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# The Ethio-Semitic Possessive Pronouns as Predicalizers in Historical Perspective

OLGA KAPELIUK

*To Thomas Kane whose Dictionaries rendered our task so much easier*

## Chapter I

1. In a few Tigrinya expressions the adnominal suffix pronouns, which usually serve to indicate the owner of what is designated by the substantive to which they are attached, have a more complex function. Let's consider the following sentence: **T<sup>1</sup> ጸጥም ፡ ነኛብ ፡ ቤቶም ፡ እንተ ፡ አሳናብትክዎም ፡ አብ ፡ መገዲ ፡ ኺሕለሉ ፡ እዮም** (Mark 8:3, also Matthew 15:32)<sup>2</sup> “if I should send them home hungry, they would faint on the way”<sup>3</sup>. It is clear that the combination of the noun **ጸም** together with the possessive suffix pronoun of the third person masculine plural doesn't mean simply “their fast”, as may also be ascertained both from the English translation and the Greek original, which contain a circumstantial adverbial construction.

The exact function of the Tigrinya expression **ጸጥም** in this context may become clearer if we compare it with the Amharic version of the same verse from Mark 8:3 **A ጠግቸውን ፡ ወደ ፡ ቤታቸው ፡ ባሰናብታቸው ፡ በመንገድ ፡ ይዝላሉ**<sup>4</sup>. In Amharic the same substantive “fast” and the corresponding possessive pronoun are further completed by the accusative marker **ን**. The

<sup>1</sup> Whenever necessary the examples in Ethiopian script are preceded by the capital letters A(mharic), G(e'ez) and T(igrinya).

<sup>2</sup> The Tigrinya Bible translation currently quoted is the one printed in Asmara in 1992. If another translation is used it will be specified.

<sup>3</sup> For the English Bible translation cf the Bibliographical list at the end of the article. I've introduced some changes in the English translation to make it more conform to the Ethiopian text quoted.

<sup>4</sup> Unless specified otherwise, the Amharic quotations from the Bible were copied from the edition printed in Addis Abeba in 1980 E.C., reprinted in 1994.

latter acts here as the adverbial accusative of state, or *حال* according to the terminology of the Arab grammarians, and the whole combination exactly renders the spirit of the Greek original. Therefore, we may say that where Tigrinya has no explicit sign of adverbial subordination, Amharic has an adverbial accusative, very similar to the Ge'ez adverbial accusative (even though the short final vowel *a* was replaced by the accusative marker **ኃ**)<sup>5</sup>. Surprisingly enough, Tigrinya, in spite of its reputation as being more conservative than Amharic, had discarded all the historical traces of the accusative, both in form and function, whereas Amharic still follows quite faithfully the Ge'ez usage. Even the Tigrinya prefixed case marker **ኃ** cannot be defined as an accusative marker because it also indicates the dative, similarly to the ancient preposition **ለ** from which it probably derives. It may only be defined as a neutralized sign of a verbal object which is never used in adverbial expressions<sup>6</sup>. As for the historical accusative *a* which was maintained unchanged in the Amharic gerund, e.g.: **ለ ረከሰህ** "you having found", it disappeared from Tigrinya, without leaving any traces: **ረከሰህ**<sup>7</sup>.

Consequently, both **ለ ጠግኛውኃ** and **ጥ ጸጥጥ** in the sentence quoted above could eventually be defined as an adverbial accusative, with the explicit accusative marker **ኃ** in Amharic and a zero accusative in Tigrinya. Without any doubt this would have been the opinion of Franz Praetorius, who uses the term "virtual accusative" in a similar context, had he been confronted with the contemporary expression **ጥ ጸጥጥ** and not with yet another construction, to be

<sup>5</sup> Whose use is limited to definite nouns. For the various uses of the Amharic accusative cf KAPELIUK (1979) and KAPELIUK (1973) where the basic bibliography on the subject is mentioned.

<sup>6</sup> LESLAU (1941) 42–43; PRAETORIUS (1871) 214–215; for Ge'ez cf KAPELIUK (1992) 157–163 in particular.

<sup>7</sup> It is possible that in the particular variant of late Ge'ez, from which Tigrinya probably evolved, a short *a* at the end of nominals and in close juncture disappeared without leaving any traces. This could also explain why even in compounds with the construct state borrowed from Ge'ez Tigrinya drops more readily than Amharic the short vowel *a*, e.g.: **ለ ሥርዓተ ፡ ኦሪት** versus **ጥ ሥርዓተ ፡ ኦሪት** (Storia 28:13) "the Law of the Bible". On the other hand, the disappearance of the short vowel *a* of the accusative at a stage preceding the formation of Tigrinya as we know it, could account for the presence in that language of nouns ending in a short *a* [whatever its origin, cf PRAETORIUS (1871) 22 et passim; LESLAU (1941) 17] a phenomenon with no parallel either in Ge'ez or in Amharic.

discussed in Chapter I.2<sup>8</sup>. However, the presence or absence of the accusative case is not essential for this construction, as will be shown below, in the chapter on Ge'ez. What makes the expression what it is, namely an adverbial circumstantial construction, is its relationship with the governing verb on the one hand, and the relationship between the nominal component and the suffixed pronoun, on the other.

