Aethiopica 12 (2009)

International Journal of Ethiopian and
Eritrean Studies

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Review of

JOACHIM CRASS – RONNY MEYER (eds.), *Deictics, Copula and Focus in the
Ethiopian Convergence Area*

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wiederholt, aber aktualisiert. Damit eröffnet sich die Möglichkeit zur weiterführenden Auseinandersetzung mit den Beiträgen. Dankenswerterweise erfuhr auch die Zeitschriftenübersicht (525–35) eine intensive Überarbeitung durch C. Detlef G. Müller. Neben relativ breit angelegten Übersichtsbeiträgen wie "Äthiopische Kirche" (Hammerschmidt – Kropp), "Äthiopische Literatur" (Hammerschmidt – Weninger) und "Äthiopische Kunst" (Pjotr O. Scholz) finden sich kurze Artikel wie "Dabtarā" (Neubearbeitung Kropp), die nur wenige Zeilen umfassen.

Die wieder abgedruckten Zeittafeln, neue Karten zu den Regionen der Nationalkirchen, 40 in den Text gestreute Abbildungen und ein vergleichsweise sehr ausführliches Register (559–635) erhöhen die Benutzbarkeit des Werkes. Auf den Wiederabdruck der 1975 veröffentlichten Photos wurde – m.E. zu Recht – verzichtet.

Was ein schmales Handlexikon dieser Größenordnung leisten kann, leistet das Werk bei allen unvermeidlichen Beschränkungen. Nun bleibt zu hoffen, dass der Band, der zur Standardausrüstung jedes Forschers und jedes Studierenden der Orientalistik gehören sollte, "zur besseren Kenntnis des Christlichen Orients beiträgt", wie der Herausgeber am Schluss seines Vorworts (X) formuliert.

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JOACHIM CRASS – RONNY MEYER (eds.), *Deictics, Copula and Focus in the Ethiopian Convergence Area* (= Afrikanistische Forschungen Band XV). Köln: Rüdiger Köppe: 2007. 212 pp., Paperback. Price: € 39,80. ISBN: 978–3–89645–293–1

Research in areal linguistics has been burgeoning in recent years; within African studies, work on contact and convergence in Ethiopia has witnessed a new surge of interest, and the University of Mainz has played a crucial role in this development. It is in Mainz that the workshop *Copula constructions, focus and related topics in the Highland East Cushitic/Gurage convergence area*, which lies at the origin of the present volume, was hosted, and it is again in Mainz that the editors of the volume, Joachim Crass and Ronny Meyer, are based. In respect to the workshop, the book is certainly wider in scope; on the whole, the geographical space covered by the contributions is the Ethiopian Highlands, probably a good candidate to the status of language area (or better, following again a Mainz-inaugurated term, "convergence area").

Although areal in nature, the articles are arranged per genetic family: thus, after a very short preface by the editors (3 pages plus references), the book contains 12 contributions: 4 for Cushitic, 3 for Omotic, and 5 for Ethiosemitic. Among the articles dealing with Cushitic, three (Crass, Schneider-Blum and Treis) deal with Highland East Cushitic, one (Sasse) with Lowland East in a comparative (and historical) perspective. It is also to be noted that one paper on Ethiosemitic (Girma) deals at least partially with a dead language (Gəˁəz).

In general, I feel the lack of one or more maps detailing at least the location of the languages (without forgetting that in the case of Ethiopia, altitude is at least as important as longitude and latitude). Likewise, apart from the occasional mentioning of bilingualism and contact – e.g., Crass (p. 13) on K'abeena and Libido, Treis (p. 79) on the order of morphemes in non-verbal sentences, Baye Yimam and Rawda Siraj (p. 139) on Silṭe, etc. – no general hypothesis of grammatical contact is put forward.

Although each article deals with matters of copula, deictics, and focus, most of them discuss language-specific problems and each language is generally presented and studied *per se*. The book is also very much inspired by grammaticalization theory, the central claim made by the editors being that 'copulas may grammaticalize out of focus markers' (Preface, p. 9).

After a short preface by the editors, Joachim Crass deals with copula constructions in two similar languages, K'abeena and Libido (pp. 13–25). The article deals squarely with the morphophonemics and syntax of the deictics, and it manages to present in a very clear way what is an extremely complicated situation. A word of caution is in order here: Crass speaks of a Nominative and an Accusative case (the same terminological conventions are used by Treis on Kambaata and by Azeb Amha on Omotic Wolaitta). As is well known, the "Nominative" in Cushitic is marked, and rather a Subject case than a true Nominative (it is not the citation form of the noun, nor is it used in predicative role). The name "Accusative" is in my opinion an even worse choice: it is used in order to avoid, as is often done in Cushitic studies, the terms "Absolute" or "Absolutive", which may create confusion (alignment is strictly nominative-accusative, and ergativity plays no role). Still, it is the unmarked case, and not at all limited to object marking, as "Accusative" may lead to think.

