UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON
FACULTY RESEARCH GRANT
PROPOSAL COVER SHEET

Due November 5, 2012
Academic Year 2012-2013
Application for Funding in Fiscal Year 2013-2014

Name of Applicant: Paul D. Fallon

Department: English, Linguistics, and Communication

Project Title: Proto-Agaw Phonological Reconstruction

Requested Funding Period (Month/Year-Month/Year): 7/1/2013–6/30/2014

Funding For: ☐ Summer Stipend  Project Expenses $500 (See note below concerning amounts)

Course Release: Fall 2013  Spring 2014

Required UMW Institutional Review Board Information:
  Date Review was submitted
  Check here if IRB is not required for this project ☐

Project Summary (50-75 words):
This project will investigate the sound patterns of the Agaw (Central Cushitic) languages of Eritrea and Ethiopia with the aim of reconstructing the ancestral language Proto-Agaw. The project will build on David Appleyard's reconstruction by incorporating typological insights into internal reconstruction. In addition, it will employ cognates from other branches of Cushitic to inform an inverted reconstruction, providing a coherent account of the development of Cushitic languages. Results will be published as a journal article.

Budget Summary:

This project requires data from print sources. Some in the public domain are available as pdfs through Google Books, which will be printed and marked up for analysis. A few sources will be purchased. See details in proposal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Printing of files</td>
<td>$350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase of books</td>
<td>$150</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>$500</td>
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Applicant Signature: [Signature]  Date: 5 Nov. 2012

Chair Signature: [Signature]  Date: Nov. 5, 2012
1. Project Description

This project will investigate the sound patterns of the Agaw (Central Cushitic) languages of Eritrea and Ethiopia with the aim of reconstructing their ancestral language, Proto-Agaw. Cushitic is a language family of around 45 languages mostly spoken in the Horn of Africa, the best known of which is Somali. Cushitic is an Afro-Asiatic language, and is therefore related to Ancient Egyptian, Semitic languages, as well as the Berber, Chadic, and Omotic families. The Cushitic family is traditionally divided into Northern, Central (or Agaw), Southern and Eastern branches. According to Ehret (2011:138), these divisions first began before 6500 BCE. The Agaw branch contains one extinct language (Kailiña) and four living languages: Awngi, Blin, Xamtanga and Kemantney (Hetzron 1976, Appleyard 1984, 2006). The internal relations of Agaw were first detailed by Appleyard in 1984, and amplified in his 2006 dictionary. The current majority view of Cushitic sub-branching is given in Figure 1 (adapted from Tosco 2000):

![Family tree of Cushitic languages](image)

Figure 1. Family tree of Cushitic languages.

Appleyard’s work is a tremendous contribution to Cushitic studies, but it is unfortunately not without flaws. For example, Appleyard proposes that in Agaw, one class of sounds known as ejectives were lost completely. He attributes the presence in these sounds in Agaw to be solely the result of borrowing from neighboring Ethio-Semitic languages. In Fallon (2009) I showed that 25 roots containing the velar (back tongue, k-type) ejective had convincing Cushitic cognates and were not borrowed. Further analysis in 2011 (presented but unpublished) looked at coronal (tongue tip t-type) ejectives with an eye toward teasing apart the Ethio-Semitic loans, and found a number of native Agaw roots with ejectives, suggesting that Agaw languages have, in fact, preserved them, not simply borrowed them, and that Appleyard’s reconstruction is in need of revision.
The project will build on David Appleyard’s reconstruction by incorporating typological insights into internal reconstruction. For example, sound change follows patterns and in a few cases, Appleyard did not apply the comparative method correctly. In addition, this study will employ cognates from other branches of Cushitic to inform an inverted (top down) reconstruction, providing a coherent account of the development of Cushitic languages, with a focus on Agaw.