Unlike ordinary adverbs and other adverbial constructions, **A ጠግቸውን** and **T ጸጥም** don't provide any specification of the action of the governing verb itself. What they specify is the state of the subject or of the object of the verb during the occurrence of the action, and they stand in appositional relationship to the pronouns included in the governing verb. Hence we may say, that in functional terms they correspond to subordinate circumstantial clauses accompanying the governing verb. And, as a matter of fact, in another Amharic translation of the Gospels the expression **ጠግቸውን** in an almost identical verse is rendered by **A እንደ ፡ ተራቡ ፡ ላሰናብታቸው ፡ አልወድም** (Matthew 15:32)<sup>9</sup>. "I am not willing to send them away when they are hungry" (Tigrinya maintains also in this verse the form **ጸጥም**). Also the verse from Mark 8:3 quoted above, contains in the Amharic version of the Gospels a gerund, which is the perfect means for rendering a subordinate circumstantial clause: **A ተርበውም ፡ ላሰናብታቸው** which means more or less literally "if I send them away they [being] hungry".

The possibility of replacing the nominal construction **A ጠግቸውን** (and, by extrapolation, **T ጸጥም**) by a fully predicative (albeit subordinate) sentence composed of a verb inflected for its subject, allows us to place the two constructions on an equal footing, and suggest that in the nominal combination there exists also a predicative link (or nexus, according to O. Jerspersen's terminology) between the noun **A ጠግ** which acts as the predicate and the "possessive" pronoun suffixed to it, which functions as its subject. Predicative link implies the explicit or implicit presence of the verb "to be", therefore we may reconstruct **A ጠግቸውን** as "they [being] on fast". In the corresponding

<sup>8</sup> PRAETORIUS (1871) 313. The use of adjectives and substantives as adverbs with no external sign of adverbial subordination is normal in Tigrinya. This applies to adjectives in particular, e.g.: **T ብርቱዕ ፡ ተጎድኤ** (MAR 1:19) "was heavily damaged", but also to substantives serving as adverbs of time and place, e.g.: **T ምልእቲ ፡ ለይቲ ፡ ኸትመላለስ ፡ ሐደረት** (id 7:20) "the whole night she was coming and going".

<sup>9</sup> The four Gospels in Ge'ez with Amharic translation and **አንድም**. This translation is more idiomatic than the one from 1986 which probably is based on some more ancient translation of the Bible Society.

Tigrinya expression, in the absence of a formal sign of adverbial subordination, it is the relationship between the nominal construction and the main verb and the suffixation of the pronoun which produce the predicalizing effect. That's why the term "predicalizers" has been introduced in this article<sup>10</sup>. As for the implied presence of the verb "to be", in the modern languages it sometimes becomes explicit, as may be seen in the following example; **ገንቦሬ ፡ ማዕሰብኪ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ቤተ ፡ አቡኪ** (Genesis 38:11)<sup>11</sup> "remain unwed in your father's house"; **ፕ አብ ፡ እንዳ ፡ አቦኺ ፡ መበለት ፡ ኳንኪ ፡ ተቐመጢ** "remain in your father's home being unwed"; **አ በአባትሽ ፡ ቤት ፡ መበለት ፡ ሆነሽ ፡ ተቀመጧ** id. The predicalizing suffix pronoun of Ge'ez was replaced by a fully predicative subordinate circumstantial clause with the gerund of the verb "to be", both in Tigrinya and Amharic.

The presence of the gerund of the verb "to be" in the verse just quoted, reflects the current usage in the two modern languages. Expressions such as **ፕ ጸሞም** with a concrete substantive and a predicalizing pronoun with no other sign of adverbial subordination are extremely rare in Tigrinya. In Amharic, where the accusative renders explicit the adverbial subordination, there are few other cases. The most important among them are those translating the Ge'ez expressions "naked" and "empty handed", e.g.: **አ አዳምና ፡ ሚስቱ ፡ ሁለቱም ፡ ዕራቁታቸውን ፡ ነበሩ ፣ አይተፋፈሩም ፡ ነበር** (Genesis 2:25) "Adam and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame". However, **አ ዕራቁት** is not an ordinary substantive, because it is restricted to the adverbial expression in question. Whenever "nakedness" is meant Amharic uses either **ዕርቃን** or **ዕራቁትነት**, e.g.: **አ ዕርቃኑን ፡ በነጠላ ፡ የሸፈነ ፡ ጎበዝ ... ነጠላውን ፡ ትቶ ፡ ዕራቁቱን ፡ ሸሸ** (Mark 14:51-52)<sup>12</sup> "a youth, covering his nakedness with a linen cloth ... left the cloth and fled naked"; **አ በድን ኳ ኑም ፡ ውስጥ ፡ ዕራቁቱን ፡ ሆነ ... ካም ፡ የአባቱን ፡ ዕራቁትነት ፡ አየ** (Genesis 9:21-22) "and he lay uncovered in his tent ... then Ham saw his father's nakedness". For "empty

<sup>10</sup> The predicalizing effect of the adnominal pronouns is quite normal if we refer to abstract deverbal nouns such as the infinitive or the noun of action.

