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Article

Word Order in Epigraphic Gəʾəz

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Word Order in Epigraphic Gəˁəz[1]

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I. Introduction

In the discussion of word order in Gəˁəz, the epigraphic data is only sporadically brought into consideration, and no systematic analysis of the epigraphic evidence has been offered so far. But even the data of Classical Gəˁəz has not yet been properly analysed as far as the order of subject, object and verb is concerned. It is usually claimed that the neutral word order in Gəˁəz is V–S–O (e.g., Dillmann 1907: 503; Gragg 1997: 255; Weninger 2001: 1764). An even more specific claim has been made by J. Tropper (2002: 227), who declares that the unmarked word order in Gəˁəz is V–S–O–A (which means that the adverbial phrase follows the verb, the subject and the object). Such statements are usually illustrated by a few examples of V–S–O phrases in Gəˁəz, and are supposed to display the neutral word order. No statistical analysis of any large corpus of Gəˁəz texts has ever been attempted; no systematic investigation of the word order of translated texts in comparison to the (mostly Greek) originals has been carried out. Much better studied is the order of the noun and its modifiers in Classical Gəˁəz (Caquot 1952; Schneider 1959; Gai 1981).

As in the case of many other aspects of grammar, valuable information on word order in early Gəˁəz can be provided by Gəˁəz inscriptions found on the territory of modern Eritrea, northern Ethiopia, Sudan and the Yemen and dated to the first millennium A.D. The language (or rather a group of linguistic varieties) represented by these inscriptions and henceforth referred to as Epigraphic Gəˁəz (EG), is closely related to the so-called Classical Gəˁəz (CG) – a form of the same language known from the majority of manuscripts and described in native and western grammars. Although some

of the texts found in the manuscripts belong to the Aksumite period (i.e. to the epoch when Gəʿəz was still a spoken language), these texts are translations, mostly from Greek. Moreover, they are likely to have underwent substantial changes in the course of their manuscript transmission. The inscriptions are thus the only extant Aksumite texts in Gəʿəz created by its native speakers and known to us in their original form. Therefore, EG proves to be of high value for research on any aspect of early Gəʿəz grammar. One cannot claim, of course, that the inscriptions truthfully reflect the vernacular Gəʿəz of the time of their creation. It is quite likely that their language differed in one way or another from the spoken language: it probably used some special formulas and clichés, foreign influence might have been stronger, etc. Still, the epigraphic corpus includes texts of various genres (from short phrases of commemorative or votive character up to lengthy royal inscriptions with an elaborate structure incorporating narrative and votive parts, as well as prescriptive texts) and, therefore, is not likely to reflect one single literary norm seriously divergent from the spoken language. The value of this evidence considerably increases if it is compared with the data of CG. It is only when these two independent bodies of evidence corroborate each other that one can safely make a claim concerning the early Gəʿəz grammar.

No final statement on word order in Gəʿəz can therefore be made unless a systematic analysis of word order in the whole corpus of early Gəʿəz inscriptions is carried out. The present article is intended to present the results of such an analysis.

The EG texts are quoted mostly according to *RIÉ* (thus, consonantal gemination is not marked, but *ə* and *Ø* are distinguished, although the two features are not distinguished in the script). Omitted graphemes are sometimes restored in brackets (<>) in *RIÉ*; these restorations are also reproduced here. For non-vocalized inscriptions, a reconstructed vocalization is provided, marked with **. In the reconstructed vocalized versions the punctuation signs (word dividers) are omitted; alternative reconstructions are sometimes provided in brackets, preceded by a slash: ***saḥabəwwo*(*/wā*). Whenever an EG form differs from that of CG, the corresponding CG form is given in brackets after the reconstructed EG vocalization: ***maffas* (cp. CG *manfas*). Some minor differences between the usual orthography of EG and CG are preserved in the reconstructed vocalization, notably the writing CaH rather than CāH (***ḍabaʔku*, cp. CG *ḍabāʔku*). Uncertain and problematic vocalic reconstructions are provided with a question mark: ?***wa-zə-ʔəbn*. Proper names of uncertain patterns are left unvocalized: ***ʔgb*; in translations they are rendered in capital letters without vowels: ʔGB. Some other lexemes, the vocalic reconstruction of which is obscure, are also left unvocalized. In the reconstructed forms mimation is given in upper register: *ʔmzm* ***ʔəm-zə^m*

'then, after that'. In the translation, unclear words are substituted by question marks; a question mark put before a whole sentence or a whole translation shows the uncertainty of the example or its interpretation.

II. Practical difficulties

Before presenting the discussion of the material, some preliminary remarks are in order, explaining some general difficulties arising from the nature of the epigraphic corpus. In view of these difficulties, the results of the analysis become less definite than one would wish.

First of all, the number of complete sentences which can be reliably identified is not very high in the epigraphic corpus. For the present investigation, 276 sentences (32 of them from duplicate inscriptions[2]) with transitive or intransitive predicates, or with verbal copulas, have been collected, of which 57 are rather dubious and allow various interpretations, so that the word order is a matter of discussion.

Consider, for instance, the following passage (RIÉ 192: 9–10): *whmnt / ybrh / gzm*. It is left untranslated by R. Schneider (1974: 780–781), although he does offer some tentative identifications of the roots of the lexemes *ybrh* and *gzm* (identification of the first unit – **wa-həmmuntu* = CG *wa-ʔəmmuntu* 'and they' – is unproblematic). One can tentatively identify the second word with the verbal form *hbrh* in RIÉ 192: 15 (*whbrh / bḫyl / ʔgzbḥr* 'and ? by the might of God'), parsing *ybrh* as imperfect 3rd pers. masc. pl. with an object suffix 3rd pers. masc. sg. and *hbrh* as the corresponding form in the perfect.[3] The meaning of this verb remains obscure, but the context suggests a meaning like 'to resist (someone), to defend oneself (against someone)', or perhaps just 'to fight (someone)'. The word *gzm* is identified by Schneider with the root *gzm* 'to cut'; since its syntactical position hardly allows to interprete it as a verbal form, one can see in it a kind of adverb derived from the

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[2] Duplicate inscriptions have less value for the statistical analysis. Nevertheless, they were included in my statistical evaluations, mostly because the syntactic arrangement *is* sometimes different in duplicate inscriptions (cp. below examples [109] and [126]). Preservation of the same word order in several versions is, therefore, also informative. Nevertheless, in each section of this paper it is made clear how many examples come from different versions of the same text.

[3] The grapheme *-h* as the marker of the object suffix or the possessive suffix is typical of the inscription in question (RIÉ 192: 17: *knn-h* 'he judged him', cp. CG *kʷannan-o*; RIÉ 192: 26: *mʔk-hm* 'I conquered them', cp. CG *moʔk-omu*; RIÉ 192: 1: *bʔktt-h* 'in his praise', cp. CG *ba-ʔakkʷatet-u*); the same is true about the causative marker, which appears as *h-* rather than *ʔ-* (RIÉ 192: 35: *hlʕltn* **halʕalatanni* 'she raised me', cf. CG *ʔalʕalatanni*). For the forms with pronominal suffixes, one can offer tentative vocalizations only, such as **kʷannana-hu*, **moʔku-homu*, **ba-ʔakkʷatetə-hu*, respectively.

same root (something like 'fiercely', lit. 'cuttingly'). On the basis of these considerations, one can propose a translation 'and they resist him fiercely', with the word order S–V(+ PronO)–Adv. Still, one has to keep in mind that the whole interpretation is quite dubious and several alternative readings can be offered. For instance, *ybrh* can be interpreted as a verbal form with no object pronoun and *h* belonging to the root (note that Schneider indeed considers this word to be related to the root *brh* 'to shine'), and *gzm* (*-m* possibly belonging to the pronominal suffix **-*omu*) can be seen as its direct object. The word order would then be S–V–O. At the same time, the word order can sometimes be transparent even if no exact translation of the relevant sentence is at hand. This is the case of RIÉ 187: 10 (*waʔəlaʔəla / ʕarazna / ʔaḫazna / wamoḳaḥna* 'and we took and put in fetters all those whom we ²pierced'⁴): although the precise meaning of the verb *ʕarazna* remains unknown, the structure of the sentence is quite transparent.

Quite often the limits of the sentence cannot be established with certainty. This happens, for example, when a phrase is taken from a broken context, where the preceding or the subsequent words are unreadable; a possibility should always be kept in mind that these damaged parts contain some further constituents belonging to the phrase in question, as in RIÉ 195 I: 8: … *sadada = ʔaḥzāba = ʔəmkə[dma = …* 'he banished the peoples from the pre[sence of …' (one cannot be absolutely sure whether an overt subject precedes the predicate or not).

But even if the whole phrase is well preserved and all the lexemes are identifiable, it is sometimes difficult to understand whether one deals with one complex sentence or with two (or more) simple ones. Consider, for example, the initial sentence of the inscription RIÉ 254: 1: *ʔana ʔ-r-k-y ḳatalku b-g-yəs ʕarəkta* 'I, ʔRKY, killed a friend (fem.) in the morning'.⁵ This sequence of words can be seen, alternatively, as two independent sentences, a nominal one (*ʔana ʔ-r-k-y* 'I (am) ʔRKY') and a verbal one (*ḳatalku b-g-yəs ʕarəkta* 'I killed a friend (fem.) in the morning'). Still more complicated is the situation with the initial lines of the Anza inscription (RIÉ 218: 1–4): *ṣḥf / bzt / ngś / ʔgb / zḥwlt / zʔh / sḥbw / ʔgb / ḥzb*. This passage is understood as one phrase by Conti Rossini (1942), who reconstructs it as ***ṣaḥafa bzt nəguśa ʔgb zāḥawəlta ziʔahu saḥabu*(/*bo*/*bəwwo*) *ʔgb ḥəzb* 'BZT, king of ʔGB, wrote this obelisk of his, which the people pulled to ʔGB'. Littmann (1952) divides it into two separate phrases, introducing some other minor corrections and

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⁴ Cf. Arb. *ġaraza* 'piquer quelque chose avec un aguille' (BIBERSTEIN-KAZIMIRSKI 1860, II 454, LANE 1955–56: 2246). For the alternative translation 'to rob' cf. DAE IV, p. 26, NÖLDEKE 1913: 698 (cf. also GUIDI 1916–18: 750).

⁵ Littmann's interpretation in DAE IV, p. 69 (according to Littmann, *ʕarəkt* 'friend' is an euphemism for 'snake').

alternative interpretations: (1) **ṣaḥafa ba-zəttu (cp. CG ba-zəntu) nəguśa ʔgb za-ḥawəlta ziʔahu 'king of ʔGB wrote here this obelisk of his' and (2) **saḥabəwwo ʔgb ḥəzb 'the people of ʔGB pulled it' (with appositional relationship between the words ʔgb and ḥəzb). A few other interpretations have been offered (Drewes 1962: 65, Sergew Hable Sellassie 1972: 89), including the recent one by Kropp (2006, with a survey of previous scholarship). Still further possibilities of division can be taken into consideration: one can treat the words zḥwlt / zʔh not as a complement of the verb ṣḥf but rather as a separate phrase (**ṣaḥafa bzt nəguśa ʔgb zə(/zā)-ḥawəlt ziʔahu saḥabəwwo(/wā) ʔgb ḥəzbu 'BZT, king of ʔGB, wrote (this): This stele is his. His people pulled it to ʔGB'; cf. also discussion below, section IV.4, under example [91]) or as a topicalized object of the verb ṣḥbw (**ṣaḥafa bzt nəguśa ʔgb zə(/za/zā)-ḥawəlt(/ta) ziʔahu saḥabəwwo(/wā) ʔgb ḥəzbu 'BZT, king of ʔGB, wrote (this): This stele of his, his people pulled it to ʔGB'). Finally, one might consider ʔgb as an ethnonym rather than a place name, and, syntactically, as a subject rather than an adverbial phrase. Clearly enough, none of these interpretations is certain, and consequently, the value of such evidence for the present purpose is quite low.[6]

In the following two examples, a relatively plausible interpretation can only be achieved if a broader context of the inscription (as well as parallel texts) is taken into consideration.

RIÉ 189: 40–41: zawahabani / ʔəgziʔa / samāy / ḍewā / ʕəd / 214 / ḍewā / ʔanəst / 415 … 'what the Lord of Heaven gave me (is) the male captives 214, the female captives 415 …'

RIÉ 192: 43–44: wḍwhbn / ʔgzbḥr / bkdmh / mrd / wbdḫrh / mrd / ḍw / ʕd / (…) / bnt / wdḳḳ (…) 'and what God gave me in the first campaign as well as in the second campaign (is) the male captives … [numbers] and women and children … [numbers]'

In theory, for both phrases alternative interpretations are possible: the first part can be treated as an independent sentence, with the second part added as a chain of noun phrases: 'The Lord of Heaven gave me this: the male captives 214, the female captives 415 …'; 'and God gave me this in the first campaign and in the second campaign: the male captives … [numbers] and women and children … [numbers]'. Syntactically and morphologically such analysis is fully legitimate (treating the element **za not as a relative pronoun, but as a demonstrative pronoun 'this' in the accusative). However, all other sentences conveying the meaning 'God gave me this' (and employing the unambiguous demonstrative zəntu) occur after the enumeration of the spoils acquired in the campaign rather than before it (RIÉ 190: 42, RIÉ 191: 33). In other words, in Gəʕəz inscriptions the demonstrative zəntu is used anaphorically rather than cataphorically. In the absence of convincing examples of cataphoric usage of a

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[6] Conversely, the results of this research are potentially relevant for preferring one of the proposed interpretations to the others.

demonstrative pronoun, the traditional interpretation of the examples mentioned above is to be preferred, with **za- as a relative pronoun and the whole construction a nominal sentence with a relative clause as subject. One can observe that in both cases the relative clause may also be regarded as a modifier of the subsequent noun ('the male captives that the Lord of Heaven gave me (are) 214, the female captives (are) 415 …', 'the male captives that God gave me in the first campaign as well as in the second campaign (are) … [numbers] and women and children … [numbers]'). This analysis (proposed by Littmann in DAE IV, p. 81) seems less preferable, first of all because of the extreme rarity of Rel-N word order in EG: this order is pragmatically marked and usually employed with relative clauses consisting of a bare verbal form (see below, section IV.2).

