyəm*(pl.) |
| *č̣aggir* | - "hairy", | *č̣aggār*(fem.), | *č̣aggāyər*(pl.) |

One adjective is noted whose plural form has an alternative with the suffix -*ač*[5]:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *ʿabi* | - "big", | *ʿabbāy*(fem.), | *ʿabāyi*[6]/*ʿabbač* |

---

[1] Cf. § 2.5.3 b).

[2] Semivowels are not geminated.

[3] The presence of ə in the first syllable is due to the initial laryngal. Cf. § 1.7.4(f)

[4] Laryngals are not geminated.

[5] Cf. § 2.4.4

[6] For: * *abāyəy*.

A few adjectives have masculine singular forms as above but a suffixed feminine singular and an alternative plural, e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *bakit* | - "lucky", | *bakitat*(fem.), | *bakāyət*/*bakitām*(masc. & fem.pl.) |
| *waǧib* | - "excellent", | *waǧibat*(fem.), | *waǧāyəb*/*'awaǧǧəb*(pl.) |

### (ii) CaCCiC and CaCCuC

Adjectives whose masculine singular has one of these patterns form their feminine singular by means of the suffix -*at*, the plural forms being of the type CaCa$\overline{\mathrm{CC}}$əC/CaCāCVC[1], e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *maskin* | - "poor, miserable", | *maskinat*(fem.), | *masākin*(pl.) |
| *ḥankil* | - "crook-legged", | *ḥankilat*(fem.), | *ḥanakkəl*(pl.) |
| *makruh* | - "miserable", | *makruhat*(fem.), | *mākarəh*(pl.) |

### (iii) CaCCaC

Adjectives whose masculine singular form has this structure have plural forms of the type mentioned in (ii) above. The data collected give reason to believe[2] that there is no distinction of gender in the singular forms.

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *šangab* | - | "left" (sing.), | *šanaggəb*(pl.) |
| *šalšal* | - | "long haired"(sing.), | *šalaššəl*(pl.) |
| *banban* | - | "different, | *banābin*(pl.) |

---

[1] Cf. § 2.5.3 b)

[2] More data are required in order to establish a definite statement.

(iv) CVCCāy, V being *a* or *ə*.

Adjectives whose masculine singular forms are of this structure form their feminine singular by means of the suffix *-t*, the plural being of the type CaCaC̄C̄it[1], e.g.:

*qərč̣āy* - "curly haired, *qərč̣āyt*(fem.), *qarač̣č̣it*(pl.)
*šagrāy* - "yellow", *šagrāyt*(fem.), *šagarrit*[2](pl.)

(v) CaCāC, CaC̄C̄āC

Adjectives of this structure are treated in a)(iii) above. Following are a few examples with broken-plural forms:

*fadāb* - "brave", *fadābit*(fem.), *fadāyəb*(pl.)
*ḥamām* - "sickly", *ḥamāmit*(fem.), *ḥamāyəm*[3](pl.)
*'addāg* - "slow", *'addāgit*(fem.), *'addāyəg*(pl.)

(vi) Adjectives whose structure in the singular or plural forms differs from that mentioned in (i)-(v) above are noted. Some of them are:

CəCuC: *nə'uš* - "small", *nə'iš*(fem.), *na'āyəš*(pl.)

This is the structure of the passive participle with a broken-plural (cf. § 2.7.1 b)) and with a feminine singular form[4] whose pattern is idiosyncratic.

CaCeC : *'aber* - "old" (masc. & fem.sing.), *'abāyər*(pl.)
CəCCāC: *gəndāb* - "old", *gəndābit*(fem.), *ganaddəb*(pl.)
CaCaCa: *ṣa‘ada* - "white"(masc. & fem.sing.), *ṣa‘ādi*[5] (pl.)

---

[1] Cf. § 2.5.3 c).

[2] The word *šəgarrit* in LH,229a is to be corrected accordingly.

[3] This form is also the plural of *ḥəmum* - "a sick person"

[4] Palmer, *The morphology of the Tigre noun*, p.72, attests the form *nə'əš*(fem.) which I have not encountered.

[5] Cf. § 2.5.3 c).

### c) Adjectives whose singular form has the suffix -āy.

A noun may yield an adjective form by means of the suffixes -āy(masc.) and -āyt(fem.), the plural form being suffixed or broken plural. This singular type derivation resembles the substantival one in which collective nouns denoting human beings are rendered singulatives by means of the same suffixes. Substantival forms with -āy do not have, however, distinctive plural forms, the collective form being used in the expression of plurality[1].

Examples:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| mədrāy - "terrestrial", | mədrāyt(fem.), | mədrāyām(pl.), |
| | (from: | mədər: "earth") |
| ʻastarāy-"celestial", | ʻastarāyt(fem.) | ʻastarāyām(pl.), |
| | (from: | ʻastar - "heaven") |
| č̣ablāy - "ash coloured", | č̣ablāyt(fem.), | č̣aballit(pl.), |
| | (from: | č̣abal - "ashes") |

### § 2.10 Pronominal suffixes in conjunction with nouns and particles

The forms used as pronominal suffixes are as follows:

| Person | Singular | Plural |
|---|---|---|
| 1st | -ye | -na |
| 2nd masc. | -ka | -kum |
| 2nd fem. | -ki | -kən |
| 3rd masc. | -u | -om |
| 3rd fem. | -a | -an |

The attachment of a pronominal suffix to the noun and to some particles brings about certain features of juncture as in the cases set out below.

---

[1] Cf. § 2.2.2 b)(iii).

## § 2.10.1 Pronominal suffixes in conjunction with nouns

a) In nouns ending in a dental or alveolar consonant, a palatalization of such a consonant occurs when followed by the first person pronominal suffix. This usually happens together with gemination of the palatalized consonant in intervocalic position.[1]

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ʿad | - "village"; | ʿaǧǧe | - "my village" |
| warāt | - "work"; | warāčče | - "my work" |
| raʾas | - "head"; | raʾašše | - "my head" |
| magāz | - "scissors"; | maqāžže | - "my scissors" |
| gaṣ | - "face"; | gač̣č̣e | - "my face |
| šariṭ | - "string"; | šarič̣č̣e | - "my string" |

Gemination of the palatalized consonant is optional, although the geminated variant is more common. In one case the palatalized consonant is regularly not geminated:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| nos | - "self"; | noše | - "myself" |

b) Nouns ending in a vowel

(i) In nouns ending in a vowel and followed by a pronominal suffix beginning in a vowel, a transitional -h- occurs between noun and suffix.

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ḥu | - "brother"; | ḥuhu | - "his brother" |
| ʾəde | - "hand"; | ʾədeha | - "her hand" |
| səʾəli | - "photograph"; | səʾlihom | - "their(masc.) photograph" |
| matlo | - "dowry"; | matlohan | - "their(fem.) dowry" |

---

[1] Cf. d)(ii) below, footnote 3

(ii) Where the noun ends in the vowel a and is followed by the pronominal suffix of the third person, this a may be represented by ə or zero[1], e.g.:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| higa | - "language"; | hig(ə)hom | - "their(masc.)language" |
| mora | - "stick"; | mor(ə)hu | - "his stick" |
| səga | - "meat" | səg(ə)ha | - "its (i.e. 'her's' - the animal's) meat" |

A single instance was recorded, in which a final e becomes ə:

'əde - "hand"; 'ədəhu - "his hand" (regularly: 'ədəhu;cf. second example in (i) above)

c) In the case of three nouns which end in a consonant -'ab "father", ḥam - "father-in-law" and 'af - "mouth", (i) the pronominal suffixes of the first and second person are directly attached to the noun or suffixed to a transitional vowel -u-, (ii) the pronominal suffixes of the third person are always attached to the juncture feature -h-, which is itself preceded by -u- or directly attached to the noun.

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ḥamye | - "my father-in-law" | or | ḥamuye |
| 'afka | - "your mouth" | or | 'afuka |
| 'abki | - "your father" | or | 'abuki |
| 'abhu | - "his father" | or | 'abuhu |

---

[1] Cf. § 5.12.7 b)

The above three nouns belong to that group of nouns whose plural forms are effected by means of the suffix *-ač*[1] which - when the third person pronominal suffix is attached to it - is represented, for the most part, by *-ač*, *ačt* or *-ayt*, e.g.:

*fatač* - "friends"; *fataču*, *fatačtu* or *fataytu* - "his friends"

*'abač* - "paternal uncles"; *'abaču*, *'abačtu* or *'abaytu* - "his paternal uncles",

*'abačom*, *'abačtom* or *'abaytom*, etc.

d)

(i) Some nouns whose lexically stated gender is feminine (correlating with female sex in animate nouns) require the juncture feature *-t-* when the first or third person pronominal suffix is attached to them.

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *kərən* | - "voice"; | *kərəntu* | - "his voice" |
| *ʿən* | - "eye"; | *ʿəntu* | - "his eye" |
| *naʿal* | - "sister-in-law"; | *naʿalta* | - "her sister-in-law" |
| *ḥal* | - "maternal aunt; | *ḥaltu* | - "his maternal aunt" |
| *walat* | - "daughter"; | *walattu* | - "his daughter" |

(ii) Certain broken-plural forms of the type *'aCCəl* have also *-t-* as their juncture feature[2], e.g.:

*ṣafər* - "nail"; *'aṣfər* - "nails", *'aṣfərtu* - "his nails"

This *-t-* occurs palatalized[3] when followed by the first person pronominal suffix (in accordance with the statement made in a above), e.g.: *ḥalče* ........

---

[1] Cf. § 2.4.4

[2] Cf. § 2.5.3 d)(iii)

[3] Gemination of the palatalized consonant not occurring in the examples set out in d)(i) & (ii), except in *walačče* - "my daughter", which is morphologically * *walattye* (i.e. not geminated)

e)

(i) Certain monosyllabic nouns of the structure CVC in which V is ə or a have their final radical doubled when followed by the third person pronominal suffix. Most of these nouns are morphologically CVCC[1].

Examples:

kəs - "accusation"; kəssu - "his accusation" (pl.: kəssotāt)
ʿad - "village"; ʿaddu - "his village" (pl.: ʿaddotāt)
ləb - "heart"; ləbbu- "his heart" (pl.: ʾalbāb)
sar - "half"; sarra -"its half" (i.e.: 'the tribe's) (pl.: ʾasrār)
ʾəm - "mother"; ʾəmmu - "his mother" (pl.: ʾəmmāt)
ṣar - "companion"; ṣarru - "his companion(s)" (pl.: ṣarotāt, no third radical attested).

(ii) In two instances the morphological data of the singular form are similar to those presented in (i) above, but the plural forms make use of phonetically three different radicals:

fak - "repayment" (in kind or deed); fakku - "his repayment" (pl.: ʾafnāk)
qar - "horn"; qarru - "his horn" (pl.: ʾaqərnat/ʾaqənrat)

f) The noun wal/wad - "son", occurs regularly in its variant forms, e.g.: wal/wad masniye - "the son of my friend". When followed by suffixes not beginning with a vowel the variant wal occurs. When followed by suffixes beginning with a vowel the stem is wald or wad, the final consonant in the latter case being geminated.

---

[1] Cf. § 2.6.1 b)(ii) & footnote.

Examples:

walye - "my son"

walki - "your (fem.sing.) son"

waldu/waddu - "his son"

## § 2.10.2 Pronominal suffixes in conjunction with particles

Many particles occur with pronominal suffixes, generally having juncture features resembling those described above, for the noun (in § 2.10.1). A brief statement of their morphological behaviour when they occur with pronominal suffixes is set out below.

a) Particles ending in a vowel have the juncture feature -h- when followed by suffixes beginning with a vowel; the pronominal suffix is added directly to particles ending in a consonant. Palatalization of the final consonant of the particle occurs in accordance with the statement made in § 2.10.1 a).

Examples:

ḥaqo - "after"; ḥaqohu - "after him, afterwards"

ḥante - "under"; ḥantehu -"under him"; ḥanteka - "under you" (masc.sing.)

məsəl - "with"; məslu -"with him"; məsəlka - "with you" (masc.sing.)

'ət - "in,to"; 'əttu - "to him, there"; 'əčče - "to me"

The juncture feature -h- is also found with certain particles ending in a consonant when these are followed by suffixes beginning with a vowel, e.g.:

kəmsal - "as, like"; kəmsalhu - "like him, likewise"

'əmbal - "without, beside"; 'əmbalhu - "without him, besides"

b) Monosyllabic particles of the structure CəC show a wide range of peculiarities where juncture features are for the most part only lexically statable. Most such particles have their last consonant geminated when preceded by a suffix beginning with a vowel, e.g.:

*mən* - "from"; *mənnu* - "from him"; *mənka* - "from you"; *mənəna* - "from us"

*'əb* - "with, by"; *'əbbu* - "by it (masc.sing.); *bəka* - "by you" (also "you have", cf. § 4.3 (a))

*'ət* - "in, to"; *'əttu* - "in it (masc.sing.), there"; *'ətna* - "to us"

*kəl* - "all, every"; *kəllu*[1]- "all(of it)"; *kəllom* - "all (of them)"; *kəlna* - "all (of us)"

One particle of high distribution whose juncture feature does not include gemination of the final consonant is *'əl* - "to", e.g.:

*'əlu* - "to him", *'əlom* - "to them".

The final consonant of this particle may become palatalized when followed by the first person pronominal suffix, e.g.:

*'əlye* or *'əye* - "to me"[2]

## § 2.11 The definite article

The enclitic particle *la* is used in the expression of the article of determination.[3] *la* is invariable in form.

---

[1] Or: *kullu*, the first *u* being pronounced short and centralized.

[2] Cf. § 1.2.5

[3] *la* is also used in the expression of the relative; cf. § 3.

## § 2.11.1 Function

a) Where *la* functions as the definite article its absence may signify indefiniteness.[1]

Examples:

*labə'əs walamasni lakərmād 'ət 'arqay wadawo.*

- "The husband and the friend put the stump on a bed".

(Tigre Texts, 3:13)

*'ənās sabuʿ wal ʿalaw 'əlu.*

- "A man had seven sons".

('Ag'azot, 68:10)

...*wa'ənsa nāy nabi rakbaw*

- ".. and they found the camels of a prophet".

(PL1,80:8)

b) The definite article *la* is regularly used to recall what has just been mentioned, e.g.:

*'ət karan kəl'e bet məhro hallaya. laḥatte bet məhro nāy awāləd walaḥatte bet məhro nāy wəlād.*

- "There are two schools in Keren, one school for girls, the other for boys" (lit:...'the one school ... the one school...').

---

[1] The numeral *worot* - "one", *ḥatte*(fem.), may serve in the expression of: "a certain". Cf. §§ 7.1.3 & 2.9.1(ii).

c) As a rule, proper names need no article. Other nouns which are definite enough in themselves, such as nouns of generic sense, usually occur without the definite article.[1]

Examples:

*'ətyopya bəzuḫ maḥāzāt bədiba* - "There are many rivers in Ethiopia"

*'azbun bāli galad* - "the times of the Old Testament".
(Storia, 184:20).

*ḥarmāz mən ḥayat la'abbe* - "The elephant is bigger than the lion".

*sawdat ṣallām lazayəd 'ət ra'as təfaggər wa'ət bə'ədma garob*.
- "melanosis comes out mostly on the head and also on the other [parts of the] body".
(SS,38:1)

*'abaq lazayəd 'ət 'əday faggər waḥar 'ət·garab kullu*.
- "Scab comes out mostly on the hands and later on the whole body".
(Ibid., 41:1)

## § 2.11.2 Syntactic features

a) The definite article *la* is generally prefixed to the noun - or to the first element in a group of nouns, irrespective of whether it is either the qualifying or qualified element (see examples in §§ 2.9.1(ii) for the case in which the adjective is preceded by the noun).

---

[1] The distribution of the definite article *la* shows a considerable amount of semantic redundancy. Thus, nouns - or groups of nouns - which do not require the definite article, may occur with it, e.g.: *kokab 'abi/lakokab 'abi* - "the Big Star" (name of a star, cf. § 2.9.1(iii), third example). Cf. also § 2.11.2 c) & d).

The usual order met with is: article + qualifier + qualified, e.g.:

ʼəb ladəqqub ʼankuka laqərṭuṭat sabṭat
- "/The ant/ grasped the seed of grain with her powerful jaws"

(ʼAgʼazot,73:10)

laʼasər wakəlʼot faraʻ ʼəsrāʼəl - "the twelve tribes of Israel".

(Storia,100:22)

lagəndāb ʼənās - "the old man"; lakəlʼot ḫu - "the two brothers"

laʼəkkit gabayom - "their evil way".

In normal rapid articulation of speech, the definite article may be attached to the preceding word of the utterance. This may mainly occur where the preceding word is (i) a particle or (ii) the first element in a 'construct state'. In the case of (i) the definite article may be assimilated with the final consonant of the preceding particle[1,2].

Examples:

(i) wala nəḥəsu - "and its (i.e. the house's) clay roof".
wala wəłādkum - "and your(masc.plur.) children".
ḫatte mənna masānita - "one(fem.) of her friends".
nāyła mudiryat šayam - "chieftains of the province".
dibba ḫalfa ʼawkāt - "on previous occasions".
ʼətta dəgge gəsko - "I went to town"
ʼənze kərayo ʼəgəlla ʼakətbat - "Put the books here".

---

[1] Cf. §§ 1.2.5 & 1.7.4(c), exx.

[2] In texts which were rendered in writing, in Ethiopic script by native speakers, these phenomena were graphically noted in a consistent manner.

(ii) 'agbuyla dəgge - "the streets of the town"
kətārla 'agmāl - "the camels' caravan"

b) The definite article la is met with prefixed to nouns to which pronominal suffixes are suffixed[1], e.g."

lawaraqač̣č̣e - "my letter"; lakarsa - "the inside of it" (fem.sing.)

qadam la'əssit labə'əsa mən mayət ...-" If the husband dies before his wife ...".

(FM,149:19)

...ka'ət lašəknəha naṭbat walašəknəha šəkna 'adəg ga'at
"... And/the blood/ dripped on her foot and her foot became a hoof of a donkey."

(Lt Leg,4:7)

c) Where a noun is qualified by another noun (i.e. in the 'construct state') the definite article may precede either the qualifying noun or both, e.g.:

wəlād lādəgge - "the boys of the village"
(Tigre Games,63:12)

lawəlād ladəgge - "the boys of the village"
(Ibid.66:17)

fatāy wāldat lawalat - "a friend of the parents of the girl"
(ʿAd Šek,2:(5))

lamolād lamāytām - "the relative of the dead"
(PL1,251:21)

lanaggas walagabil 'əsrā'el - "the kings and the people of Israel"
(Storia,81:4)

---

[1] Thus occupying the same position as the demonstratives. Cf. § 3.

Where an adjective qualifies the first noun in the group, the adjective plus the first noun are to be treated in accordance with the statement made in a) above, e.g.:

laʿabāyi šayam lamangas - "the big chiefs of the kingdom"
(Storia,89:26)

laʿabāyi sab lanəgus - "the high officials of the king"
(Racconti,34:4)

d) Two nouns which are semantically connected and form a syntactic group by means of a conjunction require the article for only one of the nouns, e.g.:

lašəḥərtāy wabozzāy - "the 'sorcerer' and the 'magician' (i.e. certain spirits).
(PL1,254:6)

cf. lašəḥərtāy ma labozzāy - "the Š or the B".
(Ibid.,254:11)

lašəḥərtāy gale mən bozzāy lənʼəš - "The Š is a bit smaller than the B."
(Ibid,254:5)

cf. wamən lašəḥərtāy labozzāy ʼakke - "the B is more evil than the Š."
(Ibid.,255:4)

# Chapter Three

# THE PRONOUN

The grammatical data dealt with in this chapter refers to words or complexes which are typical of the expression of the pronoun in Tigre. Words whose contextual sense only gives them a grammatical role similar to that of a pronoun are not treated in the chapter. It should be noted here that not all Tigre pronouns are 'outline words': some of them are lexical entities which are also used as pronouns, and their factual content must be deduced from the context, e.g.

*worot* (see: § 3.7), *ra'as* (see: § 3.2) etc.

The data dealt with in the chapter consists of: (i) - the personal pronoun (§ 3.1); (ii) - the reflexive pronoun: *nos*, *ra'as* (§ 3.2); (iii) - the reciprocal pronoun: *ḥəd*, *nosnos* (§ 3.3); (iv) - the possessive pronoun: *nāy* (§ 3.4); (v) - the interrogative pronoun: *mi*, *man*, *'ayi* (§ 3.5); (vi) - the relative pronoun: *la* (§ 3.6); (vii) - the indefinite pronoun: *woro(t)*, *ḥatte*, *manma*, *'əgale*, *fəlān*, *gale*, *laga'a ləgba'*, *dəla*, *sema* (§ 3.7, a) -h)); (viii) - demonstratives (§ 3.8).

Pronominal suffixes and pronominal adverbs are not included in this chapter. The former are treated in §§ 2.10 (in conjunction with nouns) and 5.12 (in conjunction with verbs); the latter are dealt with in the section on adverbs (see: §§ 8.1.5, 8.1.6, 8.1.7.1) For the definite article see § 2.11.

## § 3.1 The personal pronoun

The personal pronouns in Tigre are as follows:

| Person | Singular | Plural |
|---|---|---|
| 1 common | ’ana | ḥəna |
| 2 masculine | ’ənta | ’əntum |
| 2 feminine | ’ənti | ’əntən |
| 3 masculine | hətu | hətom |
| 3 feminine | həta | hətan |

§ 3.1.1 The second person plural personal pronouns may be used as polite forms of address and the third person plural personal pronouns may be used as polite forms of reference. In such instances the personal pronoun is grammatically a plural form.

Examples:

> *... wa’əntum ’abuye ’addaḥa sema ’əb had’at ‘ərəf ’itərakbo* -
>
> "'... And you, my father, never find [time to] rest peacefully at midday'."
>
> (’Ag’azot, 100:17)

> *... wahətom ’əgəl gərmāwi nəgusa nagast mən ləb lafagra ḥamde ’aqrəb ’ət ləblo həgyahom damdamaw* -
>
> "... And he (i.e. the minister from Senegal) concluded his speech [to the conference members] saying: 'Let me offer hearty thanks to His Majesty the Emperor'."

§ 3.1.2 The personal pronouns of the first and second persons are used in the expression of the copula in the first and second persons. Examples of the personal pronoun in this capacity are given in § 4.1 and § 4.1.3(b) below.

§ 3.1.3 Since the three grammatical persons may be implied by the verb form itself, the incident of the personal pronoun in the expression of the subject of the verb, is likely to be low, e.g.:

> *woro ʼənās yom ʼəgəl timut tu belawo. ḥar hətu mən rabbi ʼəgəl ləske ʼasʼənu wada wamorhu nasʼa katəbaggasa. gadəm ʼət kəl wadag ləthabbaʻ waʼət kəl ʻənkəllat faggər kalataqābəl ʻala. waḥar ʻekit raʼa wamaṣʼaya kaʼəndo ṣabṭaya ṣaʻana ʼətta karabbi ʼəgəl ʼilaʻarre bu kaʼəgəl ʼiləqtallo lasʻəya ʻala.* -
>
> "Somebody (lit.: 'they') said to a certain man: 'To-day you shall die'. After that, in order to flee from God, he put on his sandals and took his stick and then departed. Now, in every river-bed he hid, and on every hill he went out and observed (i.e.: inspected). Then he saw a she-camel and approached her, and having seized her, mounted her and made her run in order that God might not reach and kill him."
>
> (Tigre Texts, 8:4)

In a chain of speech consisting of sentences with alternate subjects - such as in the case of a dialogue - the incidence of the personal pronoun is likely to be high, e.g.:

> *walašum higa kəllom kəm samʻa bellom mən ʼaddām molād ṣallim bəkum wahətom ʼifālna belawo. wahətu bellom ʼət ḥəyāyət haye mi ʼənsus ṣallim bəkum ʼəndo bela kullu sāma ʼəlom. wahətom ḥatte naʼat ṣallām bəna belawo. hətu haye waʼəlla naʼatkum ʼəttaya*

tənabbər bellom wahətom balsaw məsəlna tənabbər... - "And the chief, having heard them all speak (lit.: 'having heard the speech of all of them'), said unto them: 'Do you have a dark relative?' And they said unto him: 'No'. And he said unto them: 'What dark domestic animals do you have among your animals?' Having said ⁄this⁄ he named all ⁄animals⁄ to them. And they said unto him: 'We have one dark she-camel'. He, however, said unto them: 'And this she-camel of yours, where does she live?' And they replied: 'She lives with us...'."

(PL1, 90:10)

§ 3.1.4 The personal pronoun can be used in such a way that it emphasizes its referent. This use is typical of sentences which, when formed without the personal pronoun, have a different connotation, e.g.: ...yah yəbba ʼəgəl ḫasse ʼigabbəʼ ʼəlye ʼana ʼəb masārye wadekwo...

"'...O father I cannot lie! I ⁄am the one who⁄ did it with my axe...'."

(ʼAgʼazot, 60:14)

Without the personal pronoun the element emphasized in the above sentence would be the predicate.

walaʼənās bəzuḫ taʽa ǧǧaba waʼəgəl ʼabunawas ramqayu ʼəlla ʽelaka habanni waʼənta ʼəlli gamalye ʼəb ṣoru nəsaʼ ʼəndo bello. waʼabunawas bello ʼana ʼəlla ʼakānye ta labəzuḫ tənaffəʽanni daʼamǧallābka mi 'əwadde nəs'a kama.[1] -

"And the man was very astonished and entreated Abunawas saying to him: 'Give me this well of yours, and as for you, take this camel of mine with its lead.' And Abunawas said unto him: 'As for me, this is my place and it is very useful (lit.: 'my place which is very useful') to me; but for your sake what shall I do? Take it then.'" -

(PL1, 31:4)

§ 3.1.5 The personal pronoun of the second person may be met with having a vocative meaning, often in apposition to its referent, e.g.:

wo 'əntum 'ayhud - "'O you Jews!'"

(NT, Acts, 18:14)

'ənten 'anes - "'You women!'"

(NT, Ephesians, 5:22)

## § 3.2 The reflexive pronoun: nos, (nafs), ra'as

§ 3.2.1 The reflexive pronoun which is usually expressed by nos - "self" in its inflected forms is used (a) to indicate identity of object with subject and (b) to lay stress upon the pronoun's referent, e.g.:

la'əmmama haye ḥaqo walačče 'i'ənabbər təbe kanosa təšannaqat. -

"As for her mother, however, she said: 'I shall not

---

[1] In this instance the personal pronoun resembles the function of 'amma in Classical Arabic.

live after [the death of] my daughter, [and] then hanged herself."

(Tribù, 54:30)

wakəm təbaššala ʾəgəl nosom balluʿ waʾagwārom hedu -

"And when it is cooked (i.e.: 'the meat') they eat alone (lit.: 'by themselves') and [then], give [some of it] to their neighbours."

(PL1, 206:1)

wahaye gaʾa bəzuḥ ʾaddām qāl rabbi ʾəgəl ləsmaʿ ʾət lazʿoʿyo wahətu nosu ʾət səməṭ baḥar genesāreṭ ʾət ləbaṭṭər ʾət ǧafar labaḥar labaṭra kəlʾe ǧalbat raʾa. -

"Now it came to pass [that] as many people pressed upon him to hear the word of God while he (lit.: 'and while he himself') was standing beside the lake of Genesaret, he saw two boats standing by the side of the lake."

(NT, Luke, 5:1)

... noskum təṣṣaʿano walaḥəṣān ʾəb ʾəgaru ligis taḥadgo... -

"... 'You yourself (polite form - referring here to the child's father) ride [the donkey] and leave the boy to go on foot?...'"

('Agʾazot, 74:4)

§ 3.2.2 *nos* may be used to emphasize the idea of possession or ownership, thus having the meaning: "own", e.g.:

*wa'əb 'əlla šum 'əb fərd nosu mota* -
"And in this [way] the chief died by his own sentence."
(Tigre Texts, 10:6)

The non inflected form *nos*, may also occur in a semantic context resembling the one in the above example. Its meaning here is, however, idiomatic, e.g.:

*'akay nos* -
"illness, infirmity" (*'akay* - "badness")
(NT, Luke, 8:2/3)

*ḥamde nos* -
"pride, haughtiness" (*ḥamde* - "thank, praise")
(NT, Luke, 5:1)

*dəhir nos* -
"modesty, humbleness (*dəhir* - "state of being low")
(NT, Colossians, 2:18)

§ 3.2.3 In the translation of the New Testament the word *nafs*[1] often has a grammatical role similar to that of *nos*, e.g.:

*... gis wanafsəka 'əgəl qaš 'ar'e ...* -
"'... Go and show yourself to the priest...'"
(NT, Matthew, 8:4)

*... waḥaməs wareḥ nafsa kawalat ...* -
" ... And she hid (lit.: 'hid herself') [for] five months."
(NT, Luke, 1:24)

---

[1] The meaning of *nafs* is "soul"; the form of the reflexive pronoun *nos* seems to have evolved from it. Cf. LH, 325a.

§ 3.2.4 The word ra'as - "head" is regularly used in the expression of the reflexive pronoun, e.g.:

> laḥəṣān ʿad kəm ʾata ʾəndo saʾa raʾasu ʾət ʿad saʿa -
>
> "Hoping that the boy has returned home to the village he (lit.: 'he himself' , i.e.: 'the father') ran to the village."
>
> (ʾAgʾazot, 71:7)

## § 3.3 The reciprocal pronoun: ḥəd, nosnos

§ 3.3.1 The reciprocal pronoun is expressed by means of (a) ḥəd or ʿad/ʾad ḥəd and (b) nosnos. ḥəd is usually used of two and nosnos of more. Grammatically nosnos can be taken as a reflexive pronoun, typical of expressions of reciprocity (usually with the meaning of: 'among themselves', etc.).

Examples:

> kalāli ʾabāy ʾəndo ʾamsalaw ḥəd ʾadməʿaw ... waḥar ... ḥəd ʾalelaw wasəgād ḥəd ʾəndo ṣabṭaw məsəl tawaw belaw. -
>
> "Then at night since they believed [each other to be] enemies, they struck at each other ... and later on ... they recognized each other (i.e.: they realised who they were ) and together died holding each other's neck."
>
> (C Ross Trad, 46:4)

*... ʼət ʼadḫəd mən taʻālagaw ...* -

"As /the two giants/ fought each other..."

(Tribù, 4:1)

*... ʼət ləblo nosnosom tahagāgaw* -

"They (i.e.: the disciples ) conferred with one another saying: '...'."

(NT, Matthew, 16:7)

*... nosnosan təbahāhalaya* -

"They (i.e. the three women ) said among themselves: '...'."

(NT, Mark, 16:3)

*waʼəb nosnosom ... belaw* -

"And they (ie. the people of Israel ) said among themselves: '...'."

§ 3.3.2. The above mentioned notion of 'two or more than two' (see § 3.3.1 above) which underlies the distinction between *ḫəd* and *nosnos* is also valid in the following cases: where the mutual relatinn is (a) between two sides or groups rather than two individuals and (b) among members of a group which is taken grammatically as a collective (cf. § 2.2.1).

Examples:

*katəšāfafawom waʻad ḫəd ʼabdaw wasəmet ʻad ḫəd karaw* -

"So they (i.e.: one family ) waged war against them (i.e.: against a rival family ) and they annihilated each other and destroyed each other's name."

(PL1, 23:25)

*ḥamač waḥamātāt haye ʼəgəl ḥəd ṭaqro* -

"Male and female relatives by marriage, however, entertain each other [with food and drink]." -

(FM, 106:20)

*ʼəbbəlla ʻāmat ʼəlla bet ʼabrəhe nosnosa təgādabat wa'ət salas ʼənkər təkaffalat* -

"In that (lit. 'this') year the [tribesmen of] Bet ʼAbrəhe fought among themselves and [consequently] were divided into three sides (i.e.: factions )."

(PL1, 195:22)

§ 3.3.3 In a few instances *nosnos* is found where one might have expected *ḥəd*. This may happen where reciprocity is implied by the verb itself while *nosnos* serves in contrasting a different subject of the same utterance, e.g.:

*walawad nəgus nosnosom kəʼənna ʼət ləthāgaw ... samməʻom ʻala* -

"And the king's son was listening to them [from his hiding place] while they (i.e.: the two soldiers) were talking among themselves in the following manner: '...'."

(ʼAgʼazot, 76:19)

In adverbial expressions reciprocity is usually expressed by *ḥəd*, e.g.:

*šāwlātāt bəzḥām tom səməṭ ḥəd hollaw* -

"Šāwlāṭāt (i.e.: name of group of Stars ): They are many. They are found the one beside the other."

(Pl1. 55:7)

...salāsitom 'akəl ḥəd 'əgəl latarfa kaflaw. -

"... The three of them equally divided the rest [of the inheritance]." (Trib~~u~~ù 22:31)

## § 3.4 The possessive pronoun: nāy

The possessive pronoun is expressed by means of the preposition nāy - "of, from" (cf. § 8.2.1(23)) in its inflected form.

Examples:

wahətu təzabbaṭa mən gabbə' kəl worot 'ət lanāyu lasaqqər -

"And when it is played (i.e.: the tune of a tribe on the masanqo) each one boasts [in response] to his (i.e.: to the tune of his tribe)."

(PL1, 166:11)

wahətom 'əgəl 'ab'əstan wawəlādan man 'əgəl mawalllədan sarra 'əb nāyom lātu -

"They (i.e.: the women who sing dirges) sing for their husbands and their sons, or for their relatives about that which is theirs (i.e.: about their deeds and qualities)."

(Ibid , 228:21)

'əlli bet 'əlli nāyka tu? nāye 'ikon. nāy 'ato bakit tu -

"'Is this house yours?'-'It is not mine. It belongs to Mr Bakit'".

## § 3.5 The interrogative pronoun: mi, man, ’ayi

a) mi - "what?", is used in the following cases:

(i) In a question asking for the specifying of some thing, e.g.:

... tamne mi ’ide ’əlka ma mi habakka ...

"'... Wish, what shall I do for you, or what shall I give you? ...'"

(PL1, 263:12)

mi gab’a "'What happened?'"

(ii) Enquiring as to the nature, character, origin, etc. of a thing or person, e.g.:

...’əlla mi ta ... "'What is this?...'"

(Storia, 42:32)

... mi ’ənti mārəyām ’ənti ma ’addām ...

"'... What are you? Are you Māryām (i.e.: an angel) or a human-being?...'"

(Lt Leg, 2:13)

(iii) Interjectionally to express surprise, disbelief, etc., e.g.:

...’əlli zar’it mi ’ət ’əntu šayamkəhu ’əčče

"'... Who is this [man] Zar’it whom you appointed chieftain to me?'" (lit.: 'Zar’it being what you appointed chieftain to me?')

(Tribù, 30:4)

b) man - "Who?, whose?"; "whom?" (preceded by a preposition).

(i) The referent of man is almost always a person, e.g.:

man ʼəgəl ləgbaʼ tu kama ... -
"...'Who can he be then?'"
(ʼAgʼazot, 87:20)

... kaman satayu? ʼāye ʼəlli č̣anač̣č̣it satayu ... -
"'... Who drank it (i.e.: the milk ) then?
Gosh! The flies [must have] drunk it...'"
(Tigre Texts, 9:29)

gərah man ṭaḥarso -
"Whose field do you cultivate?"
(ʼAgʼazot, 54:16a)

ʼəgəl man zābekaha lawaʼat -
"For whom did you buy the cow?"
(Ibid, 54:18b)

(ii) Note the following idiomatic expressions:

| | |
|---|---|
| man ta səmka - | "'What is your name?'" |
| man ʼammər - | "maybe" (lit.: 'who knows?')[1] |

c) ʼayi (masc. sing.), ʼaya (fem. sing.), ʼayom (masc. pl.), ʼayan (fem. pl.) - "which?"; 'what sort of?".

---

[1] See: § 8.1.7.2.

ʾayi, etc., refers to a person or a thing (one or more) of a certain number, group, species, etc., implied or stated in the oontext, e.g.:

...ʾana ʾəb təʾəzāzu ʾəsrāʾel laḥaddəg ʾayi rabbi tu... -

"'... What sort of God is he that I shall let [the people of] Israel go by his command...?'"

(Racconti, 23:16)

waʾab lawalat ʾaya wallačče ləbəllom -

"And the father of the girl says to them: 'Which daughter of mine [do you seek for betrothal]?'"

(PL1, 113:1)

...ʾəb ʾayi səlṭān ʾəlli təwadde... -

"...'By whose (lit.: which) authority do you do this...?'"

(NT, Luke, 20:2)

... kərāy məʿəlka ʾayi tu... -

"...'What is your daily wage?'..."

(ʾAgʾazot, 84:14)

ḥamle bəka? afo ʾayi ǧənəs ḥamle taḥazze? -

"'Do you have vegetables?' - 'Yes, what sort of vegetables do you want?'"

zəlām lazalləm tu ʾayi wareḥ tu gabbəʾ -

"'When are the rainy seasons [here]?'" (lit.: 'Which is the month in which it may rain?')

When there is no clear conception of the group from which the choice is made, ʼạyi approaches mi in its function. In utterances which allow both, as, e.g., in the case of the fourth example above, the choice of one or the other is a contextual one.

## § 3.6 The relative pronoun: la-

### a) function and place in the clause

(i) The particle la- which serves as the relative pronoun[1] is usually attached to the verb, immediately preceding it, e.g.:

məsəl ʼəssitu ʼət laʻarqay latəṣaʻana ʼənās ... -
"The man who travelled (lit.: 'who was carried') in the coach with his wife..."

(ʼAgʼazot, 88:5)

ʼəwān lafəgur kəmsal mən rabbi latədaḥarat ʻəwān ta -
"The time of the constellation is like a time blessed by God."

(PL1, 65:8)

daʼam nosu raḥamat laʼalabu warabbi laʼifarrəḥ ʼənās mən ʻala ... -
"But as he (lit.: 'he himself') was a man who had no pity and did not fear God..."

(Storia, 99:14ff)

---

[1] la also serves as the definite article. Cf.: § 2.11.

*wa’ət balqat ’ət la’awqarayu ḥaddis qabru karayu* -
"And he put it (i.e.: the body) in his [own] new tomb which he hewed from a rock."

(NT, Matthew, 27:60)

*... wa’ət ḥatte dəgge dəgge wānin latətbahal nabro ʿalaw* -
"... And they were living in a village called 'the village of animals'."

(ii) In a compound tense *la* is attached to the auxiliary verb, immediately preceding it, e.g.:

*dəgəm worot ’ənās higa kulla laḥəyāyət ’ammər laʿala* -
"The tale of a man who knew the language of all animals."

(PL1, 88:14)

(iii) *la* can be used without an antecedent, e.g.:

*’əbbəlli ṇəmām lamotaw bəzḥām kəm tom ’əb tārik ’əgəl na’ammər ’ənqaddər* -
"According to history we know (lit.: 'we can know') that [those] who died by this illness were many."

(iv) The copula *tu* (all third person forms) may have the relative pronoun *la* attached to it,[1] e.g.:

---

[1] Cf. § 4.1.3.(a).

*lagaʼa ləgbaʼ mən gabilu latu mənkum (...)(...)*
*dib yarusalem ləfgar* -
"Whosoever from his people is among you (lit.: 'who is among you') is among you (...)(...) shall go to Jerusalem.'"

(Storia, 91:16)

(v) Where the subject of the relative clause has the definite article, the verb of the clause may occur without *la*, e.g.:

*daʼam lagabil larabbi wadayu ʼəlu sən kəllu*
*ʼagid ʼəgəl lətrassaʿ ʼambata* -
"But soon the people started forgetting all favours which God did unto them."

(Ibid, 95:22)

(vi) When the verb is preceded by a preposition with a pronominal suffix, the relative pronoun is regularly attached to the preposition, e.g.:

*lasabab laʿəbbu dangarko ...* -
"The reason for which I was late ..."

*ʼəgəl bəzuḫ ʼawkād laʼəglu ḫazze ʿalko kətāb*
*rakabkəwo* -
"I found the book which I was looking for a long time."

*ʼarʼenni lakətāb laʼəlu bəka* -
"Show me the book you have."

(vii) The preposition *kəm* - "according to, like", followed by *la* serves to express the notion rendered in English by "as" ('according to what'), e.g.:

*da'am ḥarma kəm la'ənrə'e ba'asom 'əbbəlli itəkallasa* -
"But as we shall also see later their quarrel was not ended by this [fight]."
(Tribù, 43:9)

*kəm la'əlu na'ammər ...* -
"As far as we know..."

## b) Relative clauses without *la*

In relative clauses where the place of the main verb is occupied by *'alabu*[1] - the suppletive form of the impersonal verb of existence in the negative - *la* does not occur, e.g.:

*wa'addām lamotu kəm ra'aw 'ət betu sakkəb 'alabu 'asək hətu qannəṣ* -
"And when people see its death (i.e.: the moon's) there is no one who sleeps at home until it rises."
(PL1, 64:1)

*wa'ət gaṣṣu 'əgəl ba'as baṭṭər ʿala 'alabu* -

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[1] Cf.:§ 4.2.5.

"No one could face him in a fight." (lit.: 'There was no one who was standing against him in a fight')

(PL1 , 73:11)

Other relative clauses may occur without *la*, e.g.:

*... gadəm ʿaǧǧe ʾəlli ʾəlu qarabna tu ...* -
"... 'Now, my village is this [place] which we are near to'..."

(Ibid, 262:18)

## § 3.7 The indefinite pronoun

As a whole, words used in the expression of the indefinite pronoun in Tigre can be independently substantival or can be adjectivally used. Semantically, a fairly large number of words may qualify in the expression of an/a few unspecified member/members of a class, or in the expression of an unspecified part of what is denoted by the noun, e.g.:

*waʾaddemāy mən ʾəlli waʾəlli ʾana bello* -
"And the little man said to him: 'I am from such and such [a place]."

(PL1, 83:22)

*ʾət ʾawropa bəzḥāt ʿaddotāt lətrakkaba sarran naʿāyəš* -
*wasarran ʿabbāy* -
"There are many countries in Europe. Some of them are small and some [are] big."

The following list consists of words and idioms which are typical of the expression of the indefinite pronoun:

a) woro(t), ḫatte - "someone, some person".

(i) Lexically, these are the masculine and feminine forms of the numeral "one".[1]

Examples:

ḫəlāyat worot ʼənās -
"A song of an unknown man."[2]
(PL3, L522:5)

haye woro bəʿəd mənnom ... -
"However, someone else among them..."
(Tribù, 4:7)

...ḫar worot ʼəb ʼarwe mədər kəm tənakkaša
ʼət laʼarwe naḫās gannəḫ kakəʼənna ḫaye ʿala -
"... Afterwards, when someone was bitten by a snake he used to look at the copper snake and consequently was healed in this way."
(Storia, 51:24)

(ii) In utterances in which the main verb is in the negative, woro/ḫatte has the meaning "no one, nothing". In such a case the indefinite pronoun is usually followed by the enclitic particle ma, e.g.:

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[1] See § 7.1.3. See also: § 2.11.1(a)

[2] Rendered in the German translation as: "Anonymos" (PL4B, 1072:2)

... wafarhāt tu ʿalaya ʾəgəl woroma sema
ʾiʾasʾalaya. -

"... And as they were frightened they told nothing to anyone."

(NT, Mark, 16:8)

mənna ta mi taḫazze ma məsla mi təthāge woroma
ʾibela. -

"Nevertheless no one said: 'What do you wish?' or: 'Why are you talking to her?'"

(NT, John 4:27)

mi gabʾa? ḫatte ʾigabʾa -

"'What happened?' - 'Nothing happened.'"

... kaḫattema mən ʾəlli kəm ʾitaḫabbaʿa mə̄nnu
ʾamassəl. -

"'... So I believe that nothing of this is concealed from him'."

(NT, Acts, 26:26)

b) manma - "no one, nobody".

This expression consists of the interrogative pronoun man - "who?" plus the particle ma

Examples:

man māṣəʾ halla? manma. -

"'Who has come?' - 'Nobody.'"

(ʾAgʾazot, 54:13a)

wamanma mənnom ’əgəl lərdə’o ’isaʿa ’əttu. -
"And none of them ran (lit.: ('ran to him') to help him."

(’Ag’azot , 80:18)

c) ’əgale, ’əgaletāy (’əgaletat-fəm.) - "so and so", is usually used for persons, e,g,:

’əgale wad ’əgale ’agarrəmu nas’a wamən gəbərənnat fagra ... -
"'So and so the son of so and so performed his duty with his warranters and became free'..."
(lit.: 'free from slavery').

(FM, 101: 4)

... ’əgaletāy masni ’ənta wa’ət hədāy təfarrar ’əlye -
"...'You, so and so, are [my] friend, and [therefore] go in the nuptial procession for me.'"

(PL1, 122:22)

d) fəlān - "such and such", is usually used for things, e.g.:

...waʿāmat fəlān təwallada ləblo. -
"... And it is said: 'He was born in such and such a year' "

(Ibid, 111:3)

e) gale - "some, something", e.g.:

warə’e gale kātbat ’əb ləbbom ’əlli lətʿāyar belaw. -

"And, behold, some scribes thought to themselves (lit.: 'said in their hearts'): 'This /one/ speaks blasphemy' "

(NT, Matthew, 9:3)

*gale 'əgəl təbla' taḥazze?* -

"'Do you want something to eat?'"

*...kaḥaqo gale higa ...* -

"... And after some talking..."

(FM, 103:12)

*wagale 'aqruš 'ət lalababəs 'aqro 'əttu*

"And they tie up some money (i.e.: coins) in the dresses."

('Ad Šek, 188:(51))

In its substantival use, for things, *gale* may be occasionally reinforced by *gār* - "thing", e.g.:

*lamamhər galegār belayu 'əgəl latamhārāyu.* -

"The teacher said something to the student."

*gale* may occur with the suffixed pronouns, having the meaning "some of", e.g.:

*lohom ta'amro? 'afo galehom mən ṣəwabečče tom wagalehom mən 'aǧǧe tom.* -

"'Do you know these people?' - 'Yes. Some of them are from my family and some of them are from my village.'"

f) laga'a ləgba'[1] - "whoever, whatever, someone, something, some, anyone" etc.

(i) This expression consists of forms of the verb gab'a[2] - "to become, to happen" in the perfect and imperfect, third person, singular masculine, preceded by the relative pronoun (lit.: 'that which happened shall happen'). The pronoun's referent occurs in the masculine singular form.

Examples:

... walaga'a ləgba' baʿal 'əlla gabay latu sab ma 'anəs mən rakkəb... -

"... And if he meets anyone who is of this way (i.e.: this religion), men or women, ..."

(NT, Acts, 9:2)

... ma laga'a ləgba' bəʿad māl ... -

"... Or any other property...."

(Storia, 44:12)

wa'əlli kəl 'əwān laga'a ləgba' 'ət beta wakəd 'atte təwaddyo ... -

"And she does this each time someone enters her house..."

(PL1, 106:15)

(ii) In an idiomatic use of laga'a ləgba' with the connotation: "whatever may (have) happen(ed)", the gab'a forms may be conjugated according to the person and gender of the pronoun's referent, e.g.:

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[1] Standard pronunciation: lag'a ləgba'.

[2] Cf. § 4.5

gadəm laʼəbba gaʼat təgbaʼdi tābotna badet mənəna... -

"... But whatever [may] have happened to our Tābot, we have indeed lost it."

(Tribù, 70:31)

g) dəla - "whoever, whatever, any."

...wadəla ʼəlu teṣārara təsāʻara.

"... And whoever was hostile to him was deposed."

(ʻAd Šek, 184:(36))

... dəla raʼaya... -

"... Whoever saw her..."

(PL1, 29:25)

... dəla matherərāyt warāgmāyt tahadde. -

"'... You will marry any reviling and scolding woman.'"

(Tigre Texts, 3:17)

h) sema - "something, anything, no one, nothing".

(i) This indefinite pronoun is used almost solely in negative utterances, e.g.:

... sema ʼirəʼena waʼisamʻana ... -

"...'We have seen nothing nor have we heard anything'..."

(Tribù, 25:22)

(ii) sema is occasionally reinforced by the enclitic particle ma, e.g.:

lakalb kəl dol nabbəḥ ʻala daʼam ḥəna semama ʼirəʼena. -

"The dog was barking continuously (lit.: 'all the time'), but we saw nothing at all."

## § 3.8 Demonstratives

The demonstrative forms in Tigre are:

| | Near objects | | Distant or absent objects | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Singular | Plural | Singular | Plural |
| Masculine | ʼəlli | ʼəllom | lahay/lohay/ləhay | lahom/lohom/lehom |
| Feminine | ʼəlla | ʼəllan | laha/loha/leha | lahan/lohan/lehan |

### (a) The demonstrative adjective

(i) The noun is always preceded by the demonstrative adjective in the case of near objects, e.g.:

daʼam ʼəllan ʼamʻəlāt kəm ḥalfaya ... -
"But when these days are over...."

(PL1, 66:22)

(ii) The noun regularly precedes the demonstrative adjective in the case of distant or absent objects, e.g.:

’əb la’awkād lahay ... -

"At that time..."

(Tribù, 30:20)

wa’asək ’aze laʿāmaṭ sab darābuš latəbattakawa tətbahal la’əwān laha -

"And to this day (lit.: 'until now'), that time is called 'the year in which the Dervish people were defeated (lit.: 'beaten')."

(PL1, 165:9)

...’əb la’alelat lahan ... -

"... In those days..."

(NT, Acts, 11:27)

(iii) The demonstrative adjective can be used periphrastically, both preceding and following the noun at the same time, e.g.:

’əlli ʿāmat ’əlli bəzuḥ ’izalma... -

"This year it has not rained a lot..."

(GT, p.89 No. 5)

... loha ’akān loha ta’ammərra ma mi? -

"'... You recognize that place, don't you?"

(’Ag’azot, 86:22ff)

(iv) Nouns qualified by the demonstrative adjective may take pronominal suffixes, e.g.:

’əlli ḥəlmu ’əgəl ’abuhu wa’əgəl ḥawu kəm ’assa’ala ... -

"And when he told this dream of his to his father and his brothers..."

(Racconti, 15:4)

b) The demonstrative pronoun

(i) Demonstratives may be substantivally used, e.g.:

da'am 'əllima qadam 'əlla qər'ān 'i'ammər -
"But this [one] also, does not yet know how to read."

(PL1, 52:10)

(ii) Demonstrative forms for near objects can be used to represent a previously mentioned action, thought or speech, or to introduce things which are about to be mentioned. In both cases the deictic notion is secondary , e.g.:

wa'əllan kəm bella 'əb lakāb ləbbu 'əndo teqammaša mota. -
"And having said these [things] to her with his heart burning from the heat, he died."

(PL1, 27:17)

(iii) Demonstrative forms are met with in the expression of the notion rendered in English by: "the former... the latter, the one ... the other", etc., e.g.:

walahay dib 'addu 'aqbala walaḫārsāy 'əb 'aybu tarfa
"And the other one returned to his village and the

ploughman (i.e.: the first one who was ploughing) stayed with his client."

(PL1, 86:5)

wa’əgəl ’əlli gis ’əbəllo wagayəs wa’əgəl lahay na‘a wamaṣṣə’ -

"'And I say to one: 'Go!', and he goes /away/, and I say to the other one: 'Come!', and he comes.'"

(NT, Matthew, 8:9)

## Chapter Four

# THE COPULA; FORMS EXPRESSING EXISTENCE AND POSSESSION; AUXILIARY VERBS.

The linguistic forms described in this chapter are: (a) those which serve in the expression of the copula and consist mainly of non-verbal forms; (b) those which are used in the expression of existence and possession and consist of both verbal and non-verbal forms, and (c) verbs which participate in the expression of the notions mentioned in both (a) and (b) but have other structural and lexical values.

## § 4.1 The copula: formation

Nominal sentences are encountered in Tigre in the case of those utterances which do not contain a finite verb.[1] However, the relation between subject and predicate usually has a formal expression.

The paradigm of the independent copula consists of the following forms:

| | Singular | Plural |
|---|---|---|
| 1st pers. masc. & fem. | ʼana | ḥəna |
| 2nd " " | ʼənta | ʼəntum |
| " " fem. | ʼənti | ʼəntən |
| 3rd " masc. | tu | tom |
| " " fem. | ta | tan |

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[1] Cf. § 9.3.

The following points are to be noted:

(1) the forms tu, ta, tom, tan share one of the consonantal elements and suffixes of the personal pronoun in the third person.

(2) in the first and second persons the forms encountered are those of the first and second person personal pronouns and are used mainly in those utterances in which the subject is a personal pronoun (explicitly expressed or implied).

(3) the form tu is also met with in other persons than the third, when the utterance consists of a personal pronoun and a copula (i.e.: a nexus such as * ’ana ’ana etc., is impossible).

Examples of utterances in which the copula is a personal pronoun:

’ana mən gabil mansaʿ ’ana. -

"I am from the tribe of Mansaʿ."

ḥəna gāššotāt ḥēna. -

"We are strangers."

’ənta wa’ana ṣar ḥəna. -

"You and I are friends."

(’Ag’azot, 54:1)

’əntum bəzḥām ’əntum. -

"You are many."

( Ibid.)

man ʼənta. -

"Who are you?"

šāfəg ʼənta? -

"Are you in a hurry?"

(GT, 88:25)

(...) ʼəb ʼamān walye ʼəsaw ʼənta ʼət ləbəl saʼalayu

waya‘aqob ‘ābe ʼana tu bello. -

"He asked him, saying: 'Are you truly ʼEsau my son?'

And Jacob answered him: 'Yes, I am he'."

(Storia, 23:5)

Examples of utterances with the copula tu:

č̣əwa sanni tu. -

"Salt is good."

(NT, Mark, 9:50)

ʼəlli tu. -

"This is it." (i.e.: That's all.)

(...) ʼəllidi banna ta. -

"(...) This, indeed, is a different matter."

(ʼAgʼazot, 98:12)

ḥəṣẹ waḥədāy məlku ʼət wāldat waḥaqohom ʼət

laqarrubom tu. -

"The power of execution (lit.: 'the domination') of engagement and marriage is with the parents and after them with their next of kin (lit.: 'those who are their relatives')."

(FM, 102:23)

*nāy sidamo ḥilat zelām ’ət salas kəffal kəfful tu.* -
"The rainfall (lit.: 'the strength of the rain') at Sidamo is rated (lit.: 'divided into') according to three /geographical/ divisions."

*kalasarur lala’ammərra ḥudāt tan.* -
"And those who know dirges are few."
(PL1, 228:21)

*(...) sab mansaʿ mən badirom kestān tom.* -
"(...) The people of Mansaʿ are Christians from long ago."
(Tribù, 70:14)

## § 4.1.1 The copula in the negative

The copula in the form of the personal pronoun has attached to it the negative particle *’i-* when in the negative, as in: *’i’ana* "I am not", *’i’ənta* "You (masc. sing.) are not", etc.

The copula *tu* in the negative has the suppletive fossilized form *’ikon*,[1] as in:

*(...) higāye rətuʿ ’ikon (...).* -
"(...) My speech is not correct (...)" (i.e.: not fluent).
(Storia, 38:25)

## § 4.1.2 Temporal values in the copula

By virtue of the copula's morphological (i.e.: pronominal) status and syntactical value in an utterance containing it, the copula

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[1] The form *’ikone* is also encountered. *’ikon* may be used to signify "no".

does not occupy a definite place in the tense system. In fact such an utterance, in its temporal aspect, is closer to a nominal sentence: hence the use of the copula regardless of the temporal distinction past/non-past.[1]

Examples:

> ʼabrahim wad ʼədris ʼənās ʽad takles tu daʼam mədər mansaʽ bet ʼabrəhe nabbər ʽala. -
>
> "ʼAbrahim W. ʼE. was a man of the ʽAd Takles, but he was living in the country of Mansaʽ B. ʼA."
>
> (PL1, 247:14)

> lasabdi gabay ʽabbāy ʼəndo ḥadgaw ʼət kelab lagabberāy ṭarqaw. wahətom (...) fallastāy (...) waworot mallahayu tom. (...) lagabberāy ʼənās farhāy rabbi tu. ʼəgəl lafallastāy təkābatayu. -
>
> "As for the [two] men, having left the main road they entered the courtyard of the bondsman. And they were a monk and a friend of his (...). (...) And the bondsman was a godfearing man. He [, therefore,] received the monk [with hospitality]."
>
> (ʼAgʼazot, 98:7,15)

Temporal relations in the expression of the copula are, however, possible by means of the use of verbs which supply the appropriate alternate forms. The verbs ʽala (cf. § 4.2.2) and gabʼa (cf. § 4.5) enable the distinction past/non-past to exist - where ʽala

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[1] Cf.: § 6.6.

is used in a past context and gabʾa in a non-past context.

Examples:

ʾabib ʾəb ḥaṣin mota wahətu ḥāṭər ʿala. -

"ʾAbib died by an iron weapon and he was [a] brave [man]."

(PL1, 235:15)

kelʾot ʾənās ʿaškar nāy ṭilan ʿalaw. -

"Two men were soldiers with (lit.: 'of') the Italians."

(Ibid , 79:11)

hətu mamhər ʾəgəl ləgbaʾ tu.[1] -

"He will be a teacher."

In the jussive (imperative) morphological category gabʾa is used to complement the paradigm of the copula with the forms necessary for non-temporal and infinitival moods.

Examples:

saʾayat bəye mamhər ʾəgəl ʾəgbaʾ. -

"I hope to be a teacher."

ʾəm sabuʿ (...) gəbəʾ.[2] -

"Be a mother of seven (...)."

(PL1, 122:5)

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[1] For the construction ʾəgəl + jussive + tu in the expression of future, see § 6.5.

[2] [gəbiʾ]

wakə'ənna wəllād 'ət ʿastar lahalla 'abukum gəbu'. -

"And in this manner be the children of your father who is in heaven."

(NT, Matthew, 5:45)

### § 4.1.3 The subordinate forms of the copula

(a) Non-temporal subordinating particles do not cause a change in the morphological shape of the copula.

Examples: The particle kəm (denoting a content-clause):

'əb 'arabi wad mansaʿāy 'ənās fadāb kəm tu (...). -
ləddaggam halla. -

"It is told about 'A.W.M. that he was a brave man (...)."

(Tribù, 7:10)

laḥayat 'alelat wagale 'awkād qadam 'əlla nafsa
lamaḥaka hətu kəm tu 'āmarat. -

"She recognized the lion and knew that he was the one who spared her life some time before that."

('Ag'azot, 66:14)

(...) gaṣka ḥaqo rə'eko wa'asək 'əlla ḥəyāy kəm 'ənta
mən rə'eko 'aze 'əb nəyat 'əmayət (...). -

"(...) Having seen your face and having seen (i.e.: realized) that you are alive until now (lit.: 'until this'), I shall now die in delight (...)."

(Racconti, 20:26)

The relative:

wa'ab laḥəṣān 'əgəl bet 'abuhu wadəla molādu tu ʿaddəm (...). wa'ab lawalatma kəmsalha molādu latu ʿaddəm. -

"And the father of the boy invites his own family and whosoever are his relations (lit.: 'is his relation') (...). And the father of the girl, also, invites in the same manner those who are his relations (lit.: 'that which is his relation')."

(PL1, 122:15, 17)

(b) When subordinate by reason of the temporal conjunction 'ət or dib - "when", the personal pronoun copula retains its morphological shape while the copula tu assumes the forms 'əntu (masc. sing.), 'ənta (fem. sing.), 'əntom (masc. pl.) and 'əntan (fem. pl.).

Examples:

(...) kallāt wač̣abal 'ət 'ana məsəl mambāye 'əgəl 'əthāge radeko (...). -

"(...) I, being clay and ashes, have dared to talk with my Master (...)."

(Storia, 17:12)

laḥəmum kə'ənna ḥawān dib 'əntu (...). -

"When the sick man is [as] weak as this (...)."

(P11, 208:23)

(c) When subordinate to the conditional particle mən - "if" the copula is expressed in all persons by the imperfect forms of the verb gab’a.

Examples:

‘ən barəh garob ta. gadəm ‘ənka ṣərit mən tagabbə’ kullu garobka bārəh gabbə’. da’am ‘ənka ḥəmmət mən təgabbə’ kullu garobka ṣəlmut gabbə’. gadəm ’ətka lahallet ṣəlmat mən təgabbə’ laṣəlmat ’akəl ’ayi ‘abbāy təgabbə’. -

"The eye is the light of the body. Thus, if your eye is clear your whole body will be bright. But if your eye is clouded (lit.: 'sick'), your whole body will be dark. Now if the brightness which exists in you will become darkness how [much] greater it (i.e.: 'the darkness') is (i.e.: 'will be/must be')."

(NT, Matthew, 6:22)

’aze šāfəg mən təgabbə’ ’ət betka ’əgəl tigis qaddər. -

"If you are in a hurry, you can go home now."

## § 4.1.4 The explicative form tu

The form tu etc., may occur along with a finite verb - or a syntactically equivalent form - as a sign of an explanation or motivation in the preceding or following sentence. In this capacity the meaning of the form tu can be rendered into English by "so, since, because" etc., depending on and incorporated with the meaning of the preceding or following sentence. The semantic connotation of the part of the sentence which immediately precedes or follows the 'explicative tu' may be one of emphasis.

Examples:

gadəm kəm təṣabbaḥaw yasus ’əgəl p̣eṭros simon wad yona mən ’əllom lazayəd tu təfattenni bello. wap̣eṭros ’afo mamba kəm ʾəfattekka ʾənta taʾammər bello. wayasus ʿawyāč̣č̣e rəʿe bello. ḥaqoha yasus ʾəb dəgmān simon wad yona tefattenni tu halleka bello. wapeṭros ʾafo mamba ʾənta kəm ʾefattekka taʾammər bello. wayasus ʾabāgəʿəye ʿəqab bello. -

"Now, after they had had their meal, Jesus said to Peter: 'Simon the son of Jonas, do you love me more than they [love me]?'. And Peter said to him: 'Yes master, you know that I love you'. And Jesus said to him: 'Pasture my lambs'. Afterwards, Jesus said to him again: 'Simon, the son of Jonas, do you love me?' And Peter said to him: 'Yes, master, you know that I love you'. And Jesus said to him: 'Watch my sheep'."

(Storia, 165:31)[1]

(...) məsəl rabbi waməsəl ʾaddām ʾəndo təgādalka tu waṣṣəʿaka gadəm ʾəsraʾel daʾikon yaʿakob ʾitətbahal (...). -

"(...) Having wrestled with God and with people, you prevailed, so [your name will be] Israel, you will not be called Jacob (...)."

(Ibid , 26:17)

ḥar haye ʿabāyi wadəqqubām gabāyəl dāganaw warabbi molāyom tutəsāfafa ʾəlom kaworoma idaqqaba ʾəttom. -

"Afterwards, however, they drove away big and powerful tribes and their lord (lit.: 'God, their lord') fought

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[1] Cf.: NT, John, 21:15-17.

for them, so that not even one [tribe] was stronger than them."

(Storia, 53:24)

ʼoke bezuḥ wāqi ḥəṣan kəm tu ʼəgəl laḥabbər tu ḥaza ʼət gazif kətāb kəm laqarrəʼ ʼəndo təmassala ʼət seməṭ gabay ʻabbāy ʼət raʼas gəndāy təgassa. -

"ʼOke wanted to show that he was a useful child, [so] he sat on the stump of a tree by the side of the main road, simulating one who reads a large book."

(ʼAgʼazot, 60:20)

(...) mənnu ʼəgəl ʼətmahar tu ḥazze ʼamānu ʼassʼelanni bello. -

"He said to him (...): 'I want to learn from him, [so] tell me the truth of it."

(Ibid , 79:8)

ʼatrāfātu lata bəzuḥ məʼət ʻāmat ʼət məsər kalʼaw. waḥatte dol rabbi ʼəgəl yaʻaqob ʼəsraʻel tu samayu kaʼəbba wəllād ʼəsraʼəl lətbahalo ʻalaw. -

"His descendants, however, stayed in Egypt many hundreds of years. And once God had named Jacob Israel, then, because of this, they used to be called the children of Israel."

(Racconti, 20:31)

samuʼel māyət mənnu tu ʻala kalagammyo ʼirakba. -

"Samuel had died to his (i.e.: Saul's) detriment so he found no one to advise him [since no one else could do so]."

(Storia, 64:28)

*(...) nəblaʻ wanəste faǧər tu ʼənmayət (...).* –
"(...) Let us eat and drink since [It is] tomorrow [that] we shall die (...)."