<sup>11</sup> For Ge'ez I've used both E.Littmann's and A.Dillmann's editions of parts of the Old Testament. There are some discrepancies in the counting of verses between the two texts; the translations to the modern Ethiopian languages match Littmann's edition. For the Ge'ez New Testament I've been currently using the edition of the Bible Society published for the first time in Leipzig in 1898 and reprinted in Great Britain in 1957, but also the Gospels in Ge'ez with Amharic translation and commentary are often referred to.

<sup>12</sup> **አ ዕርቃን** may also be used in the adverbial construction, e.g.: **አ ዕርቃኑን ፡ ቆመ** in KANE, Amharic.

handed” Amharic uses a predicalized definite adjective or its combination with a substantive indicating a part of the body, e.g.: **A ባዶውንም ፡ ሰደዱት** (Mark 12:3) “they sent them away empty handed”; **A ባዶ ፡ ዕጅን ፡ በሰደድከኝ ፡ ነበር** (Genesis 31:42) “you could have dismissed me empty handed”; **A ራቁቱንም ፡ ባዶ ፡ እግሩንም ፡ ሄደ** (Isaiah 20:2) “he went naked and barefoot” for Ge‘ez **ዘእንበለ ፡ አሣእን**. Another, somewhat similar construction, is to be found in the expression for “being lonely”: **A ሞድ ፡ ግን ፡ ብቻውን ፡ አንድ ፡ ፍጥሩን ፡ ነበረ** (AWR 17:5) “but Wahed was alone<sup>13</sup> [and] lonely”.

In the parallel Tigrinya expressions for “naked” and “empty handed” the predicalizing pronouns are suffixed either to the word **T ጥራይ** or to the substantive which follows it, thus for Genesis 2:25 **T ሰብአይን ፡ ሰበይትን ፡ ድማ ፡ ኸልቲአም ፡ ጥራዮም ፡ ነበሩ ፡ አይሐንኩን ፡ ነበሩ**, for Mark 14:52 **T ነጸላኡ ፡ ሐዲጉ ፡ ጥራይ ፡ ዝባኑ ፡ ሀደመ**, for Mark 12:3 **T ጥራይ ፡ ኢዱ ፡ ሰደድዎ**, for Genesis 31:42 **T ሕጂ ፡ ጥራይ ፡ ኢደይ ፡ ምሰደድካኒ ፡ ኔርካ** etc. **T ጥራይ** in contemporary Tigrinya is to be considered as an adverb, both when used bare with the meaning “only” and together with a suffix pronoun meaning “alone” and “naked”<sup>14</sup>, but the possibility to prepose **ጥራይ** to a substantive (**ጥራይ ፡ ዝባኑ ፡ ጥራይ ፡ ኢዱ**) shows that originally it was an adjective<sup>15</sup>.

That is also how F. Praetorius classified it, while quoting the more archaic variant **T ጥራሐ** for Mark 14:52 **T (ጥራሐ ፡ ኃደመ**<sup>16</sup> and **T ጉዮ ፡ ጥራሐ/ጥራዩ**<sup>17</sup>. Like **T ጸሞም** in the examples quoted above, **T ጥራሐ/ጥራዩ** specifies the state of the subject/object of the governing verb thanks to the predicalizing effect of the pronoun suffixed to it. However, unlike **T ጸሞም** where the “possessive” pronoun is most naturally (in formal terms) suffixed to a substantive, in the case of an adjective (or a participle) the suffixation of an

<sup>13</sup> In historical terms also **ብቻውን** belongs to the category described here. It goes back to Ge‘ez **ባሕቲቶ** composed of the abstract noun **ባሕቲት** (DILLMANN (1865) 1148b) in the accusative plus the suffix pronoun, but both in Ge‘ez and Amharic it became a regular adverb.

<sup>14</sup> I have borrowed these definitions from Th. Kane's manuscript of his forthcoming Tigrinya Dictionary which he has kindly put at my disposition.

<sup>15</sup> Also the nominal pattern **ቅታል** points out to its being an adjective to be compared with **ገ ዕራቅ** and **ገ ሕይወ**.

<sup>16</sup> PRAETORIUS (1871) 313. This verse was quoted by Praetorius from a manuscript of the translation of the Gospels by debtera Matteos done in 1836–37 and revised by Isenberg (id. p 10).

<sup>17</sup> id, from the same translation, edited by J.L. Krapf and printed at Chrischona in 1866 (PRAETORIUS (1871) 10 note 2).

adnominal pronoun is definitely exceptional and is the cause of the predicalization (see also Chapter II). At any rate, Tigrinya also uses another, perhaps more literary expression for “naked”, in which the predicative link is rendered explicit by the use of the gerund of the verb “to be”, e.g.: **T ዳርጋ ፣ ዕራቁቶም ፣ ኮይኖም ፣ ለይቲ ፣ ለይቲ ፣ ይለሀይን ፣ ይስዕስዕን ፣ የጎድር ፣ ነበረ** (Storia 38:16–18) “he spent every night [together with them] dancing and jumping,(they being) almost naked”.

