Coronal Ejectives and EthioSemitic Borrowing in Proto-Agaw

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1. Cushitic and Agaw Background

Although there is some controversy surrounding the exact composition and internal relations of the Cushitic languages, the consensus view (Hayward 2000, Tosco 2000, Mous 2012) is that they are organized into four main branches: Northern, Central, Eastern, and Southern, as indicated in the diagram below (after Tosco 2000):

![Cushitic Stammbaum](https://example.com/cushitic-diagram.png)

The historical reconstruction of these various branches of Cushitic is, to quote Mous, “very much ‘in progress’” (2012:347). Beja, the sole representative of the Northern branch, has fragments of a topical lexicon (Blažek 2003, 2005), with some comparative work (Blažek 2007). Within the Eastern branch, Hudson (1986) has reconstructed the Highland East Cushitic (HEC) lexicon; Lowland East Cushitic (LEC) has been treated by Black (1974); Proto-Sam (the Eastern group of Omo-Tana) has been reconstructed by Heine (1979); other important reconstructions of Eastern Cushitic include Sasse (1979) and Arvanites (1991). Southern Cushitic (SC) has been reconstructed by Ehret (1980) and Takács (2011), while the West Rift branch of Southern Cushitic has been the focus of Kießling (2002) and Kießling & Mous (2003). The Agaw languages have been reconstructed in their phonology...
Reconstruction of Proto-Cushitic (PC) as a whole is found in the pioneering work of Dolgopol’skij (1973) and in Ehret (1987). Within Proto-Afroasiatic (PAA) reconstruction, PC may be examined in Ehret (1995); Orel & Stolbova (1995) provide some “tentative and highly hypothetical” reconstructions of branches of Cushitic, but do not attempt to reconstruct the family as a whole.

This paper is concerned with details of the reconstruction of the Agaw branch, which contains four main languages plus one extinct (Appleyard 2006, Lewis, Simons & Fennig 2013). Appleyard groups them into two main branches: Northern, which contains Blin, Xamtanga, and Kemantney; and Southern, represented by Awngi. Blin, also known in the literature as Bilin, Bilin, or Bilen, is the preferred native-speaker spelling, and is spoken by around 100,000 speakers centered around Keren, in the ‘Anseba region, Eritrea. It has two dialects, Tä’ak’or (Tak’or) and Tärk’or, which are very similar except for a small number of lexical items and morphological differences. The remaining Agaw languages are or were spoken in Ethiopia. Xamtanga (Khamtanga, Chamir) is spoken by 213,000 speakers in the Wag region. Kaïliña is a variety formerly spoken by Ethiopian Jews in the Semon region. Kemantney (Kemant, Kimant, Qimant) is spoken by 1,650 people in the regions of Čalga and Kärkär. A dialect known as Dämbiya (Dembiya) was formerly spoken along the north shore of Lake T’ana. A closely related, moribund dialect spoken by the Betä Isra’el is known as Falashan or Quara/Quarenyna/Qwarenya. Awngi (Awiya, Southern Agaw) is spoken by 489,000 in the Agäwm and Mätäkkäl districts. A closely related variety known as Kunfål is spoken by some 2,000 people in the lowlands west of Lake T’ana. The composition of the Agaw languages is depicted below:

Given the paucity of materials in the historical reconstruction of Cushitic, Appleyard’s (2006) comparative dictionary is a very welcome addition to the field. The dictionary has 720 English headword entries and 391 reconstructed roots, with appendices containing word lists of the reconstructions and the primary language data in Blin, Xamtanga, Kemantney, and Awngi. Furthermore, much of the language data, especially forms from Xamtanga and Kemantney (along with some corroboratory forms from Blin, Qwarenya, Awngi), are from Appleyard’s own fieldwork (2006:10). Appleyard’s work has been well received (Joswig 2008). Nevertheless, this paper will take issue with one aspect of Appleyard’s reconstruction–his postulation that Proto-Agaw did not have ejective consonants (although they are required for the reconstruction of both PC and PAA, and despite the fact that ejectives are present in some Agaw languages).