(Isaiah, 22:13)

## § 4.1.5 The explicative copula *tətu*

Where the form *tu* functions as copula and is, at the same time, used to connect a preceding or following utterance of explanation or motivation (cf.: § 4.1.4), the form *tətu* occurs. This 'double' function of *tətu* is clearly detected when two versions of the same utterance may be compared:

*ladol yasus ʼəgəl rabbi molāyka səgad waʼəlu leṭa ʼamlək kətub tu halla kaʼənta šeṭan raḥaq mənye bello.* –
"Then Jesus said to him: 'It is written: "Adore God, your lord and worship only him", so you, Satan, go away from me'."

(NT, Matthew, 4:10)

*(...) ʼəgəl rabbi molāyka səgad waʼəlu leṭa ʼamlek ketub tetu kagis rəḥuq ʼənta šəṭan (...).* –
"(...) It is written: 'Adore God, your lord, and worship only him', so go you far [away] Satan."

(Storia, 115:23)

In the first instance the form *tu* occurs between two constituents of a tense complex and indicates a following clause of purpose. In the second instance the copula *tu* functions in its syntactical role and also indicates a following clause of purpose. ?

Note the two versions of the following utterance:

*(...) mənna ta ʼəb laʻəč̣č̣at ʼamər mənna latəballəʻ ba məʻəl mot ʼəgəl timut tu bello.* -
"(...) But about the tree of knowledge he said to him: 'On the day on which you will eat of it you shall die'."

(Racconti, 6:6)

*(...) mənna ta mən lasannet waʼəkkit latatʼāmər ʻəč̣č̣at ʼamər latəballəʻ ba məʻəl mot ʼəgəl timut tətu kamənna ʼitəblaʻ bello.* -
"(...) He said to him: 'But on the day on which you will eat of the tree of knowledge, which enables [one] to recognize good and evil (lit.: 'good and bad'), you shall die, so do not eat of it."

(Storia, 6:22)

Here, in both instances, the form *tu* - though not a copula - is necessary for the actualization of the nexus of the utterance, since it is a constituent of a tense complex. The second example contains a clause of purpose: hence the occurrence (in it) of the form *tətu*.

Other examples:

*laḥatte ʼəslemāyt wawalat ʻad-qayəʼ təta ʼəb yatāyma səḥe təkarret. walaḥatte kəstenāyt wawalat kabasa təta ʼəb yatāyma ʼət kabasa fagrat.* -
"The one was Moslem and belonged to the [tribe of] ʻAd-Qayəʼ, [so] she descended with her orphans to Səḥe;

and the other was Christian and belonged to [the region of] Kabasa, [so] she went out with her orphans to Kabasa."

(Tribù, 11:30)

*qərṭuṭat šərnāy ’əgəl nə’išatotat ’aqḥəmat bəzuḥ kəbud walalaǧarrəb ṣor təta ka’əlla ’əgla warāt ṣəddət ta.* -
"Grains of wheat are a very heavy and distressing load for small ants and this was a difficult [job of] work for her (i.e. for the ant in the story)."

(’Ag’azot, 73:4)

*’əlli tətu qənaṣ waḥāsso.* -
"It is he (lit.: 'This is he'); rise, then, and anoint him."

(Storia, 61:14)

*’əlla ’akān qəddus mədər təta kamən ’əgərka ’as’ənka ḥəraṭ.* -
"This place is holy ground, so take your shoes off [your feet]."

(Ibid , 38:11)

In the following utterance there are two statements followed by a phrase of result - connected to both. The form *tətu* occurs, only as the nexus of the second statement, since the copula in the first statement is expressed by means of a personal pronoun:

*(...) ’ənta mandalāy leṭa tu ’ənta wahətu mən nə’əšu matšāffāy tətu kaməsəl ’əlli fələsṭemāy ’əgəl tətšāfaf*

*’igabbə’ ’əlka bello.* -

"You are only a youngster and he is a warrior since his youth, so you cannot fight him."

(Storia, 62:79)

## § 4.1.6 The form *tu* as second complement

Transitive verbs with a pronominal suffix may take a second complement in the form of *tu*.[1] This *tu*, which immediately follows the pronominal suffix, agrees in number and gender with the noun it stands for.

Examples:

*waḥar ’əgər ḥarit laqabbulo kaḥazzwo ta. wa’ab lawalat ’əgəl lahabbom ta mən ’ifatte kallə’om ta (...). da’am ’əgəl lahabbom ta mən radde mən ‘ad ’abuha wa‘ad ’əmma ḥəzawa ləbəllom (...). - wadib ’ab laḥəṣān laqablo kawalat gadəm habawuna ta ləbulo.* -

"And, afterwards, they return to him, /for the/ last time and ask her of him. And if the girl's father does not wish to give her to them, he refuses her to them (...). But if he agrees to give her to them he says to them: 'Ask her of the family of her father and the family of her mother.' (...) And they return to the boy's father and say to him: 'Well, they gave us the girl (lit.: 'Well, then, the girl, they gave us her')."

(PL1, 113:9, 11, 18)

*(...) da’am ’əb dəgmān sabu‘ ‘āmat mən təkaddəm ’əlye rahelma haybakka ta balsa ’əttu. ya‘aqob sanni bela*

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[1] Morphologically this *tu* is a sandhi-form of *’əttu* (cf. § 8.2.1 (30)(ii)); the absolute form *’əttu* is, however, rare in the role of the second complement.

kakəmsalhu wada. ladol laban ’əgəl rahelma ’əssitu ’əgəl təgba’ habaỵu ta. -

"He answered him: '(...). But if you will serve me again, seven years [more], I shall give you Rachel also'. Jacob agreed and did thus. Then Laban gave him Rachel also, to be his wife."

(Storia, 25:6)

(...) gadəm nə‘no ’ət Betləhem nigis wa’ətta ’əlli laga’a warabbi la’at’amarenna tu nər’e (...). -

"(...) So come hither, let us go to Bethlehem and see there that which has happened and which God has let us know (...)."

(NT, Luke, 2:15)

ḥaqoha kəm warraw lahaỵ ’əgəl laṣarru la’ənās ’ar’uni tu ’i’ammərro bela. -

"Afterwards, when they attacked, that [man] said to his comrades: 'Show me the man, I do not know him."
(lit: 'Show me him'). (Tribù, 40:26)

(...) mən mədərka wamən bet ’abuka ’ana dib laḥabrakka tu məder fəgar (...). -

"Leave (lit.: 'go out of') your country and [of] your family [and go] to the country that I shall show you(...)."
(lit: 'that I shall show you it'). (Racconti, 12:5)

walamora ’əgəl la’iṣanḥa mənnom laṣabbuṭa mədər ’əndāỵ labaṣṣəḥəwa ’ət ‘ərge bet saqqula waḥar la’əglu ṣabṭawa kəm maṣ’a laṣabbuṭo ta. -

"And the stick which they retain for the one who was not with them they hang from the ceiling of the house, without its reaching the ground, and when the one for whom they retained it has arrived they let him hold it."

(PL1, 206:5)

(...) waʾəgəl lasəga ʾatḥadagawom tu. -

"(...) And he made them give up the meat (lit.: 'the meat, he made them give it up')."

(Ibid , 80;17)

The form tu is also found as an adverbial complement immediately following the verb or the pronominal suffix - where the verb has one.

Examples:

nabukadneṣar kālʾāyt laʾəwān yarusalem lazamtaya ta ḥəzqəʾel ma dib babilon təgaffafa. -

"The second time Nebuchadnezzar raided Jerusalem even Ezekiel went into captivity to Babylon."

(Storia, 90:28)

ʾəb zaban badir wakəd laʾəkəl bazzaḥa ta woro rəyāl ʿibat malləʾ wamən ʾaḥa waʾat lamaṣṣəʾ ʿala. -

"In former times, when corn was in plenty (i.e. plentiful), one thaler used to [suffice to] fill a large leather-sack and, as regards cattle, to procure a cow."

(Tribù, 69:13)

## § 4.2 Expression of existence: distributional relations of the forms expressing existence

The verb halla (a type B verb with a final semivowel) is the one typical of the expression of existence. In this capacity forms of halla occur in all morphological categories of the verb. The temporal distinction past/non-past[1] which is the principle temporal distinction of the Tigre verb does not exist in the case of halla: this verb is the only one existing in Tigre whose perfect forms have the meaning of present (§ 4.2.1). As for the expression of existence in the past the verb ʿala is used (§ 4.2.2). The verb ʿala exists only as a perfect form.[2] Existence in future time is expressed by the imperfect form of the verb gab'a (§ 4.2.5). The verb gab'a is also used in the expression of existence in the modal categories, where the occurrence of forms of halla is less frequent (§ 4.2.6). In subordination to temporal conjunctions (§ 4.2.7(a)) the perfect forms of halla show a morphological peculiarity in the sense that they are governed by conjunctions which occur otherwise only with forms of the imperfect of the Tigre verb. Furthermore, the imperfect form of halla is met with when preceded by the conditional particle mən - "if" (§ 4.2.7(b)), where its perfect form does not occur.

The function and value of the verb halla as described above accounts for the use of this verb in the perfect as auxiliary in tense complexes which denote the non-past.[3]

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[1] See § 6.6.

[2] Hence the use of ʿala as auxiliary in tense complexes which express the past. Cf.: §§ 6.11.1, 6.14, 6.15.2.

[3] Cf.: §§ 6.10.1, 6.15.1.

## § 4.2.1 halla - the verb of existence in the present

To express the notion of "to be, to exist" in the present tense, the conjugated forms of halla in the perfect are used. Examples:

waʼasək ʼaze lawərəd halla ʼəgəl lasamaʿ laʼalaba gārit. -
"And the oath exists until now for a matter concerning which there is no testimony."
(PL1, 176:5)

(...) tābot maryam raʼaw bela wamən raʼaw hallet belaw. -
"(...) 'Look for the Tābot of Mary', he said. And when they had looked they said: 'It is [there]'."
(Lt Leg , 10:31)

rabbi halla. -
"God exists."
(GT, 79:1)

waḥar woro mən lasab ʼəgəl ləgānəḥan badaya ma hallaya ʼəndo bela ʼaqbala ʼəttan. -
"And later, one of the men returned to them, to see them, saying: 'Have they perished or do they [still] exist?'"
(Tribù, 5:12)

Existence in the present tense may also be expressed by means of a compound tense, when the use of a compound is required by the contextual sense. In such instances halla occurs in the imperfect as the 'auxilié' of the compound.

Examples:

(...) ’əbbu tu ’ənnabbər wakuskus ’əmbal wanahalle tu hallena (...). -

"(...) We live by him and move and exist (...)."

(NT, Acts, 17:26)

The conjugation of halla in the perfect also expresses the notion rendered in English by the expression "there is/are".

Examples:

mən ’aḥa šənguli latətbahal ’əzən hallet. -

"There is a sort of cow called šənguli (lit.: 'sort of cows')."

(PL1, 99:2)

ləb la’iballuʿ wamantallema la’ilər’u wa’iballuʿ hallaw. -

"There are [those] who do not eat the heart [of animals] nor do they look at the hare or eat it."

(Ibid., 197:10)

(...) nəgus salamun laləbulo ’ət yarusalem halla (...) -

"There is in Jerusalem a king called Salomon (...)."

(Lt Leg, 4:11)

## § 4.2.2 Expression of existence in the past: the verb ʿala

Since the perfect form of the verb halla is used to denote present tense, another verb - ʿala - is used to denote past tense.

Example:

ʾasla latətbahal walat ʿalat. -

"There was a girl /who was/ called ʾasla."

(ʾAgʾazot, 58:2)

## § 4.2.3 halla/ʿala + adverbial complement

The verbs halla (present) and ʿala (past) may take an adverbial complement, then rendering the notion expressed in French by the verb "se trouver (être là)".

Examples: halla + adverbial complement:

ʾət mədər namsa bəzuḥ təkla hallaw. -

"There are many wolves in the land of Austria."

cf.

ʾət ʿad ʾamerika bəzuḥ takallit lətrakkabo. -

"There are many wolves in the country of America."

(...) rabbi məsəlki halla (...). -

"(...) The Lord is with you (...)."

(NT, Luke, 1:28)

waḥaqoha ʾət galab ʾaqbala waʾasək ʾaze ʾəṫta halla. -

"And afterwards it (i.e. the village of the tribe) returned to Galab and it is there until now."

(PL1, 278:22)

(...) ʾabel ḥuka ʾəttaya halla (...). -

"(...) Where is your brother Abel?"

(Racconti, 9:1)

### ʿala + adverbial complement:

ʾət worot sāḥəl salas ʾənās ʾəb salas ʾəssitom ʿalaw. -

"There were, on a shore, three men with their wives."

(PL1, 38:16)

nəʾuš waldu wakalbu məslu ʿalaw. -

"There were with him his small son and his dog."

(ʾAgʾazot, 71:3)

waʾanəs haye mən rəḥuq ʾət lattaqbəla ʾətta ʿalaya. -

"And there were there, also, women who observed from afar."

## § 4.2.4 Negation of halla and ʿala

The negation of either one of these verbs is effected in the usual way in which a finite verb is negated, i.e. by means of the prefixed particle ʾi.

Examples:

wayaʿaqob yosef bada səmʾon ʾihalla wabənyam haye ʾəgəl tənsuʾ mənye taḥazzu (...) bela. -

"And Jacob said (...): 'Joseph has perished, Simon is gone and you want to take Benjamin from me?"

(Racconti, 19:7)

ʾawtobus ʾiʿala. ʾəbbəlli sabab ʾəlli ʾagid ʾimaṣʾako. -

"There was no bus. Because of this I have not come sooner."

*da’am ’əlli ’ət ləwaddu robel məslom ’i‛ala.* -

"But when they did this Reuben was not with them."

(Racconti, 16:9)

The negation of *halla,* the impersonal verb of existence, is effected by means of the use of the suppletive form *’alabu.*[1]

Example:

*wahətom ləbulo (...) ’əb təfāna mayət ’alabu (...).* -

"And they say to him: '[There is] no one [who] dies by [telling his] last will (...)."

(PL1, 208:7)

## § 4.2.5 Expression of existence in the future

Since the perfect forms of *halla* denote only the present tense and the use of the imperfect forms of *halla* is infrequent, another verb - *gab’a*[2] - is used to denote future.

Example:

*(...) ’ana məsəlka ’əgabbə’ (...).* -

"(...) I shall be with you (...)."

(Storia, 38:21)

## § 4.2.6 Expression of existence in the modal categories

The jussive (imperative) and infinitival moods are usually expressed by the use of the verb *gab’a.*

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[1] *’alabu* is also the negative form of the particle *bu* which denotes the notion "to have". Cf.: § 4.3.

[2] Cf.: § 4.5.

Examples:

(...) ’ənās bannu ’əgəl ləgba’ sanni ’ikon (...). -

"It is not good that man should live alone (...)."

(Storia, 6:25)

wahətu ’əgəl mi ḥazekuni ’ət lanāy . ’abuye lata ’əgəl ’əgba’ kəm lastəhəlanni ’i’āmarkum tu bellom. -

"And he said to them: 'Why have you sought me? Did you not know that I am bound to be at that which is my father's (i.e.: my father's business)?."

(Racconti, 41:8)

Examples with the verb halla:

’əgəl lahalle halla ’əlu. -

"It must be (or: 'it has to be')."

halle wanəbar. -

"Live long!" (Lit.: 'Exist and live!')

(LH, 5a)

### § 4.2.7 Subordinate forms of verbs used in the expression of existence

#### (a) gab’a and ‘ala

As regards the forms of the verbs gab’a and ‘ala, subordination is effected in the manner typical of any other finite verb.

Examples:

(...) šaf mən gabbə’ (. .). -

"(...) If there will be a war (...)."

(Storia, 36:25)

da’am ’ət la’akān bezuḥ ’addām mən ‘ala yasus ǧaraṭ tu wada (...). -

"But since there were many people at that place, Jesus withdrew (...)."

(NT, John, 5:13)

wala’anəs məsəl walattan ’əndo ‘alaya la‘ad kəm ṣabḥayan dib ‘addan laqabla. -

"And the women, having been with the[ir] daughter (i.e.: 'the bride to whom they are related') return home after the family [of the bride] gives them a meal."

(PL1, 132:13)

(b) halla

When halla occurs with other than temporal conjunctions and particles no peculiarities are to be noted.

Examples:

wa’ət bet ’əgəl lahallaw kəllom barrəh (...). -

"And it gives light to all those who are in the house (...)."

(NT, Matthew, 5:15)

(...) wamas’əl ’ət kəl ’akān ləssamma‘ lafəgur ’əbbaya ’əwān kəm halla. -

"(...) And the message about the time at which there is the lucky constellation [of stars], is heard in every place."

(PL1, 65:7)

When the verb *halla* is subordinate by reason of a temporal conjunction, two morpho-syntactical phenomena may be noted:

(1) preceded by the conjunctions *ʼət* and *dib* - "when", which occur with imperfect forms of the Tigre verb, *halla* retains its perfect form.

Examples:

*badir laqaššom qadam (...) ʼət halla ṭəmqət ʻalat.* -
"Formerly, when their first priest lived (...), there was baptism."

(PL1, 134:22)

*ṭabib ʼaze ʼət ʻad ʼihalla daʼikon badir ʼət halladi ʼət laʼela sarḥa ʻawlu nassəʼ.* -
"Now there is not a blacksmith in the tribe. Formerly, when there was [one], he took the price for what he manufactured."

(FM, 151:15)

(2) preceded by the conditional particle *mən* - "if", *halla* occurs in the imperfect form.

Examples:

*daʼam lataʻallabaw ḥəmum waʼaber ʼəgəl ləmṣuʼ laʼigabbəʼ ʼəlom mən hallu ʼəttomma ʼəndo ṣorawom lamaṣṣəʼəwom (...).* -
"But if there are [among] those who were counted, sick and old who cannot come, carrying (lit.: 'having carried') them, they bring them (...).

(PL1, 175:5)

(..) mənma ʼaḥa ʼət ḥarratu tahalle wamənma ʼaqruš ʼət betu halle (...). -
"Even if there are cattle in his kraal and even if there is money in his house (...)."

(FM, 143:8)

kəmsalhu haye worot mən mallahayu ʼəb sərq legbaʼ ma ʼəb hanāšayot māl nasʼa mən gabbəʼ ma haye ʼəndo sallafa ʼibalsa mən gabbəʼ kəm taʻasa saləf kullu ʼəgəl baʻal lamāl wahətu mən ʼihalle ʼəgəl warsātu maʼawadu ləfde. daʼam ʼəllom mən ʼihallu ʼəgəl gamāyəṣ lamāl lahab. -
"Likewise, if someone took money from his friend by theft or by deceit, or if, having borrowed he did not return, he should, having repented, first of all pay his debt to the owner of the money and - if he is not alive - to his heirs. But if they are not alive he should give the money to the poor."

(ʼAgʼazot, 80:5)

(...) worot ʼət ʼaya kəm halla laʼammər mən halle ʼəgəl laḥabbərrom ʼāzzām ʻalaw -
"(...) They had ordered that if there was (lit.: 'there is') anyone who knew where /Jesus/ was, he should show them."

(NT, John, 11:57)

## § 4.3 Expression of possession

The usual expression of possession - i.e.: the notion rendered in English by the verb "to have" - is effected by means of:

(a) the particle *bu*[1] or *bədibu*,[1] both forms being conjugated in all persons. In this capacity *bu* (*bədibu*) has the syntactical function of a finite verb in the present.

Examples:

*həta ‘abbāy ṣəwābet ba.* -

"She has a large family".

*’ana bəzḥām masānit bəye.* -

"I have many friends."

*laga’a ləgba’ wad ’addām kəl’e ’əde bədibu.* -

"Every human being has two hands."

*’ət beč̣č̣e bəzuḥ ’akətbat bədibye.* -

"I have many books at home."

(b) the perfect forms of the verb *halla* conjugated in the third person + the particle *’əl*[2] conjugated in all persons. *halla* is used here as an impersonal verb and the person of the 'possessor' is denoted by the particle.

Examples:

*’ana sanni mas’alit hallet ’əlye.* -

"I have a good camera."

*la‘ələb təlafuna halla ’əlka.* -

"Do you have the telephone number?"

---

[1] 3rd pers. masc. sing. form represents the paradigm.

[2] For: *hallaye* instead of *halla ’əlye* and *hallakka* instead of *halla ’əlka* see: § 1.2.5.

## § 4.3.1 Negation of forms used in the expression of possession

In the construction *halla* + *'əl* the verb is negated in the usual manner: by means of the prefixed negative particle *'i.* The negative form of the particle *bu* (*bədibu*) is *'alabu* (conjugated)[1] as in :

*kabəd 'alabəka.* -

"You do not have a belly."

(PL1, 84:7)

*(...) 'aze lata 'əgəl ḥarāmom məsməsa 'alabom.* -

"Now they do not have a pretext for their sin."

(NT, John, 15:22)

## § 4.3.2 Temporal and modal relations in the expression of possession

The forms dealt with in §§ 4.3 and 4.3.1 are used in the present. The expression of possession in the past is rendered by the construction *'ala* + *'əl.*

Example:

*worot 'ənās məsəl 'əssitu ʿala. wahətom na'at ṣallām ʿalat 'əlom.* - (PL1,90:19)

"A man lived with his wife, and they had a dark female camel."

The expression of possession in the future is rendered by the verb *halla* in the imperfect + the particle *'əl*, as in: *bəzuḥ*

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[1] Cf.: § 4.2.4. - negation of *halla.*

*lahalle 'əlu* - "He will have plenty." The construction consisting of the imperfect form of *gab'a* + the particle *'əl* is not used in the expression of possession in the non-past (unlike the situation as regards the expression of existence - see § 4.2.5), owing to the idiomatic meaning of *gab'a* + *'əl* which prevails.[1] In the jussive the construction *'əgəl* + jussive + *'əl* occurs - the verb in the jussive being *halla*.

Examples:

> *karabbi 'əb wəlud worotāy waldu la'ammen kullu nāy dima ḥayot 'əgəl tahalle 'əlu da'ikon 'əgəl 'iləbde 'əlu 'asək maṭṭe ḥad 'əlli 'əddina fata.* -
> "And God loved the world to such an extent that he surrendered his only [one] begotten son, in order that whoever believed in him might have eternal life - not in order that [whoever believed in him] might perish."
>
> (NT, John, 3:16)

> *sabbat 'əlli haye 'ət qadam rabbi wa'ət qadam 'addām la'itəkassəs ḥəllena 'əgəl tahalle 'əlye nošema kəl dol 'əṣṣagam.* -
> "On account of this, however, I apply myself to have a conscience which does not put the blame on either God or people."
>
> (NT, Acts, 24:16)

## § 4.3.3 Subordinate forms used in the expression of possession

The verb *halla* is used in subordinate position showing the same features as described (in § 4.2.7) for *halla* in the expression of

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[1] *gab'a* + *'əl* means "to be possible for someone", i.e.: "to be able to". See: § 4.5.2 (b).

existence. One example will suffice here:

*'ət worot gale kəs mən halle 'əlom (...).* -

"If they have an accusation against someone(...)."

The particle *bu* is used in subordinate position in cases other than those in which subordination is effected by means of a temporal conjunction.[1] One such case is the occurrence of *bu* in a relative clause, where the object of *bu* repeats itself in the form of the particle *'əl*. The order of constituents in the relative clause is as follows: (1) *la* + *'əl*, (2) *bu* .

Example:

*'ar'enni lakətab la'əlu bəka.* -

"Show me the book that you have."

### § 4.4 *halla* + *'əl* in the expression of necessity

The construction *halla* + *'əl* is also used[2] to denote the notion expressed in English by the idiom "have to" or the modal auxiliary "must". The verb *halla* in this construction exhibits the same morphological and syntactical features as are displayed in other instances of the occurrence of *halla* + *'əl* in the expression of possession.[3]

Examples:

*'əgəl 'igis halla 'əlye.* -

"I have to go."

*'ət beč̣č̣e 'aze 'əgəl 'igis 'alabye.* -

"I don't have to go home now."

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[1] See, however, § 8.2.1 (29) (iii)(b).

[2] Cf.: § 4.3.

[3] Cf.: § 4.3 et seq.

## § 4.5 The verb gab'a

Conjugated forms of gab'a are met with in all morphological categories of the Tigre verb. Only one morphological peculiarity need be noted: in the perfect, two forms are encountered in free variation: gab'a and ga'a.[1]

As seen above (§§ 4.2, 4.2.5) the verb gab'a supplies forms to the paradigm of halla and to that of the copula (§§ 4.1.2, 4.2.3), having in such cases a structural value but not a lexical content of its own. The verb gab'a can have, however, a semantic value which adds a new aspect to the notion of existence or the function of the copula. The semantic features of gab'a are portrayed below.

### § 4.5.1 The verb gab'a as a lexical entity

As a lexical entity the verb gab'a means (a) "to happen" and (b) "to become".

(a) examples of gab'a - "to happen".

waḥar 'ət ʿaddom kəm 'aqbalaw laga'a kullu 'əgəl 'abuhom 'assa'alaw. -

"And afterwards when they returned to their country they informed their father all that happened."

(Racconti, 19:5)

'əlla laqadāmit kətbat 'əgəl ṭəlbat ta waqarenewos 'ət sorya šum 'ət 'əntu ga'at. -

"This was the first registration for taxation and it took place when Cyrenius was the governor in Syria."

(NT, Luke, 2:2)

---

[1] 3rd pers. masc.sing. form represents the conjugation in the perfect.

da’am ḥaqo kəl’e mə‘əl ba‘āl fāzaga waba‘āl faṭir ga’a (...). -

"But after two days the feast of Easter and the feast of unleavened bread occurred (...)."

(NT, Mark, 14:1)

Note the following idiomatic expression:

(...) ’ana mi gab’ako (...). -

"(...) What has happened to me?"

(PL1, 72:17)

mi ga’aka. ‘aso ḥamamka. -

"What has happened to you? Have you been ill with malaria?"

(GT, 89, No.6)

cf. mi gab’a. ḥatte ’igab’a. -

"What happened? Nothing happened."

(b) examples of gab’a - "to become":

wala’əmmu ’əb gahay lawalda dib taḥazzən motat walanafsa sarerat ga’at. -

"And [during the] while the child's mother was afflicted by the grief of [the death of] her child she died and her soul became a bird."

(PL1, 78:12)

waḥar lawəlāda sab dār kəm gab’aw ‘ad šuma təsammaw. -

"And afterwards when her sons became independent (lit.: 'people of property') they were called ‘Ad Šuma."

(Ibid., 283:23)

ḥaqoha mən kəllom lāwəh wakəhəlāy ga'a. -

"Afterwards he became kinder and more patient than anyone [else]."

('ag'azot, 70:11)

da'am ḥaqo gale wakəd 'əgəl lawaldu lamabšəlāy ta'ab ga'a 'əttu (...). -

"But after some time it (i.e.: supporting his father ) became an inconvenience to his son, the baker (...)."

(Ibid., 100:14)

wad bəkrom qayəl təsamma wahətu ḥārsāy ga'a. waḥaqohu 'abel təwallada wahətu rə'əyāy 'abāgə' ga'a. -

"Their first-born son was called Cain and he became a husbandman. And after him Abel was born and he became a shepherd."

(Racconti, 8:3)

gab'a has an inchoative meaning also in cases in which the event or situation described came into effect previous to the 'zero-point' of time of the utterance. Such use of gab'a is typical of cases in which the starting point of the event is essential to its progression. Examples:

waḥəṣān waldat da'am laḥəṣān ḥəbru ṣallim ga'a. -

"And she bore a son but his colour was dark [while both parents were light-skinned]."

(PL1, 90:21)

(...) laʿaqqač (...) ḥan ʿəčay ʾəndo gaʾaw zabṭaw. - (...) The soldiers (...) having taken up position (lit.: 'having become') under the trees, shot [at the enemy]."

(Ibid., 164:22)

### § 4.5.2 The verb gabʾa in the expression of doubt or of possibility

The verb gabʾa may be used to denote the aspect of (a) doubt[1] or (b) possibility.

(a) doubt.

Example:

daʾam hətom ʾəgəl laḥəwāy ʾiraʾawo. ʾəb hətu gabbəʾ tu. - "But they did not see the [snake called] ḥəwāy; it is by [guessing]: 'It is possibly he'."

(PL1, 77:1)

When the occurrence of gabʾa in this use is not necessitated by reason of the actualization of the nexus, the form encountered is the fossilized gabbəʾ whose syntactical role is adverbial. In such instances gabbəʾ can be rendered in English by expressions such as : "perhaps", "possibly", "maybe".

Examples:

(...) gabbəʾ kəstenāy waʾazzazoṭ ʿaqqač dima ʾilətrāde (...). - "(...) perhaps [being] a Christian and also commanding soldiers can never agree (...)."

(ʿAgʾazot, 79:2)

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[1] Cf § 8.1.7.2.

*higāhu 'amān tu gabbə' (...).* -

"His speech is true, [it seems to be](...)."

(Tribù, 70:30)

The fossilized form *gabbə'* is also met with in construction with the conditional particle *mən*, in conditional sentences,[1] as in:

*(...) walat ga'at mən gabbə' 'əlla ṣaggat (...)*
*təmṣə'anni waḥəṣān. ga'a mən gabbə' 'əlli marwad (...)*
*lamṣə'anni (...).* -

"(...) If it will be a girl let her come to me holding this (...) staff; and if it will be a boy let him come to me holding this ring (...)."

(Lt Leg, 6:20)

(b) possibility: *gab'a* (+ *'əl*).

In this usage the verb *gab'a* can be rendered in English by "to be possible", "to be able". Here, *gab'a* may occur as an impersonal verb, the logical subject being denoted by the conjugated forms of the particle *'əl*.

Examples:

*wa'əlli kullu 'əmbal fəgurma gabbə' da'am lazaẙəd 'əb*
*la'əwān tu.* -

"And all this is possible even without the [rising of] the constellation, but it is [done] especially in that time."

(PL1, 65:20)

*badir 'ət 'aqqač romāyām la'aram gabbə' la'ala yom 'agədda*
*'ət 'aqqač kəstān haye kəm gabbə' 'amassəl balsa 'əttu.* -

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[1] Cf.: §

"He answered him: 'I believe that that which was formerly possible to heathen Roman soldiers is indeed possible to Christian soldiers now (lit.: 'today').'"

(’Ag’azot, 79:12)

wala’ənās laqarbat ’əb ḫalib ’əgəl lətmaṭṭe ’iga’a ’əlu. -
"And the man could not hold the skin [filled] with milk."

(PL1, 84:3)

walaḫəṣān ’əb kəlla ḫilatu ’əgəl lənqalla waṭṭana da’am ’iga’a ’əlu. -
"And the boy tried to remove it with all his strength, but failed to do so (lit.: 'it was impossible for him')."

(’Ag’azot, 59:20)

## § 4.5.3 The verb ga’a in the expression of "to amount to"

When quantity, in measurement, money, etc., is expressed by numerals gab’a is often used, having the meaning of "to amount to" - sometimes with the general sense of approximation.

Examples:

ḫarmāz mən maṭor ’əgaru ’asək maqdadu mawaqqālu ḫad salas metar ma sabu‘ ’ammat gabbə’. -
"The height of the elephant from the flat (lit. 'side') of his feet to his back is about three metres or seven fore-arms."

(’ag’azot, 75:15)

(...) kəl’ot ḫaməs dewāni bahalat rabbu‘ garəš lagabbə’ karet ’əttu. -

(...) She put there two five-dewāni [coins], that is to say, what amounts to a quarter of a garəš (i.e.: a certain coin)."

(NT, Mark, 12:32)

wakəl’e qobat ḥatte wānč̣a təgabbə’. -

"(...) And two qobat (i.e.: a measure) make one wānč̣a (i.e.: another measure)."

(FM, 171:11)

## § 4.5.4 Constructions with gab’a which express an alternative

The verb gab’a is frequently used in constructions which express the notion: "(be it) A or B"; "either A or B". In such cases gab’a occurs in the jussive followed by the conjunction ma - itself capable of expressing the alternative - or wa. The major constructions to be noted are:

A ləgba’ ma B

A ləgba’ wa B.

Examples:

ka’əlli ḥəwāy ’əgəl ’addām ləgba’ ma ’əgəl ḥəyāyət ’ət ḥəwrārat qattəllom. -

"And this [snake called] ḥəwāy kills people or animals with a glance."

(PL1, 76:12)

(...) ’addām ləgba’ waḥəyāyət (...). -

"Be it people or animals (...)."

(Ibid., 76:17)

For the idiomatic expression laga’a ləgba‘ - "whatever; someone", see §

## § 4.6 The verb *ṣanḥa*

This verb is used:

(a) as a free variant of the verb *halla* in the expression of existence.

Examples:

*wa’əb ladol gale ’addām ’ətta ṣanḥaw.* -

"And at that time there were present there some people."

(NT, Luke 13:1)

*waḥəfrat mən ’itəṣannəḥ ḥaffura.* -

"And if there is no grave, they dig one (lit.: 'it')."

(PL1, 209:18)

(b) as a lexical entity. The meaning of this verb can then be rendered in terms of aspects of passing the time: "to live", "to stay", "to wait", etc. Such meanings can be expressed in Tigre by verbs other than *ṣanḥa*, when the meaning of "to be", "to exist", is not marked, e.g.:

*’atrāfātu lata bəzuḥ mə’ət ‘āmat ’ət məsər kal’aw.*[1] -

"His descendants, however, lived [stayed] in Egypt many hundreds of years."

(Racconti, 20:31)

The function and meaning of *ṣanḥa* described in (a) and (b) account for the use of this verb in the perfect as an auxiliary in verb complexes which denote time relations.[2]

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[1] Cf. also § 4.6.1(b), third example, where *ṣanḥa* and *kal’a* are used in the same utterance.

[2] Cf.: §§ 6.12.2, 6.14.1, 6.15.3, 6.15.5.

### § 4.6.1 The verb *ṣanḥa* as a lexical entity

(a) The general notion of 'passing the time' (unlimited duration).

The verb *ṣanḥa* often occurs with an adverbial complement, having in this instance the meaning of the English verb "to live". The distinction in meaning between this use of *ṣanḥa* and the use of *halla/ʿalla* + adverbial complement (cf.: § 4.2.3) is in the aspect of time duration to which attention is drawn in the case of *ṣanḥa*, whereas existence is the relevant notion in the case of *halla*.

Examples:

> *walamaʿalbat ʾəmmurām sab tom waʾagədda ʾət ʿad takles waʾət ḥabāb ṣannuḥ.* -
> "And the computers [of the 'lucky constellations')
> are [well-]known people and they live especially among
> the ʿAd Takles and the Ḥabāb."
>
> (PL1, 65:1)

> *walatakallit ʾəb ḥašəm ḥašəm ṣannuḥ ma ʾəb worworot gayso.* -
> "And the wolves live in packs or [even] move one by one."
>
> (Ibid., 74:10)

> *daʾam ʾaze ʾəb mansaʿāy waʾəb tarfu higa ʾənday ʾənwassək qadamom ʾəttəlli mədər mansaʿ ʾəb laṣanḥaw ʾaddām gale ʾəgəl nəwʿəz tu.* -
> "But now, before we add words (i.e. speak more) about
> the man of Mansaʿ and his descendants, we shall speak
> a little about the people who lived in this Mansaʿ
> country before them."
>
> (Tribù, 3:15)

(b) The notion of 'passing the time' (limited duration).

The meaning of this use of *ṣanḥa* can also be rendered in English by notions such as: "to stay", "to tarry", when the period indicated is not regarded as being long.

Examples:

*kahətom ʾətta bəzuḥ ʾamʿelāt kəm ṣanḥaw (...).* -
"And after they spent there many days (...)."

*(...) kaʾasək baʿāl ḥəmsa ʾət ʾefesos ʾəṣannəḥ.* -
"(...) And I shall tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost."
(NT, 1 Corinthians, 16:8/9)

*waḥaqo ʾəlli kullu ʾəwān ḥərsa tətamməm . ʾəm ḥəṣān ʾət labet ḥərəs ʾarbəʿa məʿəl təkalləʾ. waʾəm walat haye salasa ma ʿəsra wasabuʿ məʿəl təṣannəḥ.* -
"And after all this, the time of her childbed is completed. The mother of a boy stays forty days in the house of [her] childbed but the mother of a girl stays thirty or twenty-seven days."
(PL1, 107:23)

*kamarta ʾəgəl yasus mamba ʾənze waṣanḥakadi ḥuye waʾimota.* -
"And Martha [said] to Jesus: 'Master, if you had stayed here my brother would not have died'."
(NT, John, 11:21)

The period of time indicated can be age.

Examples:

*ladol ʾabraham wad sabʿa waḥaməs ʿāmat ṣanḥa.* -
"At that time Abraham was seventy five years old [passed

seventy five years of his life]."

(Racconti, 12:10)

həta ladol walat saʻa ʻāmat waʼabraham wad məʼət ṣanḥaw. -
"At that time she was ninety and Abraham [was] one
hundred years old."

(Ibid., 13:18)

(c) The notion of "to wait for".

Examples:

ʼəttəlla ʼakān ṣənḥanni gale nawid ʼəgəl ʼamṣəʼ ʼəlka. -
"Wait for me here, until (lit.: 'so that') I shall bring
you a kid.".

(PL1, 5:20)

daʼam ṣənḥini ʼəgəl ʼassəʼəlakki tu bela. -
"But he said: 'Wait for me so that I [may] tell you
[of it]."

(Ibid., 89:8)

## § 4.6.2 ṣanḥa + pronominal suffix as an idiomatic expression

With the pronominal suffixes attached to it, the verb ṣanḥa may be used idiomatically to mean "to meet", "to encounter", "to find". In this use ṣanḥa occurs as an impersonal verb; the grammatical subject and object of ṣanḥa become its logical object and subject respectively.

Examples:

waʼət ləgayso ʼət gabay dəme ṣanḥattom. -

"And while walking they encountered a herd of elephants."

(PL1, 48:1)

wa’ət la’akān la’ətta ’angargara maṣ’a wa’ətta
č̣əggarāy ṣanḫayu. -

"And he came to the place where ⁄the animal⁄ had wallowed and found there a hair."

(Ibid., 72:11)

wa’əlli walka tu ’ət gabay ṣanḫenni bello. -

"And he said to him: 'This is your son; I found him on the road'."

(Ibid., 263:10)

’ət bəč̣č̣e kam maṣ’ako woroma ’iṣanhenni. -

"When I came home I found no one."

## § 4.7 The verb nabra

The verb nabra only infrequently functions as the copula, nor is it typical of expressions of existence. It does, however, occur in its perfect forms as an auxiliary in complexes which express time relations. As auxiliary verb in such complexes nabra can: (a) be void of any semantic content, in which case its function, being grammatical only, is identical with ʿala in similar structures; (b) retain its lexical content, in which case its use partially resembles the use of ṣanḫa (as regards the meaning of ṣanḫa described in § 4.6.1(a) in similar structures.[1]

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[1] Cf.: § 6.12 et seq.

## § 4.7.1 The lexical meaning of the verb *nabra*

The meaning of the verb *nabra* is "to live" in the sense of:

(a) "to pass one's life", referring either to the whole period of life, or to a considerable part of it.

Examples:

*waḥar ʼəgəl lagənāzat gərāb ma ḥəyāyat ʼəndo wadaya ʼət betu tənabbər waləssallaḥ ba.* -
"And afterwards, when he (i.e.: the evil spirit) turns the corpse into a vessel or an animal, it passes its [other] life in his (i.e.: the spirit's) house, and he exploits it."

(PL.1, 255:3)

*ʼəb daḥan nəbaro.* -
"Live (masc. pl.) in peace."

(GT, 88:15)

(b) "to be alive".

Example:

*(...) ʼəgəl lənbar kəm ʼilastəhəllo.* -
"(...) that he does not deserve to live."

(NT, Acts, 25:24)

(c) "to dwell", "to reside".

Example:

*ʼəttaya tənabbər ʼət bet nabbər ma ʼət pansyone.* -
"Where do you live? Do you live in a [private] house or in a hotel?"

# Chapter Five

# THE MORPHOLOGY OF THE VERB

The morphological data treated in this chapter consist of:

(a) the inflexion of verbs, which may have a biradical stem (§§ 5.5-5.7.2), a triradical stem (§§ 5.3.-5.4.3.4) or stems of more than three radicals (§§ 5.9-5.10.1).

(b) those instances in which compounds with two elements - the first being a nominal form and the second itself a verb - occur, whose function is that of a verb (§§ 5.11.1-5.11.2).

(c) the pronominal suffixes in conjunction with verbs (§§ 5.12-5.12.7).

## § 5.1 Types and derivatives of the verb: distinctive morphological features and general meaning.

### The four types

The description of verb formation necessitates the recognition of four types of inflexion according to stem. These types of inflexion are referred to in this work as A, B, C, D, where type A is taken as representing the 'simple' stem - i.e. the basic stem in relation to which the form and meaning of the other types is considered.

The stems of types B, C and D are formally distinctive in that:

type B has the medial radical geminated throughout the inflexion, e.g.: ʿallaba - "to count";[1] (laryngals and semivowels are not geminated, cf.: §§ 5.4.2, 5.5.2); type C has a long penultimate vowel throughout, e.g.: dāgama - "to tell"; type D has a long penultimate vowel throughout together with a repetition of the medial radical, e.g.: balālasa - "to answer repeatedly". All these distinctive morphological features are lacking in the case of the type A stem.

Only types A and C are common to all verbs: types B and D do not occur with verbs of more than three radicals.

As regards meaning type B verbs are to be taken as lexical entities while verbs of types C and D express the notions of conative (intensive) and frequentative aspect: triradicals of type C are for the most part conative verbs while triradicals of type D and quadriradicals of type C are either conative or frequentative.

## Prefixed derivatives.

Verbs of each of the four types may occur with a preformative whose function and meaning is usually related to coexisting verbs of other types and derivatives. Such a preformative - prefixed to the stem of the verb - is functional in the system where it is a derivative of another coexisting verb-form.

There are four preformatives which serve in the formation of the derivatives, as follows: tə-, ʾa-, ʾat- and ʾatta-. In general

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[1] When entered as lexical entity the given form is in the 3rd pers. masc. sing. of the perfect and the meaning in English is rendered by "to" + infinitive.

terms *tə-* is used to express the passive voice of type A and D verbs and reciprocity in type C and D verbs; the other three preformatives are used to express various aspects of the notion of causation.

There are certain limitations to the distribution of these preformatives, e.g.: *'at-* does not occur with type A of the tri-radical verb, which has no semivowel or laryngal as radical, and *'a-* does not occur with type D verbs. These limitations of distribution are treated in the appropriate sections below (§§ 5.3 et seq.).

In addition to the four preformatives which are functional in the system some other preformatives, whose value is lexical only, occur with verbs of more than three radicals. These are the preformatives *'an-* and *'as-*.

A special statement, as regards form and meaning, necessary for some of the verbs with laryngals or semivowels as one of their radicals is made in the appropriate sections below (§§ 5.4 et seq.).

## § 5.2 The four types and derivatives of the verb - a detailed statement of function and meaning.

### Type A

Type A verbs have an unmarked meaning in relation to co-existing verbs of types B and C. Verbs of type A can be either transitive or intransitive.

Examples:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *lakfa* | - | "to throw"; | *fagra* | - | "to go out"; |
| *sakba* | - | "to take rest"; | *waḥaza* | - | "to flow"; |
| *gab'a* | - | "to become'; | *ʻwada* | - | "to do, to make"; |
| *dangara* | - | "to be late"; | *'ambata* | - | "to begin". |

## Type B

Verbs of type B are non functional in the morphological system of the verb and are to be treated in terms of lexis. Many among type B verbs do not have coexisting verbs of type A and thus form the 'head' of a dictionary entry. Type B verbs are frequently denominative: in many instances of coexisting type A and B verbs the respective roots are of different origin and meaning.

Examles of type B verbs which do not have coexisting verbs of type A:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| mazzana | "to weigh" (v.t.) | garrama | "to be beautiful"; |
| wallaba | "to turn at"; | sallasa | "to do three times"; |
| tallama | "to begin to plough"; | baššara | "to bring good news"; |
| ṭallaqa | "to let loose"; | saddaqa | "to sacrifice"; |
| ʼazzaza | "to command"; | ʻaddama | "to invite"; |
| ʻaddaba | "to trouble"; | ḥabbasa | "to take prisoner"; |
| ḥaddasa | "to renew" | ʼaddaba | "to accustom"; |
| ʻaggaba | "to do wrong"; | kayana[1] | "to deceive"; |
| kawala[1] | "to hide"; | halla | "to be, to exist"; |

Examples of type B verbs which have coexisting verbs of type A:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| daggama | "to tell"; | šakkara | "to praise |
| dagma | "to repeat"; | šakra | "to get drunk";; |

---

[1] Semivowels are not geminated. See: § 5.5.2 et seq.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ballasa | - | "to turn over (v.t.)"; | faṭṭara | - | "to be unleavened"; |
| balsa | - | "to turn over (v.t.)"; | faṭra | - | "to create" |
| qarraṣa | - | "to cut off hair"; | masla | - | "to resemble"; |
| qarṣa | - | "to chop off"; | massala | - | "to compare, to tell a parable"; |
| ḥabbara | - | "to show"; | harrama | - | "to weed"; |
| ḥabra | - | "to assemble (v.i.)"; | hạrma | - | "to beat"; |
| ḥaffana | - | "to take with both hands"; | kabbara | - | "to give news"; |
| ḥafna | - | "to become hot"; | kabra | - | "to be honoured". |

Type C

1. Triradicals of type C are met with in the expression of:

(a) increase of force or intensity of the action denoted by the underlying verb of type A. Such verbs of type C are transitive.

Examples:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| gāraba | - | "to cut in pieces"; | sāṭara | - | "to split, to tear off a number of pieces"; |
| garba | - | "to cut"; | saṭra | - | "to split, to tear of"; |
| sāqala | - | "to hang all (of it, of them)"; | sābara | - | "to break to pieces, to be engaged in breaking"; |
| saqla | - | "to hang"; | sabra | - | "to break"; |

*lākafa* - "to throw many, to persist in throwing";
*lakfa* - "to throw";

*qātala* - "to do some killing, to be engaged in killing";
*qatla* - "to kill";

*wālada* - "to persist in giving birth, to give birth a few times";
*walda* - "to give birth";

*ṣābaṭa* - "to hold back" (i.e. not to allow);
*ṣabṭa* - "to hold".

(b) the notion of causation for those verbs whose initial radical is a laryngal.[1] Triradicals with an initial laryngal can also express the conative aspect and meaning is then determined by the contextual sense. Thus, type C of *halka* - "to exert oneself, to trouble oneself" which is *hālaka*, is either "to exert oneself very much" or "to trouble" (v.t.).

Examples of type C verbs whose first radical is a laryngal:

---

[1] Verbs with an initial laryngal are lacking the *ʼa*-A formation. See: § 5.4.1.2.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *ḥālafa* - | "to cause to pass, to remove"; | *ʼāta* - | "to make enter, to bring in"; |
| *ḥalfa* - | "to pass"; | *ʼata* - | "to enter"; |
| *ḥārada* - | "to slaughter (e.g.: several cows)"; | | |
| *ḥarda* - | "to slaughter". | | |

(c) a stylistic free variant of type A, or type B where the type A verb does not coexist.

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *tākala/takla* | - "to plant"; | *sāfaṭa/safṭa* | - "to sew" |
| *bātaka/batka* | - "to cut off"; | *lābaka/labbaka* | - "to anoint, to smear" |
| *kālasa/kallasa* | - "to terminate"; | *tālama/tallama* | - "to begin to plough". |

There are some instances in which a type C verb and the coexisting verb of another type are of different origin and meaning.

Examples:

| | |
|---|---|
| *sāraḥa* | - "to send away, to make leave"; |
| *sārḥa* | - "to produce, to make"; |
| *bāraka* | - "to bless";[1] |
| *barka* | - "to kneel"; |

---

[1] The usual verb which renders the notion of "to bless" is, however, *daḥara*.

*šākara/šakkara* - "to praise";

*šakra* - "to get drunk".

2. Quadriradicals of type C[1] are used in the expression of the conative or frequentative (iterative) aspect of the action denoted by the underlying verb of type A. Thus, quadriradical verbs of type C function, in relation to type A, as triradical verbs of both types C and D function in relation to type A.

Examples:

*qarāṭaṭa* - "to crush" (v.t.);

*qarṭaṭa* ~ "to break into several pieces" (v.t.)

*marāmara* - "to examine thoroughly";

*marmara* - "to examine, to consider".

*gasāgasa* - "to charge forward repeatedly";

*gasgasa* - "to march forward quickly".

## Type D

The type D verb which occurs with triradicals only, is used to express the frequentative or conative aspect of the action denoted by the underlying verb of type A. When the intensity of action is described this can involve either increase or decrease of force, i.e. augmentative or attenuate aspect.[2] There are, therefore, instances in which the meanings of verbs of types C and D in relation to type A overlap.

---

[1] Quadriradicals occur only in types A and C. See §. 5.9.

[2] Cf.: § 5.11.1, *bela* compounds: The aspectual use of *bela* and *'abala*.

Examples:

*sabābara* - "to break thoroughly";
*sābara* ≈ "to break in pieces (v.t.), to be engaged in breaking";
*sabra* - "to break".

*ḥarārasa* - "to plough a little";
*ḥārasa* - "to cultivate the soil";
*ḥarṣa* - "to plough".

*katātaba* - "to write much, repeatedly";
*kātaba* - "to vaccinate";
*katba* - "to write" (also: 'to vaccinate').

*dagāgama* - "to tell repeatedly, to recite";
*dāgama* - "to tell";
*dagma* - "to repeat".

*balālasa* - "to answer repeatedly";
*bālasa/balsa* - "to answer".

*badādala* - "to change repeatedly";
*badla* - "to change" (v.t.).

*kadādama* - "to work on and off";
*kadma* - "to serve, to work".

*kalāləʼa* - "to pass a short time";
*kalʼa* - "to pass the time".

*dawāwara* - "to wonder about";
*dora* - "to turn" (v.i.)

## § 5.2.1 Prefixed derivatives.

### Derivatives with the prefix *tə-*

*tə-* derivatives are used in the expression of:

(a) the passive voice of transitive verbs of types A, B and C. In some instances transitive verbs become intransitive or denote the notion of reflexivity by means of the *tə-* formation.

Examples of *tə*-A:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *tənaqqama* | - | "to be called, to be mentioned"; | *təraqqaba* | - | "to be found"; |
| *naqma* | - | "to call"; | *raqba* | - | "to find"; |
| *taḥassaba* | - | "to be thought" | *təqantaba* | - | "to be appointed chieftain"; |
| *ḥasba* | - | "to think"; | *kantaba* | - | "to appoint as chieftain"; |
| *təsaqqala* | - | "to be hanged, to hang" (v.i.); | *təkassata* | - | "to be opened, to open" (v.i.) |
| *saqla* | - | "to hang" (v.t.) | *kasta* | - | "to open"; |
| *taʿaǧǧaba* | - | "to be astonished; to wonder"; | *tədardara* | - | "to gird oneself"; |
| *ʿaǧba* | - | "to astonish"; | *dardara* | - | "to gird". |

Examples of *tə*-B:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *təkallasa* | - | "to be terminated"; | *təmazzana* | - | "to be weighed"; |
| *kallasa* | - | "to terminate"; | *mazzana* | - | "to weigh" (v.t.) |

| | |
|---|---|
| taḥaddasa | - "to be renewed"; |
| ḥaddasa | - "to renew". |

Examples of tə-C:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| təsāṭara | - "to be torn off into several pieces", | təšārama | - "to be cut into strips" |
| sāṭara | - "to tear off into several pieces"; | šārama | - "to cut into strips". |

| | |
|---|---|
| taḥārada | - "to be slaughtered (e.g.: several animals)"; |
| ḥārada | - "to slaughter (e.g.: several animals)". |

(b) the notion of reciprocity by means of tə-C and tə-D formations, where the underlying verb is neither C in the former case nor D in the latter; i.e. both formations are best treated as unanalysable wholes as regards their morphological constituents (the meaning of tə-C is not the outcome of the meaning of tə- + C, etc.).

Examples of tə-C verbs which express the notion of reciprocity.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| təlāmada | - "to get used to each other"; | təqāraba | - "to approach each other"; |
| lamda | - "to get accustomed"; | qarba | - "to be near, to come near"; |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| təgādaba | - | "to fight each other"; | taḫādara | - | "to dwell together"; |
| gadba | - | "to plunder"; | ḫadra | - | "to dwell"; |
| taḫādaga | - | "to leave each other"; | tərāda | - | "to be in mutual agreement"; |
| ḫadga | - | "to leave"; | rada | - | "to agree"; |
| təmarāmara | - | "to consult one another"; | | | |
| marmara | - | "to examine". | | | |

Examples of tə-D verbs which express the notion of reciprocity:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| təsalālama | - | "to bandy salutations"; | təraʾāʾa | - | "to see one another"; |
| təsālama | - | "to salute"; | raʾa | - | "to see"; |
| təsaʿāʿama | - | "to kiss one another"; | təlakāka | - | "to call one another"; |
| saʿama | - | "to kiss"; | təlāka | - | "to call"; |
| tahagāga | - | "to bandy words, to converse"; | | | |
| tahāga | - | "to speak". | | | |

In the case of verbs where types A or C are lacking, tə-C and tə-D may assume the aspectual notion normally expressed by types C (conative) and D (frequentative) respectively.

Examples:

təsa'ā'ala - "to ask repeatedly, to 'inquire'";
təsa'ala - "to ask" (no type A for this meaning);
təgāyasa - "to go far away" (no type C);
gesa - "to go".

In some instances verbs of tə- form the 'head' of a dictionary entry, e.g. təkabbata - "to meet".

## Derivatives with the prefix 'a-

'a- derivatives, which occur in all types but D, are used in the expression of:

(a) the causative of the transitive verb:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 'ašmata | "to cause to anoint"; | 'asbara | "to cause to break"; |
| šamta | "to anoint"; | sabra | "to break"; |
| 'azmata | "to cause to raid"; | 'andaqa | "to cause to build"; |
| zamta | "to rob, to raid"; | nadqa | "to build"; |
| 'aṣbaṭa | "to cause to seize"; | 'afanfana | "to make abhor"; |
| ṣabṭa | "to seize, to catch"; | fanfana | "to abhor"; |
| 'aqātala | "to cause to do some killing"; | 'aṭālaqa | "to cause (some people) to be released"; |
| qātala | "to do some killing"; | ṭallaqa | "to let loose" (type C is non existent); |

'azābaṭa - "to make beat";
zābaṭa - "to beat".

(b) the causative of the intransitive verb. Some of the verbs which are intransitive become transitive by means of the prefix 'a-.

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 'aqṭara | "to drip" (v.t.); | 'aṣgaba | "to satisfy (food), to make rich"; |
| qaṭra | "to trickle"; | ṣagba | "to be satisfied (food), to be rich"; |
| 'amṣə'a | "to cause to come, to bring"; | 'amḥala | "to make swear"; |
| maṣ'a | "to come, to bring"; | maḥala | "to swear"; |
| 'as'a | "to rouse hopes"; | 'aṭlala | "to wet" |
| sa'a | "to hope" | ṭalla | "to be wet" |
| 'ab'a | "to let enter"; | 'ašangala | "to cause maturity"; |
| ba'a | "to enter"; | šangala | "to become adult" |
| 'abharara | "to frighten"; | 'agarrama | "to beautify"; |
| baharara | "to be frightened"; | garrama | "to be beautiful"; |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ’afrasa | - | "to destroy, to ruin"; |
| farsa | - | "to perish, to be ruined". |

In some instances the prefix ’a- is non functional, where the verb of the ’a- formation is to be taken as a co-existing lexical entry alongside the underlying verb, e.g.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ’aqbala | - | "to return" (v.i.); |
| qabbala | - | "to accept" (type A is non existent). |

## Derivatives with the prefix ’at-

’at - derivatives are used in the expression of:

(a) the causative of intransitive verbs of tə- formation. Some intransitive verbs of the tə- formation become transitive by means of the prefix ’at-.

Examples:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ’atgassa | - | "to make sit"; | ’atbaggasa | - | "to make depart"; |
| təgassa | - | "to sit down"; | təbaggasa | - | "to depart"; |
| ’atkarra | - | "to cause to descend"; | ’atlaḥama | - | "to join (v.t.) together"; |
| təkarra | - | "to descend"; | təlaḥama | - | "to join (v.i.) together"; |
| ’atkāsata | - | "to cause to open"; | ’addāla | - | "to make ready, to prepare". |
| təkāsata | - | "to open (v.i.)"; | tədāla | - | "to be ready". |

This relationship of *'at-* to *tə-* is on the same level as that of *'a* to A, B and C.

(b) the causative reciprocal in the case of *'at-*C and the frequentative causative in the case of *'at-*D; prefix *'a-* being non existent in the case of type D verbs.

Examples:

*'atgādaba* - "to cause to fight each other";
*təgādaba* - "to fight each other";

*'atkāfala* - "to allow to divide among each other";
*təkāfala* - "to divide among each other";

*'atnābara* - "to make dwell together";
*tənābara* - "to dwell with each other";

*'atkābata* - "to cause to meet each other";
*təkabbata* - "to meet";

*'atfarārha* - "to cause to be feared much";
*təfarrəha* - "to be feared".

(c) the causative for those verbs whose initial radical is a laryngal; the causative being normally expressed for such verbs by type C proper or by means of the prefix *'at-*.

Examples:

*'atḥādara/ḥādara* - "to cause to dwell";
*ḥadra* - "to dwell";

*'at'asara* - "to make bind";
*a̦sra* - "to bind";

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ’atḥadaga | - | "to make leave"; | ’atʿasa | - | "to incite to revolt"; |
| ḥadga | - | "to leave"; | ʿasa | - | "to revolt"; |
| ’at’abbasa | - | "to make someone sin"; | ’athalālaka | - | "to make someone exert himself a little"; |
| ’abbasa | - | "to sin"; | halālaka | - | "to exert oneself a little". |

## Derivatives with the prefix ’atta-

’atta- derivatives are used in the expression of (a) the factitive (i.e.: the 'double' causative) and (b) the causative where the action is caused to be performed via an agent other than the subject of the verb.

Examples:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ’attaqtala | - | "to cause to be killed (e.g. by a hired assassin)"; |
| qatla | - | "to kill"; |
| ’attabala | - | "to cause to be said (e.g. to spread rumours)"; |
| bela | - | "to say"; |
| ’attamṣə’a | - | "to cause to be brought, to let come"; |
| maṣ’a | - | "to come"; |
| ’attaftəḥa | - | "to cause to be released"; |
| fatḥa | - | "to release, to loosen"; |

'attawda - "to cause to be done, to cause to have made (e.g.: food and drink prepared by servants for guests)";

wada - "to do, to make";

'attaqraç̌a - "to cause to cut off";

qarça - "to cut off";

'attabtaka - "to cause to be cut off";

batka - "to cut off";

'attaklə'a - "to cause to be hindered";

kal'a - "to hinder";

'attandaqa - "to cause to be built";

nadqa - "to build";

'attafgara - "to cause to be brought out";

fagra - "to go out".

'atta- serves also as the simple causative for quadriradical verbs whose prefix is 'an- or 'as-. For examples see the following section.

## Prefixes 'an- and 'as-

These prefixes occur only with the quadriradicals and are non functional as regards the system. Their causative form is effected by means of the prefix 'atta-.

Examples of verbs with the prefix 'an- and its causative form 'attan-:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ’anṣarṣara | - "to be in trouble, to suffer"; | ’anqaṭqaṭa | - "to shake" (v.i.); |
| ’attanṣarṣara | - "to make suffer"; | ’attanqaṭqaṭa | - "to shake (v.t.); |
| ṣarṣara | - "to cry aloud"; | qaṭqaṭa | - "to knock, to forge (iron)"; |
| ’angargara | - "to wallow"; | ’anqalqala | - "to stagger"; |
| ’attangargara | - "to roll (v.t.) in the mud"; | ’attanqalqala | - "to make stagger"; |
| gargara | - "to get used to "; | | |
| ’angalḥaṭa<br>(*ǧalḥaṭa) | - "to slip (v.i.)"; | ’anṭoṭala/’anṭawāṭala<br>(*ṭoṭala) | - "to swing"; |

Examples of verbs with the prefix ’as- and its causative form ’attas- :

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ’asnaqnaqa | - "to be shaken"; | ’asqamqama | - "to groan"; |
| ’attasnaqnaqa | - "to cause to be shaken"; | ’attasqamqama | - "to make groan"; |
| naqnaqa | - "to shake"; | | |
| ’asdamdama | - "to blunt" (v.t.); | ’aslola | - "to collapse" (v.i.); |
| tədamdama | - "to become blunt"; | lawla | - "to move around" (v.t.); |

’astargama/targama - "to translate, to interpret".

## The prefix *'asta-*

This prefix appears only in Arabic loan-words and is thus to be regarded as an integral part of the verb in Tigre.

Examples:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *'astafāšara* | - | "to inquire [about]"; (Arabic: *'istafsara*) |
| *'astahala* | - | "to be worthy of, to be entitled to"; (Arabic: *'ista'hala*). |

## § 5.3 Verb formation: Triradical verbs of types A, B, C, D and their derivatives.

The verbs to be treated in this section are triradicals which do not contain semivowels or laryngals. The incidence of any such form of the Tigre verb can best be described in terms of:

(a) the morphological category of the verb, i.e., perfect, imperfect or jussive (imperative);

(b) the type of the verb, i.e., A, B, C or D;

(c) the prefixed derivative, i.e. *tə*, *’a*, *’at* or *’atta* attached to the verb form.

The following synoptic table illustrates the threefold possibilities in their actual range of occurrence:[1]

| | | | tə | ’a | ’at | ’atta |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | Perfect | qatla | təqattala | ’aqtala | -- | ’attaqtala |
| | Imperfect | ləqattəl | lətqattal | laqattəl | -- | lattaqtəl |
| | Jussive | ləqtal | lətqattal | laqtəl | -- | lattaqtəl |
| B | Perfect | qattala | təqattala | ’aqattala | ’atqattala | -- |
| | Imperfect/ Jussive | ləqattəl | lətqattal | laqattəl | latqattəl | -- |
| C | Perfect | qātala | təqātala | ’aqātala | ’atqātala | -- |
| | Imperfect/ Jussive | ləqātəl | lətqātal | laqātəl | latqātəl | -- |
| D | Perfect | qatātala | təqatātala | -- | ’atqatātala | -- |
| | Imperfect/ Jussive | ləqatātəl | lətqatātal | -- | latqatātəl | -- |

---

[1] 3rd pers. masc. sing. form of the verb *qatla* - "to kill" represents the conjugation. *qatla* is used here as a model verb only.

In reading the above table the following morphological phenomena are to be noted:

(1) there is a similarity of form in the case of tə-A and tə-B, in the sense that the semantic value required for tə-A in relation to A is rendered regularly by tə-B forms.

(2) an imperfect/jussive contrast exists only in type A and in the derivative ʼa-A throughout the conjugation, other types and derivatives having a similar conjugation for both imperfect and jussive forms.[1]

(3) type D does not have the derivative with the prefix ʼa.

(4) the prefix ʼatta occurs only with type A forms, where the prefix ʼat is not used.

## § 5.3.1 Paradigmatic analysis of the three morphological categories and the four verb types.

The morphological data relevant to this analysis consists of: (a) the phonemic shape of the stem, i.e., the arrangement of consonants and vowels in it and the quality of those in terms of gemination (consonants) and duration (vowels); (b) the formatives used with the stem, i.e. suffixes and prefixes.

### Perfect, types A, B, C, D:

Formatives Essential morphological features of this category are the occurrence throughout of the same suffixes and the absence of prefixes. The suffixes are as follows:[2]

---

[1] The prefix of 1st pers. pl. retains, however, the contrast imperfect/jussive in other types.

[2] The following order will be kept throughout the chapter: 1st pers. sing., 2nd pers.masc. sing., 2nd pers. fem. sing., 3rd pers. mas. sing., 3rd person fem. sing., 1st pers. pl., 2nd pers. mas. pl., etc.

-ko, -ka, -ki, -a, -at, -na, -kum, -kən, -aw, -aya.

Stem

type A:

all persons except third: qatal

third persons: qatl

type B:

all persons: qattal

type C:

all persons: qātal

type D:

all persons: qatātal

Imperfect, types A, B, C, D:

Formatives The essential feature of this category is the existence of the same formatives through the inflexion of the various types. The formatives are as follows:

ʼə-, tə-, tə-...-i, lə-, tə-, ʼən-, tə-...-o, tə-...-a, lə-...-o, l-...-a.