Another case where comparison between various sentences with the same syntactic structure is necessary for their correct understanding are the following constructions employing the word *gādā* 'tribute'.

RIÉ 187: 5–6: … *bahəya / rakabana / ʔabaʔalkəˁo / nəguśa / ʔa[gʷezā]t / məsla / ḥəzbu / wa-boʔa / gādā*

RIÉ 186: 7–8: *wbhym / bwʔm / gdm / ngš[m] / ʔgdtm / swśwtm*

RIÉ 186: 10–11: *wbhym / bʔm / gdm / ngšm / gbzm / sblm*

RIÉ 192: 47: *wbḏ / gbʔ / gd / kl / ʔgd / wytl*

The vocalized inscription RIÉ 187 shows that the last verbal form appears in the stem 01 and is thus intransitive ('to enter', Dillmann 1970: 524–525, Leslau 1987: 114). It excludes the possibility that in RIÉ 186: 7–8 or in RIÉ 192: 47 other stems (such as 02 with a causative meaning – **bawwəʔa* and **gabbəʔa* respectively, both unattested in CG) are employed. According to the interpretations which are currently available (DAE IV, pp. 22, 26; Schneider 1974: 785), the noun phrases *ʔabaʔalkəˁo*, *ngš[m] / ʔgdtm*, *ngšm / gbzm* and *kl / ʔgd / wytl* are to be understood as subjects, whereas the substantive *gādā* is an adverbial adjunct dependent on the intransitive verbs *boʔa* and *gabʔa*. However, Nöldeke (1913: 697–698) already offered for RIÉ 186 and 187 a more straightforward and syntactically less cumbersome interpretation: *wa-boʔa gādā* 'and the tribute came'. Within this interpretation, the text admittedly becomes less informative as it leaves it to the reader to guess who exactly was the tribute-bearer (most probably, the same *ʔabaʔalkəˁo*). Such a structure is, however, by no means improbable: in formulaic parts of the inscriptions, designations of tribute could well function as subjects of intransitive verbs, the bearer left unexpressed or attached to the subject as a genitival complement.[7]

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[7] For an interesting parallel cf. the early inscription RIÉ 218: 4–5: *ʔtw bḳˁt ʔ***ʔatawa baḳʷˁet/bāḳʷˁet/baḳʷˁāt/bəḳʷˁāt* ʔ'the benefit came'.

Within this approach, one obtains the following vocalizations and inter-pretations.

RIÉ 187: 5–6: … *bahəya / rakabana / ʔabaʔalkəʕo / nəguśa / ʔa[gʷezā]t / məsla / ḥəzbu / waboʔa / gādā* 'there ʔabaʔalkəʕo, king of ʔagʷezāt, found us, and the tribute came in'

RIÉ 186: 7–8: *wbhym / bwʔm / gdm / ngš[m] / ʔgdtm / swśwtm **wa-ba-həyaᵐ boʔaᵐ gādāᵐ nəguśa[ᵐ] ʔagʷezātᵐ swśwtᵐ* 'and there the tribute of SWŚWT, king of ʔagʷezāt, came in'

RIÉ 186: 10–11: *wbhym / bʔm / gdm / ngšm / gbzm / sblm **wa-ba-həyaᵐ boʔaᵐ gādāᵐ nəguśa gbz sbl* 'and there the tribute of SBL, king of GBZ, came in'

RIÉ 192: 47: *wbd̲ / gbʔ / gd / kl / ʔgd / wytl **wa-ba-zə gabʔa gādā kʷəllu ʔaggāda* (cp. CG *ʔangāda*) *wytl* 'and in this the tribute of all the tribes of WYTL came in'

A striking example of the uncertain nature of the EG material is the reinter-pretation of a number of epigraphic passages proposed in Drewes 1999. In each re-analysed passage, the phrase as read by Drewes displays the S–V–O order instead of the traditional division into two separate phrases: an intro-ductory list of titles and an independent verb-initial sentence. Consider, for example, RIÉ 188: 1–6: *[ʕe]zānā / walda / ʔəle / ʕamidā / bəʔəsəya / [ḥa]len / nəguśa / ʔaksum / waza / ḥəmer / [wa]za / raydān / waza / sabaʔ / waza / salḥen / waza / ṣəyāmo / waza / bəgā / waza / kāsu / [wa]lda / maḥrəm / zaʔayətmawāʔ / la[da]r / d̲abʔu / ṣarane* …, traditionally understood as 'ʕezānā, son of ʔəle ʕamidā, man of Ḥalen, king of ʔaksum and of Ḥəmer and of Raydān and of Sabaʔ and of Salḥen and of Ṣəyāmo and of Bəgā and of Kāsu, son of Maḥrəm which is unconquerable to the enemy. The Ṣarane waged war…'. Within Drewes' analysis, the whole passage is considered one single sentence, with the initial noun phrase functioning as subject and the proper name *ṣarane* as a direct object: 'ʕezānā, son of ʔəle ʕamidā… waged war against the Ṣarane' (the plural form of the verb is then to be understood as pluralis majestatis, in ac-cordance with the style of the royal inscriptions). Within the present work, Drewes' interpretation is accepted as more plausible, although in view of the considerable distance between the first word of the assumed compound sub-ject and the predicate, it is still tempting to see two separate sentences here ('ʕezānā, son of ʔəle ʕamidā…, son of Maḥrəm which is unconquerable to the enemy. He waged war against the Ṣarane').

Needless to say, only one interpretation of a dubious phrase can be ac-cepted in a statistical evaluation such as the one undertaken in the present work. In view of the uncertainty of the choice between various possibilities, such cases should be taken with a great deal of caution. One also has to keep in mind that the degree of uncertainty varies from one case to another and cannot be strictly evaluated. Within the present study, no attempt has been made to establish a consistent and sufficiently elaborated notation of the degree of certainty for the examples under scrutiny, which were simply subdivided into dubious (with a question mark) or certain (no question

mark). The former group includes highly unclear passages with uncertain readings and obscure meanings as well as relatively transparent phrases for which two or more alternative interpretations are possible. The latter group includes: (1) transparent passages for which only one reading and interpretation is possible, (2) less transparent passages whose different interpretations do not relate to the word order, and (3) phrases for which an alternative analysis is theoretically possible, but in fact unlikely and therefore ignored in the present study.

<div align="center">⁕   ⁕   ⁕</div>

In spite of the many difficulties and uncertainties outlined above, the syntactic material provided by the EG corpus clearly remains an important source of information on word order in early Gəʕəz, which cannot be ignored in any research on Gəʕəz syntax.

The main part of the present contribution (section III) presents the results of the analysis of all verbal sentences of the epigraphic corpus with regard to the position of phrase constituents. All in all, 249 phrases with verbal predications (198 in main clauses, including 20 from duplicate inscriptions, and 51 in subordinate clauses, including 6 from duplicate inscriptions) and 27 copular phrases (26 in main clauses, 6 of them from duplicate inscriptions, and 1 in a subordinate clause) have been analysed. The nominal sentences of EG, not treated in this study, will be dealt with in a future publication. In section IV, the order of constituents in noun phrases is discussed. Section V contains information on the order of some other constituents which are relevant for word order typology. In section VI, the main results of the present study are summed up.

III. Word order in verbal clauses in EG

In the present contribution, the following three types of clauses will be subsumed under "verbal clauses": intransitive verbal clauses, transitive verbal clauses (both types belonging to clauses with verbal predication), and clauses with non-verbal predicates but containing verbal copulas (for this division see, e.g., Dryer 2007: 224).

III.1. Sentences with overt subject and object in EG

Gəʕəz inscriptions provide no direct and solid evidence on the order of subject, object and verb in transitive clauses. Indeed, whenever epigraphic evidence is used in the discussion of word order of Gəʕəz, examples quoted have no explicit subject. Thus, the examples adduced in Weninger 2001: 1764 display V–O word order rather than V–S–O word order. Drewes (1999: 179–182), who provides an extensive list of epigraphic passages, prefers to speak of V–S word

order rather than V–S–O. The reason is obviously the lack of material: in the corpus of EG, in itself relatively small, only a few phrases can be gathered that contain both an overt nominal subject and an overt nominal object. At the same time, the rarity of such phrases is by no means a peculiarity of the EG corpus, being rather a common tendency in texts produced in any language: as Dryer (1997, section 4) observes, clauses containing both a noun subject and a noun object "do not occur very often in texts and may occur even less often in natural conversation".

The list below presents all EG sentences with a verbal predicate, an overt subject and an overt direct object:[8]

V–S–O

[1] RIÉ 191: 37–38: *wʔrʔyn / ʔgzʔ / bḫr / ḳdsh* ***wa-ʔarʔayanni ʔəgziʔa bəḥer ḳəddāsehu* 'and God showed me his holiness'

[2] ? RIÉ 180: *tbʕl / mzlt / lʔrg / wllmḳ* ʾ***ta(/tā)bʕəllo mzltu la-ʔrg wa-la-lmḳ* ʾ'let his ? bring wealth to (ʾdeities) ʔRG and LMḲ' (interpretation according to Kropp 1994)

V–O–S

[3] ? RIÉ 198: [*ʔ*]*mḥḍn zgl / bʕstr wmdr dmʕm / wngś / .hyhy ḥkf zṣḥf / z[gl]* **[*ʔa*]*maḥ-ḍana za-gl ba-ʕastar wa-mədr ʾdamiʕomu wa-nəguś .hyhy ḥkf za-ṣaḥafa za-[gl]* ʾ'ḤKF who wrote this (basin) entrusted this basin to ʕastar and Mədr ʾtogether' (this analysis is far from unquestionable; especially the word *dmʕm* allows various vocali-zations and interpretation; for alternative interpretations cf., e.g., Drewes 1962: 70).

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[8] Note that the nouns which accompany verbs of motion and indicate the goal, even though they may be formally in the accusative, are not treated here as direct objects. The main cri-terion adopted to distinguish between an adverbial accusative and accusative of direct ob-ject is, as Hug (1993: 106) puts it, the syntactic one: whereas direct object becomes the sub-ject when the verb is passivized, the adverbial phrase in accusative preserves its accusative marker if the same transformation is applied to the verb which governs it. Of course, the data of EG is limited and one has to resort to the data of CG in order to find out the syn-tactic behaviour of the corresponding passive stem (*t*-stem) or passive participle for a given verb of motion. Whenever the verb has a passive stem or a passive participle with the noun designating the place of destination functioning as a subject or as a head noun respectively, the construction in question is treated as verb + direct object. Otherwise, the construction is treated as verb + adverbial phrase. E.g., the collocation *baṣḥa hagara* 'he reached the city' (and similar examples with the verb *baṣḥa*) would be treated as verb + adverbial phrase since the transformation of a sentence with the verb *baṣḥa* into passive does not seem to affect the noun in the accusative. In the available examples the participle *bəṣuḥ*, morphologically passive, is used only to qualify the agent of the transformed verb: *bəṣuḥa ʔamṭān* 'qui ad justam aetatem pervenit', *bəṣuḥ wəsta təruf* (Dillmann 1970: 547) 'he who reached (perfection) in the virtues'. Consequently, the phrases like RIÉ 189: 28 (*wa-baṣaḥku / kāsu* 'and I reached Kāsu') or RIÉ 190: 19 (*ʔmzm / bṣḥm / sšwtm / dmw*[*m*] **ʔəm-zə[*m*] *baṣḥu*[*m*] *sarāwit*[*m*] *dmw*[*m*] 'from there the troops reached DMW'; for *r* instead of *ś* cf. below, example [114]) are not counted as examples of V–O and V–S–O, respectively.

S–V–O

[4] RIÉ 189: 45–46: *ʾəgziʾa / samāy / yaṣnəˁ / mangəśtəya* 'Lord of Heaven may strengthen my kingdom'

[5] RIÉ 192: 34: *ymn / ʾgzbḥr / [gbr]t / ḫyl* ***yamāna ʾəgziʾabəḥer [gabra]t ḫayla* 'the right hand of God made strength' (from Ps 117:15; note that the word order corresponds to that of LXX and may have been influenced by the Greek version)

[6] RIÉ 232: 9–11: *zabalaˁa / śəgāya wasatiya / daməya / ʾiyəṭəˁəmā / lamot* 'the one who ate my flesh and drank my blood will not taste death' (here again one can suspect preservation of the word order of the original, although the phrase is not a direct rendering from the Bible but, as indicated in Kropp 1999: 173, rather a contamination of two different pieces: Jn 6: 54 and Jn 8: 52)

[7] RIÉ 192: 20–21: *ʾmlky / ygb<ʾ> / lt / bḳly* ***ʾamlākəya yāgabbə<ʾ> lita baḳaləya* 'my Lord brings for me revenge' (quotation from Ps 17:48; the word order does not strictly follow the original, although both have S–V–O)

[8] ? RIÉ 198: 1–4: [*ˁezānā / walda / ʾəle / ˁamidā*] … *ḍabʾu / ʾa[gʷezāta /*] ']*ˁezānā, son of ʾəla ˁamidā*] … waged war against *ʾa[gʷezāt]*' (interpretation according to Drewes 1999: 183–185, cf. also Sergew Hable Sellassie 1972: 93; cf. also section II)

[9] ? RIÉ 188: 1–6: [*ˁe]zānā / walda / ʾəle / ˁamidā* … *ḍabʾu / ṣarane / mangəśtomu / ʾa[fā]n* ']*ˁe]zānā, son of ʾəla ˁamidā* … waged war against Ṣarane, whose kingdom is ʾafān' (interpretation according to Drewes 1999: 183–185; cf. also d'Abbadie 1878: 21, Müller 1894: 40; cf. also section II)

[10] ? RIÉ 183 III: 1–4: *ʾmlhm ngś / ʾḥt / smṭ zʾmṣʾ / ynś mʾs / wsmṭ* ʾ***ʾəm-lahm nəguś ʾaḥatta səmaṭa za-ʾamṣəʾa(/ʾo) yənśā maʾsa wa-səmaṭa* ʾ'from the cow, (let) the king (take) one flank, let the one who brought (it) take the skin and flank' (interpretation according to Drewes 1962: 52)