2. Agaw History and Appleyard’s Reconstruction of Proto-Agaw

The history of the Agaw, who, according to Appleyard (2006:1), were probably the original population of much of the highland region of northern and central Ethiopia, has been intertwined with their Semitic-speaking neighbors for twenty-four centuries (Taddesse 1988:6). Appleyard (1978) has traced the linguistic influence of Agaw on Ge’ez lexicon, and detected some morphosyntactic influences as well. Leslau (1988, 1991) has also examined the lexical borrowings between
EthioSemitic and Cushitic languages. Agaw is thus “the deepest-level and major linguistic substratum of Tigrinya and Amharic” (Appleyard 2006:1; see also Hetzron 1976:5). Some Agaw assimilation to their Semitic-speaking neighbors may have begun as much as a millennium before the rise of the Aksumite kingdom. It culminated with the Zagwe dynasty (1137-1270 A.D.); Zagwe, from Zä-Agwe, is said to mean ‘of the Agaw’ (Appleyard 2006:2). During this time, “borrowing of Agaw words by northern Ethiopian Semites would naturally have been expected” (Hudson 1994:1261). Indeed, in Gragg’s (1991) count of Leslau (1991), there is a significantly higher percentage of Agaw words that are, in Leslau’s view, borrowed (32%) than which share a common origin (24%), unlike every other source of borrowings in Ge’ez. In Gragg’s calculations, there are 219 Agaw borrowings in Ge’ez.²

Before summarizing Appleyard’s reconstruction, it will be instructive to compare the phonemic inventories of the Agaw languages: Blin (Palmer 1960); Xamtanga (Appleyard 1987); Kemantney (Appleyard 1975, Zelealem 2003); Awngi (Hetzron 1997). Of course, determining a phonemic inventory can be difficult when there are loanwords, but these sources give the following phoneme inventories:

(3) Obstruent Phonemic Inventories of Central Cushitic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Obstruent Phonemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blin</td>
<td>t k kʷ g gʷ tʰ kʰ kʷ f s j x xʷ h h f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xamtanga</td>
<td>tʃ k kʷ q qʷ b d g gʷ tʃ tʃ' kʰ kʷ s' f s j x xʷ h z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kemantney</td>
<td>t tʃ k kʷ b d g gʷ tʃ tʃ' kʰ f s j x xʷ y yʷ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awngi</td>
<td>p t ts tʃ k kʷ q qʷ b d dz g gʷ f s j z z y yʷ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that three of the four Agaw languages (all but Awngi) contain ejectives, in boldface in (3) above. Kemantney contains /tʃ/ kʰ/, Blin contains /tʃ' kʰ kʷ/, and Xamtanga contains /tʃ' tʃ' kʰ kʷ s'/.

Yet Appleyard claims that “most of the occurrences of glottalized consonants in Agaw languages can be explained as contact features, most obviously because they occur in borrowings” (2006:17). Appleyard nevertheless admits that both Blin and Xamtanga have ejectives in “lexemes of indubitable Agaw origin” (2006:17). Further, ejectives are “part of the reconstructable Proto-Cushitic phoneme inventory and thus at some point in the prehistory of Agaw must have been present” (2006:18). But because he believes they are (almost all) the result of borrowings, he does not reconstruct ejectives in PA. To summarize Appleyard’s view, all Agaw languages descend from a PA stage in which ejection was lost. The presence of ejection in Agaw languages can virtually always be attributed to EthioSemitic borrowing, or more recent, language-internal developments.

Appleyard dismisses velar ejectives in Blin as a “comparatively recent development” based on allophonic variation with q (the presumably older original articulation), and free variation with glottal stop (the result of debuccalization, analyzed in Fallon 2001). Fallon (2009) presented evidence for the reconstruction of velar ejectives in Agaw based on evidence from 25 cognates in Cushitic languages which could not been seen as loanwords. Appleyard concedes a small number of Agaw lexemes with reflexes in Blin of ę’ and t’. In Xamtanga, there is greater occurrence of glottalization than in Blin. Xamtanga does contain minimal pairs involving ejectives, e.g. k’ābu ‘he cut’ vs. kābu ‘he helped’; čiągu ‘he called’ vs. čįju ‘he found’, among others (Appleyard 1987:248). Appleyard observes that Xamtanga has many instances of free variation (e.g. sʔb- ~ sʔ[b]- ‘live’), especially when his data is compared with older data collected by Leo Reinisch. In short, ejection in Xamtanga is both phonemically contrastive and in many pairs of words, non-contrastive.

The reconstructed obstruent inventory Appleyard proposes is as follows:³

² The highest absolute number of loans in Leslau (1991) is 345 from East Cushitic (but 23% “borrowed” vs. 42% “common”).

