The verbs of falling in Tigrinya*

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Abstract. The paper gives a survey of verbs of falling in Tigrinya (an Ethio-Semitic language spoken in Eritrea and northern Ethiopia). The employment of each verb related to the situation of falling down is illustrated with phrasal examples. The Tigrinya data is further compared with Geez, a closely related extinct language. A special subsection deals with metaphorical use of the basic verb ‘to fall’ in Tigrinya.

Tigrinya possesses one basic verb of falling, wädäḳä, which is applied to describe the downward movement of a solid object through the air or a loss of vertical position of a vertically oriented object. Falling of a solid, heavy object, either through the air or, less typically, along an oblique surface, can also be referred to by a special verb şüdäfä. In all situations deviating from this default situation of falling in Tigrinya, special verbs are employed. Thus, the verbs tägälbäṭ ‘to be overturned, to topple’ or tägämṭälä ‘to be turned over’ are used to describe the situation of toppling, overturning which does not involve physical falling from a higher level to a lower one. Detachment of an object which had been firmly fixed to another object, is usually denoted by the verb moläḳä ‘to slip off; to become detached’. Falling to pieces of buildings or other built structures is described by the special verbs färäśä ‘to collapse, crumble, to fall’ or ṣanäwā ‘to collapse’ (but şädäfä can also be used in such contexts).

Detachment of parts of body or plants due to natural reasons is denoted by the special verb rägäfā ‘to fall off (leaves), to break off, break loose (fruit, leaf), to shed a coat (livestock)’ (although the physical falling which is caused by such a detachment can well be described by the verb wädäḳä ‘to fall’). Furthermore, with respect to teeth, a special verb goräfā ‘to lose milk teeth, to have one’s tooth pulled out’ is used, with the possessor of the tooth encoded as the subject, and the tooth itself, as the object.

Downward movement of liquids is denoted by a wide range of verbs, such as wūḥazā ‘to flow’, nāṭābā ‘to fall in drops, to drop (water), to drip (water), fāsāsā ‘to be spilled, poured (out) (water, grain, etc.), to flow (liquid, stream), to run (water), to fall (water), sārār bālā ‘to ooze, exude’, lāḥakʷā ‘to drip, run (water along a wall after leaking

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through a roof), to leak, to seep, filter through (intransitive). The verb wärädä ‘to descend’ is also used to describe the movement of liquids from a higher level to the lower.

Spilling of granular material is denoted by fäsäsä ‘to be spilled, poured (out) (water, grain, etc.).’

Rolling down is denoted by the verb ḏankorārāyā?ankorārwā ‘to roll’.

Downward movement in water is described by the verb ṭāhalā ‘to sink, to submerge’.

Intentional losing of vertical position is described by the verb bāṭṭ bālā ‘to lie down’, and intentional movement from a higher level to the lower is described by wärādā ‘to descend’.

The metaphors of falling include the employment of the verb wādāḳ to describe an abrupt, unexpected (and often unpleasant) change. This involves decrease in a measure, loss of interest, the destruction of a social power, arriving of a sudden calamity.

A separate group of metaphorical employment is the verb wādāḳā as the standard predicate of such nouns as “lottery” and “lot”, presumably by extension from the situation of dice falling to the ground. Finally, death in battle is also denoted by the verb wādāḳā.

The Geez cognate of wādāḳā likewise functions as the basic verb ‘to fall’, whose employment is very similar to, although not identical with, its Tigrinya equivalent. Similarly, Geez šadāfā does not display any significant difference from Tigrinya šādāfā in its semantics and usage.

**Keywords:** verbs of falling, Tigrinya language, Geez language, Semitic languages, Ethio-Semitic languages.
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Во всех случаях, отклоняющихся от этой типичной ситуации падения, тигрinya использует особые глаголы. В гезе глагол, родственный тигриня wäädäkä, также используется как основной глагол падения. Его употребление очень сходно, хотя и не полностью идентично, употреблению его соответствия в тигриня. Семантика и употребление глагола ṣädfä в гезе не обнаруживают значительных расхождений с глаголом ċādfä в тигриня.

Ключевые слова: глаголы падения, язык тигриня, язык гез, семитские языки, эфиосемитские языки.

1. Introduction

The present contribution deals with verbs of falling in Tigrinya, a language spoken in Eritrea and northern Ethiopia (Tigray region) and belonging to the Ethio-Semitic branch of Semitic languages. Within this paper, the uncontrollable movement of a solid object from a higher to a lower point through the air is taken as the typical situation of falling. Various deviations in the mode of movement, the type of the moving object, the speed, the medium of movement, are regarded as subtypes of falling.

The paper is organized after the semantic principle: for each group of situations of falling, all applicable verbs are listed and supplied with sentential examples. A special section deals with metaphors involving falling and descending. The concluding section sums up the results of the investigation.

While the description of the pertinent verbs in Tigrinya is strictly synchronic, a few comparative observations have been made dealing with the employment of the cognate verbs in Geez, an extinct Ethio-Semitic language (documented since the first centuries A.D.) closely related to Tigrinya. In some cases, information on Geez semantic equivalents of certain Tigrinya verbs has been provided. Still, these remarks do not aim at a full description of the Geez system of verbs of falling. Moreover, such a description could not be entirely complete in view of the usual limitations of data on an extinct language: even for a well-attested verb such as the basic verb ‘to fall’, it is impossible to establish the contexts in which its employment was forbidden. Rather, the comparative data from Geez is adduced to give a glimpse on the differences in the employment of cognate verbs and in the mapping of the situation of falling in two genetically close languages. The comparative remarks are given as subsections in each of the sections of the paper,
and absence of such a subsection indicates that the pertinent examples for
the basic verb of falling in Geez have not been detected, and that the other
Tigrinya verbs discussed in the section lack cognates in Geez.

The Tigrinya examples are given in the conventional phonological tran-
scription, same as used in Bulakh forthcoming (with the symbol ä stand-
ing for a mid central vowel, corresponding to the IPA symbol ə). Spiran-
tization of the labial b and velars, which is a phonetic phenomenon, is not
marked. The labialization of ä in the vicinity of w and as a result of distant
vocalic assimilation, and some other phonetically conditioned changes, re-
main unmarked. The citation form of the verbs is the 3 sg. masc. old perfec-
tive (wädäkä ‘to fall’, etc.), in accordance with the tradition well-established
in Semitic studies. For each verb references to the two-volume Tigrinya-En-
glish dictionary by [Th. L. Kane 2000] are adduced, with Kane’s transcrip-
tion modified slightly.

2. Standard situation of falling

The basic verb ‘to fall’ in Tigrinya is wädäkä [Kane 2000:1787], which
is attested with the same meaning in most Ethio-Semitic languages [Leslau
1987:604]. It will be seen that it is applicable to most situations of falling
discussed in this paper, and it is only rarely that its employment is found
infelicitous or entirely unacceptable.

The standard situation of an object falling from a certain elevated point
to the ground is denoted by wädäkä, as in the following examples:

(1) kab gäräb tuffaḥ wädiḥa
    from tree   apple   fall.PFV.3SF
    ‘An apple fell down from the tree’.

(2) ʔita ṭärmus wädiḥa täsäyra
    ART.SF  bottle   fall.CV.3SF   be.broken.PFV.3SF
    ‘The bottle fell down and broke’.

(3) ʔita näfarit wädiḥa tāḥamšiša
    ART.SF  plane    fall.CV.3SF   be.smashed.PFV.3SF
    ‘The plane fell down and was smashed to pieces’.

(4) ʔanä ʔab mängäddi ʔinda-kädku källoku
    1SG   in   road   while-go.PFV.SBJV.1SG GOAL.AUX.PRS.1SG
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The verb \textit{kab} \textit{ziban zingo ŋimni wädiḳunni} from back zinc stone fall.PFV.SBJ.3SM.OBJ.1SG

‘As I was walking along the street, a stone fell down upon me from the roof’.

(5) \textit{säb nab gobo ŋinda-ŋakorä ŋatät ŋilu}

\textit{wädiḳu}

fall.PFV.3SM

‘A man was climbing a rock, but slipped and fell down’ (contrast example (138)).

(6) \textit{ʔanä kab bisikletta wädiḳā}

\textbf{1SG from bike fall.PFV.1SG}

‘I fell off from my bike’.

The verb \textit{wädiḳā} is applied indiscriminately to heavy or light objects:

(7) \textit{kîntit märet wädiḳu}

\textbf{leaf towards earth fall.PFV.3SM}

‘A leaf fell down to the earth’ (but see also example (88)).

(8) \textit{wärikât mîdri wädiḳu}

\textbf{paper towards earth fall.PFV.3SM}

‘A sheet of paper fell to the floor’.

(9) \textit{nay ʃof kîntit mîdri wädiḳu}

\textbf{poss of kîntit mîdri wädiḳu}

\textbf{bird feather towards earth fall.PFV.3SM}

‘A bird feather fell to the earth’.

In order to indicate the way a light object moves through the air, the verb \textit{filfil bälä}, defined in [Kane 2000: 2649] as ‘to flutter, wave, flapp (flag)’, can be introduced into the sentence (as an adjunct of the verb ‘to fall’):

(10) \textit{kîntit filfil ŋila wädiḳa}

\textbf{feather float CVB.3SF fall.PFV.3SF}

‘The feather floated down’.

For the falling of a heavy object, a special verb \textit{ṣädäfā} can be employed, defined in [Kane 2002: 2613] as ‘to fall down, to fall off a cliff, a high building, to fall in a chasm’. It describes the falling of a heavy object from a higher level to a lower, typically sudden and with a conspicuous effect of the action (usually disastrous for the object itself or for the surroundings).
The meaning of šāḏāfā is thus narrower than that of wādākā, and practically in all contexts the former can be replaced with the latter. Thus, in (11) and (12), wādākā can be used instead of šāḏāfā. On the other hand, šāḏāfā can replace wādākā in examples (2)–(6), but not in examples involving falling of light objects (examples (7)–(10)) or falling down of parts of natural objects in due time (example (1)).

