Articles

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ONOMASTIC AND LINGUISTIC NOTES
ON THE EARLY AKSUMITE INSCRIPTIONS
AND RELATED TEXTS
ONOMASTICS

1. Burial of two peoples

On the expression mlkn 'gezyn of the grand inscription CIH 541:5, written in Sabaic towards the middle of the 6th c. AD. by the rebel Ethiopian viceroy Abraha (and left by him near the old capital Marib), many hypotheses have been made (see the summary in Ryckmans 1951: 242-5, with additions in Drewes 1962:108). Parallels to the term 'gezyn do not appear as such in the Ethiopic inscriptions, except the fixed expression "country of the 'A." (bohera 'ag'azi), or others similar to it, very frequent in the literary texts referred to the aksumite period (but all of them much later). This is maybe still an ethnic term, perhaps indicating the parts of the country which today are known to be those of the oldest Semitic settlement (in fact, Erythrea and Tigray). This same term seems to appear in the Greek inscription (2nd-3d century A.D.) called Monumentum Adulitanum, copied in Adulis by Cosma Indicopleustes about 525, as "people of the Gaze": one of the numerous scholia of the text adds: "Gaze means the Axumites"; frequently a comparison with the term (adjective?) Yg'dyn, which appears together with the title of "king" (mlkn šr'n yg'dyn) in the Sabaic inscriptions from Abyssinia of the 8th c. B. C., has been proposed.

In our case, the basic linguistic fact is that this title cannot mean "king of the 'Ag'azyân", with 'gezyn as the second term of a genetival relation, the linguistic reason is clear: mlkn, with an ending -n (morpheme of the definite article in Sabaic), cannot govern a genitive (if not, it would be determined twice) - not to speak of the ending -n, which would be justified in Geez only if this was an adjective or a participle; if a substantive it should have been -วล. But also many translations leave us disappointed, this time because also of the shortcomings of our European languages: "re, appartenente alla stirpe Ag'azi", o "re di stirpe Ag'azi" (both in Conti Rossini) is not so distant from the "rex Aethiopicus" of the CIH (1918), which was immediately condemned, because nowhere a king of Ethiopia is called "ethiopian king". It is perhaps because of this ambiguity that Ullendorff 1955:7 still speaks of "the South Arabian tribes who settled in what later became the Kingdom of Aksum, ... the Habasha and the Ag'azyan [sic]". But now there is the formula mlkn šr'n yg'dyn, quoted above (unknown until the Sixties), which can be utilized in this connection; but here again Sima, the author of this item, translates "[king]... of (the tribe?) yg'dân". So, it is perhaps safer to translate with an adjective, "the ag'azite "king" or the like.(although this kind of adjective is very difficult to be accepted in a translation).

The second of these peoples are (were) the "Habashat" (Hbs²t in the original South Arabian spelling). It is well known that this "South Arabian" people (explained as such by Conti Rossini...
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1906, who followed in part Glaser 18959) has become a simple indication of "Abyssinia" after the excellent study by Irvine 1965. But with all this, the ultimate origins of the name Hbsst remains untouched. Any parallel with the 'Ag'aazyän (see below) is at the beginning misleading, because this latter term has a possible forerunner in the ethnicon (?) yg'yn of the Sabaic inscriptions in Ethiopia, whereas for Hbsst there is no witness in the South Arabian epigraphy whatsoever. So, it should be an old term, but under king Ezänä the inscriptions of the so-called "trilingual inscription" (in fact, a Graeco-Geez bilingual inscription in three writings: RIE 270 and 270bis [= DAE IV, 4], RIE 185 I-II and RIE 185 I-IIbis [= DAE IV, 6, 7]), besides inserting the title "king of Hbsst" in different places as compared with the other royal inscriptions, makes the clear equation Hbsst (Geez) = "Ethiopia" (Greek). This equivalence indicates that, like "Ethiopia", also Hbsst should be a term which was not only ancient, but also general. So, maybe it could be permitted to resume the old hypothesis by Glaser himself, who identified the Hbsst with the hbs.tfw of the Egyptian texts relating to Punt (Punt appears since the end of the 3rd millennium), the well known country on the coast of southern Red Sea or the Somaliland, also quoted recently, but with the contrary solution, by W. W. Müller9 - although the question remains still open, of the reason why the general denomination of Hbsst has disappeared (about that of "Ethiopia" nothing can be said, because no other Greek inscription with extended titles exists after RIE 270 and 270bis).10

