



Aethiopica 13 (2010)
International Journal of Ethiopian and
Eritrean Studies

ALESSANDRO BAUSI, Universität Hamburg

Review of

OLGA KAPELIUK, *Selected Papers in Ethio-Semitic and Neo-Aramaic
Linguistics*

Aethiopica 13 (2010), 257–259

ISSN: 1430–1938

Published by

Universität Hamburg

Asien Afrika Institut, Abteilung Afrikanistik und Äthiopistik

Hiob Ludolf Zentrum für Äthiopistik

OLGA KAPELIUK, *Selected Papers in Ethio-Semitic and Neo-Aramaic Linguistics*, Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2009. Pp. xii + 579. Price: US \$ 49.99. ISBN: 978-965-493-360-5.

The book is a welcome reprint of a large part of the linguistic production that Olga Kapeliuk, at present Professor Emeritus at the Department of Linguistics and of African Studies of the Hebrew University, has displayed during the last 40 years on the “peripheral Semitic” domains of Ethio-Semitic and Neo-Aramaic languages.

Belonging to the linguistic school grown up at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem around Hans Jakob Polotsky, like other pupils of the former of the caliber of Gideon Goldenberg and Ariel Shisha Halevy, Olga Kapeliuk has developed an original production in the footsteps of her Master and beyond, in her case especially focusing on Ethio-Semitic and Neo-Aramaic syntax (the latter subject having also been touched upon by Polotsky, as well as several others, such as, e.g., typological parallelism between Amharic and Turkish). Far from being an accidental and fortuitous coexistence, the interest for Ethio-Semitic and Neo-Aramaic languages answers to one and the same interest for morphological and especially syntactical phenomena in the so-called “Neo-Semitic” and “peripheral” areas as viewed in their typological peculiarities.

Four out of the 43 contributions reprinted in the thick volume (either in English or French, only one in Hebrew) focus on “Peripheral Semitic” in general (chapter 1, pp. 3–90); 32, i.e. the overwhelming majority, on Ethio-Semitic (chapter 2, pp. 91–481), and seven on “Neo-Aramaic” (chapter 3, pp. 483–579). As the author states, “Most misprints have been corrected as discreetly as possible. A few articles had to be retyped, with the prior pagination indicated in square brackets” (p. ix).

The book does not include author’s contributions on “Arabic language and culture, Amharic literature, Ethiopian society, or material for Hebrew teachers of adult immigrants from Ethiopia ... in order to preserve its purely linguistic character in dealing with the two branches of Semitic” in which the author specialized. The reprint volume is not to be understood as encompassing the whole of Kapeliuk’s scientific production on the subjects either, because it obviously does neither include the main monographs (*Nominalization in Amharic* = Äthiopistische Forschungen 23, Stuttgart: Steiner, 1988; *Syntax of the Noun in Amharic*, Äthiopistische Forschungen 37, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994), nor the numerous reviews, which are all omitted with the exception of two (on Josef Hartmann, *Amharische Grammatik*, 1980, and Rainer M. Voigt, *Das tigrinische Verbalsystem*, 1977). Also not included are short articles later developed in longer contributions (“Les noms amhariques à fi-

nale -o”, in: *Groupe Linguistique d'Études Chamito-Sémitiques, Comptes Rendus* 18–23/2 [1973–1979 [1981]], pp. 215–217; “Particules d'enchaînement et de référence en amharique”, *ibid.*, pp. 241–243; “Les néologismes éthiopiens”, *ibid.*, pp. 321–323; “Modalités d'action et aspects en amharique”, *ibid.*, pp. 18–23/3 [1973–1979 [1983]], pp. 673–686) or very recently published (“Verbless Relative Clauses in Gəʕəz and their Equivalents in Amharic and Tigrinya”, *Aethiopica* 12 [2009], pp. 143–154).