2. Beside the Tigrinya expressions with no explicit mark of external subordination just examined, there also exists a somewhat more frequent combination with the preposition **T ብ** “in, by” with a similar function<sup>18</sup>. This brings us back to the verses from Mark 8:3 and Matthew 15:32 examined above. Whereas in the modern translation they contain the combination **ጸዋም** for Tigrinya and **ጠግቸውን, እንደተራቡ,** and **ተርበው** in Amharic, in the manuscript of the Gospels quoted by F. Praetorius in his Tigrinya Grammar (p 313) the verse from Mark sounds: **T እንተሰናበትክ ዎም ፣ ብጥሙኖም** “if I send them away hungry”, or, literally “in/by hungered–their”, where the predicalizing pronoun is suffixed to a historical passive participle and the whole subordinated to the governing verb by the preposition **ብ**.

Thanks to the presence of the preposition **ብ** the function of the expression in question, as an adverbial specification of state of the subject or object of the accompanying verb, became explicit and more evident. Tigrinya **ብ** corresponds to **በ** in Ge'ez and Amharic, but whereas in the latter two languages it means both “in” and “by”, in Tigrinya its use is almost exclusively restricted to marking the instrument while location is indicated by the preposition **ኣብ**. The presence of the preposition “in/by” in expressions corresponding to subordinate circumstantial clauses is by no means restricted to the Ethiopian branch of the Semitic language family. Together with the infinitive it provides the equivalent of a gerund in classical and modern literary Hebrew as well as in Neo-Syriac<sup>19</sup>. In Ge'ez the combination of **በ** with a noun of action and a predicalizing pronoun sometimes also serves as a gerund, e.g.: **G ወበግብአቶሙ ፣ በነግህ ፣ ረከብዋ ፣ ለይእቲ ፣ በለስ ፣ ይብስት ፣ እምሥርዋ** (Mark 11:2) “and upon their return at dawn they saw the fig tree withered from its root”. In present day Amharic the infinitive preceded by **በ**

<sup>18</sup> cf LESLAU (1941) 44.

<sup>19</sup> For instance in biblical Hebrew: **בשוב אדוני את שיבת ציון היינו כחולמים** (Psalms 126:1); for Neo-Syriac cf in particular POLOTSKY (1984–86) 327–329.

often replaces the historical gerund in rendering a concomitant action<sup>20</sup>. Also in Tigrinya, in the combination ብጥሙዮም a deverbal nominal form follows the preposition, but it is not an abstract noun, like the infinitive or the noun of action, but rather a historical passive participle.

The adjectival deverbal form ቅቲል (ቅትልት in the feminine) is passive only if derived from a transitive verb, but active otherwise, which is most often the case. The combination of this participle/adjective with a suffix pronoun produces the predicative link, which corresponds to the verb “to be” in deep structure. This construction is found both in more ancient sources and in contemporary texts, e.g.: **T ሃና ፡ ኸአ ፡ ናብ ፡ ቀያፋ ፡ እቲ ፡ ሊቀ ፡ ካህናት ፡ ብእሱሩ ፡ ሰደዶ** (John 18:24) “then Annas sent Him bound to the high priest Caiaphas”, both in the manuscript quoted by Praetorius and in the modern translation. The same applies to the following verse: **T ወጼ ፡ እትምውት ፡ ብግነዙ** (John 11:44) “the dead [man] stepped out wrapped in a shroud”. With a feminine suffix pronoun the participle/adjective stands in the feminine, e.g.: **T ታማር ፡ ብጉህይታ ፡ አብ ፡ ቤት ፡ አቤሴሎም ፡ ሐዋ ፡ ተቆመጠት** (II Samuel 13:20) “but Tamar remained unwed in her brother Absalom’s house”. A few adjectives with the predicalizing pronoun and ብ became regular adverbs, e.g.: **T ብአውራኡ ፡ ድጎሬና ፡ መጸኢኡ** (Storia 53:4) “he came after us in person”<sup>21</sup>; **T እቶም ፡ ፈለሰቲ ፡ ብምሉአቶም ፡ የፈቅርዎ ፡ ነበሩ** (YGYM 26:16) “all the monks (literally the monks in their full) loved him”; **T ብሰፊሑ ፡ እናገለጹ** (YGYM 17:3) “explaining extensively”; and **T ብደሓኑ ፡ ስለ ፡ ዝረኸቦ** (Luke 15:27) “because he found him safe”<sup>22</sup> as against **A በደኅና ፡ ስላገኘው** or **G በደኅን** (Exodus 4:18) without a suffix pronoun.

In contemporary Tigrinya the predicalized construction may be replaced by a gerund, or an equivalent verbal construction, of the corresponding verb, e.g.: **T ብእኩባቶም ፡ ፈረሳውያን ፡ ጠየቆም** (Matthew 22:41) “while the Pharisees [were] gathered he interrogated them”, quoted by Praetorius, as against **T ተእኪቦም ፡ ከለዉ ፡ ... ሐተቶም** in the modern version. When the participle/adjective cannot automatically be transformed into the corresponding verb the gerund of “to be” has to be introduced, e.g.: **T ብዕዉሩ ፡ እተወልደ ፡ ሰብአይ ፡ ረአየ** (John 9:1 and 9:19, 9:29; 9:32) “he saw a man who was born blind”, and in verse 2: **T ዕዉር ፡ ከዑይኑ ፡ ዚውለድሲ** “and that he be born (being) blind”; both elements may also stand side by side, e.g.: **T ብድቁሱ ፡ ኸ**

<sup>20</sup> cf KAPELIUK (1988a) 54–55.

<sup>21</sup> KANE, Tigrinya: ብአውራኡ “he himself”, “in person”.