O–V–S

[11] RIÉ 191: 39–40: *ʾmz / ymsn / wynšt / wysb[r / w]z / nšt / wʾmsn / yšt / ʾgzbḥ[r* ***ʾəmma-za yāmāssəno wa-yənaśśəto wa-yəsabbə[ro wa-]za naśato wa-ʾāmāsano yəśśətto* (cp. CG *yənśətto*) *ʾəgziʾabəḥer* 'if (there is one) who destroys it and demolishes it and breaks it, may (lit. [and] may) God demolish him who demolished and destroyed (it)' (in the apodosis, the object is expressed by the relative clause *z / nšt / wʾmsn* 'who demolished and destroyed')

[12] RIÉ 190: 42: *ḏntm / whbnm / ʾgzʾm / śmym* ***zanta^m wahabanna^m ʾəgziʾa^m samāy^m* 'God of Heaven gave us this'

[13] RIÉ 191: 33: *znt / whbn / ʾgz / bḥr* ***zanta wahabanni ʾgz* (cp. CG *ʾəgziʾa*) *bəḥer* 'God gave me this'

[14] RIÉ 195 II: 19: *wazanta = gabra = lita = ʾəgziʾa = bəḥ[er* 'and God made this for me'

[15] ? RIÉ 225: 1: *zgbr / dˁbr* ʾ**za-gabra dˁbr ʾ'DˁBR made this' (interpretation according to Schneider 1972: 112)

Besides, there are several further clauses with overt subject and object. In these clauses, either subject or object is expressed by a personal pronoun (sometimes followed by a noun appositionally connected with it) which occupies a separate position within the phrase:

V–O–PronS

[16] RIÉ 192 A: 4–5: … *ḍbʔku / wytl / ʔn / wʕzb* ***ḍabaʔku wytl ʔana wʕzb* 'I, WʕZB, waged war against WYTL'

PronS–V–O

[17] RIÉ 254: 1: *ʔana ʔ-r-k-y k̲atalku b-g-yəs ʕarəkta* 'I, ʔRKY, killed a friend (fem.) in the morning' (but cf. the discussion above, section II)

[18] RIÉ 191: 34: *wʕd.ḫ / wʔt / whbn / sm / ʕby* ***w-ʕd.ḫ wəʔətu wahabanni səma ʕabiya* 'and ? he gave me a great name'

[19] ? RIÉ 191: 7–12: *ʔn / klb / ʔl / ʔṣbḥ … brdʔt / [ʔgzʔb]ḫr / ḍbʔk / ʔgzt* ***ʔana kāleb ʔəlla ʔaṣbəḥā … ba-rədʔata [ʔəgziʔabə]her ḍabaʔku ʔagʷezāta* 'I, Kāleb ʔəlla ʔaṣbəḥā, … with the help of God waged war against the ʔagʷezāt' (interpretation according to Drewes 1999: 192; cf. also section II)

[20] ? RIÉ 189: 1–7: *[ba]ḫayla / ʔəgziʔa / samāy / [zaba] / samāy / wamədr / mawāʔi / lita / ʔana / ʕe[zā]nā … baḫayla / ʔəgziʔa / kʷəlu / ḍabaʔku / nobā* 'by the power of the God of heaven who is in the heaven and on the earth victorious for me, I, ʕezānā, by the power of the God of everything waged war against Nobā' (interpretation according to Drewes 1999: 182; cf. also section II)

As one can see, the number of main clauses with both overt subject and object is comparatively low (10 % of the whole corpus). Moreover, this material does not exhibit any consistent pattern: the extant examples can be classified into four types of word order: V–S–O, V–O–S, S–V–O, O–V–S. Of these, the word order V–S–O, usually claimed to be the basic one in early Gəʕəz, is in fact among the least frequent (two examples only, one of them highly dubious). The most common types of word order are rather those with verb occupying the middle position: S–V–O (4 secure cases + 3 dubious cases + 4 cases with a personal pronoun as subject) and O–V–S (4 secure cases + 1 dubious case).

A similar situation can be observed in dependent clauses: examples with both overt subject and object are extremely rare (3 cases among 51 extant dependent clauses with verbal predicate + 1 case with a personal pronoun as subject) and display different types of word order:

S–V–O

[21] RIÉ 192: 17–18: *wbhy / smʕk / kʔgzbḫr / knnh / ldḫr* ***wa-ba-həya samaʕku k-ʔəgzi-ʔabəher kʷannanahu* (cp. CG *kʷannano*) *la-dḫr* 'and there I heard that God judged DḪR'

V–O–S

[22] ? RIÉ 189: 9: *sobe / gafʕa / ʔəḫzāba / mangurto / waḫasā / wabārya / waṣali[ma /] [ḍa]bʔa / k̲ayəḫ / ḍabʔ* '"when the red army oppressed the people of Mangurto and ḫasā and Baryā and the black army' (this highly uncertain interpretation is based on vocalization and restoration offered in RIÉ)[9]

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[9] A different vocalization and interpretation – reading *[sa]bʔa* rather than *[ḍa]bʔa* – is found in DAE IV, p. 37; cf. also LITTMANN 1950: 120. Still another solution is offered in DREWES 1962: 98, n. 2, who considers the final words to be two coordinate noun phrases

O–V–S

[23] RIÉ 189: 17–18: *ʔənza / ḍewā / waməhrəkā / yāgabəʔ / ʔəḥzābəya* 'while my people delivered the captives and booty'

Subordinate clauses with an overt pronominal subject:

PronS–V–O

[24] RIÉ 191: 3–4: [*d*]*w<ʔ>t / wḥbn / mngšt / ṣnʕ* ****za-wəʔətu wahabanni mangəśta ṣənuʕa* 'who gave me strong kingdom'

   Thus, the claim that early Gəʿəz is a V–S–O language is so far not confirmed by the epigraphic evidence: the majority of clauses with both overt subject and object are not verb-initial. But does it mean that the data of EG contradicts this claim? Hardly so: As one can easily notice, clauses with overt object and subject show no preference for *any* type of word order. Therefore, at this stage of the investigation, one can only claim that EG – similarly to CG – was a language with a flexible word order, and that the choice for a certain word order type was usually dictated by the principle that the marked topic should occupy the initial position.[10] It is also clear that certain types of word order correlate with specific information structures. Thus, in four out of five O–V–S sentences the object is expressed by a demonstrative pronoun, which can easily be interpreted as a marked topic. Another factor which should be taken into consideration is the influence of the Greek original. Such an influence can be posited for those S–V–O phrases which are quotations from Biblical texts (RIÉ 192: 20–21, 192: 34, 232: 9–11).

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wa-ṣali[*m*] [*da*]*bʔ ḳayəḥ ḍabʔ* 'and the black war, (and) the red war', drawing parallel to the Arabic expression *ḥarb-u l-ʔaḥmar-i wal-ʔaswad-i* 'war against the whole world', lit. 'war of/against the red and the black'. The advantage of Drewes' interpretation is the treatment of the final pairs of words as syntactic parallels, as actually suggested by their semantic correspondence. Its disadvantage is that the whole construction is syntactically disconnected from the rest of the sentence. Another major obstacle (ignored by Drewes) is that *ḍabʔ* has different endings in the first and the second phrases, which of course obscures the parallelism. This obstacle may admittedly disappear in view of the sporadic reduction of a final *-a* into *-ə* or Ø in EG, as in RIÉ 187: 7: *sobe / gafʕan* (cp. CG *gafʕanna*) / *wakatal* (cp. CG *ḳatala*) 'when he oppressed us and killed'. This consideration allows one, incidentally, to amend interpretation as a whole: as soon as the latter words are considered as apocopated forms of *ḳayəḥa ḍabʔa, it becomes possible to regard two final phrases as syntactically and semantically parallel and to interpret them as 'and he (Ṣarane) waged war against the black, waged war against the red', which still can be seen as rewording of the Arabic expression ('he waged war against the whole world'). The word order, according to this latter interpretation, would be V–O in the initial part (*gafʕa / ʔəḥzāba / mangurto / waḥasā / wabārya*) and O–V in the final part.

[10] Cf. the analysis of word order in Biblical Hebrew carried out in Givón 1977, as well as the results of Groß' investigation (1996: 152) whose conclusions at least partly coincide with Givón's.

The data of EG is thus clearly insufficient to tell us with certainty what the basic word order in early Gǝʿǝz was. It can be stated that the word order was flexible and probably pragmatic-sensitive, both with respect to subject and object. Four out of six possible combinations of subject, object and verb are registered in the EG corpus (only the types S–O–V and O–S–V are absent).

III.2. EG as VO language

Since the attempt to classify EG in terms of the classical six-way typology faces serious obstacles, it seems justified – at least for practical reasons – to resort to the alternative, four-way typology. Proposed by Dryer (1997), it is based on two separate parameters: order of subject and verb and order of object and verb. In terms of this typology, a language can belong to one of the following types: VS & VO, SV & VO, SV & OV, or VS & OV. As argued by Dryer, the four-way typology is superior to the classical typology in several aspects. As for the types which it does not distinguish (such as VSO and VOS), they have in fact many features in common and can conveniently be regarded as belonging to one major type. The splitting of one criterion (order of subject, verb and object) into two independent criteria (order of subject and verb vs. order of object and verb) is justified since it is only the order of object and verb which correlates with a number of other features (the Branching Direction Theory explains these correlations in terms of harmony between fully recursive phrasal categories on the one side and the non-phrasal categories on the other).

It is indeed the four-way classification that allows one to use most fruitfully the epigraphic evidence for establishing the type of word order in early Gǝʿǝz. The analysis of the object position in the same 198 main clauses has yielded the following, quite unambiguous, results:

> Word order V–O:
> 90 secure examples (16 from duplicate inscriptions)
> 24 questionable examples (3 from duplicate inscriptions)
> Word order O–V:
> 10 secure examples
> 1 questionable example

Eleven phrases with pre-verbal objects are those quoted above under O–V–S (examples [11]–[15]) and those listed immediately below (note also the example [22] and the alternative interpretation of its final part as an O–V phrase, cf. fn. 9):

[25] RIÉ 187: 10–12: *wa[la]* [*ʔabaʔa*]*lkǝʿo / nǝguśa / ʔagʷezāt / baka / ḫadagnāhu* 'and we left (alone) only [ʔabaʔa]lkǝʿo, king of ʔagʷezāt' (for CG *bakka* 'only' cf. Dillmann 1970: 523)
[26] RIÉ 187: 10: *waʔǝlaʔǝla / ʿarazna / ʔaḫazna / wamokạḥna* 'and we took and put into chains all those whom we ˀpierced'

[27] RIÉ 189: 11–12: *watanbālana / waḥawāryāna / za[fana][w]ku / lotu / yəsməʕəwo / he-domu* 'and they plundered our ambassador and our messenger that I sent to him so that he listens to him'

[28] RIÉ 186: 6–7: *wzm / ʔbym / yḳtlwm **wa-za^m ʔabaya^m yəkattələwwo^m* 'and they kill (him) who refused'

[29] RIÉ 192 B: 9: *ḏt / mḥḍk / lḏhgśn / lʔgzbḥr **zatta* (cp. CG *zanta*) *maḥḍakku* (cp. CG *ʔamāḥḍanku*) *la-za-haggaśanni* (cp. CG *ʔangaśanni*) *la-ʔgzbḥr* (cp. CG *ʔəgziʔabəḥer*) 'I entrusted this to God, who enthroned me'

[30]? RIÉ 191: 36–37: *wgbzh / ḥnṣk / wḳdsk **wa-gabazahu*[11] *ḥanaṣku wa-ḳaddasku* 'and I built and sanctified his ʾ*gabaz*' (the word *gabaz* probably refers to a kind of sanctuary, cf. Schneider 1974: 777; for its tentative identification with the cathedral of Aksum Ṣəyon cf. Habtemichael Kidane 2005: 599–600)

It may be observed that five among the O–V sentences ([12]–[15] and [29]) have a demonstrative pronoun as the direct object, which is likely to be interpreted as a marked topic. In three other sentences – [25], [26], [28] – the position of the object can be motivated by the necessity to mark the contrastive topic shift, in all these sentences the object is opposed to the object or subject of the preceding or following clause. Cf. the whole context: RIÉ 187: 10–12: *waʔalaʔəla / ʕarazna / ʔaḥazna / wamoḳaḥna / wa[la] [ʔabaʔa]lkəʕo / nəguśa / ʔag^wezāt / baka / ḥadagnāhu* 'and we took and put into chains **all those whom we ʾpierced**, and we left (alone) only **[ʔabaʔa]lkəʕo, king of ʔag^wezāt**'; RIÉ 186: 6–7: *wzm / ..m / ybm / ydḥ[n]m / wzm / ʔbym / yḳtlwm **wa-za^m [ʔoho]^m yəbe^m yədəḥ(ḥ)[ən]^m wa-za^m ʔaba-ya^m yəkattələwwo^m* 'and **(he) who [agreed]** is safe, and they kill **him who refused**' (or, rather: 'and as for **(him) who [agreed]**, he is safe; and as for **(him) who refused**, they kill him'. In two cases – [27] and [30] – the preverbal object seems to be a marked focus or a newly introduced topic.

Thus, the preferred word order in the main sentences in EG was clearly V–O.

The situation in subordinate clauses confirms this statement.

> V–O:
> 23 secure examples (6 from duplicate texts)
> 4 questionable examples
> O–V:
> 3 secure examples:

[31] RIÉ 189: 17–18: *ʔənza / ḍewā / waməhrəkā / yāgabəʔ / ʔəḥzābəya* 'while my people delivered the captives and booty'

[32] RIÉ 192 A: 4–5: *ʔḍ / ḏt / ʔtʔmn …* 'while I believe this …'

[33] RIÉ 189: 22: *waʔənza / ʔəḥmārihomu / yāsaṭəmu* 'and while they were drowning their boats'

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[11] Cf. fn. 3.