To the collection, however, at least three additional contributions could have been added (“The pronouns *ərswo* and *ərsaccäw* as sociolinguistic variants”, in: Bahru Zewde – Richard Pankhurst – Taddese Beyene [eds.], *Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies. Addis Ababa, April 1–6 1991*, I, Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, 1994, pp. 495–500; “The evolution of *ərswo* and *ərsaccäw* as sociolinguistic variants”, in: Harold G. Marcus [ed.], *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies. Ethiopia 94. Papers of the 12th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies. Michigan State University 5–10 September 1994*, I, Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1994, pp. 1270–1274; “Some suprasentential constructions in Amharic”, in: Andrzej Zaborski [ed.], *New Data and New Methods in Afroasiatic Linguistics. Robert Hetzron in memoriam*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001, pp. 75–83). An overview of Amharic is also not included (“Amharique”, in: Jean Perrot [ed.], *Les langues dans le monde ancien et moderne*, III: *Les langues chamito-sémitiques*, ed. by David Cohen, Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1988, pp. 146–159).

The range of the themes approached in the contributions of Kapeliuk on Ethio-Semitic is impressive: broad, as well as consistent and rigorous, stretching along a *continuum* of interrelated problems spanning from typological convergence versus inherited features to sociolinguistics; from noun, pronoun and verbal pattern and morphology, e.g., of the Gəʕəz gerund, to redundant verbs and auxiliaries, and synthetic verbal forms; from definiteness and indefiniteness, treatment of body and soul, to focus and topicalization; from tenses system to expressivity, evidentiality and factivity. However, if one, more specific area of prominent interest has to be singled out in Kapeliuk's contributions, this is probably that of nominalization and relativization, as these subjects have been approached in their most extensive range: from the morphology of the relative pronouns to the syntax of the Gəʕəz cleft sentence, from the relative verb in areal perspective, to the general question of relative constructions, from the nominalization of the verb in Amharic to the transformation of the copula sentences. It is also to be remarked that few authors have such a deep and first-hand knowledge of

Amharic and Təgrāñña modern literatures as Kapeliuk: and precisely these sources she has often used.

Like the reprint volumes of Polotsky's (*Collected Papers*, 1971) and Goldenberg's (*Studies in Semitic Linguistics. Selected Writings*, 1998) writings, this one is also published by Magnes Press. One can only regret that, unlike the preceding volumes, no detailed index of subjects has been provided, which would have greatly helped the reader and made the use of the volume easier and more fruitful; the print quality is also not as good. All this notwithstanding, like the aforementioned volumes and few others (e.g., the *Nouvelles études d'éthiopien méridionale* by Marcel Cohen, 1939, Edward Ullendorff's *The Semitic languages of Ethiopia*, 1955, or Robert Hetzron's *Ethiopian Semitic*, 1972), this book is deemed to become an indispensable companion for those who intend to approach the study of Ethio-Semitic (and "Peripheral Semitic") languages according to proper and rigorous linguistic principles.

Alessandro Bausi, Universität Hamburg

OSVALDO RAINERI, ክብረ ፡ ነገሥት # *Kebra Nagast. La gloria dei re. Salomone e la regina di Saba nell'epopea etiopica tra testo e pittura.* Traduzione del testo etiopico (ge'ez) di Osvaldo Raineri. Miniature di Yohannes Tesemma presentate da Renata Riva. Roma: Editrice Fondazione Benedetta Riva 2008. 225 pp. 66 Tavole. Prezzo: € 30,-. ISBN: 978-88-903551-0.

Stampata su carta lucida con luminose immagini a colori, l'opera ha un aspetto magnifico. La divisione delle sezioni è evidenziata da diversi colori: "Introduzione" (Osvaldo Raineri), "Presentazione delle miniature e del pittore" (Renata Riva) e "Abbreviazioni bibliografiche" presentano una banda blu sul bordo superiore e inferiore delle pagine. Seguono quindi "Prologo – Il primo regnante d'Etiopia: un Re Serpente" (p. 21–24), la traduzione vera e propria (p. 27–149) e il "Colofone" (p. 150) con bande giallo senape. Le 66 miniature seguenti di Yohannəs Täsamma (p. 155–220) sono munite di bande verdi. Piccoli dettagli delle pitture decorano il testo, che è corredato dei passi biblici e di poche altre indicazioni. Chiudono un "Indice Generale" e un "Indice delle tavole" (p. 222–225).

La precedente edizione italiana di Lorenzo Mazzoni (2007) discende dalla non impeccabile traduzione inglese di E.A. Wallis Budge (1932), e con ciò Osvaldo Raineri giustifica la sua nuova traduzione italiana, che è condotta direttamente sul ge'ez. La traduzione è senz'altro generalmente buona, ma