³ Appleyard [ɛ] = IPA [ts]; [ɔ] = [dz] (both identified as a pair of alveolar affricates 2006:14); [ɛ] = IPA [tʃ]; [ɣ] = [ɕ]; [y] = [j]. For vowels, Appleyard’s [a] = [i] and [ɑ] = [a].
Obstruent Inventory of Proto-Agaw (Appleyard 2006:13, 11)

* t  *ts  *tʃ  *k  *kʷ  *q  *qʷ  *
  *b  *d  *dz  *
  *f  *s
  *z

In short, the obstruent consonants of Proto-Agaw had only a simple voice contrast in a fairly symmetrical stop system with six places of articulation and with dorsal consonants showing a plain and labialized contrast. There were three affricates, and three fricatives, one of which was voiced.

The changes required by such a reconstruction require several steps from Proto-Agaw to the daughter languages. I schematize the changes required from PC to PA in Appleyard’s view:

Steps of Phonological Change in Agaw Ejectives According to Appleyard

a. Proto-Cushitic ejectives > Pre-Proto-Agaw ejectives
b. Loss of Ejectives from Pre-Proto-Agaw > Proto-Agaw
   1) complete loss in Awngi and Kemantney (and possibly all Agaw languages)
   2) perhaps partial loss in Blin and Xamtanga
d. Reintroduction of ejectives through borrowing from EthioSemitic, and in certain cases, in some languages, from allophonic shifts or independent free variation

It is undeniable that since Awngi (Joswig 2010) and Kemantney (Zelealem 2003) have no ejectives in native words, a rule encompassing (5b1) must be necessary. What is disputed here is whether this rule also applied to Blin and Xamtanga, and whether Proto-Agaw therefore may have had ejectives. As one anonymous reviewer noted, ‘Appleyard has perhaps intentionally left some vagueness concerning whether all Agaw ejectives can be attributed to borrowing.’ To quote Appleyard, ‘It is clear that most of the occurrences of glottalized consonants can be explained as contact features, most obviously because they occur in borrowings’ (2006:17, emphasis added). He continues: ‘However, the situation is not as simple as this in Blin and Xamtanga, where glottalized consonants occur in lexemes of indubitable Agaw origin’ (17).

The most explicit statement of the historical phonological rules in Agaw may be found in Ehret (2008:155-156), who essentially agrees with Appleyard’s analysis and fleshes it out, but adds some details to fit with his own reconstruction of PC, which, I should note, is often regarded as ‘vulnerable’ on many points (Takács 2011:16). Ehret has formalized the stages of change as the following rules:

Ehret’s Sound Changes from PC to Agaw
1. PC *k(wp) > pre-Agaw *q(w)
2. PC *p’ > pre-Agaw *b
3. PC *t’ > pre-Agaw *ts’
4. [*[+ glottal/-lateral] > pre-Agaw *[-glottal/-lateral]
   a. pre-Agaw *b > PA *b
   b. pre-Agaw *ts > PA *ts
   PC *c’ > PA *c.
5. PC [*[lateral/+obstruent] > pre-Agaw [*-lateral]4
   a. PC *dl > PA *d
   b. PC *t’ > pre-Agaw *t’
6. pre-Agaw *q’ > *t’ ~ *t’
7. pre-Agaw *q(w) > PA *q(w) ~ *x(w)

Among the additions to Appleyard’s conception (5) that are postulated by Ehret in (6) are, steps 1-3 from PC to pre-Agaw: (1) the shift from PC velar ejective place to uvular plosive in a pre-Agaw stage; (2) the shift from bilabial ejective to bilabial implosive; and (3) the affrication of PC *t’. Step 4

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4 Ehret (2008:156) states this change as to pre-Agaw [*-continuant, +obstruent], but since the laterally released affricates lose that feature, I have rewritten this rule more simply.
of (6) above is roughly what Appleyard supposes: loss of the phonological feature [+glottal] (or [+constricted glottis]). Step 5 is required by Ehret’s understanding of PC, though 5b introduces in the pre-Agaw stage a new ejective which later undergoes free variation in 6 to explain Agaw variation among the labialized uvular and the voiced and voiceless (labialized) velar spirants.

In the following section, we will examine some of the evidence in Appleyard (2006) in which the Agaw languages contain coronal ejectives which he does not reconstruct in PA. We will then compare Leslau’s opinions and other sources on Cushitic languages to weigh the likelihood of borrowing or whether the form might be reconstructed with a coronal. Leslau (1988:63) notes that the most obvious loanwords are those in Blin that come from Tigre, which often shows a form different from other EthioSemitic languages. For example, Ethiopic *llassän ‘tongue’ is nassal in Tigre and näsälä in Blin5. Ethiopic bh ‘make an incision’ is bältšha and báltch in Tigre and Blin, respectively. Where possible, I will report possible Cushitic cognates that have either been reported in the literature or which I suggest here.