<sup>22</sup> Also ብደኅን “safely” according to KANE, Tigrinya.



**ሎ ፡ ተላዕለላ** (MAR 7:4) “he let himself be lifted by her easily, being asleep”. In Amharic, on the other hand, there is no construction with **በ** plus a predicalized adjective or historical participle and a gerund is used, thus for Matthew 22:41 **ሌላውን ፡ ተሰብስበው ፡ ሳሉ**, for John 9:1 **ሰው ፡ አየ**, and for John 9:2: **ሰው ፡ ሆኖ ፡ እንዲወለድ**. One Tigrinya example among those quoted by Praetorius (313–314) contains the preposition **ፕ እንካብ** “from”: **ፕ እንካብ ፡ ንዑሱ** (Mark 9:21) “since his childhood (literally since his little)”. In the recent Tigrinya translation the adjective is replaced by an abstract noun: **ፕ እንካብ ፡ ንእሰነቱ** “from his childhood”, similarly to Amharic: **ከእግንነቱ ፡ ጀምሮ** and Ge<sup>c</sup>ez: **እምንእሱ**. I have shown elsewhere, in respect to Amharic, that abstract nouns should be analyzed as transformation of underlying copula sentences<sup>23</sup>, hence **ፕ እንካብ ፡ ንኡሱ** and **ፕ እንካብ ፡ ንእሰነቱ** may both be reconstructed as “from his [being] little”.

This brings us to the last and perhaps the most extravagant combination with **ፕ ብ**. **ብ** may also be preposed to a noun, followed by a predicalizing suffix pronoun. If the noun is an abstract one, the combination seems almost natural, e.g.: **ፕ ንጉሥ ፡ ዓይ ፡ ከአ ፡ ብሀይወቱ ፡ ኸሎ ፡ ሒዞም** (Joshua 8:23) “they captured the king of Ai alive (literally in his life)”; **ፕ ጎደታአቶም ፡ ብቈመናአ ፡ እንከሎ** (Storia 146:5) “while their master was still alive”<sup>24</sup> and so too in the following, somewhat poetic expression: **ፕ አብ ፡ ሃራርጌ ፡ ብሠዊቶም ፡ ሞቱ** (Storia 144:5) translated by the editor “*morì ad Hararge prematuramente*”; **ፕ ነፍሶም ፡ ብሰዊታ ፡ ትቸዘፍ** (Job 36:14) “they die in youth”; according to KANE, Tigrinya **ሠዊት** means “ear of corn, grain, pod (of peas, beans etc.) still green but ripe enough to eat”. In a few other cases the noun is a concrete one and the expression, if literally translated, sounds real strange. This happens in specification of a period of time, when a substantive referring to a human being at a certain age is used where we would expect an abstract noun, e.g.: **ፕ ብጎብዞም ፡ ከለዉ** (YGYM 4:15) “when He was young (literally: when He was in His young man)”; **ፕ ብዕሽሉ ፡ ከሎ** (YGYM 18:19) “while he was a baby (literally in his baby)”; **ፕ በዋልደን ፡ ከለዋ ፡ አመንዘራ** (Ezekiel 23:3) “they prostituted themselves as young girls (literally: in their young girls)”. Here the predicalizing pronoun not only creates the predicative link between the pronominal subject and the concrete noun which provides the predicate, but also leads to a deeper analysis of the latter. **ፕ ጎብዝ ፡ ዕሽል ፡ አዋለድ** in this syntactical context equal “youth of man”, “childhood”, “youth of

<sup>23</sup> Cf KAPELIUK (1988b) 74–77.

<sup>24</sup> **ፕ ቈመና** according to Kane, Tigrinya means “existence”, “presence”.

woman”, and since abstracts are transformed copula sentences, they are to be interpreted as “being a young man”, “being a child” and “being young girls”.

## Chapter II

We shall turn now to the Ge'ez parallels of the predicalized expressions of state described in Chapter I in respect to Tigrinya and Amharic. Whenever a direct comparison between the modern languages and the old one is possible<sup>25</sup> one construction consistently emerges in Ge'ez. This construction usually contains either a participle/adjective of the form **ቅቲል** or an adjective of the form **ቅታል** followed by an adnominal suffix pronoun, accorded either to the subject or to the object of the governing verb. The adjectival component generally stands in the nominative when it specifies the state of the subject of the governing verb and in the accusative when it refers to its object. Thus for **T ጸጥም** and **A ጠግቸውን** we may quote from Mark 8:3 **G ወእመኒ ፡ ሰዐርክዎሙ ፡ ርኅባኒሆሙ ፡ ይእተዉ ፡ አብያቲሆሙ**; for **T ጥራዮም** and **A ዕራቁታቸውን** in Genesis 2:25 **G ሀለዉ ፡ አዳም ፡ ወብእሲቲ ፡ ዕራቃኒሆሙ ፡ ወኢየጎፍሩ**. Parallel to Tigrinya **ብ** with the participle/adjective and suffix pronoun Ge'ez lacks the preposition but the rest is identical, whereas Amharic has no corresponding adjectival construction. Thus **T ብእሱሩ** in John 18:24 renders **G ወፈነዎ ፡ ሐኖ ፡ ሕሙዮ ፡ ለኢየሱስ ፡ ኀበ ፡ ቀያፋ ፡ ሊቀ ፡ ካህናት** and **T ብዕዉሩ** “blind” in John 9:1 (et passim) **G ርእየ ፡ ብእሴ ፡ ዘዕዉሩ ፡ ተወልደ**.