2a. Comparison with Geez

In Geez, the verb wādka, cognate with Tigrinya wādākā, is likewise used as a basic verb of falling (see [Dillmann 1865: 930–931, Leslau 1987: 604]:

(13) kalabāt-ti yəḥalləʃu fərəʃrātə za-wādka
dog.pl-even eat.ipfv.3pm crumb.pl.acc rel-fall.ipfv.3sm
ʔəm-məʔədda ʔaŋʔəstihomu
from-table.cnst master.pl.poss.3pm

‘Even dogs eat crumbs which fall from the table of their masters’. [Mt 15: 27]¹

(14) wa-yəṭballāʃ’ kuʃu ba-məʃr wa-yəwaddək
and-be.eaten.ipfv.3sm sour.grape.poss.3sm in-moment and-fall.ipfv.3sm
kama fərə za-yətnaggaf
like fruit rel-fall.off.ipfv.3sg

‘His sour grape will be eaten in one moment, and it will fall as the fruit that fell off’. [Job 16: 33]; note that the second verb, tanagfa, used in this example as an equivalent of wadka, is restricted to the specific context of falling off of ripe fruits and withered leaves, see Section 7a.

¹ The quotations from Geez Bible are drawn from the following editions: Bachmann 1893 (Is), Dillmann 1853 (Ex, Deut, Lev), Dillmann 1861 (II Kings), Dillmann 1894 (Sir), Esteves Pereira 1989 (Job), Löfgren 1930 (Zech), Ludolf 1701 (Ps), Zuurmond 1989 (Mk), Zuurmond 2001 (Mt), Haddis kidan (Acts).
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(15) wa-ʔi-tatkarram ḥənbābāta waynəka
    and-NEG-harvest.ipfv.2sm berry.pl.cnst grape.nom.poss.2sm
    za-wadka
    rel-fall.pfv.3sm

    ‘and you will not harvest your fallen grapes’. [Lev 19:10]

The Geez equivalent of ṣəddāfə is the verb ṣədfa ‘fall off a cliff, fall into
a hole, cast oneself down’ (see [Dillmann 1865: 1314, Leslau 1987: 547]).
Predictably, it is used less frequently than wadka, and describes the falling
from an extreme height or into depth:

(16) ṣədfa ṭəm-tašlās
    fall.pfv.3sm from-third.floor

    ‘he fell off from the third floor’. [Acts 20: 9]

(17) wa-ṣabda marāʃəyu wa-ṣadfa
    and-be.mad.pfv.3sm cattle.pl.poss.3sm and-fall.pfv.3sm
    wəsta bāhr
    in sea

    ‘And his herd became mad and rushed into the sea’. [Mk 5: 13]

(18) wa-ʔəmma bo za-kašata Šazakta wa-laʔəmmahi
    and-if exist.3sm rel-uncover.pfv.3sm pit.acc and-if
    ʔakraya wa-ʔi-kadan-o ʔafu-hu
    dig.pfv.3sm and-NEG-cover.sbj.3sm-obj.3sm mouth.poss.3sm
    wa-ṣadfa wəstetu lāhm wa-ʔəmmahi ṭadg
    and-fall.pfv.3sm in.3sm cow and-if donkey

    ‘And if somebody uncovers a pit or if he digs one and does not cover
its surface, and a cow or a donkey falls into it…’. [Ex 21: 33]

All in all, the semantics and the combinatorial properties of the Geez
verb do not display any significant difference from those of its Tigrinya cognate.
Admittedly, the Tigrinya verb can designate a downward movement
of an object along the oblique surface (see Section 9), but no such state-
ment can be made concerning the Geez cognate, since no relevant contexts
have been detected.

Finally, it is worth while to mention that the verbal root *ṣdf (found,
apart from Tigrinya and Geez, in Tigre and Amharic, see [Leslau 1987: 547])
is undoubtedly related to *sad(a)f ‘precipice, cliff’, which is attested in Geez
(ṣadf, see [Leslau 1987: 547]), Tigrinya (ṣădfi, [Kane 2000: 2614]), Tigre
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(ṣadaf, [Littmann, Höfner 1962: 648]), Amharic (tädf, [Kane 1990: 2178]), and, interestingly, has a cognate in Arabic (ṣadaf- ‘anything lofty, such as a wall and a mountain’, [Lane 1863–93: 1666]). Furthermore, the Arabic verbs ṣadaf ‘to turn away’ and ṣadif ‘to have a crookedness in the fore legs, an inclining in the hoof towards the off side (about a horse), or an inclining of the foot of the fore leg or of the hind leg towards the off side (about a camel)’ [Lane 1863–93: 1665] must also be related: their semantics may well be derived from the meaning ‘to turn over’, a likely narrowing of a general verb ‘to fall down’ (on the link between the meanings ‘to fall’, ‘to turn over’, and ‘to turn back’, see Section 3).

3. The loss of vertical orientation

For vertically oriented object the situation of losing the vertical position and coming to a horizontal position is likewise indicated by the verb wädäḳä discussed in Section 2 (the verb ṣädäfä was explicitly rejected in such contexts). This involves objects like trees, street lamps, or chairs:

(19) ṭinda-täšawätña ṭiza sedia wädiḳa
    while-play.pfv.sbjv.1pl dem.sf chair fall.pfv.3sf
‘As we were playing, the chair fell down.’

(20) ṭizi gäräb wädiḳu
    dem.sm tree fall.pfv.3sm
‘The tree fell down’.

The latter phrase can refer to the falling of a tree cut down by the woodcutters or uprooted by wind. The uprooting is more precisely described with the following phrase:

(21) ṭizi gäräb wädiḳu sirawru käʔa nab märet
    dem.sm tree fall.cvb.3sm root.pl.poss.3sm and towards earth
    wäsiʔom
go.out.pfv.3pm
‘This tree fell down, and its roots appeared upon earth’.

When applied to human beings, this verb can also indicate loss of vertical orientation:
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(22) bi-bäräd šätät ʔilä wädiḵä
    in-ice slide CVB.1SG fall.PFV.1SG
    ‘I slid upon the ice and fell down’ (contrast example (6)).

Objects which are both high and long (but comparatively thin) are also considered as vertically oriented and are well compatible with the verb wädiḵä:

(23) ʔiti mändäk wädiḵu
    ART.SM wall fall.PFV.3SM
    ‘The wall overturned’.

(24) mäkkabäbiya wädiḵu
    fence fall.PFV.3SM
    ‘The fence overturned’.

(25) ʔita bisikletta ʔab mändäk tāssāggiša nāyira
    ART.SF bike in wall be.leaned.CV.3SF AUX.PST.3SF
    dāḥar gin wädiḵa
    then but fall.PFV.3SF
    ‘The bike was leaned to the wall, then it fell down’.

Quadrupeds belong to the same group:

(26) ḥadā hadanay šaggazen tokk*isu šaggazen wädiḵa
    one.M hunter antelope shoot.CV.3SM antelope fall.PFV.3SF
    ‘When a hunter shot an antelope, the antelope fell down’.

(27) ʔiti färás wädiḵu
    ART.SM horse fall.PFV.3SM
    ‘The horse fell down’.

However, the verb wädiḵä is not applied to the overturning of objects which are broad as well as long, such as a car, a bus, a train, or a table. For such an object, the verb wädiḵä can only denote the situation of a proper falling down from an upper position to a lower level through the air (see Section 2):

(28) ʔita mäkkina ʔansīta sīḥita kab dildil
    ART.SF car direction.POSS.3SF miss.CV.3SF from bridge
    wädiḵa
    fall.PFV.3SF
    ‘The car lost direction and fell down from the bridge’.
The table fell down from the upper floor (to the ground).

If the situation of toppling, overturning does not involve physical falling from a higher level to a lower one, the verbs tägälbița ‘to be overturned, to topple’ [Kane 2000: 2215] or tägämțilä ‘to be turned over’ [Kane 2000: 2248] are used:

(30) mākkina šātāti ?ila tägälbița
      car     slide       CVB.3SF overturn.PVF.3SF
   ‘A car slid and overturned’ (**wādița is not acceptable in this context).

(31) ?izi țawla tägälbițu
      DEM.SM table  overturn.PVF.3SM
   ‘This table was turned upside down’.

(32) mākkina/?awtobus tägämțila
      car/bus       overturn.PVF.3SF
   ‘A car/bus overturned’.

(33) babur kab ḥadid taʔalya tägämțila
      train   from track deviate.CVB.3SF overturn.PVF.3SF
   ‘A train went off the track and overturned’.

These verbs can be applied to other objects to indicate the wrong, upside-down position (not necessarily a result of accidental toppling):

(34) ?iza țārmuz tägälbița/tägämțila ?alla
      DEM.SF bottle  overturn.CVB.3SF/overturn.CVB.3SF AUX.PRS.3SF
   ‘The bottle has been turned upside down’.

With animate subjects, both verbs acquire the meaning ‘to turn back’, and the verb tägämțilä can also be used with the meaning ‘to somersault’:

(35) tägälbița  riʔyatinni
      overturn.CVB.3SF    see.PVF.SBJ.3SF.OBJ.1SG
   ‘She turned back and looked at me’ (not much in use).

(36) tägämțila  riʔyatinni
      overturn.CVB.3SF    see.PVF.SBJ.3SF.OBJ.1SG
   ‘She turned back and looked at me’.
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(37) ?izi  ḥişan  tāgāmtīlu
DEM.SM  child  overturn.PFV.3SM
‘The kid made a somersault’.

The verb tāgāmsāsā ‘to lean over, lean to one side’ [Kane 2000: 2238] is used to denote a lesser degree of overturning, loss of normal vertical position:

(38) ?ita  mākkina  tāgāmsisā
ART.SF  car  overturn.PFV.3SF
‘The car tipped over (on its side) or became inclined’.

(39) ?izi  ṭawla  tāgāmsisu
DEM.SM  table  overturn.PFV.3SM
‘The table tipped over (on its side) or became inclined’.

Its basic meaning is ‘to lean (upon something)’, as in the following example.

(40) ?izi  ṭom  wādiḳu  ṭab  māndāk  tāgāmsisu
DEM.SM  tree  fall.CVB.3SM  in  wall  overturn.PFV.3SM
‘The tree fell down and leaned upon a wall’.

With animate subjects, the verb tāgāmsāsā is consistently used to indicate the intentional lying down in order to sleep:

(41) ?iti  fārās  ṭab  māret  tāgāmsisu
ART.SM  horse  in  earth  overturn.PFV.3SM
‘The horse lay down (and slept) on the ground’.