3. Analysis of Proto-Agaw (PA) Coronal Ejectives

3.1. Evidence for PA *t’

3.1.1. t’ in Initial Position

Here follow a list of Agaw forms which provide evidence for possible Proto-Agaw forms with word- or root-initial ejective *t’. The precise Agaw language is given after the gloss.

1. t’af ‘teff, poa abyssinica’ (Bl. t’af). PHEC *t’aafe. Perhaps a Wanderwort. Leslau (1991) has Ethiopic Te., Tna. taf, Amh. tef, etc. Cushitic Tēm tāfā, Or. tāfā, Bl. tāba, (coll. tāfl), Khamir. dāb, tāb, Sa. Af. dāfī. See also Blench (2012), who notes that Ehret believes the word is Cushitic in origin.

2. tām ‘taste good’ (Bl., Leslau) (though Ap. cites another Bl. form with tam; Reinisch’s data shows both as alternates). Gz. tš’mā ‘be tasty’. In this instance, Leslau (1988:81) classifies this as a loan which ‘passed into Cushitic’, via Tna. tā’āmā. Leslau cites Ar. tā’āmā ‘taste’. However, he also cites Or. ču’mī ‘flavor’. In Leslau (1991:583) we see added a Ge. form which appears to be t’e’me ‘taste good’ (cf. what must be the same root t’e’m- ‘taste good, be sweet’ in Hudson (1989:263)) and Sa. tš’am. Dolgopolsky (1983:131) considers it common with Cush. Appleyard (2006:132-133) considers the PNA root *tam- probably from EthSem, (especially, as a reviewer notes, given the proximity of Agaw to the EthSem semantics), but Appleyard notes similar forms, with broader semantics which mean ‘taste, drink, eat’ in Cushitic. He cites Or. d’and’am- ‘taste’, Som. d’am- ‘drink milk or blood’, Bayso t’am- ‘drink’, Af. taam- ‘taste’, Dahalo tem-, Beja tam- ‘eat’, as well as a number of Omotic forms, many with initial alveolar ejective or glottalic sound. The preponderance of the evidence therefore suggests this root to be not only of Agaw, but Cushitic and possibly Afroasiatic origin.


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5 A sharp-eyed anonymous reviewer caught a contradiction in Leslau’s (1988) data in which ‘tongue’ is given as näsälä in Tigre and in nassal in Blin on p. 68, but as nassal in Tigre and näsälä in Blin on p. 69.


7 Transcription follows the source whenever possible. Note that ejective t’ is also transcribed as ź.
4. **t’ayamb-** ‘hit’ Bl., with cognates in Re. Chamir t’ab-/tab, Qu. tamb-. Elsewhere in Agaw, we see semantically similar forms with similar but different roots: Kailiña t’az-, Kham. t’az-, Xam. taz-/t’az-. Kem. tay- and Awn. tas- give Ap.’s PA *tax-{s-z-}, with extended stems in Xamt. and Awn. If correct, Ap. says to compare PEC *-tank’-/tuk’- (2006:84), with final velar ejective consonant, but initial voiceless alveolar, along with forms in EC for ‘strike’, ‘touch’, ‘push’, ‘break’ (all without initial ejection). Ap. offers no EthSem cognate to account for the ejection in Bl., Chamir, Kailiña, Kham. and Xam. Leslau (1988:102) believes such verbs in Cushitic are “common with Ethiopian-Semitic”—in other words, of common Afroasiatic descent. He cites Kham. t’ab ‘hit’, and compares Be. /ib ‘hit’ (Beja has no ejection, but is a retroflex which often corresponds to EC), Som. tib ‘stick’ (Som. has no ejection) and compares the following Semitic forms: Gz. /aba ‘whip, lash’; Amh. ṭabāṭabā ‘whip’; Ar. ṭabtaba ‘stick’. Cf. Or. d’al’a ‘hit’ (d’ = implosive or retroflex) (Hudson 1989: 80). Blažek (2007:129) compares EC *da* > Arbore de? ‘to throw’, where the implosive (Hayward 1984:53) is traced to a PEC glottalic *d* (Arvanites 1991).

5. **t’a-y-** ‘drive (animals)’ (Bl.), which also has the form tät y-. Other Agaw forms are apparently unrelated. But no EthSem etymon is offered. Gz. nada ‘drive, drive away, lead, lead off’ etc. seems unrelated (L385) and I can find no plausible candidates in Leslau (1988). Hudson (2013:217), however, offers Arabic tay ‘goat’, s. ‘sheep’ and other EthSem forms referring to animals.