This list can be expanded with the sentence from RIÉ 192, where the direct object is introduced by the *nota accusativi kiyā-*:

[34] RIÉ 192: 14: *ʔl / kyy / ḥgšn **ʔǝlla kiyāya haggaśuni* (cp. CG *ʔangaśuni*) 'who (pl.) made me king'

It seems that the pragmatic factors triggering the use of O–V object in main clauses are also active in the subordinate clauses (in [31] and [33], the marked focus can be posited, whereas [32] and [34] are probably instances of marked topic).

III.3. EG as VS language

Statistical evidence for the subject position in main clauses is as follows.

Word order V–S:

34 secure examples (1 from a duplicate text)

15 questionable examples

Word order S–V:

14 secure examples

9 questionable examples

As one can see, the preference for V–S over S–V order is not so markedly pronounced, especially in comparison with the obvious predominance of V–O over O–V order. However, 7 of the S–V phrases are Biblical quotations[12], which can be influenced by the word order of the original. In most cases, the word order of the Greek original is preserved. Here belong examples [5], [6], [7] adduced above, as well as the following phrases.

[35] RIÉ 192: 25–26: *klhm / ʔḥzb / ʕktn **kʷǝllǝhomu*[13] (cp. CG *kʷǝllomu*) *ʔaḥzāb ʕaka-tanni* (cp. CG *ʕagatanni*) 'all peoples surrounded me' (from Ps 117: 10)

[36] RIÉ 192: 35: *ymn / ʔg[z]bḥr / ḥlʕltn **yamāna ʔǝgziʔabǝher halʕalatanni* (cp. CG *ʔalʕalatanni*) 'the right hand of God raised me' (from Ps 117: 16)

[37] RIÉ 192: 21: *ʔgzbḥr / yḍbʔ / lkm **ʔǝgziʔabǝher yǝḍabbǝʔ lakǝmu* 'God fights for you' (from Ex 14: 14)

Still, whatever the role of Greek in the formation of the flexible word order in early Gǝˁǝz might have been, it is clear that pre-verbal subjects in EG are not restricted to translations from Greek. Moreover, there is one example where V–S in the Greek original corresponds to S–V in EG:

[38] RIÉ 232: 13–14: *mǝwtān / yǝtnaśǝʔu* 'the dead will rise' (cp. Is. 26: 19: ἀναστήσονται οἱ νεϰροί)

Of special interest are sentences whose subject is an independent personal pronoun (sometimes followed by nouns which are either coordinate sub-

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[12] A survey of Biblical quotations in the EG corpus can be found in KNIBB 1999: 46–54 and BEAUCAMP et al. 1999–2000: 39, n. 98.

[13] Cf. fn. 3.

jects or appositions). The following data about the word order in such sentences is at hand.

V–PronS:

4 secure examples

1 questionable example:

[39] ? Ricci 2003, fig. 9:1: *ṣḥfk / ʔnbt / lbs* [/] ²·**ṣaḥafku ʔana bt lbs* ²'I, BT LBS, wrote' (so Ricci 2003; this reading, however, is problematic since there is no word-divided separating *ʔn* from the following signs; alternatively, one might consider *ʔnbt* to be a proper name, but in such case the presence of the verbal form of 1st person would be highly unusual)

PronS–V:

13 secure examples (3 of which are Biblical quotations)

3 questionable examples

Clearly enough, in sentences with pronominal subjects the word order S–V predominates over V–S. This is in full agreement with the results obtained by Givón for Biblical Hebrew (1977: 196–197), and one can assume that the factors behind the EG picture are largely the same as those posited by Givón for Biblical Hebrew.

Thus, some of the examples with PronS–V order can be classified as **marked topic-shifting** (note that in some cases special discourse markers are employed, such as *-hi* in [41] and [44], *-ssa* in [41] or *lalli-* in [43]):

[40] RIÉ 232: 9–11: *zabalaʕa śəgāya / wasatiya / daməya / ʔiyəṭəʕəmā / lamot / waʔana ʔanaśəʔa* 'he who ate my flesh and drank my blood will not taste death, and I will raise ²him/her'[14] (from Jn 6: 54 and Jn 8: 52)

[41] RIÉ 191: 25–26: *wʔzzkm / ymṣʔ / ḫr[t] / bḥrm / [k]m / ʔšrʕ / wʔnhs / lʔk / wḥdrk **wa-ʔazzazkomu yā(/ya)msəʔu ḥari[ta] bəḥeromu [ka]ma ʔəśraʕ* (cp. CG *ʔəśrāʕ*) *wa-ʔana-hi-ssa laʔakku wa-ḫadarku* 'and I ordered them that they bring the elite of their land so that I judge (them); **as for me, I** sent and I stayed'

[42] RIÉ 192: 8–9: *ḍbʔk / sb / gfʕn / dḥr / wdbʔ / ʔḥzby / wl / wwḥss / whmnt / ybrh / gzm* … **ḍabaʔku soba gafʕanni dḥr wa-ḍabʔa ʔaḥzābəya wl wa-wḥss wa-həmmuntu* (cp. CG *ʔəmmuntu*) *ybrh gzm* 'I waged war when DḤR oppressed me and waged war against my peoples WL and WḤSS, and they ²resisted him ²fiercely …' (cf. discussion in section II)

[43] RIÉ 188: 9–11: *fanawna / sarāwita / sarwe / maḥazā / wasarwe / dākʷen / wasarwe / ḫarā / walalina / talawna / waḥadarna / məgbāʔa / marād / ʕālāḥā* 'we sent the

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[14] It remains unclear whether the *ʔanaśəʔa* stands for *ʔanaśəʔā* (with confusion of 4th and 1st orders in syllables with laryngeals due to the merger between historical **a* and **ā* in such contexts, as in late Gəʿəz) or for *ʔanaśəʔo* (with graphic confusion of the 7th and 1st orders affecting "two-leg" letters; for a similar phenomenon in the manuscript Abbā Garimā III cf. ZUURMOND 1989: 27). The latter reading is preferable as it strictly corresponds to the source of the quotation.

troops: the troop of Maḥazā, the troop of Dāk[w]en, the troop of Ḥarā, and (and as for us,) we ourselves followed and stayed at ʕālā(hā), the gathering place of the army'

[44] RIÉ 191: 14–15: *wmṭw / [sr]wt / gn / wmṭn / ws.t / wzʕml / wˀnh / ḍbˀk / msl / s[r]wt / ḥgry* ***wa-maṭṭawu [sarā]wita gn wa-mṭn wa-s.t wa-zʕml wa-ˀana-hi ḍabaˀku məsla sa[rā]wita hagarəya* 'and they accepted the troops GN and MṬN and S.T and ZʕML and (as for me,) I fought together with the troops of my country'

[45] RIÉ 191: 20–21: *y]ḳtl / ḥst / wˀnh / tlwk / msl / šymy* ***yə]ḳattəl ḥst wa-ˀana-hi talawku məsla śəyyumiya* 'they kill ḤST and (as for me,) I followed with my officials'

Two phrases (admittedly, Biblical quotations whose word order corresponds exactly to that of LXX) obviously represent **contrastive topic shift**:

[46] RIÉ 195 II: 26–27: *ˀəmun[tusa = baˀafrās = wabasaragalāt = wa]nəḥnasa = naʕābi = basəma = ˀəgziˀa = bə[ḥer* 'they (are great) through horses and chariots and we are great through the name of God' (from Ps 19:8)

[47] RIÉ 195 II: 27–28: *[ˀəmuntusa] taʕāḵṣu = wawadḵu wanəḥnasa = tanśāˀna* 'they stumbled and fell down and we rose up' (from Ps 19:9)

Besides this, a specific pattern of usage of pronominal subjects – not mentioned by Givón in his analysis of Biblical Hebrew syntax, where he concentrates on 3rd person pronouns – has been detected: overt 1st person pronouns can occur as pre-verbal subjects at the beginning of the inscription. In the majority of cases they are followed by a proper name as a modifier and thus function as special devices of identifying the author of the text.[15] Cf. examples [17], ? [19], ? [20] and

[48] RIÉ 202: *ˀn / yhd gbrk* **ˀana yhd gabarku 'I, YHD, made (it)' (less likely **ˀana yhd gabrəka 'I, YHD, am your slave)'.

These sentences can perhaps be classified as **semantically emphatic-cleft contexts** in Givón's terminology: [48] 'I, YHD, (am the one who) made (it)'; [17] 'I, ˀRKY, (am the one who) killed a friend (fem.) in the morning', etc. Similarly, another case, no. [18], where there seems to be no immediate reason for using the overt pronoun, can be tentatively seen as an example of an emphatic-cleft context. Cf. the whole context (RIÉ 33–34): *znt / whbn / ˀgz / bḥr / zkyh / tˀm[nk /]wʕd.ḥ / wˀt / whbn / sm / ʕby* ***zanta wahabanni ˀəgzi bəḥer* (cp. CG *ˀəgziˀa bəḥer*) *za-kiyāhu taˀama[nku] wa-ʕd.ḥ wəˀətu wahabanni səma ʕabiya* 'this gave me God, in whom I believed, and ? he gave me a great name', with the overt personal pronoun probably functioning as emphasizer of the subject: '… and ? (it was) he (who) gave me a great name'.

For the examples [49] and [50] below, the main factor triggering the pre-verbal position of the subject is equally uncertain. Both are conditional clauses in which the subject is a chain of coordinate constituents, the first of

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[15] This type of subject can also be post-verbal. In fact, such examples constitute the majority of pronominal subjects in post-verbal position: cf. [16], ? [39]; also RIÉ 193 I: 3–5; RIÉ 222: 1–2.

which is a personal pronoun. The pronoun is prominent pragmatically and bears the main stress (note that the verb is in the singular and thus agrees only with this constituent rather than with the whole chain[16]):

[49] RIÉ 188: 26–28: *laʔəma / boza / naśato / wanak̇alo / wəʔətu / wabəḥeru / wazamadu / layətnak̇al / wayətnaśat* 'if there is (one) who demolishes it and removes it, let him and his land and his relative be removed and demolished'

[50] RIÉ 189: 50–51: *laʔəmabo / zanak̇alo / waʔamāsano / wanaśato / wəʔətu / wazama-du / yəśara[w] / wayətnak̇al* 'if there is (one) who eradicates it and destroys it and demolishes it, let him and his relative be eradicated and removed'

It may be that the pre-verbal position of the subject group is motivated here by the necessity to underscore the topic-switching (the referent introduced in the protasis becomes the new topic in the apodosis) or by the general tendency of putting overt pronominal subjects before the verb. Note that in one case (example [51] below) a similar chain of coordinate constituents functions as a nominal adjunct and the pronominal constituent surfaces as a bound rather than as an independent pronoun. This chain occupies a post-verbal position, although its pragmatic role is presumably the same as that of the respective constituents in [49] and [50].[17]

Although some of the phrases mentioned above are Biblical quotations where influence from the Greek original might be suspected (examples [40], [46] and [47]), such cases do not constitute the majority of PronS–V sentences. Greek influence is therefore unlikely to play any significant role in the formation of the word order patterns of such sentences.

For the subordinate clauses, statistical evidence for the subject position is as follows.

> V–S:
> 11 secure cases
> 2 questionable cases
> S–V:
> 3 secure cases

Predominance of the V–S type is somewhat more pronounced in subordinate clauses (81 % V–S vs. 19 % S–V) than in main clauses (68 % V–S vs. 32 % S–V); cf. Givón 1977: 239 for the discussion of factors favouring the post-verbal subject in these environments. The pre-verbal position is nevertheless preferred if the subject is expressed by an independent personal pronoun:

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[16] Cp. REVELL 1993: 74–77 for the use of a singular verb with a compound subject in Biblical Hebrew to mark the first constituent of the subject group as the principal actor.

[17] Cp. also HOLMSTEDT 2009: 11–12 on similar coordinate phrases in Biblical Hebrew, which constitute the majority of V–PronS sentences in this language.

V–PronS:

1 secure example

PronS–V:

5 secure examples

One remarkable trend can be observed: in main clauses, the V–S word order is common when the verb is in the perfect, whereas the imperfect and the jussive forms appear to be more flexible with respect to the word order. Thus, among 54 sentences of the V–S type[18] only 7 (or 13 %) have the main verb in the imperfect or the jussive, whereas in the remaining cases it is in the perfect. As for the 39 sentences displaying the S–V word order, 25 of them have their predicates in the perfect, whereas in 14 cases (or 36 %) it is in the imperfect or the jussive. This picture is in agreement with the claim that a temporally sequenced event line (in Gəʿəz obviously associated with the perfect) favours the initial position of the verb (cf. Payne 1995: 454).

III.4. Word order in sentences with verbal copulas

The assumption that the neutral word order in EG still implies the initial position of the verb is corroborated by the evidence collected from the sentences with verbal copulas. The clauses with verbal copulas are likely to have some properties in common with clauses which employ full-fledged verbs, and one is justified to expect some sort of correlation between the position of a true verbal predicate and that of a verbal copula with respect to their subjects. Therefore, sentences with verbal copulas have also been considered in the framework of the present contribution.[19]

Out of 24 sentences with the verbal copula *kona* in the main clause (6 examples from duplicate inscriptions), 20 (3 from duplicate inscriptions) display *kona* in the initial position (V–S). It is only in one sentence (repeated thrice in duplicate inscriptions) that the subjects precede the verbal copula (S–V):

[51] RIÉ 185 II, 21–22: *wlʾmb / zʾm[s]n / lzʾbn / ṣll / wnkt / lykn / wzmd / wwld **wa-la-ʾəmma-bo za-ʾamā[sa]no la-zə-ʾəbn ʾṣalalo wa-nəket la-yəkuno wa-zamadu(/do) wa-waldu(/do)* 'and if there is (one) who destroys this stone, let darkness and harm befell (lit. be for) him and his relative and his son' (cf. also duplicate inscriptions RIÉ 185 I, 21–22, RIÉ 185 bis I, 24, RIÉ 185 bis IIC, 40)

These 20 examples can be supplemented by one, admittedly dubious, example of a V–S sentence with the copular verb *kona* in a subordinate clause:

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[18] Main clauses with nominal and pronominal subjects are counted here.