The fact that the term "Habashat" as a Sabaic ethnicon has to be eliminated does not affect the South Arabian origin of the Semites of Ethiopia - if only, inside the term "South Arabian", one makes a distinction between "South Arabian" in general (that is, people[s] and language[s] coming from the South of the Arabian Peninsula, irrespective of the epoch - in short, the Semites of the Peninsula as meant by Christian 1919-20 and Cantineau. 1932), and "Epigraphic South Arabian" in the meaning traditional for Ethiopian studies, of the four (or more) dialects of the 1st millennium B.C. The indiscriminate usage of these two terms has brought the entire question of the "Ethiopian (linguistic) origins" into a blind alley: if the Ethiopians are not "derived" from the "South Arabians" in the second meaning,11 this does not mean that they (quite naturally) are not the linguistic heirs the "South Arabians" in the first.12

8 Glaser put the origin of these "Habashat" in Ḥadramawt, taking into consideratio a passage (already quoted by Ludolf in 1681 and 1691, of the geographer Stehen of Byzantium (4th c. A. D.), in turn from another geographer, Uranius (same century): "Beyond the Sabaeans [there are] the Abyssinians of the Ḥadramawt" (Xatramōtalitai Abasēnōt). See also Müller 2008.

9 EAE II (2005) 948. The argument by Müller is the excessive chronological distance between the two attestazioni, exactly one of the elements which we think are in favor of this hypothesis. The phonetic correspondence would be more or less regular.

10 C.P.Schneider 1987: 610.

11 Reconfirmed by Ullendorff 1955 more than half a century ago. But his main thesis, that all the Semitic languages of Ethiopia derive from Ge'ez because all their relevant characteristics are found in Ge'ez, does not stand, because these characteristics are at the same time (Proto)Semitic, and no significant common innovation has been found so far; on the contrary opinion see the important observation by Beeston in his private letter quoted in Ullendorff 1955: fn. 30 pp. 8-9.,

12 If one denies a "general South Arabian" origin of the Ethiopians, he has maybe to accept the (in itself fascinating) hypothesis of Hudson 2002, according to whom the origin of the Semites should be sought exactly in the Ethiopian territory today occupied by the Gurage, according to the principle of clear American origin, i.e., of scholars who are mainly compelled to have to do with "languages without history" like those of the redskins or the easkimo: exactly for them Morris Swadesh invented glottochronology) of the "archaic etogeneity", according of which where one finds the more extended dialectal variety, there should he look for the origin of a given group of languages - as if the greatest linguistic differentiation of Italian should be met in he surroundings of Rome, or all the migrations of the Semitic peoples would not be performed (except some "wandering Aramaean" like Abraham) from North to South, and not vice versa. But the greatest difficulty lies in the fact of the phonological and morphological "regular" correspondences among the Semitic languages: it is impossible to suppose that they have developed from a common language from which many of them were absent, and recreated (with regular correspondences) in the single Semitic languages - unless all this is driven back to ... a pre-Semitic period. These elements have escaped the attention not only of a non-Semitic like G. Fiaccadori, Sembrothes "gran re" (DAE IV 3 = RIEth 275). Per la storia del primo ellenismo axumita, PP 59 (2004),
2. Meropios

In the traditional story about the christianization of Ethiopia, the name of the teacher and guide of the two boys is always Meropios (Me-/Mi-) in the literary aources which call him by name, except the Synaxary, which has Merobopyos, which sually is taken as a mistake deriving from the Arabic text from which the Ethiopic was translated; for Greek p there was, in the corresponding Arabic text, as usual, a b. When the Ethiopian translator realized that his languages did in fact possess a p. inserted in the Ethiopic syllabary just for Greek or also Cusitic words) he corrected his text, by inserting this p, but without eliminating the already written b. 13 But it can be observed hat a b (without p) exists also in the tradition reported by the eccechhi Filpos 704,14 which has Marbeas: partial stabilization of an "arabicizing" spelling or even tradition?15

