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**Review**

RONNY MEYER, *Wolane. Descriptive Grammar of an East Gurage Language (Ethiosemitic)*

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some of the languages. All in all, it would be nice if the whole field of Ethiopian linguistics could abandon this unhelpful tradition and agree to use the internationally accepted standard of the IPA.

In spite of this little shortcoming, the *Comparative Dictionary of the Agaw Languages* is an excellent resource. It defines a new step in the reconstruction of Proto-Agaw, which can be used even for comparative work on all Cushitic languages. It is also a priceless documentation of the combined lexicon of the Agaw languages, as far as it has been published in various sources to date. The author is to be commended for this diligent and time-consuming work. It will be an asset to anyone who wants to study the Agaw languages, be it from the descriptive or from the comparative perspective.

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RONNY MEYER, *Wolane. Descriptive Grammar of an East Gurage Language (Ethiosemitic)*. Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, Köln. 2006. 340 pp. Price: € 39,80. ISBN: 978-3-89645-547-5

Wolane (also Wäläne) is an unwritten language with around 70,000 speakers belonging to the East Gurage branch of South Ethiopic or Ethiosemitic (ES). Some classifications of ES consider Wolane to be a dialect or variant of Səlṭe, whilst others regard it as a separate language. Though Meyer states that Səlṭe and Wolane are mutually intelligible, which on purely descriptive linguistic grounds would make them varieties of the same language or dialect continuum, he prefers to consider them as two distinct languages on sociolinguistic grounds, as the two groups of speakers themselves stress the cultural differences between them.

The present grammar does not follow a single linguistic or theoretical model, but is expressly descriptive, using a structural approach in identifying phonemes and morphemes and a functional approach in describing morpho-syntactic and discourse-pragmatic features. As such it is readily accessible and allows the reader easily to discover and grasp relevant facts about the language. To this end the copious examples are given in a fourfold format: (a) the word or words as spoken, in a broad transcription marking sub-phonemic features, followed (b) by a morpheme analysis, (c) a morpheme-by-morpheme gloss, and finally (d) an English translation. The distinct utterance format is necessitated insofar as there is a not inconsiderable degree of allophonic variation in Wolane, for instance where the ending of the 1s perfective of verbs, underlyingly /-h<sup>w</sup>/, can surface as [-k<sup>u</sup>], [-h<sup>u</sup>] or [-<sup>w</sup>x] according to environment, or the consonant /q/ surfaces either as ejective [k<sup>ʷ</sup>] or glottal stop [ʔ] in strictly defined positions. Data in tables and

citations within the text, however, are by and large given only in utterance format unless expressly marked to the contrary.

Following an introductory section briefly discussing sociolinguistic and historical issues, the grammar pursues the normal sequence of chapters on phonology, morphology and syntax in that order. A smaller chapter containing language samples, greetings and a fully glossed text, closes the main part of the grammar. Each larger chapter is subdivided into smaller sections, sub-sections and subsidiary sub-sections, where appropriate. The transcription used is generally that familiar to ethiopianist linguists, aside from the notation of some allophones where the normal IPA symbols are used; the most notable exceptions, however, are *ɲ* instead of *ɲ̃* or *ɲ̄* for the palatal nasal, and the vowels, the six phonemes of which are noted as *i*, *ē*, *u*, *ō*, *ε* and *ā*. The discussion throughout is full, comprehensive and well illustrated with examples. Occasional comparative information referring to other related languages is also given in the footnotes or in the closing remarks of sections. Indeed, the volume provides what is probably the most in-depth description to date of any South ES language, aside from Amharic. This is particularly evident in the chapter on syntax, where the treatment is near exhaustive, often cross referencing with and amplifying what has been mentioned earlier in the book. The analysis of the data is rigorous and for the most part clear, though one or two things may give the reader cause for temporary puzzlement: why, for example, is vowel length marked in the phonemic transcription (so, *ē*, *ō* and *ā*, above) when the author states that length in vowels is not phonemic? Or, whilst it is understandable from the point of view of economy of description, it seems odd that pronoun object markers are handled under the discussion of the verb, along with subject marking, whilst other pronoun suffixes, i.e. possessive suffixes, are treated under the discussion of pronouns as part of the larger chapter on nouns.