(42) ?anā  kīgīmsās  dālliyā
1SG  GOAL.Overturn.IPVF.1SG  want.PFV.1SG
‘I want to lie down’ (= ‘I want to sleep’).

The direction of falling / overturning (to the front, to one side, backwards) is not relevant for the choice of the verb of falling:

(43) wādiḳā  gāmbārāy  tāsāyṛā
fall.CVB.1SG  forehead.Poss.1SG  be.broken.PFV.1SG
‘I fell down and my forehead was wounded’.

(44) wādiḳā  ṭidāy  tāsāyṛā
fall.CVB.1SG  arm.Poss.1SG  be.broken.PFV.1SG
‘I fell down and broke my shoulder’.
‘He hit me so that I fell down backwards’.

For inanimate vertically oriented objects the verb tāšasfā ‘to be folded, turned; to be doubled, creased, drooped, to collapse’ [Kane 2000: 1947] can be applied to indicate that the base of the object did not change its position:

‘The street lamp was bent’.

The verb šatāk bālā can be used with a similar meaning. In [Kane 2000: 1938], it is defined as ‘to fall and break (object)’, but according to Täsfaldät Ḥadhāṃbas, its proper meaning is ‘to be tilted’:

‘The tree was bent and fell down’.

‘The tree was bent and broke’.

The situation of falling flat (with one’s whole body spread upon the ground) can be denoted by a special verb šāḥ bālā ‘to fall face forward, fall on one’s face, fall flat; to prostrate oneself, to lie flat’ [Kane 2000: 2549], which can be used as an adverbial adjunct to wādākā:

‘He fell flat upon the ground’.

3a. Comparison with Geez

The Geez verb wadkā is likewise applicable to situations of loss of vertical position:

‘For the cedar fell’. [Zech 11: 2]
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(51) ʔə muntu-ssa tašakṣu wa-wadku
     3PM-EMPH stumble.PVF.3PM and-fall.PVF.3PM

‘They stumbled and fell down’. [Ps 19:9]

(52) wa-boʔa māʔkala ṣəlwān wa-wagʔ-o
     and-enter.PVF.3SM among rebel.PM and-pierce.PVF.SBJ.3SM-OBJ.3SM
la-1-ʔəmannehomu baʔa kʷināt wa-wadka
     ALL-1-from.3PM INS-mouth.CNST spear and-fall.PVF.3SM

dəḥyrita
backwards

‘And he entered into the midst of the rebels and pierced one of them
with the point of spear, and he [the rebel] fell backwards’. [Marras-
sini 1993: 86]

The Tigrinya verbs tāgālbāṭā and tāgāmsāsā do not have reliable cognates in Geez.

For the verb tāgāmtālā, it is tempting to suggest a connection with
Geez ganpala ‘distort, turn upside down, overturn’ and its passive deriva-
tive taganpala [Leslau 1987: 198, Dillmann 1965: 1182]. The phonologi-
cal correspondence is not fully reliable (Tigrinya ţ should correspond to t
in Geez), yet acceptable in view of the fact that the phoneme p is extremely
rare in Geez and mostly restricted to borrowings (the same is true of p in Ti-
grinya). It is therefore difficult to establish exact rules of its behaviour in the
indigenous vocabulary, and the correspondence between np in Geez and mt
in Tigrinya is easy to imagine: the shift from the labial ejective p to dental
ejective t is compensated by the shift from dental nasal n to labial nasal m.
Semantically, the Geez and Tigrinya roots are extremely close. While ta-
ganpala in Geez is only attested in the figurative meaning ‘to be distorted’
[Dillmann 1865: 1182], the basic meaning of the root is clearly ‘to turn up-
side down’:

(53) ganpala manābōrtihomu
     overturn.PVF.3SM chair.PL.POSS.3PM

‘he overturned their chairs’. [Dillmann 1865: 1182]

The rest of the Tigrinya verbs mentioned in this section either do not
have cognates in Geez, or have cognates which are not used as verbs of fall-
ing or loss of vertical position.

Tigrinya tāšasfā has a reliable cognate in Geez, tašasfa/tašasfa ‘clothe
oneself’ [Leslau 1987: 74, Dillmann 1865: 1024]. It is commonly assumed
that the meaning ‘to clothe oneself’ and ‘to put on clothes’ (attested both
for the derived verb taʕasfa/taʕasfa and the source verb ḡasfa) is a secondary development of ‘to fold up, to double (a piece of cloth)’, attested for the verb ḡasfa (‘bend, fold up, double’) and for the passive participle ḡəṣuf ‘folded up, double’ (see [Leslau 1987: 74, Dillmann 1865: 1024]).

The Geez and Tigrinya data thus mutually confirm the statement that the basic meaning of the root ḡṣf is ‘to bend’. However, the root has a wide application in Tigrinya, where it can refer to bending of solid vertical objects and thus to the situation of loss of vertical position. In Geez, in all the passages quoted in [Dillmann 1865: 1024], the root refers to the folding of clothes, hence the meaning ‘to clothe oneself’ (< ‘to fold clothes around oneself’) and the figurative meaning ‘to double’ (< ‘to fold (cloth), to make a double layer of cloth’):

(54) ṭəsmə ḡəṣuf wəʔətu za-lāšleka

because double 3SM REL-upon.2SM

‘for what is upon you is twice as much’. [Job 11: 6]

Its use to describe the bending of a solid object is less frequent, but still not entirely absent:

(55) ṭəmna wadka ṭi-yəkəl tanšəʔo ṭəsmə
if fall.PFV.3SM NEG-be.able.IPfv.3SM rise.INF because

ʔałbo ba-zə-yaʕəṣəf bərəkihu
NEG.EXIST INS-REL-bend.IPfv.3SM knee.PL.3POS

‘If he [the elephant] falls down he cannot rise because there is nothing by means of which he can bend his knees’. [Hommel 1877: 35]

The Tigrinya verb ḡaṭək bālä ‘to tilt’ is probably derived from ḡaṭəkā ‘to put a belt on one’s trousers (originally to gird one’s loins with a sash)’ [Kane 2000: 1937]. The semantic connection between bending, tilting and the girding goes along the same lines as the colexification of the meanings ‘to bend’ and ‘to clothe oneself’ in the root ḡṣf discussed above in this subsection: obviously the girding is understood as bending, folding, or wrapping of the girdle. The cognate in Geez, ḡaṭaka, is found only with the meaning ‘to gird, put around the waist’ [Leslau 1987: 76, Dillmann 1865: 1017].

Finally, the verb ṣəh bālä ‘to lie flat’ must be cognate to Geez ṣəḥa ‘make level, make even, pave a road’ [Leslau 1987: 568, Dillmann 1865: 1308]. The Geez root, however, is not attested in the descriptions of the situation of falling.
4. Falling from inside of a container or through an aperture

There is no special verb denoting falling out of something, the verb \( \text{wādākā} \) being applied to this situation:

(56) \text{ʔɨ tɨ miʃtəh kab borsay wādiŋu}  
\text{ART.SM key from bag.POSS.1SG fall.PVF.3SM}  
‘The key fell out of my bag’.

(57) \text{ʔɨ ta č̣ačwit kab sāʃār nab māret wādiŋa}  
\text{ART.SF chick from nest towards earth fall.PVF.3SF}  
‘The chick fell out of a nest’.

(58) \text{ʔɨ ta dimmu kab māskot nab māret wādiŋa}  
\text{ART.SF cat from window towards earth fall.PVF.3SF}  
‘The cat fell out of window to the ground’.

Note that the verb \( \text{ṣādaʃa} \) is acceptable in (57) and (58), but not in (56). The reason is that a key falling out of a bag is neither a heavy object, nor falls from a height, and thus, the result of its falling is insignificant.

5. Detachment of fixed objects

The falling down of objects which are loosely attached to some object, without special means of fixation, is denoted by the general verb for falling, \( \text{wādākā} \):

(59) \text{ʔɨ ti ɡaket kab takkabanno šātāt ʔilu wādiŋu}  
\text{ART.SM jacket from hanger slip CVB.3SM fall.PVF.3SM}  
‘The jacket slipped down from a hanger and fell down’.

(60) \text{ɡāmād kab māntaɬli wādiŋu}  
\text{rope from hook fall.PVF.3SM}  
‘A rope fell down from hook’.

(61) \text{māŋkāsi ?id čarki kab māntaɬli wādiŋu}  
\text{dryer hand cloth from hook fall.PVF.3SM}  
‘A hand towel fell down from hook’.
(62) kobšāy kab riʔisāy wādiḵa
    hat.poss.1sg from head.poss.1sg fall.pfv.3sf
    ‘My hat fell down from my head’.

(63) ḥimni kab kräyn wādiḵu
    stone from crane fall.pfv.3sm
    ‘A slab fell from a crane’.

In accordance with the semantic restrictions discussed in Section 4, the verb šādāfā can replace wādāḵā only in the last of these examples, where the falling object is heavy and falls from a height.

For an object which is firmly fixed (e.g. screwed) to another object, the verb molāḵā ‘to slip off; to become detached’ [Kane 2000: 327] is usually applied2:

(64) nay mākkina goma molīḵa
    poss car tire slip.off.pfv.3sf
    ‘A tire fell off car’.

(65) ḥanā zī-šāmmārkuvwo mismar molīku
    1sg rel-nail.pfv.sbjv.sbjv.1sg.obj.3sm nail slip.off.pfv.3sm
    ‘The nail which I nailed (into a wall) fell out’.

(66) mākdān ūrmus zālikā nāyra
    lid bottle be.loosened.cvb.3sf aux.pst.cvb.3sf
    *molīḵa
    slip.off.pfv.3sf
    ‘The bottle lid got loose and fell off’.

(67) gāṃād tāsāmmira nāyra ḏāḥar molīḵa
    rope be.nailed.cvb.3sf aux.pst.3sf afterwards slip.off.pfv.3sf
    ‘The rope was nailed (to a wall), but then it (got loose and) fell down’.