3. "Azg"ag"â

The son of the aksumite king under whom the two boys lived and worked is called 'Ella 'Azg"ag"â in the Synaxary16 and in the honoly on St. Frumnentius edited by Getatchew Haile 1979: 317. This name, together with that of his father ('Ella 'Aladâ) has always made some difficulties to the historians. But, whereas the name of 'Ézâna's father in the inscriptions is 'Ella 'Amida, and thus the 'Ella 'Aladâ of the Synaxary could be rightly explained by Conti Rossini 1922:18 as a corruption of the Greek ELLA AMIDA (with MI > LA possible in capital letters) the other, 'Ella 'Azg"ag"â has never received a satisfactory explanation: as the verb is in the plural (wanagśu "and they reigned") it has also been proposed a translation "Zague", the reading Zag"â being present in a part of the manuscript tradition - were it not that in this case it would be a matter of simple assonance, and, from the philological point of vue, a very surprising lectio faciilior17, not to speak of the fact that the Zague (ca. 1150 -1270) reigned about eight hundred years after the facts here in question. Also the other proposal by Conti Rossini, that 'Ella 'Azg"ag"â came (again through Greek capitals) from a 'Ella 'Azg"â, in turn from 'Ella Aizana.18 It is also wise non to insist too much on such philological gymnastics, jumping from mistake to mistake like monkeys in a non-bédierian Silva portentosa. In fact, it is surprising that nobody19 has ever mentioned the place name 'Asguagua, which according to Paez in Beccari II 270 and Almeida in Beccari V 24 indicates a region of Angot, at the sources of the- Takkaze20 - taking also into account the fact that place names seem to be sometimes employed in anthroponimy (cp. one of 'Ézâna's brothers, Adafâ, below, and the general Şaggâ Krâstos

1 Or perhaps eliminating it, but with the usual not very clear sign in similar cases, i. e. two parallel strokes, one above the letter, and the other below. Given the not very good state of edition of the Ethiopian Synaxary we do not know if and how much this variant b + p was generalized.

14 Conti Rossini 1918.

15 The weakness of the articulation p in Ethiopic must also have played some role.

16 The variant Zag"â is of course of no value; see below.

17 Completely different from the word discussed above, which did not concern the subject., but the verb ("he made to reign" and "They reigned").

18 That the name of 'Ézâna never appears, for the moment, with 'alla in his inscriptions is not very significant, because such an element must probably be felt as typical of the aksumite royal names.

19 But see my summary of the "Life" of Abroha and Asbaha (Marrassini 1999: 176).

20 Paez in Beccari II 270 [(the river Takkazé) tem suas fontes muito perto dos limites do reyno de Angót, em huma terra que se chama 'Asguagua, ao pe de hum alto monte que lhes fica a oriente ...); Almeida in Beccari V 24 [(the river Takkazé tem sua fonte em huma terra, que se chama 'Asguagua, no principio do reyno de Angót, junto a Begamderaonde ao pêe de hum alto monte que lhe fica a oriente...].
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Bagamdor under king "Amda Soyon" (21). The name of the king would then be an uncorrupted 'Ella 'Azm'ág'a; as for the verb in the plural with a subject in the singular, quoted above, there is no question of modeling the first on the second, but the second on the first, by considering it a rest of the well known pre-aksumite and aksumite use of the "plural of respect" (on which see below). In this case the plural wanagsu (already, in itself, a difficult) should be accepted in the text.