As a South ES language, Wolane exhibits many features that are similar to what can be found in related languages, particularly, of course, in other members of the Transversal South ES (TSE) subgroup. Readers will, however, find a number of points particularly interesting either from a general typological point of view, or because of the light they may shed on comparative ES linguistics. So, for instance, Wolane has a small subclass of bi- and triradical stem verbs that show a seemingly unexplained intrusive *n*: *ɲandere* 'he spent the night' (cf. Amharic *addärä*), *ɲanžē* 'he saw' (cf. Amharic *ayyā*, Chäha *azä-m*, but Argobba *hanğa*), *yēnzē* 'he took' (cf. Amharic *yazä*), and so on, a feature that seems to be limited to TSE. Also from verbs, Wolane shows an unusual feature in that the 3sm and 3p markers in the negative imperfective are different in main-clause verbs and subordinate verbs: so, 3sm main /ɲ-/ and subordinate /-ɲay-/ , resp: /ɲ-sebr/ *ɲələseβər* 'he does not break' but /t-ɲa-y-sebr/ *tāyseβər* 'without his breaking' (contrast Amharic *aysäbrəm*, *saysäbr*). Rela-

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tive verb formation shows much in common with other TSE languages: perfective marker *ye-*, imperfective zero marker (cf. Old Amharic, Səlte), but with the obligatory addition of the auxiliary *-ā[n]*, making the relative imperfective identical with the main verb form: /*y-sebr-ey-ān*/ *yiseβreyān* 'he breaks it' and '[the thing] which he breaks'. These are just a few examples of many interesting features that are dealt with in this excellent volume.

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*Proceedings of the XV<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Hamburg July 20–25, 2003.* Ed. by SIEGBERT UHLIG. Assistant Editors: MARIA BULAKH, DENIS NOSNITSIN and THOMAS RAVE = Aethiopistische Forschungen 65. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006. XIX + 1110 S. Preis: € 110,00. ISBN 3-447-04799-2

Mit der 15. ICES in Hamburg und den jetzt vorliegenden Akten wurden mehrere Rekorde gebrochen. Mit ca. 400 Teilnehmern und 266 Vorträgen war sie die größte Äthiopistenkonferenz bisher.<sup>1</sup> Entsprechend ist der vorliegende Band der bisher umfangreichste in der Reihe der "Aethiopistischen Forschungen". Er enthält 129 ausgewählte Beiträge, somit fast die Hälfte der gehaltenen Vorträge. Dem in Rezensionen zu Sammelbänden regelmäßig geäußerten einleitenden Vorbehalt, die Rezension könne nicht allen Beiträgen gerecht werden, muss sich angesichts dieser Monumentalität auch diese Rez. anschließen. Eine gewisse Pauschalität ist schlicht unvermeidbar. Willkürlich einzelne Beiträge positiv oder negativ hervorzuheben wäre hier einfach ungerecht.

Die Proceedings sind in die folgenden neun inhaltlichen Abschnitte gegliedert:

- a) "Anthropology" (23 Beiträge): Hier ist eine deutliche Überzahl von Beiträgen festzustellen, die sich mit südäthiopischen Ethnien befassen. Die Tradition, dass Ethnologen sich primär mit illiteraten Völkern abseits der schriftgeprägten Hochkulturen befassen, ist also auch in der Äthiopistik noch wirksam.
- b) "History" (26 Beiträge): Die meisten Beiträge befassen sich mit der Geschichte des 19. und des 20. Jahrhunderts, einige wenige haben die aksumitische Periode oder das 16. und 17. Jahrhundert zum Thema.
- c) "Arts" (13 Beiträge): Hier kommen nicht nur Themen der bildenden Kunst und der Architektur zur Sprache, sondern auch die Musik.
- d) "Literature and Philology" (13 Beiträge): Der Fokus liegt klar auf der traditionellen Gə'əz-Literatur.

<sup>1</sup> Die 16. ICES in Trondheim (Juli 2007) war mit etwa 200 Vorträgen deutlich kleiner.