The verb molāḵā denotes the process of getting detached from the fixed position rather than the movement downwards (note that it is not applicable for instance in the example (59) because the object is not firmly fixed from the beginning). For some of the examples given above, the verb wādāḵā is also applicable, which then indicates the actual falling down to the ground:

2 The verb is also used in the meaning ‘to steal off, to escape unobserved’ [see Kane 2000: 327]: sāb kab ṭisir bet molīku wāšiżu man from arrest house escape.cvb.3sm go.out.pfv.3sm ‘A man escaped from prison’.
The verbs of falling in Tigrinya 693

(68) ?ană  zi-sämmärkuwwo  mismar  wādiḵu
1SG  REL-nail.PFV.SBJ.SBJ.1SG.OBJ.3SM  nail  fall.PFV.3SM
‘The nail which I nailed (into a wall) fell down’.

(69) gämäd  täsämmira  näyra  dāḥar  wādiḵa
rope  be.nailed.CV.B.3SF  AUX.PST.3SF  afterwards  fall.PFV.3SF
‘The rope was nailed (to a wall), but then it fell down’.

The following examples, in each of them both wādākā and molākā are employed, illustrate the difference between the two verbs:

(70) natāy  kālābāt  nay  kalkidanāy  zālāklāk
POSS.1SG  ring  POSS  matrimony.PROSS.1SG  be.loosened
?ilatinni  dāḥar  kitmolūk  dāliya
PFV.SBJ.3SF.OBJ.1SG  afterwards  GOAL.slip.off.IPV.3SF  want.PFV.3SF
?anā  gin  kāyyitwādīk  ?ilā  ?awsīyā
1SG  but  GOAL.NEG.fall.IPV.3SF  say.CV.1SG  take.out.PFV.1SG
‘My wedding ring got a bit loose and then it was about to come off, so I took it off to prevent it from falling down’ (the speaker is not so much afraid of the ring getting detached from the finger as of its falling down to the ground and getting lost).

(71) ʔizi  mismar  kab  māndāk  moliku  nab  māret
DEM.SM  nail  from  wall  slip.off.CV.B.3SM  towards  earth
wādiḵu
fall.PFV.3SM
‘The nail got detached from its position on the wall and fell down to the ground’.

6. Falling to pieces

The situation of falling to pieces of buildings or other built structures normally is not described by the verb of falling wādākā. On the contrary, the verb šādāfā can be used in such contexts, as an equivalent of the verb fārāsā ‘to collapse, crumble, to fall’ [Kane 2000: 2660]. The latter is the default verb to describe such a situation:

(72) ʔiti  gāza  fārisu/šādīfu
ART.SM  house  collapse.PFV.3SM
‘The house collapsed’.

The verbs of falling in Tigrinya 693
The verb ʕənəwā ‘to collapse’ [Kane 2000: 1889] can also be used in the same contexts, implying a stronger degree of destruction:

(74) ʔəti ḫiṃsa ʕənəwā

‘The building was completely demolished’.

The application of the verb wådåkā to the situation of destruction is only possible if the destruction is accompanied with the proper falling down, as in the case of a bridge, or of losing the vertical orientation, as in the case of a wall or a fence (see Section 3):

(75) ʔəzə dildi ʕədikʉ

‘This bridge fell down’ (the same situation can also be described as ʔəzə dildi ʕərusu ‘This bridge collapsed’, or ʔəzə dildi ʕənəwā ‘This bridge was totally destroyed’).

(76) ʔəti mändåk ʕədikʉ

‘The wall fell down (the same situation can also be described as ʔəti mändåk ʕərusu ‘The wall collapsed’, or ʔəti mändåk ʕənəwā ‘The wall was totally destroyed’).

(77) mäkkabäbiya ʕədikʉ

‘A fence fell down’ (the same situation can also be described as mäkkabäbiya ʕərusu ‘A fence collapsed’ or mäkkabäbiya ʕənəwā ‘A fence was totally destroyed’).

The same motivation — the fact that the destruction entails the physical fall of the object — must be behind the application of the verb wådåkā to the situation of the ceiling falling down:
The verbs of falling in Tigrinya

(78) ṭizi naḥsi zātiṭu  kiwāddīk dāliyu
DEM.SM ceiling be.curved.CVB.3SM GOAL.fall.IP.FV.3SM want.IP.FV.3SM
‘The ceiling became curved and is threatening to fall’.

The verb wādākā is also — quite predictably — applied to a man falling through the broken ceiling:

(79) bäzi naḥsi ṭintāḥaliṭka kitwāddīk ʔika
in.DEM.SM ceiling if.pass.IP.FV.2SM GOAL.fall.IP.FV.2SM COP.2SM
‘If you walk over this ceiling you will fall through’.

As for the falling in of a riverbank, the verb wādākā is applicable to this situation only if the subject denotes the earth which is falling:

(80) bisānki figrā māret ʔizi ḥamād wādiku
because erosion.CNST earth DEM.SM soil fall.IP.FV.3SM
‘Because of erosion the soil fell down’.

(81) ʔab gāmgām wiğiṭ zirikkāb māret wādiku
in bank river REL.be.situated.IP.FV.3SM earth fall.IP.FV.3SM
‘The earth which was on the bank of the stream fell down’.

A special verb tābaḥgʷägᵃ ‘to be washed away, to be eroded’ [Kane 2000: 1108] is also used with the noun ‘earth’ or ‘soil’ as its subject:

(82) ʔab gāmagim kālay zirikkāb māret
on bank.PL lake REL.be.situated.IP.FV.3SM earth

tābaḥgigu
be.eroded.PFV.3SM
‘The earth which was on the banks of the lake was eroded’

The term gāmgām ‘(river)bank’ is compatible neither with wādākā nor with tābaḥgʷägᵃ, nor with färāsā: **gāmgām wādiku, **gāmgām tābaḥgigu, **gāmgām fārisu are all unacceptable for the native speaker.

6a. Comparison with Geez

Unlike its cognate in Tigrinya, the verb wadka in Geez is well attested to refer to collapse of buildings:

(83) wa-ḥanasu kʷəllo ṭəkma wa-kʷəllo
and-build.PFV.3PM all.3SM.ACC wall.ACC and-all.3SM.ACC
‘And they built (again) every wall and every bulwark which collapsed in the land of Egypt’. [Vanderkam 1989: 239]

‘The rain came, and floods flowed, and winds blew, and they afflicted this house, and it collapsed, and its destruction was great’. [Mt 7: 27]

‘And after this I will restore and build again the house of David which had collapsed, and I will build anew its ruins’. [Acts 15: 16]

This employment can well be explained by the Greek influence: all the relevant texts are translations from Greek, where in the corresponding passages the verb πίπτω ‘to fall’ or its derivatives are used.

7. Falling down of parts of natural objects

which have reached the stage at which they are expected to be detached from the main body

The situation of a leaf falling from the tree or of petals falling from the flower can be denoted by a general verb for falling, wādāḵā (see also examples (1), (7); note that the verb šādāfā is not used in such contexts):

‘Leaves fell down (in the autumn)’. 

The relevant texts are translations from Greek, where in the corresponding passages the verb πίπτω ‘to fall’ or its derivatives are used.
The verbs of falling in Tigrinya

(87) ᵇⁱᵍᵍᵉ ṇᵃʸ ˢⁱᵐᵇᵃᵇᵃ ᵇⁿᵈⁱᵏᵘ
petal poss flower fall.PFV.3SM
‘The petals of a flower fell off’.

However, more natural is the employment of the special verb ṭᵃᵍᵃᶠᵃ ‘to fall off (leaves), to break off, break loose (fruit, leaf), to shed a coat (livestock)’ [Kane 2000: 610]:

(88) ᵃʳᵒˡⁱ ʳᵃᵍⁱᶠᵘ
leaf fall.off.PFV.3SM
‘A leaf fell down’.

(89) ᶞᵃʳˢᵘˡᵗⁱ ʸⁱʳᵃᵍᵍᶠᵘ
leaf.PL fall.off.IPfv.3PM
‘Leaves fall down (in the autumn)’.

(90) ᶞᵃʳˢᵘˡᵗⁱ ʳᵃᵍⁱᶠᵒᵐ
leaf.PL fall.off.PFV.3PM
‘Leaves fell down’.

(91) ᵇⁱᵍᵍᵉ ṇᵃʸ ˢⁱᵐᵇᵃᵇᵃ ʳᵃᵍⁱᶠᵘ
petal poss flower fall.off.PFV.3SM
‘The petals of a flower fell off’.

(92) ᵇⁿⁱᵐᵇᵃᵇᵃ ḡᵉⁿ ᵇⁿᵃᵏᵃˢᵃ ᶜⁱᵍᵍᵃʔᵘ ʳᵃᵍⁱᶠᵘ
flower when wither.PFV.SBJV.3SM petal.Poss.3SM fall.off.PFV.3SM
‘When the flower withered, its petals fell off’.

(93) ᵇⁱʳᵃ ṇᵃʸ ᵇᵒʳᵃⁿˢʰⁱ ʳᵃᵍⁱᶠᵘ
fruit poss orange fall.off.PFV.3SM
‘The oranges fell down (from the orange-tree)’.

(94) ᵇⁱʳᵃ ḡᵉⁿ ᵇᵃˢᵃˡᵃ ʳᵃᵍⁱᶠᵘ
fruit when ripen.PFV.SBJV.3SM fall.off.PFV.3SM
‘When the fruits became ripe, they fell down (from the tree)’.

The verb ṭᵃᵍᵃᶠᵃ is consistently used with objects which are parts of human or animal body and which fall off for natural reasons (e.g. at a certain age):

(95) ᵇⁿᵃbbb ˢᵃᵇ ḡᵉⁿ ᵇᵉʳᵃʳᵃʳᵃ ᶜⁱᵍᵍʳᵘ ʳⁱʳᵃᵍᵍⁱᶠ
man when be.old.PFV.SBJV.3SM hair.Poss.3SM fall.off.IPfv.3SM
‘When a man gets old, his hair falls out’.
‘When this man got old, his teeth fell out’.

‘The hair of this dog started to fall out and spoiled the house’ (**ṣogri nayzi kälbi wädiḳu** hair POSS.DEM.SM dog fall.PFV.3SM is not acceptable).

‘A snake skin fell off’ (**nay tāmān Ɂorbot wädiḳu** POSS snake skin fall.PFV.3SM is not acceptable).

The verb ṭädäḳā is incompatible with such objects as animal hair or snake skin, but can be applied (with some hesitation) to the falling out of teeth and human hair:

‘His teeth fell out’ (less acceptable than sinnu ṭāgīfu).