6. 'alla

Speaking of this kind of personal names, something can be said about the element 'alla, which frequently occurs in the aksumite royal names ('alla Aládá, 'alla 'Amidá, 'alla 'Azm'ág'a, 'alla Asbáha, 'alla Gabaz). After a phase in which it was interpreted as the name of the Semitic god El,22 one has passed,23 thanks to the Greek legend on several coins, which bore a double illé, to the possibility of an Arabic-like article (which was improbable both chronologically and culturally, not to speak of the fact that the Arabic article does not show any double illé) or to a rendering of the South-Arabian and Arabic relative of appurtenance du- (but 'älla is a plural, and du- is a singular). One could also think to the relative pronoun24 and definite article of Tigré la-, but in the present writer's opinion this element 'älla should not be anything else than the relative 'ällä, which in this form, or also 'wád, still today indicates in Amharic the retinue of some important personage,25 and also the personage himself; it seems to be the same element found in Amharic in the plural forms of the independent personal pronoun and the definite article in 1st and 2nd person. Of course, in this plural can have had an important role also the use of the plural of respect usually found (although not always) in the aksumite inscriptions (see below). Altogether arbitrary the statement of Munro-Hay 1991: 159 and 162, that this would be an epitheton meaning "who that ...", that all the Ethiopian kings bore it, and that it had "religious implications".26

7. The two cÉzâná

Some scholars are in favour of the presence of two kings whose name was cÉzâná (cÉzâná I, 4th c., and cÉzâná II, 6th c.). After the notes by Ryckmans 1955: 3 n. 7, Drewes 1962:87,27 Pirenne 1975. Drewes 2007. One has insisted mainly on palaeographic considerations, pointing out the difficulty of admitting that in few decades it has been possible to pass from "a consonantal writing to a syllabic writing of an evolved type"28. Maybe one basic observation should be made, that of sharp formal separation between the inscriptions in south-arabian writing (frequently called "pseudo-sabaic" because of its artificial, too much ornamented, appearance), and those in ethiopian writing, without mixing the two types. Formal separation, not of functions, because all of them are (or are supposed to be) part of bilinguals which shoul tell more or less the same facts. At least judging from the so-called "trilingual inscription" (in fact, bilingual in three writings: DAE 4-6-7 = RIE 370 and 185 I and II, with duplicates), the "normal", basic inscription was that in south arabian characters (or even that in Greek, for a different public), and the true bilingual was that in Geez in south arabian characters - Greek; this is demonstrated by the fact that the inscription in Geez with ethiopian characters seems

21 Taddese Tamrat 1972: 192-3
22 Conti Rossini 1895: 22, following a hypothesis of J. Halévy.
23 With Dillmann 1853: 352 n. 1, but also in part Conti Rossini.
24 As already for Dillmann.
25 So, it is probable that the second element would be a place name. A similar case could be that of Tigrinya daqq(i) followed by a place or ethnic name, in the sense of "the boys of", "those of".
26 Another opinion in Lusini 2004: 70-71, according to whom this element could derive from a root *'ly and from a substantive "guardian" (*'ell[e].
27 As usual, Drewes expresses himself too concisely, and he does not offer a clear conclusion; the continuation of his argument does not seem to have much to do with the problem of the "two Ézâná", and limits himself to explain the similarity between the writings of DAE 7 and of the inscription of Gdr, and also to discuss the new theory of J. Pirenne, who put Gdr in the 3d century.
28 Garbini 1979: 80-82 (but see already Dillmann 1878).
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to have been added later, and had to be satisfied with utilizing the spaces left by the others;²⁹ or the inscriptions RIE RIE 190 (Geez with ethiopian characters) and 271 (Greek), which seem to have been part of a throne, in which the right side showed in the outer face the inscription RIE 190, and in the inner face the inscription RIE 271.²⁰ Because of the fact that the first inscription begins ex-abrupto (without even quoting the name of the king), and the second des not tell of any detail of the campaign against the Noba, it is generally assumed that both these missing parts were found in the other slab, lost for the moment (the inscription RIE 189 = DAE 11), in vocalized Geez, which also speaks of an expedition against the Noba, probably also belonged to a throne, but without any physical connection with the preceding inscriptions).³¹

So, these inscriptions in Geez in sabaic writing are a category, or even an epigraphic genre, by itself, with a long evolution from the 4th (RIE 186 = DAE 8) to the 6th c. (RIE 192), without much to do, from the formal point of view, with their counterparts; an aksumite king "had to" write his deeds in Greek and in Geez, but this latter in the more prestigious south arabian characters, like many Germans who prefer to write titles or "noble" texts in Gothic characters. So, these bilinguals were such from a point of view of the contents, not of the formal epigraphy, and to jump continuously from one type to another, inside the same king, only blurs the question, showing a bewildering alternance of progress (ethiopian vocalized writing) and regress (sabaic consonantal writing). In this way, instead, if we put aside the inscriptions in sabaean writing, the evolution of the ethiopian writing becomes much clearer, from an alphabet (without vowels) to a syllabary (with vowels), these latter perhaps developed under Greek (or even Indian) influence. Anyway, to speak of "too short" or "too long" times is senseless; also the times of palaeographical history are what they are.