6. **t’af y-** ‘spit’ Bl., Xam. taf y-; PNA *t-af-. Ap. notes similar forms: tua- in Or., Som., HEC, Saho, etc. He compares EthSem., Amh. täffä, etc. Perhaps these forms are onomatopoetic, but there is no evidence that the Bl. form has borrowed the ejection from EthSem. Regarding Gz. taf’a and Tna. täf’e in Leslau (1988:90), it is conceivable that ejection transferred from the glottal stop to the initial stop. Leslau also notes the Bl. form täffö. Ehret (1995 #162) reconstructs PEC *taf-.


3.1.2. **t’** in Medial Position

9. **ʔanbīt’a** ‘locust’ (Bl.). Xam. abta, Kham. abt’a, Kem. amboya, Aw. anbiti. Ap. believes this to be from EthSem.: Gz. ʔanbat’a, Tna. ʔanbīt’a, Amh. anbīt’a. Ap notes that the sound changes t’ > t > y in Kem. (Qu. idem) suggest an ancient borrowing. Leslau (1991:27) suggests this may be a loan from Cushitic; Leslau (1988:84) states that the direction of the loan could be ‘the other way around’.

10. **ʔantūr-** ‘hate’ (Bl.), Qu. antar-. Ap states Bl. t’ is normally indicative of a loan, but provides no EthSem. forms. Perhaps cf. Gz. sa’ā, Amh., Argobba t’allla. The Tē. form for ‘hate’ listed in Nakano & Tsuge (1982 #692) is the unrelated karha. No form for ‘hate’ or ‘dislike’ is listed in Beaton & Paul. This form may be a very good candidate for a native Agaw root.
11. **bit’a**


12. **fənt’ira**


13. **hint’an**

‘be thin, weak, delicate’ (BL). Kham. *tet’in*, et’in. Gz. ḫṭṭ, ḫṭṭa, ḫṭṭa ‘be small’ ḫṭṭnāt ‘subtle, acuteness’; Te.Tna. ḫṭṭāt ‘little child’ from ḫṭ(f) with augmented n. (L1991: 269). Leslau (1988:98) classifies this as ‘also in’. Since forms are in both BL and Kham., and the semantics are broad, I find the loan to be less likely, especially with BL. ḥ whereas EthSem has ḫ.

14. **kʷot’ā**


15. **kʷot’ana**

Bl. ‘green, unripe’ derived from root for ‘wet’ (see 3.1.2 #14 immediately above).

### 3.1.3. *t’* in Final Position

16. **bāt’ y-**

‘be spread out’ (BL). Occurs in Te. bāt’ bela, Tna. bāt’t’ bālā ‘lie down, stretch out’. Ehret 1987 compares bat’ ‘to be stretched out, stretch, gape, have a split or crack’ with Beja (Reinisch) beday ‘to yawn’, PEC ḥadiya bačč ‘‘aen Wald ausholzen’’ (‘to cut down a forest’). L notes Gz. bat’at’a I ‘lie on the stomach’ and compares it as ‘also in’ Cushitic: Sa. bat ḏah (L114); Tna bātt bālā ‘lie down’; Ar. baṭṭaṭa ‘flatten’.

17. **gōt’**


### 3.1.4. Probable Borrowings Containing *Agaw t’*

1. ?ant’āt’iś

‘flax, linseed’ (BL) Ap. states the form is from Te. or Tna. ?ant’āt’ī (also given as antati‘ in Kane (2000:1497).

2. ?ant’īt


3. gʷət’n

‘cotton’ (BL) < Arabic *qūṭun*. Whether Bl. ejectives regularly correspond to Arabic emphatics in loanwords requires further investigation.

4. hat’si y-

‘sneeze’ (BL), Xam. *ntōs* y-, Kem. nāt’āś-. EthSem., Te. hat’āśā, Tna. hant’āśā, Amh. anāt’t’āśā etc. Note possible onomatopoeia.

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8 Appleyard uses the symbol ∇ to indicate an indeterminate vowel.
5. ḥabôt ‘armpit’ (Bl., Ap. 2006:171), presumed native. Te. of Beaton & Paul (1954:45) lists similar forms without the final ejective: hibet/habetaa, haabaat. However, Nakano & Tsuge (1982:8, #51) do list the form hibit' for ‘armpit’, making this a probable loan from EthSemit. The presence of a Bl. voiceless pharyngeal fricative frequently indicates a loan from EthSemit as well.