Between Crass' and the other articles on Highland East Cushitic we find Hans-Jürgen Sasse's work on non-verbal predication on Lowland East Cushitic (pp. 27–52); Sasse's contribution is also, together with Goldenberg's and Meyer's articles on Gurage, truly comparative in nature. Dealing as he does with a completely different set of languages, Lowland East Cushitic, Sasse takes a rather different perspective: copulas play by neces-

sity a much narrower role, while the lion's share is given to nominal predications and the intricacies of their morphosyntax.

We come back to Highlad East Cushitic with Gertrud Schneider-Blum's article 'The "Copula" in Alaaba' (pp. 53–70). The double quotes are well-suited, as the author convincingly argues that what may act, among other functions, as copulas are basically demonstrative clitics. The author tries to explain (and basically succeeds) in a few pages an extremely complicated morphosyntactic situation, in which the gender of the predicate element, its word class (noun or adjective), polarity (positive vs. negative), and many other factors play a role in determining the shape of the copular element.

Yvonne Treis, discussing copulas in Kambaata (pp. 71–97), takes a different stance: there ARE copulas, three of them (although the article has to limit to the non-locative ones). In Kambaata too these copulas are near homophonous with the proximal demonstratives and the case/gender markers. One of Kambaata's most interesting features is in this regard the presence of a predicative form of nouns and adjectives, marked either suprasegmentally or through the deletion of a case/gender marker (it is to be noted that the predicative form of the noun in Lowland East Cushitic Arbore – discussed by Sasse at p. 32 – is instead marked on the whole by an added gender-marking element). Both copulas have a number of allomorphs, including Ø: interestingly, the Ø allomorph of "COP2" appears when the predicate element is a cardinal number or a demonstrative (pp. 82–83). But the demonstratives **are** the copula in the very similar language Alaaba (as per Schneider-Blum), and the numbers are generally gender-unmarked.

With Azeb Amha's article on the 'Non-verbal predication in Wolaitta' (pp. 99–117) we turn to Omotic. With the exception of locative and presentational non-verbal clauses, there is no copula in Wolaitta, and a sentence-final noun may act as predicate in their citation form (the "Accusative", in the author's framework).

Debela Goshu's paper on the copula in Anfillo (pp. 119–127) is by necessity rather different: dealing with a highly endangered language, the data are limited, and the picture seems very neat and simple, with a copula *-ni* used in positive tense contexts and which can apparently be omitted. The same element occurs after an element in focus, although, strangely, the author seems to consider the copula and the focus-marking morpheme *-ni* as 'interrelated' (p. 125), and not one and the same.

Hirut Woldemariam focuses in her contribution on 'Deictics in Gamo' (pp. 129–138), analysed according to the categories of spatial, projective, locative, temporal, anaphoric, and recognitory deictics. This is probably the best analysis so far of the deictic system of any single language of Ethiopia. The Gamo system of spatial deictics, with its threefold opposition between

a deictic marking 'distance, declining landscape, downward direction' (*hirki*), a deictic expressing 'distance hilly landscape, upward direction' (*killi*), and a third one for 'distance and horizontal direction' (*seekki*) is one of the features of that "Southwestern Ethiopian language area" discussed by Sasse (1986), and including Konsoid and Dullay Cushitic as well as Omotic Zayse and Koyra, to which we can now probably add Gamo (as its north-ernmost member?). On the other hand, it is true that the article departs from the common focus of the book by not taking into account non-verbal predications nor information structure in Gamo.

With Baye Yimam and Rawda Siraj's contribution on 'Silt'e deictics' (pp. 139–151) we move to Ethiosemitic. The authors rightly include among the deictics the person deictics (i.e., the personal pronouns), which appear in two forms: neutral and focused. The authors describe the use of the pre- and postpositions with the deictics (p. 147) in terms of case inflection. An Ethi-osemitic language comes therefore to be described as having an (unmarked) Nominative, an Accusative (partially unmarked), as well as a Genitive, a Dative, an Ablative, and an Instrumental. While this solution is in principle perfectly acceptable, nothing is said about the morphonological criteria behind this choice (against, for example, the current one in other Ethio-semitic languages in terms of clitic adpositions).

Girma A. Demeke's article on copulas in Gәʿәz and Tigre (pp. 153–165) offers a neat description of the data, although at times unduly influenced by generative (minimalist) assumptions which are not truly relevant.

Gideon Goldenberg's contribution on "the predicative bond in Gurage" (pp. 167–175) is much more than what the title and the number of pages (less than 9, bibliography included) may suggest. It is most of all a short, dense presentation of a few basic points: first, why pronouns, however prosodically weakened and phonetically reduced, are **not** copulas. Second, while verbal constructions may need some special means to mark informa-tion focus, no such need arises in nominal sentences, where predication is expressed 'syntactically, and is not inherent in the form of any part of it' (p. 169), and there is therefore no discrepancy between syntax and func-tional sentence perspective. Third, a cleft consists basically in the transfor-mation of a part of a verbal sentence into the predicate of a nominal sen-tence, 'thus involving the nominalization of the rest of the sentence to make it the subject-phrase' (p. 170). At the light of all this, one can now under-stand the generalization of what were or still are basically copula markers as verbal affixes, as exemplified by Goldenberg with data from Kistane (the "most extremist" language in this regard – being the only one which uses former copular auxiliaries in both the Perfect and the Imperfect).