‘A hair from my head fell into the dish’ (**rāgifā is not acceptable).”

However, the verb ṭāgāfā is not acceptable in a sentence which focuses on the actual falling down of the object:

‘A hair from my head fell into the dish’ (**rāgifā is not acceptable).”

To describe the falling out of milk teeth of a child, the verb gorāfā ‘to lose milk teeth’ [Kane 2000: 2278] is usually employed, with its subject encoding the person whose teeth fall out or are pulled:
**sinna**   **gorifa**  
> tooth.poss.3sf  lose.teeth.pfv.3sf

‘Since the new teeth of the girl were about to grow, her (milk) teeth fell out (lit. she shed her milk teeth).’

(103) ʔanā  šiddāy  šāduštā  šamāt  mis  bāṣā́ḥku  
> 1sg  age.poss.1sg  six  year  when  reach.pfv.sbjv.1sg

> sinnāy  gorifā
> tooth.poss.1sg  lose.teeth.pfv.1sg

‘When I reached the age of six years, I lost my (milk) teeth’.

(104) wāddāy  sinni  mugraf  ġāmmiru  
> boy.poss.1sg  tooth  lose.teeth.inf  begin.pfv.3sm

‘My son started to lose his (milk) teeth’.

(105) ʔolśa  mis  ṣabāyā  sinni  yigorif  
> child  when  be.big.pfv.sbjv.3sm  tooth  lose.teeth.ipfv.3sm

‘When a child grows up, he loses his (milk) teeth’.

The verb goräfä was defined by Täsfaldät Ḥadgāmbäs as referring to teeth being pulled out by force. The falling out of milk teeth is thus perceived as involving external aid. The verb goräfä is not restricted to a situation of losing one’s milk teeth, as one can infer from the following example (about a grown-up person):

(106) ʔanā  nab  ḥakim  kāyā  sinnāy  gorifā  
> 1sg  towards  doctor  go.cvb.1sg  tooth.poss.1sg  lose.teeth.pfv.1sg

‘I went to a doctor and had my tooth pulled out’.

### 7a. Comparison with Geez

Neither rāgäfä nor goräfä have reliable cognates in Geez (Leslau [1987: 464–465] mentions ragafa ‘fall to the ground (fruit, leaves)’, but no such root is attested in [Dillmann 1865], and the entry in Leslau’s dictionary must be founded on local glossaries of Geez which are not fully reliable).

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3 But its subject cannot encode a person pulling someone else’s tooth. For this situation, the causative derivative ḳagʷṛāfä is applied: ḳiti ḥakim ni-sinnāy ḳagʷṛifullāy dem. sm doctor all-tooth.poss.1sg pull.out.pfv.3sm.appl.1sg ‘The doctor pulled out my tooth’.
While the verb *wadka* is applicable in the situation of leaves or fruits falling off the tree (see above, examples (14), (15)), the most common lexeme to describe such a situation is apparently the verb *tanagfa* ‘fall off’ [Leslau 1987: 391, Dillmann 1865: 696]:

(107) _kama kʷašla ẓəš za-ṣəfuk kʷašlu za-ḳadəmi_
    like leaf.CNST tree REL-dense.M leaf.Poss.3SM REL-first.M
_yətnaggaf_ wa-daḥəri yəsarrəs_
    fall.IPFV.3SM and-last.M sprout.IPFV.3SM

‘Like the leaves of a tree with dense foliage: the first one falls off and the last one sprouts’. [Sir 14: 18]

(108) _kʷašl za-ṭanagfa Ḫəm-nafəs_
    leaf REL-fall.IPFV.3SM from-wind

‘A leaf which had been shaken off because of wind’. [Job 13:25]

(109) _wa-təṭərri ẓəsawəta zayt wəsta kʷəllu_
    and-possess.IPFV.2SM tree.PL.CNST olive in all.3SM.NOM
_dawaləka wa-ʔi-tətkabbəʔ Ḫəbʔə_
    region.NOM.Poss.2SM and-NEG-be.anointed.IPFV.2SM oil.ACC
_ʔəmənnehu Ḫəsma ṭanagfa fərəhu_
    from.3SM because fall.IPFV.3SM fruit.Poss.3SM

‘You shall possess olive trees in each of your regions, but you will not anoint yourself with its oil because its fruit will fall off’. [Deut 28: 40]

The semantic and functional similarity between Geez *tanagfa* and Tigrinya *răgăfū* is also demonstrated by the fact that the Amharic *răggăfă* (which corresponds to Tigrinya *răgăfă* both etymologically and functionally, see [Kane 1990: 422]) is used as a gloss to Geez *tanagfa* in the traditional Geez-Amharic lexical list quoted in [Dillmann 1865: 696].

The Geez verb *tanagfa* is a reflexive-passive derivative from *nagafa* ‘shake, shake off, knock off’, which is typically used with an animate agent to denote shaking or casting something off one’s body, or simply shaking or casting something:

(110) _nəgafu ʂəbala Ḫəgarikəmu_
    shake.IMP.PM dust.CNST foot.PL.Poss.2PM

‘Shake the dust off your feet!’ [Mt 10: 14]

(111) _wa-nəgafu ʔəwlos Ḫədehu_
    and-shake.IPFV.3SM Paul hand.Poss.3SM

‘And Paul shook his hand’. [Acts 28: 5]
The verbs of falling in Tigrinya 701

(112) *nagafomu*  *

shake.Pfv.Sbj.3sm.obj.3pm  all-Egypt  among  sea

‘He (the God) knocked the Egyptians into the middle of the sea’. [Ex 14: 27]

Remarkably, the same verb can be used with non-agentive subjects:

(113) *qəša  ṭərbentos  ṭənta  nagafat  kʷašlā*

tree.cnst  terebinth  rel.sf  shake.pfv.3sf  leaf.poss.3sf

‘The terebinth which cast off its foliage’. [Is 1: 30]4

Furthermore, in post-Aksumite Geez there is at least one attestation of the same verb *nagafa* intransitively, with the meaning ‘to fall off’ (about the spines of a hedgehog):

(114) *wa-yəbelā  la-kəŋfəz  yəngaf*

and-say.pfv.sbj.3sm.obj.3sf  all-hedgehog  fall.off.juss.3sm

šagʷrəki  ba-ḥayla  ṭəamlākiya  wa-soba

hair.nom.poss.2sf  ins-power.cnst  lord.poss.1sg  and-when

yəbe  kama-ţə  *nagafa*  šagʷrā

say.pfv.3sm  like-dem.sm.nom  fall.off.pfv.3sm  hair.poss.3sf

wa-κonat  ṣərākā

and-become.pfv.3sf  naked.poss.3sf

‘And he told the hedgehog: let your fur fall off by the power of my Lord! and as he said so, the fur of the hedgehog fell off, and it became naked’ [Marrassini 2003: 303 (ed.), 106 (tr.)]5

The influence of the above-mentioned Amharic *räggäfä* can well account for this change of diathesis. Whether the Geez root *ngf* is etymologically related to Tigrinya *rgf* and/or *gʷrf* remains an open question (the irregular phonological correspondence *n — r* is an obstacle, but the semantic proximity is remarkable).

4 See a similar employment of *goräfä* ‘to shed (milk) teeth’ in Tigrinya. It is this usage of *nagafa* which apparently gave rise to the derivative *tanagfä* (lit. ‘to be shaken off’) used with the meaning ‘to fall off (about leaves etc.)’.

5 This meaning is attested neither in [Leslau 1987] nor in [Dillmann 1865], but see TraCES online edition of [Dillmann 1865] with additions, http://betamasheft.eu/Dillmann/?mode=none&query=%E1%8A%90%E1%8C%88%E1%8D%88&id=Lb33f230d-206c46e9948b412d6e71e25b (accessed on 01.02.2019).
8. Falling down of liquids and granular materials

The verb wäädäḳä is never applied to liquids. Thus, sentences like **may yiwädd̠ik ‘Water falls’ or **may wädiku ‘Water has fallen down’, **šiṃṣa nab ʔidāy wädiskunni ‘Wax fell upon my hand’ are unacceptable. Similarly, the verb šädäfā is not used to describe the falling/streaming down of liquids.

Instead, verbs of flowing, leaking and dripping are applied, such as wähazā ‘to flow’ [Kane 2000: 1718], nāṭābā ‘to fall in drops, to drop (water), to drip (water)’ [Kane 2000: 1381], fäsāsā ‘to be spilled, poured (out) (water, grain, etc.), to flow (liquid, stream), to run (water), to fall (water)’ [Kane 2000: 2677], šārār bālā ‘to ooze, exude’ [Kane 2000: 2563], lāḥakʷā ‘to drip, run (water along a wall after leaking through a roof), to leak, to seep, filter through (intransitive)’ [Kane 2000: 71]. Of these, the verb wähazā is said to denote unconstrained, usually horizontal movement of water or other liquids:

(115) zınab mis zänābā may ʔab māret wihizu
    rain when rain.pfv.sbjv.3sm water in earth flow.pfv.3sm
    ‘After rain, water flooded over the earth’.

For flowing downwards, the verb fäsāsā is most commonly used:

(116) bumba tākāfita may fāsisu
    tap be.opened cvb.3sf water flow.pfv.3sm
    ‘The water tap was opened and the water flowed (from the tap)’.

(117) may šiṃṣa mikkak nab kidānāy
    POSS wax liquid towards dress.poss.1sg
    fāsisunni
    flow.pfv.sbjv.3sm.obj.1sg
    ‘The melted wax flowed upon my dress’.

Other verbs are used to describe various modes of movement of water:

(118) may nāṭiбу
    water drip.pfv.3sm
    ‘(A drop of) water has dripped’.

(119) šiṃṣa nab ʔidāy nāṭiбуnni
    wax towards hand.poss.1sg drip.pfv.sbjv.3sm.obj.1sg
    ‘Wax dripped upon my hand’.
(120) *nih*sat šäär ärilu
  tear  flow  PFV.3SM
  ‘The tears flowed down’.

(121) *kab* naḥsi may šäär yibil ?allo
  from  ceiling  water  flow  IPFV.3SM AUX.PRS.3SM
  ‘Water is flowing from the ceiling’.

(122) *kab* naḥsi may liḥiku
  from  ceiling  water  leak.PFV.3SM
  ‘Water has leaked from the ceiling’.