[19] Within the present approach, all the occurrences of *kona* were counted as examples of copular usage, even though in some cases one can argue that it is employed as a full-fledged verb. This question, however important, bears no influence on the results of the present investigation.

[52]ʔ RIÉ 192: 10–11: *ttks / wk̲l / d̲dʔ / ykwnh[m] / ʔgzbḥr / ʔywh **ttks wa-k̲l za-dʔ yə-kawwənaho[mu]*[20] *ʔəgzibəher* (cp. CG *ʔəgziʔabəher*) *ʔi-yawāha* 'TTKS and K̲L, to whom God is not mild'

Thus, the behaviour of the verbal copula *kona* – both in main and subordinate clauses – largely supports the case for the neutral verb-initial word order in early Gəʿəz.

The situation with the verb *hallawa* (treated here as a copula, although its status in EG – a locative/equational copula or a full-fledged verb – is rather unclear) is less illustrative: both passages where it seems to be used with overt arguments come from highly problematic inscriptions whose interpretation can be at best tentative.

The first example comes from the inscription on a clay jar discussed in Wendowski et al. 2001:

[53]ʔ Wendowski et al. 2001: *mr ḥl+s zlt kfr+ grmnt*. In Wendowski et al. 2001: 193 this phrase is read as *m[ʕ]r ḥls zlt kfr grmn*, vocalized as ***məʕr hallo-ssa za-lottu kʷəfāra gərumān*, and understood as 'it is (only for) a moment that (one can wear) the garments of the majestic (ones)' ("Es währt (nur) einen Augenblick, in welchem (man) das Gewand des Gewaltigen (trägt)"). Both reading and translation are not without difficulties. Thus, the insertion of ʕ into the first word looks suspicious since on the copy provided *ibid.* 103 there is hardly any space for a letter between *m* and *r*. The final symbol is read as *t* in the first line, but exactly the same symbol in the second line is not treated as part of the text. The word *kfr* can rather be understood as referring to the object that bears the inscription (cf. CG *kafar* 'basket; container for measuring, bushel', Leslau 1987: 276, Dillmann 1970: 879). The first word, if read as *mr*, can be vocalized as *māri* and understood as 'priest' (cf. Leslau 1987: 362, Dillmann 1970: 168). If read as *mʕr*, it can be vocalized as *maʕar* 'honey' (cf. Leslau 1987: 326, Dillmann 1970: 207). But even if some of these suggestions are accepted, the structure of the sentence remains the same: NP + copular verb *hallo* with a particle *-ssa* + relative clause (prepositional phrase + noun phrase).

The second one comes from the Safra inscription, discussed at length by Drewes (1962: 30–64), whose interpretation is only tentative and leaves many questions unanswered.

[54]ʔ RIÉ 183 IV: 3–5: *whlw / ʔld / wmsg* ʔ***wa-hallawo ʔld wa-msg* 'and there are (i.e., are due) to him *ʔld* ('money' according to Drewes 1962: 53) and *msg* ('butter' according to Drewes 1962: 37)'

Thus, in the first of these two questionable passages the subject precedes the copula and in the second one the copula occupies the initial position. These examples cannot have any relevance for the statistical picture presented above.

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[20] Cf. fn. 3.

The extant evidence makes it possible to describe the word order in EG as displaying a rigid position for the object but a flexible one for the subject, with a predilection towards post-verbal subjects unless they are independent pronouns. The latter condition almost certainly relates to the pragmatic role of independent pronouns as marked topic or focus: as in most Semitic languages, pronominal subjects in Gəʿəz do not normally surface when they refer to an unmarked topic[21].

IV. Word order in noun phrases in EG

IV.1. The position of adjective

In Classical Gəʿəz, as shown by Gai (1981: 258–260), the neutral position of the adjective is after the noun it qualifies. This is in perfect agreement with the data from EG, where the majority of noun phrases with adjectives as modifiers display the word order "qualified – qualifier", i.e. N–Adj:

[55] RIÉ 191: 1: ʔgzʔbḥr / ḫyl / wṣnʕ **ʔəgziʔabəher ḫayyāl wa-ṣənuʕ 'mighty and strong God' (from Ps 23:8; the Greek word order is preserved)

[56] RIÉ 191: 1–2: ʔgzʔbḥr / ḫyl wst / ḍbʔ **ʔəgziʔabəher ḫayyāl wəsta ḍabʔ 'God, mighty in war' (from Ps 23:8; the Greek word order is preserved)

[57] RIÉ 191: 3–4: mngśt / ṣnʕ **mangəśta ṣənuʕa 'mighty kingdom (acc.)'

[58] RIÉ 191: 7: mfs / ḳds **maffas (cp. CG manfas) ḳəddus 'Holy Spirit'

[59] RIÉ 192: 1: wmfs / [ḳds]m **wa-maffas (cp. CG manfas) [ḳəddus]ᵐ 'and [Holy] Spirit'

[60] RIÉ 193: 1–2: wamanfas- : ḳədus- 'and Holy Spirit'

[61] RIÉ 193:II: 2: waman-fas- : ḳ-dus- 'and Holy Spirit'

[62] RIÉ 192: 36: smk / ḳds **səmaka ḳəddusa 'your holy name (acc.)'

[63] RIÉ 250: 1: ʔ-bəʔəsi : ʕāmāḍ- 'from the unjust man' (from Ps 139:2; the Greek word order is preserved)

[64] RIÉ 250: 2–3: ʔ-bəʔəs- gaf-ʕ- 'from the violent man' (from Ps 139:2; the Greek word order is preserved)

[65] RIÉ 191: 2–4: ʔyss / kr[s]ts / wld / ʔg<z>ʔ / bḥr / mwʔ / zʔmnk / bt **ʔiyasus krəstos walda ʔəgziʔa bəher mawāʔi za-ʔamanku bottu 'Jesus Christ, son of God, victorious, in whom I believed'

[66] RIÉ 189: 25: waʔəngabenāwe / kābra[22] 'and a honorable nobleman (acc.)'

[67] RIÉ 191: 34: sm / ʕby **səma ʕabiya 'a great name (acc.)'

[68] ? RIÉ 202: 1: dāwit / gəbṣāwi 'Dāwit the Egyptian' (although the word gəbṣāwi probably functions here as a proper name, it undoubtedly has an attributive origin: "the Egyptian Dāwit"; therefore, this name can be used here as a piece of evidence for the position of adjective in EG)

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[21] Cf. HOLMSTEDT 2009: 9 for Biblical Hebrew. A different point of view is expressed by GROß (1996: 150–151), who disregards the pragmatic factors triggering the use of overt pronominal subjects.

[22] Rather, kābəra.

Among these 14 examples, four are quotations from the Greek Bible, and another four involve the fixed expression *manfas ḳǝddus* (in which a Greek influence could also be suspected). Still, the cumulative evidence of the epigraphic corpus, supported by the data from CG, seems sufficient to confirm the hypothesis that the neutral word order in EG was N–Adj.

As far as the reverse (Adj–N) order is concerned, EG data also agrees with the CG picture. As in CG (for which see Caquot 1952: 487–489 and Schneider 1959: 69–70), this order is less common than the Adj–N order. Statistics for the Adj–N word order yielded by the epigraphic corpus occupy an intermediate position between the figures obtained by Caquot (who investigated the syntax of the Book of Enoch) and those by Schneider (whose corpus included various texts of the Aksumite and post-Aksumite period). In EG there are 3 certain and 2 dubious examples of Adj–N order (26 % of the collected phrases), opposed to 13 certain and 1 dubious case of N–Adj order. For CG, Caquot (1952: 487) has 45 examples of Adj–N order (14 %) against 278 examples of N–Adj order. Schneider 1959: 69 has 112 phrases of the structure Adj–N (34 %) and 221 phrases of the structure N–Adj. He observes that the majority of Adj–N examples come from fixed expressions employing a certain number of frequently used adjectives, viz. *ḳǝddus* 'saint', *ʿabiy* 'great', *bǝṣuʿ* 'blessed' (cf. also Gai 1981: 259–260).

Three certain examples of Adj–N word order in EG are the following.

[70] RIÉ 232: 11–12: *ʾama daḫāri / ʿǝlat* 'on the last day' (from Jn 6: 54; the Greek word order is preserved)

[71] RIÉ 192: 43–44: *bḳdmh / mrd* ***ba-ḳadāmi-hi marād* 'in the first attack'

[72] RIÉ 192: 44: *wbdḫrh / mrd* ***wa-ba-daḫāri-hi marād* 'and also in the last attack'

The first example comes from a late inscription and is rather uninformative, since the word order can be influenced by the language of the original.

The remaining two examples are more interesting. These are noun phrases from the same inscription which belong to two coordinate prepositional phrases within the same clause. The translation given above is equivalent to that of Schneider (1974: 785): "lors la première expédition et lors de la dernière expédition". What is different is the vocalization: in Schneider's version it is ***ba-ḳadāmihu marād wa-ba-daḫārihu*[23] *marād*, where possessive suffixes are attached to the adjective rather than to the noun – a construction which is highly atypical of Gǝʿǝz and requires a special explanation. If one continues to regard the final *-h* as part of the possessive suffix, several alternative interpretations of various degree of plausibility can be considered, such as ***ba-ḳǝdmehu marād wa-ba-dǝḫrehu marād* 'before the attack and after the attack' or ***ba-ḳadāmihu marād wa-ba-daḫārihu marād* 'in the first of the attack

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[23] Schneider has *badaḫarahu*, obviously a typographical error.

and in the second of the attack' (in both cases with omitted *la*-[24]). However, none of them is truly satisfactory, and they all become redundant as soon as one ventures to vocalize the final syllables as **-*hi* 'and, also', in the framework of the well-known construction -*hi* … *wa*- … -*hi* 'both, (this) as well as (that)' (cf. Dillmann 1970: 2: -*hi* … *wa*-…-*hi* 'et-et, cum-tum, ut-ita', with such examples as Gen 41:11: *wa-ḫalamna ḥəlma ʔana-hi wa-wəʔətu-hi* 'we have dreamt a dream, I as well as he').

The particle -*hi*, alongside its conjunctive function, can be used to render a special emphasis on the word to which it is attached (Dillmann 1970: 2). This is obviously the reason why this particle is employed in the emphatic coordination (in terminology of Haspelmath 2007: 2–3, 15–17), which stresses the contrast between the coordinated elements and puts the emphasis on both of them. The presence of this type of coordination in RIÉ 192: 43–44 is not accidental: the author of the inscription obviously strived to stress that the numbers he was going to present included spoils of *two* expeditions. In the constructions in question, the adjectives are used in a restrictive sense and legitimately bear the main stress: the new information is introduced by the semantically opposed adjectives, rather than by the head nouns.

This is obviously the reason why the "inverted" (rather than the "neutral") word order has been chosen here. In view of the CG evidence (Gai 1981: 258–260), one can claim with certainty that the word order Adj–N in this sentence marks (together with the coordinator -*hi* … *wa*-…-*hi*) a special pragmatic stress on the restrictive adjectives.

Two further putative examples of the Adj–N word order can be adduced, in which no pragmatic stress on the adjective can be discerned. Both examples are highly questionable and are adduced here for the completeness's sake only. Both come from heavily damaged inscriptions RIÉ 193 and RIÉ 194.

[72] ? RIÉ 194: 9–10: *wfnwkw : ynṣr : ʔksm : dḫr : mngsty* ***wa-fannawkəwwo yənaṣṣər ʔaksum ʔdəḥura mangəśtəya* 'and I sent him so that he watches ʔaksum, my ʔblessed kingdom'. The meaning 'to bless' for the verb *daḥara* is known from CG (Leslau 1987: 129, Dillmann 1970: 1111), and the existence of a passive adjective *dəḥur 'blessed' is quite conceivable. In principle, it can even be seen as a modifier of the noun *ʔaksum*, in which case the word order would still be N–Adj. However, it is semantically more likely that the adjective in question modifies the word it precedes: the entire noun phrase *dḫr mngsty* **dəḥur mangəstəya 'my blessed kingdom' thus becomes an appositional attribute of the proper name *ʔaksum*.

[73] ? DAE IV, 12, pp. 31–32 (the corresponding passage is presented as unreadable in RIÉ 193): *waṣ-w-k- : d-m-m- : ṣ-w-* **wa-ṣewoku (cp. CG *ḍewawku/ḍewoku*) *ʔdəmuma ṣewā* (cp. CG *ḍewā*) 'and I captured ʔmarvelous booty' (cf. DAE IV, p. 44)

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[24] For the few similar examples with omitted *la*- in CG see DILLMANN 1907: 427.

Still another phrase where Adj–N word order has been posited is RIÉ 189: 9–10: *waṣali[m /] [ḍa]bʔa / ḳayəḥ / ḍabʔ* (cf. the discussion under [22] above, with fn. 9). However, if the interpretation offered in the fn. 9 is accepted, the phrases in question cannot be considered as examples of the Adj–N word order.

Summing up: the neutral position of the adjective in EG is after the head noun; the reverse word order, Adj–N, is a marked one, and there is one reliable example when it is used to express a special emphasis on the adjective. This picture corresponds exactly to that of CG.

IV.2. Relative clauses

Almost all the relative clauses in EG (54 examples, 11 rather questionable, 7 from duplicate inscriptions) follow their head nouns. This is in agreement with the general word order typology, which claims that a V–O language has usually N–Rel (rather than Rel–N) word order (Dryer 2008a; 1991: 455–456; no verb-initial languages with Rel–N order seem to be known at present).