8. The personal names in the (Greek) accusative

Some of the inscriptions have personal names in the accusative, with the regular Geez ending -h(i), e.g. one of the two "Ezana's brothers in RIE 185 I (=DAE 6, Geez in South Arabian writing) S\textasciitilde dhnh;
RIE 185 ibis (its duplicate), ²² RIE 185 II (=DAE 7, Geez in Ethiopian unvocalized writing) Sznh,
RIE 185 IIb is (its duplicate) Sznh (all with the sign \( z \)). In the Greek corresponding versions the accusative is sometimes indicated (duplicate RIE 270 bis Saizanan), sometimes it is not (RIE 270 Saizana).

A particular case is that of the other brother of king Ezana, whose name not only has the accusative ending in both Geez versions (Hdfn;³³ so, one should not transcribe the name as "Hadefaha" or "Hdfn" as in Huntingford 1989:48 or Brakmann 1994: 27), and also, together with the article to\( n \) (which is wanting in the other brother's name) in the Geez versions RIE 270: 9 and duplicate RIE 270 bis: 9 to\( n \) Adifan. Now, the inscription RIE 192, by W\textasciitilde zb son of Kaleb, shows the expression b's Hdfn referred to the king according to the well known royal formula "man of ...", ³⁴ A place Ada\( f \), in the neighborhood of Lalibela, is indicated by the "History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria" in 1210 as the capital of the zague dynasty;²⁶ and it is also found in the "Life" of the zague king Yann\( \alpha \)anna Krostos.²⁷ Could this -\( n \) be a kind of crystallized "Greek accusative"? Note that the anthroponomy of the 6th century (limited as far as the number of the PN is concerned, but abundant in their documentation) is full not only of these "Greek" (-\( n \)) structures, but also of the possessive ending in Semitic texts (where of course there is not the possibility of a similar

³⁰ That this Greek inscription was placed at the inside is demonstrated by the fact that it stops some tens of centimeters before the tenon, which is placed exactly inside.
³¹ See the short notices on the relevant inscriptions in RIE, and in Schneider 1996.
³² It must be made clear that the terms "original" and "duplicate" have no absolute meaning, being only due to the time of the discovery.
³³ According to Sima 2003-4, who speaks of the inscriptions RIE 185 (Geez) and 270 (Greek) with their duplicates, the true bilingual inscription, commemorating the military facts, was that in South Arabian characters, together with that in Greek, where the primary redaction was the first. The inscription in ethiopian characters was added subsequently, by utilizing the spaces left.
³⁴ Cp. the discussion in Littmann 1913: 14-15.
³⁶ Taddese Tamrat 1972: 2:59 with fn. 5.
³⁷ Marrassini 1995: 80. From this point of view, the emendation from 
\( hdfn \) into \( hdn \) proposed by Manzo RSE 39 1995
74-75 for this inscription is not strictly necessary.
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For example, the Abyssinian king 'abella Aṣbaha'\(^{38}\) ("$<\$>bh\) in the South Arabian inscription Istanbul 7608bis = RES 3904), is Elitazbēa, Elitshētāias, Elesbāa, Elesbaa, Elesbās, Elesbās, Elesbā, in the Byzantine sources, including the Martyrium Arethae, but also Elesbān, Elesboam, and in Armenian Eghezbovam (at least in part of the tradition); in the Portuguese, e.g. Paez (from Simeon Metaphrastes) in Beccari II 607 (Elesbā) and 611 sgg. (Elesbaam), Almeida in Beccari V 153 and sgg., from Baronio (Elesboam). The name of the Himyariite king was originally Du-Nuwās (and derived forms) in the tradition fixed in the Arabic area; in the literary texts is Doynaaś in the Greek version of the Martyrium Arethae, Dynas in the Armenian version, but Doynaan (in position of nominative in the text) in Nikephoros Kallistos and Simeon Metaphrastes (here with a striking difference in cases: Doynaan Ebraios); Dunaan in Almeida in Beccari V, 153 ff. (from Baronio), 163 and passim. In the narrative of another war between Abyssinia and Himyar (a war which is probably the same as the preceding one, but told differently) the name of the himyariite king seems to be similar: Danmus in John of Nikiu, Damianos in Teophanes the Confessor and in George Cedrenus, Damnos in Nikephoros Kallistos, but in the Syriac texts is Dymnwn in the so-called "Chronicle of the Pseudo-Denis of Tell Mahre" (also called "Chronicle of Zuqnin").