Since this construction is well known to those familiar with Ge'ez, the purpose of what follows is limited to providing a few clarifications based on extensive reading of Ge'ez texts. A. Dillmann described the construction in his Grammar but it is evident that he was confused as to its syntactical standing. He deals with identical examples under two different headings, once referring to suffixes in apposition and once in the paragraph on adjectives in apposition. Moreover, he is not explicit as to what these pronouns or adjectives are apposed to. M. Chaîne is more accurate when he states that the “qualificatif” refers to a pronoun, either subject or object and hints at the connection with the gerund<sup>26</sup>, though without establishing a clear analogy between the two.

<sup>25</sup> The Amharic translations of the Scriptures used in this article were done, without any doubt, from the Ge'ez text. As for the Tigrinya modern translation, I was sometimes under the impression that it followed more faithfully the Amharic translation than the Ge'ez basic text.

<sup>26</sup> DILLMANN (1907) 360, 482; CHAÎNE (1938) 195, 161.

I had, in the past, the opportunity of demonstrating how the combination of the participle/adjective with a suffix pronoun in Ge'ez created a predicative link between the two, transforming at the same time the combination into an adverbial specification of state<sup>27</sup>. It should be stressed that in Semitic suffixing a pronoun to an adjective (unless substantivized), even with possessive meaning, is most unusual<sup>28</sup> while a pronoun suffixed to a participle may only indicate its object. Therefore the sole fact of combining a participle/adjective or a regular adjective with a pronoun produced a unique adverbial construction in which the former constitutes the predicate and the latter the subject with an underlying verb "to be"<sup>29</sup>. I had also pointed out to the affinity between the predicalized participle/adjective and the gerund both in terms of function and suffixation of a "possessive" pronoun as subject. In certain cases they even are interchangeable, as in Matthew 25:39 "when did we see you – **ሙቁሐከ** – imprisoned" and id :44 **ተሞቂሐካ** "having been imprisoned", or Matthew 8:13 **ገ ረከቦ ፡ ለወልዱ ፡ ሕይዎ** "he found his son in good health", but in the translation of the Gospels the same verse has **ሐይዎ** "having been healed".

Theoretically any predicalized participle or adjective in Ge'ez may be transformed into the gerund of the corresponding verb or, in the impossibility of forming the latter, by the gerund of the verb "to be". This also was the regular historical evolution in Amharic and Tigrinya, except for the few special cases examined in Chapter I. But the reversal of this process isn't automatically possible. Not every Ge'ez gerund may be transformed into a predicalized participle/adjective. This possibility is almost exclusively limited to the specification of the physical and psychological state of human beings<sup>30</sup>, e.g.: **ገ ወነበሩ ፡ ስቁላኒሆሙ** (Joshua 10:26) "and they remained hanging" (**A ተሰቅለው**, **T ተሰቁሎም**); **ገ ወቆመ ፡ እደዊሁ ፡ ለሙሴ ፡ ርቡባቲሆን** (Exodus 17:12) "and the hands of Moses remained stretched"; **ገ ወበጽሐ ፡ ንጉሥ ፡ ወከሉ ፡ ሕዝብ ፡ ድኩማኒሆሙ ፡ ህየ** (II Samuel 16:4) "and the king and all the people arrived there exhausted"; **ገ ወተጋብኡ ፡ ከሉሙ ፡ ድንጉዓኒሆሙ** (Acts 2:6) "and they all gathered, confused". I have found three examples only of

<sup>27</sup> KAPELIUK (1979) 233–238; cf also GAI (1983) 21–22 and CORRELL (1991) 258–259.

<sup>28</sup> I can quote only one example in Hebrew, from a love song **שלי רחוקי קולי הושמע** "will you hear my voice my distant [one]".

<sup>29</sup> cf GAI (1983). The term "embedded non-sentence nexuses" he uses is the most accurate for this combination but I refrained from borrowing it here because not everybody is familiar with this terminology.

<sup>30</sup> Speakers of Ethiopian languages are very much aware of the special status of human beings and use several linguistic means to express it, cf KAPELIUK (1973).

the predicalized construction not with human beings: **G ወረከበታ ፡ ለእብን ፡ እትታ ፡ እምአፈ ፡ መቃብር** (John 20:1) “and she found the stone removed from the opening of the grave”; **G አልቦ ፡ ዘይጠብቅ ፡ ድርግሐ ፡ ልብስ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ሰጠተ ፡ ልብስ ፡ ብሉይ ፡ እሰመ ፡ ያነጥፆ ፡ ሕያዎ ፡ ለልብስ** (Matthew 9:16) “no one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old coat because it will tear the coat ‘alive’”; **G ወአልቦ ፡ ዘተረክበ ፡ እራቁ ፡ እምንዋየ ፡ ቤት** (GTH 17:51–52) “and none of the house vessels was found empty”, and in the Amharic translation **A ከቤት ፡ ዕቃ ፡ ባደውን ፡ የተገኘ ፡ የለም**.