Stem

types A and B:

all persons having a suffix: qatl

all persons not having a suffix: qattəl

type C:

all persons having a suffix: qātl

all persons not having a suffix: qātəl

type D:

| | |
|---|---|
| all persons having a suffix: | qatātl |
| all persons not having a suffix: | qatātəl |

### Jussive, types B, C, D:

Excluding the prefix of first person plural which is ne, the forms of these types in the jussive are identical with those of the same types in the imperfect throughout the inflexion.

type A:

| | |
|---|---|
| formatives: | as in the imperfect, excluding the first person plural prefix which is nə- |
| stem: | qtal. |

## § 5.3.2 A detailed study of verb inflexion

### Type A

qanṣa - "to get up"[1]

| Perfect | | Imperfect | |
|---|---|---|---|
| qanaṣko | qanaṣna | ʼəqannəṣ | ʼənqannəṣ |
| qanaṣka | qanaṣkum | təqannəṣ | təqanṣo |
| qanaṣki | qanaṣkən | təqanṣi | təqanṣa |
| qanṣa | qanṣaw | ləqannəṣ | ləqanṣo |
| qanṣat | qanṣaya | təqannaṣ | ləqanṣa |

---

[1] When entered as lexical entity the given form is in the 3rd pers. masc. sing. of the perfect and the meaning in English is rendered by "to" + infinitive.

### Jussive

| | |
|---|---|
| ’əqnaṣ | nəqnaṣ |
| təqnaṣ | təqnaṣo |
| təqnaṣi | təqnaṣa |
| ləqnaṣ | ləqnaṣo |
| təqnaṣ | ləqnaṣa |

### Imperative

The imperative forms are derived from the jussive forms in the appropriate persons. They differ from the jussive forms in that they do not have prefixes[1] and are, therefore, liable to change their position with regard to the syllabic structure.[2]

The inflexion of the imperative is as follows:

qənaṣ
qənaṣi
qənaṣo
qənaṣa

### Type B

mazzana - "to weigh"

| Perfect | | Imperfect/Jussive | |
|---|---|---|---|
| mazzanko | mazzanna | ’əmazzən | ’ənmazzən/nəmazzən[3] |
| mazzanka | mazzankum | təmazzən | təmazno |
| mazzanki | mazzankən | təmazni | təmazna |
| mazzana | mazzanaw | ləmazzən | ləmazno |
| mazzanat | mazzanaya | təmazzən | ləmazna |

---

[1] This is the situation for imperative forms in the affirmative. For the imperative in the negative see: § 5.3.3.

[2] For the syllabic structure typical of Tigre see: § 1.4 & § 1.7.6.

[3] The first form is the imperfect one, the second is the jussive.

Imperative

mazzən

mazni

mazno

mazna

### Type C

kātaba - "to vaccinate"

| Perfect | | Imperfect/Jussive | |
|---|---|---|---|
| kātabko | kātabna | ʼəkātəb | ʼənkātəb/nakātəb[1] |
| kātabka | kātabkum | təkātəb | təkātbo |
| kātabki | kātabkən | təkātbi | təkātba |
| kātaba | kātabaw | ləkātəb | ləkātbo |
| kātabat | kātabaya | təkātəb | ləkātba |

Imperative

kātəb

kātbi

kātbo

kātba

### Type D

balālasa - "to keep on answering; to answer repeatedly"

| Perfect | Imperfect/Jussive |
|---|---|
| balālasa | ləbalāləs |

Imperative

balāləs

---

[1] The first form is the imperfect one, the second is the jussive.

## § 5.3.3 Negation of the verb

A verb is rendered negative by means of the prefixed particle *'i*.

Examples:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Perfect: | *'isarqa* | "He did not steal" |
| Imperfect: | *'i'əfaqqəd* | "I do not remember" |
| Jussive: | *'əgəl 'ilətkam* | "in order that it will not be weak" |

In the imperative the second persons of the jussive are used instead, e.g.:[1]

*qatla* - "to kill"
'itəqtal
'itəqtali
'itəqtalo
'itəqtala

## § 5.3.4 The optional use of prefixes in the imperfect

In colloquial speech there is a distinct tendency to omit the prefixes of the verb in the imperfect.[2] The prefixes of the first persons are normally retained, except in the case of verbs with first radical laryngal where the prefix of the first person singular form

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[1] For the semantic relationship between jussive and imperative, see § 6.2.

[2] I have found no evidence to substantiate the statement made in Leslau, *Supplementary Observations*, § 29 a), that "The element *lə* is always used when the verb is preceded by a conjunction". In fact I have registered *'ət ləfaggər*, the example given there, as *'ət faggər* - "when he goes out".

is never pronounced, e.g.: *ḥassəb* - "I think" (cf.: § 5.4.1, 1(a)). Thus, the typical inflexion of the verb in the imperfect is as follows:

*fagra* - "to go out"

| | |
|---|---|
| ʼəfaggər | ʼənfaggər |
| faggər | fagro |
| fagri | fagra |
| faggər | fagro |
| faggər | fagra |

## § 5.3.5 Prefixed derivatives

### § 5.3.5.1 Prefix tə

As mentioned above (§ 5.3, (1)) there is a similarity of form in the case of *tə*-A and *tə*-B. The verb *təbaššara* - "to be announced [good news]" for example is counted as *tə*-B since it exists beside the verb *baššara* - "to bring good news" and in the absence of a verb **bašra*, while *təkassata* - "to be opened" is counted as *tə*-A since it exists beside *kasta* - "to open" and in the absence of **kassata*. The distinction between *tə*-A and *tə*-B must, therefore, be analysed lexically.

Example of *tə*-A/B:[1]

*təqarraç̌a* - "to be cut off"

| Perfect | | Imperfect/Jussive | |
|---|---|---|---|
| təqarraç̌ko | təqarraç̌na | ʼətqarraç̌ | nətqarraç̌ |
| təqarraç̌ka | təqarraç̌kum | tətqarraç̌ | tətqarraç̌o |
| təqarraç̌ki | təqarraç̌kən | tətqarraç̌i | tətqarraç̌a |

---

[1] The sign *tə*-A/B signifies that *tə*-A is formally identical with *tə*-B.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| təqarraç̌a | təqarraç̌aw | lətqarraç̌ | lətqarraç̌o |
| təqarraç̌at | təqarraç̌aya | tətqarraç̌ | lətgarraç̌a |

### Imperative

təqarraç̌

təqarraç̌i

təqarraç̌o

təqarraç̌a

## tə-C

*təqābala* - "to meet"

| | |
|---|---|
| Imperfect/Jussive: | lətqābal |
| Imperative: | təqābal |

## tə-D

*tənabābara* - "to live a bit on A and a bit on B" (e.g.: agriculture and cattle-herding)

| | |
|---|---|
| Imperfect/Jussive: | lətnabābar |
| Imperative: | tənabābar |

As regards the phonemic shape of the derivatives with the prefix *tə* two points are to be noted:

(1) The prefix *tə* is optional, e.g., *baggasa* or *təbaggasa* - "to depart"

(2) When *tə* becomes a constituent in a consonantal cluster it may assimilate to dentals, alveolars and palato-alveolars. The result is a geminated consonant - voiced or voiceless - according to the assimilating consonant.

Examples:

| | |
|---|---|
| ləddaqqab | "He is strong, able" (tədaqqaba - "to be strong") |
| ləssalālamo | "They greet each other" (təsalālama - "to greet each other") |

## § 5.3.5.2 Prefix ’a

### ’a-A

This is the sole instance of a triradical derivative where a formal distinction between the imperfect and jussive morphological categories is maintained.

The inflexion is as follows:

’angafa - "to save, to let escape"

| Perfect | | Imperfect | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ’angafko | ’angafna | ’anaggəf | nanaggəf |
| ’angafka | ’angafkum | tanaggəf | tanagfo |
| ’angafki | ’angafkən | tanagfi | tanagfa |
| ’angafa | ’angafaw | lanaggəf | lanagfo |
| ’agafat | ’angafaya | tanaggəf | lanagfa |

| Jussive | | Imperative |
|---|---|---|
| ’angəf | nangəf | ’angəf |
| tangəf | tangəfo | ’angəfi |
| tangəfi | tangəfa | ’angəfo |
| langəf | langəfo | ’angəfa |
| tangəf | langəfa | |

The consonantal element in the suffix ’a is liable to variation as follows: there is a possibility of free variation between

’ and ‘ when a neighbouring consonant is an ejective.

Examples:

’aq‘a or ‘aq‘a - "to cause to vomit"
’aṣmə’a or ‘aṣmə’a - "to make thirsty"

When the first radical of the root of the verb is q the q may occur as ’ or ‘ along with the change of ’ to ‘ in the suffix, as in: ’aqrəḥa, ‘a’rəḥa or ‘a‘rəḥa - "to set fire to".[1]

### ’a-B

’abattala - "to stop, to bring to a standstill"

| Perfect | | Imperfect/Jussive | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ’abaṭṭalko | ’abaṭṭalna | ’abaṭṭəl | nabaṭṭəl |
| ’abaṭṭalka | ’abaṭṭalkum | tabaṭṭəl | tabaṭlo |
| ’abaṭṭalki | ’abaṭṭalkən | tabaṭli | tabaṭla |
| ’abaṭṭala | ’abaṭṭalaw | labaṭṭəl | labaṭlo |
| ’abaṭṭalat | ’abaṭṭalaya | tabaṭṭəl | labaṭla |

Imperative

’abaṭṭəl
’abaṭli
’abaṭlo
‘abatla

---

[1] For the phonetic behaviour of ejectives and largyngals see §§ 1.2.1, 1.2.3. The phonetic identity of q in the above position - i.e., as initial of a consonantal cluster - is open to question, and so is the phonetic identity of the preceding consonantal element of the prefix. The above description is based upon the interpretation of the acoustic impression on the lines of traditional semitic terminology.

### ʼa-C

ʼaṣābaṭa - "to get hold of"

| Perfect | | Imperfect/Jussive | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ʼaṣābaṭko | ʼaṣābaṭna | ʼaṣābəṭ | naṣābəṭ |
| ʼaṣābaṭka | ʼaṣābaṭkum | taṣābəṭ | taṣābṭo |
| ʼaṣābaṭki | ʼaṣābaṭkən | taṣābṭi | ṭaṣābṭa |
| aṣābaṭa | ʼaṣābaṭaw | laṣābəṭ | laṣābṭo |
| ʼasābaṭat | ʼaṣābaṭaya | taṣābəṭ | laṣābṭa |

| Imperative |
|---|
| ʼaṣābəṭ |
| ʼaṣābṭi |
| ʼaṣābṭo |
| ʼaṣābṭa |

### Type D

The derivative *ʼa-D is non-existent. Its place in the system is taken by ʼat-D.

## § 5.3.5.3 Prefix ʼat

### Type A

The derivative *ʼat-A is non-existent. Its place in the system is taken by ʼa-A and ʼatta-A.

### ʼat-B

ʼatbaggasa - "to cause to move off"

| Perfect | | Imperfect/Jussive | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ʼatbaggasko | ʼatbaggasna | ʼatbaggəs | natbaggəs |
| ʼatbaggaska | ʼatbaggaskum | tatbaggəs | tatbagso |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ʼatbaggaski | ʼatbaggaskən | tatbagsi | tatbagsa |
| ʼatbaggasa | ʼatbaggasaw | latbaggəs | latbagso |
| ʼatbaggasat | ʼatbaggasaya | tatbaggəs | latbagsa |

Imperative

ʼatbaggəs
ʼatbagsi
ʼatbagso
ʼatbagsa

## ʼat-C

### ʼatrāsana - "to heat"

| Perfect | | Imperfect/Jussive | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ʼatrāsanko | ʼatrāsanna | ʼatrāsən | natrāsən |
| ʼatrāsanka | ʼatrāsankum | tatrāsən | tatrāsno |
| ʼatrāsanki | ʼatrāsankən | tatrāsni | tatrāsna |
| ʼatrāsana | ʼatrāsanaw | latrāsən | latrāsno |
| ʼatrāsant | ʼatrāsanaya | tatrāsən | latrāsna |

Imperative

ʼatrāsən
ʼatrāsni
ʼatrāsno
ʼatrāsna

## ʼat-D

### ʼatqabābala - "to go to and fro"

| Perfect | | Imperfect/Jussive | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ʼatqabābalko | ʼatqabābalna | ʼatqabābəl | natqabābəl |
| ʼatqabābalka | ʼatqabābalkum | tatqabābəl | tatqabāblo |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ’atqabābalki | ’atqabābalkən | tatqabābli | tatqabābla |
| ’atqabābala | ’atqabābalaw | latqabābəl | latqabāblo |
| ’atqabābalat | ’atqabābalaya | tatqabābəl | latqabābla |

Imperative

’atqabābəl
’atqabābli
’atqabāblo
’atqabābla

## § 5.3.5.4 Prefix ’atta

This prefix is functional in the system only in the case of type A verbs[1]. A small number of verbs of ’atta-C formation appear in the written language, including the following examples:

’attaqābala - "to pay attention, to take notice of"
cf.: ’attaqbala - "to observe, to look at"
’atqābala - "to return"

’attalāmada - "to cause to become mutually habituated"
cf.: ’attalmada - "to cause to habituate"
’atlāmada - "to cause to become mutually habituated"

Because of the extremely infrequent occurrence of ’atta-C verbs it is not possible to draw any practical inferences as regards their function in the system from the data, and they are best dealt with within the lexical domain.

---

[1] Cf. § 5.3, table

## ʼatta-A

ʼattaqraç̌a - "to let cut off"

| Perfect | | Imperfect/Jussive | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ʼattaqraç̌ko | ʼattaqraç̌na | ʼattaqrəç̌ | nattaqrəç̌ |
| ʼattaqraç̌ka | ʼattaqraç̌kum | tattaqrəç̌ | tattagrəç̌o |
| ʼattaqraç̌ki | ʼattaqraç̌kən | tattaqrəç̌i | tattaqrəç̌a |
| ʼattaqraç̌a | ʼattaqraç̌aw | lattaqrəç̌ | lattaqrəç̌o |
| ʼattaqraç̌at | ʼattaqraç̌aya | tattaqrəç̌ | lattaqrəç̌a |

Imperative

ʼattaqrəç̌
ʼattaqrəç̌i
ʼattaqrəç̌o
ʼattaqrəç̌a

## § 5.4 Verbs with laryngals

The influence of laryngals on adjacent speech-sounds is described in detail in the first chapter (§§ 1.2.3, 1.7.4.(e)(f)). Additional statements which are relevant to the morphology of the verb follow in the appropriate sections below.

### § 5.4.1 Verbs with initial laryngals

The following phenomena are to be noted:

(1) Verbs with initial laryngals have only one preformative, ʼat, which contains a laryngal. Thus:

(a) the preformatives ʼə and ʼən of the first persons, which usually occur with the appropriate imperfect and jussive forms of the verb, do not materialize, as in, e.g.:

ḥassəb - "I think"

(b) *’a* formations do not occur with initial laryngals. The place of *’a* formations in the system is taken by type C or the *’at*-A derivative of type A, as in, e.g.:

*‘arga* - "to ascend"
*‘āraga* - "to lift up".

*ḥatma* - "to seal"
*’atḥatama* - "to make seal".

In the case of the other types, *’at* formations may serve the purpose of the *’a* formation - though type C may function either as C proper or as *’at*-A. Examples:

*’abbasa* - "to sin"
*’at’abbasa* - "to make one sin"

*ḥarsa* - "to plough"
*ḥārasa* - "to cultivate"
*’atḥarasa* - "to make plough".

(c) the prefix *’atta* is lacking in all types.

(2) As regards vocalization the following features are typical of verbs with initial laryngals:

(a) In the first person singular of the jussive where the prefix is lacking, the vowel of the first radical is *i* - as opposed to *ə* or zero in the other persons, e.g.:

*ḥirad* - "should I slaughter [the sacrificial cow]"
(PL1, 77:10)

(b) In the case of the occurrence of the sequence $V_1LV_2$ $V_1$ usually assimilates to $V_2$, though stress must be accounted for. Thus, one may encounter: *taḥaṣṣəb* - "you (masc. sing.) will wash", as well as *ˈtḥaṣṣəb*.

(c) Since the sequence VLCV is not typical of verbs with laryngals, the consonantal cluster of a possible VLCV sequence is eliminated by vocalizing the largyngals.

This phenomenon prevails in the jussive of type A, as in:

| | |
|---|---|
| *'əgəl təḥədag tu* | "you (masc. sing.) will leave" |
| *'əgəl təḥədagi tu* | "you (fem. sing.) will leave" |
| *'əgəl ləhəram* | "in order that he will play [the instrument]" |
| *'əgəl ləʿəqab* | "in order that he will watch" |
| *'əgəl tə'əmano* | "in order that you will believe" |

(d) In *'at*-A derivatives the consonant-vowel arrangement of the stem in the perfect is CaCaC in all persons. Thus the inflexion formation of *'at*-A contrasts with that of *'at*-C only as regards the quantity of the first vowel of the stem. In the imperfect/jussive the stem of *'at*-A has the consonant-vowel arrangement of *'at*-B but without gemination of the second radical.

## § 5.4.1.1 The inflexion of verbs with initial laryngals

### Type A

In the absence of *'a* derivatives only type A has separate inflexions for the imperfect and the jussive. The inflexion of type A is as follows:

ḫaṣba - "to wash" (v.t.)

| Perfect | | Imperfect | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ḫaṣabko | ḫaṣabna | ḫaṣṣəb | naḫaṣṣəb |
| ḫaṣabka | ḫaṣabkum | taḫaṣṣəb | taḫaṣbo |
| ḫaṣabki | ḫaṣabkən | taḫaṣbi | taḫaṣba |
| ḫaṣba | ḫaṣbaw | laḫaṣṣəb | laḫaṣbo |
| ḫaṣbat | ḫaṣbaya | taḫaṣṣəb | laḫaṣba |

| Jussive | | Imperative |
|---|---|---|
| ḫiṣab | nəḫəṣab | ḫəṣab |
| təḫəṣab | təḫəṣabo | ḫəṣabi |
| təḫəṣabi | təḫəṣaba | ḫəṣabo |
| ləḫəṣab | ləḫəṣabo | ḫəṣaba |
| təḫəṣab | ləḫəṣaba | |

### Type B

ʿaddama - "to invite"

| Perfect | | Imperfect/Jussive | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ʿaddamko | ʿaddamna | ʿaddəm | naʿaddəm |
| ʿaddamka | ʿaddamkum | taʿaddəm | taʿadmo |
| ʿaddamki | ʿaddamkən | taʿadmi | taʿadma |
| ʿaddama | ʿaddamaw | laʿaddəm | laʿadmo |
| ʿaddamat | ʿaddamaya | taʿaddəm | laʿadma |

Imperative

ʿaddəm
ʿadmi
ʿadmo
ʿadma

### Type C

ḥābara - "to join"

| Perfect | | Imperfect/Jussive | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ḥābarko | ḥābarna | ḥābər | naḥābar |
| ḥābarka | ḥābarkum | taḥābar | taḥābro |
| ḥābarki | ḥābarkən | taḥābri | taḥābra |
| ḥābara | ḥābaraw | laḥābər | laḥābro |
| ḥābarat | ḥābaraya | taḥābər | laḥābro |

| Imperative |
|---|
| ḥābər |
| ḥābri |
| ḥābro |
| ḥābra |

### Type D

harārama - "to weed here and there"

| Imperfect/Jussive | Imperative |
|---|---|
| laharārəm | harārəm |

### § 5.4.1.2 Prefixed derivatives[1]

tə-A/B : taḥaṣṣaba - "to wash oneself"

tə-C: taʿārafa - "to visit"

| | tə-A/B | tə-C |
|---|---|---|
| Imperfect/Jussive: | lətḥaṣṣab | lətʿāraf |
| Imperative: | taḥaṣṣab | taʿāraf |

---

[1] Type D and its derivatives will be dealt with henceforth only where peculiarities need to be noted in the forms occurring.

’at-A: ’atḫalafa - "to cause to pass"

’at-B: ’atḫaddasa - "to cause to renew"

’at-C: ’atḫādaga - "to cause to leave one another"

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Imperfect/Jussive: | latḫaləf | latḫaddəs | latḫādəg |
| Imperative: | ’atḫaləf | ’atḫaddəs | ’atḫādəg |

### § 5.4.2 Verbs with medial laryngals

The characteristic features of verbs with medial laryngals are:

(a) the absence of type B formations, as the laryngals are not geminated.

(b) the type A stem shows peculiarities in all morphological categories of the verb: in the perfect the stem is CaLaC throughout the inflexion; in the imperfect the stem is CLəC, in the jussive CLaC and in the imperative CaLaC - throughout.

(c) type C seems to be non-functional in the system, e.g.:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| təba’asa | = təbā’asa | "to quarrel" |
| qaḫara | = qāḫara | "to get excited" |
| təsa‘ara | = təsā‘ara | "to be deposed" |

### The inflexion of type A verbs with medial laryngals

ṣa‘ana - "to load"

| Perfect | | Imperfect | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ṣa‘anko | ṣa‘anna | ’əṣ‘ən | ’ənəṣ‘ən[1] |
| ṣa‘anka | ṣa‘ankum | təṣ‘ən | təṣ‘əno |

---

[1] Or: nəṣ‘ən.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ṣaʿanki | ṣaʿankən | təṣʿəni | təṣʿəna |
| ṣaʿana | ṣaʿanaw | ləṣʿən | ləṣʿəno |
| ṣaʿanat | ṣaʿanaya | təṣʿən | ləṣʿəna |

| Jussive | | Imperative |
|---|---|---|
| ʾəṣʿan | nəṣʿan | ṣaʿan[1] |
| təṣʿan | təṣʿano | ṣaʿani |
| təṣʿani | təṣʿana | ṣaʿano |
| ləsʿan | ləṣʿano | ṣaʿana |
| təṣʿan | ləṣʿana | |

### Prefixed derivatives of type A

(1) With the exception of the ʾatta formation all derivatives are found.

(2) No formal distinction exists between the imperfect and jussive forms.

(3) The stem of ʾat-A in the imperfect/jussive is CəLəC[2] and that of ʾa-A is C(ə)LəC.

| | tə-A | ʾa-A | ʾat-A |
|---|---|---|---|
| Perfect | təbaʾasa - "to quarrel" | ʾasḥata - "to mislead" | ʾatlaḥama - "to clos |
| Imperfect/ Jussive | lətbaʾas | lasḥət | latləḥəm |
| Imperative | təbaʾas | ʾasḥət | ʾatləḥəm |

---

[1] Or: [ṣäʿan]

[2] Cf.: § 5.4.1, 2(b).

## § 5.4.3 Verbs with final laryngals

### Type A

The characteristic features of verbs with final laryngals of type A are:

(1) the actualization of the sequence VLCV[1] is made feasible by means of metathesis. The sequence VLCV is represented, therefore, by LVCV, as in bal'ako - "I ate" which stands for *bala'ko.

(2) all forms with verb suffixes in the non-perfect morphological categories show peculiarities, as follows:

(a) in the second persons, the vowel of the verb suffix is liable to transposition, which, if it occurs, results in its insertion between the first and second radicals of the stem;

(b) the vowel of the verb suffix in the second persons of the masculine plural forms is u as opposed to o in the verbs with a final non-laryngal consonant;

(c) all jussive forms with verb suffixes have the vowel ə as the second vowel of the stem, as opposed to a in the verbs with a final non-laryngal consonant.

Peculiarities (b) and (c) refer to the cases in which transposition of the vowel of the verb suffix does not occur. When transposition occurs, as described in (a), the second vowel of the stem, which is ə, is omitted. Owing to the phonemic shape of the imperfect form, the second radical is geminated throughout.

---

[1] Cf.: § 5.4.1, 2(c).

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ləfarrəhu | or | ləfarruh | - "they (masc. pl.) are afraid" |
| ləmaṣṣə’u | or | ləmaṣṣu’ | - "they (masc. pl.) come" |
| ləbaṣṣəḥu | or | ləbaṣṣuḥ | - "they (masc. pl.) arrive" |
| təsamməʿi | or | təsammiʿ | - "you (fem. sing.) hear" |
| ’əgəl ’iləsmu’ | or | ’əgəl ’iləṣmə’u | - "in order that they (masc. pl.) will not be thirsty" |
| nəs’u | or | nəsu’ | - "take!" (masc. pl.) |

## § 5.4.3.1 The inflexion of type A verbs with final laryngals

balʿa - "to eat"

| Perfect | | Imperfect | |
|---|---|---|---|
| balʿako | balʿana | ’əballəʿ | ’ənballə’ |
| balʿaka | balʿakum | təballəʿ | təballəʿu/ |
| balʿaki | balʿakən | təballəʿi/ | təballuʿ |
| balʿa | balʿaw | təballiʿ | təballəʿa |
| balʿat | balʿaya | ləballəʿ | ləballəʿu/ləballuʿ |
| | | təballəʿ | ləballəʿa |

| Jussive | | Imperative |
|---|---|---|
| ’əblaʿ | nəblaʿ | bəlaʿ |
| təblaʿ | təbləʿu/təbluʿ[1] | bəlʿi/bəliʿ |
| təbləʿi/ | təbləʿa | bəlʿu/bəluʿ |
| təbliʿ | ləbləʿu/ləbluʿ | bəlʿa |
| ləblaʿ | ləbləʿa | |
| təblaʿ | | |

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[1] In the sequence əLV (cf.: § 5.4.1, 2(b)) of the jussive plural forms, a full vowel assimilation can be detected, as in: təbluʿu, təblaʿa, ləbluʿu, ləblaʿa.

### § 5.4.3.2 Type B

The second radical is geminated throughout the inflexion and followed by an ə whose timbre is determined by the various modes of the assimilation process. The inflexion of type B is as follows:

šamməʿa - "to daub with wax"

| Perfect | Imperfect/ Jussive | Imperative |
|---|---|---|
| šamməʿako (1st pers. sing.) | ləšamməʿ | šamməʿ |
| šamməʿa | ləšamməʿu/<br>ləšammuʿ (3rd masc. pl.) | šamməʿi/šammiʿ (fem. sing.) |

### § 5.4.3.3 Type C

The vowel of the verb suffix in the non-perfect forms of type C, unlike that of types A and B, is not liable to transposition. In other respects the vowel of type C verb-suffixes is that of the other types, i.e. - u in the second and third persons of the masculine plural forms and i in the feminine singular. The stem of type C in the perfect is CāCL , though a barely audible central vowel can be detected following the second radical. This central vowel is also detected in the non-perfect forms which have verb suffixes. The inflexion of type C is as follows:

šār(ə)ʿa - "to shave"

| Perfect | Imperfect/Jussive | Imperative |
|---|---|---|
| šār(ə)ʿa | ləšārəʿ | šārəʿ |
| | təšār(ə)ʿi (2nd fem. sing.) | šār(ə)ʿu (2nd masc.pl.) |

### § 5.4.3.4 Prefixed derivatives

The following phenomena are to be noted:

(1) All derivatives are found with types A, B and C, excluding derivatives with *'at*, which seem to occur with type C only, and those with *'atta* which seem to be non-existent for type C. Type D derivatives show no peculiarities.

(2) The formal distinction of imperfect/jussive exists only in derivatives of *'a*-A formation.

The formation of the prefixed derivatives is exemplified in the table below:

| | Perfect | Imperfect | Jussive | Imperative |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| tə-A<br>tə-B | təmallə'a<br>("to be filled") | lətmalla' | | təmalla' |
| tə-C | təbāləḥa<br>("to be freed") | lətbālaḥ | | təbālaḥ |
| 'a-A | 'asmə'a<br>("to let, make hear") | lasammə' | lasmə' | 'asmə' |
| 'a-B | 'ašalləḥa<br>(to make lean, thin") | lašalləḥ | | 'ašalləḥ |
| 'a-C | 'aṭāqə'a ("to clap hands") | laṭāqə' | | 'aṭāqə' |
| 'at-C | 'atmāsə'a<br>("to make meet") | latmāṣə' | | 'atmāṣə' |
| 'atta-A | 'attalmə'a<br>("to make blossom") | lattalmə' | | 'attalmə' |
| 'atta-B | 'attaqallə'a<br>("to cause premature birth") | lattaqallə' | | 'attaqallə' |

## § 5.5 Verbs with semivowels

A distinction is to be made here between those verbs whose final radical is a semivowel and those whose initial or medial radical is a semivowel. This distinction needs to be made by reason of two general phenomena:

(a) verbs with initial or medial semivowels show a complementary biradical-triradical inflexion in all types and are triradical in the derivatives, e.g., verbs with initial semivowels are biradical in the jussive of type A and triradical in all other types and derivatives and verbs with medial semivowels are biradical in all morphological categories - imperfect excluded - of type A and derivatives.

Verbs with a final semivowel are biradical throughout.[1]

(b) verbs with initial or medial semivowels make it possible to distinguish those verbs whose semivowel is w̲ from those whose semivowel is y̲ on morphological grounds. Verbs with a final semivowel do not make such a distinction possible as they have the same morphological import for those verbs which, historically, had w̲ or y̲ as their final radical.

## § 5.5.1 Verbs with initial semivowels

### Type A

Apart from the jussive of type A, verbs with initial w̲ or y̲ are inflected in the same manner in which the typical triconsonantal verbs are inflected. It should be added here that the number of verbs

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[1] This is so apart from some feminine forms, such as second person fem. pl. of the morphological categories other than the perfect, and second person fem. sing. of the jussive (imperative), where y̲ appears. This y̲ can be interpreted, therefore, as an element of the feminine verb suffix.

with initial y is very small - probably no greater than four - but sufficient to substantiate the above statement. In the jussive, verbs with initial semivowel lose the first radical and the stem is thus CaC, to which the verb suffix with the vowel element i is attached.

The inflexion of type A is as follows:

| Perfect | | Perfect | |
|---|---|---|---|
| warsa - "to inherit" | | yabsa - "to dry" (v.i.) | |
| Imperfect | | Imperfect | |
| ləwarrəs | | ləyabbəs | |
| Jussive | | Jussive | |
| ’iras | niras | ’ibas | nibas |
| tiras | tiraso | tibas | tibaso |
| tirasi | tirasa | tibasi | tibasa |
| liras | liraso | libas | libaso |
| tiras | lirasa | tibas | libasa |
| Imperative | | Imperative | |
| wəras | | yəbas | |
| wərasi | | yəbasi | |
| wəraso | | yəbaso | |
| wərasa | | yəbasa | |

An optional biradical form is possible for the imperative of verbs with initial w, e.g.:

ladi -

"Bring forth!" (2nd pers. fem. sing. of walda - "to bring forth")

(PL1, 101:21)

*rad* -

"Get down!" (2nd pers. masc. sing. of *warda* - "to descend")

### Other types and their derivatives

(1) Verbs with initial *w* show no peculiarities.

(2) Verbs with initial *y* are attested in the following types and their derivatives where they show no peculiarities:

**type B**

Example:

*yattama* -

"to become an orphan"; imperfect/jussive: *ləyattəm*

**'a-A**

Example:

*'aybasa* -

"to dry" (trans.); imperfect: *layabbəs*

jussive: *laybəs*

**tə-C**

Example:

*təyāmama* -

"to decide"; imperfect/jussive: *lətyāmam*.

## § 5.5.2 Verbs with medial semivowels

(1) The morphological phenomena which are common to verbs with medial semivowels - as distinct from that of the typical triconsonantal verb - may be set out as follows:

(a) Verbs with medial semivowels are biradical in the perfect and jussive (imperative) of type A and the derivative *'a*-A.

(b) Gemination of the medial radical - in those cases where it is morphologically required by the system - is not effected.

(2) The inflexion of verbs with medial *w* is distinctive from that of verbs with medial *y* in that:

(a) the biradical stem of verbs with initial *w* has the vowel *u* in the jussive (imperative) of type A and the derivative *'a*-A where verbs with initial *y* have the vowel *i*;

(b) in the imperfect of type A and the derivative *'a*-A and in all morphological categories of other types and derivatives *w* and *y* occur as medial radicals.

In the perfect of type A a distinction between verbs with medial *w* and verbs with medial *y* is maintained only in the third persons, where the vowel of the stem in the former case is *o* and in the latter case *e*. A central vowel, *ə*, occurs as the vowel of the stem in other persons of the perfect for both verbs with initial *w* and verbs with initial *y*.

The inflexion of verbs with medial semivowels is as follows:

## Type A

| medial *y*: | medial *w*: |
|---|---|
| *geda* - "to hurry" | *dora* - "to go around" |

### Perfect

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| gədko | gədna | dərko | dərna |
| gədka | gədkum | dərka | dərkum |
| gədki | gədkən | dərki | dərkən |
| geda | gedaw | dora | doraw |
| gedat | gedaya | dorat | doraya |

### Imperfect

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ’əgayəd[1] | ’əngayəd | ’ədawər[1] | ’əndawər |
| təgayəd | təgaydo | tədawer | tədawro |
| təgaydi | təgayda | tədawri | tədawra |
| ləgayəd | ləgaydo | lədawər | lədawro |
| təgayəd | ləgayda | tədawər | lədawra |

### Jussive

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ’igid | nigid | ’idur | nidur |
| tigid | tigido | tidur | tiduro[2] |
| tigidi | tigida | tiduri[2] | tidura |
| ligid | ligido | lidur | liduro |
| tigid | ligida | tidur | lidura |

### Imperative

| | |
|---|---|
| gid | dur |
| gidi | duri |
| gido | duro |
| gida | dura |

---

[1] Owing to the nature of the semivowels as continuants, the disjunctive ə is not an essential feature: it is often absent, as in, e.g.: ’əgayd.

[2] In sequences of normal rapid articulation the vowel of the stem can disappear, e.g.: ’əgəl tidri tu - "in order that you (fem.sing.) will turn"; ’əgəl tidro tu - "in order that you (masc.pl.) will turn", etc.

Examples of other types and derivatives:

| | Perfect | | Imperfect | Jussive | Imperative |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | qayasa | "to measure" | ləqayəs | | qayəs |
| | lawaṭa | "to exchange" | ləlawəṭ | | lawəṭ |
| C | tāyana | "to explore" | lətāyən | | tāyən |
| | kāwala | "to guard" | ləkāwəl | | kāwəl |
| tə-A/B | təbayana | "to recover (health)" | lətbayan | | təbayan |
| | tənawaka | "to turn away" | lətnawak | | tənawak |
| tə-C | təgāyasa | "to go (together)" | lətgāyas | | təgāyas |
| | təlāwaša | "to be placed, put" | lətlāwaš | | təlāwaš |
| 'a-A | 'arema[1] | "to remove" | larayəm | larim | 'arim |
| | 'adora[1] | "to make turn" | ladawər | ladur | 'adur |
| 'a-B | 'akayana | "to cause to betray" | lakayən | | 'akayən |
| | 'ašawaka | "to cause trouble" | lašawək | | 'ašawək |
| 'at-C | 'atnāyata | "to encourage" | latnāyət | | 'atnāyət |
| | 'addāwara[2] | "to turn" (trans.) | laddāwər | | 'addāwər |
| 'atta-A | 'attaṣwara | "to be carried" | lattaṣwər | | 'attaṣwər |

## § 5.5.2.1 The verbs mota - "to die" and ṣoma - "to fast"

The verbs mota and ṣoma, whose inflexion shows features which are typical of both medial w and medial y verbs are exceptions

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[1] But 'arəmna - "we removed", 'adərna - "we turned" (v.i.) etc. Cf. the inflexion of type A above.

[2] There is an assimilation of the t of the prefix with its voiced adjacent dental.

to the above generalization regarding verbs with medial semivowels.

The verb mota shows distinctive features of a medial w inflexion in the morphological category of the perfect of type A, e.g. mota - "he died", mətki - "(when) you (fem.sing.) die" (PL1, 77:10), the ʼa-A derivative, e.g.: ʼamota - "to kill", and the jussive (imperative) of type A, e.g.: limut - " in order that he will die". The imperfect forms of type A and the ʼa-A derivative and all other types and derivatives have distinctive features of a medial y inflexion, e.g.: ləmayət (imperfect of type A), lamayət (imperfect of the ʼa-A derivative).

The collected examples of ṣoma suggest that the radicals w and y occur in free variation in this particular verb: both ləṣawəm and ləṣayəm are recorded.

## § 5.5.3 Verbs with final semivowels

These verbs, whose historical origin is believed to be a triradical verb with final w or y, are represented by one biradical inflexion.[1] The morphological phenomena which are common to verbs with final semivowels - as distinct from the typical triconsonantal verb - may be exemplified by the inflexion of type A verbs, as follows:

šaqa - "to work"

| Perfect | | Imperfect | |
|---|---|---|---|
| šaqeko | šaqena | ʼəšaqqe | ʼənšaqqe |
| šaqeka | šaqekum | təšaqqe | təšaqqu |
| šaqeki | šaqekən | təšaqqi | təšaqya |
| šaqa | šaqaw | ləšaqqe | ləšaqqu |
| šaqet | šaqaya | təšaqqe | ləšaqya |

---

[1] Cf. § 5.5, footnote. In second pers.fem.pl. forms of other categories than the perfect, transposition of the y and the consonant preceding it may occur, e.g.: təwadya/təwayda - "you(will)do". Cf. also § 1.2.5 last example; § 2.7.1 a) last example but one & § 5.9.2 (3) footnote.

| Jussive | | Imperative |
|---|---|---|
| ’əšqe | nəšqe | šəqe |
| təšqe | təšqaw | šəqay |
| təšqay | təšqaya | šəqaw |
| ləšqe | ləšqaw | šəqaya |
| təšqe | ləšqaya | |

## Types other than A and their derivatives

The endings typical of verbs with final semivowels, which are represented by the type A inflexion, are common to derivatives of type A as well as other types and derivatives. A special statement must, however, be made for the non-perfect forms of verb formations which do not have separate conjugations for the imperfect and the jussive morphological categories: such verbs have the endings of type A verbs in the imperfect for verb formations other than tə derivatives; tə derivatives have the endings of the jussive.

Examples of the various types and their derivatives:

| | Perfect | | Imperfect | Jussive | Imperative |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | fassa | "to cut meat for drying" | ləfasse<br>(pl.: ləfassu) | | fasse |
| C | lāṣa | "to shave" (trans.) | ləlāṣe | | lāṣe |
| tə-A/B | təqalla | "to be roasted" | lətqalle<br>(pl.: lətqallaw) | | təqalle |
| tə-C | təbāqa | "to endanger oneself" | lətbāqe | | təbāqe |

| | Perfect | Imperfect | Jussive | Imperative |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ’a-A | ’abda "to destroy" | labadde<br>(pl.: labaddu) | labde<br>(labdaw) | ’abde |
| ’at-C | ’atbāka "to bewail the dead" | latbāke | | ’atbāke |
| ’atta-A | ’attansa "to listen attentively" | lattanse | | ’attanse |
| ’atta-C | ’attanāsa "to listen attentively" | lattanāse | | ’attanāse |

## § 5.5.4 Verbs with more than one semivowel

There are, in theory, twelve radical-combinations in such verbs within the frame of the triradical verb. In fact, however, the number of actual combinations is small, since:

(a) there is no paradigmatic distinction between w and y in final position;

(b) no initial y verbs are in this group;

(c) verbs with a medial and final semivowel are represented by the same inflexion.

Verbs containing two semivowels show the morphological features which are typical of their respective paradigms. Thus, the verb wada - "to do, to make", for example, has the endings of a final semivowel verb and the beginnings of an initial semivowel verb. Its inflexion is as follows:

| Perfect | | Imperfect | |
|---|---|---|---|
| wadeko | wadena | ʼəwadde | ʼənwadde |
| wadeka | wadekum | təwadde | təwaddu |
| wadeki | wadekən | təwaddi | təwadya |
| wada | wadaw | ləwadde | ləwaddu |
| wadet | wadaya | təwadde | ləwadya |

| Jussive | | Imperative |
|---|---|---|
| ʼide | nide | de[1] |
| tide | tidaw | day |
| tiday | tidaya | daw |
| lide | lidaw | daya |
| tide | lidaya | |

As mentioned above, verbs containing a medial and final semivowel are represented by the same inflexion - that of verbs with a final semivowel. The medial semivowel, either w or y, is retained throughout the inflexion. Thus, the verb ṣawa - "to pervert, to distort", for example, has the imperfect form ləṣawe and the jussive ləṣwe; the verb maya - "to let pass the night", has the imperfect form ləmaye and the jussive ləmye.

Other types and derivatives show their typical expected features:

Examples:

| | Perfect | Imperfect | Jussive |
|---|---|---|---|
| tə-C | təwāla "to be led" (animal) | lətwāle<br>(pl.: lətwālaw) | |
| tə-A/B | təmaya "to pass the night" | lətmaye<br>(pl.: lətmayaw) | |
| ʼa-A | ʼadwa "to make last" | ladawe | ladwe |
| ʼatta-A | ʼattawda "to cause to be done" | lattawde | |

---

[1] Also occurring though less frequent are the forms: wəde, wəday, etc. Cf. § 5.5.1.

## § 5.6.2 L C SV

The perfect inflexion of type A is identical with that of final semivowel verbs. Other morphological categories of type A and other types and derivatives show no peculiarities.

Example:

| Perfect | Imperfect | Jussive |
|---|---|---|
| ḥaza - "he wished" | laḥazze - "he wishes" | ləḥəze - (in order that) he will wish" |
| | ḥaze - "I wish" | ḥize[1] - (in order that) I will wish" |

Other types and derivatives show no special features. It should be added here that ʼa-A derivative does not exist for these verbs, since they begin with a laryngal. The meaning usually expressed by ʼa-A can be conveyed by type C, e.g.: ʼāta - "to bring home", as compared to ʼata - "to come home".

## § 5.6.3 L SV SV : the verb ḥaya

This combination of initial laryngal, medial and final semivowel is worth mentioning: ḥaya - "to heal" (v.i.) "to recover (from sickness)" being the single verb of its kind. The semivowel y - as second radical - is retained throughout the inflexion. Thus, the only morphological difference between this combination and L C SV is in the gemination of the second radical of the latter and the non-gemination of the second radical here.

---

[1] Imperative ḥəze (2nd pers. masc. sing.).

(2) In imperfect and jussive forms the expected combined features of medial laryngal and final semivowel verbs occur. Since imperfect and jussive forms have the same beginnings in medial laryngal verbs, imperfect and jussive are formally contrasted only in their endings,[1] in those persons in which final semivowel verbs exhibit such a contrast.

Examples:

| Imperfect | | Jussive | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *tər'i* | - "you (fem.sing.) will see" | *tər'ay* | - "in order that you (fem.sing.) will see" |
| *lər'e* | - "he will see | *lər'e* | - "in order that[2] he will see" |
| *lər'u* | - "they will see" | *lər'aw* | - "they will see" |

(3) In the imperative the endings are those of a final semivowel verb and the beginnings are those of a medial laryngal verb, except in the second person masculine singular, e.g.: *rə'e* - "See!", where the verb form follows a pattern of its own (cf.: statement No. (1) above).

Other types and derivatives show no further peculiarities.

Examples:

| | Perfect | Imperfect/Jussive |
|---|---|---|
| *tə*-A/B | *təra'a* - "he was seen" | lətrə'e |
| *'a*-A | *'ar'a* - "he showed" | lar'e |

---

[1] Excluding the case of 1st pers. pl., where the prefix of the imperfect form is *'ən* and that of the jussive is *ne*.

[2] The imperative forms are: *rə'e*, *ra'ay*, *ra'aw*, *ra'aya*. Cf.:§ 5.4.1, 2(b).

## § 5.6 Verbs with both a semivowel and a laryngal

Verbs containing a semivowel and a laryngal reflect the behaviour of vowels which are adjacent to laryngals in addition to the basic morphological features which are typical of their respective paradigms.

The following table is sufficient to illustrate the actual possibilities of combinations:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| C | L | SV |
| L | C | SV |
| L | SV | SV |
| C | SV | L |
| SV | L | C |
| L | SV | C |

## § 5.6.1 C L SV

(1) In the perfect the vocalic endings of this combination are those of final semivowel verbs. When the final vowel of the stem is e the initial vowel of the stem is central. Thus, only third person plural forms and third person masculine singular forms retain the initial vowel typical of medial laryngal.

Examples:

ra’a - "he saw"
ra’aw - "they (masc.) saw"
rə’et - "she saw"
rə’ena - "we saw"

Examples:

| | Perfect | Imperfect | Jussive |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1st pers.sing. | ḥayeko | ḥaye | ḥiye |
| 2nd pers. fem.sing. | ḥayeki | taḥayi | təḥəyay |
| 3rd pers.masc.pl. | ḥayaw | laḥayu | ləḥəyaw |

| Imperative |
|---|
| 2nd pers. sing. |
| masc.: ḥəye |
| 2nd pers. sing. |
| fem.: ḥəyay |
| 2nd pers. pl. |
| masc.: ḥəyaw |
| 2nd pers. pl. |
| fem.: ḥəyaya |

### § 5.6.4 C SV L : the verb ba'a and verbs with inflexion similar to it

(1) Type A is lacking in the case of verbs with medial radical w.

(2) The inflexion of type A verbs with medial radical y has:

- (a) the biradical stem CaC throughout the paradigm of the perfect;
- (b) the optional occurrence of y as medial radical throughout the paradigm of the jussive (imperative);
- (c) the optional occurrence of a jussive paradigm where the stem is CaC and the prefix vowel i - a formation identical with that of verbs with initial w.

Some of the C SV L verb forms in the imperfect and jussive of type A, which have suffixes, have optional endings owing to vowel transposition, a phenomenon typical of verbs with final laryngals.

Some verbs with the combination of radicals CyL are:

*ba'a* - "to enter"

*qaḥa* - "to be red"

*qa'a*[1] - "to vomit"

The phenomena noted in (2)(b), (c) above may be exemplified by means of the inflexion of the verb *ba'a*, as follows:

### Jussive

| with medial y | | without medial y | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 'ibya'[2] | nibya' | iba' | niba' |
| tibya' | tibya'u/tibyu' | tiba' | tiba'u/tibu' |
| tibya'i/tibyi' | tibya'a | tiba'i/tibi' | taba'a |
| libya' | libya'u/libyu' | liba' | liba'u/libu' |
| tibya' | libya'a | tiba' | liba'a |

### Imperative

| with medial y | without medial y |
|---|---|
| bəya' | ba' |
| bəy'i/bəyi' | bə'i/bi' |
| bəy'u/bəyu' | bə'u/bu' |
| bəy'a | bə'a |

## § 5.6.5 SV L C : including the verbs *waḥada* and *waḥaṭa*

Verbs containing initial semivowel and medial laryngal:

(a) are constituted according to the inflexion pattern of verbs with medial laryngal, as follows:

---

[1] Or: *qaʿa*.

[2] Also: *'əbya'*, etc.

Type A: waʿala - "to pass the day"

| | Perfect | Imperfect | Jussive |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1st pers.masc.sing. | waʿalko | ʾəwʿəl | ʾəwʿal |
| 3rd pers.masc.sing. | waʿala | ləwʿəl | ləwʿal |
| 3rd pers.masc.pl. | waʿalaw | ləwʿəlo | ləwʿalo |

Imperative

waʿal

waʿali

waʿalo

waʿala

There is nothing to add with regard to other types and derivatives.

(b) have biradical variants in the perfect and jussive of type A. waḥada - "to be little", and waḥaṭa - "to devour" are the only verbs attested with these variants:[1]

| Perfect | Jussive |
|---|---|
| ḥada | laḥad |
| ḥaṭa | laḥaṭ |

## § 5.6.6 L SV C : including the verb haba

The following morphological phenomena are typical of this combination of radicals:

---

[1] Cf.: the perfect forms of the verbs haba (§ 5.6.6) and ʿala (§ 5.7.1).

(1) No type A verbs with medial w are attested.

(2) The prefix vowel of verb forms in the jussive of type A is ə, e.g.:
ləḥis - "(in order that) it will be better" (ḥesa - "to be better").

The verb haba - "to give" is a special case. Historically it represents the form *wahaba. From a descriptive point of view its inflexion shows the following morphological phenomena, which combine features of L SV C and SV L C verbs:

(1) The imperfect forms of type A and all other types and derivatives show no pecularities and can be classified - in terms of radical arrangement - as L SV C, e.g. lahayəb - "he gives" which is idential in form with laḥayəs - "it is better".

(2) The perfect and jussive of type A stems is biradical, having the stem hab throughout. In this respect the inflexion of haba is identical with that of verbs of the SV L C combination as described in § 5.6.5,(b).

The medial radical y occurs in all other existing types and derivatives.

The inflexion of haba in type A is as follows:

| Perfect | | Imperfect | |
|---|---|---|---|
| habko | habna | hayəb | nahayəb |
| habka | habkum | tahayəb | tahaybo |
| habki | habkən | tahaybi | tahayba |
| haba | habaw | lahayəb | lahaybo |
| habat | habaya | tahayab | lahayba |

| Jussive | | Imperative |
|---|---|---|
| hab | nahab | hab |
| tahab | tahabo | habi |
| tahabi | tahaba | habo |
| lahab | lahabo | haba |
| tahab | lahaba | |

Examples of derivatives:

| | Perfect | Imperfect/Jussive | Imperative |
|---|---|---|---|
| tə-A | tahayaba<br>("to be given") | ləthayab | tahayab |
| ʼat-A | ʼathayaba<br>("to cause to give") | lathayəb | ʼathayəb |

## § 5.7 Irregular verbs

This section consists of two verbs whose morphological analysis - though best dealt with along with the triradical verb - requires recognition of their special morphological status. The verbs are ʿala - "he was" and bela - "he said".

### § 5.7.1 The verb ʿala

This verb, whose function is to supply the forms of the verb "to be" in the past,[1] occursonly in the morphological category of the perfect of type A. The stem is ʿal to which the verb suffixes

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[1] Cf.: §§ 4.1.2, 4.2.2. ʿala also participates in complexes which express time relations; see § 6.9 et seq.

are attached, e.g.: ʿalko - "I was", ʿalaw - "they were". The verb ʿala belongs historically to the group of verbs described above in terms of radicals (§§ 5.6.5, (b)) as a SV L C combination. Although the verb waʿala - "to pass the day" occurs in Tigre, there is nothing to suggest any connection, from a descriptive point of view, between waʿala and ʿala which are, in fact, two separate lexical entities.

## § 5.7.2 The verb bela

This verb - originating from the root *bhl - is unique in its inflexion formation in that:

(a) it has only one radical in the stem of some of its type A perfect forms to which prefixes of the imperfect are attached;

(b) it has endings for those forms referred to in (a), i.e. in the perfect, which are typical of the jussive endings of verbs with a final semivowel;

(c) in its derivatives the stem is triconsonantal, bhl (excluding ʾa-A which has a biconsonantal stem), the radical h not occurring in type A. This phenomenon is typical of verbs with medial semivowel but is never met with in the case of verbs whose medial radical is not a semivowel.

The inflexion of type A exhibits the following morphological phenomena:

Perfect: third persons have forms typical of verbs with a medial semivowel while all other forms have formatives which are typical of categories other than perfect. In the second persons an optional form with the stem telk exists.

Imperfect: The prefixes and endings are typical of those of the triradical verb. The stem is bəl in forms without suffixes and bl in suffixed forms.

Jussive (imperative):

The inflexion is similar to that of verbs with an initial semivowel.

The inflexion of bela is as follows:

| Perfect | | Imperfect | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ʼəbe | ʼənbe | ʼəbəl | nəbəl |
| təbe/telka | təbaw | təbəl | təblo |
| təbay/telki | təbaw/telkum | təbli | təbla |
| bela | belaw/telkən | ləbəl | ləblo |
| belat[1] | belaya | təbəl | ləbla |

| Jussive | | Imperative |
|---|---|---|
| ʼibal | nibal | bal |
| tibal | tibalo | bali |
| tibali | tibala | balo |
| libal | libalo | bala |
| tibal | libala | |

## Derivatives

The following derivatives have an inflexion typical of medial laryngal verbs, excluding the case of ʼa-A where the stem is biradical:

| | Perfect | | Imperfect/Jussive |
|---|---|---|---|
| tə-A | təbahala | "to be said" | lətbahal |
| ʼa-A | ʼabala | "to make say, let speak" | labəl |
| ʼatta-A | ʼattabala | "to make say" | lattabəl |

---

[1] The form təbe - "she said" is equally met with, and is the only form of this person to which the pronominal suffix is attached.

## § 5.8 Verbs whose second and third radicals are phonetically identical

When there is a zero vowel between second and third non-geminated radicals there is an assimilation of the two radicals into one doubled consonant of the same quality.

Examples:

*ʿaqqa* - "to cut, to wound": (root: *ʿqq*, type A)
*danna* - "to descend"; (root: *dnn*, type A)
*ʾazzaza* - "to command, to order"; (root: *ʾzz*, type B)
*ʿadda* - "to visit (sick people)"; (root: *ʿdd*, type A)

*ʿaqqat* - "she wounded"
*ʿaqqaw* - "they wounded"
*tədanni* - "you (fem.sing.) will descend"
*tədanno* - "you (masc. pl.) will descend"
*lədanna* - "they (fem. pl.) will descend"

Imperfect and jussive forms with pronominal suffixes:

*ʾazzakkum* - "I order you (masc.pl.)"
*taʾazzuni* - "you (masc. pl.) order me"
cf.: *ʾazzəzzo* - "I order him"
*taʾazzuzo* - "you (masc.pl.) order him"
*ʾəgəl ləʿədodo* - "in order that they (masc. pl.) will visit him"

## § 5.9 Quadriradical verbs

The arrangement of radicals in the quadriradical verb exhibits, for the most part, the linear orders 1.2.3.4 as in ʼambata - "to begin"; 1.2.1.2 as in bač̣bač̣a - "to mix" and 1.2.3.3 as in qarṭaṭa - "to break into several pieces".

The characteristic morphological features of the quadriradical verb are as follows:

(1) Absence of gemination in any one of the radicals.

(2) In contrast to triradical verb formation, only types A and C exist.

(3) No formal contrast exists between the imperfect and jussive paradigms of either type and their derivatives.

(4) The preformatives ʼan and ʼas are found only with quadriradicals. The preformatives which are typical of triradical verbs are found with quadriradicals as well. In addition the quadriradical verbs occur, to a limited extent, having the combinatory preformatives ʼattan and ʼattas, as in, e.g.:[1]

ʼattanqalqala - "to move" (v.t.); ʼattasqamqama - "to make groan".

(5) The inflexion formation of verbs with semivowls shows some peculiarities which are not paralleled in the comparative triradical formation (see: § 5.9.2).

In all other respects the quadriradical verb differs from the triradical only in its stem inflexion.

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[1] For the function and meaning of the preformatives mentioned in 4, see: § 5.2.1, last section but one: Prefixes ʼan- and ʼas- .

The inflexion of the quadriradical verb is as follows:

## Type A

targama - "to translate"

| Perfect | | Imperfect/Jussive | |
|---|---|---|---|
| targamko | targamna | ʼətargəm | ʼəntargəm/nətangəm |
| targamka | targamkum | tətargəm | tətargəmo |
| targamki | targamkən | tətargəmi | tətargama |
| targama | targamaw | lətargəm | lətargəmo |
| targamat | targamaya | tətargəm | lətargəma |

Imperative

targəm

targəmi

targəmo

targəma

## Type C

qarāṭaṭa - "to shatter to pieces"

Imperfect/Jussive

ləqarāṭəṭ

Some examples of prefixed derivatives:

| | Perfect | | Imperfect/ Jussive | Imperative |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| tə-A | təqanṭaša | "to be torn off" | lətqanṭaš | təqanṭaš |
| ʼa-A | ʼatamtama | "to reach" (v.t.) | latamtəm | ʻatamtəm |
| ʼan-A | ʼanqaṭqaṭa | "to quake"(earth) | lanqaṭqəṭ | ʻanqaṭqəṭ |
| ʼas-A | ʼastargama | "to interpret" | lastargəm | ʼastargəm |

| | Perfect | | Imperfect/ Jussive | Imperative |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| tə-C | təbarābara | "to scatter" (v.i.) | lətbarābar | təbarābar |
| ’at-C | ’atmasāmasa | "to justify oneself" | latmasāməs | ’atmasāməs |
| ’as-C | ’asnaqānaqa | "to shake oneself" | lasnaqāneq | ’asnaqāneq |

## § 5.9.1 Quadriradical verbs with laryngals

The inflexion of quadriradical verbs possessing a laryngal shows, mutatis mutandis (the stem has four radicals), the same characteristics as the inflexion of triradical verbs possessing a laryngal. Some examples:

L.2.3.4

type A: ’ambata[1] - "to begin"; imperfect/jussive: la’ambət

tə-A: ta‘anqafa - "to stumble"; imperfect/jussive: lət‘anqaf

type C: harābata - "to throw oneself (on the ground)"; imperfect/jussive: laharābət

L.2.L.2

type A: ḥasḥasa - "to rub, scrub"; imperfect/jussive: laḥasḥəs

1.L.3.4

’a-A: ’am‘adaga[2] - "to be at one's prime"; imperfect/jussive: lam‘adəg

---

[1] Or: ’anbata, la’anbət, etc. See: § 1.2.4.

[2] From the root *m‘dg. The non typical sequence VLCV, here, as in *’ama‘daga, is represented by the sequence LVCV. Cf.:§§ 5.4.1, 5.4.2.

1.L.3.3

type A: č̣aʿarara - "to become dry"; imperfect/jussive: lač̣aʿarər

tə-A: təmahalala - "to appeal to God"; imperfect/jussive: lətmahalal

1.2.1.L

type A: qarqəḥa - "to knock"; imperfect/jussive: ləqarqəḥ

type C: qarāqəḥa - "to knock"; imperfect/jussive: ləqarāqəḥ

## § 5.9.2 Quadriradicals with semivowels

A quadriradical verb may contain one or two semivowels. Unlike the formation of triradicals with semivowels, two quadriradical verbs - having the same arrangement of radicals but lexically different - may show two separate inflexions of the stem: one in which w retains its phonetic shape throughout the inflexion, another in which w is represented by o in all morphological categories of type A and its derivatives but retains its shape in type C and its derivatives.

The following is sufficient to illustrate the variety of actually attested combinations of radicals:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | w C w C | (4) | C w C C |
| (2) | C C C SV | (5) | C y C SV |
| (3) | C w C SV | (6) | C y C C |

(1) A group of verbs in which the radical SV retains its phonetic shape.

Examples:

watwata - "to shake" (v.t.); imperfect/jussive: ləwatwət

(2) Verbs whose morphological behaviour is that of quadriradicals with endings typical of verbs in general that have final semivowels.

Examples:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| type A: | *fanta* | - "to separate"; | imperfect/jussive: | *ləfante* |
| type C: | *fanāta* | - "to tear to pieces"; | imperfect/jussive: | *ləfanāte* |

(3) C w C SV represents two different types of stem. One type and its inflexion is similar to that of combination No. (2), as

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *nawna* | - "to move" (v.t.) | imperfect/jussive: | *lənawne*, |

whereas with the other type of stem and its inflexion the *w* is actualized as *o* throughout the entire paradigm of type A and its derivatives.

Examples:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| type A: | *gola* | - "to dance"; | imperfect/jussive: | *ləgole*[1] |
| | *goda* | - "to dig"; | imperfect/jussive: | *ləqode* |
| *'a*-A: | *'aqoda* | - causative of "to dig"; | imperfect/jussive: | *laqode* |

(4) Differs from No. (3) only in that its final radical is not a semivowel.

Examples:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| type A: | *dawrara* | - "to turn" (v.i.); | imperfect/jussive: | *lədawrər* |
| | *gorata* | - "to load"; | imperfect/jussive: | *ləgorət* |
| | *qočaba* | - "to tear off"; | imperfect/jussive: | *ləqočəb* |

---

[1] The semivowel *y* of the verb suffix of 3rd pers. fem. pl. form is liable to metat̄hesis, as in *goyla* - "they (fem.) dance" (PL1, 125:3); cf.: *golu* - "they (masc.) dance" (Ibid., 124:26). Cf.: § 1.2.6 & §5.5.3 footnote.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 'atta-A: | 'attaqoč̣aba | - causative of "to tear off"; | imperfect/jussive: | lattaqoč̣ə |
| 'an-A: | 'anṭoṭala | - "to swing"; | imperfect/jussive: | lanṭoṭəl |
| 'an-C: | 'anṭawāṭala | - "to swing"; | imperfect/jussive: | lanṭawāṭə |

(5) & (6) Verbs whose second radical is the semivowel y. This y is represented by e throughout the inflexion of type A and its derivatives and retains its phonemic shape in type C and its derivatives. The endings of such verbs are those of triradicals with a final semivowel in the case of combination No. (5).

Examples:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| type A: | gega | - "to make a mistake"; | imperfect/jussive: | ləgege |
| 'a-A: | 'alela | - "to distinguish"; | imperfect/jussive: | lalele |
| tə-A: | təlela | - passive of "to distinguish" | imperfect/jussive: | lətlele |
| type A: | deraba | - "to tie together"; | imperfect/jussive: | ləndereb |
| 'a-A: | 'aserara | - "to stand in line"; | imperfect/jussive: | laserer |
| tə-A: | təkelaba | - "to be surrounded"; | imperfect/jussive: | lətkelab |
| type C: | hayārara | - "to chase away"; | imperfect/jussive: | lahayārər |

I have found no examples of type C in the case of combinations No. (3) and No. (5). No conclusion, therefore, can be drawn with regard to type C verbs of which both the second and fourth radicals are semivowels.

## § 5.10 Verbs of more than four radicals

There are some verbs of five consonants, of the order 1.2.3.2.3.[1] A few of these have semantically corresponding triradicals, as:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| halaflafa | or | hālafa | - "to chatter" |
| haṭalṭala | or | haṭṭala | - "to tremble" |
| 'aglablaba[2] | or | galba | - "to be startled, to withdraw (from fear)". |

The inflexion of the quinqueradical verb is different from that of the quadriradical verb by virtue of the five radicals: the stem of type A verbs shows a vowelless sequence of the third and fourth radicals and the stem of type C has a lengthened vowel following the third consonant.

Examples:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| type A: | balač̣lač̣a | - "to glitter"; | imperfect/jussive: ləbalač̣ləč̣ |
| | ḥašakṣ̌aka | - "to whisper"; | imperfect/jussive: laḥašakšək |
| type C: | halaqālaqa | - "to stagger violently" (LH, p.3a). | |

### Derivatives

Only 'a, 'at and 'atta formations of A and C types appear to exist. Verbs whose first radical is a laryngal occur only with the preformative 'at, as is the case with the triradical verb, e.g.:

halaqlaqa - "to be tired"

'athalaqlaqa - "to tire".

---

[1] Some other verbs with a different order and number of radicals, such as šankalkala - "to slip", qarṭaṭama - "to be dense (hair)" (LH, p.244b) exist but are few and are best treated as lexical items.

[2] Type 'a-A of *galablaba.

### § 5.10.1 Quinqueradicals with semivowels

(1) There is a small number of verbs of the order 1.2.3.2.3 in which the second and the fourth radicals are w. Their inflexion is similar to that of verbs with five radicals as described in § 5.10.

hawašwaša - "to disappear"; imperfect/jussive: lahawašwəš

ʿawadwada - "to grow dark"; imperfect/jussive: laʿawadwəd

(2) There is a very small number of verbs - somewhere in the region of a dozen - which have the vowel o following the second radical throughout the inflexion, e.g.

ḫanobaza - "to murmur"; imperfect/jussive: laḫanobəz

ʾašʾobaba (ʾa-A) - "to look downward"; imperfect/jussive: lašʾobəb

ʾa and ʾatta are the only prefixed derivatives attested for such verbs.

In view of the small number of verbs and the absence of such morphological features as could determine o as a representation of w, a statement may be made by analogy to the quadriradical verb with a second radical o, as described in § 5.9.2, (3).

Verbs of this group whose final radical is a semivowel have endings which are typical of verbs with final semivowels.

Their inflexion is as follows:

ʾa-A: ʾagdoda - "to hobble"

| Perfect | | Imperfect/Jussive | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ʾagdodeko | ʾagdodena | ʾagdode | nagdode |
| ʾagdodeka | ʾagdodekum | tagdode | tagdodu |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ’agdodeki | ’agdodeken | tagdodi | tagdodya |
| ’agdoda | ’agdodaw | lagdode | lagdodu |
| ’agdodat | ’agdodaya | tagdode | lagdodya |

## § 5.11 Verb compounds: form and meaning

There are instances in which compounds with two elements - constituting a grammatical unit - occur, whose function is that of a verb. The first element of the compound is invariable; the second element - itself a verb - enables the compound to function as a verb-class member in the sense that it is regularly conjugated, immediately preceded by conjunctions and can supply the basis for derivatives. In terms of syntagmatic relations these compounds are unanalysable wholes, which, at the semantic level represent idiomatic expressions. Thus, if either element can be replaced by another of the same paradigm (the same form-class), the form in question is not a verb compound.

The first element in the compound may exist as a lexical entity or be dependent upon the occurrence of the compound. As a lexical entity it may exist either as a nominal form along with a verb of the same root, or as an isolate linguistic form.