In the corpus under scrutiny, only two passages have been found where relative clauses possibly precede the head noun[25]:

[74] RIÉ 192: B9: *ḏt / mḥḏk / lḏhgśn / lʔgzbḥr **zanta maḥḍakku* (cp. CG *ʔamāḥḍanku*) *la-za-haggaśanni* (cp. CG *ʔangaśanni*) *la-ʔəgziʔabəḥer* 'this I entrusted to God, who made me a king'. The fact that the preposition **la-* is repeated twice (before the relative pronoun **za-* and before the noun **ʔəgziʔabəḥer*) makes it possible to analyse the first constituent as a headless relative clause connected to the head noun as an apposition: 'this I entrusted to (him) who made me a king, to God' (cf. DILLMANN 1907: 481 on the repetition of *la-* before appositional constituents). This theoretical analysis, however, does not undermine the fact that, on the surface level, the modifying relative clause precedes rather than follows the modified noun (a similar, appositive, analysis of relative clause for relative constructions with "inverted" order in Tigre was considered in RAZ 1980: 238). The function of the "inverted" order is probably, as in the case of Adj–N, a pragmatic one. This case, however, is obviously one of a non-restrictive relative clause: the author of the inscription, supposed to be a monotheist, could have meant only 'to God, who made me king' and not 'to the god who made me king'. One is tempted to compare this usage with the Tigre picture, for which RAZ (1980: 238–239) argues that a relative clause with "inverted" order "has an interpretive force and also places emphasis on the word denoted by the antecedent". Still, as will be shown below (example [75]), the "inverted" word order can also be used for restrictive modifiers both in Tigre and in Gəʿəz.

[75] RIÉ 189: 25–26: *waʔəla / moto / magabt danokʷe / 1 / dagale / 1 / ʔanakʷe / 1/ ḥawāre / 1 / karkārā / 1 / mārihomu / 1 /…* 'the chiefs that died (are) Danokʷe 1, Dagale 1, ʔanakʷe 1, Ḥawāre 1, Karkārā 1, their priest (1) …'. This interpretation has been rejected in Bulakh 2009:408 in favour of the following one where the relative clause functions as

[25] Cp. the predicative interpretation of other potential examples of Rel-N (RIÉ 189: 40–41 = DAE IV, 11, pp. 40–41 and RIÉ 192: 43–44), cf. discussion in section II.

the predicate: 'those who died (are:) the chiefs Danokʷe (1), Dagale 1, ʔanakʷe, Ḥawāre 1, Karkārā 1, their priest 1 …'. As argued in this study, the phrase *ʔəla moto* is semantically related to both *magabt* and *māri* and, therefore, must be syntactically linked to both of these phrases as well. Still, discrepancy between semantic and syntactic links is registered elsewhere in EG. Cf., e.g., RIÉ 188: 17–18: *wa-kona / ḳətla / ʕəd / zaʔa[fā]n / 503 / waʔanəst / 202* 'and (the number of) the killed men of ʔafān was 503, and (the number of) women – 202', where the nominal complement *za-ʔafān* semantically qualifies both *ʕəd* and *ʔanəst*, but syntactically is linked to *ʕəd* only. If the phrase *ʔəla moto* is interpreted as a modifier of *magabt*, the reverse order Rel–N is easy to explain in terms of special emphasis laid on the modifier, which has here a restrictive and contrastive value (unlike in [74]): those chiefs who died are opposed to the previously mentioned ones who were captured (RIÉ 189: 23–26: *waḍewawku / magabta / kəlʔeta / 2 / … waʔasmā-tihomu / yəsākā / 1 / butāle / 1 / waʔəngabenāwe / kābra*[26] */ waʔəla / moto / magabt danokʷe / 1 / dagale / 1 / ʔanakʷe / 1 / ḥawāre / 1 / karkārā / 1 / mārihomu / 1 / …* 'and I captured two 2 chiefs … and their names (are) Yəsākā 1 Butāle 1, and a great nobleman; and the chiefs **that died** (are) Danokʷe 1, Dagale 1, ʔanakʷe 1, Ḥawāre 1, Karkārā 1, their priest (1) …'). Cf. the employment of the "inverted" word order Adj–N in the examples [70], [71] and [72], also with restrictive and constrastive modifiers. Significantly, the same restrictive/contrastive usage of the "inverted" word order N–Adj is registered in Tigre: cf. the expression *ʔəb-la ʔənkərā la-**gəbuḥ*** 'by its **blunt** side' which is contextually opposed to *ʔəb-la gaṣṣā la-**bākəʕ*** 'by its **sharp** edge' (Littmann 1910: 13). Unfortunately, no evidence about a similar usage of "inverted" word order with relative clauses in Tigre is at hand.

Thus, one can safely claim that the neutral position of the relative clause in EG is after the head noun, assuming that the reverse order, Rel–N, could be sometimes – very rarely – employed to mark special emphasis laid on the modifier, or perhaps even on the modified, as in [74] (for both potential examples of the reverse order alternative interpretations cannot be excluded). The fact that, in spite of the rather high number of examples, only two potential cases of the reverse order have been registered suggests that the position of the relative clauses was more rigid than that of adjectival modifiers. This, again, is in full agreement with the general typology of word order: cross-linguistically, V–O languages usually have N–Rel word order rather than Rel–N; at the same time, they have no restrictions on the mutual order of adjective and noun (Dryer 2008a; 2008b). In Dryer (1992: 107–108), this difference is explained in terms of opposition between non-phrasal constituents (like adjectives) and phrasal constituents (like relative clauses). This opposition is a syntactic one and the phrasal constituent remains such even if it contains one lexeme only (the noun phrase *water* is a phrasal constituent exactly in the same way as *cold water* or *water of the Pacific Ocean*). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that in both exceptional examples from the

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[26] Rather, *kābəra*.

EG corpus the relative clauses consist of bare verbal forms only, and that the same is true of most of the extant CG examples (Gai 1981: 260–261; cf. also Dillmann 1907: 530)[27], such as Deut 33: 11 (*lāʿla ʾəlla yətkāwwaməw-wo ḍarru* 'upon the enemies who oppose him') or Lev 19: 9 (*ʾi-təʾrəyu za-wadka ʾəkla* 'gather not up the corn which has fallen aside'). What may count here is the adjectival use of the relative clauses. In Classical Gəʿəz, a verb with a relative pronoun can be employed as a functional substitute of an adjective (Kapeliuk 2003: 178; cp. Kapeliuk 2002: 41–42 for such use of Amharic relative verbs). One may argue that *ʾəla / moto*, which obviously functions in [75] as an equivalent of the adjective 'dead', was perceived by the speakers as an adjective, thus, as a non-phrasal constituent.

Still, one may persist in considering the relative clauses under scrutiny as phrasal constituents, and to relate the possibility of the inverted order directly to the length of the relative clause. In this case, this phenomenon has to be treated in the light of Hawkins' Performance Theory (1994). Hawkins has shown that rules of word order are influenced by the so-called "principle of Early Immediate Constituents": the higher the ratio of the immediate constituents with respect to the number of words within the constituent recognition domain, the more preferable is the linear order (*ibid.* 76–77). What is crucial for the problem under scrutiny is that the word order is sensitive to the actual number of words within the constituents: the same principle may govern the order of relative clauses in Gəʿəz. Still, it may be observed that in his discussion of interaction between performance and grammar Hawkins (*ibid.* 87–93) describes situations not quite identical to what occurs in Gəʿəz. He is aware of readjustments of basic word order if the non-basic order becomes preferable due to the principle of Early Immediate Constituents. In the present case, the word order can be inverted when there is no preference for either word order. If the relative clause consists of more than one content word, the basic word order becomes preferable according to the principle of Early Immediate Constituents, and this may account for the fact that in EG the inverted order is never used with more-than-one-word relative clauses.

IV.3. The position of a genitive complement

In the synthetic genitive constructions, only N–Gen word order is possible in Gəʿəz. This restriction is motivated morphosyntactically. The synthetic genitive construction in Gəʿəz, as in many other Semitic languages, allows neither any change of word order nor insertion of a third element between the head and the dependent noun. Thus, in *wald-a nəguś* 'son of a king' the possessive

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[27] Among 20 passages dealt with by Gai, no less than 16 consist of a bare verbal form.

relation between the two nouns is marked not only by the ending *-a*, but also by the word order and by the immediate adjacency of the two terms. As for the analytic genitive constructions, in theory both orders are possible, but, as will be shown below, only the N–Gen order is present in EG.

Genitive complements attached through the *nota genitivi za-* are discussed in Bulakh 2009. Among the extant examples of nominal complements (37 cases altogether), no reliable examples with the complement preceding the head noun have been found.

Nominal complements attached through the preposition *la-* and copied through a possessive pronoun are uncommon in the EG corpus. There are three secure examples:

[76] RIÉ 192: 1: *bʾktth / l[ʾ]bm / wwldm / wmfs / [ḳds]m** **ba-ʾakkʷatetəhu*[28] *la-[ʾa]bᵐ wa-waldᵐ wa-maffas* (cp. CG *manfas*) *[ḳəddus]ᵐ* 'in praise of the Father and the Son and the [Holy] Spirit'

[77] RIÉ 192: 33–34: *[z]bnm / lḏry** **zabanomu la-ḍarəya* 'the back of my enemies' (from Ps 17: 40)

[78] RIÉ 232: 3: *maḫātəwiha / lagenā* 'the eve of Christmas'

One is less certain but still possibly represents the same construction:

[79] RIÉ 185 bis II: 3–4: *wld / lmḥrm** **waldu la-maḥrəm* 'son of Maḥrəm'. The presence of the pronominal suffix is not expressed graphically since the inscription is unvocalized. Still, it is reasonable to interpret this phrase as a periphrastic construction with *la-* and the pronominal suffix instead of considering other, less frequent and less typical possessive constructions, such as ***wald la-maḥrəm* (despite the fact that the latter type is also registered in CG, cf. Dillmann 1907: 470–471).

In all these noun phrases, the order is N–Gen.

Four additional examples discussed below (of various degrees of plausibility; even the first and most convincing one comes from a damaged inscription and therefore is not absolutely certain) are clearly different from the canonical periphrastic genitive construction with copying pronouns since the preposition *la-* is missing. Such a usage, however, is also known from CG (see Dillmann 1907: 427), e.g., *ʾafuhu walda ziʾahu* 'mouth of his son' (Dillmann 1866: 14), and one is justified to treat it as a special, less common variety of the periphrastic construction. The exact relationship between these two types and conditions triggering the use of the periphrastic construction without *la-* lie beyond the scope of this paper. As far as its main purpose is concerned, it suffices to state that in this case, too, the genitive modifier follows the head noun in EG:

[80] RIÉ 195: 13: *[man]faḳu = ʾaḫzābəya = warada* 'half (or part) of my people descended'. The reconstruction *[man]faḳu* (see Müller 1972: 72, 73) is based on a parallel passage, also heavily damaged (see example [81]).

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[28] Cp. fn. 3.

[81] RIÉ 195: 11: …]*marān = wamanfaḳu = ʔa[ḫ…* ʔʿand half (or part) of [my peo]ple'. The last word is convincingly reconstructed by Müller (1972) as *ʔa[ḥzābəya]*. Examples [80] and [81] clearly corroborate each other and both likely exemplify the construction under scrutiny.

[82] ? RIÉ 218: 6–7: *śwh ṣḥb / 520* ʔ***śə(/a)wāhu ṣaḥb* 'beer in jar (lit. 'beer of jar') – 520'. Reconstruction of this phrase as a periphrastic genitive construction with a possessive suffix and without *la-* is not unproblematic[29]. The semantic relationship between the head noun and the modifier here is not of the kind which usually allows periphrastic constructions with copying pronouns in CG: according to Schneider 1959:49, the latter is used for true possessive relationship only, whereas RIÉ 218: 6–7 implies an attributive relationship ("a jar beer"). Littmann (1952: 7–8), apparently followed by Hable Sellassie (1972: 89) and Drewes (1962: 37, 67) considered the final *-h* to be a marker of the accusative. Within an alternative explanation, *-h* can be analyzed as the definite article (or, better, a possessive pronoun functioning as the definite article), known also from CG (Dillmann 1907: 426): ***śə(/a)wāhu* 'the beer'. The phrase would then be interpreted as an appositional collocation: 'the beer – 520 jars'.

[83] ? RIÉ 185 I, 8: *wbgʿm / wʔnsṯhm / ʿwd* ʔ***wa-baggəʿⁿ wa-ʔənsəsāhuⁿ ʿawd* 'and sheep and beasts of burden'. The expression *ʔənsəsā ʿawd* 'beasts of burden' is also known from the vocalized inscription RIÉ 188: 22. The translation is based on the corresponding term in the Greek version (RIÉ 270: 14, cf. DAE IV, p. 15), although the semantic motivation in Gəʿəz is different from that of Greek (κτηνῶν νωτοφόρω[ν]) and English (*beasts of burden*). Cf. Nöldeke 1913: 697, who renders *ʿawd* (lit. 'circle') as "Hof" ("area" in Dillmann 1970: 1000), and understands the whole expression as "Tiere des Gehöftes". In any case, *ʔənsəsā ʿawd* is an idiomatic expression and, as such, is better to be understood as a complex word rather than a syntactic construction[30], and it is somewhat strange to find it transformed into a periphrastic genitive construction. Moreover, the latter is usually restricted to true possessive constructions (Schneider 1959: 49), whereas the expression *ʔənsəsā ʿawd* is a clear example of an attributive genitive construction. Therefore, it is doubtful that *wʔnsṯhm / ʿwd* reflects a living expression of the spoken language. In view of these factors, Littmann (DAE IV, p. 15) suspected a scribal error or even the use of *h* to mark the length of *ā*. The former possibility is no serious explanation at all, whereas the latter one is highly implausible since such orthographic usage is not attested anywhere else in EG. This phrase should rather be analyzed as a result of artificial modifications characteristic of the "pseudo-Sabaic" inscriptions, where graphic exponents of the possessive suffixes can be more or less mechanically attached to nouns, in the same way as the final *m* was added to almost every word in these inscriptions. Note that the duplicate inscriptions RIÉ 185 bis II, 13

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[29] It is not quite clear whether KROPP (2006), who translates the phrase as 'beer in jars', analyses its syntactic structure in this way.

[30] Synthetic genitive constructions in Gəʿəz can be used as a means of forming complex nouns, whose morphological behaviour is different from that of simple genitive constructions. Cf. *beta krəstiyān* 'church' (lit. 'house of Christians') whose status as an independent lexeme can be clearly seen from the way it attaches the plural marker *-āt*: *beta krəstiyānāt* or *ʔabyāta krəstiyānāt*, instead of **ʔabyāta krəstiyān*, expected for a canonical genitive construction (DILLMANN 1907: 466).

and 185 bis I: 10 make use of the synthetic construction, which in one case (RIÉ 185 bis I, 10) is even written as one word. A detailed analysis of discrepancies between the inscriptions 185 and 185 bis can be found in Sima 2003/2004, where possible reasons behind these deliberate modifications are also discussed[31].