The semantic limitations on the use of the predicalized construction distinguish it from the gerund which is freely used in any context and regularly derived from all the verbal roots. Moreover, the deverbal base of the gerund is always the same (and in the accusative) and has no independent existence in the language, whereas the predicalized construction has no uniform base and both the participle/adjective and the adjectives may also be used outside the construction. In the case of ቅጽጻ its meaning is passive if the verb from which it derives is transitive, and active otherwise, e.g.: **G ስድስቱ ፡ ምእት ፡ ብእሲ ፡ እለ ፡ ቅኑታኒሆሙ ፡ ይጸውሩ ፡ ንዋየ ፡ ሐቅሎሙ** (Judges 18:11) “six hundred men who, girdled, carry their weapons”; **G ዛብሎን ፡ ስኡኑ ፡ የጎድር ፡ ከመ ፡ መርሶ ፡ አሕማር** (Genesis 49:13) “Zebulun, [being] little, dwells by the seashore”. Unlike the gerund base, the participle is accorded in gender and number to the pronoun it specifies, e.g.: **G እንዘ ፡ ተሐውሩ ፡ ትኩዘኒክሙ** (Luke 24:17) “when you go worried”; **G ወሐረ ፡ ጎበ ፡ እለ ፡ ሙቅሕታ ፡ ትነብር ፡ ነፍሶሙ** (I Petros 3:19) “and he went to those whose soul remains imprisoned” and **G ነጸራ ፡ ቀዊማ ፡ እንዘ ፡ ስርጉታ ፡ ይእቲ** [DILLMANN (1866) 37:11] “he looked at her, standing, while she was adorned”, where we find side by side the unchanging base of the gerund and the participle accorded in the feminine.

Among the adjectives constituting the predicate the most frequently used are ሕያው “alive” and ዕራቅ “naked” and “empty handed”. ሕያው is accorded to its subject both in gender and number, e.g.: **G ወአወፈያ ፡ ኪያሃ ፡ ሕያውታ** (Actes 9:41) “and he delivered her to her alive”; **G እቀብሮን ፡ ውስተ ፡ ምድር ፡ ሕያዋኒሆሙ** (AMS 389:3–4) “shall I bury them alive in the ground?” ዕራቅ is never used without a suffix pronoun and has no feminine form, e.g.: **G ምልእትየ ፡ ሐርኩ ፡ ወዕራቅየ ፡ አግብኦኒ ፡ እግዚአብሔር** (Ruth 1:21) “I went amply supplied and God brought me back empty handed”. Whereas ሕያው is freely used as an adjective ዕራቅ may only be used in the predicalized construction, otherwise it is replaced by ዕሩቅ, e.g.: **G ወለሊከ ፡ ታአምር ፡ ከ**

**መ ፡ ነዳይ ፡ ወምስኪን ፡ አንተ ፡ ወዕሩቅ ፡ ወዕዉር ፡ አንተ** (Revelation 3:17) “and you know yourself that you are poor and miserable and you are naked and blind”. Very few other adjectives referring to bodily state are employed, e.g.: **ገ ይኒይሰከ ፡ ትባእ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ሕይወት ፡ ሐንካሰከ ... ይኒይሰከ ፡ ነቋዋርክ ፡ ትባእ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ሕይወት** (Matthew 18:8–9) “it is better for you to enter life lame ... it is better for you to enter life one-eyed”. Also we should add to the list two substantives: **ገ ማእዜ ፡ ርኢናክ ፡ እንግዳክ ፡ ወተወከፍናክ** (Matthew 25:38) “when did we see you a stranger and we accepted you”; and **ገ ንቦሪ ፡ ማእሰብኪ** (Genesis 38:11) “remain a spinster”.

The gerund and the predicalized participle/adjective further differ on two important points: the case and the presence or absence of the suffix pronoun. The accusative case of the deverbal base which produces the adverbial subordination of state (الْح) is inherent in the form of the gerund. In the predicalized construction, basically the case is in agreement with the pronominal component of the governing verb which it specifies, i.e. nominative for the subject, e.g.: **ገ ወዘበዝነ ፡ ፍትወታቲሁ ፡ ይነብር ፡ ትኩዙ** [DILLMANN (1866) 42:19–20] “and the one who has many desires will remain distressed”; **ገ ወወድቀ ፡ ዕራቁ ፡ ኩላ ፡ ይእቲ ፡ ዕለት** (I Samuel 19:24) “and he lay all that day naked”, and accusative for the direct object, e.g.: **ገ ማእዜ ፡ ርኢናክ ፡ ርኅብክ ፡ ወአብላዕናክ ፡ ወጽሙእክ ፡ ወአስተይናክ** (Matthew 25:37) “when did we see you hungry and fed you, when did we see you thirsty and made you drink?” **ገ ጌሰመ ፡ ለእመ ፡ ርእየኪ ፡ ንጉሥ ፡ ድግድግተኪ** (GTH 46:10) “if the king sees you tomorrow famished”; **ገ ምንተ ፡ አቀመካሙ ፡ ዝዩ ፡ ኩሎ ፡ ዕለተ ፡ ዕሩዓኒካሙ** (Matthew 20:6) “what made you stand here all day unemployed”. Sometimes we may get the impression that the case is already fixed, either as an adverb, e.g.: **ገ ወእይስተይ ፡ ዘእንበለ ፡ ማይ ፡ ዕራቁ** [DILLMANN (1866) 64:5] “and he shouldn’t drink except water only”, or as a real equivalent of the gerund, e.g.: **ገ ትዜሀር ፡ ንቡረክ ፡ ውስተ ፡ ቤትክ** (II Kings 14:10) “you boast, staying at home”.