7. q̱ut?- ‘punish’ (Bl.), Xam. ḵūs’a-, Kem. ḵut’-, Aw. kic’-(cf. Amh qätt’a, Tigrinya qūṣ e Kane 2000:1064).

8. šāwāt- ‘thresh’ (Bl.) is from Ti. šāwāt’a according to Ap. (2006:137).


10. t’it’ ‘cotton’ (Xam.). EthSemit. Tna t’ut’, Amh. t’ot’ ‘cotton’ borrowed into PA *tut-, yielding Bl. tut, Kem. tay, Aw. tətít with later borrowing in Xam. t’it’ (though Ap. also believes ejection in Xam. to be a recent phenomenon, given older forms in Reinsich which lack ejection. (Cf. also Arabic tūt ‘cotton’ in Leslau 1988:68).

11. wāt’ān- ‘try’ (Bl.) is from Ti. wāt’nā according to Ap. Other Agaw words are not cognate.

This list is not exhaustive, but gives the reader an idea of the range and types of forms in Appleyard (2006) which I agree are highly likely to be loanwords from EthioSemitic.

3.2. Evidence for PA *č’

3.2.1. č’ in Initial Position


2. č’ak’uta ‘chick, fledgling’ (Bl.), Khampa č’āč’utān, Kem., Qu. šašuna. Ap. says these are cognate with EthSemit., Ti. ċ’āč’ut, Tna. č’āxʷ’ut, Amh. č’āč’ut. Yet he notes ‘similar forms occur elsewhere in Cushitic: Saho č’aač’utta, Or. č’uč’oo, č’uč’ii, Bu. c’iwe, Hadiyya č’iič’ool, Sidamo č’aač’č’urre, Gidole č’aač’uutet.’ Agreeing with Sasse (1982:50), Ap. believes the word is probably of an onomatopoetic nature. While this is perhaps the case, the broad distribution in Cushitic undermines the case that this is an EthSemit. loan.

3. č’ač’od-axʷ ‘white’ (Bl.), Xam. s’ar-āw, Khampa sār-ūw, Kālīnā s’a-yāq, Kem. sāy-ay. PNA *caR- related to Bl. Ap. notes “the initial č’ and certainly the medial ċ’ are normally indicative of a borrowing from EthSemit., and indeed there are clearly cognate forms in Gz. s’a’īdawa ‘be white’, s’a’īdā ‘white’, Tna. s’a’īdāwā. The EthSemit. root is probably itself of Cush. origin [Dolgopolovsky 1973:118; Leslau 1991:542-3], though the apparent EC. cognate does not have the sibilant initial.” Perhaps we can compare Bu. t’uda.

4. č’abbār- ‘wait for, expect’ (Bl.). Compare this with s’ab in X. ‘stay, wait’ (Ap. 2006:129). This is possibly connected to Ehret (1987:40 #135) PC *c’e-b- or *c’e-p- ‘to watch’, for which he cites Re. Beja šebib ‘to see, view’ and Yaaku -c’epa- ‘to wait’.

5. č’afrār- ‘sing’ (Bl.) Ap. says this is from Tna. čάţťarâ (see Kane 2000:2533). Perhaps related are Bu. shibir, Ge sib-, Si sîr-, PHEC *sibir (Hudson 1989:135).

6. č’aṃboṛora ‘thumb’ (Bl.) Si. lowo k’ubb-icco (‘big finger’). PHEC *k’uba ‘finger’ (Bu. k’uba, Ge. k’ub-icco, Si. k’ubbe (pl.), Or. quba. Hudson (2013:243) reconstructs Proto-Semitic *śVbaʔ- ~ ?Všbaʔ- ‘finger’, a form which bears several segments of similarity and which may well be Afroasiatic in origin.
7. ʾēḇā 'family' (Bl.). Cf. Gz. ḏēwā I 'army unit'. Brockelman (1950:8) derives it from Bl. 'a good family' > 'freeborn') (also cited in L153).
8. ʾēʾinɛ-n ‘fart’ (Bl.) (onomatopoetic) but Semitic form not given. In Te. the form is tʿartʾa (or ṭisaʾat for a noiseless one) (Nakano & Tsuge 1982: 14/#87).
9. ʾēʾinɛ ‘fly’ (Qu.). Ap. Qu. ʾenɛʾa, Bl. šiṃša, Xam. šʾsʾa, Khampa šʾsʾā, Kaśliña šʾsʾā, Kem. šiṃša, Aw. cəncā. Cf. Gz. šənšənā, šənšənā, šənšənā 'fly, moth, buzzing swarm'. Leslau believes it is common with Cush., citing Or. ʾinʾi, Dem. sʾesʾā (L562, L88:90), cf. Heb. șōlāṣa‘ ‘cricket’. Perhaps Or. tītīsa, tīsīsa, Ge. tītīcca, etc.