**LINGUISTICS**

9. The "plural of respect"

About this "plural of respect" (improperly called by some *plurale majestatis*, which in fact applies itself to the 1st person only), it must be stressed that it is typical not only of the aksumite age (where, to be sure, it shows much inconsistency in the inscriptions), and that it disappears with the post-aksumite period (with very few, and doubtful, exceptions), but that it is clearly documented also in the Sabean inscriptions on ethiopian soil, which are present from the 8th c. B. C. onwards. A recent note by Alexander Sima (Sima 2002: 129-132)\(^{39}\) looks for the origins of this usage strictly inside South-Arabian epigraphy, and suggests that its origin is to be found in the custom of co-regency, beginning with king bkrb 'sêd (co-regent with his son Hs'Yhn; inscr. Ry 509), at the beginning of the 5th c. A. D.. Sima notes that here the dual had to be employed (and the dual is in fact employed here in the substantive and the pronouns referring to the two kings), and in his opinion this seems to suggest that this usage was already fixed in a preceding period, when the co-regents were frequently more than two; here it can be observed that the explanation by Sima is similar to that of the ecceghie Filpos 705 for Ethiopic, who says that, in addressing the king, it was first employed with Abroha e Aṣbaha,\(^{40}\) because they were two; but Sima, strangely enough, does not take into consideration this Ethiopan pre-aksumite and aksumite usage, already present, as we

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\(^{38}\) The name is surely Semitic, from the root *$bh* "to dawn" which exists, outside Ethiopic, also in Old South Arabian (more than 120 cases in Harding 1974: 365.), in Modern South Arabian and in Arabic. This root has produced in Ethiopia personal names like sâbuh (passive participle, in two monograms of aksumite age, from Ertria, RIE 400 e 423), and this causative 'asbgha,\(^{39}\) which is found also in the name of one of the two Abyssinian ambassadors who build a house in Zafar, in a South Arabian inscriptions dated under king Martad'ilan Yaniif (ca. 500-515), 619 him, and also in Pre-Islamic North-Arabian. The use of this name in non-regal texts makes highly improbable the proposal by Fiaccadorni in Berger 2006. 64 (repeated in EAE III, 2007:328; for a similar attitude (significantly following an etymology proposed for ESA by Conti Rossini) see his etymology of 'Elia Gabaz in EAE II 262, which in his opinion should come from *$gbs* "[tax] collector", instead from the right *gabaz* "treasure [of the cathedral of Aksum]"); that the name is derived from another root meaning "to collect tributes". It is truly amazing that, when some "Biblical" atmosphere is at work, every poor housebound found by the archaeologist is immediately labeled as a temple; whereas, as soon as this "Biblical" atmosphere disappears, every (previously) sacred king becomes to the utmost a tax-agent (this is particularly evident in Ethiopian studies, thanks to the rampant positivism, so implicably attentive to the *histoire éventemmentielle*). The form of the name seems to be absent from the Geez post-aksumite texts, but it reappears today in Tigirinya, probably without real continuity, but only by derivation from the historical event; that it is a genuine Geez formation is demonstrated by the final $he, which would be $he in Tigirinya would be $he.