As for the suffix pronoun, its presence with the gerund is absolutely mandatory<sup>31</sup>, whereas the participle/adjective may equally be used bare, i.e. without the predicalizing pronoun (with the exception of **ዕራቁ**). It is not clear why one form is chosen and not the other and they often alternate, in the same text or in different versions of the same verse. Thus for specifying the state of the subject: **ገ ጽዑሙ ፡ ይእቲ** [DILLMANN (1866) 61:9] “let him go home

<sup>31</sup> In more than forty years of reading Ge‘ez texts I haven’t seen a single example of something to which Correll’s term “unsuffigiertes Gerund” could be applied (op. cit. 259).

fasting” against: **ገ መዓልተ ፣ ይውዕሉ ፣ ጽዕላን ፣ ምስለ ፣ አጎው** (id 65:17) “in the daytime they spend the day fasting with the brothers”; **ገ ወአምላካ ፣ የዐቅብ ፣ ኃያል ፣ ዐጸዶ ፣ ርሱዮ ፣ በንዋየ ፣ ሐቅሉ** (Luke 11:21) “as long as a strong man guards his field armed with weapons” where the translation of the Gospels has **ርሱይ**; **ገ ወነበረት ፣ ትዕማር ፣ መበለት ፣ ውስተ ፣ ቤተ ፣ አቡሃ** (II Samuel 13:20) “and Tamar remained unwed in her father’s home” against Genesis 38:11 **ማዕሰብኪ** with the same meaning. Referring to the object of the governing verb, the participle, both bare and with a suffix pronoun, normally stands in the accusative, e.g.: **ገ ኢይደልዎ ፣ ንፈንዎ ፣ ኅበ ፣ ንጉሥ ፣ ሙቁሐ** (Acts 25:27) “we shouldn’t send him to the king in chains”; **ገ ወኢይፈቅድ ፣ እፈንዎሙ ፣ ጽዕላን** (Matthew 15:32) “I don’t want to send them away fasting” where the translation of the Gospels has **ርኅባኒሆሙ**; **ገ ወረከበታ ፣ ለእብን ፣ እትታ ፣ እምአፈ ፣ መቃብር** (John 20:1) “and she found the stone removed from the opening of the grave” while in the translation of the Gospels we find **ዕብነ ፣ እቲተ**.

In the absence of the predicalizing pronoun the participle/adjective should stand in the accusative when it qualifies the object, and so it does in most cases, as may be seen from the examples in the preceding paragraph. However, the marking of the accusative in Ethiopian manuscripts and books is often confused, especially with the predicative complement and in specification of state. In the Scriptures the variants are numerous and shouldn’t be accorded too much importance, e.g.: **ገ ረከብዎ ፣ ለይእቲ ፣ በለስ ፣ ይብስት ፣ እምሥርዎ** (Mark 11:20) “they found the fig tree withered from its root” versus **ይብስተ** in the translation of the Gospels. Inconsistencies also exist in specification of the state of the subject of the accompanying verb by a bare participle/adjective, but in this case one variant is significant. The bare participle/adjective may stand in the nominative on the one hand, e.g.: **ገ እስመ ፣ ዕሩዓን ፣ ጸርሐ** (Exodus 5:8) “because they shouted, unemployed”, but the interesting cases are when it qualifies the subject and nevertheless stands in the accusative, e.g.: **ገ እንዘ ፣ ይቀወሙ ፣ ውስተ ፣ ምስያጥ ፣ ዕሩዓን** (Matthew 20:3) “while they stand in the market unemployed”; **ገ በእንተ ፣ ዘአተወ ፣ ምታ ፣ ዳኅነ** (GTH 72:8) “because her husband came home safe”; **ገ ኅበ ፣ ሀለዉ ፣ አርዳኢሁ ፣ ጉቡዓነ** (John 20:19) “where his disciples were found, assembled” in the translation of the Gospels, against **ጉቡአን** in the edition of the Bible Society.

In terms of comparative semitics the use of the bare participle/adjective (or substantive) in the accusative case for specifying the state of both the object

and the subject of the governing verb seems to represent the original construction. This may be deduced from the usage in classical Arabic where the **حال** stands invariably in the accusative and never carries a suffix pronoun with the status of subject. Suffixation of a predicalizing “possessive” pronoun with the function of subject to non-abstract deverbal nouns, such as participles and adjectives, seems to be a particular Ethiopian feature. Perhaps it was the presence in Ge‘ez of the gerund as a deverbal noun (though abstract) in the accusative with an adnominal suffix pronoun as its subject, which brought to a similar combination between the “possessive” pronoun with predicalizing function and certain participles and adjectives. But, given the semantic limitations on this construction, as specification of bodily or spiritual state of human beings, it was probably abandoned in favour of the gerund during the period of evolution from Ge‘ez into Tigrinya and Amharic, leaving behind only a few residues, which have been described in Chapter I.

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