3.2.2. ʾɛ in Medial Position

10. ṭanṣa ‘that’ (Bl.), Xam. ṣē Españ ‘that (f.)’. Ap. offers no EthSem. cognate.
11. ṣēʾəwa ‘mouse, rat’ (Xam.), Kaśliña ṣēʾəwa, Khampa ṣēʾuwa; Bl. ṭanṣaw, Kem. ṣanšwa. Ap. reconstructs PNA *ṭançaswa- as a Proto-Semitic root. There are also interesting Omotic parallels: Shinasha iıntsʾa, Kafa ištʾe, Shekko ištʾe, Mocha ištʾe, Yemsa uṯ. Gz. ṭanṣawā ‘mouse, weasel’ is from Cushitic (Leslau 1991:32); Te ṭansaʾay, Tna. ṭanʾəwa < Bl. ṣanšwa (L88:84). See also Ap. 2006b: 702, where Awngi yinch is cited as an unrelated form with Omotic cognates, cited above.
12. ṣəʾək ‘saliva’ (Bl.), Xam. ḏasʾqan, Kem. ṣəxaxw, Aw. bēs. Ap. says no single proto-form can be reconstructed, but perhaps NAgaw *bəqqə.

3.2.3. Probable Borrowings with ʾɛ from EthSemitic

1. ṩeʾläm- ‘become dark’ (Bl.) is from EthSemitic, Gz. sʾalma, Tna. sʾallāmā, ṩələm ‘darkness’ (Bl.). Ap. adds ‘interestingly the shift s’ > ʾe occurs only in SEthSemitic, e.g. Amh. ṩəllamā. Cf. Hudson (2013:243) PS *slm 'be dark (v)'.
2. ṕəʾamam ‘def’ (Bl.), from Tna. sʾānam.
3. ṕəʾɐrəb- ‘chop, cut’ (Bl.) Ap. gives no etymology. Perhaps Gz. qʾarafa ‘chop into little pieces’ (L440), but the consonants correspondences would be irregular.
5. ṕəʾbəf ‘finger, toe’, ṕəʾbəfət (Bl.) from EthSemitic, Ti. ṕəbfət.
6. ṕəʾənən- ‘load’ (Bl.), from Gz. sʾənəṇa, Ti. sʾaṇnə, Tna. sʾaṇnə. Other Agaw forms reflect Amh. ʾanən (Xam. sʾan-, Kem. šan-).
7. ṕəʾʃər ‘claw, fingernail’ (Bl.) is from Ti. sʾʃər, Khampa sʾʃər (Cf. Tna. sʾəfr), Re. Qu. təfr (= Amh. tʾəfr). Hudson (2013:243) reconstructs PS *ṣVbaθ- ~ ṣVbaθ- ‘finger’ (see §3.2.1 #6 above).
8. ḥərgūɛ ‘crocodile’ (Bl.) Ap. says from Ti. ḥərgus’ but also Tna ḥargas’.

3.3. Geʾez and Agaw Similarities According to Leslau

In these forms, the evidence of these forms is difficult to discern, since the details and exact correspondence sets are tricky. For example, in the first two cases, Geʾez ʂ corresponds both to Bl. ʾe
and ē’. The different reflexes may reflect different periods of loanwords. The data below, directly taken from Leslau (1987 [1991]) and (1988), are presented here for further study and analysis. They include a variety of forms which Leslau believes are “from Cushitic”, “possibly common with Cushitic”, “also in Cushitic” and so on. Certainly several of these candidates offer further possibilities that ejectives in Agaw could be due to native Agaw words and are not always due to borrowing from Ethio-Semitic.