The inventory of verbs used as the second element of the compound is limited to three:

*bela* - "to say" and its causative form: *’abala*;

*wada* - "to do, to make"; *ga’a* - "to become".

The verb *bela* is the one usually met with in verb compounds, and *wada* is encountered as its variant for some verbs, or as its free variant for some others (see: § 5.11.1). The verb *ga’a* is different from *bela* or *wada* in that it is never void of meaning: it denotes the inchoative aspect of the activity or state expressed by the compound (see: § 5.11.2).

It should be mentioned here that from a morpho-semantic point of view any complex consisting of a verb and its nominal complement may be apprehended as lying between the two extremes of lexicological unit and grammatical unit. In the case of a verb compound, the meaning of the whole compound is not predictable from the meaning of its constituences when: (a) the second element is void of lexical meaning and (b) the occurrence of the first element is limited to the compound. Cases in which the first element is a free morphological and semantic entity and the second element a verb whose original meaning is retained can be interpreted either as a verb and its complement or as an idiomatic expression, according to the contextual sense.

Note the following examples:

*sanni kama bello* -

"He said to him: 'Very well, then'." (i.e. "I accept")

*walamallahayu sanni bello* -

"And his friend said to him: 'O.K.'." (i.e.: "And his friend agreed")

(PL1, 32:16)

*wa’ab lawalat mən qadāmu sanni ’iləbəllom nakkərrom* -

"And the father of the girl does not give them his consent in the first place - he rejects them."

(Ibid., 113:3)

’əb kəl ga’at gadəm ’ab laḥəṣit hədāy ’əgəl lahab sanni bela mən gabbə’ wakdom lətqāṣaro -
"But, in any case, if the father of the betrothed girl has agreed to grant the wedding, they fix their /wedding/ time."

(FM, 109:17)

## § 5.11.1 bela compounds

Examples of compounds in which the occurrence of the first element is not limited to the compound:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| bəḥəl bela | - "to pardon to excuse"; | bəḥəl | - "pardon"; |
| | | baḥala | - "to pardon". |
| qəməč̣ bela | - "to wink"(v.i.); | qəməč̣ | - "twinkling"; |
| | | qāmač̣a | - "to wink" (v.i.). |
| balbal bela | - "to rattle"; | balbal | - "confusion" |
| | | ’abalbala | - "to move rapidly to and fro". |
| habhab bela | - "to blaze"; | hāb | - "fire"; |
| fuf bela | - "to blow (exhale)"; | fuf | - "breath"; |
| qaʿ bela | - "to make a sharp noise" | qaʿ | - "a sharp noise" |
| šut bela | - "to refuse"; | šut | - 'an exclamation of disbelief'; |
| waha bela | - "to be astonished": | waha | - 'an exclamation of astonishment'; |
| həy bela | - "to scare away"; | həy | - 'a call to drive someone away'. |

### Examples of compounds whose first element is limited to that compound only:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| rasras bela | - "to scratch" (v.i.); | rassa | - "to itch; |
| ləhəb bela | - "to sweat"; | lahaba | - "to sweat"; |
| fəršək bela | - "to break into pieces" (v.i.); | təfaršaka | - "to break into pieces"; |
| kaškaš bela | - "to clatter, crackle"; | kaškaša | - "to clatter, crackle"; |
| ʿəwədwəd bela | - "to grow dark"; | ʿawadwada | - "to grow dark"; |

| | |
|---|---|
| bət bela | - "to spring forth"; |
| senrik bela | - "to sniff" (v.i.); |
| təftəf bela | - "to puff" (v.i.) |
| təm bela | - "to be silent". |

As one can see from the examples given above (in § 5.11.1) the nominal forms which consist of the first element of the bela compound and are derived from the root of the coexisting verbs do not suggest a morphological structure typical of bela compounds.

### The verb ʾabala: the transitive and causative formation of bela compounds:

Most bela compounds happen to be intransitive. They may be rendered transitive or become causative of the intransitive by the use of the verb ʾabala, which is derivative ʾa-A of the verb bela, in place of the second element in the compound.

When the first element of the compound is derived from a root from which the coexisting verb is also derived, the compound may be related functionally to the verb, with the same kind of relationship which exists between *tə-*A and A. Consequently, compounds of which the second element is *’abala* enter this relationship in accordance with the transitive or intransitive meaning of the coexisting verb.

*Examples of compounds in which the occurrence of the first element is not limited to the compound:*

*balaç̌laç̌ bela* or *balaç̌laç̌a* - "to glitter";
*balaç̌laç̌ ’abala* - "to make glitter".

*ləwəţ bela* or *təlawaţa* - "to be exchanged";
*ləwəţ ’abala* or *lawata* - "to exchange".

*’atta* formations are also encountered:

*sanni bela* - "to agree";
*sanni ’abala* - "to make agree, to convince";
*sanni ’attabala* - "to get one's permission".

*šiš bela* - "to select";
*šiš ’attabala* - "to make selected".

*Examples of compounds whose first element is limited to that compound only:*

*kaf bela* - "to sit";
*kaf ’abala* - "to make sit".

*bah bela* - "to rejoice" (v.i.);
*bah ’abala* - "to rejoice"(v.t.).

| | |
|---|---|
| kəb bela | - "to get up"; |
| kəb ’abala | - "to cause to stand up, to raise". |

## The aspectual use of bela and ’abala

In a certain number of verbs the compound carries further information concerning the aspect of action or state of happening - as compared with the semantic content of a coexisting verb of the same origin as the first element of the compound. The addition in meaning can be specified in terms of intensity or manner of the activity, such as: augmentative, attenuate or iterative. When ’abala is used in this manner, bela may occur as its passive form.

Examples:

| | |
|---|---|
| lafqa | - "to sew"; |
| ləfəq ’abala | - "to sew a little"; |
| ləfəq bela | - "passive of ləfəq ’abala. |

| | |
|---|---|
| lakfa | - "to throw"; |
| ləkəf ’abala | - "to throw a little/all"; |
| ləkəf bela | - "passive of ləkəf ’abala. |

| | |
|---|---|
| waswasa | - "to move" (v.i.) |
| waswas bela | - "to move fast, to move to and fro". |

| | |
|---|---|
| ḥalaqlaqa | - "to weep"; |
| ḥələqləq bela | - "to weep a little". |

| | |
|---|---|
| ’atmama | - "to complete"; |
| tamam bela | - "to complete all, without deficiency". |

| | |
|---|---|
| qanṣa | - "to get up"; |
| qənəṣ bela | - "to get up (and be absent) for a short while." |

(PL1, 13:14)

## bela in free variation with wada

In some compounds the second element, bela, is in free variation with the verb wada, which, as a lexical entity, means "to make, to do". The transitive or causative meaning of the compound is rendered, however, through the use of ʼabala as the second element. Examples:

| | |
|---|---|
| koy bela/wada | - "to hurry"; |
| ǧamam bela/wada | - "to be silent"; |
| bərəf bela/wada | - "to clear off" (v.i.); |
| kələḥ bela/wada | - "to look at"; |
| taftaf bela/wada | - "to drip" (v.i.). |

| | |
|---|---|
| dəb bela/wada | - "to fall down"; |
| dəb ʼabala | - "to cause to fall down, to overthrow". |

The verb wada may also be found as the second element of the compound - not in variation with bela - having a role similar to that of bela, as in:

| | |
|---|---|
| ʿaqəl wada | - "to be patient"; |
| qalb wada | - "to wish". |
| yak wada | - "to hurry" (v.i.) |

## § 5.11.2 Compounds with *ga'a*

The verb *ga'a* which means "to become, to happen, to be",[1] may occur as the second element in some verb compounds. In such cases the verb *ga'a*, though having the morphological status of its equivalent element in *bela* compounds, retains - unlike the usually colourless *bela* - its original meaning of "to become". This retention of meaning gives the whole expressinn the notion which is typical of 'predicative complexes of becoming'.

A *ga'a* compound is, however, an idiomatic expression as much as *bela* compounds are, and neither of its elements can be substituted in the way in which elements of a predicative complex can.

Thus, *ġaz ga'a* - "to become thin" - is a lexical entity, while

*qaṭin ga'a* - "he became thin" is a predicative complex which stands beside:
*qaṭin 'ala* - "he was thin";
*qaṭin tu* - "he is thin".

*gazif ga'a* - "he became fat";
*gazif tu* - "he is fat", etc.

Examples of *ga'a* compounds:

*'aǧhab ga'a* - "to become senseless";
*hawaššes ga'a* - "to break to pieces" (v.i.);
*bad ga'a* - "to become poor". (*bad* - "poverty").

Some compounds make use of a transitive or causative construction beside the intransitive one, by replacing *ga'a* with *wada*.

---

[1] For its other functions see: §§ 4.1.2, 4.2.5. See also § 4.5.

Examples:

| | |
|---|---|
| hən gaʼa | - "to become speechless (by astonishment)"; (hən - "confusion"); |
| hən wada | - "causative of hən gaʼa. |
| harawraw gaʼa | - "to become ripe, to ripen" (v.i.); |
| harawraw wada | - "to ripen" (v.t.); |
| ṣar waṣar gaʼa | - "to form groups" (v.i.); |
| ṣar waṣar wada | - "to form groups" (v.t.). (ṣar - "comrade, companion"). |

## § 5.12 The pronominal suffixes - in conjunction with verbs

The Tigre language makes wide use of pronominal suffixes which denote the direct or indirect object implied by the verb.

Note the following utterances:

| | |
|---|---|
| ʼənze kərayo | - "put it (masc.sing.) here" |
| kətāb habayu | - "he gave him a book" |
| ʼəgəl labāb dabʼayu | - "he closed the door" (lit.: "the door, he closed it" (masc.sing.)) |
| ʼəmaṣṣəʼo | - "I shall come to him" |

The pronominal suffix which is attached directly to the end of the verbal form (some exceptions will be dealt with later) takes various phonemic shapes, but with each person a common element, e.g.: V or VC, is encountered in all forms.

The forms are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1st pers. sing. | -ni, -nni |
| 1st pers. pl. | -na, -nna |
| 2nd pers. masc. sing. | -ka, -kka |
| 2nd pers. fem. sing. | -ki, -kki |
| 2nd pers. masc. pl. | -kum, -kkum |
| 2nd pers. fem. pl. | -kən, kkən |

| | |
|---|---|
| 3rd pers. masc. sing. | -*o*, -*wo*, -*yo*, -*hu*, -*yu* |
| 3rd pers. fem. sing. | -*a*, -*wa*, -*ya*, -*ha* |
| 3rd pers. masc. pl. | -*om*, -*wom*, -*yom*, -*hom* |
| 3rd pers. fem. pl. | -*an*, -*wan*, -*yan*, -*han* |

As seen from the above scheme the first and second person pronominal suffixes differ, in each person, only with regard to the gemination of their consonantal elements, whereas the third person pronominal suffixes vary considerably. This is so since first and second person forms, beginning with a consonant, are not susceptible to those changes resulting from the meeting of two vowels - a situation which has brought about the present range of variation in the sequential forms of both the verbal and third person pronominal suffixes.

Some general observations regarding the comparison of: (a) the verbal stem which precedes the pronominal suffix with (b) the verbal stem which occurs in the absence of the pronominal suffix, may be summarized as follows (throughout the following sections the tri-consonantal non laryngal verb is taken as a norm):[1]

---

[1] The following description is of the type A verb. The manner by which other types and derivatives submit to changes can be deduced from the description of type A, and examples will be given later.

## Phonetic and morphological phenomena which are special to stems followed by pronominal suffixes:

(1) followed by first and second person pronominal suffixes: In the imperfect there is an absence of second-radical gemination throughout the inflexion, which results in clustering of the second and third radicals.

(2) followed by third person pronominal suffixes:

(a) In the imperfect, gemination of the second radical occurs in second person feminine singular and second and third person masculine plural. With these verb forms the verb suffix is transposed and inserted between the second and third radicals. The transposed masculine plural verb-suffix o is represented by u. Transposition of a similar sequential order and degree of person occur in the jussive and imperative, but with different vocalization; the quality of the second and third plural verb-suffix vowel remains intact, while the transposed second feminine singular verb-suffix vowel is represented by e.[1]

(b) In all morphological categories other than the perfect there is gemination of the third radical in forms without a verbal suffix.

## § 5.12.1 A detailed account of verb forms co-occurring with pronominal suffixes.

### First person singular (masc. and fem.): -ni, -nni

The following table sets out a segmental analysis of the minimum free forms. The column on the right gives the resulting form[2] in the verb qatla - "to kill".

---

[1] Slightly higher than cardinal /e/.

[2] In the following sections the terms: 'verb suffix in final position' and 'ultimate form' will be used in accordance with their positional occurrence in the table.

## Perfect

| Person | Stem | Verb suffix |  | Transitional element | Ultimate form |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | In final position | Followed by the pronominal suffix |  |  |
| 2nd masc.sing. | CaCaC | -ka | -ka- | - | qatalkanni |
| 2nd fem.sing. | " | -ki | -ki- | - | qatalkini |
| 3rd masc.sing. | CaCC | -a | -e- | - | qatlenni |
| 3rd fem. sing. | " | -at | -att- | -a- | qatlattanni |
| 2nd masc.pl. | CaCaC | -kum | -ku- | - | qatalkuni |
| 2nd fem.pl. | " | -kən | -k(ə)n- | -a- | qatalk(ə)nani |
| 3rd masc.pl. | CaCC | -aw | -aw- | - | qatlawni |
| 3rd fem.pl. | " | -aya | -aya | - | qatlayani |

The following morpho-phonemic phenomena may be observed in the above table:

(1) In all cases except one the conjunction of a verb suffix with a pronominal suffix necessitates the presence of a vowel immediately preceding the pronominal suffix as when:

- (a) the verb suffix itself ends in a vowel;
- (b) the verb suffix ends in a consonant as when:
  - (i) the final consonantal element of the verb suffix is elided; or
  - (ii) a transitional vowel is inserted between the two suffixes.

While the third person feminine singular and the second feminine plural forms produce a transitional vowel, the second masculine plural verb-suffix loses its final consonantal element.

(2) The third person masculine plural verb-suffix constitutes a special case having *w* as its syllable final. Semivowels in Tigre, in inter-vocalic or post-vocalic position, can be weakened or can lose their distinctive features altogether. In the present instance, two variants of the third person masculine plural forms are found: [w] and [u]. The latter variant complies with the observations set out in point (1).

(3) In the verb-suffix of second person feminine plural an *ə* vowel may sometimes be detected following a full actualization of the *k* sound: this vowel is otherwise not essential to the syllabic structure.

Imperfect

| Person | Stem | Verb suffix | | Transitional element | Ultimate form |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | In final position | Followed by the pronominal suffix | | |
| 2nd masc.sing. | CaCC | - | - | -a- | təqatlanni |
| 2nd fem.sing. | " | -i | -i- | - | təqatlini |
| 3rd masc.sing. | " | - | - | -a- | ləqatlanni |
| 3rd fem.sing. | " | - | - | -a- | təqatlanni |
| 2nd masc.pl. | " | -o | -u- | - | təqatluni |
| 2nd fem.pl. | " | -a | -a- | - | təqatlani |
| 3rd masc.pl. | " | -o | -u- | - | ləqatluni |
| 3rd fem.pl. | " | -a | -a- | - | ləqatlani |

Notes for the above table:

(1) In persons where a verb-suffix does not exist the presence of a vowel is required between the verb form and the form of the pronominal suffix.

(2) In second and third person masculine plural the verb suffix o is represented by u.

### Jussive

| Person | Stem | Verb suffix | | Transitional element | Ultimate form |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | In final position | Followed by the pronominal suffix | | |
| 2nd masc.sing. | CCaC | - | - | -a- | təqtalanni |
| 2nd fem.sing. | " | -i | -i- | - | təqtalini |
| 3rd masc.sing. | " | - | - | -a- | ləqtalanni |
| 3rd fem.sing. | " | - | - | -a- | təqtalanni |
| 2nd masc.pl. | " | -o | -u- | - | təqtaluni |
| 2nd fem.pl. | " | -a | -a- | - | təqtalani |
| 3rd masc.pl. | " | -o | -u- | - | ləqtaluni |
| 3rd fem. pl. | " | -a | -a- | - | ləqtalani |

### Imperative

| Ultimate form |
|---|
| qətalanni |
| qətalini |
| |
| |
| qətaluni |
| qətalani |
| |
| |

The morpho-phonemic phenomena noted in connection with the imperfect table are also to be observed in the case of the jussive inflexinn and the appropriate imperative forms.

First person plural (masc. and fem.): -na; -nna

As first person singular.

## Second person masculine singular: -ka; -kka

### Perfect

| Person | Stem | Verb suffix | | Transitional element | Ultimate form |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | In final position | Followed by the pronominal suffix | | |
| 1st sing. | CaCaC | -ko | -ko | - | qatalkoka |
| 3rd masc.sing. | CaCC | -a | -e- | - | qatlekka |
| 3rd fem. sing. | " | -at | -att- | -a- | qatlattakka |
| 1st pl. | CaCaC | -na | -na- | - | qatalnaka |
| 3rd masc.pl. | CaCC | -aw | -aw- | - | qatlawka |
| 3rd fem. pl. | " | -aya | -aya- | - | qatlayaka |

### Imperfect

| Person | | Verb suffix | | Transitional element | Ultimate form |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | In final position | Followed by the pronominal suffix | | |
| 1st sing. | CaCC | - | - | -a- | ʼəqatlakka |
| 3rd masc.sing. | " | - | - | -a- | ləqatlakka |
| 3rd fem. sing. | " | - | - | -a- | təqatlakka |
| 1st pl. | " | - | - | -a- | ʼənqatlakka |
| 3rd masc.pl. | " | -o | -u- | - | ləqatluka |
| 3rd fem. pl. | " | -a | -a- | - | ləqatlaka |

## Jussive

Prefixes and stem constitute the typical morphological features of the jussive category. The construction of the verb suffix and the pronominal suffix is the same as for the imperfect. The morphophonemic phenomena noted in connection with the first person pronominal suffix are also to be observed with regard to the second person masculine singular.

2nd pers. fem. sing.: -ki; -kki
2nd pers. masc.pl. : -kum; -kkum
2nd pers. fem. pl.: -kən; -kkən

No table or observations are necessary in the case of these pronominal suffixes since their inflexion in all morphological categories corresponds with that of the second person masculine singular pronominal suffix.

Third person masculine singular: -o; -wo; -yo; -hu; -yu

## Perfect

| Person | Stem | Verb suffix | | Transitional element | Vocalic element of pronominal suffix | Ultimate form |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | In final position | Followed by the pronominal suffix | | | |
| 1st sing. | CaCaC | -ko- | -k- | -w- | -o | qatalkwo |
| 2nd masc.sing. | " | -ka | -ka- | -h- | -u | qatalkahu |
| 2nd fem. sing. | " | -ki | -k(ə)- | -y- | -o | qatalk(ə)yo |
| 3rd masc.sing. | CaCC | -a | -a- | -y- | -u | qatlayu |
| 3rd fem. sing. | " | -at | -att- | - | -o | qatlatto |
| 1st pl. | CaCaC | -na | -na- | -h- | -u | qatalnahu |

Perfect (continued)

| Person | Stem | Verb suffix | | Transitional element | Vocalic element of pronominal suffix | Ultimate form |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | In final position | Followed by the pronominal suffix | | | |
| 2nd masc.pl. | CaCaC | -kum | -kum- | - | -o | qatalkumo |
| 2nd fem. pl. | " | -kən | -k(ə)n- | -ah- | -u | qatalk(ə)nahu |
| 3rd masc.pl. | CaCC | -aw | -aw- | - | -o | qatlawo |
| 3rd fem. pl. | " | -aya | -aya- | -h- | -u | qatlayahu |

In comparing the verb suffixes in final position with those followed by the third person pronominal suffix as illustrated in the above table, the following observations are to be noted:

1. There is an elision of the vowel of the verb suffix in first person singular and second person feminine singular and an ə follows the consonantal element - as a free variation - in the latter case.
2. The consonantal element of third person masculine singular is geminated.
3. There is a transitional a following the final consonant of second person feminine plural verb-suffix. The ə vowel is not essential to the syllabic structure and occurs sporadically as a free variation, being an aspect of full k realization.
4. The final consonantal element of third person masculine plural verb-suffix - w - has the weakened variation [ɯ].
5. All other verb-suffixes remain intact.

The third person singular pronominal suffix is characterized by its vocalic termination - o or u - and by the manner in which this vocalic termination necessitates a preceding consonantal element in forming a final CV sequence of the ultimate form. The points to be noted with regard to the perfect are as follows:

1. The termination -u occurs following verb suffixes which end with the vowel a in final position as well as in the ultimate form.
2. The termination o occurs following verb suffixes which end with a consonant, excluding the second feminine plural where u occurs.
3. The preceding consonantal element is either the final consonant of verb suffixes in final position ending with a consonant or one of the three transitional elements - w, y, h - when the verb suffix in final position ends with a vowel. Here again, the second person feminine plural ultimate form stands as an exception, having the transitional sequence ah following a consonantal verb-suffix termination. All u terminations but one are preceded by a transitional h, the exception being third person masculine singular where y occurs.
4. The only two degrees of person in which the final vowel of the ultimate form is preceded by a consonantal cluster are the first person singular and the second person feminine singular. In these two instances the second element of the cluster - w and y respectively - points to a historical phonetic change which produced the semivowels, i.e.: an off-on glide.

Imperfect

| Person | Stem: ignore brackets to derive stem in ultimate form | Verb suffix | | Transitional element | Ultimate form |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | In final position | Followed by the pronominal suffix | | |
| 1st sing. | CaCCəC(C) | - | - | - | ʼəqattəllo |
| 2nd masc.sing. | " " | - | - | - | təqattəllo |
| 2nd fem. sing. | CaC(Ci)C | -i | transposed | - | təqattilo |
| 3rd masc.sing. | CaCCəC(C) | - | - | - | ləqattəllo |
| 3rd fem. sing. | " | - | - | - | təqattəllo |
| 1st pl. | " " | - | - | - | ʼənqattəllo |
| 2nd masc.pl. | CaC(Cu)C | -o | transposed | - | təqattulo |
| 2nd fem. pl. | CaCC | -a | -a- | -h- | ləqatlahu |
| 3rd masc.pl. | CaC(Cu)C | -o | transposed | - | ləqattulo |
| 3rd fem.pl. | CaCC | -a | -a- | -a- | ləqatlahu |

Notes for the above table:

1. The termination o occurs following the third radical of the stem in all persons except second and third feminine plural where u occurs following a transitional h.

2. Gemination of the final radical occurs in all forms which do not have a verbal suffix.

3. There is a transposition of the verb suffix into the stem in second person feminine singular and second and third masculine plural of the ultimate forms together with the representation of o by u.

4. Gemination of the medial radical occurs in the persons mentioned in Note 3.

Jussive

| Person | Stem (see comment following the table) | Verb suffix | | Transitional element | Ultimate form |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | In final position | Followed by the pronominal suffix | | |
| 1st sing. | CCaC(C) | - | - | - | ʿəqtallo |
| 2nd masc.sing. | " | - | - | - | təqtallo |
| 2nd fem. sing. | CC(a/e)C | -i | transposed | - | təqtelo |
| 3rd masc.sing. | CCaC(C) | - | - | - | ləqtallo |
| 3rd fem. sing. | " " | - | - | - | təqtallo |
| 1st pl. | " " | - | - | - | nəqtallo |
| 2nd masc.pl. | CC(a/o)C | -o | transposed | - | təqtolo |
| 2nd fem. pl. | CCaC | -a | -a- | -h- | təqtalahu |
| 3rd masc.pl. | CC(a/o)C | -o | transposed | - | ləqtolo |
| 3rd fem. pl. | CCaC | -a | -a- | -h- | ləqtalahu |

Comment: for the oblique line inside brackets read "or". When removing the brackets one of the vowels is left out, depending on the presence or absence of a pronominal suffix in the inflected form.

In comparing the construction of the various constituents of the imperfect form and the manner in which they constitute the ultimate forms with those of the jussive, two morpho-phonemic phenomena are found to be specific to the jussive: a) the verb suffixes of second and third person masculine plural retain their phonemic shape; b) the verb suffix of second person feminine singular - i -

in final position, is represented by *e* in the ultimate form. A further point to be noted is the omission of the vocalic element of the stem in final position in persons requiring transposition in the ultimate form.

## Imperative

The phenomena noted above in connection with the jussive are also to be observed in the case of the appropriate imperative forms. The ultimate forms are as follows:

*qətallo*; *qətelo*; *qətolo*; *qətalahu*.

*3rd pers. fem. sing. pron. suf.*: *-a*; *-wa*; *-ya*; *-ha*
*3rd pers. masc.pl. pron. suf.* : *-om*; *-wom*; *-yom*; *-hom*
*3rd pers. fem. pl. pron. suf.* : *-an*; *-wan*; *-yan*; *-han*

No tables or observations are necessary in the case of these pronominal suffixes since their inflexion in all morphological categories corresponds with that of the third person masculine singular pronominal suffix.

## § 5.12.2 The pronominal suffix - in conjunction with verb forms of derivatives and other types:

Derivatives of type A verbs, and also other types and their derivatives, submit to the same changes as occur with type A inflexion, without losing their morphologically typical features. This statement is true both in regard to verbs whose stem is triconsonantal non-laryngal and verbs whose stem is quadriconsonantal non-laryngal.

A further observation is, however, necessary to adapt the given description of type A to all types and derivatives. This observation involves the transposed vocalic element of the verb suffix of the imperative and jussive as follows (see p. , Imperfect, Note 3): When the vowel between the second and third radicals of the stem in final position is *a*, the plural verb-suffixes in the ultimate form retain their phonemic shape while the singular verb-suffix is actualized as *e*. When no phonemic or any other vowel separates the second and third radicals of the stem in final position, the plural verb suffixes are actualized as *u* whereas the singular verb suffix retains its phonemic shape in the ultimate form. In the light of this observation, the transposed vowels - *i*, *u* - in the imperfect and - *e*, *o* - in the jussive may be considered as typical of the morphological distinction of the type A inflexion as a particular case, and do not represent morphological properties typical of a formal distinction between the imperfect and jussive in general. Some examples of the triradical verbs are:

| | |
|---|---|
| tə-A/B: | *təkabbata* - "to meet, to receive". |
| Perfect: | *təkabbatattom* - "she met them (masc.)". |
| | *tkabbatawa*[1] - "they (masc.) received her". |
| Imperfect/<br>Jussive: | *lətkabbatahom* - "they (fem.) meet them (masc.)". |
| Imperative: | *təkabboto* - "receive (masc.pl.) him!". |
| | *təkabbota* - "receive (masc.pl.) her!". |
| *ʿa*-A: | *ʾawdaqa* - "to overpower"; *ʾafgara* - "to let go out, to pour(v.t.)"; *ʾaqbala* - "to come back, to return"; *ʾaqmata* - "to observe, to take notice of". |

---

[1] For: *təkabbatawa*.

| | |
|---|---|
| Perfect: | *'awdakenni* - "he overpowered me". |
| Imperfect: | *tafaggərra* - "she pours it (lit. 'her', i.e. 'the soup')". |
| | *laqabbulo* - "they (masc.) come back to him". |
| Jussive: | *'əgəl taqmutom* - "in order that you (masc.pl.) will observe them (masc.)". |
| *'atta*-A: | *'attaqbala* - "to observe". |
| Imperfect/ Jussive: | *lattaqbəllo* - "he observes him". |
| | *lattaqbulo* - "they (masc.) observe him". |
| Type B: | *waṭṭana* - "to test"; *dakkala* - "to entreat"; |
| Imperfect/ Jussive: | *‘əwaṭṭənno* - "I shall test him". |
| | *lədaqqulo* - "they (masc.) entreat him". |
| *'a*-B: | *'aǧarraba* - "to importune, to distress". |
| Imperfect/ Jussive: | *'əgəl laǧarrubom* - "in order that they (masc.) will distress them (masc.)". (NT, Acts, 14:5) |
| Type C: | *kālasa* - "to terminate"; *fāraga* - "to interpret". |
| Imperfect/ Jussive: | *təkālsakki*[1] - "she will terminate your suffering (lit. 'she will terminate you' (fem.sing.))". (PL1,101:16) |
| | *fārugo* - "they (masc.) interpret it (masc. sing.)" (PL1, 258:1) |
| *tə*-C: | *təbāṭara* - "to resist"; |
| Imperfect/ Jussive: | *‘əgəl lətbāṭoro* - "in order that they (masc.) will resist it (masc.sing.)" (NT, Luke, 21:15) |

---

[1] The actual pronunciation is sometimes *təkāl$^{ə}$sakki*, the [$^{ə}$] appearing in order to overcome the difficulty of pronouncing a long unstressed vowel in a close syllable.

| | |
|---|---|
| *ʼat*-C: | *ʼatrāsana* - "to heat"; |
| Imperfect/ Jussive: | *latrāsuno* - "they heat it (masc.sing.)" |

§ 5.12.3 *Quadriradical verbs* in their ultimate forms reflect a morphological behaviour similar to that of the triradical verbs, as in: *ṣanbala* - "to give (a present)"; imperfect: *ṣanbulo* "they (masc.) give him (a present)". No further examples of the quadriradical verb in the ultimate form will be given.

### § 5.12.4 Verbs with laryngals.

Verbs which have either first or second radical laryngal (see: §§ 5.4.1, 5.4.2) comply with the description generated so far. A point - regarding verbs with second radical laryngal - worth mentioning again here (cf.: § 5.4.2) is the absence of any formal difference between the imperfect and jussive in all existing types except type A and all derivatives, owing to stem structure in general and to the non-geminative feature of L in *ʼa*-A in particular.

*Examples of verbs with second radical laryngal*:

| | |
|---|---|
| Type A: | *saḥaba* - "to drag"; *kahala* - "to endure;<br>*raḥama* - "to have pity on". |
| Imperfect: | *ləsḥəbbo* - "he drags it (masc. sing.)"<br>*ləsḥubo* - "they (masc.) drag it (masc.sing.)" |
| Jussive: | *ʼegel təkhola* - "in order that you (masc.pl.) will endure it (fem.sing.)" |
| Imperative: | *rəḥomom* - "have (masc. pl.) pity on them! (masc.)". |
| *tə*-A: | *təkaḥada* - "to oppose"; *təsaʿala* - "to ask". |

Imperfect/

Jussive: *lətkəḥodo* - "they (masc.) will resist him".

*ləssə’olom*[1] - "they (masc.) ask them (masc.) ".

*’a*-A: *’amhara* - "to teach";

Imperfect/

Jussive: *lamhurom* - "they (masc.) teach them (masc.)".

*’at*-A: *’assa’ala* - "to tell, to inform".[2]

Imperfect/

Jussive: *lassə’ulo* - "they (masc.) tell him".

*Verbs which have a third radical laryngal* (see § 5.4.3) form a class of their own in retaining their significant morphological features in the ultimate forms, notably the gemination of the second radical of the imperfect throughout its inflexion and the occurrence of the masculine plural verb-suffix -*u*- in the imperfect and jussive (imperative) - represented in normal rapid articulation by *ə*. No sequential permutation occurs with the third person pronominal suffix in the ultimate forms and the vowel of the third person pronominal suffix is attached to the verb suffix by means of a transitional element: -*y*- in second person feminine singular and -*w*- in the appropriate plural forms. The only significant change which occurs in these verbs is one involving the quality of the vowel of the jussive stem: in forms lacking a verb suffix the vowel *a* in final position in the ultimate form becomes *ə*.

Examples:

Type A: *samʿa* - "to hear"; *maṣ’a* - "to come".

Imperfect: *’əmaṣṣ$^{ə}$’akka* - "I shall come to you (masc. sing.)".

---

[1] For: **lətsə’olom*.

[2] For: **’atsa’ala*.

| | |
|---|---|
| Imperfect: | *təsamməʿiyo* - "you (fem.sing.) will hear him". |
| | *təsamm$^{ə}$ʿəwo* - "you (masc.pl.) will hear him". |
| | *ləsamm$^{ə}$ʿəwo* - "they (masc.pl.) will hear him". |
| Jussive: | *ʾəgəl təmṣəʾanni* - " in order that you (masc.sing.) will come to me". |
| | *ʾəgəl ləmṣəʾo* - " in order that he will come to him". |
| | *ʾəgəl təsməʿiyo* - " in order that you (fem.sing.) will hear him". |
| | *ʾəgəl təsməʿəwo* - " in order that you (masc.pl.) will hear him". |
| Imperative: | *səmʿo*, *səmʿiyo*, *səmʿəwo*, *səmʿahu*. |
| *ʾa*-A: | *ʾamṣəʾa* - "to bring"; |
| Perfect: | *ʾamṣəʾawa* - "they (masc.) brought for her". |
| Imperfect: | *lamaṣṣ$^{ə}$ʾəwo* - "they (masc.) bring him". |
| Jussive: | *lamṣəʾəwo* - " in order that they (masc.) will bring him". |
| *tə*-C: | *təqārḥa* - "to treat"; |
| Imperative: | *təqārḥəwo* - "treat (2nd pers. masc. pl.) him!". (PL1, 93:5) |

## § 5.12.5 Verbs with semivowels

Verbs with *w* or *y* as one of their radicals retain their typical morphological features. Verbs with a final radical semivowel - having peculiarities which resemble, in principal, the behaviour of verbs with a third radical laryngal - deserve special attention. These peculiarities can be described as follows:

a) No transpotision of verb suffixes occurs.

b) In the case of verb forms of the imperfect and jussive (imperative) ending with the vowel *e* in final position, *e* is represented by *ə* or zero in the imperfect and by *a* in the jussive (imperative). In both cases a transitional *y* immediately follows the vowel concerned.

c) In imperfect forms with *u* in final position, the *u* of the ultimate form is represented by *ə* or zero and a transitional *w* immediately follows the vowel concerned.

Examples (cf. § 5.5.3):

*sama* - "to name"; *kara* - "to put (down)".

Imperfect: *təsammiyo* - "you (fem. sing.) will name him".

*təsamm$^{ə}$yo*

or *təsammyo* - "she will name him".

*samm$^{ə}$wan*

or *sammwan* - "they (masc.) name them (fem.)".

*karrəwo*

or *karrwo* - "they (masc.) put it (masc.sing.)down".

jussive: *'əgəl təkrayo* - "in order that she will put it ('him')";

*'əgəl ləkrawo* - "in order that they (masc.) will put it (masc.sing.)".

Imperative: *kərayo* - "put (masc. sing.) it (masc.sing.) down".

*kərawo* - "put (masc. pl.) it (masc.sing.) down".

*Verbs with more than one semivowel (cf.: § 5.5.4) and verbs with both a laryngal and a semivowel* exhibit a synthesis of the morphophonetic behaviour of the sonants concerned. The final radical determines the presence or absence of the verb suffix transposition. Some examples:

W C SV - *wada* - "to do, to make".

C L SV - ra'a - "to see".

L SV C - haba - "to give".

Imperfect: wadd$^{ə}$wo

or waddwo - "they (masc.) do it (lit. 'him')".

lər'əwo - "they (masc.) see him".

hayubo - "they (masc.) give him...".

Jussive: 'əgəl lidawo - " in order that they (masc.) will do it (masc.sing.)".

'əgəl lər'awo - " in order that they will see him".

'əgəl ləhobo - " in order that they (masc.) will give him....".

§ 5.12.6 The verb bela - "to say" (cf.: § 5.7.2) retains its essential morphological features in the ultimate form. A point to be noted is the existence of the radical l throughout the inflexion in the perfect, either as a suppletion of the form in final position, or by means of the use of the telk- (or tel- ) stem in the appropriate persons[1] . In other morphological categories of the verb a transposition of the verb suffix occurs in the appropriate forms. The ultimate forms with the third person pronominal suffix are as follows:

| Perfect | Imperfect | Jussive | Imperative |
|---|---|---|---|
| 'əbello | 'əbəllo | 'iballo | |
| təbello/tello | təbəllo | tiballo | ballo |
| telkyo | təbilo | tibelo | belo |

---

[1] 'Ag'azot, pp. 22-23, gives some other forms than those of the stem telk-, as follows: telyo for telkyo, telwo for telkumo, telyahu for telknahu.

| Perfect | Imperfect | Jussive | Imperative |
|---|---|---|---|
| bello/belayu | ləbəllo | liballo | |
| təbello | təbəllo | tiballo | |
| ’ənbello | ’ənbəllo | niballo | |
| telkumo | təbulo | tibolo | bolo |
| telknahu | təblahu | tibalahu | balahu |
| belawo[1] | ləbulo | libolo | |
| belayahu | ləblahu | libalahu | |

## § 5.12.7 Variant Forms[2]

In order to complete the description of verb inflexion in the ultimate form, the following three phenomena should be mentioned:

a) The first person singular pronominal suffix -ni can stand in free variation with -ne, as in:

| | |
|---|---|
| ṣa‘ana | - "to cause to mount" |
| ’afgara | - "to cause to go out" |

Jussive:

| | |
|---|---|
| ’əgəl lafgəranne | - "in order that he will let me go out" |
| ṣa‘anune | - "make (masc. pl.) me ride him (i.e.: the horse)" |

(PL1, 23:12)

---

[1] With first and second pers. pron. suffs.: beluni - "they (masc.) said to me"; beluki - "they (masc.) said to you (fem. sing.)".

[2] I have failed to establish that these forms are in free variation in the speech of any one native speaker. However the overall impression to be gained from existing texts as well as the material which I collected in Eritrea, makes it possible to describe the forms as actually being in free variation. Lack of sufficient data prevents me from reaching a definite conclusion in the matter.

b) In verb forms, with the third person pronominal suffix, in which the transitional element is -*h*- preceded by *a*, the *a* can be represented by *ə*. The range of actualization of the vowel extends from *a* through *ə* to zero.

Examples:

*rakba* - "to find"; *'āmara* - "to know"; *haba* - "to give"; *samʿa* - "to hear"; *ḥaza* - "to seek, wish, want"; *bela* - "to say"; *ḥaṣba* - "to wash (v.t.)".

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Perfect: | *rakabkähu* | - "you (masc. sing.) found him". |
| | *'āmarkəhu* | - "you (masc. sing.) knew him". |
| | *habnəhu* | - "we gave him...". |
| | *wadekha* | - "you did it (fem.sing.)". |
| | *'isamʿanəha* | - "we have not heard her". |
| | *ḥazenäha* | - "we sought her [for marriage]". |
| Imperfect: | *ləbləha* | - "they (fem.) say unto her". |
| | *ḥaṣbəha* | - "they (fem.) wash her". |

(PL1, 113:3)

c) The ultimate form of third person masculine plural perfect[1] *qatlaw* - "they killed" with first and second pronominal suffixes is given in the appropriate sections above as *katlawni*, *katlawka*, etc. Two other variants of these ultimate forms are found, in both of which an *u* precedes the pronominal suffix, and in one of which the *w* of the plural suffix appears as *y*.

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[1] See: § 5.12.1, first table.

Examples:

ḥalfa - "to pass"; šāwaṭa - "to flog"; kal'a - "to prevent"; ʿadda - "to visit"; ʿaggaba - "to wrong"; nas'a - "to take"; 'athada - "to give in marriage"; hawaka - "to confound".

| | |
|---|---|
| ḥalfawuka | - "they passed you (masc. sing.). |
| šāwaṭawuki | - "they flogged you (fem. sing.)". |
| kal'awuna | - "they prevented us". |
| | (PL1, 44:25) |
| ʿaddawuna | - "they visited us". |
| ʿaggabayuna | - "they wronged us". |
| | (PL1, 43:2) |
| nas'ayuna | - "they took us". |
| 'athadayuna | - "they gave us ... in marriage". |
| | (PL1, 23:25) |
| hawakayukum | - "they confounded you (masc. pl.)". |
| | (NT, Acts, 15:24) |

# Chapter Six

# THE TENSE SYSTEM

## § 6.1 The three morphological categories of the Tigre verb and their modal meaning

There are three morphological categories of the Tigre verb: perfect, imperfect and jussive. The perfect and imperfect categories constitute the temporal category of indicative, while the jussive is a modal non-temporal category.[1]

Verb-forms of all three morphological categories contrast with each other in serving as the main verb of a sentence or a clause. While verb-forms of the perfect and imperfect can be subordinate without necessarily changing their value, verb-forms of the jussive can occur as subordinate in one environment only: when preceded by the conjunction ʼəgəl. When the complex ʼəgəl + jussive serves to perform a modal function it must be regarded as being in a subjunctive rather than a jussive mood.

The major distinction of category between the perfect and imperfect can be seen in terms of the temporal contrast past (perfect-forms)/non-past (imperfect-forms).

A detailed discussion of the various uses of the modal categories is provided in §§ 6.2-6.8.2.

## § 6.1.1 Complex expressions of time-relations

More specific time-relations than those mentioned above

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[1] The terms perfect, imperfect and jussive are used throughout the work in a morphological sense only.

(see: § 6.1) can be expressed by means of a complex. Three major syntactical structures serve to express two temporal categories:

(a) the imperfect-form in construction with *halla*, *ʿala*, *ṣanḥa* and *nabra* (see: §§ 6.9-6.12.2), or in construction with verbs of time-duration (see: (§ 6.13).

(b) the perfect-form in construction with *halla*, *ʿala* and *ṣanḥa*. Here, two different constructions are to be considered:

(1) *ʾəndo* + perfect + *ʿala/ṣanḥa* (see: §§ 6.14-6.14.1)

(2) perfect + *ka* + *halla/ʿala/ṣanḥa* (see: §§ 6.15-6.15.3).

(c) the participle-form in construction with *halla/ʿala/ṣanḥa* (see: §§ 6.16-6.16.5).

The constructions with *halla* and *ʿala* mentinned in (a) are those employing compound-tenses in the expression of non-perfective time-relations.[1] The constructions with *halla* and *ʿala* mentinned in (b) and (c) are complexes which express the perfective notion of time-relations. In all such constructions the verb *ṣanḥa* (and *nabra* - to a lesser extent) may introduce an additional meaning to the complex, or may have the same function in the complex as *ʿala* or *halla*.

## § 6.2 Jussive and imperative

This morphological category of the Tigre Verb corresponds

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[1] A distinction is made throughout the work between the terms 'perfect' and 'perfective': the former denotes morphological category only, the latter a temporal category corresponding to e.g.: present-perfect , pluperfect, etc. in English grammar.

to a modal category for which the name 'subjunctive-jussive' seems to be adequate, owing to its occurrence in both dependent and independent clauses. The imperative occurs as the second person (sing. & pl.) of the jussive in the affirmative.

Morphologically, the 'subjunctive-jussive' and imperative belong to the same paradigm: they have a common stem and are to be distinguished only in that the jussive has preformatives while the imperative does not. In the negative, the second person (sing. & pl.) can have only the forms with the preformatives, even if the mood is 'imperative', e.g.:

təm bali ʾitəbkay - "Be silent, do not cry" (PIL, 10:5).

When the import of the paradigm is that of the 'jussive mood', the jussive-imperative relationship is shown in terms of shades of modality: the second person (sing. & pl.) is in what is usually called 'imperative mood', the moods of the other persons being referred to by various terms, such as 'cohortative' (1st pers.), optative (3rd pers.), and so forth.

### The imperative

The imperative is used in requests which may range from commands to humble entreaties. For prohibitions the jussive-form in the negative is used.

Examples:

wahaye[1] p̣ətros qənaṣ waḥərad kabəlaʿ latəblani kərən samʿako -

"And then I heard a voice saying to me: 'Peter, arise, slaughter and eat". (NT, Acts, 11:7).

---

[1] Standard pronunciation: [wah$^{y}$e]

ʿayəbka ʾənze naʿa - "Come here, please!"

ʾagid ʾəndo šafagka[1] məṣʾanni daʾam ʾəb ʾəwān ṣaḥāy ʾitəmṣəʾanni -

"Come to me quickly and in haste (lit.: 'while you hurry'); but do not come to me in the day time" (lit.: 'in the sun time', i.e., when the sun shines)."

(PL1, 35:5)

Other related uses of the imperative are seen in expressions such as salutations, blessings, curses etc., some of which are to be found in set phrases.

Examples:

ʾəb salām gis - "Good journey!"
(lit.: 'Go with peace')

taʿayan, or - "May you go mad!"
ʿəyun gəbaʾ (lit.: 'Become mad')

wo rabbi ʾabuna ʾəlla nabra daḥar ʾəlna

"O God our Father, bless this meal for us"

(ʾAgʾazot, 112:2)

## § 6.3 The independent jussive-form

When not in subordinate relationship the jussive represents a modal category which comprehends many shades of will, wish, request, supposition, doubt, prohibition etc. and is seldom preceded

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[1] Pronunciation: [ safakka ].

by a conjunction.[1]

The range of meaning covers many nuances of which the following examples are characteristic:

### 1st and 3rd person (sing. & pl.)

naʿa mən ’əlla ’aḥāye wa’at nəḥəṛad -

"Come, let us kill a cow of my cattle."

(PL1, 24:7)

nəʿno diba nigis bellom -

"'Come, let us go there', he said to them."

(Ibid., 2:14)

’əlla nide - "Let us do this."

wahətom ’ət betu ’ət ləsakkəb lāli betu wa’əlu nandəd ’ə̣ndo belaw gamaw -

"And they deliberated, saying: 'Let us burn his house and himself at night, when he sleeps in his house'."

(PL1, 19:26)

faǧər tu ’ənmayət kanəblaʿ wanəste -

"It is tomorrow that we die, so let us eat and drink."

(NT, Corinthians, 15:32)

---

[1] For the periphrastic expression ’əgəl + independent jussive, see § 6.4.2.

ʾəbbəlla masārye ʾəlla ʿəč̣č̣atki ʾəbtak ma worot mən lawəlādki tahaybini bella -

"He said to her: 'With this (lit.: 'this my') axe I shall cut down your tree, unless (lit.: 'or') you give me one of your fledglings'."

(PL1, 12:3)

ʿabi latu lənsəʾo belaw - "They said: 'The one who is the oldest shall take it'."

(PL1, 7:18)

worot mən mawallədka məgda laṣbəṭ -

"One of your relatives shall kindle a fire."

(Ibid., 32:22)

ḥuye mən gabbəʾ laʾəlu qatalka, ḥuye ləqsan ʾəndo bela ʾəb manduk qatlayu -

"He killed him with a gun, saying: 'If it is my brother whom you have killed, my brother shall be avenged'."

(Ibid., 79:16)

ʾaze ʾəb ǧalabkum ʾət beta taqbəl kama -

"Now, for your sake, may she return then to her home!"

(Ibid., 25:4)

sanni ʾazedi laṭuṭma sanni libas -

"Very well, now then, let the sinew get very dry."

(Ibid , 8:25)

ladol rabbi barhat təgba' bela -

"Then the Lord said: 'Let there be light!'."

(Racconti, 5:5)

2nd person (sing. & pl.) in the negative

When the jussive is used with the negative prefixed particle it is sometimes necessary to rely on the context in order to distinguish different shades of modality. Note the following examples:

'itəqtal 'itəzne 'itəsraq -

"You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal."

('Ag'azot, 104:7)

'itaṣbəḥ

"May you not live until morning!" (PL1, 274:3, No. 200)

Other related uses of the independent jussive are seen in idiomatic set phrases such as:

| | |
|---|---|
| rabbi ləsdekka[1] | - "Thank you" (lit.: 'May God help you') |
| rabbi lahabakka[2] | - "Thank you" (lit.: 'May God give you') |

---

[1] Standard pronunciation: [ràbbəlsdékka]

[2] Standard pronunciation: [ràbbəlhabákka]

## Interrogative utterances

The independent jussive is also found as the nexus element of an utterance in the interrogative when the question implied is rhetorical, raises doubt, or requires an answer in the imperative mood. Here again the possible shades of modality are numerous. Examples:

’ana mi ’idekka ?

"What shall I do for you?" (i.e.: 'I cannot help you')

(PL1, 4:25)

ka’afo nidayo wanəgbarro ? -

"What shall we do to him and how shall we deal with him?" (An idiomatic expression; the meaning here: 'Is there anything that we can do to overcome him?')

(Ibid., 20:25)

’əšwo māyka ? mən ’aya ’əṣṭẹ ? (...) wahətu (...)
mən ’əl:i sətay bel:a -

"'Where is your water? From where shall I drink?' (...) And he said to her: '(...) Drink from this [waterhole]'."

(Ibid., 26:23/24)

mi ’ide maslakka? -

"What does it seem to you that I should do?" (i.e.: 'What should I do, according to your opinion?')

kasab lahədāy ’əgəl kantəbāy ṣalim belawo mi nide?

ʿəč̣ay kalʼawuna səga ʼəbbu nabaššəllo ʼirakabna. wahətu (...) kawannikum ḥārṭo waʼəb laqaṣāyər lasəga ʼabšəlo katədarraro wakor labu hʸe ʼəlu ləsbar kaʼebbu tədarraro -

"And the people of the cortege said to Kantebay Ṣalim: 'What should we do? They have refused us wood. We have found nothing with which to cook the meat!' And he [said] (...) : 'Draw your spears (i.e. 'Pull off the spearheads') and cook the meat with the shafts, then eat. And he who has a saddle shall break it, then eat with it (i.e.: by using it in place of wood'."

(PL1, 44:24-45:1)

walabəʼsa bella ʼaze kəm mətki rəggāz ḥirad ʼətki ma laʼətta gəsko lata kəl dol ʼəssič̣e ʼəm kaləb ʼət ʼəbəl səmki ʼərfaʿ wahəta tello səmye refaʿ -

"And her husband said to her: 'Now, when you are dead, shall I kill the funeral cow for you or shall I exalt your name by saying all the time wherever I go: My wife, 'Em-Kaləb (i.e. her name)?'. And she said to him: 'Exalt my name'."

(PL1, 77:9)

daʼam ʼəbbaya gabay ʼigis beka? bello walagərəz laʼəbba fateka gis bəye kulluma ʼagbuy ʿaǧǧe tu bello -

"[The man said]: 'Which way shall I go with you? And the boy said: 'Go with me where you like. All roads are [to] my village'."

(Ibid., 262:14)

ladol mamba labəsṭān ǧabib mi ʼide? labəzuḥ fətuy walye ʼəlʼək ʼənde ʼəgludi kaǧǧulo gabbəʼ bela - "Then the lord of the vineyard said: 'What shall I do? I shall send my much beloved son: they may, indeed, venerate him'." (lit.: 'Well then, him, indeed, they perhaps will venerate')

(NT, Luke, 20:13)

## § 6.4 The dependent jussive-form

When subordinate - always preceded by the conjunction ʼəgəl[1] - there are two main usages to be observed: (a) the jussive functions as a semantic category of modality, or (b) it can appear as a syntactical device functioning as a quasi-infinitive or verbal-noun equivalent for those verbs whose complement is generally not an infinitive.[2]

(a) This usage is one in which an adverb clause of purpose ('finality') or result is introduced - analogous to English expressions such as 'in order to' + infinitive,[3] 'in order that', 'that', etc.

Examples:

wahətom lāli ʼət betu ʼəsāt wadaw ʼəgəl ləndad - "And they set fire to his house at night that it should burn down."

(PL1, 20:3)

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[1] As a conjunction, ʼəgəl can only precede verb-forms which belong to the jussive paradigm.

[2] See: § 9.5.1.

[3] Called sometimes 'the Infinitive of Purpose'.

ʾəgəl laʿārwom maṣʾaw -

"They came to make peace between them."

(PL1, 24:15)

lamaryamāt haye ʾət raʾas labaʿat laʾetta ʿalaya lafānusan karaya ʾəlom ʾəgəl lərʾawan -

"The 'Marys', however, placed their lamp for them on the top of the cave in which they were, that they might see them."

(Ibid., 53:7)

daʾam raʾas ʾalula (...) məṣʾat ladarbuš waʿasi lagabbāru kəm samʿa ʾəb karāyihu qanṣa məsəl ladarbuš ʾəgəl ləššāfaf -

"But when Ras ʾAlulu (...) heard of the arrival of the dervishes and of the rebellion of his subjects, he got up with his army in order to fight with the dervishes."

(PL1, 164:9)

daʾam ʾəlli ʾət ləfattuno laʾəbbu kassuso ʾəgəl lərkabo belaw -

"But this they said, tempting him, so that they might find /something/ with which to accuse him."

(NT, John, 8:6)

ʾəlli kəm samʿa ʾət tədros ḥuhu ʿad ʿaylay ʾəgəl ləššayam ḥazze halla ʾənta ʾagədda ʾəgəl təššayam ʾagid naʿa ʾəndo bela ʾəbbu ʾəbbu laʾaka ʾəttu -

"When he heard this he sent at once to his brother Tedros, saying: 'The ʿAd ʿAylay want the chieftainship; [as for] you, then, come quickly so that you will be appointed'."

(Tribù, 51:33)

*hətu ʼənze ʿala daʼam ʼaze gesa galegār ʼəgəl lassāne* - "He was here, but now he has gone to arrange something."

*ladol labaʿal ladəkkān ʼəgəl laḥəṣān nadʼayu ʼəgəl lamṣəʼ* - "At that time the shop owner sent the boy to fetch [it]."

*kəstān waʼəslām ʼət mədər ḥabaš dinom mən ḥəd ʼəgəl lətfante lawaddwo ʼəlli tu* - "This is what the Christians and Moslems in the country of Abyssinia do so that their religions (lit.: 'religion') should be distinguished from each other."

(PL1, 198:16)

(b) With this usage the complex *ʼəgəl* + jussive can be used as a grammatical device to render the complement of the subordinating verb as a 'subordonée (conjonctive) objet'. This use of the complex is one in which it has the force of (i) an infinitive-equivalent or (ii) a 'content-clause' equivalent.[1] In this usage the jussive does not imply a modal nuance.

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[1] For the meaning of the term 'content-clause' see:Jespersen, *Essentials*, § 33.1. Cf.: § 9.4.2 in this thesis.

Examples:

wakullu ’əgəl ləddarbaš wamālu wadāru ’əgəl ləḥədag ka’əgəlləttālayo fatte ʿala -

"And they (i.e.: 'the dervishes') wished that all [people] should become dervishes and leave their belongings and houses and follow them."

(PL1, 163:4)

sə’lika ’əgəl ’ənsa’ ’əefatte -

"I want to take your picture"

la’aḥa ’əgəl nosu ’əgəl lənsə’a batka -

"He determined to take the cows for himself."

(PL1, 28:7)

’əgəl tassᵊ’əlanni qaddər ḥud ḥud ? -

"Can you tell me [about it] in detail?"

ḥəmām ʿaso laṣabbəṭo ’addām ’agid bagid ’ət ḥakim ’əgəl ligis waǧǧəbbo -

"People who have caught malaria should go to the doctor at once."

wa’əgəl lədḥan lagabbə’ ’əlu man tu kama ? belaw -

"And they said: 'Who, then, can be saved?'"
(lit.: Who is the one, then, for whom it is possible to be saved.)

(NT, Matthew, 19:25)

waḥar ʾəgəl laʾaddām ʿəlla masal ʾəgəl libalom ʾambata -

"Then he began to tell the people this parable."

(NT, Luke, 20:9)

ʾəb ʾəgarom ʾəgəl ligiso ḥadgawom -

"They let them walk by foot."

## § 6.4.1 Idiomatic uses of the dependent jussive

The complex ʾəgəl + jussive can be found in subordination to certain verbs which function as 'semantic auxiliaries' in that they bring about an addition to the meaning of the complex which is the outcome of the separate lexical contents of both the subordinating and the subordinate verbs. This addition involves the aspect of the subordinate verb. These expressions are lexical (i.e., of idiomatic nature) and a few examples will suffice here:

wakəm ʾatet mahaṣat ʾəgəl tilad -

"And having returned [home], birth pangs took hold of her."

(PL1, 18:24)

walaʾənās ʾəgel lətʿayan qarba -

"And the man was about to go crazy."

(Ibid , 32:1)

wahəta ʾəndo ḥammat ʾəgəl timut šaʾagat -

"And she became sick and was nearing death."

(Ibid , 77:9)

A further construction worth mentioning is that where the complex under discussion is subordinate to the verb bela which is itself subordinated by means of a conjunction, such as ’əndo - "while, after", ’ət - "while", to the verb of the principal clause. Here the verb bela stands for an idiomatic expression which means 'intending to do'.

Examples:

waḥayat la’əgāl ’əgəl nosu ’əgəl lənsə’o ’əndo bela (...) -
"And the lion, intending to take the calf for himself (...)."

(PL1, 9:16)

wahətom ’əlli kəm sam‘aw (...) ’ət lamarat təkāraw
wa’ətta təšammamaw bəzuḥ ’əgəl ləṣgabo ’ət ləblo -
"And when they heard it, (...) hoping to become very rich, they descended into the pond and were drowned in it."

(Ibid., 22:10)

wadannāš ’əgəl latfarārho ’əndo bela ’əb lasayəf
wāšayu (...). wakə’ənna dannāš ’əgəl ləfattən ’ət
ləbəl mot ’ət nafsu ’amṣə’a -
"And Danāš raised his sword towards him intending to frighten him. (...). And in this way Danāš, intending to try [his slave], brought death upon himself."

(Ibid , 50:4, 50:7)

Ḥalib ‘əgəl ləbḥat ’əndo bela la’əgāl ’əgəl ləḥərad
ḥaza -
"He wanted to slaughter the calf, intending to have milk for himself."

(Tribù, 4:8)

### § 6.4.2 *ʼəgəl* + jussive as a periphrastic expression of the jussive mood.

The conjunctional complex *ʼəgəl* + jussive can stand for the main verb in a sentence or a clause, as its nexus, i.e. when it occurs in a syntactic position similar to that in which the jussive alone may occur. This statement excludes the possibility of 'inner' syntactic dependence. The term 'periphrastic jussive' seems, therefore, suitable to describe its function as a syntactically independent complex beside that of the equivalent subordinate complex. The periphrastic jussive in comparison with the ordinary jussive does not exhibit any special shade of modality, as can be seen from the following examples:

> *sanni wadekum ḥəčema ḥətkum ta. kaʼaze laʻamsat ḥətkum habuni. mi ʼəwadde ? ʼəla ʼəgəl hide bello.* -
> "He said to him: 'You have done well. My sister is your sister. And now give me your sister who has become pregnant. What shall I do? I must marry her."
>
> (PL1, 23:23)

> *ḥatte dol lakarāy ʻəgəl lamallahaya tella nəʻni ʼət ʼakān ʼəgale ʼəgəl nigis. ʼətta ʻad zəmut halla. mən laʼabaddən ʼəgəl nəblaʻ.* -
> "Once a hyaena said to her companion: 'Come, let us go to a certain place. There a village has been robbed. Let us eat from the corpses of the dead."
>
> (Ibid., 29:11)

> *ʼəb ʼəlla kakaʻat ʼət lətkaḥado mənnom lalaʻabbe ḥəṣān maṣʼa kaʼət fənge lakəḥudām ʼəndo ʼata ʼana kaḥadkum*

’əgəl ’əkalləs ’əlkum bela. -

"While they were quarrelling about this cake there came a boy who was older than them and, entering between the /two/ opponents, he said: 'I shall settle your quarrel for you'."

(’Ag’azot, 65:4)

rabbi wadaya mən gabbə’ ’əgəl ’aqsənno. -

"Let us avenge him, if God wills (lit.: 'If God does it')."

(PL1, 75:13)

rabbi wadaya mən gabbə’ ’əgəl nətmamakka wanəḫlafakka. -

"If God wills, we shall have your place and surpass you."

(Ibid., 223:26)

In the examples given so far the complex ’əgəl + jussive can be regarded as independent. In some cases, however, a relationship of syntactic dependence between the complex and another verb can be understood - if not formally seen. There are instances in which the use of the complex seems to be connected with its function in a subordinate syntactic position, i.e. as 'subordonnées complétives' or in expressing finality, when the demarcation line between direct and indirect speech - though marked morphologically - is not syntactically obvious.

Examples:

ḥaruṣ ’əbbu ’ənšāwəṭṭo ’əgəl namṣə’ ’əndo belaw gesaw. -

"They went away saying: 'Let us fetch switches with which to scourge him'." (i.e.: 'They went away intending to bring switches.')

(PL1, 17:1)

habay haye ʼanama səttāyki ʼəgəl ʼərʼe ʼəndo bela məsla gesa. -

"The baboon, however, saying: 'Let me also see your [sort of] drink', went with her." (i.e.: intending to see her (sort of) drink.)

(Ibid., 27:10)

Cf.:

ladol mafatnāy ʼəndo maṣʼaya wad rabbi mən təgabbəʼ ʼəlla ʼəban ʼanaggər ləgbaʼ bal bello. -

"Then the tempter came to him and said: 'If you are the son of God tell these stones to become [loaves of] bread."

(NT, Matthew, 4:3)

### § 6.4.3 ʼəgəl + jussive used in the expression of causal clauses in the negative.

The complex ʼəgəl + jussive may be used to express causal clauses in the negative. In this use the meaning expressed by the complex is that of a causal or consecutive clause while its form is typical of a clause of purpose.

Examples:

wasab badir kəflat wafəntit ʼammər ʼilʻala ʼəgəl lətfanātaw. -

"And the people of the times long past did not know division and separation, so they could not separate from each other."

(PL1, 35:18)

wakəl mənnom ʾəb ʾəssitu ʾəgəl ʾilətʿadde ḥar laǧalbat ʾət laṣarru laballəssa ʾalabu. -

"And not one of them could (lit.: 'and each one of them could not') cross with his wife as nobody was there who would return the boat to his companions."

(.PL1, 38:20)

ḥar nosnosom mi nibal? ʾəlli ḥalibna ʾaddām satayu ʾəgəl ʾinibal maftəḥ ʾakānu waʿamur dəbʾət ṣanḥattanna. -

"They [talked] among themselves: 'What shall we say? We cannot say that people drank this milk as the key was in its place and the milk-pail covered'."

(Tigre Texts, 9:27)

waʾəgəl ʾiləqaddəm baḥar gaʾat dibu waʾəgəl ʾilaqbəl laǧafaru təwattada mənnu. -

"And the sea was on him (i.e. on the mountain) so he could not advance; and his one edge was fixed [in the ground] so he could not retreat."

(PL1, 90:6)

ʿəlbom mən kawākəb labazzəḥ (...) kaʾafo ʾəgəl nəzmattom? --

"[They said]: 'Their number is more numerous than [that of] the stars (...), so how can we attack them?"

(Tigre Texts, 13:25)

hətuma mən gabbəʾ mi ʾəgəl ʾilide? ʾəlli ʾənās battərāy tu belaw. -

"They said: 'Even if it is he, what can he do? As for him he is an unarmed man [and thus unable to cause any harm]'."

(PL1, 46:13)

## § 6.5 *’əgəl* + jussive + *tu* as the expression of futurity.

Among the non past temporal expressions, this complex - which occurs in an independent position - is the one which marks futurity. Within the domain of non past this complex can express (a) what is about to, or soon to, happen (imminence), or (b) what will happen. No modal (non-temporal) meaning is implied in this use of the jussive, and it is probably the value of the conjunction *’əgəl* in final clauses (adverb clauses of purpose) which brought about the above use and meaning, especially in the case of (a). Examples of (a):

*la’agərbače habuni ’əgəl ’igis tu.* -
"Give me my things: I am to go."

(PL1, 20:12)

*da’am lagabər ’əgəl ləqtalanni tu wa’ana ’əgəl ’əbdaro ’əndo bela ’əgəl lamambahu səgādu natfa.* -
"But the slave, thinking that he was going to kill him, cut his master's throat intending to forestall him (lit.: to precede him)."

(PL1, 50:5)

*wa’addām ’əlli ḥabre kəm ra’aw dəgge ma ’akāba ’əgəl ləzzammat tu (...) ləblo.* -
"And when people see this sign they say that a village or a herd is to be robbed (...)."

(Ibid., 61:4)

*wakəm ta’akkabaw ‘əlu mənkum ’əlli ’əkkuy wəddāy* wādi lahalla ʼəgəl lətqaṣṣab tu bela laʼabuhom. -

"And when they assembled, their father said: 'The one who has done the bad deed is going to be punished'."

(ʼAgʼazot, 60:11)

woro ʼənās yom ʼəgəl timut tu belawo. -

"A man was told (lit.: 'they said to a man'): 'Today you will die'."

(Tigre Texts, 8:4)

ḥatte məset ʼəgəl ʼəssitu ʼana tahargako. ʼəgəl ʼəskab tu. waʼənti ʽəqabi. kakarāy[1] maṣʼat mən gabbəʼ harsini bela wasakba. -

"One evening he said to his wife: 'I am sleepy, I am going to sleep. And you keep watch. And if robbers come wake me up.' Then he went to sleep."