Ronny Meyer's article (pp. 177–194) takes non-verbal predications in Gurage languages as its scope: Meyer manages to clearly discuss a very complex situation, and his article will certainly become a classic in Gurage studies. The peculiar situation of Zay (which has no present-tense copula) stands out clearly: alone among the Gurage languages, Zay does not have a present-tense copula; the morpheme -*n* used in other languages as a copula is instead an assertive focus marker in Zay. As such, it 'can be attached to any constituent in a nominal or verbal clause to mark the most prominent constituent' (p. 181). Nevertheless, the same morphosyntactic pattern is followed by the copula in Silṭe – and partially in Wolane (these are with Zay the three East Gurage languages) – and by the focus marker in Zay. In particular, they both precede other grammatical morphemes; therefore, they are not clause-final (which is of course the expected position for a "verbal" element). At the light of all this (and much else), the author seems to be even over-cautious when he closes his discussion of East Gurage merely suggesting that '[t]he peculiar morphosyntactic features of the copula in Wolane and Silṭe, and their resemblance to the focus marker in Zay may suggest that they are diachronically related' (p. 185).

Meyer further provides a neat account of the "copula" element -*t(tɛ)*, suggesting that it is a remnant of an older focus system, preserved in certain syntactic configurations, such as after personal and demonstrative pronouns as well as, in certain (East Gurage) languages, with proper names. Even synchronically, 'the attachment of the morpheme -*t(tɛ)* to a pronoun as predicate nominal stresses the identity between subject entity and certain pronominal predicative nouns but it does not function as a copula' (p. 190).

The author further notes that this alveolar element is probably related to the copula -*ta* of Harari and the morpheme -*t(t)* found in Old Amharic. As this element may be found without any accompanying copula in old texts, this implies that Old Amharic had no copula in present-tense nominal clauses – thus resembling and continuing the situation which obtains in Gəˁəz.

Rafael Suter's article 'Copula constructions and information structure in Inor' (pp. 195–212) closes the book. The article is neatly divided between a presentation of the usually extremely complicated morphosyntax of the copula in the present, future, and past tense, and a discussion of clefts and their pragmatic role in order to mark discourse prominence (although that same role has been largely eroded in identificational sentences).

The sober dark-blue cover (from which, strangely, the names of the editors are missing) and the relatively small number of pages (just 212) may give the casual reader the impression of little more than the usual proceedings of a workshop. It is instead much more: it is a true mine of data and a

bonanza of scientific hypotheses. There is much to learn and ponder on in this small, precious volume. It is also the first book trying to establish "from below" (from the data and from smaller subsets of languages) the long-debated issue of Ethiopia (or a part thereof) as a linguistic area. It is only to be hoped that it sets a model for further work.

References

Sasse, Hans-Jürgen (1986), "A Southwest Ethiopian Language Area and Its Cultural Background", in: Joshua A. Fishman – Andrée Tabouret-Keller – Michael Clyne – Bh. Krishnamurti – Mohamed Abdulaziz (eds.), *The Fergusonian Impact*, Volume 1, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter: 327–342.

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Wälättä Yohanna. Ethiopian Studies in Honour of Joanna Mantel-Niećko, ed. Witold Witakowski et Laura Łykowska, Varsovie, 2006 (Rocznik Orientalistyczny, t. LIX). 306 pp. Prix: Zł. 25,–. ISSN: 0080–3545

Ce livre en l'honneur de Joanna Mantel-Niećko rend hommage au travail que cette grande dame des études éthiopiennes, et plus généralement des études africaines, a accompli ces cinquante dernières années au sein de l'Institut des Études Orientales de Varsovie. Chacun des articles qui composent cet ouvrage renvoie à ses domaines de prédilection que sont la linguistique, l'histoire et le droit. Au-delà de cet aspect, il serait bien difficile de trouver une unité à cet ensemble et je ne m'y essaierai pas. Une bonne partie des contributions porte sur des études linguistiques dont l'intérêt ne fait aucun doute … Toutefois, n'étant pas spécialiste de ces questions, je préfère laisser à d'autres le soin d'en discuter. Je m'arrêterai donc aux contributions qui traitent d'histoire car plusieurs d'entre elles ont éveillé mon intérêt.

Tout d'abord, quelques articles se présentent comme de véritables outils pour des recherches futures et sont tout à l'honneur de leurs auteurs qui livrent à d'autres leur travail de traitement des archives. Je pense notamment aux contributions de Hanna Rubinkowska qui présente les archives du Ministère des affaires étrangères britanniques, déposées à Kew, en donnant un rapide tour d'horizon du contenu des différents dossiers et de leur classement, ou de Wolbert Smidt qui propose une étude prosopographique des membres