For description of waterfall, a special verb ?ančaščiišä ‘to cascade’ [Kane 2000: 2528] is used (see also mänčaščaši ‘cascade, cataract, waterfall’, ibid.):

(123) may *yänčaščič* ?allo
  water  cascade.IPFV.3SM AUX.PRS.3SM
  ‘Water is cascading’.

The verb wäřädä ‘to descend’ [Kane 2000: 1733] is also applicable to water:

(124) may *kab* gobo yiwarrid ?allo
  water  from  mountain  descend.IPFV.3SM AUX.PRS.3SM
  ‘Water is flowing down from the mountain’.

The verb wäďäkä is not applied to rainfall. A number of special verbs and lexical constructions are used for rain, with *zinab* ‘rain’ or *may* ‘water’ as subject, and the verbs such as zänäbä ‘to rain’ [Kane 2000: 1996], harämä ‘to hit, strike; to pelt (rain)’ [Kane 2000: 14], kafäyä ‘to drizzle’ [Kane 2000: 1697], näṭäbä ‘to drip (water)’ [Kane 2000: 1381] as predicates:

(125) *zinab* zänibu
  rain  rain.PFV.3SM
  ‘It rained’.

(126) *may* harimu
  water  strike.PFV.3SM
  ‘It rained’.

(127) *may* kafiyu
  water  drizzle.PFV.3SM
  ‘It drizzled’. 
The verb wädäkä is not used to describe the situation of snowing. The noun bäräd ‘snow, ice’, when combined with this verb, is interpreted as a designation of a solid object:

(129) bäräd  dubb  ?ilu  wädikube
     ice  fall.loudly  CVB.3SM  fall.pfv.3SM
     ‘An icicle fell with a loud noise’.

Snowfall can be denoted with the verb wärädä ‘to descend’:

(130) bäräd  yiwärrid  ?allo
     snow  descend.ipfv.3SM  aux.prs.3SM
     ‘It is snowing’.

For granular materials, the verb wädäkä is sometimes applicable, but only when a large quantity of the substance is involved (in which case the whole mass is apparently perceived as a solid object):

(131) nab  märet  bizuḥ  ḥarič  silä-zi-wädiḳä
     towards  earth  much  flour  because-rel-fall.pfv.sbjv.3SM
     misrāq  ?alloni
     sweep.inf  be.prs.sbj.3sm.obj.1sg
     ‘Since a lot of flour fell down to the floor, I have to sweep (the floor)’.

The verb wädäkä is predictably applied to describe a container with a granular material falling down (the grammatical subject of the verb may denote the granular material itself):

(132) ḥab  kārāṭit  zällo  ḥikli  wädiḳu
     in  sack  rel.be.prs.3sm  grain  fall.pfv.3sm
     ‘The grain in a sack fell down’.

However, if granular material is spilled to the surface, the use of wädäkä is blocked. Instead, exactly as with liquids, a special verb denoting spilling is used (fäsäsä ‘to be spilled, poured (out) (water, grain, etc.)’, [Kane 2000: 2677]):
(133) kab ƙofo hiruc fäsisu
    from container flour spill.PFV.3SM
    ‘The flour from the container spilled (upon the floor)’.

(134) kab mäkkina ĕamād fäsisu
    from car soil spill.PFV.3SM
    ‘Some soil spilled from the car (which was carrying a load of soil)’.

(135) kärāṭit täkādidu ʔikli fäsisu
    sack be.torn.CVB.3SM grain spill.PFV.3SM
    ‘The sack tore, and the grain spilled’ (**kärāṭit täkādidu ʔikli wādiku
    sack be.torn.CVB.3SM grain fall.PFV.3SM is not acceptable).

Remarkably, the verb fässāsā is not compatible with solid objects in large
quantities, where the verb wādākā is used instead:

(136) kärāṭit täkādidu ʔəasin wādiku
    sack tear.CVB.3SM nail fall.PFV.3SM
    ‘The sack tore, and the iron nails fell out’ (contrast example (135)).

8a. Comparison with Geez

Among the verbs related to movement of liquids and granular materi-
als discussed in this section, only two have reliable cognates in Geez. Ti-
grinya wāḥazā has an exact phonetic and semantic equivalent in Geez
wəḥza ‘flow (stream, water)’ [Leslau 1987: 610, Dillmann 1865: 892]. Ti-
grinya nāṭābā corresponds to naṭba ‘drop, trickle’ [Leslau 1987: 408, Dill-
mann 1865: 696].

9. Downward movement along the oblique surface

In a situation of falling down from a rock or a mountain, it is distin-
guished between falling down through the air and between rolling down.
The first situation is described by wādākā (see example (5)), whereas for
the second one, the verb ḷankorarāyā/ḥankorarāwa ‘to roll’ [Kane 2000:
1606] is used, sometimes as an adverbial adjunct to wārādā ‘to descend’:
Maria Bulakh

(137) ʔimni kab gobo ʔankorariyu
stone from mountain roll.PFV.3SM

‘A stone rolled down from the mountain’.

(138) sāb kab gobo šätät ?ilu kab gobo
man from mountain slip CVB.3SM from mountain
ʔankorariyu
roll.PFV.3SM

‘A man, having slipped down, rolled down from the mountain’ (contrast example (5)).

(139) kuʃ so kab laʃli ʔankorariya wârida
ball from above roll.CVB.3SF descend.PFV.3SF

‘A ball rolled down from an upper level’.

(140) ʔiti ʔom kab gobo ʔankorariyu wâridu
ART.SM tree from mountain roll.CVB.3SM descend.PFV.3SM

‘The tree rolled down from the mountain’.

However, the verb ʔankoraräyä is not restricted to movement downwards, rather it denotes a rolling movement in general:

(141) kuʃ so ʔab märet tankoraru ʔalla
ball in earth roll.PFV.3SF AUX.PRS.3SF

‘A ball is rolling on the ground’.

While wâdâkä is not compatible with the verb ʔankoraräyä/ʔankorarawä, the verb šâdâfâ can be used to indicate the direction, with the implication that the moving object is heavy:

(142) ʔimni kab gobo ʔindankorarawä yişâddif
stone from mountain while.roll.PFV.SBJV.3SM fall.IPV.3SM
ʔallo
AUX.PRS.3SM

‘The stone rolled down from the mountain’.

9a. Comparison with Geez

It is tempting to compare the Tigrinya verb ʔankoraräyä with the Geez ʔankʷarkʷara ‘roll (transitive, intransitive)’ [Leslau 1987: 292, Dillmann...
The verbs of falling in Tigrinya [Dillmann 1865: 838]. The two verbs are extremely close semantically, while formally they represent different extensions of the biradical element kʷr.

10. Movement downwards in water

Neither wädäkä nor šädäfä is not applicable to the situation of an object sinking in the water. Instead, a special verb tāḥalä ‘to sink, to submerge’ [Kane 2000: 2409] is employed:

\[(143) \text{däbtäräy } \text{ʔab may tihila} \]
\text{notebook.POSS.1SG in water sink.PFV.3SF}

‘My notebook sank into the water’ (contrast däbtäräy nab may wädiḳä tāʔalika notebook.POSS.1SG towards water fall.CVB.3SF become.soaked.PFV.3SF ‘My notebook fell into the water and got wet’, where the verb wädäkä refers to the fall through the air to the water surface, which may or may not be following by sinking).

\[(144) \text{ḡalba tihila} \]
\text{boat sink.PFV.3SF}

‘A boat sank’.

10a. Comparison with Geez

The verb tāḥalä is apparently related to Geez ṭahala ‘settle (dregs)’ [Leslau 1987: 590; Dillmann 1865: 1216], which seems to be a development of ‘to sink into water (about dregs)’. The only relevant passage quoted in [Dillmann 1865: 1216], however, does not refer to sinking at all: wəsta maṇṭafi yəḥəḥəl ḥəsər in sieve settle.IPfv.3SM straw ‘the straw remains as dregs in the sieve’ [Sir 27: 4]. As Leslau [1987: 590] suggests, the verb can well be a denominative from ṭähl ‘sediments, dregs’ [Leslau 1987: 590; Dillmann 1865: 1216], whereas the noun can go back to the root ‘to sink’. Its further connection with the root ṭḥl ‘to throw’, marginally attested in Geez (see [Leslau 1987: 589; Dillmann 1865: 1216]), but widespread in South Ethio-Semitic (for the etymology see [Leslau 1987: 589]), cannot be excluded.
11. Intentional fall

The verb wädäkä is never used to denote intentional movement downwards. Thus, about a soldier rushing down in order to escape the bullets the verb bätt bälä ‘to lie down’ [Kane 2000: 1206] would be used:

(145) wättaḥadär ṭab midri bätt ṭilu tāḥabīʔu
soldier in earth lie.down CVB.3SM be.hidden.PFV.3SM

‘A soldier hid himself by falling down to earth’ (the use of wädäkä in this phrase would mean that he fell down by accident).

Similarly, in a description of a parachute jump, the employment of the verb wädäkä implies that the parachute is out of order:

(146) ṭiʔizi wäddi kab sāmay wādiku mikniyaṭu ṭiti
DEM.SM boy from sky fall.PFV.3SM because ART.SM
zi-tāṭākāmāllu ḡāntīla
REL.-USE.PFV.SBJV.SBJ.3SM.APPL.3SM parachute
silā-zi-tābalašāwo
because-REL.-be.spoiled.PFV.SBJV.SBJ.3SM.OBJ.3SM

‘This boy fell down because the parachute which he was using was damaged’.

For a normal parachute jump the verb wārādā ‘to descend’ [Kane 2000: 1733] or ṭansafāfā ‘to soar, glide, hover (in the air); to float (transitive)’ [Kane 2000: 800] can be used:

(147) ṭab sāmay bi-ḡāntīla ṭansafaṭfu
in sky INS-parachute float.PFV.3SM

‘He floated in the sky with a parachute’.

(148) bi-ḡāntīla wāridu
INS-parachute descend.PFV.3SM

‘He came down with a parachute’.

On the contrary, the verb wārādā is inapplicable in some situations of uncontrolled fall: **košli nab māret wāridu leaf towards earth descend. PFV.3SM ‘A leaf descended to the ground’ is unacceptable (but note the employment of wārādā in (124), (130), (139), (140)).