2. Gz. šadanā ‘bee that lives underground’ “also in Cush.” Bl. č’idənā (L547).
4. Gz. šawwə̀a ‘call, call upon’ etc. “also represented in Cush.” Qab. ě’awə̀aw iyo, Bl. ě’aw y- (L565); cf. Heb. šāwə̀h ‘cry aloud’, Te. səw’a (L88:90). Perhaps Bu. c’eech-
5. Gz. ſaʃawə̀a I ‘close, shut, shut up, lock, bolt, block, confine, stop’ “also in Cush.” Kham. īes’uwä ‘tie, bind’, Aw. ans’iaw, Kem. anəsəw (L75); Tna. ſaʃawə̀a ‘close’; related to Ar. gdy ‘close the eyes’. Ap. 2006:46 states that Kham. has ſaʃəwə̀w- from Tna. ſəwə̀aw. Perhaps Or. c’ufə ‘close’, HEC *tu- (e.g. Ge. c’uf-, Ha. t’u-).
6. Gz. ɗagama I ‘be on the left hand’ “poss. common with Cush.” Kham. s’agib ‘left’ (with alternance b:m), Bl. Qua. šəŋəb, with inserted n, hence Te.Tna. šəŋəb ‘left’, Aw. ě’angaba (L149); Ar. ḏəğimə ‘be crooked’ (L88:91).
7. Gz. dəmr ‘wool, fleece, woolen garment’ “also in Cush.”: Kham. s’amir ‘tail, hairy tail’, Aw. s’imər, Bl. ʃəmr (L150-151).
9. Gz. həsə, has’sə, has’a ‘be deficient, subsise, wane’ etc. “also in Cush.” Bl. has’əs ‘cut in small pieces’ (L247; L88:96 notes that it was “perhaps rather borrowed by Cushitic” but cites Ar. həsə (həṣə) ‘cut’; Tna. həsəsə ‘be little’.
10. Gz. q’anəʃ ‘fox, jackal’ Brockelmann considers it a Cushitic loanword Bl. k’ənəslə, Kham. k’asələ (L435).
11. Gz. šəbə, šabo, daʃə ‘milk’ Cohen (1947: no. 343) considers it a root common with Cushitic Bl. Qua. šab, Kham. s’ab, žab, Gən. šəbə. (L544). Tna. ʃaba
13. Gz. šag ‘r ‘hair, fur, feathers, fleece, fiber (of palm) ‘from Cush.’ (so also Cerulli 1936:242-3) Bl. ʃəgar, Qua. t’əgar, Som. dogor, dagor. (Possible connection with Semitic and Cushitic root that suggests the Semitic-Ethiopic root is taken from Cushitic (L550)). Yields Tna. səg’ri, Amh. t’əgar. Perhaps PSC *t’i- ‘body hair, fur’ (Ehret 1995 #247).
17. Gz. ʃəwəwə̀ ‘cup, goblet’. Bl. ʃwəwə̀, Sa. duwə̀; Tna. ʃəwə̀; Ar. sə̀ ‘a cubic measure’
18. Gz. fənəʃə ‘smallpox’. Bl. fənt’ət’a, Sa. fənt’ət’a, Tna. fənt’ət’a; Or. fənt’ət’a.
4. Conclusion

This paper has brought forth evidence that Proto-Agaw should be reconstructed with ejectives, and thus with the distinctive feature [+constricted glottis]. Unlike Orel & Stolbova (1995), who simply assume Proto-Agaw reconstructions with ejectives, this paper has provided actual linguistic forms to support this hypothesis. Fallon (2009) presented evidence from other Cushitic languages that, in the velar place of articulation, there are 25 Proto-Agaw roots which may be reconstructed with a velar ejective. Appleyard could not argue that all these forms were the result of Ethio-Semitic borrowings. In this paper, I have presented additional evidence for ejectives in Proto-Agaw, focusing on coronal stops and affricates. In addition to providing Cushitic (and occasionally Afroasiatic) cognates wherever possible, I have tried to weigh the opinions of the scholars Wolf Leslau and David Appleyard regarding the complex and entangled web of loanwords and similarities in the Agaw and Ethio-Semitic lexicons. I have suggested here that there are 17 roots with PA *t’ (while conceding that there are at least 11 Ethio-Semitic loanwords with t’ in Agaw). In addition, I provided data for 14 roots with PA *č’. Finally, I provided a number of other forms involving ejective sibilants which will require greater scrutiny in teasing apart the reason for the similarities between Agaw and Ethio-Semitic. Further work will shed light on different cognate sets to help determine periods of loanwords, strata of borrowings, and the exact nature of the required phonological rules. Already, I have shown that Appleyard’s assumption in (5b) that Agaw lost all its ejectives needs to be revised. In addition, the careful seriation of changes posited by Ehret (2008) which are formalized in (6) above will need to be modified in their details and probably sequencing. This will thus allow a more accurate reconstruction of Proto-Agaw, which will in turn put on a firmer basis the reconstruction of Proto-Cushitic.

References