\(^{39}\) Cp. also Drewes 1991: 384-5, Sima 2003-4: 280. Quite independently from this latter problem, a continuous oscillation between singular plural (especially in the collective nouns), is normal in Geez and even more in modern Ethiopian languages.

\(^{40}\) Cp. in this connection the continuous oscillations between singular and plural pointed out in Marrassini 1999: 164.
have said before, in the Sabaic inscriptions of Ethiopia in the 8th c. B. C., and absent from the inscriptions from South Arabia of the same period; disappeared from post-aksumite Geez, but re-emerging in the modern Ethiopian languages, in Amharic and above all in Tigrinya. This feature seems to be absent from the rest of Semitic.

10. The causative

In the inscription by the son of Kaleb, Wzrb (RIE 192), in Geez written in south-aborian characters, the causative is in (a), as usual in Geez, in 2 to 4 cases (l. 10 ywh, l. 37 grr, perhaps l. 24 kry and l. 49 ybdw), but there are 5 or 6 other cases in which the morpheme is h(a)- (l. 10 hgrb, l. 23 hhsr, l. 32 hdm, l. 35 hftm, l. 36 hkt, perhaps l. 10 h[dm?] Face B line 10 hgsn). This is not a discovery, because these examples were already pointed out by Schneider in his *editio princeps* of 1974, but in a very modest (in keeping with his personality), but also a little hasty, way, and not repeated in his paper read at the GLECS in 1975 (Schneider 1973-9), although the readings were confirmed in RIE 1991. That it is at least opportune to recall this phenomenon is demonstrated by the simple fact that it is not recorded in the recent grammars of Geez, including the book on the verbal system by Weninger and some introductory outlines, and in Semitic. From the phonological point of view, to this type of causative with h- instead of - should be added the h- which appears, according to Schneider 1973-9, in the personal independent pronoun III m. s. h't (l. 4) = Tigre hntu, instead of Geez we'nwu, and hmnt (l. 9) instead of Geez 'amuntu. Of course there is nothing to be surprised with a phenomenon like that: h- is the causative in OSA and of part of the MSA, and in general of the chronologically "middle" stages of Semitic (Hebrew, part of Aramaic and of Arabic). Perhaps an encouragement for further research could come from the present situation of Tigre itself, where equally this phenomenon is not pointed out, including the long article by Raz on the Tigre verb (Raz 1980), but which equally shows many verbal forms beginning with ha-, that in my opinion could be interpreted as archaic causatives. In the first 28 pages of the Tigre dictionary by Littmann-Hoefner (LH 1962), containing the letter h, there are about forty verbal forms showing the pattern ha-l2a3a (or ha-l21a2a, e.g. harakraka "to hurry [without sense]" LH 11), which strongly resembles that of the "normal" a-causative, plus another ten with different verbal themata plus another fifteen or so, with a prefix han- which is difficult to separated from the well known Semitic 'an, which in turn seems to show, contrary to this, an original alef.

The only interesting element could be the presence of a dialect (and a typologically Tigre-like - or South Arabian-like - dialect) of Geez, which could at last put to an end the apparent, and unistorical, granitic aspect of this issue.

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41 Schneider 1961: 63 (singular and plural); Schneider 1965: 222x2 (singular and plural); Schneider 1971-2: 24; Schneider 1973-9: 38x2; Schneider 1976: 85x2 (plural instead of dual, a phenomenon in itself of universal presence); cp. also Drewes 1959: 29 (singular instead of plural).


43 Weninger 2991.


46 Here we can add Tigré 'atom.


49 Unfortunately, a short etymological survey proved to be of no practical utility: only one case in common with Geez (Te. hadamadam to come unexpectedly) LH 25; Ge. 'adamadam "to cause to be astonished or stupefed" L 133), only four with Tigrinya (Te. halaf "inf. 'invitation to chat' L 8 5, Tna. 'aafa "to cause to chat' L 146; Te. haratra to move about fussily" LH 11, Tna. 'aratra "to send at a trot" K 569; Te. harakraka "to hurry [without reason]" LH 11, Tna. 'arakra "to cause to enter by force' K 582; perhaps Te. harfafa "to become blunt" LH 12, Tna. 'aafafa "to finish off' K 616).
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