Whatever the interpretation of these questionable examples may be, one can state confidently that the EG corpus has no examples – certain or hypothetic – of periphrastic genitive constructions with the modifier preceding the head. This picture fully agrees with the word order typology, which predicts that the verb-initial languages – unlike S–V–O languages – have a strong preference for the N–Gen word order (Dryer 1991: 464–465; 1992: 91). In this respect, EG does not differ much from CG, where the Gen–N word order does sporadically occur (Dillmann 1907: 428, 466), but is extremely rare at least as far as genitive constructions with the *nota genitivi za-* are concerned. Gai (1981: 260) quotes three examples (Lev 25: 21, Gen 37: 7, Deut 4: 32), and Schneider (1959: 56) only two. Neither Gai nor Schneider provide any explicit statistical evidence about the Gen–N word order in the analytic constructions with *la-*, but among 30 examples quoted by Schneider (1959: 49–53) this order occurs only twice.

IV.4. Position of the demonstrative pronoun

In CG, demonstrative pronouns and other determiners usually precede the head nouns (Dillmann 1907: 476; Schneider 1959: 67–68). The same picture is observed in EG, where this word order is present in all the available examples (admittedly, not very numerous). Nine cases are fully reliable.

[84] RIÉ 185 I, 19–20: [*w*]*ṣḥfn / zt / ṣḥftm* **wa-ṣaḥafna zātta ṣǝḥfata* 'and we wrote this inscription' (with duplicates in RIÉ 185 bis I, 21–22, RIÉ 185 bis IIC, 31–33; remarkably, all these examples have *z* **zā* rather than *zt* **zātta*)

[85] RIÉ 185 I, 22: *lzʔbn* **la-zǝ-ʔǝbn* 'this stone' (with duplicates in RIÉ 185 II, 22; RIÉ 185 bis I, 24; RIÉ 185 bis IIC, 39)

[31] In fact, the vocalic reconstruction proposed above is not quite certain. From the syntactic point of view, *-m* is more likely to represent mimation. However, in the version of the same inscription in Ethiopic writing the final *-m* is not omitted in this case, and one has to assume that the writers of the Ethiopic version considered this *-m* a part of a 3rd pers. pl. possessive pronoun. In this case, one should vocalize the version in South-Arabic script as ʔ**wa-baggǝʕomu wa-ʔǝnsǝsāhomu ʕawd*, assuming that the possessive suffix does not mark the genitive relation between *ʔǝnsǝsā* and *ʕawd*, but rather is governed by the whole noun phrase: 'and their sheep and their beasts of burden'. Such an analysis, however, creates a morphosyntactic problem: the head of a synthetic possessive construction in Gǝʕǝz cannot normally attach a possessive pronominal suffix (DILLMANN 1907: 464; compare the grammatically correct construction in RIÉ 185 bis II, 13: *wʔnss / ʕwdm* **wa-ʔǝnsǝsā ʕawdomu* 'their beasts of burden', with *ʔǝnsǝsā ʕawd* treated as a complex noun).

[86] RIÉ 185 bis I, 26: *lḏʔbn* **la-zə-ʔəbn 'this stone'
[87] RIÉ 189: 40: *zādaset* 'this island'
[88] RIÉ 189: 49: *zamanbara* 'this throne (acc.)'
[89] RIÉ 191: 38: *db / z / mnbr* **diba zə manbar 'upon this throne'
[90] RIÉ 200: *zəʔəbn* 'this stone'
[91] RIÉ 218: 2–4: *zḥwlt / zʔh* ***zā(/zə) ḥawəlt ziʔahu* 'this stele is his' (cf. Kropp 2006;
    cf. also discussion in section II). The syntactic relationship between the demonstra-
    tive and the noun can also be interpreted as attributive (with a tentative vocalization
    ***zə/zā ḥawəlta ziʔahu* 'this (is) his stele'). Such an interpretation is, however, less
    attractive: an attributive use of an independent possessive pronoun *ziʔahu* (instead of
    a more usual possessive pronominal suffix) requires a special explanation. Converse-
    ly, if this is a predicative possessive construction, the use of an independent posses-
    sive pronoun is obligatory: in fact, it is the only way to express predicative posses-
    sion with a pronominal dependent constituent in Gəˁəz. This is why Kropp's inter-
    pretation is followed here.

[92] RIÉ 210: *znt : mḵld* 'this basin'

Three additional examples are more doubtful:

[93] ? RIÉ 198 I (B): *zgl* **za-gl 'this basin (acc.)'
[94] ? RIÉ 201: *zəʔəbn* 'this stone' (note, however, that the reading of RIÉ does not coin-
    cide with that of DAE IV, 16, p. 49)
[95] ? RIÉ 217: *wzʔbn* ʔ**wa-zə-ʔəbn 'and this stone' (the phrase comes from a broken
    fragment and hence both vocalization and interpretation are highly hypothetic)

There is only one example where the demonstrative might appear to follow
the head noun[32]:

[96] ? DAE IV, 12, p. 25: *nagara za.ta sam-ʕəya* 'having heard ʔthis speech'. Even in
    Littmann's copy the demonstrative *za[n]ta* is not distinctly legible. The editors of
    RIÉ were able to read neither *-n-* in *za[n]ta* nor the preceding word (RIÉ 193: 25:
    […]*z-t- : sam-ʕəya*). This example is, therefore, far from reliable, although one has to
    admit that Littmann's interpretation in DAE IV, p. 43 makes perfect sense.

All in all, the epigraphic evidence clearly shows that the normal position
of the demonstrative adjectival pronoun was before the head noun. This
word order was seldom (if ever) reversed in EG.

The word order Dem–N–Dem, typical of Tigre and Tigrinya, is not regis-
tered in EG, but it is interesting to observe that in one case a similar construc-
tion is used with the numeral *ʔaḥadu* 'one' (cf. section IV.6, example [130]).

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[32] In RIÉ 184 D: 3–4 the words *ʔgd z* could be interpreted as a noun (for instance, identified
    with CG *ʔəngədā* 'stranger') modified by a demonstrative pronoun *zə* (with the word
    order N-Dem). There is, however, a more suitable solution: *z* can be analyzed as part of
    the conjunction *za-kama* 'as, even as, just as, according to…' (LESLAU 1987: 284, DILL-
    MANN 1970: 826). RIÉ 184 D: 4 would read thus: *z : km / ʔydlw* ʔ***za kama ʔi-yədallə-
    wwo* ʔ'as it does not behoove him'.

IV.5. Position of the quantifier *kʷəllu* 'all, whole'

In CG, the quantifier *kʷəllu* mostly precedes the head noun (Schneider 1959: 67). In EG, this picture is clearly observable as a trend, but the proportional difference is less pronounced. For CG, Schneider was able to record only two cases of *kʷəllu* following the head noun. He does not give the exact number of the opposite examples (in his study constructions with *kʷəllu* are counted together with demonstratives and some other determinatives), but there is no reason to doubt that the number of attestations of *kʷəllu* in Schneider's sample by far exceeds that attested in the epigraphic corpus. There are only five secure examples of *kʷəllu* preceding the noun in EG, which are opposed to one reliable example of *kʷəllu* following the noun.

kʷəllu–N:

[97] RIÉ 191: 6: *bkl / fnwy* ***ba-kʷəllu fənāwəya* 'in all my paths'
[98] RIÉ 191: 9–10: *wkl / ʕrbm* *wa-kʷəllu ʕarabᵐ 'and (of) all Arabs'
[99] RIÉ 192: 25–26: *klhm / ʔḥzb* **kʷəlləhomu[33] *ʔaḥzāb* 'all peoples'
[100] RIÉ 192: 47: *kl / ʔgd / wytl* **kʷəllu ʔaggāda (cp. CG *ʔangāda*) *wytl* 'all tribes of WYTL'
[101] RIÉ 267 II: *kʷəlo / məd-ra* 'the whole land'

N–*kʷəllu*:

[102] RIÉ 186: 13–14: *ʔngdm / mṭnm / klm* ***ʔangādaᵐ mṭnᵐ kʷəlluᵐ* 'all tribes of MṬN'

In principle, this picture can be interpreted chronologically rather than statistically. Four out of five examples displaying the *kʷəllu*–N word order come from the inscriptions RIÉ 191 and 192 (6th cent.), whereas the only example with the reverse order is registered in RIÉ 186 (4th cent.). One can suspect some sort of diachronic evolution, with free word order gradually shifting to a mostly fixed position of *kʷəllu* before the head noun. The extant data, however, is too scanty to draw a definite conclusion.

IV.6. Position of the numerals

According to Dillmann (1907: 488), numerals usually precede the counted objects in CG. This neutral word order (Num–N) is only rarely inverted. The pragmatic evaluation elaborated by Gai (1981: 261–262) claims that the pragmatic stress normally lays on the numerals, while the inverted word order marks those rare situations when it is the noun that bears the main stress.

Dillmann (1907: 488) interprets phrases with numerals as appositional or attributive phrases, with the counted object as the head and the numeral as its attribute: *ʕaśśarta wa-kəlʔetta ʕāmata* 'twelve years (acc.)' (Gen 14: 4). It is only in some exceptional cases that numerals clearly function as heads of synthetic genitive constructions and govern the nouns denoting counted objects (*ibid.* 486–487): *ḫamməsta ʕədaw* 'five men' (Gen 47: 2).

[33] Cf. fn. 3.

In the EG corpus, the word order Num–N is observed in the majority of cases, although the "inverted" word order is also well represented: out of 36 pertinent phrases 10 examples (thus, 28 %) have the order N–Num.

The Num–N order is attested in 26 cases, 20 reliable (6 from duplicate inscriptions) and 6 questionable.[34]

Num–N

[103]RIÉ 187: 24: *śalasatu / sarāwāt* 'three armies'

[104]RIÉ 188: 15–16: *ʔarbaʕtu / ʔangāda* 'four tribes (acc.)'

[105]RIÉ 188:16–17: *məsle / kəlʔe / daḳu* 'with his two children'

[106]RIÉ 189: 16: *ʕəśrā / waśalusa / mawāʕəla / 23* '23 twenty three days (acc.)'

[107]RIÉ 185 I, 4: *sdstm / ngštm* ***səddəstuᵐ nagaśtᵐ* 'six kings' (duplicated in RIÉ 185 bis I, 6, RIÉ 185 bis II, 7)

[108]RIÉ 185 I, 6–7: *ḏz / sdstw / ngštm* […] ***zazza səddəstu nagaśt* 'of each of the six kings […]' (duplicated in RIÉ 185 bis I, 8–9 and, in a slightly different version, in RIÉ 185 bis II, 10–11: *zsdst / ngśt / 4400* […] ***za-səddəstu nagaśt 4400* […] 'of six kings 4400 […]')

[109]RIÉ 185 I, 12: *ʔrbʕtm / ʔwrḫm* ***ʔarbaʕtaᵐ ʔawrāḫaᵐ* 'four months (acc.)' (duplicated in RIÉ 185 bis I, 13–14)

[110]RIÉ 185 II, 18: *lsdst / ngśt 25140* […] ***la-səddəstu nagaśt 25140* […] 'for six kings 25140 […]' (duplicated in RIÉ 185 bis IIC, 21–22)

[111]RIÉ 186: 18: *lʔrbʕtm / srwtm* ***la-ʔarbaʕtuᵐ sarāwitᵐ* 'to four armies'

[112]RIÉ 193: 9: *100 : ś-r-* ***100 [məʔəta] śora* '100 bulls (acc.)'

[113]DAE IV, 13: 15: *ʔaḥada : ʔ-l-[f-] : ʔabā[gə]ʕ-* ***ʔaḥada ʔəlfa ʔabāgəʕa* 'ten thousand sheep (acc.)' (lit. 'one ten-thousand sheep')

[114]RIÉ 190: 40: *rlsm / mʔtm* **śalāsāᵐ məʔətᵐ 'thirty hundred' (the South Arabian graphemes *r* and *š* are sometimes confused in RIÉ 190 because of their graphic similarity, cf. Schneider 1974: 769; the vocalization ***śalās/śəls məʔət* 'three hundred' is unlikely since this phrase probably belongs, together with [115], to the expression for 'thirty three hundred': ***śalāsāᵐ məʔətᵐ wa-śalastuᵐ məʔətᵐ*)

[115]RIÉ 190: 40: *wślstm / mʔtm* ***wa-śalastuᵐ məʔətᵐ* 'and three hundred'

[116]RIÉ 190: 34: *wtḻṭm / rlstm / mʔtm* ***wa-śalāsāᵐ śalastuᵐ məʔət* 'and thirty three hundred' (note the absence of the conjunction *wa-* which in CG practically always

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[34] In the statistic evaluation below, only cases in which there is an obvious syntactic relationship between the numeral and the noun are considered. Accordingly, examples like [75] are not counted since the numerals in such cases are unlikely to be real constituents of the phrase, being rather asyndetically inserted into it as explanatory notes. One has to admit, however, that in some cases it is virtually impossible to choose between two alternative interpretations of a numeral or graphic cipher. Thus, examples like [125] may also be considered as asyndetic insertions. Within the present investigation, all numerals which appear in words (rather than in numerical figures) are interpreted here as true constituents of the phrase. Most (but not all) numerals given in numerical figures (mostly following the nouns counted and usually occurring in lists similar to those of [125] or [75]) are discarded as asyndetic insertions. That the N-Num word order occurs frequently in lists has already been observed by GAI (1981: 262).

appears as a linking element in complex numerals, cf. Dillmann 1907: 369; for *r* instead of *ś* cf. [114])

[117]? RIÉ 183 I, 16–17: *ʔḫt ʕlt* ʔ**ʔaḥatti ʕəlat* 'one day' or ***ʔaḥatta ʕəlata* 'one day (acc.)' (the latter vocalization is proposed in Drewes 1962: 48, where this expression is rendered as 'le premier jour' in spite of the fact that *ʔḫt* is a cardinal rather than an ordinal number)

[118]? RIÉ 183 III, 2: *ʔḫt / smṭ* ʔ**ʔaḥatta səmaṭa* 'one ʔflank/moiety (acc.)' (cf. Drewes 1962: 51–52)

[119]? RIÉ 183 III, 5: *ʔḫt / ḥg* ʔ**ʔaḥatti ḥəgg* ʔ'one law' (cf. Drewes 1962: 52)

[120]? RIÉ 191: 27–28: … *ʕ]šr / mʔt* **…*ʕa]śru məʔət* 'ten hundred' or **…*ʕə]śrā məʔət* 'twenty hundred'

[121]? RIÉ 263: 8: *samana = ʕəl*[… (cp. CG *samāna / samuna ʕəlata / ʕəlatāta / ʕəlat / ʕəlatāt*) ʔ'eight days (acc.)'