(Ibid., 13:13)

ʼana ʼenze kaf ʼəgəl ʼibal tu ʼənta ken kaf bal. -

"I am going to sit here - you sit (imperat.) there."

Examples of (b):

ḥaqo kəlʼe ma salas saʽat ṣəlmat ʼəgəl ləgbaʼ tu walaṣaḥāy ʼəgəl tidak tu. -

"Within two or three hours it will be dark and the sun will set."

faǧər baṣəʽ ʼəgəl nigis tu. -

"Tomorrow we shall go to Massawa."

ʾamʿəl ʾəgale nəṣṣāf ʾəndo mayena ʾəb faǧra rəggāz
ʾəgəl nəḥərad tu (...). -
"Having a wake on such and such a day, the day after
we shall slaughter the funeral sacrifice (...)."

(PL1, 223:8)

yom ʾəbba[1] sābʿāy kə̣ffal ʾəgəl nə̣tmahar tu. -
"Today we shall study the seventh chapter."

ləʿul bernar$^{ə}$d nāy nedarland ʾətyopya ʾəgəl ləbṣəḥu
ʾəb fəntit ṭyārat ʾadəs ʾabba ʾəgəl ləʾtaw tu. -
"Prince Bernard of the Netherlands will come to Addis
Ababa in a special aeroplane to visit Ethiopia."

In the Mansaʿ Tigre of today the use of the above compound seems to be gaining ground at the expense of the imperfect as the typical expression of futurity, and to be developing into the formal expression of future tense.

## § 6.6 Perfect and imperfect: function and value.

The perfect and imperfect are the two morphological categories of the Tigre verb in the indicative mood. Verb-forms of these two categories, in their syntactic role of predicate in independent sentences or clauses, are in contrast in the expression of the distinction between past and non-past. This temporal distinction in the above mentioned syntactical environments is the pertinent one as regards the system. In traditional terms of time relations the perfect essentially denotes the preterite and the imperfect serves to express

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[1] Assimilated from: [ʾəb~lā́]; cf. § 1.2.5 & § 2.11.2 a)(i)

the present and future. Thus, in the case of *šəqəlye ’ambatko* - "I began my work", an event in the past has been expressed regardless of any relative 'zero-point' of time, while *korit ləttalhe* can be either: "He plays the ball" or "He will play the ball", and only the context can help us in arriving at the correct interpretation. Hence the label 'present-future' which is sometimes used.

Before we begin to examine data in the light of the above statement (i.e.: that the temporal distinction past/non-past is the pertinent one) three general observations are necessary:

### (a) Marked and unmarked meaning of the categories.

Both the perfect and imperfect are, formally and functionally, the unmarked or neutral term of the compound tenses (cf.: § 6.9.9), i.e. they are characterized by the absence of any formal expression of the meanings marked by the compound tenses. The distinction past/non-past in the compound is marked by the auxiliary verb, while the 'auxilié' renders its lexical content. The 'simple tense' (the unmarked category) can, however, convey a meaning which is specific to a given compound tense arising from 'parole' only, i.e. without a formal expression of the verb-form. Thus, the imperfect in the utterance *korit ləttalhe* - "He plays the ball" - can have the unmarked meaning 'non-past' when compared with the perfect, or else it can be: "He is playing the ball" when the emphasis is on duration.[1] In the latter case the marked meaning is preferably indicated by the compound tense imperf. + *halla* which indicates the present

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[1] Cf.: § 6.10.

progressive tense itself distinct from the non-progressive *korit lattalhe*.[1] A similar interchangeability of form and meaning can be found in verb expressions such as *ʼəgayəs ʻalko* - "I was going " (past progressive) and *gəsko* - "I went", though these are of much lower distribution.

### (b) The relative concept of time-relations.

The distinction past/non-past should not be taken in absolute terms of time-relations, since the 'zero-point' of time is relative either to the auxiliary verb of the compound or to any other verb which frames the context. Furthermore, shifting of tenses does not occur in Tigre. Consequently, a situation may exist in which a morphological category serves to express a 'temporal parenthesis', such as in the following example:

> *waʼəllan kəlʼe gadabo ḥəd ʼabdaya. walamot ʼət ḥabāb təbazzəḥ daʼam ʻad takles sab ʼagəṣṣatu təbattaka mənnu.* - "And these two parties destroyed one another. And the death [toll] among the Ḥabāb was high (i.e.: imperfect form). But ʻAd-Takles lost their leaders."
>
> (PL1, 42:24)

### (c) The two morphological categories in subordination.

In the case of subordinate clauses a distinction between perfect and imperfect may occur only in so far as the syntactic environment enables a choice to be made between the two. Subordinating conjunctions usually determine whether the perfect or imperfect verb-forms

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[1] Cf.: § 6.10.

will be used and also the time-element of the subordinate verb. Certain conjunctions can form complexes with both the perfect and the imperfect and even where there is no difference in meaning or function between the two complexes there is still a difference in distribution.

Examples:

ʼəndo - "when, after", usually combines with the perfect, as in:

male ʼət beččeʼ ʼəndo dangarko[1] maṣʼako. -

"Yesterday I came home late (lit.: 'having been late')."

karan ʼəndo maṣʼat lawaraqačče ʼəgəl tətkabbat tu. -

"When she comes to Karan she will receive my latter."

ʼəndo + imperfect is not often met with, as in:

ʼəgəl bet maryam ləblo kaʼəndo ḫalluba ʼəgəl qaš hayubo. -

"They say: '[It is] for the church' (lit.: 'the house of Mary'), and having milked them (lit.: 'her', i.e.: 'the cows') they give [the milk] to the priest."

(PL1, 204:19)

mən precedes the verb of the protasis in the principal clause of a conditional statement when the verb is in the imperfect, e.g.:

soldi bəzuḫ mən halle˜ye ʼət ʼənze bəzuḫ ʼawkād ʼəṣannəḫ. -

"If I have more money I shall stay here longer."

bet ʼabrəhe ḫatḫatte dol ʼəkəl ʼāwlat mən badde ḫalib

ʼəgəl təste ʼəb dəggeha təsabbək ʿalat. -

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[1] tədangara - "to be late". Cf. § 5.3.5.1, end of section (note (1)).

"Sometimes the Bet-ʼAbrəhe used to go to the lowlands to drink milk if they lost the corn of the highlands."

(Tribù, 32:16)

Combined with the perfect, mən means "since", e.g.:

daʼam yasus qadam ʼella mən ʼikabra manfas qəddus ʿādu həyub tu ʼiʿala. -

"But since Jesus was not glorified up to that time (lit.: 'before that'), the Holy Ghost was not yet given."

(NT, John, 7:39)

Some conjunctions are combined only with the imperfect, e.g. wakəd - "when", while others are combined only with the perfect, e.g.: kəm - "when, after" (but not in the capacity of a conjunction which introduces a content-clause), e.g.:

mansaʿ qalāqəl wakəd təsabbək ʼət kara šəʿəb wamaḥadar yagin waʿayg taḥaddər ʿalat. -

"When the Mansaʿ moved to the lowlands they used to live in places such as Šəʿəb, M.Y. and ʿAyg."

(Tribù, 36:26)

ʼət beččе kəm maṣʼako woroma ʼiṣanḥenni. -

"When I came home nobody was there (lit.: 'Not even one waited for me')."

šəqəlka kəm kallaska ʼəgəl ʼərʼekka saʿat ḥames ʼətrākabakka. -

"When you finish your work I shall meet you at five o'clock in order to see (i.e.: consult) you."

When the choice between the perfect and imperfect is not determined by the conjunction, a distinction of past/non-past is possible and the verb of the subordinating or principal clause is taken as the relative 'zero-point' of time, e.g.:

la'ənās nosu təgba' ma 'əssitu wakādmāyu wa'afrusu
'agid 'aray takallit kəm gabbə' fahama. -
"The man understood that soon he or his wife, and his servant and his horses, would become the prey of the wolves..
('Ag'azot, 88:14)

waləbbāsu šaṭṭa wala'əla wadde 'i'āmara. -
"And he tore off his clothes and he did not know what to do (lit.: 'He did not know that which he would do')."
(Racconti, 16:11)

## The perfect and imperfect in relative clauses.

Verb-forms of the two morphological categories in relative clauses usually occur with their ordinary meanings - accounting for the distinction past/non-past. Here, the 'zero-point' is in a relationship to the time of happening of the relative verb as regards the antecedent; if the happening took place prior to the 'zero-point', as regards the antecedent, the perfect is used, while the imperfect is used if the time of the happening is non-past, as in the clauses:

'ətta ḥalfat ǧəm'at. - "Last Friday" (lit.: In Friday which passed);
'ətta ḥalfa 'awkād. - "Last time".

Examples of sentences:

waʾət ʾakān laʿəç̌ç̌at labadir raʾaya baṣḥa. -

"And he arrived at the place which he previously saw."

(PL1, 35:23)

kahəta laḥākaratta həyāyət mən ʾitabattək ʾəndo ḥardaw ball$^{ə}$ʿəwa. -

"And if the animal that she has wounded has not died they eat her after having slaughtered her."

(Ibid., 29:4)

ʾət ʾəlla ʾəgəl təbqal laʾambatat qəṭqəṭat nəqala bello. -

"He said to him: 'Uproot the thornbush which began sprouting in here'."

(ʾAgʾazot, 59:6)

kanoski ḥaradkyo leṭa bəliʿ. -

"Eat only what you have yourself slaughtered."

(PL1, 29:22)

ḥaqo ḥalibkum sata ç̌ənç̌āy larəʾekumo qətolo bellom. -

"Since they (i.e.: 'the flies') drank your milk, kill every fly [you have] seen', he said to them."

(Tigre Texts, 9:23)

ʾət (...) baʿal ṣaləʿ (...) ʾəgəl ləšbobo ʾət ləmaṣṣuʾ laṣaləʿ laḥəmum ʾəgəl ʾilərkas waʾəgəl ʾiləʾ$^{ə}$ke qaraf ṣaḥat lataḥābara ʾəttu māy ʾənday nadgo ʾəttu ʾət laḥəmum ʾəgəl ləʾ$^{ə}$te ʾiṭalluko.

"When they come to visit (...) a wounded man (...), in order that the wound of the sick man will not be infected and worsen, they do not release him to go home unless they spray it with water [which has been] mixed with the peel of the ṣaḥat tree."

(FM, 133:23)

The imperfect is evident as non-past in adjectival clauses in which the emphasis is laid on the quality or state of the noun described. Examples:

waddəgənni ’ət ’anəs na’āyəš wa’ət ’awāləd ’əb la’itət’ammar gabay ḥaddər -

"Waddəgənni (i.e.: name of a demon) makes his abode in young women and in girls in an unknown way."

(PL1, 255:9)

lalatlawəq təlhəyāhom ’əb məṣ’at kəl’ot gašša hamgam tarfa. -

"Their joyful play (lit.: 'Their play which is rejoicing') was interrupted suddenly by the coming of two strangers."

(’Ag’azot, 98:6)

’əgəl yosef la’i’ammər ḥaddis nəgus ’ət məsər nagsa. -

"A new king who had not known Joseph arose over Egypt."

(Racconti, 21:5)

waḥante ʿastar mən lahallȧ kəl gabil rabbi lafarruh sab ’ayhud ’ət yarusalem nabro ʿalaw. -

"And in Jerusalem were living God-fearing Jews from every nation which is under the sky."

(Storia, 168:19)

## § 6.7 The perfect in the expression of the preterite.

As a main verb in the utterance the perfect is used to express existence or action which is regarded as completed in the past (the preterite).

Examples:

nāy yordanos nəgus ḥusen wanāy fələsṭen mārḥāy yasər ’arafat male mset ’et ʿaman lahalla bet ḥukumat ’əndo ṭrākabaw ’ət fənge kəllom lahalla ’akay ma’arəḥ[1] ’əgəl lartu’ təgāmaw. -

"King Husein of Jordan and Y.A. the Palestinian leader resolved to fix up (lit.: 'straighten') the bad condition[s] which exist among them, after having met in the government house which is in ʿAman."

’aze lakəl’ot ’ənās kəl mennom ’ət ’adgu ṣaʿana wagabayom ’ambataw. -

"Now each of the two men mounted his [own] donkey and they started on their way."

’aze mambāna gesa. warātna ’əndo ḥadagna nəʿəraf bello. -

"'Now our master has gone away. Let us leave our work and rest.' he said to him."

(’Ag’azot, 63:20)

da’am lawaldu yəbba ’ət ʿastar wa’ət gaṣka ḥarām wadeko gadəm ḥaqo ’əlla walka ’əgəl ’ətbahal ’ilastəhəlanni bello. -

"But his son said to him: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in front of you, so after this I am unworthy of being called your son'."

(NT, Luke: 15:21)

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[1] Standard pronunciation: [ma’raḥ] or [maqrəḥ].

### § 6.7.1 The perfective use of the perfect.

No formal expression in the above examples (§ 6.7) exists to designate any time-relation other than that of the past (preterite). The specific meaning of the perfect is in excluding the present moment, when the present moment is to be understood as any period of time, short or long or 'eternal' that includes the present moment. As seen in the last two examples the context can bring the past aspect of the time content of the preterite into contact with the present in the sense that the action is relevant to something observable at present. Such time-relation is usually unmarked and must be deduced from 'parole'.[1]

The language sometimes makes use of the preterite with a resultative value whose association is perfective, i.e. where the same phenomenon can be regarded as action and the resultant condition.[2] Examples:

walka mota. -

"Your son is dead (has died)."

(PL1, 25:14)

ḥəna ʼəb dəmmu badena. mi nide ? -

"We are destroyed by the cat; what shall we do?"

(Ibid., 6:10)

naʻa gadəm ʼaze yabsa kašankenni. -

"Come now, it is dry now and it chokes me."

(Ibid., 9:1)

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[1] See, however, §§ 6.14-6.15.3.

[2] This accounts for the high incidence of verbs with the preformative t- and 'stative' verbs in this type of utterance.

waʼət lamarāt dargagawo wagadəm ʻārafna mənnu ʼət ləblo ʼət ʻaddom ʼaqbalaw. -

"And they made him roll down into the pond. And saying: 'Well then, we have rested from him', they returned to their village."

(PL1, 22:5)

waworot ʼənās mən lamattalhəyat lakarāy$^{i}$ ḥabāb kəm raʼa ʼəgəl fəkāk zammatna karāy$^{i}$ maṣʼat bello. -

"And when a man of the players saw the army of the Ḥabāb he said to Fekāk: 'We are raided! An army has come!'."

(Ibid., 41:9)

ʼəgəl mi qāl ʼawaǧǧabot laʼalabu ḥəṣān ʼagədda ḥareka bello. tgegeka bello lanāgedāy. laḥəṣān bəzuḥ qāl ʼawaǧǧabot ʻala ʼəlu. -

"He said to him: 'Why have you rather chosen the boy who has not a letter of recommendation?'. The trader said to him: 'You are mistaken. The boy had many letters of recommendation'."

(ʼAgʼazot, 82:6)

hətu h$^{y}$e ʼafo ʻaraqki malgamat. ḥawki ʼafo ʼalbasotki saʼanaw bella. həta h$^{y}$e wannayuni kaʻaraqko ʻellum tello. -

"He, however, said to her: 'How [Is it that] you are shabbily clothed Malgamat?[1] How [Is it that] your brothers were not able to dress you?' She, however, said to him:

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[1] Name of a woman.

'They rejected me so I /have been reduced to/ wear ragged clothes, ʿEllum[1]'."

(Tribù, 40:14)

ka’əgəl mi ’əttelli ta’assarki belawa. -

"They said to her: 'And why are you bound (i.e. fettered) in here?'."

(Lt Leg , 3:4)

## § 6.7.2 The non-temporal use of the perfect.

To complete the picture of the uses of the perfect its non-temporal use should be mentioned here. This use which has to do with the 'unreality' of the nexus is to be found: (a) in the expression of unreality in the apodosis of conditional clauses (wa + perfect), as in:

bəzuḫ soldi mən halleye[2] makinat wazzābeko. -

"If I had more money I would buy a car";

(b) as a special form of modal expression (resembling the 'conditionnel' in French), as in:

’əgəl mi wakal’akwa? -

"Why should I have refused her /to your son for marriage - if she were not already engaged/."

(PL1, 113:4)

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[1] ʿellum is his səm-səqrat, i.e.: "The second name by which the mother and the other women call the child" (LH, 181). For a full explanation of the term, see PL2, p.190. In this particular case the name səqrat comes from a war-cry meaning 'a marksman'.

[2] Assimilated from: halle ’əlye.

### § 6.8 The imperfect in the expression of the non-past.

The imperfect serves essentially to express:

(a) A state of existing or an action whose period of time includes the present moment in so far as it excludes the past.

Examples:

ʼət lətbaggaso ḥarmāz ʼəgəl ḥašil bello ʼasək ʼaya təgayəs ḥašil? waḥašil məsəlka ʼəgayəs bello. -

"When they set out the elephant said to the fox: 'To which place are you going, fox?'. And the fox said to him: 'I am going with you.'"

(PL1, 14:6)

daʼam latalač ʼazedi sanni naʼamrakka ʼəb nosnosom belaw. -

"But the shepherds said among themselves: 'Indeed, now we know you well'."

(ʼAgʼazot, 80:17)

kaʼafo bannu ḥadgo bela kaməslu tarfa, -

"'How do they leave him by himself?' he said, and stayed with him."

(Tribù, 32:22)

nāy sidamo raʼas dəgge ʼawasa tətbahal. -

"The capital of Sidamo is called ʼAwasa."

ʼəlli kabasa daggumo. -

"The people of Kabasa tell this [proverb]."

(PL1, 14:3)

’ət bet məhro kəl dol ’asaabuḥ saʿassamān[1] ’əgayəs. -

"I go to school every day (lit.: 'all time') at eight o'clock in the morning."

’ana ’əb dəggalabye ’əkattəb da’am labazzəḥ gabil ’əb ’ədamānom tu lakatbo. -

"I write with the left hand but the majority of the people write with their right hand."

ṣaḥāy ’əmməfgār[2] faggər wa’əmmewdāq[3] waddəq. -

"The sun rises in the east and sets in the west."

### § 6.8.1 (b) Futurity.

Examples:

’əlli qalil tu ’ənwaddyo ’əlki. -

"This is easy. We shall do it for you."

(PL1, 23:13)

gadəm ḥaqo ’aze ’i’ənkaddəm wa’inaballəʿ ’əndo belaw mən ladəgge naksaw ka’ət dabər ḥadraw. -

"Saying: 'But from now on (lit. 'after now') we shall not serve and shall not prepare (lit.: 'make eat'),' they departed from the village and made their abode on a mountain."

(’Ag’azot, 62:18)

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[1] Assimilated from saʿat samān.

[2] Assimilated from ’əb məfgār.

[3] Assimilated from ’əb məwdāq.

wah̆ətu ḥago kəlʾe ma salas ʿāmat ʾaqabbəl ləbəl. -

"And he says: 'I shall return after two or three years'."

(PL1, 255:20)

ḥago gale zaban bəzuḥ māl ʾənrakkəb ʾəttu ʾəndo belaw kəlʾot kātrāy wadqaw ʾəttu waqatlawo. -

"After some time two robbers, saying: 'We shall find there a lot of money', ambushed him (lit. 'fell upon him') and killed him."

(ʾAgʾazot, 77:8)

ʾəttu lanaqmanni ʾaddām dol ʾiʾəsamməʿ waʾiʾərʾe ləbye ʿarrəf waʾət ʾəlli kəl dol mən lalaǧarbanni qaṣəb ʾəṭṭallaq bela. -

"He said [to himself]: 'There, when I shall not hear nor see (lit.: 'and not see') people who call me, my heart will rest, and there I shall be freed from the anger which importunes me all the time'."

(Ibid., 69:17)

musa ʾəlli kəm samʿa mamba ʾana daʾam ʾiʾəqaddər bela gis ʾana ʾəsaddəkka bello. -

"When Moses heard this he said: 'But I am not capable [of doing it], O Master.' 'Go, I shall help you' he (i.e. God) said to him."

§ 6.8.2 (c) The descriptive present situated in the past.

In this use of the independent imperfect the 'zero-point' of time is relative to the verb which frames the context (see § 6.6, (b)).

Here the present tense is not shifted (and consequently retains its meaning as stated in § 6.8, (a))- a phenomenon which gives an emotional colouring typical of direct speech. This use of the imperfect reminds one of the 'historic' or 'dramatic' present in other languages, i.e. the use of the present in a past context to achieve a more vivid or dramatic result.

Examples:

> qom ʾarwām ʾəb nəwāyu ʾət kəl ʾakān nabber ʿala. waʾarwām laʿawalli lamənnu ʾaḥāhom lasattu bəzuḥ qori tu ḥad rim ṣafər gabbəʾ. wakəl rom laʾaḥāhu ʾət lasatte laʾəgru ḥatte, ʾət laʿela walaḥatte ʾət lasamuy ʾəndo karre ǧaqqəf . (...). waʿəč̣ay ʾəgəl megdəhu mən ʾarre ʾəgəl laʿaqba ʾəb ʿaqrudu naqəllo kaʾət lamegda lasawərro. waʾət ḥatte ʾakān ʾənās worot ʾəb ʾəssitu mən laʾaddām laʾaze lahalla nabbər ʿala. waḥar ʾəgəl laʾənās laʾəssitu qabbatto katello baʿal mi ʾənta ʾaḥa romma ʾitəzammət?
>
> "Groups of the people of the Rom (i.e.: legendary giants), with their flocks, were living [once upon a time] everywhere. And the wells from which the Rom used to water their flocks were very deep, perhaps about the length of a packing-rope. And when each one of the Rom was watering his flock he used to draw [water] placing one of his feet in the well and the other in the watering trough. (...). And when he was collecting wood for his fire he used to pull up the ʿAqba tree with its roots and push it into the fire. And, in a certain place, there lived a man with his wife, from the [race of] people existing now. And then the wife of

the man reviled him saying (lit.: 'reviled him and said to him'): 'What [power] do you have? (lit.: 'The owner of what are you?'); or [is it that] you are not to raid the cattle of the Rom? (i.e.: 'Are you a weakling that you cannot raid the cattle of the Rom?')'."

(PL1, 83:5-18)

*badir laqaššom qadām qaš ḥayl gargis wad qaš blenāy ʾət halla ṭəmqat ʿalat. ʾəb wareḥ gabrəʾel mən baʿāl ləddat ḥad kəlʾe sāmən ʾəndo dangaraw ʾəb laməʿəl laqaš tābot maryam č̣ewan ʾət raʾasu karre wakullu lasab ʾasaru gayəs. waʾəzgəʾo maḥaranna krəstos ʾət ləblo walaqaš ʾət marrəḥom salas dol bet maryam dawro. (...). waʾəlla ʾət kəl ʿāmat waddwa waʾəb dəgmān ləṭṭammaqo waṭəmqat yahannəs ta ləblo. daʾam ḥar latābot badet walaʾaqəššatma ḥawanaw walasərʿat ṭəmqat tarfat. daʾam ḥabre labet maryam ʾasək ʾaze halla.* -

"Formerly, when their first priest Ḥayle Georgis, the son of the priest Blenāy, was alive, there was baptism. In the month of Gabriel about two weeks after the feast of Christmas (lit.: 'having waited two weeks'), on that day the priest used to carry the Tābot of Mary of Zion on his head (or: 'on him') and all the people were following him. And while the priest was leading them they were marching around the church (lit.: 'the house of Mary') three times, saying: 'God, have mercy on us, Christ!'. (...). And this they used to do every year and were baptized once again (i.e.: every year); and they said: 'It is the baptism of John'. But later on, the Tābot was lost and the priests became weak [in power] and the rite of baptism ceased. But the sign [of testimony] of the house of Mary exists until today."

(Ibid., 134:22, 135:20)

*waladol nəsər ʼəb ʼaṣfāru rafʻayu wawəlādu ʼəgəl labləʻo raʼasu laʻal ʼət betu barra bu. labet lanəsər ʼət weggəl balqat ʼəb qəluʻ tətrəʼe daʼam lagərəz ʼəgəl ladḥən laʻarrəg ʼətta ʼemān labu man tu. worot mandalāy ʼəgəl ləwaṭṭən rada daʼam ʼət sar gabay labalqat kəm ʻarga farhat wadqat ʼəttu katəkarra.* -

"And at that time the eagle lifted him (i.e.: the child) with his talons and flew with him up high to his nest to feed [him to] his young ones. The nest of the eagle was seen clearly on a high rock. But who was the one who had steadfastness who would climb there to save the child? One young man had the courage to try, but having climbed half of the way on the rock he was seized with fear (lit.: 'fear fell upon him'), so he got down."

(ʼAgʼazot, 81:1-6)

## § 6.9 Compound Tenses: the imperfect in construction with auxiliaries.

As stated above (see.: § 6.6 (a)), the simple tenses are characterized by the absence of any formal expression of the meanings marked by the compound tenses, but can convey a meaning which is specific to a given compound tense. This is true for both the imperfect + *halla* and imperfect + *ʻala* compounds in relation to imperfect and perfect time-relations respectively.

### § 6.9.1 The formation of the compound tenses.

The temporal distinction of past/non-past which exists in the contrast perfect/imperfect is expressed in the compound by means of the auxiliary verb while the 'auxilié' gives the compounds its semantic meaning. The verb halla - though morphologically perfect[1] - has the meaning of non-past, while ʽala occurs only in the perfect with the meaning of past tense. Both the 'auxilié' and the auxiliary of the compound are conjugated in full.

Examples:

> waʼab laḥəṣān ʼəgəl bet ʼabhu wadəla molādu tu ʽaddəm waʼəgəl walye hadde halleko məsəlna təfarraro. - "And the father of the boy invites the family of the father (i.e.: his family) and whoever is his relative and says to them: 'I am marrying my son; come out with us'."
>
> (PL1, 122:15)

> nəʼiš ʼaqḥəmat qərṭuṭat šərnāy rakbat. ʼəb kəlla ḥilata laqərṭuṭat ʼət dərbobat ʼəgəl tabṣəḥ təherər ʽalat. - "A small ant found a grain of wheat. She was hurrying with all her power to bring the grain to the ant hill."
>
> (ʼAgʼazot, 73:2).

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[1] For halla in the imperfect, see: Verb of existence, § 4.2 et seq.

waḥar lawəlāda sab dārkəm gab’aw ‘ad šuma təsammaw.
wa’asək ’aze ’əb səm la’abotom ‘ad šuma lətbahalo hallaw. -
"And later on, when her children became established (lit.: 'became people of property') they were named ‘Ad Šuma. And until today they are being called by the name of their great grandmother."

(PL1, 283:23)

§ 6.9.2 The auxiliary verb can be in construction with more than one 'auxilié'.

Examples:

wa’əbbəlla margam latəwləd ’addām ’asək yom walləd waqabbər halla. -
"And because (lit.: 'by') this curse [every] generation of man begets and buries until today."

(PL1, 83:1)

ḥəna kəl dol ’əb warāt nətqa‘ar ’ənǧarrəb wanahalləkhallena. -
"We are oppressed; we suffer and exert ourselves by work all the time."

(’Ag’azot, 62:16)

waḥatḥatte ’əwān haye ’əb zāhər ’əb qəlu‘ ’əgəl lasab taḥat ’əb nəwāyom lāli rə’enhom wa’aḥāhom ‘āllo waḥalbo ‘alaw. wahaye ’abyātom wa’əsātom rə’ena wa’ət ’akān la’akbərom kərəntom sam‘ana waḥallu wadagmo ‘alaw ləblo. -
"And sometimes, however, they say: 'We saw the people of below, openly, at night and they were calling their cows in and milking them. And we also saw their

houses and their fire and we heard their voice[s] at the place of their grave[s] and they were singing and telling tales."

(PL1, 251:24)

walatalač ’aqbalaw wasabbat lasam‘awo wara’awo kəllu rabbi šakkuro waḥammudo ‘alaw. -

"And the shepherds returned, and were praising and thanking God on account of all that they had heard and had seen."

(Racconti, 39:9)

§ 6.9.3 The 'auxilié' can be in construction with two subordinating verbs of which one is a verb of time duration,[1] itself subordinate to the auxiliary.

Example:

da’am həta ’ət ‘ad təw‘əl wa’ət kaleb la’aḥāha təsakkəb təw‘əl ‘alat. -

"But she used to stay at home and pass the day sleeping at the enclosure of the cattle."

(PL1, 27:22)

§ 6.9.4 The negative particle immediately precedes the 'auxilié'.

Examples:

gərrum tətrə’e ’ihalleka. -

"You are not looking well."

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[1] Cf. § 6.13

ʼət saləf dagyāt ʼobe ʼegel bet ʼabrəhe gəbər həbini bella. wabet ʼabrəhe ṭəlbat taʼammər ʼiʻalat qadam laʼəwān kaʼabet ʼəlu. -

"At first D.ʼO. said to [the people of] Bet ʼAbrəhe: 'Give me tribute'. And Bet ʼAbrəhe did not know of tribute before that time and refused him."

(PL1, 193:20)

§ 6.9.5 When the compound is the verb of a relative clause, the relative pronoun immediately precedes the auxiliary verb.

Examples:

daʼam ʼəlli ʻad ʼəllima saka mənnu. (...). daʼam mən sab laʻad worot ʼənās ʼəlu taharharayu ʼənta ʼənās mi halla goka laʼəbbu tasakkenna lahalleka ʼəndo bela. -

"But even [the people of] this village ran away from him. (...). But one man from the people of the village shouted at him, saying: 'You, man, what is there with you (i.e.: what do you have) with which you cause us to run away'."

(PL1, 72:16, 18)

ʼəbbəlli mesmesa tu karāy ʼasək ʼaze ʼəgəl laʼaḥa kəl dol ʼaṣərrəʻəta wafanādiha təgamḥəč̣ lahāllet ləblo. -

"And it is for this reason that, again and again, until now, the hyaena lacerates the udders and the haunches of the cows, it is said."

(PL1, 28:20)

walabadir rabāʿ dib ʾəntu ʾendo ʿaṭāl qatla balləʿo laʿala səga faqda. -

"And he remembered the meat that, having killed the goats, he used to eat, formerly, when he was young."

(PL1, 70:17)

kaʾət qayeḥ. kor kəm baṣḥa tābot ṣawər laʿala dyākon gabra ḥəywat lalətbahal mota waʾətta təqabbara. -

"And when they arrived at Qayəḥ-Kor a deacon called G.Ḥ. who was carrying the Tābot died and was buried there."

(Lt Leg , 10:32)

§ 6.9.6 Particles such as prepositional complements and pronominal adverbs of place immediately precede the auxiliary.

Examples:

(...) waʾabunawas nabarrit sanni lattawde ʾelna halla ləbəl. --

"(...) And they said: ʿAbunawas, now, takes care of preparing plenty of food for us."

(PL1, 34:2)

ʾaze hədāy nāy kantebāy ṣallim ʿayər ʾətna halla. -

"The nuptial cortege of K.Ṣ is now coming to us."

(PL1, 44:10)

ḥənāma ʾeb ləbna ʾəngəhe ʾəttu hallena ʾəb ləbki gahay. -

"We lament him in our heart [all the time]; lament in your heart." (i.e.: They ask the woman mourner to stop her lamentation.)

(Ibid., 245:11)

*walaḥəṣān ʼəssit bəʻdat hada kaʻad banna ʼātaya waʻəgəl laʼəmmu ʼət ʼakāna nabrāha naddəʼ ʼəla ʻala.* - "And the son married another woman and brought her into a home for herself; and he was sending his mother her (i.e. his mother's) food at her place."

(Tigre Texts, 3:28)

*ʼəb zaban qəddum ʼəttəlli mədər ʼəlli ləgbaʼ ma ʼət kabasa waḥabāb lamassəl ʼarwām laləbulom bəzuḥ rayāyəm wadəqqubām ʼaddām nabro ʼəttu ʻalaw.* - "In ancient times, in this country or in what seems [to be] Kabasa and Ḥabāb, there were living very tall and powerful people called ʼArwām."

(Tribù, 3:18)

§ 6.9.7 The pronominal suffix is attached to the 'auxilié', while a disjunctive pronominal object, preceding the 'auxilié', may exist as a second object.[1]

Example:

*waʼaze ʼəla naḥazzeka hallena.* - "And now we ask her from you."

(PL1, 113:15)

§ 6.9.8 A subordinating conjunction may be found preceding either one of the verbs of the compound.

Examples:

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[1] The Tigre verb can have only one pronominal suffix. Cf. § 4.1.6

wagabil ’arwām ’əgəl rabbi belawo gadəm ḥaqo tasartanna halleka ’əb madḥar ’abdenna. -

"And the people of the Rom said to God: 'Now, since you destroy us, let us perish by your blessing."

(PL1, 87:2)

wa’əbbəlla gabay ’asək ’aze lətnābaro kəm hallaw lətbahal. -

"And it is said that in this way they live together until now."

(Tribù, 5:29)

’ət nyu york nāȳ ’a‘bər ḥəfar lalaḥafro sab māl . ’əgəl lətwassakkom ləssa’alo sabbat hallaw šəqlom ’abaṭṭalaw. -

"The people who dig graves (lit.: 'who dig holes of tombs') in New York have gone on strike (lit.: 'caused their work to be stopped') because they are asking for a pay increase (lit.: 'They are asking for money to be added to them')."

hətu haye ’əlla mar‘āt kəm tətherarakki ‘alat ’addām samməʿ ‘ala bella. -

"And he, however, said to her: 'Were there people hearing /that/ this bride /was/ reviling you?'"

(Tigre Texts, 3:18)

ḥar ’alləṣ mən mədər kukat raf‘at kaṭəgayəs ba ’əndo ‘alat. ’ət ra’as la’ənās karetta watənakkaša (...). wahətu mən rabbi ’əndo sakke ‘ala ’əb kə’ənna mota. -

"After that a hawk picked up a viper from the ground and, when flying with it, dropped it from above the man, and he was bitten (...). And, while (lit.: while he was) running away from God, he died in this way."

(Tigre Texts, 8:9)

Temporal conjunctions are usually found preceding the 'auxilié' of imperfect + ʿala.

Examples:

wala'əssit kəl dol 'əglu təsʿəm ʿalat da'am la'ənās 'iqan'a wa'əndo ləttalhaw ʿalaw mən ḥəd taʿādaw. - "And the woman was kissing him all the time, but the [other] man did not become jealous, and having played [the game] they left each other and returned home (lit.: 'returned from each other')."

(PL1, 92:24)

wa'əndo batko ʿalaw ḥad wəqqāʿ kəm 'atmamaw waqqəʿəwo. - "And when mowing, as soon as they complete about a sheaf they thresh it (i.e. each sheaf, with a threshing-stick)." (lit.: "And having completed about a sheaf when [they were] mowing, they thresh it".)

(Ibid., 97:3)

wala'ənās 'əb lawa'āt 'ət 'əssitu 'aqbala wa'aḥa rom zamatko bella. wa'əndo nabro ʿalaw la'əssit 'əgəl labə'sa təllo 'azema fadāb mən təgabbə' 'aḥa rom zəmat. -

"And the man returned with the /few/ cows to his wife and said to her: 'I have raided the cattle of the Rom'. And while they were living /together/ the wife said to her husband: 'Now, if you are indeed brave, raid /again/ the cattle of the Rom.'"

(PL1, , 84:20)

## §6.9.9 The meaning of the compounds: temporal and aspectual relations

An adequate description of the marked meanings of the two compounds involves two levels of analysis, firstly: the compounds in relation to the simple tenses and, secondly: the compounds in relation to one another.

(1) The two compounds superimpose upon the basic meaning - as expressed by the simple tenses - an aspectual feature which can be seen in terms of the duration, or aspect of duration, of the action or state involved. 'Duration' is taken here as indicating those features statable in terms other than the mere report of activity (as a single dot on the axis of time), i.e.: progressive (continuous or broken), habitual, iterative, simultaneous with a single action or with a progressive one, etc.

(2) The relevant distinction between the two compounds is intrinsically temporal and thus is similar to the one which contrasts the equivalent unmarked categories (i.e.: simple tenses). This morphological - and thus functional - symmetry is clearly seen through the use of imperfect + halla in the expression of the present non-future.

The following table may suggest a summary of the temporal and aspectual relations under discussion:

| Past | Non-past |
|---|---|
| perfect - 'preterite' (narrative) | imperfect - 'present-future' |
| imperfect + ʻala - 'praesens in praeterito' (descriptive) | imperfect + halla - 'present non-future' |

(The use of these terms will be made clear as they are encountered in the appropriate sections.)

More explicit expression of the meanings involved depends to a large extent on the existence of adverbials, as is shown later in the appropriate sections. Indeed, often it is only the presence of the adverbial that determines the choice between the simple and the compound tenses.[1]

Some examples follow to show the nature of the temporal relations between the two compounds:

waʼəlli ʼəb zaban badir kəl ʼəwān waddwo ʻalaw.
waʼazema galgale mənnu waddu hallaw. -
"And they used always to do this in the old time. And even now they do /some7 of it."

(PL1, 204:20)

ḥatte gale ʼamʻəlāt wad ʼarbaʻ ʻāmat lagabbəʼ nəʼuš
wad waldu ʼəb qararreç̌ ʻəç̌āy ʼət lakadbet ləttalhe
ʻala. ʼət ʼəlla mi təwadde halleka saʼalayu ʼabuhu.
ʼana ʻabi kəm gaʼako ʼabuye waʼəmye laballuʻ ʼəttu
nəʼuš šaḥan ʻəç̌āy ʼəwadde halleko balsa lagərəz. -
"On one of those days his small grandson who was four

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[1] See examples in § 6.10 et seq.

years old was playing on the floor with pieces of wood. His father asked him: 'What are you doing with these [pieces]?'. The child replied: 'I am making a small plate of wood off which my father and mother will eat when I grow up'."

('Ag'azot, 83:11)

*kə'ənna gadəm bet 'əšḥaqan ḥar 'əb səma 'ət latəsamma mədər zāwəl təgasset watəsabbək 'əttu watəsāgəm ʿalat wahallet.* -
"Now, in this way Bet 'Ešḥaqan settled in the country of Zāwəl which was named, later on, after them (lit.: 'with their name'), and they used both to go there (to the lowlands) and to move into the highlands and they are [still going down and up]."

(Tribù, 77: 14)

## § 6.10 *Imperfect + halla in the expression of present progressive.*

(a) This compound is essentially used to express an activity in progress at the time of speaking, or an actual state. This use resembles in meaning the English 'present continuous' or 'progressive'. Examples:

*(...) kami wadenaka 'afo kə'ənna wadekanna ləbluka hallaw ballo.* -
"(...) And say to him: 'They say unto you: "What have we done to you? Why have you treated (lit.: 'have you done') us so?"'."

(PL1, 34:8)

*(...) ḥənama nəskab manabitnama sakbo hallaw.* -
"Let us lie down too; our masters are (lit.: are also) lying down."

(Ibid., 88:23)

*ʾaddām ʾəb lagaʾa ləgbaʾ ʿədər mən ḥamməm waḥəmām gale ʾamʿelāt mən gabbəʾ mayət halla ma garobu qattəllo halla ləblo.* -
"If a person becomes ill, with whatever disease, and the illness lasts several days, they say: 'He is dying', or 'His body is killing him'."

(Ibid., 206:17)

*ʾəb lasālsāyt məʿəl latalāy ʾəndo ʾatwāyana lakaləb ʾəngerāhu kaʾafo kəm waddya ʾəgəl ʾərʾe ʾəgayəs halleko bela.* -
"On the third day the shepherd deliberated, saying: 'I am going to see what the dog does with his bread'."

(ʾAgʾazot, 71:12)

*ḥaqo ʾəlla lakəlʾot kātrāy ʾət ṣirih ʾət kəmmārat gəssuyām ʾət ʾəntom gābāt mən laʿal bet ʾət laʿasso kəm raʾaw laworo ʾəgəl lamallahayu ʾənde gənaḥ samʿāt qəddus maynhard barro hallaw bello.* -
"After that, when the two robbers were sitting in a wine-tavern in Zurich, as they saw falcons flying above the house the one said to his friend: 'Well then, look: the witnesses of Saint Meinhardt are hovering [above]'."

(Ibid., 77:12)

*ʾəb ʾamān kəʾənna gəmuṣ ʾənta sanni waṣəruy ʾət qadamye* təbaṭṭər halleka ʼarʼe bello lamamhər. -

"The teacher said to him: 'Are you really so poor? I perceive that you are standing in front of me well and healthy'."

(ʼAgʼazot, 83:24)

gadəm ḥaṣena wakəlʼitna ḥəna hədāy nətfarrar hallena belaw wagesaw. -

"They said: 'We are betrothed now and [only] we two are going out to the wedding'."

(Tigre Texts, 3:10)

daʼam laḥawu mən rəḥuq kəm ʼanṣarawo raʼaw baʻal laḥəlm maṣṣəʼ halla (...) təbahāhalaw. -

"But when his brothers caught sight of him [from afar] they bandied words with each other [saying]: 'Look, the dreamer is coming! (...)'."

(Racconti, 15:12)

walakāləʼ mambāye kəllu tu lərʼe kamən laʻal ʼəndo gaʼa lattaqbəlanni halla daʼikon mambāye ʼigesa. sabbat ʼəlli warāčče ʼəwadde halleko ʼət ləbəl balsa ʼəttu. -

"And the other one answered him, saying: 'My master sees everything and he is observing me, being above; my master has not gone away. Because of this I am doing my work.'"

(ʼAgʼazot, 63:21)

ladol yasus fagra waman taḥazzu hallekum bellom. -

"Then Jesus went out and said to them: 'Whom are you seeking?'"

(Racconti, 50:27)

kalāli ʼət lesakbo hətu qasna kalaʻəntātu fazza wahətan ʼisakkəb lərʼe halla belaya. -

"And when they lay down at night he fell asleep and his eyes were open, and they said: 'He does not sleep, he sees'."

(Lt Leg , 6:19)

ladol ʼət ləbbu ʼəndo ʼaqbala ʼəngera latarrəf mənnom kādmat ʼabuye ʼakəl ʼayom tom waʼana ʼət ʼəlli ʼəb ʻəṣṣo ʼəmayət halleko. -

"Then when he came to his senses [he said]: 'How many are they, the servants of my father who [eat sufficiently and can] spare bread? And I am dying here of hunger'."

(NT, Luke, 15:17)

raʼaše ḥammanni halla. -

"I have a headache."

ʻad hasəri galehom mən ʼənze ḥədud nabbər halla wagalehom mən kenu. -

"Some [of the people] of ʻAd-Hasəri are living on this side of the border and some of them on the other side of it."

(PL1, 286:8)

waʼaze ʼəbbəlli məsməsa latarfu nəssāl sarrəʻ halla ʼasək yom. -

"And now for this reason his descendants regard the tongue as taboo (i.e.: they do not eat it) until today."

(PL1, 198:13)

## § 6.10.1 Imperfect + halla in the expressinn of habitual or iterative aspect.

(b) Other uses of the compound draw attention to the habitual or iterative (recurrent) aspects of the activity or state, when the period of time being indicated includes the present moment. (This use does not necessarily imply that the activity continues throughout the relevant period of time, but merely that it has duration within the period.) The presence of adverbials which indicate extent of time in such expressions can determine the presence of the compound.[1]

Examples:

*waḥar motat wahətu mən laʼamʻəl lamota ʼəndoʼanbata ʼasək hādəl yom kəl wuqat ʼəssičče ʼəm kaləb ləbəl halla walakərəntu kəmsalha təmassəl.* -

"And later she (i.e.: the 'wife' of the bird) died and, beginning on the day of her death, until today he (i.e.: her 'husband') says all the time: 'ʼEssičče ʼEm Kaləb' and his call resembles this." (i.e. The call of the 'husband' bird in the story is said to resemble the utterance which means: 'My wife, ʼEm-Kaləb'.)

(PL1, 77:12)

*waʼəbbəlla gomātu laʼənsa mən ʼaddām kəm motat ʼəb laʻədər gədʼo nabrəhu rakkəb halla ʼasək yom bahalat mən lawaṣama*

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[1] The contrast habitual/actual present has no relevance to the distinction between imperfect and imperfect + halla. When a certain period of time is indicated the compound is usually used, regardless of the semantic contrast 'habitual/actual' present.

ma badana. (...). wa'əb lagəd'o 'asək yom təmayət hallət. - "And until today he finds his nourishment when [some of] the camels die of Gəd'o disease [to the detriment of men] by reason of this advice of his; that is to say, from their slaughtering-place or [from] their corpses. (...) And until today they (lit.: 'she', i.e.: the camels) die of Gəd'o [disease]."

(PL1, 69:12, 20)

da'am 'aze ladəgge məḥəlāb māy mən remayu 'əb ḥud ḥud 'ət bə'dat 'akān nakkəs halla. - "But now, since water is far from the village of Məḥəlāb, it is (i.e.: its people are) changing abode slowly to another place."

(Ibid., 279:3)

la'addetāy kəstān lamaḥabar məsyon 'əb gararrəm 'abyāt 'āmat 'āmat lət'ammar halla. lagərhom 'əb ḥars sanni labaššulo wawarāt bəsər wabə'ədma kə'ənna lamassəl lamdo hallaw. - "The small Christian parish of the Mission [of Galab] is enhanced yearly with beautiful houses. They cultivate their fields well by ploughing and are learning handicrafts and also [some] other similar (lit.: 'which resembles like this') works."

(Tribù, 74:33)

## § 6.11 Imperfect + 'ala as a descriptive past.

This complex is essentially used to express a dynamic description in the past, when attention is drawn to the continuity of the activity (or state) rather than to the fact that it occurred. In such utterances the perfect serves as past narrative. A story needs the simple perfect forms for the succession of events, while the compound describes various aspects of the events. It is thus correct to treat it as a descriptive past which contrasts with the narrative past. The compound is used to express the past progressive when attention is drawn to the extent of the action.

Examples:

> *waḥawu qanʾaw ʾəttu ʾabuhu lata ʾəlli kəllu ʾət ləbbu ʾakkəbbo ʿala.* -
>
> "His brothers became jealous of him. His father, however, kept all this in his heart."
>
> (Racconti, 15:6)

> *waʿəṣṣo ʾət ʾaddām waʿət nəwāy maṣʾat. wanəwāy qaṭaf ʿəč̣ay ʾəndo qanṭašaw laballʾəwo ʿalaw. walaqaṭaf kəm ḥarra lanəwāy kullu ʾət sāḥəl baḥar gəsaw bu waʾəttu ʿambaṭa rakbaw ʾəlu kaʾəlu balləʿ ʿala. walanəwāy ḥalibu kəm ḥəbər laʿambaṭa masla.* -
>
> "And hunger came upon people and upon cattle. And having plucked the leaves of the trees they were feeding the cattle. And when the leaves dried they went with all the cattle to the lowlands and there they found for them locusts and they were eating them. And the colour of the milk of the cattle resembled the colour of the locusts."
>
> (PLl, 193:11)

kaləb ’əb gabay ləsʿe ʿala wakətfat səga ’ət ’afuhu ʿalat ’əlu. ḥaqo gale ’ət maḥāz ’əb mayu baṣḥa. -

"A dog was running on the road and in his mouth he had a piece of meat. After a while he arrived at a river (with water)."

(’Ag’azot, 65:16)

wa’esaw ’ət yaʿaqob ḥuhu təqaṣṣaba ka’əgəl ləqtallo ḥazze ʿala. -

"And Esau was angry with his brother Jacob and sought to kill him."

(Racconti, 13:23)

wala’ənās lahay ’əgəl laç̌əggarāy ’əb māl təzābayu mənnu. waḥar ’akarrazayu ’ət gano wakətābat ma ḥərz gab’a ’əlu. wa’ət səgādu waddyo ʿala. (...) wala’əla zamta ’atte ba ʿala. -

"And that man bought the hair from him with money. And then he sewed it up in a leather case and it became a talisman forhim. And he used to hang it around his neck. (...) And whatever /loot/ he raided he brought home."

(PL1, 73:6, 9)

kaləb wadəmmu kəl’ot galgalāy fatač ʿalaw waməsəl ’ət woro dəgge nabro ʿalaw. ’aze ḥatte məʿəl lāli ’ət woro dəgge ’əsāt mən qabəl ’ət taḥaye ra’aw. -

"A dog and a cat were (two) friends - pals - and were living together in a certain village. Now, at night (lit.: 'one day, at night'), they saw from a distance a fire burning in a village."

walaqaš kəm dab'at 'əttu 'asək 'arbə'a mə'əl kərəntu təssamma' 'alat da'am ḥaqoha mota. -

"And after she had shut the priest in it (i.e.: the house) his voice was heard for up to forty days, but after that he died."

(PL1, 53:19)

da'am bəzuḥ 'ənday kallə' 'əb hərgāte ra'asu 'əbbu 'əbbu ladanno 'ala da'ikon tək 'ibela. -

"But, soon, he was drooping his head owing to sleep, without resisting [it]; he did not raise [his head]."

(Ag'azot, 60:22)

ḥar haye 'əb lakāl'āyt 'āmat mangas daryos ḥəstasp̣əs nəgus fārəs 'əb dəgmān fasəḥ nədqo labet mənnu tahayabayom. (...) ka'aze 'ənday lətkarru' nədqo 'alaw. -

"Later on, however, in the second year of the kingdom of Xerxes the king of Persia, permission for building the house (i.e.: the Temple) was again given to them by him. (...). And now they were building without being kept back."

(Storia, 92:30, 93:2)

waḥar zəlām kəm bazḥat 'əkəl waḥalib haye faššа ḳa'ad farḥa wa'əb goyla wa'əb ṭəqər nabbər 'ala. -

"And later on when rain was plentiful corn and milk were in abundance, and the people rejoiced and were living in comfort (lit.: 'living in song and dance and sufficient nourishment')."

(Tribù, 33:8)

## § 6.11.1 Imperfect + ʿala in variation with the simple perfect.

A particular case of the above use mentioned for this compound (i.e.: as a dynamic descriptive past) is its variation with the simple imperfect; here the compound expresses an activity as if it takes place in the present (cf. § 6.8.2).

Examples:

wakullu lasab ladarbush tāla ʾarʾəstu lāṣa kaʿamāyəm wada. wakəl mənnom ʾəde laʾamir ṣabbəṭ ʿala wahətu sabbəl mansur ləlla warasul bal ləbəllo ʿala. wahaye ləssaʾallom (...). (...) wakəl mənnom balləs (...). wakəl ʾəwān ʾət lanəggāratu ʾakəl laʾasqaraw ləblo mansur ləlla warasul. wabəllāy ḥadis ʾakəl lalabsa kəl mənnom laṣarru makfanka ləgbaʾ ləbulo wahətu ʾamin ləbəl. walaʾamir walamašāyək ʾəgəl lakarāyihom ləbula ʿalaw gadəm kəstān kəlla ʾəgəl nabdəya tu. (...). daʾam raʾas ʾalula (...) ʾəb karāyihu qanṣa məsəl ladarbuš ʾəgəl ləššāfaf . daʾam laʿaqqač ʾəb masʾəl samʿaw ladarbuš kəm, ʾimayət wahaye ʾəglom kəmsal ʿač̣ay ʾəgəl lidayom kəm daqqəb. kaʾəb sabab ʾəlli farruḥ ʿalaw. waraʾas ʾalula ʾət səḥəl kəm təkarra ʾəb konātu moṭəʿat təmaya. -

"And all the people who followed the Dervishes shaved their heads and put on turbans. And each one of them grasped the hand of the Emir, and he (i.e.: the Emir) said to him: 'Make a vow; say: 'Victorious [is] Allah and the Prophet!' And also he asked them: (...). And each of them answered: (...). And all the time, on each occasion when they raised the war-cry against [the noise of] the drum, they said:

'Victorious [Is] Allah and the Prophet!' And whenever anyone of them put on a new garment his companions used to say to him: 'May it become your shroud', and he was saying [in reply]: 'Amen'. And the Emir and the Sheikhs were saying to their army: 'Well then, we are going to destroy all the Christians.' (...). But Ras ʼAlula (...) rose with his army in order to fight (lit.: to fight with) the Dervishes. But the soldiers heard [by means of] an account that the Dervishes did not die and also that they could make them like trees (i.e.: that the Dervishes were immortal and could render their enemy immobile). And because of this they were afraid. And Ras ʼAlula, having descended to the lowlands, spent the night at Moṭəʼat with his troops."

(PL1, 163:12, 16;
164:1, 9, 10)

ʼənās faras ʼə̄ndo təṣaʻana lāli ʼəb dəbaʻ ḥaləf ʻala. mədər ṣəlmut ṭu. laʼənās ʼakəl ʼakəl ʼət dəwāru səma lərʼe ʼiʻala. ʼət səmət lagabay ʻabbāy ʻəč̣ay təbaṭṭər. worot mən laʼaqšuna mən laʻal lagabay mədud tu. hətu ʼəb ratrat naddəʼ ʻala. ʼət raʼasu laqəšən ʼadməʻayu. - "A man mounted on a horse was passing through the forest at night. It was dark. Gradually the man was seeing nothing around him. At the side of the road stood a large tree. One of its branches was stretching above the road. He was driving out [the horse] at a trot. His head struck the branch (lit.: 'The branch struck his head')."

(ʼagʼazot, 72:2)

daʾam latābotna bəzuḥ ṣənʿət wakābrat ta. ʾəbba ʾəndəḥər kaʾəkəl waḥalib ʾənrakkəb waʾət ʾabāyna nətʿawat waʾaray ʾənkāfəl waʾəbbama ʾabāyna ʾənraggəm wanabaṣṣəḥ. sabbat ʾəlli haye dol səbək wasəgəm q̣aš ʾət raʾasu ʾəndo wadaya ʾəgəl ʾitəzammat ḥāysotāt lətʿāraw ʾəla kaʿaqquba wakəwāl gabbuʾ ʾəla ʿalaw. (...). daʾam ʾaze (...). tābotna badet mənəna. -

"But our Tābot was very strong and honourable. By [means of] it we were blessing, finding our corn and milk, overcoming our enemy and dividing the booty. And also we were cursing and getting hold of our enemy by [means of] it. So, because of this, at the time of going down to the lowlands and up to the highlands, the priest having put it on himself, the nobles united around it and guarded it, and were its guard [so] that it would not be robbed. (...). But now (...) we have lost the Tābot."

(Tribù, 70:18, 27, 31)

### § 6.11.2 Imperfect + ʿala as 'praesens in praeterito'.

This compound is also used to express those aspects exemplified above (see: § 6.10, 6.10.1) by imperfect + halla- here in a past context.

The main uses of the compound imperfect + ʿala as 'praesens in praeterito' are as follows:

(a) To express a habitual or recurrent activity in the past, or a custom (situation) which prevailed. This use of the compound usually requires the presence of an adverbial expression.

Examples:

wala'ənās higa ḥəyāyət kullu 'āmara nāy ʿad wanāy kadan wa'akəl lasamʿayu laḥasāb 'əndo 'āmara təm ləbəl ʿala. -

"And the man understood the language of all animals, domestic and wild, and whenver he heard it, having understood the meaning, he kept silent."

(PL1, 88:19)

ṣāwra waʿad maʿalləm badir məsəl ʿad təmāryām lətʿallabo ʿalaw. wa'aze lata bannom lətʿallabo wakəl mənnom zaga bannu bu. -

"The Ṣāwra and the ʿAd Maʿalləm formerly used to be counted with ʿAd Təmāryām. And now, however, they are counted by themselves and each of them has its own village."

(PL1, 284:19)

yaʿakob 'ət kəl highu 'amān ləthāge 'iʿala. -

"Jacob was not in the habit of always speaking the truth." (lit.: 'He did not use to speak the truth in all his utterances'.)

('Ag'azot, 57:3)

ḥaqo māy 'ayh bəzuḥ zaban kəm ḥalfa 'abraham laləṭbahal 'ənās 'ət dəgge kārān nabbər ʿala. tāra 'abuhu bəʿdām 'amāləkət lamalləkʿala 'abraham lata fārhāy rabbi tu. -

"When a long period of time had passed after the great flood, a man called Abraham was living in a town called Kārān (i.e.: Haran). His father Terah used to adore idols (lit.: 'other gods'), but Abraham was [a] God-fearing [man]."

(Racconti, 12:2)

*’ana nə’uš ’ət ’ana kəl dol ’ət bet məhro ’əgayəs ‘alko.* -
"When I was young I used to go to school every day (lit.: 'every time')."

*‘ad takles mənma la’afarrə‘ətu kə’ənna ḥaw gabbə’ kəl dol lətgādab walətqātal kəl’ot ’ənkər ’əttu ’əndo təkaffala lətba’as waḥəd labadde ‘ala.* -
"Although the branches (i.e.: tribes) of ‘Ad Takles were, in this fashion, brothers, they used to quarrel and contend with each other all the time; they used to split into two factions, to fight and destroy each other."

(PL1, 40:6)

*da’am wəlād ’əsra’el ’akəl latənassaḥaw rabbi haye fārdāy ’əndo harrasa saddyom wamən ’abāyāmom ladḥənom ‘ala ka’asək bəzuḥ zaban ’əb had’at rabbi lamalko ‘alaw.* -
"But whenever the children of Israel did penance God helped them, raising up a judge [for them] and saving them from their enemy, so that they were worshipping God in calm for a long time."

(Storia, 72:31)

*walaqašša ‘əṭān ləbān ’ət mə‘əl ḥad kəl’e gabata ‘aṭṭənna‘ala.* -
" And her priest used to burn incense for her - about two gabata[1] a day."

(PL1, 53:12)

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[1] *gabata* is a measure of about 18 kilograms (see: PL2, p.57 footnote 1), or 48 litres (see: FM, p.171, footnote 1, line 5).

(b) To express a simultaneous activity (with a single action or with a progressive one) in the past.

Examples:

’addaḥa ṣaḥāy kəm ḥafnat ḥayat ’ət ‘əzāl ‘əč̣č̣at ’akarrara waqasna. bəzḥāt ‘anaṣṣit ’ət səmṭu ləttalhaya ‘alaya. ’ət ləttalhaya gale mənnan ’ət maqṭan laḥayat ‘argaya. - "When the sun became hot at noon the lion lay down in the shade of a tree and fell asleep. Many mice were playing at his side. While playing, some of them mounted theback of the lion."

(’Ag’azot, 66:2)

ka’ət ləghe ’əlla ḥəlāyat bela. (...). wala‘aṭāl ləttalhe ’əttu ‘ala. wa’əllan kəm bela nafsu gesat. - "And he sang (lit.: 'said') this song, grieving: '(...)'. And the goats were making fun of him (i.e.: while he sang his song). And having sung this he died (lit.: 'his soul went out'."

(PLl, 70: 18, 71:1)

wanabra ’addāla’əlom wa’ət ləballu‘ ḥante la‘əč̣č̣at səmṭom baṭṭər ‘ala. - "And he made ready a meal for them and while they ate he was standing beside them under the tree."

(Racconti, 13:7)

wakarāyi ’əsra’el mən lašaf ’ət taqabbəl la’anəs ’əb goyla wa’əb səssə‘it lanəgus ’əgəl lətkabbata fagraya kasa’ol šəḥ da’am dawəd ‘asər šəḥ qatla ’ət ləbla ḥalya ‘alaya. -

"And when the army of Israel returned from the battle the women went out to receive the king with song and dance, and were singing, saying: 'Saul killed one thousand but David - ten thousand'."

(Storia, 63:16)

kahətu haye dangaṣa waḥar kəʼənna bela wo fanč̣əč̣ ʼaddemāy ʼəb sababka gəməš ʼətqātal ʻalko nafsəka kəʻənna ḥawānit ʼət ʼənta. -

"And he became frightened but later spoke like this: 'O little man, be like fənč̣ič̣[1]! I was fighting because of you in vain, your breath of life having been so weak'."

(PL1, 86:10)

kahətu sakba mən gabbəʼ laʻəntātu fazzəz waqanṣa mən gabbəʼ šam labəllo ʻala. -

"And if he went to sleep his eyes used to be open and if he awoke he used to close them." (i.e.: When he fell asleep his eyes were open and when he woke up he shut his eyes.)

(Lt Leg , 6:18)

ḥar laʼəssit qanṣat kaʼət laʼaffet walda kaf ʻəndo təbe ragmat watəherarat wakəʼənna telanni ʼəndo təbe samʻāt təwadde ʻalat. -

"After that the woman got up and, sitting [herself] at the entrance [of the house of] her son, cursed and reviled; and she was calling [people] to witness, saying: 'She spoke to me like this'."

(Tigre Texts, 3:14)

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[1] A small bitter herb. Here the verb form is the imperative of fanč̣ač̣a, a denominative of fənč̣ič̣ (See LH , p.670 ) .

worot ʾənās ḥatte dol ʾət ʾadgu ʾəndo təṣaʿana ʿaddu gayəs ʿala. walanəʿuš waldu ʾəb ʾəgru ʾət səmṭu ʾəgəl ligis ḥadgayu. -

"Once, a man mounted on a horse was going to his village. And the man left his son to walk by foot beside him."

(ʾAgʾazot, 74:2)

## § 6.12 The imperfect in construction with nabra and ṣanḥa

The complexes imperfect + nabra and imperfect + ṣanḥa are grammatically analogous to imperfect + ʿala, though not lexically identical: while, in the imperfect + ʿala complex, the auxiliary verb has only a grammatical function, nabra and ṣanḥa may often retain their lexical content. In the latter case the meaning of the complex proceeds from the lexical content of both the auxiliary verb and the 'auxilié'. It should be mentioned here that both complexes under discussion have a low distribution and that their actualization is one of distributional inclusion with imperfect + ʿala.

### § 6.12.1 Imperfect + nabra

As the main verb of the sentence, nabra means "to live", "to pass one's life"[1].

Examples:

ʾəttaya tənabbər ? ʾət karan ʾənabbər halleko. -

"Where do you live? I live in Karan."

worot ʾənās ʾaḥa ʿalat ʾəlu. daʾam mən ʾəlla ʾaḥāhu mambaro ʾəkkit nabbər ʿala bahalat laʿaḥāhu ḥalib ʾisatte

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[1] Cf. § 4.7 et seq.

(...) ʿaqqəbba wa'akkəbba nabra. -

"A man had [some] cows. But he was living a bad life with these cows of his, that is to say he did not drink the milk of his cows (...); he passed his time merely (lit.: 'only') guarding and collecting them."

(PL1, 262:7, 10)

As the auxiliary verb in construction with a verb in the imperfect, nabra is used to express:

(a) the extent of an activity or a situation throughout one's life, or any considerable period of it - when so defined by adverbial expressions.

Examples:

badir kəm latəbahala tasfamkəl wad gabres mənma 'ilətkantab ʿad marrəḥ ʿala. waḥar 'əndo kə'ənna nabbər nabra kəm mota 'ədris waldu māyət mən ṣanḥa lagəṣənnatu 'ət tədros wad waldu ḥalfat. wahətu 'ət zamāytotāt marrəḥ wagayəs 'əndo nabra ḥar təkantaba. -

"As it was said before, Tasfamkel W.G., although not appointed as chieftain, was leading the people. And later, when he died, having passed his life thus, since his son 'Edris had died before him, the leadership passed to his grandson Tedros. And he, having led [his people] and having made plundering raids, was later appointed chieftain."

(Tribù, 51:20)

ḥago 'əlla zar'it 'ət laḥaddis maskabu bet 'əšḥaqan 'ət ləmarrəḥ 'əndo nabbər nabra mota watəqabbara. -

"After this, Zar'it died and was buried in his new abode, having passed his life leading the [people of] Bet 'Ešḥaqan."

(Tribù, 77.20)

(b) the quality of life as regards a given situation or state which prevailed.

Examples:

kəl'ot ḥu məsəl nabro ʿalaw (...). da'am kəl dol laḥaw lətba'aso nabraw. -

"Two brothers were living together (...). But they used to quarrel all the time."

(PL1, 35:17)

waḥatḥatte 'awān haye məsəl gabbə' kagabāyəl bə'əd zammət waməslu lətgādab. wa'agədda məsəl ḥabāb kəl dol lətgādabo waletqātalo nabraw. -

"And sometimes, however, they were together (i.e. united) and raided and fought other tribes. Especially, they quarrelled all the time with the Ḥabāb and fought them."

(Ibid., 40:8)

gadəm mansaʿ ma rəḥəm 'arabi 'əb zaban badirdi zammət nabrat da'ikon təzammat 'iʿalat. -

"Now, in the old time Mansaʿ - or Rəḥəm 'Arabi - were indeed making plundering raids; they were not [themselves] being raided."

(Tribù, 8:8)

*waḥətu balsa kabellom ʾəmye tamayət nabrat waḥar ʾana kəm təwalladko ʾəgəl ʾiʾimut mənna ʾadəg sametanni.* – "My mother lost [her children] in death and, later on, when I was born, she named me Donkey lest I should die."