Historical reconstruction within Cushitic has tended to ignore Agaw because of the lack of availability of grammars and dictionaries. Dolgodol’skij (1973) was an important early work which has been superseded in several ways. Ehret (1987) contained little Agaw data in his reconstruction of Proto-Cushitic. Orel & Stolbova (1995) contain Agaw data but essentially deny the unity of Cushitic, treating them as coordinate branches of Afro-Asiatic. Disappointingly, Takács (2011) does not deal with any problems of Agaw in the most recent monograph on Afroasiatic reconstruction. However, other branches of Cushitic have been reconstructed since Ehret’s 1987 study, especially Highland East Cushitic (Hudson 1989), and West-Rift Southern Cushitic (Kießling & Mous 2003). These sources, along with others, will be consulted for a comparative reconstruction that makes full use of Cushitic language data. Some Cushitic lexicostatistical data relies only on a 100-word list. Appleyard’s 700 plus entries, coupled with specialized dictionaries on particular Agaw languages (e.g. Reinisch’s over 2,000 entries, and the 5,000 in Kiflemarsham & Paulos) will be employed to match for cognates in other Cushitic languages.

2. Goals, Specific Objectives, and Project Significance
The main goal of this project is to produce a scholarly article which will present the state of the art on the linguistic reconstruction of the Proto-Agaw language. This will be achieved by the following specific objectives:

1. Acquire appropriate comparative materials from other Cushitic languages. The author has a vast collection of materials and books, but will check recent journal articles in online databases, and will print out some of the invaluable dictionaries listed specifically in the budget.
2. Check and expand Appleyard’s method of historical reconstruction within Cushitic, paying attention to irregular correspondence sets.
3. Create a database of related forms.
4. Use data from other Cushitic languages to form an inverted reconstruction of Proto-Cushitic, especially vis-à-vis Cushitic.
5. Compare the revised internal reconstruction of Cushitic with the inverted reconstruction.
6. Write a journal article detailing the main findings.

The University of Maryland Washington should fund this project because an understanding of Central Cushitic (Agaw) is central to an understanding of the linguistic history of the Cushitic languages (Tosco 2000, Ehret 2011). This study will advance the discipline to a significant degree by providing a solid reconstruction of Agaw, especially informed by the other branches of Cushitic. An accurate reconstruction of Cushitic is essential for an understanding of related Afroasiatic languages, which in turn is crucial for understanding the history of Africa for the last 10,000 to possibly 16,000 years. In addition, the proposer is one of only two active experts in the field of Agaw and it is important to support scholarly expertise in this field because of its contributions to linguistic theory and the social, historical and archaeological history of Africa.
3. Procedures and Methods

Methodology

The basic methodology will involve the comparative method of historical reconstruction, first developed in the nineteenth century, and refined subsequently, as exemplified in standard handbooks and textbooks (e.g. Anttila 1972, Fox 1995, Joseph & Janda 2003). In brief, this means identifying plausible related forms among languages (cognates), establishing correspondence sets of sounds, postulating the original (proto-) forms, and positing changes of sound and meaning. For example, the word for ‘name’ in Bilin, Xamtanga, and Kemantney is *fiŋw*, while in Awngi it is *sim*. The reconstructed proto-form, indicated with an asterisk, is therefore *fiŋw*, not only on the basis of majority rule, but because unconditioned sound change from marked sounds like the palatal sibilant (j like English sh-) to the alveolar one (like English s-) are more common, as well as the labialized velar nasal (ŋw like English –ng but with lip rounding) to a fused single bilabial nasal m.

The general relationships among the Agaw languages is indisputable. Appleyard (1984, 2006) has posited cognate sets and general sound correspondences, which will be refined by detailed comparison with additional sources on Agaw for the internal reconstruction. For example, he does not list or analyze in any detail a number of so-called irregular correspondence sets. In addition, related Cushitic languages will be systematically compared for phonological/semantic correspondences to provide additional data for an inverted reconstruction (top down, from Proto-Cushitic, as informed by Ehret (1987) and other sources). For example, the Proto-East Cushitic form for ‘lightning’ *bark’/-birk’- will be used to support the Proto-Agaw form evidenced by Bilin bœrak’- ‘flash, glimmer, shine’, showing a non-Agaw cognate with the velar ejective (k’).