[122]? RIÉ 190: 17: *rlstm / ḍš* ***śalastuᵐ ḍš* 'three ?' (for *r* instead of *ś* cf. [114])

The word order N–Num is attested in 10 cases: 9 reliable (3 examples from duplicate inscriptions) and 1 rather questionable.

N–Num

[123] RIÉ 187: 7–8: *laʕəlata / ʕəśrā* 20 'for twenty 20 days' (note that the numeral is attached as a **dependent** constituent of the genitive construction)

[124] RIÉ 189: 23: *waḍewawku / magabta / kəlʔeta / 2* 'and I captured two 2 chiefs'

[125] RIÉ 185 II: 19–20: *msl / zwrḳ / ʔḥd / 1 / wzbrr / ʔ[ḫ]d / 1 / wzṣrḳ / ślst / 3* ***məsla zawarḳ ʔaḥada 1 wa-za-barur ʔa[ḫa]da 1 wa-za-ṣariḳ śalasta* 'one (acc.) statue of gold, and one (acc.) of silver, and three (acc.) of copper' (duplicated in RIÉ 185 I, 18–19, RIÉ 185 II, 20, RIÉ 185 bis II, C 27–31)

[126] RIÉ 185 bis II, C 3–4: *ʔwrḫ / ʔrbʕt* ***ʔawrāḫa ʔarbaʕta* 'four months' (note that the duplicate inscriptions employ the reverse order, cf. [109])

[127] RIÉ 192: 13: *msfth / ʔrbʕt* ***masāfəttihu* (cp. CG *masāfəntihu*) *ʔarbaʕtu* 'his four governors'

[128] RIÉ 190: 7: *lʕltm / ʕšrm* ***la-ʕəlat(/ta) ʕaśru* 'for ten days' or ***la-ʕəlat(/ta) ʕəśrā* 'for twenty days'

[129]? RIÉ 218: 5: *ʕlt / 15* ʔ**ʕəlata 15* ʔ'15 days (acc.)' (so Drewes 1962: 65, Kropp 2006;[35] cf. *ibid.* for a review of alternative interpretations, such as Conti Rossini 1942: 28, Littmann 1952: 6, which also presume N–Num order; other alternative versions are possible, e.g., 'the 15th day', which is, however, less attractive because the form of the governing verb does not agree with the noun *ʕlt*, presumably fem. sg.)

Finally, two cases (one from a duplicate inscription) are registered where the numeral is put both before and after the noun, possibly in order to render the distributive meaning.

Num–N–Num

[130] RIÉ 185 II: 16–18: *wfttnhm / llʔḥd / ngś / ʔḥd [/4190 / lh]m* ***wa-fatatnāhomu lallaʔaḥadu nəguś ʔaḥadu* [4190 *lah*]*m* 'and we apportioned to each king [4190 catt]le'.

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[35] Cp. also Sᴇʀɢᴇᴡ Hᴀʙʟᴇ Sᴇʟʟᴀssɪᴇ 1972: 89, with a rather liberal vocalization/reconstruction of the text.

Duplicated in RIÉ 185 bis II, C 17. The reduplication of the numeral apparently marks the distributive, although this meaning is already expressed by the preposition **lalla-. The insertion of the numeral is thus superfluous and may be motivated stylistically. Note that in both "pseudo-Sabaic" versions of the same text (RIÉ 185 I and RIÉ 185 bis I) the numeral is missing altogether (cf. Sima 2003/2004: 277). Full reduplication of a numeral as a marker of distributive is well attested throughout Semitic, notably in CG (Dillmann 1907: 373–374). However, Dillmann quotes only bare numerals as reduplicated (ʔaḥadu ʔaḥadu 'each one') and does not mention the possibility of Num–N–Num order, which on the whole appears highly atypical of Gəˁəz. One wonders whether a Cushitic influence can be seen here, similar to that which, according to Leslau 1945: 78, resulted in Dem–N–Dem order in Tigre and Tigrinya.

As far as non-vocalized inscriptions are concerned, the exact nature of the syntactic relation between the numeral and the noun counted cannot be ascertained. However, a few examples available from vocalized inscriptions show that the relation was attributive, with the counted object as head (as in [103], [104], [106], [124]). At least once (example [123]), the genitive relation is attested[36], but the head of the genitive construction here is not the numeral (as in CG) but rather the noun counted. This construction, unknown from CG, is difficult to explain (cf. DAE IV, p. 26 as well as Nöldeke 1913: 698). Still, one may venture to compare it to the constructions of the type māya ṭəˁum, where the semantic relation between the head and the governed constituent of the genitive construction is that of the modified and the modifier (cf. Dillmann 1907: 461–462). The same kind of syntactic transformation can be assumed in the present case: ṭəˁum māy 'sweet water' > māya ṭəˁum, lit. 'water of the sweet' = ˁəśrā ˁəlat 'twenty day(s)' > ˁəlata ˁəśrā, lit. 'day of twenty'. This transformation implies that the numerals in EG were seen as appositional modifiers governed by the nouns. One wonders whether the reverse order (numerals as heads) is a later development in CG, perhaps under foreign (Arabic?) influence: it seems unlikely that these two types coexisted in early Gəˁəz.

A typological assessment of the EG data on order of numeral and noun testifies once again to conservatism of early Gəˁəz. EG shows clear preference of Num–N word order, although the reverse order is also present. According to Dryer (1992: 118–120), non-African V–O languages usually exhibit the Num–N order, but in the majority of African V–O languages it is rather the N–Num order that is common. That Gəˁəz follows the non-African pattern which is hardly surprising given the fact that the local influence on Gəˁəz was consid-

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[36] The reconstructed vocalization of the above mentioned unvocalized inscriptions implies the attributive rather than genitive construction, following the usual syntax of CG. Still, it is not to be excluded that in some of them, a genitive construction similar to that of no. [123] was used.

erably shorter than in the case of most of its neighbors. Indeed, quite a number of prominent local grammatical features only marginally affected Gəʿəz or are altogether missing from it (cf. Bulakh – Kogan 2010: 296–297).

V. Order of some other constituents relevant for the word order typology

V.1. The order of the copula and the predicate

The order of the predicate and the copula in copular sentences usually correlates with the order of the object and the verb respectively (Dryer 1992: 93–94). The data of EG, scanty as it is, demonstrates that early Gəʿəz did observe this correlation.

The verbal copula *kona* mostly occurs with numerals as predicates. In all relevant passages the copula precedes the predicate. The only (rather dubious) example where the predicate is an adjective is ? RIÉ 192: 10–11: *ḏdʔ / ykwnh*[*m*] / *ʔgzbḥr* / *ʔywh* ***za-dʔ yəkawwənaho*[*mu*] *ʔəgzibəḥer* (cp. CG *ʔəgziʔabəḥer*) *ʔi-yawāha* 'to whom God is not mild' (see example [52]), where the word order is equally Cop–Pred.

The copula *hallawa*, too, precedes its predicate in the only example where it seems to be used as a locative copula with a prepositional phrase as a predicate:

[131] RIÉ 194: 2: *ʔnz : hlk : b.ʔksm* ***ʔənza halloku ba-ʔaksum* 'while I am in ʔaksum'

Since no examples are attested which show the reverse order, one can reasonably claim that the predicate in EG followed the verbal copula.

V.2. Order of prepositional phrases

In agreement with the typological expectations (Dryer 1992: 92–93), prepositional phrases in EG tend to occur on the same side of the verb as the object, thus following the verbal forms. In the available EG corpus, 129 secure examples of V–PP order have been detected (25 from duplicate inscriptions); 23 examples displaying the same order are rather questionable. Pre-verbal prepositional phrases are conspicuously less frequent: 23 secure examples (5 from duplicate inscriptions), which can be expanded with 4 dubious cases.

V.3. Position of adverbs of manner

The order of adverbs of manner is known to correlate cross-linguistically with the order of objects and that of prepositional phrases (Dryer 1992: 93, 122–125). However, as far as one can judge by the epigraphic evidence, no such correlation was present in early Gəʿəz. Interestingly, this fact is in agreement with the Branching Direction Theory. This theory predicts the harmony between the order of prepositional phrase and the verb and that of

object and verb, but does not predict that the position of adverbs of manner should correlate with the order of object and verb (although the existence of such a correlation is empirically known, cf. Dryer 1992: 122–125).

The only adverb of manner which is relatively frequent in EG is *dāḫna* (rather *dāḫəna*) 'safely' (seven attestations). In four passages (RIÉ 188: 22–23, 192: 37–38, 192: 39, 192: 43) it is used post-verbally, in three others (RIÉ 189: 33, RIÉ 189: 37, RIÉ 190: 15–16) it precedes the verb. There are two other lexemes which can tentatively be identified as adverbs of manner: *gzm* 'ʔfiercely' (see the extensive comment in section II) and *dəmura* 'jointly'. Each of them occurs only once in the EG corpus, *gzm* is post-verbal (RIÉ 192: 9), whereas *dəmura* is pre-verbal (RIÉ 187: 30). As far as one can see from the usage of *dāḫna*, the position of adverbs of manner with respect to the verbal forms was probably free in EG.

VI. Conclusions

The results of this survey can be summarized in the following way.
1) The word order V–O clearly predominates over O–V.
2) There is a preference for the V–S order over S–V, which is less transparent than in the case of V–O. There are reasons to assume that the S–V order is pragmatically marked.
3) The normal word order in sentences with verbal copulas was Cop–S.
4) The word order N–Adj predominates over Adj–N. The latter type of word order certainly is pragmatically marked, at least in some cases.
5) The word order N–Rel is used almost exclusively. There are only two potential Rel–N examples.
6) In the analytic genitive constructions, the word order is always N–Gen.
7) In the noun phrases with demonstratives, the word order is almost exclusively Dem–N.
8) The quantifier *kʷəllu* 'all, whole' can precede or (more rarely) follow the head.
9) In the constructions with numerals, the preferred word order is Num–N, although N–Num is not infrequent.
10) Genitive constructions involving numerals governed by the noun counted can be used as an alternative to the attributive construction.
11) In copular sentences, the predicate follows the copula.
12) Prepositional phrases usually follow the verb.
13) Adverbs of manner can both precede and follow the verb.

In terms of Dryer's word order typology (1997), Epigraphic Gəʿəz should be classified as VS & VO language,[37] although the order of subject and verb is more flexible than that of object and verb (thus, EG seems to be close to the "partially classifiable languages" of the type SV/VS & VO discussed *ibid.*, section 5.2.). The features 1, 5, 6, 11 and 12 testify that Gəʿəz (unlike the rest of Ethio-Semitic languages) represents the classical Semitic type of a right-branching language. Two features deviate from a consistent right-branching system: position of subject and position of adverb of manner (both are fairly often attested pre-verbally).[38]

The features of word order in Epigraphic Gəʿəz are mostly in agreement with the evidence of Classical Gəʿəz. Deviations from the CG grammar are not many (features 8–10). As far as the quantifier *kʷəllu* and the numerals are concerned, the relative frequency of the "inverted" word order (N–*kʷəllu* and N–Num) is apparently higher than in CG. Nevertheless, both in EG and in CG the structures *kʷəllu*-N and Num–N are more common. One can surmise that these types of word order were predominant already in EG, but this predominance was probably less rigid than in CG.

The genitive construction with the numeral as the governed constituent is unattested in CG and one may wonder whether the reverse genitive construction, with the numeral as the head, is a late innovation in Gəʿəz.

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[37] DRYER (1997, section 2) regards a word order as basic if the ratio between this and the reverse order is no less than two-to-one. According to this criterion, V–S is the basic order in EG. Still, as Dryer himself acknowledges, this division is somewhat arbitrary (especially for a language like EG, with a limited corpus of texts), and in any case, the differences in relative frequency between V–O and V–S order in EG are worth noting.

[38] I am aware of two epigraphic examples which may be suspected to represent features of a left-branching or verb-final system. The first one is the example [10], with backward gapping (which, according to ROSS 1970, correlates with the S–O–V word order). The second case is the direct speech preceding the reporting verb in RIÉ 189: 8–9: *sobe / tamakaḫa / wa-ʔi-yəfaləs / ʔəm-takazi / yəbe / ʔəḥ[zā][ba] / nobā* 'when the people of Nobā boasted and said: "I will not withdraw from Takazi"' (this potential instance of "African" word order in early Gəʿəz received due attention by Littmann in DAE IV, p. 36; cf. also NÖLDEKE 1913: 700). To what degree any of these features may indeed correlate with the verb-final word order remains, to the best of my knowledge, a rather moot question. In the absence of a comprehensive typological investigation and in view of the scantiness of the available epigraphic evidence, one should refrain from drawing any serious conclusions.

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DAE IV.

RIÉ.

Summary

The paper offers the results of analysis of word order throughout the epigraphic corpus of Gəˁəz. This evidence is mostly in agreement with the data from Classical Gəˁəz and confirms that early Gəˁəz represents the classical Semitic type of a right-branching language: objects and prepositional phrases mostly follow the verbs, and relative clauses and genitive complements usually follow the head nouns. At the same time, some differences between the syntax of Classical Gəˁəz and Epigraphic Gəˁəz have been registered, notably in the behaviour of numerals.