(PL1, 51:4)

*waʿaddu mən ləzzammat lattakre nabra.* – "And if his village was raided he fetched back [the loot]."

(Ibid., 73:10)

When the activity concerned involves the making of a living, the complex with *nabra* denotes an occupation.

Examples:

*kaʾənās worot haye talāya ʿala walaʾaḥāha ləreʿe nabra.* – "And a certain man was her shepherd and used to pasture her cattle."

(PL1, 27:21)

*kalagabil rom ʾət kəl ʾakān ləgʿəz wanəwāyu ləreʿe nabra.* – "And the tribe of the Rom were emigrating to every place and pasturing their cattle."

(Ibid., 86:12)

(c) a habitual or recurrent activity, the indulgence in which is of extensive duration. In such instances the auxiliary *nabra* loses its semantic value and its function is purely grammatical, i.e., it is a variant of the taxeme imperfect + *ʿala*.

waʼəlli kullu ladāwrat walaṣabʼit kəllom waddwo nabraw. -
"And all the vagabonds and the highwaymen lived doing it."

(PL1, 172:4)

waʼasək ʼaze lawərəd halla ʼəgəl lasamaʻ laʼalaba gārit. daʼam ʼəb zaban badir mənma samaʻ rakbo ʼət dam waʼət gəbərənnat waʼət rəs ʻilətkabboto. wərəd ḥed nassuʼ nabraw. -
"And the oath exists until now for a case which has no witness. But in olden times, even if they found a witness, they did not accept him in [cases of] bloodshed, slavery (i.e. insulting a free man by calling him a slave) and inheritance [of land]; [in such cases] they used to take the oath from each [side]."

(PL1, 176:5)

wakəʼənna waddu nabraw ʼət maskab ʼaqbər mawalllədom labəʼəttu wakəd ʻayro ʼamʻəl lasalfom. -
"And on their first day [after arrival] they used to behave like this when they entered a place in which there were tombs of their relatives."

(Ibid., 228:13)

qaš ʻaddəmkel qārəʼ ʼiʻala. daʼam ʼəb səmmāʻ gale ṣabṭa waʼəb baʻāl waʼət taskār ʼəlu dagāgəm nabra. -
"Priest ʻAddəmkel could not read. But he acquired a little by hearing, and on festal days and on festivals for the dead he recited it."

(Ibid., 52:7)

Habits and customs imply activities of extensive duration. The use of the complex as portrayed in (c) evolves from the semantic content of the whole utterance and thus a situation exists in which the lexical content of *nabra* is pleonastic.

### § 6.12.2 Imperfect + ṣanḥa

As the auxiliary verb in construction with an imperfect form, *ṣanḥa* is used to express:

(a) continuity of the activity or state implied by the lexical content of the 'auxilié' (for *ṣanḥa* as a lexical item, see § 4.6 et seq) This notion is analogous to the one expressed in English by expressions such as "kept doing", "remained doing", etc.

Examples:

*wa'asəkma 'ət ǧalbat 'əndo 'ata lətgasse bezuḥ 'addāmātāt dibu ta'akkabaw wakullu la'addām 'ət sāḥəl baṭṭər ṣanḥa.* –
"And he even sat in a boat himself, having entered [it], [since] many people assembled around him. And all the people remained standing on the shore."

(NT, Matthew, 13:2)

*wakullu labəzḥe lagabil 'əb 'əwān 'atnanot laləbān mən gof kadan baṭṭər walətmahalal ṣanḥa.* –
"And all the multitude of people stayed standing and praying outside [the temple] at the time of the smoking of the incense."

(NT, Luke, 1:10)

kap̣eṭros laraʼayu raʼay mi bahalat kəm tu ʼəb ləbbu ʼət latwāyən rəʼe mən qornelewos latəlaʼakaw sab ʼəb bet səmʼon ʼət ləssaʼalo waʼət ləssaʼalo ʼət labāba baṭro ṣanḥaw. -

"And while Peter deliberated in his heart /about/ what was the meaning of the vision which he had seen, behold, the people who were sent by Cornelius kept standing at the gate of Simon's house making inquiries."

(NT, Acts, 10:17)

walaʼənās ʼəndo saka ʿət worot bəʿəd rom maṣʼa kaʼəlu taʿayaba walarom ḥarrəs ṣanḥa. -

"And the man, having fled, came to another Rom and sought his protection; and the Rom kept ploughing."

(PL1, 85:23)

(b) the progressive past, in which case its grammatical function parallels that of imperfect + ʿala.[1] The general notion which is found behind the use of ṣanḥa as exemplified below is that of an activity of limited duration, i.e., to stay for a certain time performing the activity expressed by the 'auxilié', and its formal expression in translation is evident only when the context allows it.

Examples:

daʼam qadamu ʼət ladəgge simon laləbulo ʼənās nabbər ṣanḥa wahətu ʼāyat wadde waʿana ʿabi ʼana ləbəl lasab samarya laddangəṣṣom ʿala. -

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[1] Cf. § 6.11.

"But before that there was living [for a certain time] in the city a man called Simon; and he was practising sorcery, and, saying, 'I am great', he astounded the people of Samaria."

(NT, Acts, 8:9)

*wašəṭān məsəl rabbi ʾəgəl ləššāfaf bet naddəq ṣanḥa kamaryam maṣʾattakka mən belawo sābaraya kaḥadgaya. (...). walaʾəban laʾəlu naddəq ṣanḥa ʾəgəl maryam bet kəstān nadqaw bu.* -

"And Satan was [staying there] building a house to fight against God. And when they told him: 'Mary has come to [confront] you' he demolished it and left it. (...) And with the stones with which he had been building they built a church for Mary."

(Lt Leg , 12:34, 35)

## § 6.13 The imperfect in construction with verbs of time-duration

Verbs of time-duration denote a concrete period of time. Examples:

*waʿala* - "to pass the day"; *təmaya* - "to pass the night"; *ʾaṣbəḥa* - "to pass the morning"; *ʾamsa* - "to pass the evening".

Verbs of time-duration retain their lexical content fully in whatever syntactical context they occur, be it in the role of an adverbial complement to the main verb of the sentence, or as the main verb itself.

Examples:

(...) ka'ənday ləwʿəl walətmaye mota. -

"(...) And [having become ill] he died within twenty-four hours (lit.: 'without passing a day and a night')."

(PL1, 252:18)

da'am 'əb lalāli laha lanegus qəsān 'alabu təmaya. -

"But on that night the king could not sleep (lit.: 'passed the night without having sleep')."

(Racconti, 35:3)

When the adverbial complement to a verb of time-duration is a verb in the imperfect form, the resulting complex has certain formal similarities to a compound-tense construction: the verb of time-duration and the verb in the imperfect form occupy syntactical positions similar to those of auxiliary verb and 'auxilié' respectively; furthermore, the tense of the complex as a whole is decided by the tense of its second element. It is mainly the semantic independence of the verb of time duration which precludes the complex form being regarded as a compound tense and clarifies the status of its elements as verb plus complement. Hence the second element of the complex may assume the perfect or imperfect form, according to the tense of the verb.

Examples:

(...) 'ənta 'əsāt təgannəḥ təmayeka. -

"(...) You passed the night looking at the fire."

(PL1, 33:9)

(...) kəlla la'aḥāhu ḥalləb 'amsa. -

"(...) He spent the evening milking all his cows."

(PL1, 83:25)

ka'əgel laǧəna kə'ənna təblo 'amset (...). -

"And she passed the evening singing to the child like this: (...)." (Tigre Texts, 13:15)

(...) wa'əb lāli nəṣṣāf kəmsalhu ḥallu lətmayaw. -

"(...) And also on the night of the wake [of the dead] they pass the night singing."

(PL3, xiii:16)

har 'əb faǧru 'ət la'ətta 'atte bet balləʿ wasatte ləwʿəl. -

"Afterwards, he spends the day eating and drinking in the house which he has entered in the morning."

(FM, 149:27)

(...) kaqarrə' laṣabbəḥ. -

"(...) And he passed the morning reading [prayers]."

(Ibid., 148:4)[1]

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[1] It can be argued that there are grounds for including the imperfect + nabra or ṣanḥa complexes in this section for those instances in which nabra describes 'life-time' and ṣanḥa a limited period. Such an argument is in fact a valid one. The complexes with nabra and ṣanḥa are, however, described in a section apart (see: § 6.12) owing to the possible weakening of the semantic meaning of these two verbs and their closer similarity to the status of an auxiliary verb. Ultimately, the degree to which nabra and ṣanḥa retain their lexical content has to be considered and context must be taken into consideration in each case, as shown in the following example:

wač̣ənč̣āy ladol 'ət lətḥāsas ṣanḥa. wa'aze kəl dol lamdaya ka'əb la'ədayu ra'asu dakkək halla. -
"And the fly had [previously] been smearing himself at that time. And now he has become accustomed to

(continued on following page)

## § 6.14 Complexes with the perfect: ʼəndo + perfect + ʿala (ṣanḥa)

This is a complex whose association with the tense concept is perfective, i.e.: the notion expressed by it refers to (a result of) an event or a situation whose beginning (and end) is previous to another specified, or understood, point of time.

ʼəndo + perfect + ʿala denotes the perfective past .

Examples:

ʼabunawas ʿəla ʿalat ʼəlu wahaye ḥatte naggalat. waʼət dəwār laʿəlāhu ʼaqərnat ʿaṭāl ʼəndo sāqaqa ʿala. -
"ʼAbunawas had a well and also one kid. And he had stuck [in the ground] horns of goats around the well."

(PL1, 30:14)

walaʼənās lagarwa ʼəndo təṣaʿana kəm ʿala ʼāmara (...). -
"And the man knew that the koodoo had already been ridden."

(Ibid., 252:9)

wabəzuḥ ʼəndo təsaddada ʿala waʼəb bəzḥət ḥafānat ṣalla. -
"And he had been much distressed and prayed with great zeal (lit.: 'heat')."

(Racconti, 50:23)

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[doing] it all the time and rubs his head with his hands."

(PL1, 80:24)

The first sentence refers to a continuous activity, taking place for some time, which was terminated before again indulged in. The second sentence refers to the resumption of the same activity from an habitual actual aspect. The perfective nature of the first sentence can be understood only from the context; the elements of the complex itself have a syntactical relationship of verb plus predicative, whose meaning implies a continuous activity, limited in time.

(...) hətu ʾəgəl laʾəndo ḥawana laʿala ʾamlakot rabbi ḥaddasayu (...). -

"(...) He renewed the adoration of God which had been weakened (...)."

(Storia, 73:19)

wakəlʾitom ʾəb ʿəmrom ʾəndo ʾabbaraw ʿalaw. -

"And the two of them had become old in years (lit.: 'life-time, age')."[1]

(Storia, 105:11)

## § 6.14.1 ʾəndo + perfect + ṣanḥa

This complex may have the same function and value as the complex with ʿala.

Example:

(...) həta bezuḥ ʾəndo ʾabbarat ṣanḥat. -

(...) She had been very old."

(NT, Luke, 2:36)

The verb ṣanḥa may - in addition to its grammatical function - introduce the notion of 'already'.

Example:

waʾət ʿad kəm ʾataw lamarʿāt ʾəbba ʾəbba dəqāla ʾəndo ʿamsat ṣanḥat. wakantebāy ṣallim samʿa ʾəssit waldu ʿamsāt kem ṣanḥat. -

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[1] Cf. the last example with the following version in which the perfect is complemented by an adjectival form: wakəlʾitom ʾəb ʿəmrom ʾabāyər ʿalaw. - "And the two of them were old in years.". (NT, Luke, 1:7)

"And when they returned home [they found] at once [that] she was already pregnant with a bastard. And K.Ṣ. heard that the wife of his son was already pregnant."

(PL1, 45:4)

The notion of 'already' is evolved from the meaning of ṣanḥa as a lexical item, as is shown in the following example, where ṣanḥa occurs in the imperfect:

(...) ʾəb warəḥ məkkəʾel ḥagāy ʾət sarru ma ʾət makallasihu ʾabʿeratom wanəwāyāt ʾḥarsom kullu wazarʾom ʾəndo ʾaddālaw ṣannuḥ. -
"(...) They already prepare their bulls and all their ploughing instruments and their seeds (or: 'they prepare.... and wait...') in the month of Məkkəʾel-Ḥagāy - in the middle of it or at its end."[1]

(PL1, 95:3)

## § 6.15 The complex perfect + ka + auxiliary

This complex consists of a verb in the perfect followed by the conjunction ka (see § 8.3.2 (4)) which is itself followed by an auxiliary verb. The auxiliary verb can be halla, ʿala or ṣanḥa. Here also (as with the complex ʾəndo + perfect + ʿala (see § 6.14))the

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[1] Another similar example is:
ʾəb baʿālāt məkkəʾel ʾəwān qayəm waḥagāy kəʾənna waddu. ʿaǧin ʾəndo ʾamləḥaw ṣannuḥ waʾəb laməʿəl baʿāl məkkəʾel ṣəbəḥ mədra ʾəgəl kəl tabʿat mən laʿaǧin ḥəbbazat qaṭaf waddu ʾəlu. -
"On the festivals of Məkkəʾel [which are] at the time of autumn (lit.: 'harvest') and of summer, they perform in this manner: beforehand, they leaven the dough (or: 'they leaven the dough and wait') and on the day of the feast of Məkkəʾel, in the early morning, they make from the [leavened] dough a [thick round loaf of] bread (called: 'the bread of the leaves') for every male."
(PL1, 204:23)

feature of time underlined is that of a perfective tense.

### § 6.15.1 The complex perfect + ka + halla

Perfect + ka + halla denotes the perfective present (approximating to the meaning of the present-perfect tense in English). Examples:

ka’aẓe mən ’elli dəgəm kəl’e masal tarfaya kahallaya. -

"And now two proverbs have remained from this story."

(PL1, 6:3)

wadəmmu mənla məʿəl laha ’asək ’aze (...) kāynat ’ət ’ənta tarfat kahallet. -

"And from that day until now the cat has remained treacherous."

(...) ’ana ḥamamko kahalleko wasərāye goka halla (...). -

"I have become ill and my cure is with you (i.e.: you possess it) (...)."

(PL1, 93:3)

wala’əwān kawākəb ḥad zamta kahalla fəgur ’alabu ləblo ’asək kəl worot ’ət ’akānu laqabbəl. -

"And at that time it is said that the stars have been fighting each other and [that] there is no constellation until each one returns to its place."

(Ibid., 67:21)

(...) wa’əgəl waldu ’assa’alayu walka nəd’o mənəna ’əndo belaw ṭarʿaw ’eč̣č̣e kahalaw. wa’aze mi nide bello. -

"And he informed his son, saying to him: 'They have complained to me saying: "send your son away from us". What shall we do?'."

(Lt Leg , 10:28)

### § 6.15.2 The complex perfect + ka + ʿala

Perfect + ka + ʿala denotes the perfective past (approximating to the meaning of the past-perfect tense in English).

Examples:

wadəla ʾəla habaw kaʿalaw ʿad lawalat ʾəndo ʿaṣfawa ma ḥəyāyet ʾəndo habaw ballusa ʾəlom. -

"And whatever they have given her (i.e.: to the bride), the family of the girl return it to them having doubled it or having given animals."[1]

(Pll, 125:10)

waʾət ʾəde ʾəsraʾel laḥalla ʾakānāt səməṭ baḥar Golān nāy sorya wanāy ʾəsraʾel ʿaskar ʾəgəl ḥud ʾawkād konāt kaftaw kaʿalaw. -

"The Israeli and the Syrian armies had skirmished for a short time at the places which are in Israeli hands near the Golan sea [shore]."

māle masāničč̣e ʾət beč̣č̣ə maṣʾaw kaʿalaw. -

"Yesterday my friends had come to my house."

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[1] The English translation requires a present-perfect or a simple-perfect form; the Tigre choice is perfective past to indicate that the present moment is not included in the act of giving which was terminated some time before the act of receiving.

> *baʼasaw kaʻalaw daʼam ʼaze taʼāraw.* -
> "They had quarrelled but now they have become reconciled."

## § 6.15.3 The complex perfect + *ka* + *ṣanḥa*

Perfect + *ka* + *ṣanḥa* primarily denotes the perfective past, in addition to which the verb *ṣanḥa* introduces the notinn of 'already' (cf. *ʼəndo* + perfect + *ṣanḥa* § 6.14.1). That *ṣanḥa* functions here as an auxiliary verb can be shown in the following example:

> *wasab lamaḥabar lamatʻalālāgom kəm raʼaw qanṣaw kahazmaw ʼəttom. daʼam kantebāy ṣallim nafsu gesat kaṣanḥattom (...).* -
> "And when the people of the council saw their struggling they got up and rushed at them; but they found that K.Ṣ. had already died."
>
> (PL1, 47:3)

Here the meaning of the complex is (literally): "His soul had already left them" (i.e. : he had already died). This meaning stands in contradiction to the semantic content of the verb *ṣanḥa* as a lexical item which is: "to wait," etc. (cf.: § 4.6.1).. Other examples are:

> *waḥar (...) laʼəndāqatu fatḥa wamən laʼakān laḥəggosatu ʼəgəl laʼənās ʼafgara. daʼam ʼəndo taḥač̣č̣aqa mota kaṣanḥayu.* -
> "And afterwards (...) he opened his belt and took the man out of the fold [formed by the girded garment]: but [The man] had already died, having been squashed." (i.e.:

the giant squashed the man accidentally).

(Ibid., 86:6, 8)

*ḥəna betna ʾəndo dabʾana ʿəč̣ay tafarrarna waḥalib ḥādgām ḥəna ʾət lakadbet wač̣anač̣č̣it satayu kaṣanḥenna (...).* -
"Having locked our house we went out [to collect] wood; and we had left milk on the floor and [upon returning] we found that the flies had drunk it (...)."

(Tigre Texts, 9:30)

## § 6.16 The complex participle + auxiliary: form and meaning.

The participle forms of the verbs of type A, CāCəC (active) and CəCuC (passive), as well as corresponding participles of other types and derivatives (see § 2.7.1 ), can enter into construction with the verbs halla, *ʿala* or *ṣanḥa* in the expression of the perfective tenses. In such cases the function of the participle resembles that of an 'auxilié' in a tense-compound: while the auxiliary verb is void of meaning and grammatical in function the participle supplies the complex with its meaning and also indicates voice.[1]

The perfective concept is taken here as denoting:

(a) a period of time that began previous to, and continued up to, a point of time explicitly expressed or implied;

(b) a condition which results from a state or a completed action that has relevance to a later point of time (past or present).

The complex participle + *halla* may express the perfective present while the complexes with *ʿala* and *ṣanḥa* may express the

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[1] Only type A verbs make use of both active and passive participles in the above construction, other types and derivatives occurring only in the passive form (even when meaning is not passive). See examples in sections below.

perfective past.[1]

The choice of an active or passive-participle form in the complex is determined by lexis.

It is not always possible to define the syntactical relationship of the two elements of the complex on formal grounds alone, owing to the special syntactical functioning of the participle.[2] For instance, the utterance ʼətta ʻad zəmut halla (PL1, 29:3) can be rendered in English as: "There is there a raided place", or: "A place has been raided there". In the former rendering the participle is taken as an epithet[3] to ʻad and the verb halla is taken as verb of existence.

Another example: mənna ta labāb ʻabi dəbuʼ mən ʻala ʼəgəl ləʼəte ʼigaʼa ʼalu. (ʼAgʼazot, 72:9) Here the utterance can be rendered as: "But since the big gate had been closed he could not enter", or: "Since the gate was closed (...)". In the latter case the participle is taken as a predicative adjective and the verb ʻala as the past-tense form of the copula tu.

In the following utterance the relationship of the elements of the complex can best be interpreted in terms of the copula and its predicative complement which is an adjective denoting quality.

The distinction between perfective and non-perfective time-relations is irrelevant in regard to such a syntactic construction:

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[1] For other formal expressions of perfective tenses, see § 6.14 et seq.

[2] The participle forms CāCəC and CəCuC and corresponding participles of other types and derivatives are regularly used in the expression of the Tigre adjective. Cf. § 2.9.2 a)(i) & (ii).

[3] Cf. § 2.9.1(iii)

*da’am ’arwe mən kəl ḥayāyət mədər kāyən ‘ala.* -
"But the snake was ⌊more⌋ perfidious than all the
animals of the earth."
(Storia, 7:7)

The active participle - when used intransitively - or the passive participle may enter into construction with the copula *tu* in the expression of the state resulting from an action, as can be seen by comparing the following two versions of the same utterance:[1]

*da’am galehom la’ibaṣḥa nabit ṣāgbām hallaw ’ət ləblo fālawom.* -
"But some of them mocked them saying: 'They are
satiated with unfermented wine."
(Storia, 168:23)

*da’am galehom ’ət ləfālwom ’əllom ’əb ḥaddis nabit ṣāgbām tom belaw.* -
"But some of them said, mocking them: 'These ⌊ones⌋
are satiated with new wine."
(NT, Acts, 2:13)

### § 6.16.1 Participle + *halla*

This complex is mainly used to denote the perfective present.

The complex may be found in variation with the simple perfect, e.g.:

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[1] Cf. the use of the passive voice in English, as described by Onions, *Syntax*, §116.2: "The articles are sold (= are in a sold condition, have been sold)." Cf. also: Jespersen, *Philosophy*, 276:6 et seq.

wahəmmam walye man qatlayu ʾəndo bela ʾəgəl lamawʿitāy təsaʾala. walahay bello walka ḥarmāz qatlayu kahəmmam haye walye gadəm ḥarmāz qātlu ʾihalla ʿaṭāl qatlayu bela. walamassʾəlāy haye bello ʾikon walkadi ḥarmāz qatlayu. waḥemmam bela yayayaʾ walye ʿaṭāl leṭa tu laqātlu halla ʾəlli wəddāy ʿaṭāl tu. -

"And the leopard asked the lamenter, saying: 'Who killed my son?' And that one (i.e. the lamenter) said to him: 'An elephant killed your son'. The leopard, however, said: 'An elephant has not killed my son; the goats have killed him'. The messenger, however, said to him: 'No, an elephant killed your son'. The leopard said: 'No, no! Only the goats (i.e. no one else but the goats) have killed my son; this is the deed of the goats'."

(PL1, 25:14)

Other examples with active and passive participles:

active participle + halla

waʾəb kəʾənna maryam bəriri ʾasək ʾaze beta dabʾat hallet ləblo. -

"And in this way M.B. has locked her house until today."

(PL1, 53:21)

waʾəgale kəʾən gābəʾ halla ʾəgəl namṣəʾo ʾigabbəʾ ʾəlna mən ləblo lalamḥəllom kataʾammano kama ləbəllom. -

"And if they say: 'So and so has become like this; we cannot bring him', the one who makes them take the oath says to them: 'Well then, confess!"

(Ibid., 175:8)

watasfoy lagamayom ta 'adga lamarrala[1] 'ət ləblo 'ət lagabil kəm masal tārfat hallet. -

"And that which Tasfoy counselled them, saying: '[Each family should go] where its donkey goes', has remained as a proverb among the people."

(Tribù, 84:20)

waḫar 'əlla za‘atu (...) 'ət tətbahal kəm masal 'əndo ga'at 'asək 'aze 'ət 'af lagabil tārfat hallet. -

"And, afterwards, this utterance (of his), being pronounced [as]: '(...), has remained among (lit.'before') the people until today, having become a proverb."

(Tribù 87:11)

wakəm dannat nəgus salamun sam‘a nəgus kabasa māṣə' halla belawo. -

"And as soon as she descended king Solomon heard [about it]. He was told (lit.:'they told him'): 'The king of Kabasa has arrived'."

(Lt Leg., 6:14)

həta kəbub qobe‘ lābsat hallet. -

"She has put on a round hat" (or: "She wears a round hat").

pilaṭos ka'ana 'ayhudāy tu 'ana gabilatka wasab 'agəṣṣat 'aqəššat 'əčče maṭayuka mi wādi halleka 'ət əbəl balsa 'əttu. -

""Pilate answered him saying: 'And I, am I a Jew? Your

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[1] For: lamarra 'əla.

people and the high priests betrayed you to me. What have you done?'."

(NT, John, 18:35)

ʾəlye waʾāmarkum ʾabuyema waʾāmarkum wamən ʾaze taʾammuro warəʾəyāmu hallekum bello. -

"He said to him: 'If you had known me, indeed, you would have known my father; and from now you know him and have seen him'."

(Ibid., 14:7)

### Passive participle + halla

waʾəbbəlla gabay ʿad sabʿat lamarbātom təwit hallet. -

"And the blood-revenge of ⁄the one brother of⁄ the Seven has been delayed in this way."

(PL1, 58:3)

waʾazedi gabilat banna ʾikon daʾam təgre ʾet ʾənta ʾət kəl ʾakān fənṭərt hallet. -

"And now it is not a tribe by itself, but has been dispersed everywhere being (i.e.: regarded as) Tigre."

(Ibid., 79:5)

waʾaze haye kəl ʿač̣č̣at sanni fəre laʾitafarre ʾəgəl tətqarrač̣ waʾət ʾəsāt ʾəgəl tətlakkaf gədəb ʾət qərd laʿəč̣ay kəruy halla ləbəllom. -

"He said to them: 'Now, however, the axe has been laid to the root of every tree which does not bear good fruit, in order that it be cut down and thrown into the fire."

(NT, Luke, 3:9)

wa'ət lətfarraro 'ət gabay 'ənās təkabbatayom. hətom haye 'ənta 'ənās labetna qəlləfət hallet walamaftəḥa 'ət ḥan 'əbbanat ləšnahu. waḥalibna 'ət səməṭ lama'ošāt dəbu' halla. 'itə'əte wa'itənsa' belawo. -

"And when they were outside a man met them. They, however, said to him: 'You, man! Our house has been locked and we put its key under a rock, and our milk has been covered [in a milk-pail] beside the fire-place. Do not enter and do not take [the milk]."

(Tigre Texts, 9:19)

'esey 'azema lanə'uš kəllom tārəf halla da'am ḥətu 'aze abāgə' 'ət lər'e kadan fərrur halla balsa. -

"Jesse answered: 'Now then, the smallest of them all is left (lit.: has remained), but he has gone out now, pasturing the sheep."

(Storia, 61:11)

## § 6.16.2 Participle + halla in subordinate clauses

Usually, subordinating conjunctions and particles - adverbial and pronominal - immediately precede the auxiliary verb. The pronominal suffix is attached to the participle.

Examples:

wamar'āwi laga'a lakokab 'abi 'ət 'astar fāgər 'ət halla mən bətu 'ifaggər (...). -

"And the one who is newly married husband, when the Great Star has risen in the sky, does not go out of his house (...)."

(PL1, 56:18)

*’amerika waḥukuma sovyet nāy nyukler ṣəwār ’ət sanni kədmat leṭa ’əgəl law‘ulo ’ət marādayat bāṣḥām kəm hallaw nāy ’amerika mārḥāy minister ’at’amaraw.* -
"The foreign minister (lit.: the leading minister) of America (i.e.: the United States) announced that America and the Soviet government have reached an agreement to use nuclear weapons for useful purposes (lit.: good work) only."

*ladol lamal’āk wo maryam ’əb rabbi sahal rākbat tu halleki ka’itəfrəhi.* -
"Then the angel [said]: 'O Mary, you have found favour [in the eyes] of God. Do not be afraid.'"

(NT, Luke, 1:30)

*yasus lata ḥədoga sanni wəddāy wāydat ’ačče tu hallet.* -
"But Jesus [said]: 'Leave her alone! She has done a good deed to me'."

(NT, Mark, 14:6)

The relative pronoun precedes either the participle or the auxiliary. Examples:

*(...) ’ət bole makkarāy ṭəyārotāt ’əndo ṣanḥawom ’əgəl ləkkabbotom kəm tu duluy lahalla program lat’ammər.* -
"(...) A programme which has been prepared gives the information that they will wait for him and will receive him (lit.: 'them' - polite form) at the airport of Bole."

*woro mən laḥəbu‘ām ’azema kurruk ləbəl walaqəmmuč̣ halla fazzə‘ ’əgəl ləḥəzayom gayəs.* -
"One of those who hid again says 'kurruk' and the one who

has his eyes closed (or: 'who has closed his eyes') opens them and goes to look for them (i.e.: his friends)."

(Tigre Games, 63:15)

## § 6.16.3 Participle + ʿala

This complex can be used to denote the perfective past. Its function in the past corresponds to that of participle + halla in the present.[1]

### Active participle + ʿala

Examples:

walanəwāyātu ʾət bet ḥādgu ʿala kalazāmtat nasʾatto kagale səwār mən ḥaza ʾirakba. –
"And he had left his weapons at home and the raiders took them, so, when he sought some weapons, he did not find [them]."

(PL1, 46:6)

wagāʿ ʾət ʾakān wəqqəl šābbāy wāydāmu ʿalaw. –
"And they had made a guard of the lizard on a high place [before they started skinning the animal)."

(Ibid., 80:14)

daʾam ʿad šuma lata ḥaw tom. ʿad šuma ʾabʿəbotom šuma latətbahal ʾəssit hādi ʿala waḥar gale wəlād walda ʾətta kamota. –
"But the ʿAd Šuma are relatives (lit.: 'brothers'). The

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[1] Cf. § 6.16.1.

ancestor of ‘Ad Šuma had married a woman called Šuma, and later he begot some children and died [hence the name of the clan]."

(Ibid., 283:20)

’ana ’əgəl masnəye ’assa’alkwo qadam bəzuḥ ‘āmotāt ’ət ’ətyopya māṣə’ ‘alko. -
"I told my friend [that] I had come to Ethiopia many years ago."

badir qadam ’əlli mab’əsom sab ‘ad Šəbot walat tedros wad ’ədris ḥāyṣām ‘alaw. -
"Formerly, previous to their (lit.: this their) quarrel, the people of ‘Ad Šəbot had promised in marriage (lit.: betrothed) a daughter of Tedros Wad ’Edris."

(Tribù, 51:14)

’əlli walye māyət ‘ala da’am ḥaya bādi ‘ala da’am tərakkaba bellom. -
"He said to them: 'My son (lit.: 'this my son') had died but [now] has become alive, he had gone astray but [now] has been found."

(NT, Luke, 15:24)

laḥəṣān badir ’əb sa‘ay sa‘ay ’ət lədawər ’ət lamaḥāz māṣə’ ‘ala. -
"The child, previously hurrying about [in circles] had arrived at the river (told about a lost child, after he was recovered, explaining how it happened)."

(’ag’azot, 71:23)

ḥatte məʻəl ʼəb bəzuḥ šafāgat ʼət lagādmotāt məder maskob ʻarqay ma sanduq gabay ḥallef ʻala. laʼawəl sədud tu wabəzuḥ barad wādəq ʻala. -

"A carriage was one day passing through the plains of the Moscow country[side] at a fast speed. Spring was difficult (i.e.: late) and a lot of snow had fallen."

( ʼAgʼazoṭ, 88:2)

ḥaqo gale ʼawkād laḥayat ʼəb dəbaʻ ḥallef ʻala. waʼət ladəbaʻ baʻal nəʻəya wānin ʼəgəl ləṣbaṭ tāl mādəd ʻala. laḥayat ʼəbbu təṣabbata(...). -

"Sometime after, the lion was passing in the bush. And a hunter had spread a snare in the bush in order to catch wild animals. The lion was caught in it. (...)."

(Ibid., 66:10)

walawəlād ʼənday lətwallado rabbi ʼəgəl rəbqa laʻabi ʼəgəl lanəʼuš kaddəm bəhəla ʻala. -

"And before the sons were born God had said to Rebecca: 'The big one will serve the small one'."

(Storia, 21:9)

### Passive participle + ʻala

Examples:

ʼəlli lawada haye woro nāy (...) həgtat matšāffat maḥabar kəm tu ʼətʼəmur ʻala. daʼam ʼət dangoba ʼəttəlli wəddāy ʼəlli ḥubur kəm ʼiʻala ʼəlli maḥabar ʼəlli bara. -

"One organization of the guerrilla fighters, however, had announced that it was [itself] the one which did this. But finally this organization denied that it had been involved in this deed."

ʼaẓe ʼəgəl ʼəlla makinat ʼəgəl ʼazbəya ʼəb kəlʼe šəḥ rəyāl ʼətyopya duluy halleko. kəmsal ʼəlla bahalat makinat mən taḥat kəlʼe šəḥ rəyāl lagabbəʼ ʼəzbuy ʻalko. - "Now I am ready to sell this motor-car for two thousand Ethiopian dollars. I (once had) sold a motor-car like this for something less than two thousand dollars."

ʻasər məʻəl ḥaqo ʻərgat yasus ʼət ʻastar baʻāl ḥəmsa gaʼa wakəllom laḥawāryāt məsəl ʼəkkubām ʻalaw. - "Ten days after the ascending of Jesus into heaven the feast of Pentecost came and the apostles had already been assembled together."

(Storia, 168:13)

saʻolma nosu ʼəb manfaṣ ḥəkkur ʻala waʻabāyāmu mən ʻarraw bu (...) ʼəgəl laṣāwrāy lanəwāyātu qətalanni bello. - "As for Saul himself he had been wounded by an arrow and as his enemies approached him (...) he said to his armour-bearer: 'Kill me!'."

(Ibid., 65:6)

## § 6.16.4 Participle + ʻala in subordinate clauses

The situation here is similar to that of participle + halla.[1]

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[1] Cf. § 6.16.2.

Examples:

waladabər lagəndəfli ḥādər ’əttu la‘ala ’asək yom gəndəfli lətbahal halla. -

"And the mountain on which Gəndəfli had been living is called Gəndəfli until today."

(PLl, 49:20)

wa’əbbu ’əbbu ṭā’otāt mən ’amlakaw haye ’əgəl lama‘at ’abzəḥaya ’əttom wamən lahāybom ta la‘ala sannət bəzuḥ ’anqasa mənnom. -

"And as they soon adored idols he increased their punishment and subtracted much from the boon which he had given them."

(Storia, 72:29)

māle nāy swizerland ṭəyārat ’arbə‘a wasabu‘ nafar ’əndo ṣa‘ant (...) ’ət ‘astar ’ət ’ənta ’ebla təfargə‘at qənbəllat ṣə‘unām ’ətta la‘ala ’addām kəllom motaw. -

"Yesterday, all the forty-seven people who had been aboard a Swiss aeroplane died, while in flight, owing to a bomb which went off (lit.:'Yesterday a Swiss aeroplane, having taken aboard forty-seven people, being in the sky, all the people who had been carried in it died owing to a bomb which went off')."

’əgəl la’ət ‘anakkəl nəduq la‘ala wa’abuhu la’afrasayu masadaqitāt hətu ’əb dəgmān nadqayu. -

"He built again the altars which had been built on the hills and which his father destroyed."

(Storia, 85:13)

walaṣarru ra’aw lagarwa ṣə‘ūn kəm ‘ala ’asar masādəd laṣafər waməqəlqāl lagambat. -

"And his friends saw that the kudu had been ridden, by the pressure [marks] of the leather-strap and the impression of the saddle-cloth [on its back]."

(PL1, 252:14)

wa’əgəl la’ət lahədāy fərurām la‘alaw kəllom səttāy lasattwom. wa’ət ‘adma ’əgəl latārfām la‘alaw lasattu. -

"And they give a beverage to drink to those who had gone out [and participated in the wedding procession]. And they give to drink also to those who had remained at home [and did not take part in it]."

(Ibid., 129:6)

wakullu lamašāyək wala’addām ladarbuš tuluy la‘ala təlaḥasa wa’əmbal worworot nafar ladaḥana ’alabu. -

"And all the sheiks and the people who had followed the Dervishes perished and no one was saved except some few [people]."

(Ibid., 165:6)

The subordinating conjunctinn ’əndo can precede either element of the complex.

Examples:

wa‘ali wad ma‘o ’əndo gayəs ‘ala ’ət ‘addu kəm maṣ’a la‘addu dəhən dəhəno ga’a ṣanḥayu. -

"And ‘Ali W.M., having been gone, when he came to his village he found it being utterly destroyed."

(PL1, 45:18)

ḥar lakəl’ot ḥu fərurām ə̣ndo ‘alaw ’ataw. -

"Later, after the two brothers had gone out, they returned."

(Tigre Texts, 9:25)

It can be seen from the examples given above that the construction passive participle + ‘ala is problematic as regards its parsing. The problem can be resolved in terms of the high distribution of the form CəCuC as an adjective rather than as a participle[1] and the use of ‘ala as a suppletive past-form for both the copula tu and the verb halla, as in:

wafāzaga qərub ‘ala. -

"And Easter was near".

(Storia, 130:32)

(...) kabelawo ’əbbəlla ’əb ḥəwār qərruč̣ ḥalfawuka. wahətu bellom la’ənkəru la’əlye talledi qərruṣ ‘ala (...). -

"And they said to him: 'Have they passed you with a shorn young camel /in their possession/?'. And he said to them: 'Indeed, its side (i.e.: the side of the camel) which was turned towards me had been shorn (or: was shorn).'"

(PLl, 92:12)

### § 6.16.5 Participle + ṣanḥa.

This complex can be used to denote the perfective past.

Examples:

kaḥatte dol ‘āylay wad ‘andaloy məsəl ’arba‘ lawᵊlādu (...) ’ət šə‘ᵊb kəm sabka karāyi waratto. da’am lakarāyi

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[1] Cf. § 2.9.2 a)(i)

kəm qarbat ʾəttom ʾəgəl lawəlādu (...) ʾəmān ʾawdayom. waʿāylay (...)laḥawaǧǧəbye ʾəb ṣəmbəl raʾasu laʿal ʾəsoro ʾəlye ʾəndo bela ʾāsrāmu ʾəlu ṣanḥaw. waʾaze lakarāyi kəm šaʾagat sayfu ʾəndo ḥarṭa wabəllayu ʾəndo ḥadga təṭallaqa ʾətta. -

"And once when ʿĀylay W. ʿA. went down /to the low-lands/ to Šeʿəb with his four sons, a band /of robbers/ attacked him. But when the band came near them (...) he encouraged (lit.: made confident) his sons. And ʿĀylay having said: 'Bind up (for me) my eyebrows with a fillet, they had bound them (for him). And now when the band drew near, having drawn his sword and having abandoned his garment, he dashed upon them."

(Tribù, 36:27, 30, 32;
37:1)

wabəzḥām ʾayhud ʾəb sabbat ḥuham ʾəgəl laddafāfʾəwān dib marta wadib maryam māṣʾām ṣanḥaw. gadəm marta ʾəb məṣʾat yasus kəm samʿat ʾəgəl tətkabbato fagrat. -

"And many Jews had come to Martha and Mary on account of /the death of/ their brother in order to console them. But when Martha heard of the coming of Jesus she went out to meet him."

(NT, John 11:9)

kayosef kəm maṣʾa lābsu laṣanḥa rayim gamisu qanṭaṭaw mənnu waʾət layəbset ʿəla lakfawo (...). -

"And when Joseph came they took off (from him) his long shirt which he had been wearing and threw him into the dry well (...)."

(Racconti, 16:3)

Unlike the complex with halla and ʿala, the verb ṣanḥa may retain its lexical content - or be meaningful - when in construction with a participle in the expression of the perfective past. The meaning of the complex, then is deduced from both the participle and the verb ṣanḥa.[1]

Examples:

musa ʾət mədər mədyan ʾarbəʿa ʿāmat gəssuy ṣanḥa. -

"Moses had stayed forty years in the land of Median."

(Storia, 38:5)

wasaʾol ʾət laʾakān ḳəm baṣḥa dawəḍ ʾəb karāyihu ḥəbuʿ ʾətta ʾət laṣanḥa baʿat ʾata. -

"And when Saul arrived at that place he entered the cave in which David had been hiding (or: 'had stayed hidden') with his army."

(Ibid., 64:7)

The complex participle + ṣanḥa can be syntactically analogous to participle + ʿala in those cases in which - though meaningful - it does not retain its lexical content.

Examples:

daʾam hətu ʾənday ʾammər radʾit lanəwāy ḥālfat ʾəlu ṣanḥat. -

"But without his knowing [it], the [people of the] raid for recapturing the cattle had already passed him."

(Tribù, 7:3)

---

[1] For the lexical content of ṣanḥa see: § 4.6.1 ; cf. § 6.12.2.

Here it is impossible to render the meaning of ṣanḥa as "to wait, to stay, to remain" etc., since such a meaning would, in this case, be contradictory to the contextual sense.

## Special uses of participle + ṣanḥa

(a) The verb ṣanḥa may bring to the complex the additional meaning of 'already'.[1]

Example :

> yasus laṣabṭaw dib bet baʻal gaṣ ʼaqəššat nasʼawo
> waʼətta kātbat waʻabbač ʼəkkubām ṣanḥaw. -
> "Those who caught Jesus brought him to the house of the high priest and there the scribes and elders had already been assembled."
>
> (Racconti, 51:7)

(b) When the verb ṣanḥa occurs with a pronominal suffix it becomes lexically an idiom whose meaning can best be rendered in translation as: "to find (that)".

Examples of (a) and (b):

> waḥar (...) fəgar ʼəlka gadəm kullu daḥan ʼət ləbəl
> kəm ʼafgarayu māyət mən ṣanḥayu (...) masəḥ mətka
> (...) bela kadarbayu. -
> "And then (...), when he took him out [of the fold of his garment] saying: 'Get out then, all is well!', since he found that he had already died (i.e.: the giant found

---

[1] Cf. §§ 6.14.1, 6.15.3.

that the man he hid in his garment was crushed accidentally) (...), he said: 'You died in vain(...)', and left his service."

(Tribù, 4:2)

wahətom darba gesaw wamāytat ṣanḥattom. -
"And they went ⌊there⌋ behind her and found that ⌊the dragon⌋ had died."

(Lt Leg , 4:14)

ḥatte dol worot 'ənās 'ət mə'ṭən čəmbuy warda māy 'əgəl ləmla'. da'am 'ət lamə'ṭən 'āw wawānin kullu wārəd ṣanḥaw. wala'ənās (...) 'ət ḥatte 'akān taḥabbə'a. -
"Once a man went down to a lonely ⌊place at the⌋ river-bed to fill up with water. But all kinds of wild animals (lit.: 'eatable and uneatable wild animals') had already descended to the river bed. And the man (...) hid himself at a certain place."

(PL1, 71:18)

walasanduqat kəm kastat gərəz kārer 'ət ləbakke ṣanḥaya 'ətta. -

"When she opened the ⌊small⌋ chest a child had been lying in it, crying."

(Racconti, 22:5)

waḥašil gesa ka'əndo sata 'əgəl lašākat dafnaya wa'ət ḥarmāz 'aqbala. waḥarmāz sateka mami bello. da'am hətu 'ifālye dəfnət ṣanḥatanni bello. -

"And the fox went, and, having drunk, filled the water pit [with earth] and returned to the elephant. And the elephant said to him: 'Have you drunk, or not? (lit.: 'or what'), but he said to him: 'No I have found the water pit filled up."

(PL1, 14:15)

*ḥar mansa‘ maw‘i lazamāte kəm maṣ’aya rad’at. wa’ət ‘ad kəm maṣ’at lakarāyi gārbat wa‘āylay məsəl wəlādu ‘əwut ṣanḥaya.* -
"Then, when one crying for help came to the Mansa‘ [people] they undertook a raid [to capture back the booty]. And when they came to the place they found [that] the band [of raiders] had already fled and [that] ‘Āylay with his sons had been victorious."

(Tribù, 37:5)

*wala‘amur kəmsal ladəb’ət laṣanḥatto dab’aya kaḥadga.* -
"And he covered the milk-pail just as he had found it covered, and left."

(Tigre Texts, 9:22)

*wa’ət ləgayəs ’ət lagabay worot gərəz wad səlṭān ’aǧnān bādi sanḥayu.* -
"And while walking on the road he found a child of the Sultan of the demons who had gone astray."

(PL1, 262:12)

# Chapter Seven

# THE NUMERALS

## § 7.1 The cardinal numerals

The cardinal numerals are as follows:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| woro or worot | "one" (masc.) | ḫatte | "one" (fem.); |
| kəl'ot | "two" (masc.) | kəl'e | "two" (fem.); |
| salas | "three"; | | |
| 'arba' | "four"; | | |
| ḫaməs | "five"; | | |
| səs | "six"; | | |
| sabu' | "seven"; | | |
| samān | "eight"; | | |
| sə' | "nine"; | | |
| 'asər | "ten"; | | |
| 'əsra | "twenty"; | | |
| salāsa | "thirty"; | | |
| 'arbə'a | "forty"; | | |
| ḫəmsa | "fifty"; | | |
| səssa | "sixty"; | | |
| sab'a | "seventy"; | | |
| samānya | "eighty"; | | |
| sa'a or tas'a | "ninety"; | | |
| mə'ət | "hundred"; | plural: | 'am'āt |
| šəḫ | "thousand"; | plural: | 'ašḫāt |

The Arabic word 'alf - "thousand", plural 'ālāf, is occasionally used having the same meaning as šəḫ, e.g. : salas 'alf - "three thousand", (ʿAd Šek, 196:(10)).

To denote a great unspecified number the word ʾəlf, whose plural is identical with that of ʾalf, may be used.

## § 7.1.1 Formation of joint numbers

(a) The numbers 11-19 are expressed by placing the units numeral immediately after the invariable element ʿasər, while an optional wa- - "and" may connect both elements. In terms of the 'stress unit'[1] this wa- is pronounced as the final unstressed syllable of the first element.

Examples:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ʾasər waḥatte | - "eleven" (fem.); | (ʿásərwa*ḥatté); |
| ʿasər wasəs | - "sixteen"; | (ʿásərwa~sə́s) etc. |
| ʾasər wasəʾ | - "nineteen". | |

(b) The numbers 21-29 are usually expressed by placing the units numeral after the cardinal which indicates the number of the tens, the two numerals being connected by means of the conjunction wa-, e.g.:

| | |
|---|---|
| ʾəsra waḥatte | - "twenty one" (fem.); |
| ʾəsra wasalas | - "twenty three"; |
| ḥəmsa waʾarbaʿ | - "fifty four". |

(c) When the number of whole hundreds or thousands is indicated by placing a numeral immediately before 'hundred' or 'thousand', məʾət

---

[1] For the sandhi term 'stress unit', see: § 1.5.

and *šəḥ* occur only in the singular form - since countable nouns always occur in the singular.[1]

Examples:

*ḥaməs məʾət* - "five thousand";

*kəlʾe šəḥ* - "two thousand".

(d) The conjunction *wa-* is usually met with[2] where the syntactic relationship between two numerals is one of coordination and not one of a qualified noun and a qualifier, e.g.:

*salas məʾət wasamānya* - "three hundred and eighty";

*ʾəb ʿāmat šəḥ waḥaməs məʾət waʿasər wasamān* -

"in the year fifteen hundred and eighteen."

(*ʾAgʾazot*, 98:4)

The conjunction *wa-* is sometimes not used between the thousands and hundreds, e.g.:

*ladol laʾabāṣḥət ʾəsraʾəl səs məʾət waworo šəḥ sabuʿ məʾət wasalāsa tom.* -

"At that time /the people of/ Israel were six hundred and one thousand, seven hundred and thirty."

(*Storia*, 52:31f.)

*sanat šəḥ samān məʾət wasaʿa waḥatte.* -

"the year eighteen hundred and ninety one."

---

[1] Cf.: § 2.1.4.

[2] See, however, (a) above.

## § 7.1.2 The distributive form of the cardinal numerals.

A special formation exists to indicate the distributive aspect of the unit numerals,[1] by means of the reduplication of the initial CVC sequence of the number, e.g.:

| | |
|---|---|
| worworot | - "one each, one by one" (masc.);[2] |
| ḥatḥatte | - "one each, one by one" (fem.);[2] |
| kəlkəlʼot | - "two each, two by two" (masc.); |
| salsalas | - "three each, three by three"; |
| səs səs | - "six each"; |
| ʻasʻasər | - "ten each"; etc. |

## § 7.1.3 The numeral "one" in the expression of the indefinite.

The numeral "one" - worot (masc.), ḥatte (fem.), serves in the expression of the indefinite. In this use it may function as: (a) an indefinite pronoun,[3] having the meaning of "someone","no one", "somebody", etc., (b) an indefinite article[4] with the unspecified meaning of "certain" and (c) a substantive, denoting "one of". Examples:

| | |
|---|---|
| kəl worot | - "everyone"; |
| woro bəʻəd | - "another (one), someone else"; |
| ḥatte ma | - "something (in the affirmative)";[5] |

---

[1] For the distributive aspect of the noun see § 9.8.1.

[2] The same formation is used to express the indefinite; the meaning being, then, "some, few", e.g. worworot ʼənās - "few people"; ḥatḥatte ʼəwān - "sometimes".

[3] Cf.: § 3.7.a)

[4] Cf.: § 2.11.1 a)

[5] As, e.g., in the utterance ḥatte ma raḳabko - "I found something".

*ḥatte ma* - "nothing" (in the negative);

*woro ma* - "nobody" (in the negative);[1]

*worot ʼənās* or *ʼənās worot* - "a certain man, some man";

*ḥatte dol* or *ḥatte ʼəwān* - "once (upon a time)";

*ḥatte məʻəl* - "one day";

*ǧafaru worot* - "its one side, one of its sides";

*woro tom* - "one of them".

### § 7.1.4 The preposition *ḥad*[2] in the expression of approximation.

When the notion of approximation is indicated, the preposition *ḥad* - "about, what amounts to", is frequently used with numbers, e.g.:

> *walabalʻaw ḥad ḥaməs šəḥ ʼənās tom.* -
> "And those who ate were about five thousand men."
>
> (*Storia*, 131:20)
>
> *ʼayhud ḥad kəlʼe məʼət ʻāmat ḥante mangas fars wamedya kəm təgazzəʼaw (...).* -
> "after the Jews were governed by (lit. 'ruled under') the kingdom of Persia and Media for about two hundred years (...)."
>
> (Ibid., 96:7)

### § 7.1.5 *ʻadad*[3] - in the expression of aggregation.

The word *ʻadad*, which as a lexical entity has the meaning

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[1] As, e.g., in the utterance: *woro maʼisanḥenna* - "(When we came home) nobody was there (lit. 'no one waited for us')."

[2] Cf. §

[3] Cf. §

"limit, number", is used in the expression of an aggregate number. Examples:

ʿadad səs dəkkān lagabbuʾ leṭa hallaw. -
"There are /there, i.e. in the village/ six shops only."

bet məhro ʾawāləd ʿadad samān məʾət walat gabbəʾ.
bet məhro wəlād ʿadad sabuʿ məʾət ḥəṣān ma wəlād tom.
"The school for girls has eight hundred girls. There are seven hundred boys at the school for boys." (lit.: 'The school for girls, there is the number of 800 girls. The school for boys, they are 700 youths or boys.')

## § 7.1.6 nafar - in the expression of the appelative.

The word nafar - "an individual, a person", plural: ʾanfār, is met with to denote a counted number, and could be approximately rendered in English as "ones", e.g.: "(Give me) six ones" (- request at Post Office stamp counter). In Tigre, however, this appellative noun is used in the counting of human beings only.

Examples:

(...) ḥəmsa nafar (...) lamakinat sabbat təballasat (...) motaw. -
"(...) fifty people (...) died (...) because the car turned over /and crushed/".

(...) ʿəsra nafar ḥamāyəm lanābu (...).-
"(...) twenty nurses (...) (lit. 'persons who nurse the sick ones')(...). -

wa’əmbal worwor$_{o}$.t nafar ladaḥana ’alabu -

"and no one saved himself except some few."

(PL1, 165:7)

## § 7.2 The ordinal numerals.

Two morphological structures are met with in the expression of the ordinal numerals, masculine forms, for the numbers 2-10, as follows:

Cā̲Cə̲C[1] and Cā̲CCā̲y[2]; the feminine form being Cā̲CCā̲yt, e.g.:

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| kālə’, | kāl’āy | - "second" | (masc.); | kāl’āyt | (fem.); | | |
| sāləs, | sālsāy | - "third" | " | ;; | sālsāyt | " | ; |
| sādəs, | sādsāy | - "sixth" | " | ; | sādsāyt | " | ; |
| sābə‘, | sāb‘āy | - "seventh" | " | ; | sāb‘āyt | " | ; |
| tāsə‘, | tās‘āy | - "ninth" | " | ; | tās‘āyt | " | ; |
| ‘āsər, | ‘asrāy | - "tenth" | " | ; | ‘āsrāyt | " | . |

To express the notion "first" the word qadām[3] (masc.), qadāmit (fem.), qadāmyām (masc. pl.), qadāmyāt (fem. pl.) is used, e.g.:

kəl’e lasāmən qadāmyāt -

"the two first weeks."

(PL1, 68:14)

laqadāmit mə‘əl -

"the first day."

### § 7.2.1 Formation of joint numbers.

(a) For the expression of the numerals 11-19 the cardinal numeral

---

[1] Cf. § 2.7.1 a)(i)

[2] Cf. § 2.7.1 d)

[3] Cf. § 2.7.1 e)

*’asər* - "ten" is used as an invariable constituent followed either by *wa-* + the ordinal numeral of the structure *CāCCāy(-t)* described in § 7.2, or by *qadāmāy* (masc.), *qadāmāyt* (fem.), in the case of the numeral "eleven".

Examples:

*ʿasər waqadāmāy* - "eleventh" (masc.);
*ʿasər wakāl’āy* - "twelfth";
*ʿasər warābʿāy* - "fourteenth";
*ʿasər waḥāmsāy* - "fifteenth".

(b) The ending *-āy* may be applied to whole numbers of tens, hundreds and thousands in the expressions of the ordinal numeral. In the case of joint numbers only the last whole numeral in the sequence is necessarily expressed by means of the forms typical of ordinal numerals.

Examples:

*ʿəsrāy* - "twentieth";
*səssāy* - "sixtieth";
*samānyāy* - "eightieth";
*saʿāy* - "ninetieth";
*mə’ətāy* - "hundredth";
*mə’ətāy waqadāmāy* - "one hundred and first";
*kəl’e mə’ətāy* - "two hundredth";
*šəḥāy* - "one thousandth";
*’asər šəḥāy* - - "ten thousandth"; etc.

The ordinal numeral is usually met with preceding the noun it qualifies, e.g.: lakāl'āyt 'əwān - "the second time". As an epithet the ordinal numeral may, however, follow the noun.

Examples: 'abot qadāmit - "great-grandmother".

qesar fredrik lasālsāy -

"the emperor Fredrick the Third".

('Ag'azạt, 77:2)

## § 7.3 The fractions

The following forms are attested for fractions whose numerator is "one", where the ending -it is common to all forms except the first three.

| | |
|---|---|
| sar | - "half"; |
| masallas | - "third part"; |
| rəbə' or rəb'a | - "fifth part"; |
| ḫəmmasit | - "fifth part"; |
| səb'it | - "seventh part"; |
| 'əssarit | - "one tenth"; |
| mə'ətayit | - "a hundredth"; |
| šəḫayit | - "a thousandth". |

## Chapter Eight

## ADVERBS; PREPOSITIONS; CONJUNCTIONS; INTERJECTIONS.

The grammatical data treated in this chapter consist of

(i) adverbs (§ 8.1), where a classification is made according to (a) the linguistic stock from which adverbs are constructed, (b) their meaning and (c) their function, as follows: (a) where a nominal element is preceded by the preposition ’əb or ’ət (§ 8.1.1); where adverbs are identical in form to adjectives and particples (§ 8.1.2); where the complex ’əndo + perfect (§ 8.1.3) functions as an adverb; (b) **adverbs** denoting relation of manner or degree (§ 8.1.4), of place (§ 8.1.5) and of time (§ 8.1.6); (c) sentence adverbs (§ 8.1.7), including interrogative adverbs (§ 8.1.7.1), adverbs denoting doubt (§ 8.1.7.2) and adverbs of affirmation and negation (§ 8.1.7.3);

(ii) prepositions (§ 8.2), where an exhaustive list of these is set out (§ 8.2.1);

(iii) conjunctions (§ 8.3), in which a distinction is made between coordinative (§ 8.3.1) and subordinative (§ 8.3.2) conjunctions;

(iv) interjections (§ 8.4), most of which occur in this capacity only.

### Problems of classification

Boundaries between adverbs[1] prepositions and conjunctions are often of an equivocal nature. Firstly, many words belonging to various word classes are constructed from the same linguistic material, e.g.

---

[1] Sentence adverbs.

ḥaqohu/ḥaqoha - "afterwards" (adverb)

ḥaqohu - "after him" (preposition)

ḥaqoha - "after her " (preposition)

waḥaqo ’əlla bəyḥo wada... - "And after Bəyḥa had done [all] this..." (conjunction)

(PL1, 22:14)

kəm badiru - "as before" (an adverbial expression in which kəm is a preposition)

wa’ət gabay karāyi ’atgassa ’əlu wakəm sakke təqārḥəwo bellom. "And he set armed men [in ambush] for him and told them: 'Treat him as if he runs away!" (i.e. 'scare him'). (conjunction)

(PL1, 93:4 ff)

’əgəl mi - "why?" (adverb); men - "from" (preposition);
’əgəl mi - "because" (conjunction); mən - "if" (conjunction)

Secondly, words of the parts of speech under discussion differ considerably among themselves as regards content. It would be difficult to find a common denominator for such words as ’ifālu - "no" and ’əb dəgmān - "again" or ’əndo - "when" and da’am - "but". Yet the first two are traditionally taken as adverbs while the last two are taken as conjunctions.

Finally, function is likewise an insufficient criterion in distinguishing between the class words under discussion. lāta - "but, however", for example, is traditionally taken as an adverb in spite of instances where it has the same function as da’am - "but".

To solve the above problem of classification would mean reaching out of the scope of this work. The line adopted in this chapter conforms to the traditional approach, as reflected by LH, with a few minor changes.

Words which belong to more than one word class are to be found in each appropriate section.

## § 8.1 Adverbs

(i) As a rule descriptive adverbs precede the verbs they qualify. Many sentence adverbs (see § 8.1.7) take first or second place in the sentence.

(ii) The linguistic stock from which adverbs are constructed comprises: (a) nouns, adjectives, infinitives, participles, (b) particles, most of which function equally as prepositions and/or conjunctions, (c) words and particles which function only as adverbs, (d) pronouns, and (e) the complex ’əndo + perfect which has a content similar to that of an adverb. An adverbial expression may consist of any combination of the linguistic material mentioned in (a)-(d).

(iii) A small number of adverbial expressions are unanalysable as regards their form, e.g.:

(’əb)hamgam - "suddenly" (hamgam is non-existent elsewhere);

’akke - "really"; ’aze - "now", etc.

### A. Classification of adverbs according to form

§ 8.1.1(i) The most frequent structure containing the elements mentioned in § 8.1(a) is that of the nominal element preceded by the preposition ’əb - "with, by", e.g.:

’əb ḥəbuʿ - "secretly"; ’əb šafāg - "quickly";

’əb qalil/’əb qallāl - "easily"; ’əb qəluʿ - "openly";

*'əb qərut* - "carefully"; *'əb tartara* - "in turn, alternately"; *'əb nᵊwet* - "purposely"; *'əb nəyat* - "joyfully"; *'əb 'amān* - "truly"; *'əb dəlit* - "certainly"; *'əb dəbə'* - "silently"; *'əb dəgmān* - "again"; *'əb fərug* - "exactly".

(ii) Less frequently the preposition *'ət* - "in, to", is met with, e.g.:

| | |
|---|---|
| *'ət 'agidat* - "soon, at once"; | *'ət dangoba*[1] - "finally"; |
| *'ət makallasi* - "finally"; | *'ət rəḫuq* - "from afar"; |
| *'ət salf* - "firstly"; | *'ət qəblāt* - "opposite". |

(iii) In adverbs of the structure exemplified in (i) and (ii) above, the nominal form may have a pronominal suffix, e.g.: *'ət 'agidat 'əb lagərəz 'ət ḫəqfa 'əb səlluma 'ət ḫəgəs ladabər baṯrat* - "Soon she stood safely at the lower part of the mountain [-slope], with the child in her lap."

('Ag'azot, 81:10)

(iv) One word with an adverbial function was noted, *bərāq* - "empty, naked", which occurs only with pronominal suffixes, e.g.:

*...wabərāqye mən ga'ako ...* - "... Since I was naked..."

(Racconti, 7:8)

*... bərāqka kəm 'ənta mi 'afhamekka? ...* - "... Who told you that you are naked?..."

(Ibid, 7:9)

§ 8.1.2 Adjectives and participles may be identical in form with the corresponding adverbs, the only distinctive feature of the latter being its position in the sentence, e.g.:

---

[1] Standard pronunciation: *'əddangoba.*

rəḥuq - "far": mən ʼəlla ʼigis warəḥuq ʼət bādobāt baynye baynye ʼəgəl ʼəmbar ḥazze halleko. - "I want to go [away] from here and to live far away in the wild completely alone." (ʼAgʼazot, 69:15)

ʼəkkit - "bad, evil": ...manma ʼəb səmye ḥilat ʼət ləwadde ʼəbba ʼəbba ʼəčče ʼəkkit ʼəgəl ləthāge lagabbeʼ ʼəlu tu ʼalabu. - "... For there is no one who, while doing wonders in my name, can soon [after] speak evil of me."

rayim - "long, far": ... rayim mən ʼigayəs... - "... If he does not go far..." (ʼAgʼazot, 86:8)

sanni - "good, well": ... waʼana sanni təkabbatkəwo . - "... And I received him well..." (TE, 703:3)

bəzuḥ - "very, much": ʼəlli bəzuḥ lalatḥazze tu ʼəgəlye - "This is very important to me."

ʼəlli kəm samʼako bəzuḥ gaheko - "I was much grieved to hear this."

§ 8.1.3 As mentioned in § 8.1(e) the complex ʼəndo + perfect has a similar meaning to that of an adverb, e.g.:

māle ʼət bəčče ʼəndo dangarko maṣʼako - "Yesterday I came home late."

sabbat ʼəlli ʼəndo šafgat latāl ʼəgəl təbattək ʼambatat - "On account of this she (i.e. the little mouse) immediately started to gnaw at the snare." (ʼAgʼazot, 66:15) *sab mansaʿ ʾəndo ʾaqdamaw ʾəslām ʿalaw.* - "The people of Mansaʿ were formerly Muslims."

## B. Classification of adverbs according to meaning and function

Although adverbs differ considerably as regards their content and function, many of them fall into several main groups according to (a) their meaning, e.g.: adverbs of manner, degree, time, place, etc., or (b) their function, i.e.: sentence adverbs, such as interrogative adverbs, adverbs of affirmation and negation, adverbs denoting exception and concession, etc.. Classification of the data that follows (§§ 8.1.4-8.1.73) is based upon the statement above.

## § 8.1.4 Adverbs denoting relation of manner or degree

Examples:

*ʾakəl ḫed* - "equally", e.g.:

*ʾət lawārsat latarfa ʾakəl ḫed kaflo.* - "They divide equally the rest among [lit. 'to'] the inheritors."

(FM, 141:17)

*ban/bayn* - "alone", e.g.:

*ʾaddām ʾəkkuyām bannu ʾət ləgayəs mən raʾawo ...* - "When evil people saw him walking alone..."

(Tribù, 85: 19ff)

*...waʾana baynye tarafko ...* - "... And I remained alone..." (NT, Romans, 11:2/3)

*ʾəb ḫāyl māyl* - "hardly", e.g.:

*laḥeṣān ʾəb ḫāyl māyl ʾəb kəlʾe ʾədəhu naqlaya.* - "The boy tore it out with difficulty with both of his hands." (ʾAgʾazot, 59:18) lazayəd - "mostly, principally, in general, more (comparative), most (superlative)", e.g.:

daʾam min ʿāmər ... waʿad nāyəb ʾəllom lazayəd fārəs ʾəndo belaw lasaqro. - "But the Min ʿĀmər ... and the ʿAd Nāyəb use mostly the war-cry fārəs (i.e.: 'brave, bold')."

(PL1, 166:17ff)

... wahətama lazayəd tətḥabbaʿ mənnu ... - "... And she too generally hides from him..."

(PL1, 56:25)

ʾana mən šāhi lazayəd bun ʾəfatte. - "I like coffee more than tea."

...mən kādmatka man lazayəd təfatte - "'... Whom do you like most among [lit. 'from'] your subjects?'..."

(ʾAgʾazot, 77:2)

ʾakəl ʾakəl - "hardly, seldom", e.g.:

ḥatte dol ʾakəl ʾakəl ʾəgəl ligisma laʾidaqqəb gəndāb ʾənās ʿala - "Once there was an old man who could barely walk." (lit. 'who could not even hardly walk')

(ʾAgʾazot, 82:22)

...ʾakəl ʾakəl ʾənās ʾəgəl waldu walat ḥuhu hadde ʾəlu. - "... Seldom does a man marry his son to his niece."