Timeline

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>June 2013</td>
<td>Obtain necessary interlibrary loans</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 1, 2013</td>
<td>Begin printing of specialized public-domain dictionaries, and ordering of necessary dictionaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>July-October 2013</td>
<td>Analyze data for reconstructions, create spreadsheet database</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov.-Dec. 2013</td>
<td>Write up data for article</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. or March 2014</td>
<td>Present paper at North American Conference on Afroasiatic Linguistics (NACAL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
<td>Refine and revise analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>May-June</td>
<td>Conclude project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 1, 2014</td>
<td>Submit final report</td>
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The faculty member has conducted field research on Blin in Eritrea and among Blin-speaking immigrants in London and the United States. He has published several articles on Blin language, language policy, and orthography, in addition to developing a research line on diachronic aspects of Blin and Agaw (e.g. Fallon 2009). As an aid in this research, he has offered URES research on Blin in which students helped digitize, translate, and create an electronic database of the first scholarly dictionary of Blin (Reimisch 1888). I should point out that this line of research on the reconstruction of Proto-Agaw has not been funded by the university. The proposer has requested teaching two courses during the second summer session of 2013. No
special facilities are required other than computers, access to university databases, interlibrary loan, and printing services.

4. Results
The project will result in the creation of an ongoing database to manage the investigator's findings. This database will be used to refine the reconstruction of Proto-Agaw. It will become the basis for a revised reconstruction, which will be analyzed in a peer-reviewed journal article. Findings will be presented in venues such as the North American Conference on Afroasiatic Linguistics (NACAL) and the Annual Conference on African Linguistics (ACAL), and perhaps the annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America (LSA).

Documentation
Selected References


**Budget**

Several works in the public domain will be printed at the Document Center at $0.05/page, plus binding costs. Printing is necessary because of the need to read carefully works with large numbers of diacritics (modifying symbols) and mark and cross-reference on hard copy. Some of the proposed works include:

- Reinisch, *Die Bedauye-Sprache in Nordost Afrika*. (90 pp.)
- Reinisch, *Wörterbuch der Bedauye-Sprache*. (382)
- Reinisch, *Die Chamirsprache in Abessinien*. (274)
- Reinisch, *Die Quarasprache in Abessinien*. (282) $56.55, plus binding options

Additional works may become necessary during the course of research.

The following works are not public domain and may need to be purchased if they cannot be procured through interlibrary loan, or being reference materials, may need to be consulted longer than the loan period. It is understood that purchased books are not to be retained by the researcher but are instead to be turned over to the University library when the grant project is completed. Some titles listed here were not available on the book market and are marked n/a.

- Hamburg: Research and Progress Verlag. n/a
- Lamberti, *Die Somali-Dialekte*. Melmut Buske, $40
- Moreno, Martino Mario. 1940. *Manuale di Sidamo*. Milano: Mondadori, $29
- Moreno, *Cushitic Mélanges*. Rome $200
- Parker, *English-Afar Dictionary*. Dunwoody Press $75
- Parker, *Afar-English Dictionary*. Dunwoody Press $75
- Roper, E.M. 1928. *Tu Bedawi*: *an elementary handbook for the use of Sudan government officials*. Hertford: Stephen Austin. n/a $544

| shipping costs and tax, estimated with some overseas shipping | $50 |
| printing costs approximate: | $75 |
| **Total:** | **$669** |

This project therefore requests a total of $500. The budget will not exceed the assigned amount. The investigator lists a high amount because he would like to be allowed some discretion about which materials might be purchased and which could be available through interlibrary loan (ILL). For example, if Moreno's *Cushitic Mélanges* may be obtained through ILL, the project will come in under budget.
Previous Awards in last three years
UMW Professional Activity Grant for “The Fredericksburg Regional English Dialect Survey Pilot Study.” Summer 2009. ($3,500). This study of the dialect of the Fredericksburg area resulted in more detailed analysis of data collected during a dialect seminar. A final report was submitted and is online.

Final Report
The contents of the final report will, according to the requirements, “briefly summarize the nature of the project (point 1); review how the completed project achieved its proposed goals/objectives/anticipated results (points 2, 3, and 5); assess the adequacy of the project’s procedures and approaches (point 4); and comment on how the results of this project have been or will be disseminated (point 5).” The report will be submitted electronically by May 14, 2015, although plans are to do this by July 2014.