Interestingly, the verb sādāfā can be applied to intentional action at least in informal speech:
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(149) bäzi gerka šidäf
    in.DEM.SM do.CVB.2SM fall.IMP.2SM

‘Go down this way!’ (used when showing the road in the mountains).

11a. Comparison with Geez

Unlike its Tigrinya cognate, the Geez verb wadka can be used to describe intentional movement downwards:

(150) wa-soba boʔa ḥaba dāwit wadka diba mədr
    and-when enter.PFV.3SM towards David fall.PFV.3SM on earth
    wa-sagada lottu
    and-prostrate.PFV.3SM ALL.3SM

‘When he came to David he fell to the ground and prostrated before him’. [2 Kings 1: 2]

Similarly, the employment of ṣadfa in Geez does not seem to be incompatible with the intentionality (see the example (17), where the interpretation of the movement as intentional cannot be excluded).

The Tigrinya verbs bätt bälä and ḍansafäfa do not have reliable cognates in Geez (although the Geez verb safafa is rendered as ‘float, be afloat’ in [Leslau 1987], this interpretation is not supported by the actual attestations in the texts quoted in Dillmann 1865: 409).

The Tigrinya verb wärädä goes back to the common Semitic root *wrd ‘to descend, come down’ (see [Kogan 2015: 385]), well attested in Geez as warada with the same meaning [Leslau 1987: 617, Dillmann 1865: 901]. Both the Tigrinya and Geez verbs (as well as their cognates in the other Semitic languages) usually refer to regular agentive movement downwards and are not associated with proper falling.

12. Change of level

In the course of the present investigation I have been able to detect only one example of wädäkä applied to a physical process which does not involve fall in a proper sense:
(151) bɪhʊk wɑdɪku
    dough fall.PFV.3SM
    ‘The dough fell down (after it had raised)’ (see also [Kane 2000: 1788]).

However, wɑdɑkɑ is not applicable to a similar situation of a water level sinking (for instance, in the dike), where, instead, the verb wɑrɑdɑ ‘to descend’ is used:

(152) nɔy dɪgɑ ʃɑkɑn mɑy wɑridu
    poss dike measure water descend.PFV.3SM
    ‘The level of water in the dike dropped’.

13. Metaphors of falling

    The basic verb for falling, wɑdɑkɑ, is somewhat restricted in its metaphorical usage. When used to describe various changes of state, it mostly implies an abrupt, unexpected (and often unpleasant) change, and is opposed to the verb wɑrɑdɑ ‘to descend, to go down’, which is the default means to describe gradual, normal change of state.

13.1. Decrease in measure

    Decrease in a scalar measure is normally described by the verb wɑrɑdɑ (see also example (152)):

(153) ʃɑkɑn mukɔt kab timali lɔmɪ wɑridu
    measure heat from yesterday today descend.PFV.3SM
    ‘The heat has diminished today in comparison to yesterday’.

(154) ʔab ʃagɑy nɔy ʔɔtkɪlɪ waga yiwɑrrid
    in summer poss vegetable price descend.IPV.3SM
    ‘In summer the vegetable prices fall’.

(155) ʔɪzi wɑddɪ bizʊh gɪze sɪlɑ-zi-ḥɑmɑmɑ
    DEM.SM boy much time because-REL-be.ill.PFV,SBJV.3SM
    mizɑnu wɑridu
    measure.Poss.3SM descend.PFV.3SM
    ‘The weight of this boy went down because he was ill for a long time’.
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(156) *nayzi telefon waga wäridu*

poss. dem. sm phone price descend. pfv. 3sm

‘The price of this (cellular) phone has decreased’.

The verb *wädäkä* ‘to fall’, if used in similar contexts, implies an abrupt change:

(157) *nayzi telefon waga wädiку*

poss. dem. sm phone price fall. pfv. 3sm

‘The price of this (cellular) phone has fallen drastically’ (contrast example (156)).

(158) *nay rubl waga ḥab ḥaṣṣir gize wädiку*

poss rouble price in short time fall. pfv. 3sm

‘The rate of rouble has fallen drastically within a short period of time’.

However, the use of *wädäkä* in this function is restricted. This must be due to the fact that the notion of the lowest point is an integral part of the semantics of *wädäkä*, but not of *wärädä*. The examples (157) and (158) can be rephrased as “the price has reached its lowest point”, “the price has reached the zero point”. In example (159) (and in similar sentences about temperature of human body and blood pressure), the native speaker was reluctant to use *wädäkä* even to describe a drastic change. The verb *wärädä* was used as a more or less full synonym of *kännäsä* ‘to diminish’:

(159) ʔizi wäddi räsni neruwo ʔita doktor

dem. sm boy fever be. pfv. sbj. 3sm. obj. 3sm art. sf doctor

médhanit mis habättö natu ṣakän

medicine when give. pfv. sbj. 3sf. obj. 3sm poss. 3sm measure

rüsni wäridu

fever descend. pfv. 3sm

‘This boy had fever. When the nurse gave him medicine, his temperature went down’.

(160) *nay ḥişan mätän räsni kab sälasan ṣommontän nab*

poss child amount fever from thirty. and eight. and towards

sälasan ṣobṣatän wäridu/ḵännisu

thirty. and seven. and descend. pfv. 3sm/diminish. pfv. 3sm

‘The child’s fever has diminished from 38 to 37 degrees’.

(161) *nayti sāb šākti dām kab miʔtin ḥamsan*

poss. art. sm man pressure blood from hundred. and fifty. and
nab sabʕa wäridu
towards seventy descend.PFV.3SM

‘The man’s blood pressure went down from 150 to 70’.

(162) nayti säb šäkti dām kab miʔtin ḥamsan
POSS.ART.SM man pressure blood from hundred.and fifty.and

nab miʔtin ʕisran wäridu/kännisu
towards hundred.and twenty.and descend.PFV.3SM/diminish.PFV.3SM

‘The man’s blood pressure went down from 150 to 120’.

(163) ḥänā bā-zigābro sportawi nīftātat nay 1SG INS-REL.do.IPFSBJ.1SG.OBJ.3SM sport activity.PL POSS

kibdātāy ḫakān wäridu
weight.PSS.1SG measure descend.PFV.3SM

‘My weight went down because of my sport activities’.

According to Tāsfaldät Ḥadgāmbās, the use of wädākā in these contexts is unacceptable because it would mean ‘to go to zero point’. Only in the context of weight measuring, with some reluctance, he produced a sentence with wädākā, to describe a rapid and conspicuous change (example (164), which differs from example (165) only in quantitative characteristic of the change):

(164) ḥiʔi sābʔay nay kibdātu mizan kab miʔti DEM.SM man POSS weight.PSS.3SM measure from hundred

nab ḥamsa wäridu/wādku

towards fifty descend.PFV.3SM/fall.PFV.3SM

‘The weight of this man went down from 100 to 50’ (wädākā is less preferable than wärādā).

(165) ḥiʔi sābʔay nay kibdātu mizan kab miʔti DEM.SM man POSS weight.PSS.3SM measure from hundred

nab ṣāmanya wäridu

towards eighty descend.PFV.3SM

‘The weight of this man went down from 100 to 80’ (wädākā not acceptable).

13.2. Decrease or loss of interest, desire

Both wädākā and wärādā can be applied in situation of decrease in desire, enthusiasm, willingness to do something, although wädākā, interpreted
as a stronger variant of warädä (compare examples (166) and (167)), is less acceptable for Täsfallät Ḥadgämbäš.

(166) nay mimhar bahgäy wäridu
    POSS study.INF desire.POSS.1SG descend.PFV.3SM
    ‘My desire to study has diminished’.

(167) nay mimhar bahgäy wädiḳu
    POSS study.INF desire.POSS.1SG fall.PFV.3SM
    ‘My desire to learn has totally disappeared’ (the wording is less common than in (166)).

(168) ṭizi wäddi nay kuʃso ṭigri mirʔay simmiʔitu
    DEM.SM boy POSS ball foot see.INF feeling.POSS.3SM
    wäridu
    descend.PFV.3SM
    ‘This boy has lost interest in watching football’.

(169) ṭizi wäddi nay kuʃso ṭigri mirʔay simmiʔitu
    DEM.SM boy POSS ball foot see.INF feeling.POSS.3SM
    wädiḳu
    fall.PFV.3SM
    ‘This boy has absolutely lost interest in watching football’ (less acceptable than (168)).

13.3. Loss of power

The verb waɗaƙä is regularly used to describe the destruction of a social power: fall of a political regime, disintegration of a state. Since the verb in its direct meaning never describes buildings falling apart (see Section 6), the metaphor “state is a building” can hardly underlie the examples (170) or (171). Rather, a calque from Amharic or from European languages can be suspected.

(170) ṭab ṣihin tšiʔattä miʔtin ṭarbiʔan hadän
    in thousand.and nine hundred.and forty.and one.M.and
    mängisti ḥiyan gizʔatu ṭab ṭeritra wädiḳu
    government Italian rule.POSS.3SM in Eritrea fall.PFV.3SM
    ‘In 1941 the rule of Italian government in Eritrea came to end’.
‘When Soviet Union collapsed, a new regime was founded’.

This employment is restricted to the entities of political rule and the verb \(\text{wädäkä}\) is never used to describe the surrender of a fortress or a town, liquidation of an enterprise, separation of spouses. Furthermore, the employment of \(\text{wädäkä}\) in the examples above indicates that the change was abrupt and brought about by force. A peaceful change of power can be indicated by the verb \(\text{wärädä}\) with an animate subject, as in example (172).

(172) \text{nay} \text{piyópya} \text{ṭǎklali} \text{ministār} \text{kab} \text{siłṭan} \text{wärídū}  
\text{poss} \text{Ethiopia} \text{general minister from} \text{power descend.pfv.3sm}  
‘The Prime Minister of Ethiopia has retired’.

13.4. Sudden calamity

Both \(\text{wädäkä}\) and \(\text{wärädä}\) (without significant difference in meaning) can be used with subjects denoting various negative events, the affected participant(s) being encoded as direct object (the same government is also possible with the literal meaning ‘to fall’, see example (4)). The employment of the verb \(\text{wärädä}\) is usually preferred:

(173) \text{zāyḥassābkuwo} \text{mākkāra}  
\text{rel.neg.think.sbjv.pfv.sbj.1sg.obj.3sm} \text{misfortune}  
\text{wāridunni/wādiḳunni}  
\text{descend.pfv.sbj.3sm.obj.1sg/fall.pfv.sbj.3sm.obj.1sg}  
‘An unexpected misfortune has befallen me’ (\(\text{wärädä}\) is preferable).