(ʿAd Šek, 186: (2))

kullu raʾasu - "altogether" (affirmative); not at all (negative)", e.g.:

...ʾənta kəllu raʾasu ʾəb ḥarām təwalladka... - "...'You were altogether born in sin'..."

(NT, John, 9:34)

wamaḥagaz mən 'igabbə' kullu ra'asuma 'igayso 'əttu - "And if there is no necessity [to do it] they do not go there at all." (PL1, 270:4)

'əb laha - "gratis"; masəḥ - "in vain"; bəlāš - "for nothing", gəməš - "for nothing".

məsəl - "jointly, together"; 'əb 'əsər - "together";

gale - "a little (place), a while (time)", e.g.:

...gale kəm kal'a - "...After a while." (lit.: 'after he waited a while') (Racconti, 10;10)

da'am yosef mənnom gale fəntət 'əndo wada baka - "But Joseph, turning a little, away from them, cried." (Ibid, 19:3)

bilu bilu/ bila bila[1] - "finally, gradually, soon, slowly", e.g.:

ḥar lāta bilu bilu ... 'əb sab bet 'əšḥaqan tahammaǧaw - "Later, however, they gradually became subdued by the people of Bet 'Ešḥaqan." (Tribù, 86:6)

wabilu bilu hətom ma 'əlu tətālaw. - "And soon, even they joined him." ('Ad Šek, 196:(6) ff).

waḥar bila bila kəm səmom təgabbə' - "And then, before long it becomes their name." (lit.: 'it becomes like their name') (PL1, 136:15 ff).

'agid/bagid/'agidbagid/'agidat - "quickly"

'əbbu 'əbbu/'əbba 'əbba[2] - "soon, at once, immediately", e.g.:

salamun kəm mota waldu roba'ām 'əbba 'əbba 'ət yəhuda

---

[1] Also: 'ət ləblo 'ət ləblo.

[2] Also pronounced: 'əbbubbu/'əbbabba.

wa'ət bənyām nagsa - "After Solomon died his son Rehoboam immediately became King of Judah and Benjamin."

(Storia, 74:6)

..'əb hergāte ra'asu 'əbbu 'əbbu ladanno ʿala ... - "... Soon he was lowering his head, falling asleep..."

('Ag'azot, 60:22 ff)

The last two entries may be combined periphrastically:

...'agid 'əbba 'əbba ləṭḥabbuʿ ... - "They hide at once..."

(PL1, 252:6)

## § 8.1.5 Adverbs denoting relation of place

Examples:

laʿal - "up(wards)", e.g.:

laʿal wataḥat ḥazeko wa'irə'eko - "I sought up and down and did not find [It]" (lit.: 'did not see').

('ag'azot, 54:9b)

taḥat - "down(wards)", e.g.:

...taḥat wadqa..." - "... He fell down..."

(NT, Acts, 20:9)

ra'asu laʿal - "upwards"; raʿasu qadam - "forwards"' ra'asu ḥar - "backwards'

səgād - "above";

gaṣṣu ḥar - "backwards"; gaṣṣu laʿal - "upwards"; gaṣṣu qadam - "forwards"

'ət qəblāt - "opposite"

qadam - "before, formerly"; mən qadam - "in front".

goṣ ʿad/gof ʿad - "inside"; goṣ kadan /gof kadan - "outside",

'ət kadan - "outside"

mən qabəl - "from a distance".

'əttu/'ətta - "there"; 'əttəlli - "here"; 'ət loha - "there";
'əbbəlla - "in here";
'ənze - "here"; 'ənze waken - "here and there (also: "from now on");
ken - "there, on the other side"; ken wa'ənze - "to and fro";

mən ken - "off", e.g.:

'ət gabay mən ken karan - "on the road off Karan".

### § 8.1.6 Adverbs denoting relation of time

These may be divided into adverbs denoting a period of time limited by two points (on the 'duration axis'), e.g.: yom - "today", and a period of time limited by one point only, e,g.: ḥar - "then, afterwards".

The former contain mainly words which reckon time and the latter are constructed from various elements. In the case of the former, the main element of the expression usually occurs without a preceding preposition, e,g,:

faǧər bāṣə' 'əgəl nigis tu. - "Tomorrow we shall go to Massawa."

wamәse kәm 'eraw -"..And when they returned home in the evening." (PL1, 85:17)

cf. ...wa'əb laməset... - "... and in the evening..." (Ibid, 124:6)

Examples:

hādel yom - "today"; māle - "yesterday"; faǧər - "tomorrow (morning)";
faǧər laha - "the day after tomorrow"; māle laha - "the day before yesterday";
'əb faǧra - "on the next morning"; 'addaḥa - "noon"; yom - "today";
yom 'āmat - "this year"; 'əb fəkkat mədər - "at day break";
fangoḥ - "tomorrow"; fangoḥ laha - "the day after tomorrow".

ḫaqohu/ḫaqoha - "afterwards"; ḫar - "then, after that"; ḫədət ʾəwan - "several times"; məndəlla/mənmənna - "from that time on"; qadam - "before, formerly"; ʾənze waken - "from now on"; ʾaze - "now"; laʾəwān - "at that time"; ladol - "at that time"; ʾəgəl dol - "for some time"; dol dol - "sometimes"; ʾəgəl dima - "for ever (affirmative)"; mən dima - "never (negative)", e.g.:

> gadəm ʾəgəl dima damāyən ʾəgəl rabbi ʾabuna kəbər ləgbaʾ.- "So let there be glory for God, our father, for ever."
>
> (NT, Philippians, 4:20)
>
> ʾəwur ʾət ʾəntu ʾəgəl latəwallada ʾaddām ʿəntātu kəm kasta ʾəlu mən dima ʾitəsamməʿa - "It was never heard that [someone] opened the eyes of people who were born blind." (NT, John, 9:32)

## § 8.1.7 Sentence adverbs

These adverbs qualify the sentence as a whole rather than any particular part of it. The sentence adverbs in Tigre are as follows:

haye[1] - "also, now, however, again (furthermore)", e.g.:

> haygat haye lətbahal - "[The land of Mansaʿ] is also called Haygat." (PL1, 94:18)
>
> haye ʾasək ʾəlla ʾəb ḫayotom lahalla kara ... tom. - "Now, [those] who are still alive (lit.: 'are alive until now') are ... and others like them."
>
> (Tribù, Introduction, xi: 28ff)
>
> laʾənās haye məsəl ʾəmye təherarat bela kaḫadgaya. - "The man, however, said: 'She quarrelled with my mother', and divorced her."
>
> (Tigre Texts, 3:3)

---

[1] Standard pronunciation: h$^y$e.

ʼəb lakawākəb haye ʼəlla ḥala ... - "Again, he sang this about the stars..." (PL1, 59:19)

lāma - "also", e.g.:

wagadəm lāma bəʻədām ʼaddām ʻalaw daʼam ǧənsom ʼitaʼammara. - "Now, the others were also men, but their families (lit. 'their kind') are not known." (PL1, 80:4)

lāta - "however, but", e.g.:

watəgrāy kəstenāy mən gabbəʼ ʼət mambəhu raffəʻo. ʼəslemāy lāta ʼət ʼəslemāy ḥuhu raffəʻo. - "If he is a Christian vassal he offers it (i.e.: the animal's tongue) to his master. A Muslim, however, offers it to his brother Muslim."

(FM, 102:5)

mən taʻabbu wamən taʻassu lāta sayf balləʻakkum... - "But if you refuse and revolt, the sword will consume you..." (OT, Isaiah, 1:20)

leṭa - "only (but)", may function as a sentence adverb, introducing a single restriction in the clause containing it, e.g.:

ʼəkəl ʼəb tarab leṭa balluʻ ʼilaḥarṣo. - "They do not plough, but eat corn which they buy" (lit.: 'They only eat corn by retail - they do not plough')

(PL1, 283:8ff)

waʼəgəl ḥawkum leṭa ʼəb nəyat təssālamo mi fāndāyt təwaddu? ʼăramma kəmsalhu waddu ʼihallaw? - "And what do you do more [than others] if you only salute your brethren voluntarily? Do not even the heathens do so?"

(NT, Matthew, 5:47)

-ma - "also, even" (enclitic), e.g.:

hətama ʼət garob təfaggər wadaran təmassəl daʼam mən gᵊdri wagadʻa təqalləl - "This [lit. 'she', i.e.: measles] also comes out on the body and looks like blisters, but it is lighter than small-pox and chicken-pox."

(SS, 128:8)

ladol ʼət mədər laṣanḥaw ʼaddām wakəl ǧənəs ḥəyāyət wasarāyər ʻastarma təšarrabaw kabadaw. - "At that time the people who remained on land and all species of animals and even winged creatures who could fly were drowned and thus perished." (Racconti, 10:4)

mənma - "although". -ma attached to the conjunction mən - "if", may render the contextual meaning "although", or be translated by "even if", e.g.:

...mənma ʼət ʼəlli baynye baynye ʼənabbər laqasəb ʼiḥadganni - "... Although I live here absolutely by myself, I am not free from anger" (lit.: 'anger does not leave me').

(ʼAgʼazot, 70:5)

mami? - "n'est-ce pas?" (French); "nicht wahr?" (German). This expression comes at the end of an utterance, asserting it as a rhetorical question (lit.: 'or what?'), e.g.:

...bal mallahay ʼəlli kəllu lalaʼakkəl qāl ʼawaǧǧabot tu ʼikon mami... - "'...Say, friend: Does not all this amount to a letter of recommendation?'..."

(ʼAgʼazot, 82:19)

...ʼəgəl mi maṣʼaka? əbba tənabbər ʼaḥa habkoka mami? ... "...'Why did you come? Have I not given you cows to live off?'..." (PL1, 84:23) mənna ta - "thus (therefore); but (contrariwise)";, e.g.:

mənna ta rabbi ’əgəl mafqadi la’ədehu məddət ’ət ’ənta tətraf ḥadga da’ikon... - "Thus God left his hand outstretched (lit. 'to be remained stretchəd') as a reminder (i.e.: the man had stretched his hand towards God, accusing him, and a lightning hit and maimed it)..." (’Ag’azot, 78:18)

warabbi mən kəl ‘əç̌ç̌at ǧannat ’əgəl ləbla‘ ṭallaqayu mənna ta ’əb la‘əç̌ç̌at ’amər .. bello. - "And God allowed him to eat from every tree of /the garden of/ paradise, but about the tree of knowledge he told him: '...'." (Racconti, 6:6)

’əmbal ’əllima/’əmbali’əllidi - "furthermore" (cf. § 8.2.1(25); lit.: 'except this').

’abba - "rather, on the contrary", e.g.:

hətu lāta ’ikon ’abba fəšək təbay bela. - "He, however, said: 'No, on the contrary, you did smile.'" (Racconti, 13:15 ff)

’ənde - "well then", e.g.:

...’ənde gənaḥ sam‘at qəddus māynhard barro hallaw .. - "...'Well then, look! the witnesses of Saint M. are flying...'" (’Ag’azot, 77:14)

’agədda - "rather, especially", e.g.

’agədda səde da’ikon ’ita’āke. - "Rather help - do not quarrel." (’Ag’azot, 54:17b)

...wa’agədda kəmsal marbāt latəmassəl... - "... And especially that which is similar to blood-revenge..." (PL1, 253:5) kama - "then, now then", e.g.:

...'əlli ḥaqo ga'adi nəḥdago kama... - "...'Since this is indeed the case, let's drop it then'..."

('Ag'azot, 63:15)

...fəgar mənnu kama... - "...'Now then leave him (lit.: 'go out from him')...'" (said to an evil spirit which has possessed a man) (PL1, 254:20ff)

kət - "then (since that is so; in those circumstances)", e.g.:

'aqqač haye ḥəna kət mi nide 'ət ləblo sa'alawo. - "Also the soldiers asked him saying: 'We, then, what should we do?'" (NT, Luke, 3:14)

...'əgəlna wa'əgəlkən mən 'i'akkəl kət? 'ət lalazabbu 'əndo gəskən 'əgəl noskən zābaya da'ikon 'igabbə' 'əlna... - "...'If it will not suffice, then, [both] for us and for you? Go to [those] who sell [oil] and buy [some] for yourselves - we cannot [give you]."

(NT, Matthew, 25:9)

kə'ənna/kə'ən/kə'ənni - "thus, like this, in this way (manner, etc.), e.g.:

...da'am hətu kə'ənna balsa... - "But he thus answered..."

(NT, Matthew, 19:4)

'ət kə'ənni lamassəl gār - "in a case like this" (in a matter which looks like this).

...'əgale kə'ən gābə' halla ... - "... So and so has become like this." (i.e.: in a situation like this).

(PL1, 175:8)

'əb kəllu lazaban lafārdat kə'ənna 'ala. kakə'ənna kəl'e me'ət 'āmat ḥaqo mot 'əyāsu ... rabbi sabu' 'āmat

ʼət ʼəde sab mədyān maṭayom. - "It was like this during (lit.: 'all') the time of the judges. And in like manner, two hundred years after the death of Joshua, God surrendered them into the hands of the Midianites."

(Storia, 55:29)

ʻādu - "still, yet", e.g.:

ʼəb zaban badir ʼabʻəbotna ʻādu ʼaram ʼət ʼəntom... - "In olden days, when our ancestors were still heathens.."

(ʼAgʼazot, 104:27)

walaḥəṣān ʻādu nəʼuš ʼət ʼəntu lamaqdas ʼamṣaʼatto ... - "And when the boy was still young she brought him to the temple."

(Racconti, 29:13)

daʼam ʼana lamaṣʼakwa ʼəwān ṣəbəḥ mədər tu. sabbat ʼəlli lawəllād ʻādu ʼibalʻaw. - "But the time I arrived (lit.: 'in which I arrived') was early in the morning. Because of this the children had not yet eaten."

(ʼAgʼazot, 95:3)

-di - "indeed, in fact, really" (enclitic). This particle functions as an adverb of insistence and the meanings given here serve as a guide only: its factual content is to be gained from the context, e.g.:

ʼəlla kəšbat mən badir ʼagədda kəm ʻādat ʻad ʼət ʼənta ṣanḥat leṭa daʼiken kəm sərʻat dindi ʼitətʻallab - "This /act of/ circumcision has rather remained from olden times, being only in the capacity of a habit of the people; in fact it is not considered a religious rite."

(FM, 127:10)

wo yəbba mən gabbəʼdi ʼəlla kās mənye təḥəlaf... - "O father, if only it is possible, let this cup pass from me...". (NT, Matthew, 26:39)

...wad rabbi mən təgabbə’di... - "...'If you are indeed the son of God'..." (NT, Luke, 4:3)

...’əllidi ’ət ḥilačče ’ikon...- "This is really not in my power." (’Ag’azot, 64:17)

gadəm - "now ((i) - as a preliminary word before some statement, question, etc.; (ii) - at this time or juncture in some period under consideration), now then, thus", e.g.:

waḥamuhu gadəm ’əb gabay qanə’ ’əgəl ’əwaṭṭənno bela - "And his father-in-law said [to himself]: 'Now, I shall try him by means of jealousy'."

(PL1, 92:20)

...’azema ḥatte dol waṭṭanat wagadəm taʿawatat... - "Even now she tried hard once [again] and thus triumphed" (i.e.: the ant, trying to remove a grain)

(’Ag’azot, 73:16)

...gadəm səmmaykum mi tu ... - "...'Now then, what is [the amount of] your wedding gift?'..."

(PL1, 114:8)

When gadəm means "now" (the above definitions (i) and (ii)), it is often joined by ’aze - "now (at the present time or moment)", itself susceptible to the same meaning as gadəm. In such a case gadəm becomes semantically redundant, e.g.:

gadəm ’aze kəl’itom ’ət la’adəg təṣaʿanaw. - "Now both of them mounted the donkey."

(’Ag’azot, 74:9)

ka’aze gadəm ’ət ḥafarom wad saraqe šangab naqabbəl. - "And now we return to [the story of the family of]

Ḥ.W.S.Š...." (Tribù, 18:16)

## § 8.1.7.1 Interrogative adverbs[1]

The interrogative adverbs are as follows:

*mədol*[2] - "when?", e.g.:

*mən karan mədol maṣ'aka* - "When did you come from Karan?"

*ma'aze* - meaning and function as above.

*'əttaya/'ət'aya* - "where?, where to?", e.g.:

*'əttaya təgayəs* - "Where are you going?"

*...'ət 'aya halleka ?...* - "...'Where are you?'..."

(Racconti, 7:7)

*mən 'aya* - "from where?", e.g.:

*mən 'aya maṣ'aka* - "Where did you come from?"

*'əšwo* - "where?" (masc. sing.), *'əšwa* (fem. sing.), *'əšwom* (masc.pl.), *'əšwan* (fem. pl.). This interrogative adverb occurs in nominal expressions only. Its referent is always in the third person, e.g.:

*'əšwo labet munat?* - "Where is the dining-room?"

*'əšwo ḥalib labə'ədat 'aḥa?* - "Where is the milk of the other cows?" (Tribù, 33:19)

*'əgəl neṭṭammaq 'əšwa tābotna?* - "Where is our Tābot so that we shall be baptized?"(*Ibid.*, 70:28)

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[1] For the interrogative pronouns *man* - "who?", *mi* - "what?", *'ayi* - "which?", see: § 3.5.

[2] For **mi dol* - "what time?"

*kaʻfo*[1] - "how?", e.g.:

*ʼəlli kaʼafo gaʼa?* - "How did this happen?"

*kaʼafo halleka* - "How are you?"

*ʼəgəl mi* - "why?", e.g.:

*ʼaṣṣəbəḥ ʼəgəl mi ʼimaṣʼaka?* - "Why did you not come in the morning?"

*ʼət mi* - meaning and function as above.

*ʼakəl ʼayi* - "how much?, how many?", e.g.:

*ʼakəl ʼayi ʼakətbat bədibka?* - "How many books do you have?"

*...ʼakəl ʼayi mənnan gəssuyāt kəm tarfaya ʼəgəl tassʼəlanni taʼammər?* - "...'Can you tell me how many of them (i.e. the birds) remained seated [on the tree branches]?"

(ʼAgʼazot, 69:7)

*...wakullu laṭəwaq ʼakəl ʼayi gabbəʼ?* - "...'And all [the loads of] cloth, how many are there?'"

(PL1, 37:5)

*ʼakəl ʼayi māl ʼakkaba?* - "How much money did you make?" (lit.: 'did you gather?')

*ʼəgəl ʼəlla makinat ʼəlla ʼakəl ʼayi soldi taḥazze?* - "How much money do you want for this car?"

*ʼakəl mi* - meaning and function as above.

*kam* - "how much?, how many..?", e.g.

*ʼəlli kətāb kam gabbəʼ* - "How much is this book?"

*ʼət ʼəlli wareḥ ʼəlli kam ʼamʻəl bu gabbəʼ?* - "How many days are there in this month?"

*kam* is used in idiomatic expressions denoting age of persons and hour of the day, e.g.:

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[1] The word *ʼafo* which is used regularly with the meaning "yes", is also met with the meaning "how?" or "why?", notably in exclamatory utterances and in rhetorical questions, e.g.:

*... mi wadenaka? ʼafo kəʼənna wadekanna?* -
"'... What have we done to you? Why do you

*mən ’ənze saʿat kam baggaska?* - "At what time did you depart from here?"

*wad kam ʿāmat ’ənta* - "How old are you?"

### § 8.1.7.2 Adverbs denoting doubt

*man ’ammər*, *lābəd*, *kando*, *gabbə’*, serve in the expression of doubt, having the meaning: "perhaps, maybe, possibly", etc.

*man ’ammər* is a complete sentence by itself (lit.: 'who knows?') and is marked as such in speech by a slight pause at the end, e.g.:

*...man ’ammər, ’ət ḥagāy zəlām lətrakkab...* - "...[There is a drought at present, although it is the rainy season] Maybe it will rain in summer" (i.e.: *ḥagāy* - time of dryness: May-October).

*gabbə’* is a fossilized form of the verb *gab’a* - "to become, to happen". (For examples, see § 4.5.2(a)

### § 8.1.7.3 Adverbs denoting affirmation and negation

*’afo/ʿābe* - "yes", are regularly used in the expression of affirmation or assent, e.g.:

*lohay ’ənās ta’ammərro? ’afo, hətu masnᵊye tu.* - "'Do you know that man?' - 'Yes, he is my friend.'"

*’əlla gabay ’əlla nāy karan tu? ʿābe, raska qadam gis.* - "'Is this the road to Karan?' - 'Yes, go [straight] ahead.'"

*’oho, ’əhə, ’uhu* - "yes". These words are used in familiar conversation only, usually by the listener, to show the speaker that he is attentive.

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treat us like this?...'" (PL1, 34:8)

*...’afo ṭalamkanni?...* - "'... How could you betray me [like this]?..." (Ibid, 15:10ff)

*ʼifālu* - "no", is regularly used in the expression of negation or, dissent, e.g.:

> *sigara taḫazze? ʼifalu, rabbi lahabbakkum*[1] *ʼana sigara ʼiʼəsatte.* - "'Do you want a civarette?' - 'No, thank you, I do not smoke '"
>
> *ʼifālu* comprises the negative particle *ʼi* - plus *fāl* plus the third person masculine singular pronominal suffix *-u* for all persons. The pronominal suffix may, however, be inflected where the connotation is: 'I (you, etc.) do not wish or dare', e.g.:
>
> *lamamhər ʼəndo wassaka wa ... ʼəzanka ʼət ʼakbāt nəgus wabadalka gabbəʽ? bello. ḫašaʽ ʼifālye balsa lamandalāy.* - "The teacher, having continued [his talk] said to him: 'And would you, perhaps, like to exchange your ears ... for the king's treasures?' - 'Far be it from me, no!', answered the young man."
>
> (ʼAgʼazot, 84:8)

*ʼikon* - "no, not", is morphologically the suppletive form of the copula *tu* (third person only) in the negative (see § 4.1.1). Unlike *ʼifālu* (see the preceding entry), *ikon* serves mainly in the expression of denial or refusal, e.g.:

> *... man galodaye kəʼənna šārafa saʼalat. hans kərəntu ʼəndo waqqala ʼana ʼikon bela wamikāʼelma ʼana ʼikon bela.* - "'... Who made my knife notchy like this?', she asked. Hans, raising his voice, said: 'Not I.' And Michael said: 'Not I.'"
>
> (ʼAgʼazot, 101:12)

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[1] Standard pronunciation: *ràbbəlhabbákkum*

kaḥəmmam haye walye ... ʿaṭāl qatlayu bela. walamassəʾəlāy haye bello ʾikon walkadi ḥarmāz qatlayu. - "The leopard, however, said: '... The goats killed my son.' And the messenger, however, said to him: 'No[t so], really the elephant killed your son.'" (PL1, 25:16)

ʿabi - "yes, of course; absoluately yes"

yaʾ/yaʿ - "not at all; absolutely not"

Both ʿabi and yaʾ are interjectionally used; morphologically, the former is an adjective (meaning "big").

## § 8.2 Prepositions

(i) As previously mentioned (cf. § 8, Problems of classification) many adverbs and prepositions are similar in form. Distinction between such adverbs and prepositions is made here according to whether they lack or possess a complement (almost all prepositions may have pronominal suffixes), e.g.:

məsəl nabraw - "They lived together " (adverb).

məsəlka ʾəgayəs - "I shall go with you" (preposition).

(ii) Phenomena regarding the attachment of pronominal suffixes to particles are treated in § 2.10.2.

The prepositions are given in the Ethiopic alphabetical order and are exemplified below. In the case of complex expressions where the first element is a particle, the order of entries is based on the first letter of the second element.

### § 8.2.1 List of prepositions set out and exemplified

(1) mən laʿal - "above", e.g.

worot mən laʼaqšuna mən laʻal lagabay mədud tu. - "One of its [i.e. the tree's] branches was stretched above the road." (ʼAgʼazot, 72:4)

(2) mən ḥaras - "because of, owing to", e.g.:

mən ḥaras ʼəlli - "Because of this."

wamən ḥaras bəzḥe laʼaddām ʼəttu ʼəgəl ləqrabo mən ʼigaʼa ʼəlom... - "And as it became impossible for them to approach him owing to the multitude of people..." (Racconti, 42:27)

(3) ḥaqo - "after", e.g.: ḥaqo kəlʼe sāmən - "after two weeks."

(4) mən ḥənet - "instead", e.g.: gadəm mən ḥənet faǧər yom dayo. - "Now then, do [it] today instead of tomorrow." (ʼAgʼazot, 54:18b)

(5) ḥante/ḥan - "under", e.g.: ...ḥante ṭilān ʼət ḥəna... - "...We, being under the rule of the Italians..." (Tribù, 69:4)

...ḥante ʼəč̣č̣at ḥadgayu - "... He left him [to wait] under a tree." (ʼAgʼazot, 71:4)

(6) ḥad - "up to, about", serves in the expression of approximation,[1] preceding numerals, e.g.:

ʼəb ḥad sabuʻ ʻāmat ʼarbəʻa waworot nəgus waṣṣəʻaw. - "They vanquished forty one kings in about seven years." (Storia, 53:25)

(7) məsəl - "with", e.g.: nəʼuš waldu wakalbu məslu ʻalaw. - "His little son and his dog were with him." (ʼAgʼazot, 71:2)

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[1] See § 7.1.4; cf. §§ 7.1.5, 7.1.6.

(8) *ʾəb məsməsa* - "on account of", e.g.:

*daʾam ʾəb məsməsa ʾisanni magāyəs ...* -

"But on account of an improper way of life..."

(Tribù, 6:29)

(9) *mašanqal* - "over, above", e.g.:

*... kəlʾot nəsər mašangalom laʿasso ʿalaw.* -

"... Two eagles were hovering over them."

(10) *maṭor* - "at the side of, near", e.g.:

*... wamaṭor laraʾasu ʾət mədər ḥaṣināy taklo* -

"... And they stick a piece of iron beside his head, in the ground." (FM, 133:22)

(11) *matān* - "for (the sake of)", e.g.:

*yasus matān nafsu matān wəlād darasahu wamatān laʾamno bu kəllom rammeq.* - "Jesus prays for himself, for his disciples and for all [those] who believe in him." (NT, John, 17 introductory clause)

*ʾaze ʾəb ǧərbačče matānkum ʾəfarrəḥ waʾəb səgāye matān garobu ... ʾaze gamāmat masdad krəstos ʾəmalləʾ.* - "Now I am happy about my sufferings for your sake, and I shall now fill up the incompleteness of Christ's distress ... with my flesh, for his body's sake."

(NT, Colossians, 1:24)

(12) *mən* - "from; than (introducing the second members of a comparison)", e.g.:

*... wamən lahətom ḥabbarawo lamaftəḥ nasʾa.* - "And he took the key from [the place] which they indicated to him." (Tigre Texts, 9:22)

waʾət lagomāt ʿāylāy wad ʿandaloy waworot mən tarəf ʾəšḥaqan təbaʾasaw. - "And at the meeting of the council, ʿA. W. ʿA. and one of the descendents of ʾEšḥaqan had a quarrel." (Tribù, 30:16)

ʾəde mān mən dəggalab tədaqqəb. - "The right hand is stronger than the left hand."

... mən ʾanəs mən latəwalladaw mən yaḥannəs lalaʿabbe ʾalabu ... - "... Among (lit.: 'from') those who are born of women there is none greater than John..."

(NT, John, 7:28)

(13) ʾəb/ʾət məgᵊb - "in the midst of", e.g.:

ladol rabbi ʾəb məgəb labaḥar ʾəgəl lətʿaddaw ʾazzazayom. - "Then God ordered them to go through in the midst of the sea." (Racconti, 24:8)

(14) (ʾət) mən raḥar - "behind", e.g.:

wasāra ʾət mən raḥaru ʾət ʾaffet lakaymat ʾət təbaṭṭər ... - "And Sarah, while standing behind him at the entrance of the tent..."

(Racconti, 13:11)

(15) ʾət raʾas - "at the top of, at the first or foremost part of (lit.: 'at the head of')", e.g.:

kalamasānit ʾət raʾas ʾəlla ḥəfnat əlla lamᵊndaq kəm ḥardaw ... - "And when the friends slaughter the məndaq (i.e.: the sacrificial cow for the dead) at the top of the hole..." (FM, 114:4)

(16) səməṭ - "near, at the side of", e.g.:

lanāy labet səʼəli dəkkan ʼət səməṭ labet lawəraq tu. - "the photography shop is near the post office house."

(17) sabbat - "on account of, because of", e.g.:

walagabil sabbat ḥarāmu taʽassa warabbi sahalayom. - "And the people, on account of their sins, were [in fact] in a state of rebellion; and God was merciful to them" (i.e.: God forgave them.)

(Storia, 45:24)

lafadāyəb ʼafrus naddəʼ laʽala kādmāyma ʼāmara. sabbat ʼəlli[1] ḥad ḥilatom ʼəgəl ləsʽaw ʼašfagayom. - "The servant who was driving the strong horses (i.e. the coachman) was also aware of the danger. Because of this he drove (lit.: 'hurried') them to the limits of their ability."

(ʼAgʼazot, 88:7)

(18) šankat/šanak - "in the direction of, towards," e.g.:

šankat bāṣəʽ galgale ʼanəs hallaya zārāt larakbawan. - "In the direction of Massawa there are some women possessed by evil spirits (lit.: 'which evil spirits seized them')."

(SS, 148:23ff)

(19) ʼət qəblāt/ʼət qabəl - "opposite, in front of", e.g.:

... ʼət qəblātom ʼət woro dabər safra ... - "... He camped opposite them on a mountain..."

(Storia, 61:30)

(20) ʼət qabat - "in the midst of, inside", e.g.:

waʼəgəl laʼənās ʼət qabat baḥar latəmaya laʼaḥa ʼatḥayabawo. - "And they let the man who [had] spent the night in the midst of the sea, receive

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[1] The expression ʼəb ʼəlli sabab ʼəlli - "for this reason" is equally used, having the same meaning.

the cows." (PL1, 34:19ff)

gadəm laʿaqač ’ət qabat lakelab bahalat ’ət safar ’abṣəḥawo. - "Now, the soldiers brought him inside the courtyard, i.e. into the camp."

(NT, Mark, 15:16)

(21) qadam - "before (earlier to; in front of)", e.g.:

qadam krəstos... - "before Christ" (i.e.: B.C.).

(’Ag’azot, 62:15)

...qadam lagənāzat gayəs ’asək laḥəfrat. - "He goes before the corpse (i.e.: leading the funeral) up to the hole." (C Ross Trad, 58:17)

... qadamom gayəs ʿala. - "... [He] was walking in front of them." (Racconti, 23:27)

(22) mən taḥat - "under, below", e.g.:

... mən taḥatka ç̌əqqa ləgba’., - "'... Let there be a ç̌əqqa [chief of inferior rank] under you'."

(Tribù, 82:11)

’ət lašagāli mən ṭaḥat la’abyātu ... māy rakba. - "He found water ... lower down than his house, by the sycamores." (Tribù, 64:12)

(23) nāy[1] - "of" (also corresponding to 'genitive' constructions in English such as: 'John's hat', etc.); e.g.:

...wahəṭakəm wa’at rəggāz ma nāy šaḥāg ma nāy ’aqḥəma ’əndo taʿallabat tətbahal. - "And she

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[1] Cf. § 3.4.

(i.e.: the cow) is named as (lit. 'being reckoned') the cow of rəggāz (i.e.: of the funeral sacrifice) or of šaḥāg (ditto), or of ’aqḥəma (ditto)." (FM, 138:30)

nāy yom məhro - "today's lesson".

...’əb ḥatte ba‘at nāy ladəba‘. - "... In a certain cave in (lit.: 'of) the bush..."

(’Ag’azot, 76:16)

‘abi qeṭo mən ‘əč̣č̣āy latəšaqqa tu wa’əb nāy ḥewān qarbat lalabsa tu. - "The [big armchair called] qeṭo is made of wood and is covered with animal skin."

(24) ’əl - "to, for", is used, more often than not, in the expression of the indirect object,[1] e.g.:

...walye ’abuka ’əlka massəl ... - "'... My son, your father resembles you...'"(Lt Leg, 8:6)

bəḥəl bal ’əlye - "Forgive me."

... ṭā’otāt ’aram ’əndo dallalaw ’əgəl lamləko wa’əgəl ləsadqo ’əlom ’ambataw. - "... Having become attached to heathen idols they started to adore and worship them." (Racconti, 33:15)

wa’əgəl ’abuhu mi ’əgəl ləssamme kəm ḥazze ’ammataw ’əlu. - "And they made signs to his father [to ask him] what [name] he wanted that he (i.e. the son) should be called." (Storia, 107:23)

...wa’ət bəsotu č̣ənč̣āy mən rə’ena ’əlu zabaṭna -

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[1] Cf.: (34)-’əgəl, and (30) - ’ət and (iii) below.

"'... And as we saw a fly on his forehead we struck at it.'" (Tigre Texts, 10:5)

Cf. walaʼəlu darāba bəʿəd ʼəban... - "And the other stones which he threw" (lit.: 'and the other stones which he threw them'). (Tribù, 3:26)

The lexical meaning of ʼəl is demonstrated in the following examples:

waʼəgəl laməs ç̌addo mən ʼirakbo ʼəlu ... - "And if they do not find ç̌addo (i.e. a certain tree whose roots are used in preparing the mead) for the mead..." (lit.: 'for the mead if they do not find ç̌addo for it'). (PLl, 188:25)

dol sakib šabbat walәbānat latanno ʼəlu. - "They fumigate for him šabbat (i.e.: substance containing alum) and incense at bed time." (SS, 134:24)

... ʼazema ʼəlla baqalka ḥəwār ʼanəs təwallad ʼəlka. -- "'... Now then, this mule of yours will beget a female young one for you.'" (TE, 703:6)

... dib masnika ʼəte ʼəlna... - "'...Go for us (i.e.: on our behalf) to your friend...'" (PLl, 34:8)

For the expression of the notion "to have" by means of halla + ʼəl and ʿala + ʼəl, see: §§ 4.3(b), 4.3.2 and 4.4. For the idiomatic expression gabʼa + ʼəl see: § 4.5.2(b).

(25) ʼəmbal - "without, except", e.g.:

*wakəllom kəm ʿargaw ʾəmbal lakəlʾot laʾəlom ʾatrafaw...* - "When all of them have mounted [the tomb], except for the two whom they left behind..."

(PL1, 175:22)

*ʾəmbal māy wasəq ʾitigis.* - "Do not go (i.e.: travel) without water and provisions."(ʾAgʾazot, 54:14b)

*mi ḥaddās? sema ʾəmbal daḥan.* - "'What's new?' - 'Nothing but good.'" (Ibid, 56:9ff)

(26) *ʾəraf* -"near", e.g.:

*labet məhro ʾəraf labet kəstān ta.* - "The school is near the church."

(27) *ʾasar* - "after (following)",e.g.:

*wahətu kəm mota ʾasaru waldu maḥammad ʾəgəl ləšaymo ʾət laḥazzu.* - "... And since he had died, they wanted to appoint his son M. after him. ..."

(Lt Su S̊ang, 11:2)

*ʾasar ʾəlla ...* - "After that..."

(Tribù, 59:24)

In some forms of the third person, the variant *ʾasarehu* etc., may occur, e.g.:

*mənna bet kəm gesa ʾana ʾət ʾasarehu maṣʾako.* - "I came home after he had left" (lit. '[He], having left the house, I came after him.')

(28) *ʾasək* - "until, up to, towards, as far as," e.g.:

*...ʾasək ʾəlladi ʾammənnom ʿalko.* - "... Up to that [time] I did believe him." (TE, 703:9)

wahətom 'asək yərusalem gesaw. - "And they went to Jerusalem." (Lt Leg, 8:9)

'əb faǧra 'asək betu 'ət laqabbəl ʿəç̌ç̌at wādqat 'əb nəhəba rakba - "In the morning, when he was returning home he found a fallen tree with honey [in it]."

(Tribù, 85:11)

walaḥəyāyət kəm rə'etto kəlla saket mənnu 'asək ḥarammәzma. - "And when the animals saw it, they all fled from it, even the elephants."

(PL1, 73:2)

(29) 'əb/bu[1] - "about, with (accompanied by; by means of), within (in the course of time, or period of), through (within the limits of), of (indicating material or substance), owing to."

(i) 'əb. Examples:

wa'əbbom bəzuḥ ḥasbo... - "... And they think often [lit. 'much'] about them..." (PL1, 251:3)

'əb tasfoy lakālə' bəzuḥ ṣaggāy wahāybāy kəm ʿala ləddaggam. - "It is told about the second Tasfoy that he was generous and munificent."

(Tribù, 86:19)

...wa'affetu 'əb 'əban sanni tədābə'a. - "... And its entrance was well sealed with stones."

(Tribù, 34:17)

'əb ḥatte sāmən - "within a week".

musa mən qādəs dib sab 'ədom wəlād 'əsrā'əl 'əb mədrom 'əgəl ləḥəlafo la'āyak nad'a. - "Moses sent messengers from Kādeš to the people of Edom, so that the people

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[1] Third person, masc. sing. form represents the paradigm.

of Israel could pass through their country."

(Storia, 51:6)

ʽarāt salon ʼəb ḥaṣin latəšaqqa tu. lamakrayi ʼagərbat haye ʼəb ʽəç̌ç̌āy latəšaqqa tu. - "The sofa is made of iron. The cupboard, however, is made of wood."

ʼəb ʼattasʼayot ʼabuhom ʼəndo tənayata worot mən lawəlādu laṣəbbat rafʽa waʼəgəl ləsbara waṭṭana. - "Owing to the promises of their father, one of his sons, being encouraged, lifted the bunch of branches and tried to break it." (ʼAgʼazot, 68:14)

(ii) bu[1]

This is a sandhi-form variant of ʼəb. bu materializes in a stress unit,[2] where (a) a preceding word carries the primary stress; (b) ʼəb takes a prononominal suffix, the syllable containing the glottal stop being unstressed and (c) ʼəb is followed by a pause. These conditions are typical of ʼəb in a stress-unit final position in the sentence, where its pronominal suffix functions as a pronoun of reference, e.g.:

walanagād mədyān ʼəgəl yosef ʼət məsər dannaw bu. (dánnawbù).- "And the Midianite traders descended with Joseph to Egypt..."

(Racconti, 16:19)

ǧən laṣabṭayu ma lataʽayana dib ʽad ǧəmbago maṣṣuʼ bu. (máṣṣuʼᵊbù)[3] - "He who is possessed by a demon, or who

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[1] Third pers. masc. sing. form represents the paradigm.

[2] For the term: 'stress-unit', see: § 1.5.

[3] The non-gemination of the b shows that it is the sandhi-form variant and not the absolute form.

who becomes obsessed, is taken (lit.: 'they go with him') to the people of Ǧəmbago."

(SS, 146:24)

*wa'əlli higahom lasamʿaw 'addām 'əgəl šum laʿad ḫākaw bom.* (*ḫákawbòm*) - "And the people who heard this talk of theirs, told the village chief about them." ('Ag'azot, 76:15)

*walatarfat 'ət laqablo ba, wᵊlād galləya kaballəʿa.* ('ə̀t laqablóba) - "And when they return with what has remained, the boys take it away and eat it."

(PL1, 125:20)

(iii) *bə'əttu*

(a) The particle *b-* + pronominal suffixes is one of the means through which Tigre expresses the notion: 'to have'; 'to have' may also be expressed by the complex form *bədibu*[1] (*bə* + *dib*).

(b) The particle *b-* may combine with *'ət* (cf. (30) below), assuming the complex-form *bə'ət(t)-* + pronominal suffixes, in the expression of the notion 'to have'. It is different, however, from *bu* or *bədibu*, as regards content and distribution. Firstly, its meaning is the outcome of the lexical content of both *bu* - "to have" and *'ət* (the latter's meaning in this complex being limited to: "on", indicating contact with surface, and "in", indicating inclusion within space, or limits). Secondly,

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[1] See: § 4.3(a).

the complex bəʾəttu occurs predominantly in relative clauses.[1] In translating such relative clauses into English, it is often preferable to use the English expression of existence (e.g.: 'where there is') rather than the expression of possession (e.g.: 'which has in/on it').

Examples:

waʾaqbəru ʾasək yom ʾət kəl ʾakān halla, ʾəban gazāyəf wararāyəm labəʾəttu. - "And their (i.e. the giants') tombs exist in every place until today, where there are heavy and large stones" (or: '[those] which have on them heavy and large stones'). (PL1, 87:22)

waḥaqoha kəl ḥaṭaʿ waḥagaləb ʾət labəʾətta bet marḥayu. - "And afterwards he led him to a house where there was any [kind of] poverty and want" (or: 'a house which had in it any...' etc.) (ʾAgʾazot, 89:21)

bəzuḥ ǧənəs nāfʿām wabah lalablo ʾagərbat labəʾəttan naʾāyəš ʿəlab ʾəb kom kom kəruy tu. - "Many small boxes which contained (lit.: 'which had in them') various (lit.: 'many kinds') useful and rejoicing things were placed in heaps." (ʾAgʾazot, 104:22)

(30) ʾət - "in, on, to, against, because of", e.g.:

(i) ʾət bāṣəʿ ʿabi bet məhro halla. - "There is a big school in Massawa."

ʾətta safrat ʿabi ʿafəš karaw. - "They placed a large parcel on the table."

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[1] For bu - "to have", in relative clauses, see § 4.3.3. For examples in which bəʾəttu functions as the main verb, cf. Tigre Games, 66:32, Storia, 46:14.

*’əgəl la’adəg ’ətta ‘əç̌ç̌at ’asrayu.* - "He tied the donkey to a tree."

*... gadam ’əllom gābāt sammu‘ ’ətkum...* - "... These vultures will be witness against you."

(’Ag’azot, 77:11)

*wala’əttu təsaḥaqka ’assə’əlanni? ...* - "... And tell me what made you laugh?" (lit.: 'that because of which you laughed') (PL1, 89:6)

(ii) Certain verbs make use of *’ət* in the expression of the indirect object, e.g.:

*...’əndo bela balsa ’əttu.* - "He answered him, saying: '...'."

(iii) *’ət* plus pronominal suffixes may, in its sandhi-form, *t-*[1], serve as a second complement (the one which is the direct object) for verbs which can take two complements. A detailed statement and examples concerning these data are provided in § 4.1.6.

(31) *’akəl* - "as (much) as, as well as," etc., is used in comparisons denoting equality, e,g,:

*ḥəsān ’akəl ’ənās ’ikaddəm* - "A child is not as useful as an adult." (’Ag’azot, 54:20b).

*’ana ’akəl ’əlli wəhər ‘abbāy ’i’əgabbə’ tu?* - "'Could I not become as big as this bull?' [said the frog]."

(Ibid, 67:5)

(32) *’ət akān* - "instead, in place of", e.g.:

*lamāyət ’əslemāy mən gabbə’ ’ət ’akān laqaš šek ‘et*

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[1] For the phonetic conditions under which *t-* occurs, cf. (29)(ii) *-bu*, above.

laqabər marrəḥ - "If the dead [man] is Muslim a sheikh leads [the funeral] to the grave, instead of a priest."

(FM, 137:26)

(33) ’ət ’əzām - "instead", e.g.:

...wa‘ət ’əzām madḥar margam ’əgəl ’iləmṣa’ ’əčče ’əfarrəḥ - "'...And I fear [that] instead of a blessing he may bring a curse against me'...".

(Storia, 22:21)

(34) ’əgəl - "for, to", indicating relation of direct object,[1] introducing the object.

(i) The particle ’əgəl is used, with considerable regularity, in the expression of the direct object, e.g.:

wabet ’abrəhe nəwāyu zamtat wa’əglu ’ətta qatlatto. - "And the [people of] Bet ’Abrəhe raided his cattle and killed him there" (lit.: 'And Bet ’Abrəhe raided his cattle, and him - they killed him there').

(PL1, 196:5)

ladol ’əgəl ’ənās ’əsrā’elāy lalaharrəm ’ənās məsrāy ra’a. - "Then he saw an Egyptian man who was beating an Israelite." (Racconti, 22:16)

(ii) ’əgəl is frequently used to introduce the object of the verb, the verb itself taking a pronominal suffix of which the referent is the object, e.g.:

’əgəl labāb dab’ayu - "He shut the door."

’əgəl masnihu kətāb habayu - "He gave his friend a book."

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[1] Cf.: (24) - ’əl above.

ʼəgəl laʼənās bello... - "He said to the man: '...'."

(iii) The lexical meaning of ʼəgəl is demonstrated in the following examples:

ʼəgəl ʻəntāt rabbi kəllu qəluʻ wakəsut tu. - "All is disclosed and open to the eyes of God."

(ʼAgʼazot, 63:22)

ʼəgəl ḥatte saʻat lagabbəʼ sakabna. - "We rested for about one hour."

ʼəgəl ʼəsrāʼəl mārḥāy ʼəgəl lahab dib rabbi ramqa. - "He entreated God to give [the people of] Israel a leader." (Storia, 52:2)

ʼəgəl man zābekaha lawaʼat? ʼəgəl ʼabuye waʼəmye. - "'For whom did you buy the cow?' - 'For my father and mother'." (ʼAgʼazot, 54:18a)

(35) ʼət ʻaf - "before", e.g.:

ʼəgəl sar ʻāmat lagabbəʼ ʼətta təmaharko ʼət ʼaf ʼəlla. - "Before that, I had studied there for about half a year."

(36) kəm - "as, like", e.g.:

kəm gəhi təmassəl. - "You look sad." (lit.: 'You seem like [a] sad [man].)

dəgəm gabil kəl dol ʼəb nosuma kəm mamhər tətu... - "People's history even by itself is always instructive (lit.: 'as a teacher')." (Tribù, Introduction, xii:12)

(37) kəmsal - "as, like". The difference between this preposition and the former is in that kəmsal can take pronominal suffixes, while kəm cannot, e.g.:

wakəm təšayamat walat kəmsalha blātāngeta wadetta. -

"And when she was appointed chief she made a girl like herself *blātāngeta.*" (Lt Leg, 4:16)

*kəmsal nafsəka mallahayka fəte.* - "Love your friend as [you love] yourself." (ʾAgʾazot, 56:17)

*ladol ʿəqul kəmsal šokan sarrər ...* - "Then the lame will jump like a gazelle..." (Isaiah, 35:6)

(38) *kara* - "with the company of, things like, such as", e.g.:

*wakara ǧahāǧ dib mallahayom ʾaqbalaw.* - "And Ǧahāǧ and his company returned to their friend."

(FL1, 48:5)

*kaʾəgəl kara ʾəgale ləblo kaḥalbo.* - "And they say: 'For so and so and his company', [and] then they milk the cows." (Ibid, 228:10)

*kaʾasək ʾaze mən kəstənnana lahallet ʾəlna sərʿat kara ʾəlli massəl leṭa tu...* - "And rites which we [still] possess from our Christianity until now, are only things like the following: ...". (lit.: 'seem only things like this') (Tribù, 71:1 ff)

*dangoba kəllu rabbi nabyāt kara sāmuʾel wabəzḥām bəʿədām ʾəndo laʾaka...* - "Finally, after God had sent prophets such as Samuel and many others..."

(Storia, 73:4 ff)

(39) *ʾət kabəd* - "in(side)", e.g.:

*...ʾaze ʾət kabəd bet*[1] *ʾaddam ʾihalla...*- "'..There is no one at present inside the house...'"

(ʾAgʾazot, 63:12ff)

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[1] As a lexical entity *kabəd bet* or *kadbet* means : "floor". Cf.: § 2.8, exx. at the end of section.

(40) *ʿadad*[1] - "according to", e.g.:

*ʿadad ʿaqmu šaqa* - "He performed according to his ability."

(41) *darb* - "behind, after", indicating relation of place only, e.g.:

*kadarbu ’ət ləgayəs ...* - "And walking after him ..."

(’Ag’azot, 71:14)

*whətu ’egəl ləḫərada darba təkarra.* - "And he got down behind her (i.e.: the cow) in order to slaughter her."

(TE, 701:2)

(42) *dib* - "to, into, at", indicating direction and locality of destination, e.g.:

*bəzuḫ werāq naddə’ ʿala dib bəʿədām ʿaddotāt.* - "He used to send many letters abroad (lit.: 'to other countries')."

*kə’ənās dib bəʿəd medər ’ət lətbaggas...* - "And a man, going out to a foreign country..."

(NT, Matthew, 25:14)

*...wagahay wamasdad dib betka gabay ’irakbo.* - "...And sorrow and distress will not find the way into your house."

(’Ag’azot, 63:3)

*ḫaqoha ... kəm ʿabaw ʿadna ’ət ləblo dib maḫāri maṣ’aw.* - "Later on..., when they grew up, thinking about their country (lit.: 'saying: "Our country"') they came to Maḫāri." (Tribù, 11:33ff)

*lakawākəb mən kəl ’ənkər dib ʿad ḫəd kəm laləddarābaw maslo...* - "The stars seem as if they are thrown one at another from all directions...."

(PL1, 60:22 ff)

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[1] Cf.: § 7.1.5.

(43) ’ət dəwār - "around", e.g.:

... ṣewa labet ’ət dəwār lasafrat ’algen ta’akkaba. - "... The family gathered around the ’Algen [wood] table." (’Ag’azot, 99:7)

(44) (’əb) ǧallāb - "for the sake of", e.g.:

... da’am ǧallābka mi ’əwadde? nəs’a kamạ... - "'But for your sake what shall I do? Take it then.'" (PL1, 31:7)

(45) ’ət gərra "behind, after". This preposition is different from darb (see (41) above) in that ’ət gərra indicates relations of both time and place, e.g.:

’ət kadamom baḥar ’erətra wa’ət gərrahom far’on ’əb kəlla lakarāyihu tu halla... - "In front of them there was the sea of Eritrea, and beind them Pharaoh with his entire army..." (Racconti, 24:6)

waḥar ’ət gərrəhom lalatammǝmma ’əlom mən ’irakbo... - "And later, after them (i.e.: after their death), if they do not find [someone] who will achieve it..." (PL1, 253:6)

(46) go/gor - "at, with" (corresponding in meaning to 'chez' in French, e.g.:

wala’ab ḥatte wakəd go yaḥannəs kəm təgassa... - "And once when the father was sitting at John's [house]..." (’Ag’azot, 100:11)

...wa’ət kaymat go ʿāqbatom ’atgassawo - "... And they made him sit in a tent, with their guards" (i.e.: where the guards stayed). (Tribù, 68:22) *dāwəd ’əb ’əlla wakəd ’əlla go ’abuhu ’ət ‘ad ’ət ’əntu la’abāgə‘ lər‘e ‘ala.* - "David, at that time, at home (lit.: 'being at home') in his father's /place/, was pasturing the sheep."

(Racconti, 32:9)

(47) *gədor* - meaning and function as above.

(48) *’əb gabay* - "by means of", e.g.:

*waḫamuhu gadəm ’əb gabay qanə’ ’əgəl ’əwat̮t̮ənno bela...* - "And his father-in-law thought: 'Now I shall put him to test by means of jealousy'."

(PL1, 92:20)

(49) *fənge/mənge*[1] - "between", e.g.:

*laḫəṣit fənge ‘asər wakəl’e wa‘asər waḫaməs ‘āmat ’ət hallet...* "When the betrothed girl is between twelve and fifteen years old..." (FM, 109:12)

*walaqadamom təgayəs la‘alat tākyat lagim ’əndo qanṣat fənge sab məsər wawəlād ’əsrā’el bat̮rat.* - "And the pillar of clouds which had been going in front of them stood between the people of Egypt and the people of Israel."

(Storia, 41:25)

(50) *fəza* - meaning and function as (44) above.

## § 8.3 Conjunctions

These are connective words, either coordinating or subordinating. The former are used in connecting two clauses, phrases or words; the two elements connected are of the same grammatical function (i.e.: substantival, adjectival, etc.). The latter are

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[1] The form *mənge* is not often met.

used in introducing a subordinate clause, joining it to a principal clause.

## § 8.3.1 Coordinating conjunctions

The two parts of an utterance linked together by a coordinating conjunction are syntactically independent. There is, however, a relation of optional dependency between the two linked parts; the sentence, clause or word introduced by the conjunctions, brings about the notion of result, restriction, contrast or alternative, in relation to the part of the utterance preceding the conjunction. Exceptional to this are wa (see § 8.3.7(1)) "and", whose role may be grammatical only (i.e.: coordinative only), and ka (see §8.3.2(4)) whose grammatical role may be occasionally identical to that of wa. The former may also participate in the expression of the alternative, the latter being regularly used in introducing clauses of result.

§ 8.3.2 The coordinating conjunctions are as follows:

(1) wa[1] - (i) "and"; (ii) "or" (following ləgba').

(i) wa is used in linking together two or more sentences, clauses, phrases, or single words, e.g.:

'ət mədər ḥabaš ḥatte 'əssit ṣādqat walāwhat samara 'əzgi latətbahal ʿalat. - "There was in Ethiopia a righteous and kind woman called S.'E."

(ii) The construction: ... ləgbaʿ wa[2]... - is used to connect alternatives, e.g.:

... 'addām ləgba' waḥəyāyət... - "... Be it a man or an

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[1] For the construction wa + perfect in the apodosis of sentences with unreal conditions, see: § 9.6.2.

[2] See: § 9.7

animal..." (PL1, 73:15)

(2) *ma*[1] - "or", is used to connect alternatives, e.g.:

*'aksum nə'iš ta ma ʿabbāy ?* - "Is 'Aksum small or big?"

*'əssit mallahayka təgba' ma gabru ma 'amatu ma bəʿərāyu ma 'adgu ma mən māl mallahayka laga'a ləgba' sema 'itərqabo.* - "Never covet your friend's wife or his slave (lit.: 'his male slave or his female slave') or his ox or his donkey or whatever [there is] of his property." (Racconti, 26:28)

(3) *wok*[2] - "or".

(i) This conjunction's function and meaning is identical to those of *ma* above, e.g.:

*gale 'əgəl təste taḫazze? man 'ammər bun wok šāhi?* - "Will you have something to drink? maybe coffee or tea?"

(ii) *wok* may repeat itself, heading either part in an utterance denoting an alternative. The corresponding English expression would be 'either ... or', e.g.:

*... wok 'ətaw 'əčče katəgabbaro wok haye 'əzamtakkum...* "...'Either you come to me and be my subjects or I shall raid you'..." (Tribù, 53:23 ff)

(4) *ka*[3] - (i) "and"; (ii) "(and) so, therefore", "then (in that case)"; (iii) "then (next in order of time)".

(i) *ka* may have a coordinative role only, being similar in function to *wa* (see (1)(i) above), in which case the difference between the two is a stylistic one, e.g.:

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[1] Cf.: § 9.7.

[2] Substandard pronunciation: *'ok*. For its role in constructions denoting the alternative, see: § 9.7.

[3] For the occurrence of *ka* in tense complexes, see § 6.15 et seq.

walarom kəm ra'ayu ṭarqa 'əttu katəsālamayu wamən 'aya 'ənta bello. - "And when the Rom (i.e.: singular form of 'arwām - name of the legendary giants who lived in olden times) saw him, he made his way towards him (lit.: 'and') greeted him and asked him.: 'Where are you from?'" (PL1, 83:21)

(ii) Along with its role mentioned in (i) above, ka may indicate that the content of the part of the utterance following it, is the consequence of the content of the part of the utterance preceding it. In such cases the English translation would be: "so, therefore, then (since that is so)", etc., e.g.:

la'əssit 'arwe 'asḥattenni kabal'ako təbe. - "The women said: 'The snake enticed me, so I ate [the apple]'." (Racconti, 7:13)

...walahay wo mamba 'əgəl 'ər'e habanni bela. wayasus karə'e 'əmnatka ḥāyetakka bello. - "And that one (i.e. the blind beggar) said [to Jesus]: 'O Master, give me my sight.' (lit.: 'Give me [the gift] to see') And Jesus said to him: 'See then (i.e.: since this is your wish'), your faith has healed you.'" (NT, Luke, 18:41, 42)

(iii) ka may have an adverbial connotation, indicating that the action described in the part of the utterance following ka is subsequent in time to that described in the part of the utterance preceding the conjunction, e.g.:

'əgəl liqa' mawat 'əndo qarfo 'əlu č̣afč̣əfo 'əlu wa'ət may waddəwo ka'əlu satte. - "In order that he ( i.e. the sick man) will vomit they peel him a *mawat* plant, crush it and put it in water, then he drinks it."

(SS, 136:25)

(5) *da'am* - "but", links two sentences or clauses, the second of which is of restrictive nature as regards the first, e.g.:

*'əgəl nər'ekka naḥazze ʿalna da'am 'awkād 'irakabna* - "We wanted to see you but found no time."

*gabil galab badir kullu 'əslām leṭa ʿala, ḥaqo ḥud 'awkād da'am kəstān 'əgəl ləgba' 'ambata.* - "Formerly the people of Galab were all Muslims (lit.: 'all were Muslims only'). But soon (lit.: 'after a little while') they started becoming Christians."

(6) *da'ikon*[1]. This conjunction is regularly used as a grammatical device which renders a paratactic relation, of an utterance comprising two sentences, hypotactic.

The notional relation between two such sentences is that of emphatic opposition or restriction, where one sentence contains a verb in the affirmative, and the other - a verb in the negative. In speech, the pitch of voice is raised in the word preceding *da'ikon* (i.e. the verb), and the conjunction is followed by a short pause.

*da'ikon* cannot be defined as a lexical entity, and its factual meaning is to be deduced from its contextual sense. In a free translation into English, meanings such as: "on the contrary, rather, but," etc., or a dash between the two sentences, would be possible, depending on the contextual sense.

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[1] Standard pronunciation: *də'ikon.* Variant forms not often met with, are: *da'ikoni* (e.g.: PL1, 82:7) and *da'ikone* (e.g. PL3, 210:4)

The main types of utterances containing da'ikon may be set out as follows:

(i) The most frequent pattern is the one in which the sentence with the verb in the affirmative comes first, followed by da'ikon, e.g.:

...'ifālka. latarfaya kəllan 'əb lazabṭat farraya da'ikon ḥattema 'itarfat... -..."'Not so. All those [birds] which had remained took off because of the [noise of] the shot - not even one remained'."

The sentence containing the verb in the negative may change place with the sentence containing the verb in the affirmative, e.g.:

...lamasāru nāy kallāt ta 'itəbattək təssabbar da'ikon... "'...His axe is [made] of clay; it cannot cut, on the contrary - it will break.'" (PL1, 12:14 ff)

(ii) The utterance containing da'ikon may be elliptical (i.e: where there is no sentence containing a verb in the negative, but the notion of such a part of the utterance is implied by the context), e.g.:

...walye wad 'amānye walonayma walye tu ǧago ga'a da'ikon... "...'[you are] my true son and that one too is my son, but he has turned out a dolt [I do not want him]...'"

(Lt Leg, 8:20)

(iii) da'ikon may approach the meaning of da'am - "but" (cf. § 8.3.1 (5) above), where the notion expressed is one of restriction rather than of opposition. In such a case da'ikon is preceded by the verb of the sentence which introduces the restriction, e.g.:

lamənna qanṣaw ’akān ’ita’ammarat da’ikon la’əbbu ga‘azaw məsməsa ’əlli tu ləblo. - "They say [that] the place from which they emigrated (lit.: 'got up') is not known, but the reason (lit.: 'by which') they emigrated is this: '...'." (Tribù, 5:9)

## § 8.3.2 Subordinating conjunctions

### Form

The linguistic stock from which subordinating conjunctions are constructed comprises (a) mainly prepositions, e.g.: ḥaqo, mən, asək, kəm: (b) nouns: sabbat - "reason", ’əwān, wakəd, dol - "time"; (c) ’əndo - "while, after" which is used as a conjunction only, and (d) compound interrogative-adverbs, e.g.: ’əgəlmi - "because" (as an adverb it means: "why?").

### Function

A subordinate conjunction introduces its clause, joining it to a principal clause. Subordinate conjunctions which also occur as prepositions may function as 'sentence prepositions': they introduce a subordinate clause whereas the corresponding prepositions introduce a single word or phrase. Subordinating conjunctions differ from the corresponding prepositions in that (a) they cannot have pronominal suffixes while almost all prepositions can, and (b) they can govern the verb of the subordinate clause (certain conjunctions determine whether the perfect or imperfect verb-forms will be used (see § 6.6 (c) ).

§ 8.3.3 The subordinating conjunctions are as follows (where no mention is made of the morphological category used with the conjunction, this can be either the perfect or the imperfect):

(1) ḥaqo - "after (subsequent to the time that), since, as", e.g.:

ḥaqo 'ət karan 'aqabbəl waraqat 'əgəl 'əndā' 'ətka tu. - "I shall send you a letter after I return to Karan."

...ḥaqo ḥalibkum sata ç̌ənç̌āy larə'ekummo qətolo... - "'...Since [the flies] drank your milk, kill any fly you see...'" (Tigre Texts, 9:32 ff)

(2) mən ḥənet - "instead of, lest (for fear that)", e.g.:

walamallahayu mən ḥənet marrəḥo 'agədda 'əb ləgām 'əgəl lasə'ən faras ləsḥəbbo. - "And instead of his friend leading him [i.e.: leading the horse by the bridle] he rather dragged the tired horse by the bridle." ('Ag'azot, 98:9)

...kəmən ḥənet fətəḥ musa lətbarraw mot ḥarraw... - "... And lest they betray the Law of Moses they chose death..." (Storia, 97:15)

(3) 'əbmi - "because", e.g.

rayim gabay 'əb 'əgru 'əgəl ligis ʿala 'əlu 'əbmi makinatu 'əb hamgam təsabbara - "He had to walk (lit.: 'go by foot') a long way, because his car suddenly broke down."

(4) 'əgəlmi - function and meaning as above.

(5) mən - "if"[1] (with the imperfect form); "since" (with the perfect form); "whether", e.g.:

ʿad gomāt 'əgəl lide mən ḥazze kantebāy waṭāy lətlāke...-

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[1] For the construction perfect + məngabbə' in the protasis of conditional sentences, see: § 9.6.1.

"If the people want to arrange a meeting of the council, the chieftain calls a [Flute] player" (i.e. the flute player announces the end of the meeting by playing his flute). (FM, 149:22)

*sabbat ’əlli kə’ənna mən ’asnaya ’əgəl lara’awa kəllom bah ’abalattom* - "Because of this, since he had taken good care of it (i.e.: of the lemon tree) in this way, it delighted all [people] who saw it."

(’Ag’azot, 59:4)

*da’am pilaṭos qadam ’əlla mən mota taʻaǧǧaba ...* - "But Pilate wondered whether he was already dead..." (lit.: 'whether he died before that').

(NT, Mark, 15:44)

(6) *sabbat* - "because", e.g.:

*sabbat dangarko bəhəl bal ’əlye* - "Excuse me for being late" (lit.: 'Excuse me because I was late').

(7) *asək* - "until" (with the imperfect form), e.g.:

*da’am hamgam č̣ənč̣ā̌y ’əndo maṣ’a ’ət dəqəm lawad nəgus təgassa wa’asək fazzəʻ nakšayu.* - "But suddenly a fly came and sat on the king's son's cheek, and bit him until he woke up." (’Ag’azot, 76:13)

*mənna ta ’asək təthadde mən dār ’abuha ... tətmawan watəlabbəs ...* - "... But until she gets married... she is fed and clothed by means of her father's property" (i.e.: after the father's death).

(FM, 139:27)

(8) ’ət[1] - "while" (with the imperfect form); corresponding to -ing (participle) forms in English in temporal clauses, e.g.:

kabə’əmnat wagale sab ’agəṣṣat ’əgəl bə’əmnat šimat ’ət laḥazzu ’ət ṭilān ’ət medun dannaw. - "So Bə’əmnat /himself/ and some notables, while seeking the chieftainship for Bə’əmnat, went down to the Italians at Mədun." (Tribù, 68:9)

wakə’ənna ’ət ləwaddu səssa ḥol ḥalfa. - "And sixty years passed while they were so doing" (i.e.: sinning against God) (Storia, 75:9)

gadəm giso wa’əgəl kəllom gabāyəl ’əgəl səm ’ab wawal wamanfas qəddus ’ət taṭammuqom wala’əlu ’azzazkokum kəllu ’əgəl lə‘əqabo ’ət tamḥurom wəlād darasa dawom. - "'Go then, and baptizing all nations for the sake of the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and teaching them to keep all that which I commanded you, make them disciples.'" (Racconti, 56:10ff)

(9) ’əndo - "when, after" (almost only with the perfect. cf. third example below; ’əndo corresponds to the construction of auxiliary + ing + passive particle in English); e.g.:

ka’əndo ’əlla ḥala ’ət ‘addu ’aqbala - "And having sung this he returned to his village." (C Ross Trad, 52:12)

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[1] For the subordinate form of the copula: ’ət ’əntu, etc., see: § 4.1.3(b).

walašek ʾət kətābu ʾəndo raʾa waʾəb ʾamruma kullu bello... - "And the sheikh, having consulted his book and also by [virtue of] his wisdom, answered him: '...'" (lit.: 'having looked in his book and also by his complete knowledge, said to him').

(SS, 146:5)

waḥar bet ʾab lamāyət kəl mənnom sayf ʾəndo ḥarrəṭ ma ʾəb konāt wok mora ʾət ləwatwət lassāqər. - "Then each [male] member of the family of the deceased, drawing a sword or swinging a lance or stick, raises the war-cry." (PL1, 223:24).

(10) ʾənday/day - (with the imperfect[1]) "before, while ... not, as long as... not, without that, until", "without" + English participle-form, e.g.:

ʾənze ʾənday ʾəmaṣṣəʾ ʾət ṭəyārat ʿalko - "Before I came here I was at the airport."

...ʾaddām ʾəndāy ḥazzəyo ʾəgəlmi kəl dol tazalləm? - "...'Why do you cause rain to fall all the time while people do not wish it?...'" (i.e.: a man complaining to God). (ʾAgʾazot, 78:16)

daʾam hətu gāričče ʾənday ʾəsalləṭ ʾiʾəballəʿ bela. - "But he said: 'I shall not eat as long as I have not completed my business [successfully].'"

(Tribù, 85:5)

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[1] I have found no supporting evidence to the statement made in Supplementary Observations, p.137a, § 56a), that ʾənday may occur with the perfect.

*daʾam hədāy ʾəndāy ḥazze mən dangər walaḥəṣit mən tədangəl ʾabuha ʾəgəl ʾab laḥəṣān ʾət hədāy lašaffəggo.* - "And if he (i.e.: the boy's father) lingers without seeking (lit.: 'without that he seeks') a marriage, and [If] the girl becomes of age, her father urges the boy's father [to fix a date] for the marriage."

(FM, 109:15ff)

*waʾənday mayət šek laʿad wafətuy ʿala.* - "And until he died he was the chief of the people and [was much] beloved [by them]." (ʿAd Šek, 183:16)

*walazāmtat kəʾənna gəssuy wamān wagalab day lərʾe kəm raʾawo ʾəgəl ləmṣəʾəwo ʾiradaw* - "And when the raiders saw him sitting like this without looking to either side (lit.: 'left or right'), they did not wish to come at him." (C Ross Trad, 68:3ff)

(11) *ʾakəl la* - "as often as, whenever", e.g.:

*wakəʾənna ʾət wadde waʾkəl laʾəmmu təherarattan ʾət ḥaddəg səʿ ʾəssit ʾatmama.* - "And while thus doing, and divorcing [them] as often as his mother reproved them, he went through (lit.: 'accomplished') [the divorces of] nine women." (Tigre Texts, 3:4)

*wadāwəd ʾakəl lamasanqo zabbəṭ ʾəlu ʾəgəl sāʾol qalləl ʾəlu ʿala.* - "And whenever David played the harp for Saul, he (i.e.: Saul) was at ease."

(Storia, 61:25)

(12) *ʾəgəl*[1] - (i) "in order to (introducing an adverb clause of purpose or result) that"; (ii) corresponding grammatically to:

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[1] For an exhaustive treatment of *ʾəgəl* see: §§ 6.4-6.5.

"to" + infinitive in English, when functioning as the object of the verb, e.g.: 'I planned to go'.

ʼəgəl can precede verb forms which belong to the jussive morphological category only, e.g.:

...ʼət məgəb ǧannat ʼəb lahallet ʻəččat ʼəgəl ʼitimuto mənna ʼitəbluʻ... - "...'Do not eat from the /fruit of/ the tree which is in the midst of paradise or you shall die (lit.: 'in order that you shall not die')." (Racconti, 6:22)

ʼəb qəyās mən təthāge bəzuḥ ʼəgəl ʼəfhamakka ʼəqaddər. - "'If you talk slowly (lit.: 'with measure') I shall be able to understand you more."

(13) ʼəwān - "when" (with the imperfect form), e.g.:

waḥar rəggāzu ʼəgəl ləḥərado ʼəwān ḥazzu...-- "Later on, when they wish to slaughter his rəggāz (i.e.: the cow of the funeral sacrifice)..." (PL1, 223:6).

(14) kəm - (i) "when, after", (corresponding to the construction of an auxiliary + ing + passive participle in English), "as soon as", (with the perfect form); (ii) "as" (according to what, or manner in which); (iii) "that" (introducing a content clause).

Examples:

(i) karan kəm maṣʼat lawaraqačče ʼəgəl tətkabbat tu. - "When she arrives in Karan she will receive my letters."

ʼət ʼadigrat kəm baṣḥaka salf mi wadeka? - "Having arrived in Adigrat what did you do first?"

...kamən ṭəgaysi laʼaffetu kəm kədki laʼəgərki kəm badira *wa'aqbalat 'əlki...* - "'... So if you go [there], as soon as you step in [the house] entrance, your foot would become as it was before'..."

(Lt Leg, 4:20)

(ii) *wanoh rabbi kəm la'azzazayu wada.* - "And Noah did as God ordered him." (Racconti, 9:30)

(iii) *woro nagedāy 'əgəl dəkkānu nāfə' ḥəṣān kəm ḥazze 'ət gāzeṭat 'assa'ala.* - "A certain shopkeeper advertised in the papers that he was looking for a young assistant (lit.: 'a useful boy') for his shop."

('Ag'azot, 82:15)

*wa'əgəl la'ənās ka'afo kəm qatlawo kəm ta'ammanaw qatlayom.* - "And since they (i.e.: the murderers) confessed how they killed him, he (i.e.: the governor) executed them." (Ibid, 77:16ff)

(15) *kəmsal* - "when" (with the perfect), e.g.:

*'əgəl lamabrəhat kəmsal 'abrəha 'ətta kadbet gale santim ra'a.* - "When he switched on the light he saw a few [copper] coins on the floor."

(16) *wakəd* - "when" (with the imperfect), e.g.:

*'ənās wakəd hadde ...* - "When a man gets married..."

(FM, 146:23)

(17) *dib* - "while" (with the imperfect), e.g.:

*wala'ət māy latəmaya dib ləghe dib 'addu gesa.* - "And [the man] who spent the night in the [sea] water, went home disheartened" (lit.: 'went home being dejected').

(PL1, 33:16)

dib gayəs dib gayəs 'et ḥatte ç̌əmbit 'akān woro 'ənās dəglāl ṣanḥayu. - "And while he was walking on and on he ran across a certain old man in a deserted place."

(18) dol - "when" (with the imperfect), e.g.:

... 'əttu lanaqmanni 'addām dol 'i'əsammə' wa'i'ər'e ləbye ʿarrəf... - "... There, when I shall neither hear nor see people who will call me, my heart will be at ease (lit.: 'will rest')..." ('Ag'azot, 69:17)

## § 8.4 Interjections

These are syntactically independent parenthetic insertions of the utterance, which as to content vaguely correspond to a full sentence (the meaning of which often depends on the context and cannot be taken as a lexical entity; cf. especially exx. in (a) below).

As regards form, interjections can be (a) words which are used as interjections only and are morphologically unanalysable, and (b) words otherwise belonging to other parts of speech, or determined by their morphological pattern.

Examples (the meanings given below serve as a guide only):

(a) həs/šət - "Be quite!"; hə'/waha - "Ah!"; 'ay/'ayo/yewu/yaw/dəbbo - "Woe!"; hey/šaw - "Away!"; haya' - "Up!"; "Now then!" (e.g.: Tribù, 45:14); ḥašša - "Far be it"; ḥay - "Make haste!"; səmḥāno - "Be praised!"; sɛmməna (also: + 'əl with the pronominal suffixes) - "Cheer up!" (e.g. 'Ag'azot, 64:9); šut - "Impossible!"; baḥ - "Not at all!"; bas - "Enough!"; 'abada'- "Never!";

*wo* - "Oh!"; *waššele* - "A pity!"; *yəbba*[1] - "Father!"; *yəmma*[1] -"Mother!"; *gaddoʼ* - "Oh wonder!"

(b)(i) *ḥesse* - "Excellent!" (*ḥesse*, pl.: *ḥessetāt* - "honour; good deed";, a noun; root: *ḥys*).

*ken* - "Away!" (*ken* - "there", an adverb).

*ʼasannāy* - "Thank God!" (*ʼasannāy* - an infinitive form[2] of **ʼasanna*; root: *sny*).

(ii) *naʻa* (mas.sing.), *nəʻi* (fem. sing.), *nəʻəno* (masc. pl), *nəʻəna* (fem. pl.) - "Come (here)!"

These forms may function as a verb, replacing the imperative forms of the verb *maṣʼa* - "to come", e.g.: *ʼənze naʻa* - "Come here".[3]

*ʼənka* (masc.sing.), *ʼənki* (fem.sing.), *ʼənkəno* (masc.pl.), *ʼənkəna* (fem.pl.) - "Behold!", "Here it is!"

*yaha* (mas.sing.), *yahay* (fem.sing.), *hayaw* (masc.pl.), *yahayāt* (fem.pl.) - "You there!".

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[1] These two interjections are used regularly by children, when addressing one of their parents, and are not, as stated in Sketches, p.202b, § 62a) poetic forms.

[2] This is one of the rarer infinitive forms, not dealt within § 2.7.2. Its pattern is similar to the one described in § 2.7.2 b)(iv), in addition to which the distinctive features of type *ʼa* - B are to be added.

[3] Cf. § 3.8 b)(iii), last example.

# Chapter Nine

# SYNTAX

The grammatical data treated in this chapter consist of: (i) the sentence, where the simple sentence (§ 9.1) and the complex sentence (§ 9.2) are commented on; (ii) nominal sentences, i.e. utterances which do not have a finite verb or a copula (§ 9.3); (iii) direct and indirect speech and content-clauses (§ 9.4); (iv) verbs taking an infinitive as their complement (§ 9.5); (v) conditional sentences (§ 9.6); (vi) the alternative (§ 9.7); (vii) the expression of the distributive, iterative and intensive aspects by means of repetition of the word (§ 9.8).

This chapter is intended to cover syntactic phenomena briefly dealt with or only mentioned in the previous chapters.

## § 9.1 The simple sentence

The term 'simple' refers here to a sentence with only one clause.

### § 9.1.1 The normal word-order in the simple sentence

There are three main features of word arrangement typical of the Tigre sentence, as follows:

(i) The main verb - or a syntactically equivalent word - is regularly placed at the end of the sentence.

(ii) Complements and qualifiers precede the words they qualify or complete.

(iii) The subject is usually placed at the beginning of the sentence; it may be preceded by sentence adverbs (cf. § 8.1.7) and conjunctions of coordination (cf. § 8.3.1).

It should be noted here that any change of the above word-order features, does not necessarily suggest a syntactic extraposition.

Examples:

worot ʼənās məsəl nəwāỵu waṣewahu ʼət qišot ʻala. -
"A man lived with his family and his cattle in a hamlet."

(Tigre Texts, 13:11)

rabbi ʻastar waməder faṭra. - "God created heaven and earth." (Racconti, 5:3)

daʼam ḥar farʼon ʼəb ṭallaqot ʼəsrāʼel ʼagid taʻassa. -
"But after that Pharaoh soon rebelled against releasing the people of Israel." (Storia, 41:13)

### § 9.1.2 Variations of the normal order of the words in the simple sentence

A noun other than the subject may head the sentence. In such a case the subject may occur in second place, having a suffixed pronoun of which the referent is the preceding word. In all grammatical expressions of such a structure the first two words in the sentence can be put in a construct state by reversing the word order and omitting the pronoun of reference. The word which occupies first place in the sentence is the subject of the utterance in the contextual sense, the grammatical subject of the sentence referring to a limited notional aspect of it.

Examples:

walaʼənās laʼəssitu ʻamsat. - "And the man's wife became pregnant." (PL1, 90:21)

rəgbāt ʼəzna ʼət kəl mədər hallet. - "The Rəgbāt people live all over the country" (lit.: 'The Rəgbāt, its tribe is found all over the country')."

(PL1, 79:5)

ʼəssit ḥilata ḥawānit ta. - "The strength of a woman is /her/ weakness."

karan ḥoṣaha qayəḥ tu. lakarsa ʼəb qəṭrān ləlqluq tu. - "The soil of Karan is red. Its interior (i.e.: of Karan) is smeared with tar."

The word order of the above structure may be further altered, as in, e.g.:

wahobāy kənna tu dəgma. - "And so was the tale about the kite." (lit.: 'And the kite, like this is her story').

## § 9.2 The complex sentence

The term 'complex' refers here to a sentence containing one or more dependent clauses in addition to the main (or principal) clause.

### § 9.2.1 The normal word-order in the complex sentence

The description given above in the case of the simple sentence (in § 9.1.1) also applies here. The main clause is a simple sentence whose verb is regularly preceded by the subordinate clause. The various types of subordinate clauses occupy their place in the sentence according to their function, e.g. a relative clause functions as a modifier of a noun and occupies those positions that modifiers occupy (i.e.: regularly preceding the noun).

Examples:

Galab ʼət ʼətyopya latətrakkab ḥatte nəʼiš dəgge ta. - "Galab is a small town /which is/ in Ethiopia."

ʾəb laʾalelāt lahan maṭatyos laləbulo gəndāb qaš məsəl ḥaməs waldu ʾət modin worot ʿad yəhuda nabbər ʿala. - "In those days there lived in Modeen, in Judah, an old priest called Matthew with his five sons."

(Storia, 97:20)

ʾət dangoba gabaya qəšən ʿəččat ʾət ladabʾaya ʾakān baṣḥat. - "Finally she arrived at a place where a tree branch blocked her way." (ʾAgʾazot, 73:7)

### § 9.2.2 Changes in the normal word-order in the complex sentence

Two different types of changes may be noted here, where (a) a nominal element in the main clause and the subject of the main clause change places, resembling in principle the structure described in § 9.1.2,[1] and (b) a relative clause is put at the end of the sentence, preceded by the copula tu[2] which may occur anywhere in the main clause between the relative and the subject (expressed or implied). The word preceding the copula may then be emphasized.

Examples:

(a) ʾelkuma ḥaməs ʿāmat kəm wadet ʾabuha həmmam qatlayu. - "When ʾE. was five years old a leopard killed her father. (ʾAgʾazot, 61:12)

laḥəṣān ḥamātu ʾət mədər bəʿad mən gabbəʾ ʿadda ... ḥamātu nabra sannet təwadde... "If the village of the boy's mother-in-law is in another country ... his mother-in-law makes a good meal..."

(PL1, 117:6)

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[1] Here the nouns whose order could be reversed are more than two, owing to the complex nature of the sentence. In the first example given for (a) below, three nouns are involved: ʾelkuma, ʾabuha, həmmam. The last two are the ones whose order can be reversed, the third being the grammatical subject of the main clause. In the second example given for (a) below, the three nouns involved are: laḥəṣān, ḥamātu, ʿadda, all of which can be put in a reverse order and form a construct state, i.e.: ʿad laḥamāt laḥəṣān - "the village of the boy's mother-in-law". The bringing forward of a nominal element in Tigre results in avoiding a long sequence of words in the construct state.

[2] Cf. § 4.1.4.

(b) waḥətu ’əb nošše tu latəsaḥaqko; ’ətki ’ikon bella. - "And he said to her: 'It is at myself that I laughed - not at you." (PL1, 89:3)

wamusa bəzuḥ farha kaman ’əndo ga’ako tu ’ana mən məsər wəlād ’əsrā’el la’afaggər? bela. - "And Moses was much frightened and said: 'Who am I (lit.: 'what have I become') that I shall bring the people of Israel out of Egypt?" (Storia, 38:19)

Other instances in which the normal word-order of the sentence is not kept show no peculiarities as to content and meaning, e.g.:

wa’abunawas bello gis ’əlla ’əčče hallet ’əlka gabaya; tərakkəbba. - "And ’Abunawas said to him: 'Go [home]. I have a solution for this; you will find it [there]." (lit: 'Go, this - its way I have for you'). (PL1, 33:18)

ka’əgəl lağəna kə’ənna təbəllo ’amset ’əgəl lazāmtat ’ət tər’əyom kəm ’itər’e ’əndo təmassalat... - "And she passed the evening speaking to the baby as follows (lit.: 'like this'), pretending while she saw the robbers, not to see them." (Tigre Texts, 13:15)

## § 9.2.3 Hypotactic relations in Tigre sentences: distribution of complex and compound sentences.

The term 'compound' refers here to a sentence having two or more coordinate independent clauses, usually joined by one or more conjunctions. The choice between a complex and a compound sentence in Tigre has no limitation of distribution, and both types are equally used. Although long complex sentences are not as frequent as in Amharic

Tigre is nevertheless capable of producing them. Two examples are given below, the first of which is a compound sentence, the second consisting of two successive complex sentences:

> *waḥar ḥǝd ʾalelaw waʾǝt ṣǝgād ḥǝd ḥalgaw kaḥǝd saʿamaw waʾǝb daḥan tǝfanātaw.* - "And later they recognized each other and fell upon each other's necks and kissed each other and left each other safely."
>
> (PL1, 94:9)
>
> *ʾǝt legos nayǧǝrya lagaʾa nāy bābur bǝqot ʾǝnday mayto ʾǝb ḥayātom laʿalaw ḥǝmsa nafar ʾǝt makinat ʾǝndo ṣaʿanawom hospital ʾǝt labaṣṣǝḥǝwom lamakinat sabbat tǝballasat kǝllom woro ʾǝnday tarrǝf mǝnnom kǝm motaw mǝn legos lamaṣʾa ʾaxbār ʾassaʾala.* - "News which came from Lagos, Nigeria, reported that fifty people who sustained minor injuries in a train accident, had boarded a car which overturned while they were being driven to hospital and all of them died." (lit.: 'In Lagos, Nigeria, news which came from Lagos reported that the train accident which happened - fifty people who remained alive without being dangerously ill, having made them board a car, while they were bringing them to hospital, since the car overturned, all of them, without that one of them will remain, died')
>
> *ʾǝllom lamotaw ḥǝmsa nafar ʾǝt mǝgbāy mǝfgār ṣaḥāy beni latǝtbahal ʿad ʾǝtta ḥalfat talāšano ʾǝbbābur labaqaw mǝn meʾǝt walaʿal nafar mǝnnom latarfaw tom lǝtbahal.* - "It has been told (lit.: 'It is said') [that] these fifty people who died, had remained from more than one

hundred people [who were] injured last Tuesday by the train in a village called Beni in the mid east."

## § 9.3 Nominal sentences

The term 'nominal' refers here to sentences whose predicate does not contain a finite verb or copula. Nominal sentences occur (a) as free variants either in interrogative utterances containing an interrogative adverb and a copula, or in answers to such utterances;[1] (b) where the sentence containing the nominal expression depends on the preceding sentence, in that it cannot otherwise head the chain of speech; (c) in interjections.[2]

Examples:

(a) waʼəšḥaq man ʼənta, walye? bela kasaʼalayu. wayaʽaqob ʼana ʼesaw wad bəkərka ʼana. - "And Isaac asked him saying: 'Who are you, my son?' (i.e.: 'Which of my sons are you?') And Jacob [answered]: 'I am Esau, your first-born son..." (Storia, 22:28)

mən ʼayi gabil ʼənta? - "Which is your tribe?" (lit.: 'From which tribe are you?')

(b) ...laqātlāy nāšəḥ ʼarʼuni ... walaqātlāy našəḥ ʼəlla ʼana bello. - "[And he said:] 'Show me the killer of Nāšəḥ'... And the killer of Nāšəḥ said to him: 'It's me'." (lit.: (This [is] I'). (PL1, 244:16)

daʼam sandaldal mən bela laʼabayām ... worot mənnom ʼənāše ʼəndo bela ragzayu ... hətu haye... ʼənās ʼəsičče daʼikon ʼənāska ʼiʼiana bello kahafša. - "But since he staggered ... one of the enemies, saying: 'My man!' pierced him. He, however, ... said to him: [I am] my wife's man - I am not your man' (i.e.: referring

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[1] Cf. § 4.1.

[2] Cf. § 8.4.

to his blaming of his wife for the cause of his weakness), then died." (Tribù, 45:18 ff)

*wala’əssit walkatu ’ana ’ənās bəʿəd ’i’ammər tello wahətu ’iwalye bela ka’abayu.* - "And the woman said to him: 'He is your son, I do not know any other man.' And he said: 'Not my son!' and refused him."

(PL1, 91:3)

(c) *’əgəl ’əddina ’əb sabab maʿanqafi dəbboha. maʿanqafidi ’əgəl ləmṣa’ qasəb tu da’am maʿanqafi ’əgəl lalamaṣṣə’ ’addām dəbbohu.* - "Woe to the world because of the offenses. Indeed, it is unavoidable that offences should exist (lit.: 'offenses, indeed, must come'), but woe to the man who brings about the offenses." (NT, Matthew, 18:7)

*wakəl mənnom sayf ’əndo ḥarṭa ... laworo ’ana yaʿaqob ’ət ləbəl ’admə‘a walakālə’ haye ’ana yosef ’ət ləbəl šawaṭa* - "And each of them having drawn a sword, one struck [at the other] saying: 'I am Jacob', and the other struck back (lit.: 'also struck') saying 'I am Joseph'." (PL1, 94:5)

The interrogative adverb *’əšwo* occurs in nominal expressions only. For examples see: § 8.1.7.1.

## § 9.4 Direct and indirect speech; Content-clauses

### § 9.4.1 Direct and indirect speech

(i) The verb *bela* - "to say" - may be used as a point of punctuation in marking the end or beginning of direct speech. In this capacity *bela* is semantically redundant, e.g.:

*waʻad lawalat balso walatna nə'iš hallet wa'itədā-lena 'əndo belaw.* - "And the family of the girl answer [saying]: 'Our daughter is small and we are not ready [yet to give her in marriage].'"

(PL1, 119:22ff)

(ii) When the main verb in the sentence is *bela*, it occurs only once, e.g.:

*ḥatte meʻəl gohu təlākayom ... wamənkum 'əllan 'əsurāt marawi 'əgəl ləsābər ladaqqəb mə'ət rəyāl hayəbbo bellom.* - "One day he summoned them to him... and said to them: 'I shall give one hundred dollars to the one who will be able to smash this [bunch of] tied branches'"

('Ag'azot, 68:12)

(iii) Unlike the regular order of words in the Tigre sentence, *bela*, as the main verb together with the sentence it introduces, may precede the subject, e.g.:

*kəm la'əlu 'as'alayuni dəgəm bet 'əšḥaqan 'əlli tu bela 'ənās bet 'əšḥaqanāy...* "As I was told (lit.: 'As they told me it') the story of Bet 'Ešḥaqan is so (i.e.: as follows), said a man of the Bet 'Ešḥaqan [tribe]." (Tribù, 74:15)

(iv) Reported speech is rendered in Tigre in the same way as direct speech and only the context accounts for the difference between the two, e.g.:

*ḥago 'əlla ra'as 'alula dib ḥamāsen māṣə' halla kəm belayuna ...* - "After that, when we were told that Ra'as 'Alula had come to Ḥamasen..." (lit.: 'when they told us: "Ra'as 'Alula has come to Ḥamasen"').

(Tribù, 82:3)

wa'əgəlləḥəzaw təgāmaw kakə'ənna gamaw derho 'ət bet waʿal belawo karāy 'ət dabər ḥəzay belawa gəmgəmmāre 'ət gādəm ḥəze belawo waḥašil 'ət maḥārəs gādəm. - "And they deliberated about seeking [the lost cows] and resolved the following: they said to the chicken to stay at home [and] to the hyaena they said to seek [the cows] on the mountain; to the hornbill they said to seek [them] on the plain and to the fox, in the cultivated lands of the plain."

(v) A special case of the above (see (iv)) is when boundaries between direct and indirect speech are not clear. Here again the difference between the two depends on the contextual sense. In such a case the meaning of bela may be rendered in English as: "to say to oneself, to think, to intend",[1] etc., e.g.:

walaḥamuhu gadəm 'əb gabay sakay 'əgəl 'əwaṭṭənno bela. - "And his father-in-law said [to himself]: 'Now I shall try him by way of [making him] run away.'"

(PL1, 92:26 ff)

wahətom 'əgəl maḥammad qabbubo ʿalaw ḥawān tu 'əndo belaw. - "And they contemned M., thinking he was weak (lit.: 'saying: "He is weak"')."

(Lt Su Sång, 11:6)

For similar phenomena with bela compounds, see: § 5.11 et seq.

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[1] Cf.: § 6.4.1.

## § 9.4.2 Content-clauses[1]

(i) These are dependent clauses containing a statement. They are usually introduced by the conjunction kəm - "that" which precedes the verb or the copula of the dependent clause. The verbs whose content-clause is their complement are those expressing speech, thought and sense. The particle kəm also occurs in Tigre in those instances where it will not occur in English content-clauses (e.g.: the English conjunctive use of 'how', in: 'He wondered how he would do it').

Examples:

...’addām ’əb rə’əyat leṭa kəm ’iṣaggəb mən ta’amro... - "'... If you know that people cannot be satisfied by sight alone....'" (PL1, 34:16)

wa’ət qəblāt sanduq karāmat təgassa wala’addām ’ət sanduq lakarāmat dərhəm ka’afo kəm karru ’əttu lər’e ʿala. - "And he sat in front of the poor's box, watching how the people put money in it." (NT, Mark, 12:41)

ḫəna šəqəlna ka’afo kəm tu ’assa’alnahu - "We told him about the nature of our work" (lit.: 'We told him how the work is').

galehom ’ət labāb lalaharrəm man kəm tu ’əgəl lər’aw fagraw. - "Some of them went out to see who was knocking on the gate." (’Ag’azot, 72:12)

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[1] For the term 'content-clause', see: § O. Jespersen, Essentials, § 33.1.

*ḥatte dol yaʿaqob ʾəgəl yosef waldu rayim dib laḥawu ... kaʾafo kəm hallaw*[1] *ʾəgəl lərʾe laʾakayu.* - "Once Jacob sent his son Joseph far away to his brothers to see how they were."

(Racconti, 15:10)

*wafarʾon ʾəlli kəllu molāy ʾəsrāʾel kəm wadayu ʾāmara.* - "And Pharaoh knew that the Lord of Israel had done all this." (Storia, 39:17)

*ʾab Ǧəmbago makkən ʿala wawəlād ʾəgəl lərkab ʾət kəl maʾamrāy gayəs waʾəb kaʾafo wəlād kəm rakkəb ləssaʾal ʿala.* - "ʾAb Ǧəmbago was barren and in order to have children he went to every scholar and asked how he could have children."

(SS, 146: 2)

(ii) The verbs *masla* - "to seem" - and *ʾamsala* - "to believe, to suppose", usually introduce the content-clause without the conjunction *kəm*, e.g.:

*gadəm ʾab kaʾafo ʾəgəl lətʿadde bom gabbəʾ ʾəlu maslakka?* - "'Now, how do you think (lit.: 'how does it seem to you') he would be able to cross [the river] with them?'" (PL1, 38:2)

*wahətom lāli ʾət betu ʾəsāt wadaw ʾəgəl ləndad, halla ʾətta ʾəndo ʾamsalaw* -"And at night they set his house on fire (lit.: '... in order to burn [it]') believing that he was there." (Ibid , 20:3)

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[1] Cf. The idiomatic expression: *kaʾafo halleka* - "How are you? How do you do."

*tərassəʻakoka ’itamsəl* - "Do not think that I forgot you." ( PL1 , 81:20)

Cf. *’ət mədər salām ’əgəl hab kəm maṣ’ako tamaslo?* - "'Do you believe that I have come to bestow peace on earth?'" (NT, Luke, 12:51)

## § 9.5 Verbs taking an infinitive as their complement

Verbs usually have the complex *əgəl + jussive*[1] as their complement, e.g.:

*’aze ’əgəl ’igis halla ’əlye* - "I have to leave now."

*...wa’əgəl ləqtolo ḫasbaw* - "... And they intended to kill him." (PL1, 19:26)

§ 9.5.1 Certain verbs take an infinitive form as their complement. Such verbs, for the most part, render the notion of '(not) to be able, (not) to wish'.

The following are the most frequent verbs that take an infinitive as a complement:

*taḫallala* - "to be unable"; *sa’ana* - "not to be able, not to have"

*’atḫaza* - "to be necessary"; *’aba* - "not to wish, to refuse"

*ḫela* - "to be unable".[2]

Examples:

*mənma ’əb kəlla ḫilatom waṭṭanawnaqila taḫallalaw wahəwənnahom ’at’amaraw.* - "Although they tried with all their strength, they were unable to uproot it (i.e.: the thornbush), and they acknowledged their weakness."

(’Ag’azot, 59:23)

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[1] See: § 6.4.(a).

[2] Also: "to overpower".

da'am yasus gayis 'ilatḥazzyom 'əntum 'əgəl ləblu' hobom bellom. - "But Jesus said to them: 'They need not go. You give them to eat."

(NT, Matthew, 14:16)

sārayotu ḥelayom... - "... They could not cure him (lit.: 'Its being cured was not possible for them').

(Ibid , 17:16)

...ləbbu 'ərəf sa'ana... - "He became restless" (lit.: 'His heart did not have rest')

(Racconti, 17:14)

...fagir 'aba 'əlu... - "He refused to go out" (lit.: 'He refused to go out for him').

(PL1, 15:20)

§ 9.5.2 Some verbs may have as their complement either 'əgəl + jussive or an infinitive form, e.g.:

šəqəlka 'agid 'əgəl təkalləs daqqəb?[1] - "Can you finish your work soon?"

walaḥəmum matahāgāy mən daqqəb... -... "And if the sick [man] can speak..." (PL1, 206:24ff)

The examples below are of such verbs, with an infinitive form as their complement:

...wala'agruz malik 'əgəl wāldatom ḥaraw - "... And the children chose to rule their parents."

(PL1, 88:7ff)

...waqatilu ḥazaw. - "... And they wanted to kill him." (Storia, 132:20)

...mayit tamnaw. - "... They wished to die."

(Racconti, 25:1)

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[1] For: tədaqqəb.

bet ḥaddās nadiqa ʼambeto. - "They start building a new house." (PLl, 65:17)

kābabot loḥoṣa kəm kallasaw... - "When they complete casting the sand in heaps..." (Tigre Games, 64:2)

## § 9.6 Conditional sentences

The conditional sentence in Tigre is a complex sentence whose subordinate clause occupies those positions that subordinate clauses occupy (cf. § 9.2.1).

As regards form and meaning, two patterns of sentences prevail: the first pattern in which the apodosis does not contain a verb form of the morphological category of the perfect, and the second pattern in which the apodosis contains the complex wa + perfect only. The first pattern is used in the expression of utterances with real or possible conditions, the second pattern - in the expression of unreal conditions.

Subordination of the verb or verb-equivalent in the protasis is regularly effected by means of (a) the conjunction mən - "if" which precedes the verb in the imperfect form, or (b) the fossilized complex mən + gabbəʼ which follows the verb in the perfect form. The following is a synoptic schema of the two patterns.

| | Protasis | Apodosis |
|---|---|---|
| pattern A | mən + imperfect<br>perfect + mən gabbəʼ | any construction, excluding the perfect form, that renders the nexus of the sentence |
| pattern B | mən + imperfect<br>wa + perfect | wa + perfect |

§ 9.6.1 Sentences expressing real conditions (pattern A)

(a) Regularly the protasis precedes the apodosis , e.g.:

(i) Where the verb in the protasis is an imperfect form introduced by mən:

kəl'ot mən lətba'aso lazayəd laməsməsa 'ət worot leṭa 'ikon. - "If two [persons] quarrel, usually the blame (lit.: 'the cause') is not on one [of them] only." ('Ag'azot, 97:22ff)

ka'ədeka ma 'əgərka mən tasḥətakka qəračča walsəκaffa mənka. - "Thus, if your hand or your foot lead you astray, cut it off and throw it [away] from you." (NT, Matthew, 18:6)

da'am sab bəzḥām mən gabbu'[1] la'əban labazzəḥəwo wakəl 'əbbanat 'əgəl ḥatte bərkətta təgabbə'. - "But if the people are many, they make the stones numerous, and every stone is for one unleavened bread." (PL1, 190:13)

(ii) Where the verb in the protasis is a perfect form, followed by the fossilized complex mən gabbə':

wawāldat ḥante məlkom tom kalət'azzazo 'əlom wagale ga'aw mən gabbə' ləghu dibom. - "And the parents are under their domination, and they obey them; and if anything happens to them, they are grieved about them." (PL1, 88:10)

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[1] The form gabbu' (3rd pers. masc. pl., imperfect, of gab'a - "to become") is here the suppletive form of the subordinate copula. Cf. § 4.1.3(c).

(b) The apodosis may precede the protasis. This may occur in sentences in which a statement is expressed, with a certain restriction or reserve on the part of the speaker. The corresponding structure in English is sometimes called 'conditional statements', i.e.: sentences of which the protasis begins with "on condition that, in case" etc., and follows the apodosis, e,g,: "I give my consent, provided that he goes immediately".[1]

Examples:

haye gabay ʼəndo gesa ʼət ʼakān bəʿədat ʼilətmaye ʼitaḥaggaza mən gabbəʼ. - "Moreover, having gone away he does not pass the night at another place, provided that he's not compelled to." (PL1, 131:19)

ʼaze məsəl mambaye məsəl nəgus ʼasor təwārad. ʼana kəlʼot šəḥ faras haybakka ʼənta ʼəttom laləṣṣaʿano fārsotāt ʼəgəl tərkab mən tədaqqəb. - "Now, make a bet with my master, [with] the king of Assyria: I shall give you two thousand horses, on condition that you find knights who will mount them."

(OT, Isaiah, 36:8)

## § 9.6.2 Sentences expressing unreal conditions (pattern B)

Meaning:

Such sentences express conditions which are improbable or incapable of fulfilment.

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[1] Corresponding in French to sentences of which the protasis begins with "pourvu que, supposé que, pour peu que, à condition que" + subjonctif présent.

*Form*:

The verb in the apodosis can only have a perfect form. It is always preceded by the particle *wa*.[1] The verb in the protasis may occur either (a) in the form of the complex *mən* + imperfect, or (b) in the form of the complex *wa* + perfect. In the latter case the copula is represented by *wa* + *gaʼa*. (a) and (b) are frequently found with the same function. The choice between them seems to be relevant when the content of the protasis suggests the remoteness of a supposition presented in the apodosis rather than its categorical denial.[2]

Examples where the protasis occurs in the form of the complex:

(i) *mən + imperfect*:

*daʼam yasus waddyo laʿala ʼazema bəzuḥ bəʿəd halla. waʼəlli kəllu ʼəb worworo mən lətkattab kəlla laʼəddinama ʼəgəl lalətkattabo ʼakətbat waʼiʼaklattom ʼamassəl.* - "Furthermore (lit.: 'even now'), however, there are many other things that Jesus used to do. And I suppose that if all this were to be written, one by one, even the whole world would not suffice for the books to be written about it." (NT, John, 19:11)

*wahətom ʼəččе gale mən halle ʼəlom ʼaze dibka ʼəgəl ləḥdaro waʼət qadamka ʼəgəl ləksasuni waʼastahala.* - "'And if they had aught against me, it would be better (lit.: 'worthy') for them now to stay near you and accuse me before you'." (NT, Acts, 24:19)

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[1] For *wa* as a coordinate conjunction, see: §§ 8.3.1 (1) and 9.7.

[2] This statement is based on the pattern of distribution of the examples collected. Out of 186 sentences expressing unreal conditions, 82 had the type (a) complex in the protasis. Of these 82, 36 complied with the above statement. Out of the 104 having type (b) complex, 11 did not comply with the above statement.

(ii) *wa* + perfect:

*waʼagripa haye ʼəgəl fəsṭos ʼəlli ʼənās ʼəlli dib qesār yəgbāw*[1] *waʼibela watəfattaḥa bello.* - And Agrippa, however, said unto Festus: 'If this man had not appealed unto Caesar, he would have been set free.'" (NT, Acts, 26:32)

*yasus ʻəwurām wagaʼakum ḥarām wagaʼat ʼətkum. daʼam ʼaze ʼənrəʼe təblo. sabbat ʼəlli ḥarāmkum ḥāṭṭat tənabbər bellom.* - "Jesus said unto them: 'If you had been blind, a sin would not have been possible for you, but now you say: 'We see'. Therefore, your sin remains firm.'" (NT, John, 9:41)

*...ʼəla nəšayəm hətāma rabbi waʼihabaya mi wamotat mənna...* - "'... Let us make her chieftain; had not God given it (i.e.: the chieftainship) to her, how could she (i.e.: the dragon) have died because of her?'" (Lt Leg, 4:15)

*wahətu bela māytat mən təgabbəʼ ʼamānkum tuʼət ʼəslām waʼət kəstān ḥerrəmət wagaʼat. daʼam ʼəlla maʼaze kəm māytat tətʻallab?* - "And he said: 'If she (i.e.: the cow whose meat he wanted to eat) is dead, you are right - she should have become forbidden by [both] Muslims and Christians. But this [cow], since when is she counted as dead?'" (TE, 701:4)

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[1] The word *yəgbāw* is foreign to the morphology of Tigre, although the whole expression *dib qesār yəgbāw* is not infrequent in the NT translation (e.g.: Acts, 25:11, 25:25, 28:19).

## § 9.6.3 The modal form *wa* + perfect

The complex *wa* + perfect may serve as a special form for modal expressions denoting the unreality of the nexus. This usage of *wa* + perfect resembles the function of the morphological category of the 'conditionnel' in French.

Examples:

*lafaras haỵe ken ʾət betu ʾəb ṭəq̣ər ḥamḥəm halla. ʾət bəʿədat ʾakān mən ʾəlla lataḥaỵəs bet mən ʾaỵa warakba.* - "The horse, however, was neighing there, in his stable (lit.: 'his house'), [happy] about [his] food. Where else (lit.: 'in another place)could he find a stable which could be better than this [one]?"

('Agʾazot, 99:4)

*rabbi ʾəgəl wəlād ʾəsrāʾel ʾət ʿərəf dib mədər kanaʾan ʾātaỵom waʾəb bəzuḥ sanni həỵāb razzaq̣aỵom kamən kəllom labakkət gabil mədər ʾəgəl ləgbaʾ wagaʾa ʾəllom. daʾam... ʾəb məsməsa ḥarāmom rabbi ḥante ʾəde ʾaram hammaǧaỵom.* - "God brought the people of Israel safely into the land of Canaan and bestowed upon them many good gifts, and the most promising (lit.: 'lucky') of them (i.e.: of the gifts) could have been their becoming the people of the country. But ... on account of their sins God let them be subdued by heathens" (lit.: ' under the hands of heathens').

(Storia, 72:25)

*kaḥatte ʾəssit tellom ʾəntum ç̌abal gəbbuʾ lawelādkum waṣaʿankum.* - "And a certain woman said to them: 'May you turn into ashes. You should have let your children ride [the donkeys]' (i.e.: the children died because they walked a long way while their parents rode the donkeys)."

## § 9.7 The alternative

To denote the possibility of one out of two (or more), Tigre makes use of the coordinating conjunctions *wa*, *ma*, *wok*[1] and the jussive conjugated form of the verb *gabʾa* - "to be, to become".

(i) Each one of these, excluding *ləgbaʾ*,[2] may occur freely in between the nouns of the sequence, whereas *ləgbaʾ* occurs following the first noun of the chain only. Stylistically there is a tendency to use a variety of particles, which may repeat themselves in a long chain of nouns.

Examples:

*latəwāk mən kəl molād waddəwo kərən qəwāʿ ma nāy sagan wok nāy gān ma fiṣa nāy worot molād sarāyər wok kərən šokān ma nāy ḥašil.* - "They made signals of all kinds: the cry of a raven or of an ostrich or of an owl or the whistle of a certain species of birds or the call of the gazelle or of the jackal."

(PL1, 171:10)

*wahətom lədḥuro waṣanābulo ʾaḥa ma ʿaṭāl wok ʾaqruš wahaye gərāh.* - "And they bless him and give him as presents, cows or goats or money [-coins] and even

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[1] Cf. § 8.3.1, (1)-(3).

[2] 3rd pers. sing. masc. represents the jussive conjugation.

fields (i.e.: plots of land)." (PL1, 128:24)."

(ii) The particle *wok*, and the form *ləgbaʾ* followed by *wa/ma*, are the ones usually used in the expression of 'either...or', *wok* preceding both nouns or clauses of the alternative, e,g.:

*wok ḥuye dannən wok ʾana.* - "Either my brother or I shall go down [to the lowland]."

('Ag'azot, 54:19b)

*waṣābṭāy yatāyəm wok ʾitahaddet mən gabbəʿ ʾəmmom təṣabbəṭṭom wok mən təthadde ḥu ʾabuhom ma ʾəgəl layatāyəm laqarrəbbom woro bəʿad ṣābṭāyom gabbəʾ.* - "And the guardian of orphans may be: either their mother may take care of them if she has not re-married, or if she does get married the brother of their father or someone else who is related to the orphans becomes their guardian." (FM, 143:4)

*ʾət ʾəlla ʾəngera ləgbaʾ wamāy ʾalabu...* - "There is neither bread nor water in here..."

(Storia, 51:13)

(ii) The linear order *wa* A *ləgbaʾ* *wa/ma* B, is used in the expression of the notion 'both A and B' (lit.: 'and be it A or B'), e.g.:

*ʾəgāl waʾənās ləgbaʾ watabʿat kəm təwallada ʾaška'alala lətbahal.* - "Calves, both female and male, are called 'Aška'alala when they are born [and for two months]."

(PL1, 178: 5)

*wahəta təgbaʾ ma ʾət dəwāra lahalla mədər ʾəbən zenāy lətbahal.* - "And both this [stone] and those which are on the ground around it are called the stone[s] of zenāy." (Tribù, 10:15)

## § 9.8 The expression of the distributive, iterative and intensive aspects by means of repetition of the word

A frequent phenomenon in Tigre is the repetition of a word or an expression, the value of which is aspectual. The repeated element can be a member of any word-class.

### § 9.8.1 The distributive

The term 'distributive' is used here in the expression of treating the members of a group individually, indicating the notion rendered in English by: 'each' and 'every'.

Repeated nouns may become a compound, the first constituent of which loses its final word-syllable.

Examples:

*wamən laḥəyāyət laḥawān ḥawān ʼabda... walasannet sannet laḥəyāyət baqqa.* - "And from the animals he destroyed all the poor ones and spared all the best ones" (lit.: '... Each one of low value he destroyed and each one of good value he spared."

(Storia, 60:15)

*waḥar ʼəgəl laʻad ḥamuha mal haybo worworot*[1] *ma kəlkəlʼot*[1] *reyāl. wok laga laga ma fəlit fəlit ma ṭalṭalit haybo.* - "Then they give money to her father-in-law's family, one or two dollars each; or

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[1] Cf. § 7.1.2.

a male-calf each, or a heifer each, or a goat each."

(PL1, 133:23)

...kəl worot 'ət 'akān 'akānu ləbṭar. - "...'Let each one [of you] stand on his own place'" (lit.: 'Let each one stand on each place').(PL1, 90:8)

### § 9.8.2 The iterative

The term 'iterative' is used here to indicate the repetition of the action denoted by the verb, either as progressive or as habitual, without limiting the number of the repeated actions, e.g.:

lanagedāy laqalāt 'awaǧǧabotom qərə' qərə' 'abalayu. - "The shopkeeper read their letters of recommendation one after the other." ('Ag'azot, 82:4)

...fāzaga fāzaga... - "... every Easter..."

(FM, 95:24)

...tələm tələm... - "every [time at the] beginning of [the] ploughing [season]..." (FM, 146:16)

... karam karam ... - ... every rainy-season..."

(FM, 146:18)

### § 9.8.3 The intensive

The term 'intensive' is used here to indicate increased emphasis or force of the action denoted by the verb, e.g.:

...'əb nə'iš nə'iš ḥayet. - "... she recovered very slowly [from her illness]." ('Ag'azot, 62:10)

...mən 'aze 'aze faggər kalathaybanna lanabra. - "'He is about to come out this very second (lit.: 'now, now!') and give us our meal.'"

(PL1, 34:4 ff)

kalaʼənās ʼət foqāyu ʼəndo ṣorayu ʼət ləgayəs bu waʼət ləgayəs bu dib ʻad lagərəz qarbaw. - "And while carrying him (i.e.: the lost boy) on his shoulders, the man walking on and on, they [finally] approached the boy's village."

(PL1, 262:16)

# TEXTS

## ʾaxbār[1]

(1) ʾət ǧəmma lalətrakkab nāy rās damṭaw hospətal ʾəb nāy ḥukumat swizerland sadāyat latəmaharaw ʾəsra nafar ḥamāyəm lanābu tədaḥaraw. (2) ʾəllom laddaḥaraw ʾanfār nāy šahadatom wərāq mən ʾəde kəbur daǧǧāzmāč gərmačaw takla hawaryāt nāy gabil ʿaqib ʿāfyat minister təkabbataw. (3) ʾamerika waḥukuma sovyet nāy nyukler ṣəwār ʾət sanni kədmat ləṭa ʾəgəl lawʿulo ʾət marādayat bāṣəḥām kəm hallaw nāy ʾamerika mārḥāy minister ʾatʾamara. (4) ʾəlli haye ʾəgəl nadād zet mafgari ʾəgəl māy lakarru ʿabāyi ʾašrām wamən mədər latətḥaffaro gārāt ʾəgəl ləgbaʾ gomātom c̣arč̣aw. (5) nāy ʾəsrāʾel mārḥāy minister ʾabba ʾəban ʾət nāy məwdāq ṣaḥāy ǧərman myunik latətbahal ʿad ʾəgəl ləbṣəḥu tu. (6) ʾəbbəlli sabab ʾəlli nāy ʾəlla ʿad ʾəlla polis ʿasər kəlʾot nafar ʿarab ʾəndo ṣabṭaw ʾasrawom. (7) ʾət ʾənkər qəblat kanal sues woro nāy ʾəsrāʾel ʿaskari ʿaskar məsər lalākfawa rəsās ʾəbba ʾəndo zabbaṭa kəm mota woro nāy ʾəsrāʾel mārhāy ʿaskar ʾatʾamara. (8) ʾət nyu york nāy ʾaqbər ḥəfār lalaḥafro sāb māl ʾəgəl lətwassakkom ləssaʾalo sabbat hallaw šəqlom ʾabaṭṭalaw. (9) ʾəbbəlli sabab ʾəlli ʿasər səs ʾaləf lagabbəʾ ganāyəz qabbərro sabbat taḥaggala ʾəbbahu kəruy halla. (10) nāy nyu york nāy gabil ʿaqib ʿāfyat bet maktab kəmla ʾafhamayu labazzəḥ məndəlli ganāyəz ʾəgəl ʾiləṣene fətuy qəduy sərāy gabbəʾ ʾəttu halla lətbahal. (11) ʾaxbār ʾəttəlli lətkallas. (12) ʾəlli ʾasmara lahalla radyo ʾətyopya tu.

## News

(1) In R.D.Hospital in Jimma twenty nurses (lit.: 'twenty one who nurse sick people') who studied with the help of the Swiss government

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[1] Radio Ethiopia from Asmara, January, 1970.

graduated (lit.: 'were blessed'). (2) These [persons] who graduated received their certificates (lit.: ('their testimony papers') from the honourable daǧǧāzmāč G.T.H. the minister of public health (lit.: 'from the hand of the honourable ... the minister of the watch of health of the people'). (3) The American secretary of state announced that America and the Soviet government have reached an agreement to confine [the use of] nuclear armaments to peaceful purposes only (lit.: 'the leading minister of America announced that America and the Soviet government have reached an agreement to preserve nuclear weapons for good use only'). (4) They decided that these [uses] will be the production of fuel, the construction of water reservoirs and the digging for minerals (lit.: 'Now, this -they decided in order that it will be for the bringing out of burning oil, for big water-holes which retain water and for things which are dug from the earth') (5) The Israeli foreign minister A.E. will arrive in Munich, in West Germany (lit.: 'The leading minister of Israel A.E. will arrive in the city of West Germany which is called Munich').(6) For this reason the police of this city have detained twelve Arabs (lit.: 'having seized ten Arabs they arrested them'). (7) An Israeli military spokesman announced that in the northern section of the Suez Canal an Israeli soldier was shot and killed by Egyptian army fire (lit.: 'An army leader of Israel announced that in the side of the north of the Suez Canal one soldier of Israel, the army of Egypt, the bullets which they fired, having been being hit by it, he died'). (8) Grave diggers (lit.: 'the people who dig holes for tombs') in New York have gone on strike (lit.: 'caused their work.. to be stopped') because they are asking for a pay increase (lit.: 'they are asking for money to be added to them'). (9) For this reason, since about sixteen thousand corpses have not been buried, they are left untouched (lit.: 'they are as they ⌈were⌉ put down'). (10) It was made understood by the office of public health in New York that a special fragrant medicine has to be applied to the corpses to prevent smell. (lit.: 'According to that which the office of public health made understood, in order that a big number of these corpses will not smell, a special fragrant medicine is necessary for it, it is said'). (11) This is the end of the new (lit.: 'The news is ended with this'). (12) This is Radio Ethiopia from Asmara (lit.: 'which is ⌈in⌉ Asmara').

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*ʾətyopta*[1]

(1) *ʾət sāmən ḥatte dol ǧəmʿat ʾəttəlla saʿat ʾəlla lanaddālyo ʾəlkum nāy məhro mədər ʾətyopya yom ʾəbba sābʿāy kəffal ʾegəl nətmahar tu.* (2) *ʾəb kafa ʾətta ḥalfat ǧəmʿat kəm təmaharna lalətfāqad tu.* (3) *ʾaze yom ʾəb sidamo wabale ʾegəl netmahar tu.* (4) *Sidamo ʾet gəblat ʾətyopya latətrakkab ʿabbāy wakədrat ʿad ta.* (5) *ʾəb məwdāq ṣaḥāy məsəl kafa ʾəb gəblat məsəl kenya tətgānad.* (6) *nāy sidamo raʾas dəgge ʾawasa tətbahal.* (7) *badir daʾam yərga ʿālam latətbahal ʿalat.* (8) *ʾət ʾənkər qəblat baḥar ʾabbayan wabaḥar ʾawasa mən məgəb sidamo ʾəndo təbaggasa ʾət mədər kenya lalaʿayər maḥāz dawan ʾəgəl ʾamdārāt sidamo fəntuy gərmat hāybu tu bahalat laʾamdārāt lāməʿ tu.* (9) *nāy sidamo ḥilat zəlām ʾət salas kəffal kəfful tu.* (10) *ʾənqər qəblat məwdāq ṣaḥāy dəqqub zalāyəm waddəq ʾəttu.*- (11) *laməgbāy kəffal ʾəb qəyās rakkəb.* (12) *ʾənkər gəblat məfgār*

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[1] Radio Ethiopia from Asmara, Summer 1969.

ṣaḥāy haye ḥud zəlām rakkəb. (13) laga’a ləgba’ nāy sidamo zarāqāt zəlām ’ət ḥatte sanat mən mə’ət waḥəmsa ’asək ’aləf waḥaməs mə’ət miləmeter lətmazzan. (14) ḥafānat haye šanqat qəblat məfgār ṣaḥāy lahalla ’akānāt mən ʻasər ḥaməs degri santigred ’asək ʻəsra degri santigred gabbə’ keyāsu. (15) mədər sidamo ’ənkər laʻal lahalla ’amdārāt kabasu tu. (16) gabil sidamo ’əb ḥarəs warəʻəyat newāy lətnabābar. (17) la’ət ’agnād kenya lahalla gabil haye sabbək sāgəm tu. (18) ’ət sidamo ’ət dəwār degge yerga ʻālam nāy bun ’abqālāt halla. (19) ’əmbal ’əlli ’ət sidamo kasal mən mədər lafaggər faḥam massəl dahab čewa naḥās lətrakkab. (20) bale məsəl sidamo latətgānad ’əbbu ’ənkar maḥāz ganale məsəl harar lalətgānad ’əbbu ’ənkər haye wabi šəbale lalətbahalo kəl’ot maḥāz hallaw, bahalat ’əllom la’əlom samekom maḥāz ganale wamaḥaz wabi šəbali tom. (21) ’əllom kəl’ot maḥāz ’ət məgəb ’ətyopya mənna lətrakkabo ’adbər ləwḥezo ka’əb mədər somalya ’əndo ḥalfaw ’ət baḥar hendāy ʻayro. (22) nāy yom məhrona ’əttəlli ’ənkalləs. (23) ’ətta temaṣṣə’ ǧəmʻat nāy ’ətyopya ǧeografi ’əbba sāmnāy keffal ’asək naddāle ’əlkum daḥan ’asməno.

## Ethiopia (geography)

"(1) Today we shall study the seventh part of [the course in] Ethiopian geography (lit.: 'the study of Ethiopia') which we present to you(lit.: 'prepare for you) at this hour, once a week [every] Friday. (2) If you remember (lit.: 'It is remembered that') last week we studied about Kafa. (3) [so] today we shall study about Sidamo and Bale. (4) Sidamo is a vast and flourishing country which is found in south[ern] Ethiopia. (5) It borders (with) Kafa in the west [and](with) Kenya in the south. (6) The capital of Sidamo is called 'Awasa. (7) Formerly [though] it used to be called Yerga

ʿĀlam. (8) The river which rises in Central Sidamo at the northern side of lakes ʾAbbayan and ʾAwasa and turns into [the land of] Kenya gives a special beauty to the lands of Sidamo, that is to say, the lands blossom. (9) The rainfall at Sidamo is rated according to three geographical divisions (lit.: 'The strength of rain of Sidamo is divided into three parts'). (10) In the [side of the] north-west strong rains fall (there). (11) The central region has sufficient rainfall (lit.: 'finds rain adequately'). (12) The south-east[ern region], however, has little rain. (13) The average rainfall in Sidamo according to these (lit.: 'its') geographical divisions is from one hundred and fifty millimetres to fifteen hundred millimetres per annum (lit.: 'whatever the quantity of rainfall of Sidamo, it is measured from one hundred and fifty up to one thousand five hundred millimetres in one year'). (14) Regarding the temperature, in the north-eastern areas[1] it is between fifteen and twenty degrees centigrade (lit.: 'The heat, however, at the places which are in the direction of north-east, its measure may be from fifteen degrees centigrade up to twenty degrees centigrade'). (15) The highlands of Sidamo are plateaux (lit.: 'The country of Sidamo, the lands which are in the upper side are plateaux'). (16) The people of Sidamo live off agriculture and the tending of cattle. (17) The people who live by the borders of Kenya are, however, nomads (lit.: 'who go down [to the lowland] and go up [to the highland]'). (18) In Sidamo, around the town of Yərga ʿĀlam there are coffee plants. (19) Furthermore there are in Sidamo <u>kasal</u> - it looks like coal which protrudes out of the ground -

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[1] The passage which follows sentence no. (14) describing the temperature in the other two areas was left out because of its similarity in content and structure.

gold, salt [and] copper.[1] (20) There are two rivers in Bale, which are called the river of Ganale, where it (i.e.: the province) borders Sidamo [and] Wabi šəbali where it borders Harar (lit.: 'Bale, two rivers exist [there] which are called River Ganale in the side where it [i.e.: Bale] borders Sidamo; in the side where it borders Harar, however, Wabi šəbali). That is to say, these are [the rivers] which I have named River Ganale and River Wabi šəbali. (21) These two rivers flow from the mountains which are in central Ethiopia, and running through the land of Somali enter the Indian Ocean. (22) Here we conclude today's study. (23) Until we present you next Friday (lit.: 'on Friday which comes') with the eighth part of Ethiopian geography have a nice week.

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## dəgəm ʾabbəkiki

(1) ʾabbəkiki ʾəslemāy nabra. (2) waḥatte məʿəl ʾət məsgəd saḥaqa. (3) waḥar lašek ragmayu waʾət sarerāy ʾaqbala. (4) gadəm ʾabbəkiki šāš bəzuḥ fatte ʿala waʾəb šāšu wanosu ʾət sarerāy ʾaqbala. (5) ʾaddām dib halla ʾabbəkiki bəzuḥ ʾət məsgəd gayəs waləṣṣale nabra. (6) waḥar ʾət sarerāy kəm ʾaqbala ʾəb šāšu ʾasək ʾaze raʾasu ladannən halla lətbahal.

## The tale of the plover

(1) The plover was Muslim. (2) [And] one day he laughed in the

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[1] The passage following sentence No. (19) describing Bale was omitted for similarity in content and structure with previous sentences.

mosque (i.e.: when he was a human-being). (3) And then the sheikh cursed him and he (i.e.: the plover) turned into a bird. (4) Now, the plover used to like the turban very much and he turned into a bird (, himself,) with the turban [on his head]. (5) When he was a man, the plover used to spend his time going to the mosque and praying. (6) And afterwards, having become a bird, he still (lit.: 'until now') stoops his head with his turban [on it].

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### dəgəm kaləb wadəmmu

(1) kaləb wadəmmu kəl’ot galgalāy ma fatač ʻalaw. (2) ’aze ḥatte məʻəl lāli ’ət woro dəgge ’əsāt mən qābəl ’ət taḥaye ra’aw. (3) ka’əgəl həd kə’ənna belaw faǧər lohay dəgge la’ətta qəblātna lahalla ’əttu nətʻadde. ’əlli dəggena səga ’alabu. man ’ammər gisna mən gabbə’ səga wa’əngera ’ənrakkəb belaw. (4) wasanbat ʻabbāy ’əgəl lətʻaddaw gomātom qarṭaw. (5) da’am dəmmu ṭelmāyt wakāynat mən ga’at ’əgəl kaləb wəʻul ṭalmat ’əttu kabayna sanbat nə’iš taʻaddet ka’ət ḥatte bet səməṭ ma’ošāt kaf təbe. (6) gadəm kaləb ləṣṣabbarra wəʻəl ʻala wakəm dangaratto taʻadda. (7) wa’əbba ’əbba labet ladəmmu hallet diba ’ətta hadfa. (8) wakəm ra’aya dəmmu ’ət səməṭ ma’ošāt ’əgḥəmət rakbaya. (9) ’ət ləbbu kəm ra’aya bəzuḥ ḥarqa kagadəm mən ’əlla yom məsəl rabbi ’ilatrə’enna bella kamaḥala. (10) dəmmu kəm samʻatto ḥarqat kataḥawraratto wa’əgəl tətba’as səʻet ’əttu. (11) da’am qabbaya ka’azma mənna. (12) wa’əbbəlli sabab ’əlli tu dəmmu wakaləb ’asək ’aze ’ilətfātaw kaḥəd ra’aw mən gabbə’ ’ət ḥəd sarro lahallaw.

## The tale of the dog and the cat

(1) The dog and the cat were two friends (or pals). (2) Now, one night (lit.: 'one day at night') they saw from a distance a fire burning in a[nother] village. (3) And they said to each other as follows: 'Tomorrow morning let us go over to that village which lies ahead of us (lit.: 'that village which is found in front of us, let us go over there'). There is no meat in our village. Maybe if we go [there] we shall find food (lit.: 'meat and bread'). (4) and [finally] they made their decision to go over on Sunday. (5) But the cat, having become treacherous and untrustworthy in his absence, deceived the dog and on Saturday went over [to the other village] alone, and set herself in a house, by the fireplace. (6) Now, the dog passed the day expecting her and since she failed to arrive he went over [to the village]. (7) (And) soon he ran across the cat in the house where she was. (8) And when he looked at her he found her lying down by the fireplace. (9) As he saw her he flew into a rage (lit.: 'he became indignant in his heart') and took an oath, saying to her: 'May God separate us (lit.: 'May God cause us not to meet') from this day [on]' . (10) When the cat heard him she became angry and looked inimically at him, and leaped at him in order to fight. (11) But the dog contemned her and ignored her. (12) And it is for this reason that, until today, the cat and the dog do not befriend one another and if they see each other they jump on each other.

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## *ʼabyāt*

(1) *ʼət ʻadna kəl ǧenəs ʼabyāt halla kəm maʻadani ʼablo ʻolelle səyuk merəbbaʻat saqlo.* (2) *maʼadani mən ʻəč̣ay lətšaqqeʼəb ʼarbāʻ rəknu walanəḥesu kəm merəbbaʻat tu.* (3) *maʻadani ʼəb saʻar labbəs.* (4) *māy ʼəgəl ʼilaqṭər haye ʼət kəl ʻāmat lətḥanfas wamən ḥaddis lətšaqqe.* (5) *maʻadani ʼət karsu kullu lalatḥazzekka wadde ʼəttu.* (6) *maʻadani saləf ʼəb ʼarbāʻ rəken taḥaffər ʼəlu.* (7) *waḥār ʼəč̣ay tākəl ʼəttu waʼəb maro ʼəb ləḥəs ʼəndo wadeka taʼasserro waḥar marreggo walwal ʼəgəl ʼilaʼāte ʼətka.* (8) *ʼablo ʼəb rəqay lətšaqqe waḥar ʼəb takob labbəs.* (9) *ʼəlli takob ʼəgəl ʼilaṭbəs ʼəb tanān lətʻalle.* (10) *ʼablo ʼəgəl sab nəwāy wasabbək sāgəm tu lanāfəʻ mən ʼakān ʼət ʼakān lagayso.* (11) *ʼablo ʼəgəl təndaqqo waʼəgəl taḥanfəso bəzuḥ qalil sabbat tu ʼəgəl sab nəwāy bəzuḥ nāfʻat bu.* (12) *ʼablo larəqay ḥaqo gandaba mən ḥaddis lətšaqqe.* (13) *ʼablo lazayəd ʼət matḥət bazzəḥ.* (14) *ʻolalle neʼiš bet ta.* (15) *ʼəlla bahalat ʼət magʻaz dib ʼənta ʼət məmyāy latənaddəqqa bet ta wahəta mən kəlʼe ʼət salas takobat tətšaqqe.* (16) *ʼəllama haye ʼəgəl sabbək sāgəm bəzuḥ nāfʻat ta.* (17) *səyuk ʼəb ḥaməs rəqyat waḥaməs takobat lətnaddaq.* (18) *səyuk māy mən maṣṣəʼ lətšalātət mənnu kaʼilaṭabbəs.* (19) *merəbbaʻat ʼət dəgge latətnaddaq mən ʼəban waʼəb norat latətlaqlaq ta.* (20) *saqlo ʼəb ʼəban waʻəč̣ay lətšaqqe wahətu ʼət dəgge lətnaddaq wasaʻar labbəs.* (21) *kaʼət ʻadna kəl ǧenəs abyāt halla.*

## Houses

(1) There are in our country all kinds of houses, such as: *madʻadani*, *ʼablo*, *ʻolelle*, *merəbbaʻat*, *saqlo*. (2) The four corners of the *maʻadani* are made of wood and its clay roof is like [that of the] *merəbbaʻat*. (3) *maʻadani* is covered with hay. (4) But in order that it will not

drip water [through] it is pulled down and built anew each year. (5) You can do inside the *maʿadani* whatever you wish (lit.: *maʿadani*, inside it all which is necessary to you you do there'). (6) [To build it] firstly, you dig [holes] (for the *maʿadani*) in four corners. (7) And then you plant there [poles of] wood and you tie them with strips of bast to the seams; [and] then you smear it with clay so that it will not let wind enter [to you]. (8) *ʾablo* is made of thin twigs [of palm] and then covered with [palm-fibre] mats. (9) In order that these mats will not let dampness enter, they are smoke-dried. (10) *ʾablo* is [especially] useful to herdsmen and nomads (lit.: 'who go down [to the lowland] and up [to the highland']) who move from place to place. (11) As it is very easy to build and [also] to pull down the *ʾablo*, it has great advantages to the herdsmen. (12) After the palm twigs of the *ʾablo* are worn-out (lit.: 'become old') it is built anew. (13) *ʾablo* is especially numerous in the lowland. (14) *ʿoləlle* is a hut (lit.: 'a small house'). (15) That is to say, this is the house that you build to pass the night while you are on a journey, and it is built from two to three mats. (16) This [one] is also very useful to nomads. (17) *səyuk* is built from five palm twigs and five mats. (18) If water (i.e.: rain) comes the *səyuk* does not let waters pass (lit.: ('*səyuk*, if water comes, it flows away from it'). (19) *mərəbbaʿat* is [the one] built in town[s] from stones and plastered with mortar. (20) *saqle* is made of stones and wood and is built in town[s]; (and) it is covered with hay. (21) So, there are in our country all kinds of houses.

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