(174) \text{ni-sidra} \text{betom} \text{ḥadāga}  
\text{all-family} \text{house.poss.3pm} \text{calamity}  
\text{wādiḳuwom/wāriduwom}  
\text{fall.pfv.sbj.3sm.obj.3pm/descend.pfv.sbj.3sm.obj.3pm}  
‘Their family was afflicted by a calamity’.

The arriving of a common disaster is usually described by the verb \(\text{wärädä}\) (whereas the afflicted participants are left unexpressed), as in examples (175)–(178).
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(175) **kʷina**t **wär**i**d**u
war descend.PFV.3SM

‘A war began’.

(176) **rāḥa**b **wär**i**d**u
hunger descend.PFV.3SM

‘A famine began’.

(177) **ʔ**a**b**zi **ʕa**māt **tāmāḥała**lāf**t**i **ḥi**mam**a**t **ʔa**bzi **ʔa**kkab**a**b**a**b
in.DEM.SM year contagious.PL disease.PL in.DEM.SM area descend.PFV.3SM

‘This year contagious diseases have spread in this area’.

(178) **ʔ**a**b**za **hag**ār **kīli**wliw n**a**y kuṭu**b**a **wär**i**d**u
in.DEM.SF land crisis poss economy descend.PFV.3SM

‘An economic crisis has begun in this country’.

The verb **wādākā** can be applied in situations of sudden emergence of something entailing additional amount of work. A more specific verb **dubb ʔi**l**u** ‘to fall with a thud, to plop’ ([Kane 2000: 3220]; for a direct employment see example (129)) can be used in the same contexts.

(179) **nī-bet** ʔa**k**ursna **b**i**z**hi **zāl**l**o**wom
ALL-house breakfast.Poss.1PL abundance rel.SBJ.3SM.OBJ.3PM

‘Suddenly too many clients appeared in our cafe (more than we can accommodate)’.

If the event is welcome, the verbs of falling are inappropriate, contrast examples (180) and (181) (but compare also example (186)).

(180) **ḥa**d**ā**ś **sīraḥ** **wādīkun**n**i**
new work fall.PFV.SBJ.3SM.OBJ.1SG

‘I unexpectedly got new work to do’.

(181) **gān**zāb **ʔa**ynābā**r**āⁿn**i**n **g**i**n** **zāyḥaṣsābku**w**o**
money NEG.be.PFV.SBJ.3SM but rel.NEG.think.PFV.SBJV.SBJ.1SG.OBJ.3SM

‘I had no money, but unexpectedly I got new job’ (**wādākā** is less acceptable here).
13.5. Falling of a lot

The nouns ʕɨč̣č̣a ‘lot, drawing of lots, lottery’ [Kane 2000: 1940] and lottori ‘lottery’ (lotärya in [Kane 2000: 104]) are consistently used with the verb wädäḵä as the subject. The motivation here is in all probability the conceptualization of a lottery as falling of dice or similar objects (importantly, this employment of wädäḵä is not extended to such situations as election, where the decision is not made by chance).

(182) ʕɨč̣č̣a  nay  märet  wädiḵu
     lot  poss  earth  fall.PFV.3SM
     ‘The drawing of lots for land (a procedure to distribute the land) took place’.

(183) lottori  wädiḵu
     lottery  fall.PFV.3SM
     ‘A lottery drawing was held’. [Kane 2000: 1788]

More common is construction with the organizer of the lottery encoded as the subject of the causative verb ʔawdäḵa ‘to cause to fall’ [Kane 2000: 1788], as in examples (184) and (185).

(184) ʕɨč̣ča  ᵐawdīkna  nᵢṣay  bāşiḥatinni
     lot  let.fall.CVB.1PL  ALL.1SG  reach.PFV.SBJ.3SF.OBJ.1SG
     ‘We drew lots, and I won’.

(185) māngisti  lottori  ᵐawdīk  nᵢṣay
     government  lottery  let.fall.CVB.3SM  ALL.1SG
     bāşiḥatinni
     reach.PFV.SBJ.3SF.OBJ.1SG
     ‘The government organized a lottery, and I won’.

The predicate wädäḵä can also attach a direct object expressing the recipient of the good or bad lot, as in (186) (although the verb bāšhä ‘to reach, to come’ is more commonly used in this function, see (185)).

(186) ᵐibbuk  ʕɨč̣ča  wādiḵunni
     good.M  lot  fall.PFV.SBJ.3SM.OBJ.1SG
     ‘I drew a happy lot’.

The metaphor of casting lots may also underlie the use of wädäḵä in the examples (187)–(189).
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(187) ṭanä lomi ḥimmak ǧiddil wādiḵunni
1SG today bad luck fall.pfv.sbj.3sm.obj.1sg
‘I had bad luck today (unexpectedly)’ (wāridunni is also possible, compare also examples (173), (174)).

(188) nissu ḡab fätäna ḥimmak ẖittotat wādiḵomwo
3SM in examination bad question.pl fall.pfv.sbj.3pm.obj.3sm
‘He got difficult questions during the examination’ (wāridomwo is also possible, compare also examples (173), (174))

(189) ḥizi ḫabti ḫandābāt wādiḵuwom
DEM.SM wealth suddenly fall.pfv.sbj.3sm.obj.3pm
‘The wealth unexpectedly came to them’

Example (189) is especially interesting, since in the discussion of the example (181), my language consultant explicitly stated that wādāḵā is usually associated with negative unexpected events. In (189), the event is definitely positive, but the use of wādāḵā is still allowed by Tāsfaldät Ḥadgāmbās, who explained it as an indication of the suddenness, unexpectedness and lack of control on the part of the involved person: the event is perceived as drawing a happy lot.

13.6. Death in a battle

The verb wādāḵā is consistently used to describe the glorious death of soldiers in a battle (the subject being typically the noun ǧāgna ‘hero’).

(190) ḷindāy ǧāganu wādiḵom
how.many hero.pl fall.pfv.3pm
‘How many heroes have fallen (in the battle)?’

However, according to Tāsfaldät Ḥadgāmbās, the same verb can be applied with negative connotations, meaning ‘to be thrown (on the battlefield), left unburied’. The verb tāḍārbāyā ‘to be thrown away; to be abandoned’ [Kane 2000: 2084] can be used in the same context as a more colloquial expression.

(191) nay ṣaḷaʔi wāṭṭaḥadārat ḡabzi wādiḵom/tāḍārbiyom
poss enemy soldier.pl in.dem.sm fall.pfv.3pm/be.thrown.pfv.3pm
‘The (bodies of) enemy’s soldiers are dispersed here’.
13.7. Attack

In [Kane 2000: 1788], an example of the verb wädäkä in the meaning ‘to attack’ is given:

(192) lomi lâyti ḍab ḋadna ṣiftat wädiḳomna
    today night in village POSS.1PL brigand.PL fall.ÇVB SBJ.3PM OBJ.1PL
    kʷillu gäzatat gorgoru
    all house. PL ransack. PFV.3PM

‘Last night, brigands suddenly fell upon our village and ransacked all the houses’.

However, this usage was explicitly rejected by Täsfaldät Ḥadgämbäs.

14. Conclusion

The basic verb in Tigrinya used strictly to denote the physical falling down of a solid object is wädäkä. Its default interpretation is (an accidental) falling down through the air of a solid object. With vertically oriented objects it normally denotes loss of vertical position, with animate vertically oriented objects it can denote falling down through the air or loss of vertical position. It is extremely rarely used to denote any other types of downward movement (the only pertinent example is discussed in Section 12).

A verb of falling with a narrower semantics and different combinatorial properties is ṣädäfū. It is used to denote the fast downward movement of a solid, heavy object, either through the air or, less typically, along an oblique surface. The denoted situation is a sudden event with a perceptible effect, usually negative for the object itself or for its surroundings. This verb is not applied to loss of vertical position.

In all situations where the physical falling down through the air or loss of a vertical position of a solid object is not involved or is not in the focus of the statement, special verbs are used. With liquids and granular materials, verbs of flowing, dripping, and spilling are used (see Section 8). For rain and snow, special meteorological expressions are employed (see Section 8). For detachment from a fixed position of artefacts and natural objects, the verbs ‘to slip off’ and ‘to fall off’ are used (see Sections 5, 7). For collapsing of buildings and various structures, the verbs with the meaning ‘to be
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destroyed’ are applied (see Section 6; the verb ṣäädäfä can also be used in such contexts). For downward movement in water, the verb ‘to sink’ is used (see Section 10).

Comparison with Geez reveals two important differences in the mapping of falling down: firstly, the Geez basic verb for falling can denote collapse of buildings and other constructions (see Section 6a); secondly, it can refer to intentional loss of vertical orientation (see Section 11a). It is interesting to observe that Geez, exactly as Tigrinya, employs a special verb to denote falling of ripe fruits or withered leaves, although the Geez verb is morphologically more complex than its Tigrinya equivalent (see Section 7a). Both in Tigrinya and Geez, in certain contexts the non-agentive participant an integral part of which falls off due to natural reasons can be encoded as the subject (and the fallen off part is encoded as the direct object; see Section 7).

Abbreviations

ACC — accusative; APPL — applicative; ART — article; AUX — auxiliary; CNST — constructus state (marker of the head of the possessive construction); COP — copula; CVB — converb; DEM — demonstrative; Deut — Deuteronomy; EMPH — emphasis; EX — Exodus; EXIST — existential copula; GOAL — goal; IMP — imperative; INF — infinitive; INS — instrumental; IPFV — imperfective; Is — Isaiah; Job — Job; Lev — Leviticus; M — masculine; Mk — Mark; Mt — Matthew; NOM — nominative; NEG — negative; OBJ — object; PFV — perfective; PL — plural; PM — plural masculine; POSS — possessive; PRS — present; Ps — Psalms; PST — past; REL — relative; SBJ — subject; SJUV — subjunctive; SF — singular feminine; SG — singular; Sir — Sirach; SM — singular masculine; Zech — Zechariah.

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